

9 April 2020

Dear ICOT 2020 Partner / Speaker / Delegate

NOTICE OF POSTPONEMENT OF ICOT 2020 IN LIGHT OF COVID-19

In our communication of 16 March 2020, we promised to give further update following the Organising Committee meeting scheduled for the first week of April. Since then we have held a series of consultative engagements, including with the ICOT Standing Committee and our Australian counterparts, who are hosting the 2021 ICOT. These consultations have been highly constructive and all of us acknowledged, with deep regret, the unforeseen impact of COVID-19 on virtually all aspects of human activity globally, including of course our plans for ICOT 2020.

We mentioned in our previous communication that **an outright cancellation of the conference is not under consideration**. This remains the case. So, having recognised that a postponement was inevitable under the circumstances, our consultations sought to assess options for this move. In talking to various travel and business events industry players here and abroad, it became clear that prospects for widespread resumption of travel during the course of this year are negligible at best. Based on that feedback we felt we couldn't proceed with the ICOT at all this year.

We then engaged in conversation with our Australian counterparts, who are hosting the 2021 ICOT in Melbourne, to explore whether they would be open to moving their ICOT to 2022, thereby enabling us to move ours to 2021. While our Australian colleagues fully understood our predicament, they too found themselves in a difficult situation as major sponsorships had already been concluded for the June 2021 ICOT. Renegotiating those relationships would be difficult, as situation we fully understood.

Under the circumstances we have decided to **postpone our ICOT to 2022**, at a date still to be set. While this postponement is occasioned by circumstances beyond our control, we believe it presents at least two major benefits for ICOT 2022:

1. Our theme, **"Thinking to transform societies"** will be even more pertinent post-COVID-19 than it is now – for obvious reasons.
2. We will benefit from a much-welcome opportunity to promote and formally announce ICOT 2022 in Melbourne next year. We will also access the ICOT 2021 database. This will assist our future promotional efforts for ICOT 2022 tremendously.

When we return to the office later this month, we will start processing refunds for registration fees received to date. We are most grateful for all the support towards ICOT 2020 and look forward to seeing you all in 2022. We will work even harder to deliver a memorable event, the very first ICOT in Africa!

Stay safe from COVID-19,



Septi M. Bukula, Chairperson
On behalf of the ICOT 2020/2 Organising Committee

