



WORLD TRADE CENTERS
ASSOCIATION

MERIDIAN™

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WORLD TRADE CENTERS ASSOCIATION

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TECHNOLOGY ISSUE —
REMOTE WORK TRENDS

MERIDIAN™

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
WORLD TRADE CENTERS ASSOCIATION

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The World Trade Centers Association (WTCA) is a network of more than 325 highly-connected, mutually-supporting businesses and organizations in nearly 100 countries. As the owner of the World Trade Center, the tri-globe map design logo and WTC trademarks, the WTCA licenses exclusive rights to these brands for Members to use in conjunction with their independently-owned, iconic properties, facilities and trade services offerings. Through a robust portfolio of events, programming and resources that it offers its Members, the goal of the WTCA is to help local economies thrive by encouraging and facilitating trade and investment across the globe through Member engagement. To learn more visit www.wtca.org.

For comments or questions regarding this issue of *WTCA Meridian™*, please contact Chanelle Kasik, Communications Manager, WTCA at ckasik@wtca.org.

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John E. Drew
Chair, Board of Directors
World Trade Centers Association

Conducting Business in a Digital World

Dear Members,

As we continue to live in a socially-distanced environment, we have learned to face challenges and adapt to the “new normal” of conducting our business in a digital world. Video conference calls have now replaced in-person, face-to-face meetings, and new information from around the world is readily available at our fingertips 24/7. While a bit daunting at times, we are utilizing advanced technology to the fullest while strengthening our relationships and becoming more interconnected than ever before.

For this month’s Technology Issue, we asked several of our WTCA Members to share how they are coping with the new normal and the strategies, tools, technologies, and protocols they are implementing to keep business as normal as possible to achieve the goals they had set forth for 2020. The Memo shares a recap of our recent WTCA Global Town Hall, which was held May 19. This virtual gathering featured guest speaker Professor Dale Fisher, Chair of the World Health Organization’s Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN). A total of 52 of our WTCA Members across 17 countries came together to listen to his perspective and insights on how long it will take to overcome the pandemic, and shared their plans on how they are re-opening their WTCs and changing the way they do business moving forward. Lastly, our Around the Network section features Member-submitted stories with updates on what is happening around the globe.

Despite these trying times, I am proud of all that our Association has done to come together and unite as one WTCA — sharing resources, best practices and strategies with each other to solve challenges that COVID-19 has presented. Our community was founded with the mission to connect globally and prosper locally, and as we celebrate “World Trade Centers Association Day” this month on June 12, we are proving that to be true by working together in this new environment and leaning on each other for support. On behalf of the WTCA, I thank you for all your hard work to help your local economies and fellow Members, and your continued support of our network.

Sincerely,



John E. Drew

ASIA PACIFIC

WTC Mumbai

RUPA NAIK

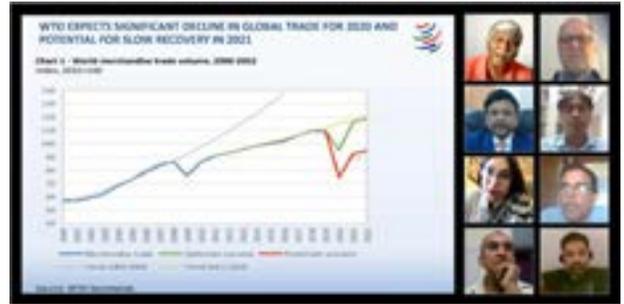
Senior Director, World Trade Center Mumbai

At the MVIRDC WTC Mumbai, management took proactive steps to respond to the disruptions brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Initially, the task was to look after the safety of staff and guiding occupants in the complex, easing anxieties through direct communication, and enforcing hygiene and sanitation measures. Today, most of our departments are working from home with close to optimal productivity.

This adverse time has brought a greater need to look beyond traditional ways to conduct business and maintain relationships. Therefore, WTC Mumbai switched its programming to digital platforms to share information through daily newsletters, research reports, and holding regular webinars on COVID-19's impact on trade via GoToMeeting™.

Webinars have provided a platform for virtual networking so we can stay close while maintaining a safe distance. Since the lockdown started, we have organized eight webinars to address concerns of MSMEs, including exporters, women entrepreneurs, and startups. These webinars are aimed at creating awareness about the relief measures offered by banks, export insurance agencies, export development agencies, and the government. WTCs in Jaipur, Bhubaneswar, and Goa are also conducting similar webinars to support their members.

Our webinars have featured speakers including Mr. Suresh Prabhu, former Union Minister; Mr. Subhash Desai, Honorable Minister for Industries & Mining, Government of Maharashtra; and Dr. Robert Koopman, Chief Economist, World Trade Organization. A special webinar was also held featuring Ms. Cristina Dragoi, Director at the World Trade Point Federation, to discuss how India's 70 million MSMEs can benefit from the Federation's landmark initiative e-trade desk.



Screenshot of a webinar on the "Impact of COVID-19 Crisis on Trade and Industry" on April 24, 2020. Esteemed speakers include Dr. Robert B. Koopman, Chief Economist and Director - Economic Research and Statistics Division, World Trade Organization; Dr. Harshadeep Kamble, Development Commissioner (Industries) Government of Maharashtra; and Dr. Sachchidanand Shukla, Chief Economist, Mahindra Group.

Photo Credit: MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai

Webinars have helped us reach the trade diaspora beyond geographical boundaries and different time zones. Many MSMEs have benefited from expert opinions across multiple countries on best practices in re-skilling, improvement in supply chain management, capacity-building, policy measures, reforms in the financial market, and digital transformation. This crisis has also opened opportunities for SMEs in logistics, healthcare, life science, and agro technologies, including developing products with higher use of digital technologies such as AI, IOT, robotics, machine learning, and security to manage operations and address customers' needs effectively. Similarly, SMEs in manufacturing hubs such as Vietnam, Mexico, and India are likely to benefit from the expected shift in global supply chain diversification.

Our mission is to support SMEs, the backbone of our economy, and increase their share in global supply chains. Going forward, WTC Mumbai is planning to organize virtual trade missions by hosting WTCs and companies from around the world, and connecting them to our local SMEs. We also believe that helping SMEs enhance their social media presence with online marketing is important, and we are developing an interactive website to help SMEs showcase their products and service to help them reach global buyers.

WTC Suwon

JIHO SONG

Manager, World Trade Center Suwon

Communities and governments around the world are struggling to deal with the chaos that COVID-19 has created. Although Korea has been dealing with the outbreak effectively, the trade sector is still going through a difficult time. New trade deals have plummeted, and the cancelation and delay of shipments are occurring frequently, resulting in doubled logistic costs, among others.

Given our affiliation with the Gyeonggi Province, WTC Suwon — which is also known as Gyeonggido Business & Science Accelerator (GBSA) — is leading the largest province in Korea by strengthening SME's trade competitiveness and finding ways to support them. In order to meet the needs of our member companies and achieve our goals for this year, we are working to launch three main initiatives and projects: building up a Digital Trade Lounge, implementing a video conference management system, and using both platforms for trade events.

The first initiative is to set up a Digital Trade Lounge — equipped with 23 video conference system booths in WTC Suwon and our overseas branches — to replace the canceled trade missions in Korea and other countries. SMEs can access these spaces through the application system to book booths and hold meetings.

The second initiative is to build a video conference management system — a one-stop platform that manages everything from the application. It will be incorporated into our overseas branch management system for our business members to use. The SME applicants' and buyers' information will be inputted into the system so it can process this data and generate matches, notify each party of the



Inside of WTC Suwon's new Digital Trade Lounge.

Photo credit: Jiho Song of WTC Suwon (GBSA)

outcome, and schedule meetings based on their schedules, with interpreters included. The meetings' outcomes will also be used as background information for future buyer matching.

Our third and last initiative is to successfully transfer conventional, in-person trade events to online environments. WTC Suwon has [a total of 52 trade events](#) for this year, and some of them will consist of a combination of offline and online programming, depending on the application and implementation of the Digital Trade Lounge and video conference management system. Particularly, one of the biggest events planned for online is G-FAIR KOREA 2020, the largest trade fair for Korean SMEs and overseas buyers, which will be held in October.

WTC Suwon continues to face many obstacles every day to adapt to and develop solutions to operate in the new normal. The way to break through is to know that opportunities are found in times of crisis such as this. The world has been shifting to the digital era and the pandemic is pushing this trend further, and it's in our best interest to go with the flow, not against it.

EUROPE

WTC Cyprus

MEHRAN EFTEKHAR

Board Member, WTCA; Director, World Trade Center Cyprus

Since March 23, Cyprus has been placed under a strict lockdown, closing all airports and ports. Similar to other areas around the world, employees at non-essential businesses, such as WTC Cyprus, have been working remotely. Even with the lockdown now lifted, this way of working is a “new normal.”

As a member of a group operating in 23 countries — spanning the European, MENA and APAC regions, the group offers amongst traditional WTC services, Real Estate, Insurance, Reinsurance, Banking and Broking — WTC Cyprus offers a multi-layered portfolio of traditional services covering both real estate and trade. Given the scale of lockdown and the scope of our services, we immediately set up a COVID-19 committee that included our risk team, to assess and facilitate alternatives in order to ensure continuation of our operations in a new digital environment. Our first task was to make sure everyone had the correct infrastructure to communicate from their remote work locations in a timely and effective manner with health and safety one of the prime objectives. Other challenges were the health and safety of the business center operations, projects under development with members, transportation, finding suppliers that were in operation, cashflow and expense management, office maintenance, government liaison, and compliance with directives. Most government departments closed with employees working remotely.

For our communications efforts, we identified and employed the following platforms to suit our various needs:

External Communications: To communicate with external parties, we have used Zoom™, Microsoft™ Meeting Rooms, and Skype™ for Business, and found that Zoom™ and Microsoft™ Meetings were the most effective and easiest to use. We also have a WhatsApp™ group administered by WTC Cyprus that is widely



The WTC Cyprus team connects via Zoom™.

Photo Credit: WTC Cyprus

used internally as well as with member clusters. Further, we have also developed a secured data room facility that our business members can access for B2B product displays.

Phone System: As our telephone system is from Avaya™, we made sure everyone had the necessary communication icons enabled on their phones and laptops. This system allows us to answer switchboard incoming calls from home, make calls as if we are calling from the office, contact each other by dialing our extensions, listen to voicemail, and effectively communicate internally as if we were in our offices.

Slack™: Our insurance company in Cyprus, which employs more than 300 staff members and agents, as well as WTC Cyprus, chose slack for internal communications. Specifically, it is designed to support collaborations between employees and has voice/video call features, and options where you can share or draw on/annotate your screen. Additionally, you can send and receive files quickly.

Virtual Offices, Exhibitions and Beyond:

Currently, we are looking at various platforms for virtual offices and exhibitions. We believe this will be the future trend for online learning and the exhibition of products.

While keeping in mind the importance of data security on all communication platforms, we have found the various platforms mentioned here very effective as we continue to ease the lockdown rules, and continue working remotely. We understand that technology will continue to evolve and are ready to adapt to the new normal as it transpires.

WTC Twente

FREERK FABER

CEO, World Trade Center Twente

Every year, WTC Twente organizes “World Trade Day,” where representatives of foreign embassies in the Netherlands are invited to participate in a matchmaking program with companies from the region. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 edition cannot take place. We have looked for tools and ideas to stay engaged despite our event’s cancelation, and concluded that it was a good alternative to organize a series of webinars titled “GO4Export – The Look Ahead.”

In this webinar series, we used different platforms such as Zoom™, Livestorm™ and Microsoft Teams™. All of these platforms allow participants to ask questions via the chat tool, and, in particular, Livestorm™ has a poll function as well. At the beginning of all webinar sessions, we mentioned that, per GDPR guidelines, all webinars are recorded, so we can distribute them afterwards to participants and make them available for viewing at a later time. Our [first webinar](#) featured Dutch trendwatcher Adjiedj Bakas, who discussed potential trends in the global economy post-COVID-19. Bakas commented on the opportunities that could open up following the pandemic and highlighted the importance of moving production capacity closer to home, or creating shorter supply chains. He also noted that technological developments are gaining momentum during the pandemic, and creative and innovative companies — including Demcon, Hemabo, MiniValves, and Micronit — are growing stronger despite the challenges faced.

The rest of the webinars in the series focused on opening to and connecting with different markets. For example, some webinars tackled the conversation of doing business with neighboring countries, such as Belgium, Germany, and the U.K. WTC Twente also hosted a [webinar](#) about opportunities for Netherlands-based companies in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a focus on Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa. This event included presentations from entrepreneurs and the Head of Economic Affairs of the Dutch Embassy in South Africa.



WTC Twente hosted a webinar titled “Trade Possibilities in Sub-Saharan Africa” featuring guest speakers Regina Nieuwmeijer, André Loozekoot, and Joop van der Vinne; and hosts Freerk Faber, Corinne Abbas, Floris Koning, and Judith van den Bovekamp.

Photo Credit: WTC Twente

Later this year, we’re hosting our second annual “[Techmed Event](#)” with the University of Twente via the Jublia™ platform. Due to uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, instead of hosting a two-day, in-person event, we decided to host the event digitally and spread the event over a longer period of time with a “Meet the Experts” session starting in August, and a seminar and matchmaking event on October 28 and 29.

The advantage of these webinars is the ability to reach a greater, global audience and quickly share information with companies. However, while these webinars bridge the gap of communicating and connecting with various communities, and are a great alternative given the current circumstance, our members still yearn for the informal contact and networking opportunities provided by attending an in-person event. And we are looking forward to the moment when we can physically meet again.

LATIN AMERICA

WTC Montevideo

IGNACIO DEL

General Manager, World Trade Center Montevideo

Our WTC complex has six buildings comprised of 200,000 square meters and more than 400 companies that employ over 9,000 people. Although the Uruguayan government did not enforce a lockdown when the pandemic first came in early March, they issued a “Stay at Home” order. Given this situation, we knew that we would need a new way of conducting business and would have to rely heavily on technology to maintain close contact with our team, clients, and community.

We identified three pillars to focus on during the pandemic:

- **Health:** preserve and ensure the health and safety of our workspaces
- **Community:** continue to build the community that works in our complex
- **Business:** strengthen ties with the companies that operate here by providing solutions and advice, and promoting networking under new means

The health pillar was based on the regulations established by the Ministry of Public Health and the interdisciplinary WTC protocol, prepared by our team of professionals and occupational doctor, to effectively and efficiently manage the health emergency. Preventive measures listed in the protocol include using masks and practicing frequent hand washing, maintaining social distancing, limiting the number of people per elevator trip, and cleaning all areas with highly disinfecting products, among others. Further, we created a campaign called “If you take care of yourself, you take care of others” (Si vos te cuidas, nos cuidamos todos) to promote these measures and implemented it on WTC Montevideo’s platforms such as mailings, promotional videos, signposts, and webinars.

To serve our community, we continued developing our service platform, providing advice and valuable content for members to collaborate on and learn from. Our training programs were delivered through an online platform called [We Lead](#), granting up to 50% off all course fees. All proceeds collected from the training programs went to our corporate

¿Cómo cuidamos nuestro sueño en la situación actual?

DR. ANDRÉS ÁLVAREZ MOCCIA
Internista y Gastroenterólogo
Gerente de Medicina Corporativa (MIP)
Medicina Personalizada

Jueves
28
de mayo

hora
9:00 am
duración: 1 hora

Plataforma
zoom

REGISTRARME

WTC MONTEVIDEO

WTC Montevideo recently held a “Free Zone Talk” featuring Dr. Andrés Álvarez Moccia to discuss how anxiety has caused poor sleep during this pandemic.

Photo Credit: WTC Montevideo

social responsibility (CSR) campaign called “the Coronavirus Fund” to help the lower income community during the pandemic. We have also been promoting a series of online webinars called “Free Zone Talks,” featuring renowned speakers discussing topics such as finance, HR, social issues, health, and international affairs. Our Free Zone Talks are taking place through the second quarter of 2020 and are available on our [Spotify™ Podcast account](#) and [Youtube™ channel](#).

Lastly, from the business pillar, we have worked closely with our clients, holding online conferences via Zoom™ to identify and understand their current needs, how their operations are performing during this pandemic, and how their teams are establishing protocols to facilitate their return to their offices. We have also been using Asana™ internally with our team for the past five years and continue to use it to collaborate. Although COVID-19 has modified our daily lives, technology has enabled us to work together to overcome these challenges and look to the future.

WTC Valencia

SUBDELIA SEVILLA

General Director,
 World Trade Center Valencia

WTC Valencia is widely known in the region for organizing events at the Convention Center of the Hesperia WTC Hotel Valencia. We host various events and activities — ranging from #InnovAcción to WTC Day — throughout the year as part of the [WTC Valencia Agenda](#). Available to our 200+ Business Club members, these events allow our members to network and foster a business-oriented environment.

After our successful WTC Women event in March (see photos on our [Instagram](#)), the first case of COVID-19 was announced in Venezuela. Shortly after, our city and economy went into lockdown. Our WTC's initial concern was that our business, which is based on networking and events, would not be viable given the lockdown, but we still had obligations, commitments with sponsors, and a community to serve. To overcome this challenge, we began exploring the digital world of hosting virtual events, which we hadn't used before aside from creating a website and posting on social media to connect with our community.

We created a virtual meeting through Zoom™ and invited our Business Club members to test the platform. It worked well and we received positive feedback from our members. However, we made a few technical adjustments such as enhancing our opening videos to ensure that the platform would run smoothly, it would be secure, and it would best present our sponsors during our first digital event.

Held in April, the official launch of our WTC Valencia Digital Agenda was well received by both members and sponsors.



The collage shows the wide spectrum of WTC Valencia's Digital Agenda event with topics including strategy, leadership, technology, finance, sustainability, and regional affairs. Some events were presented by international speakers (including Eduardo Gil Delgado, Alberto García-Jurado, Melvin Peña, and Daniel Coronel) as well as some WTCA members (WTC Guanajuato and Nuevo Laredo, and WTC Monterrey), with attendance from members of WTC Valencia's community.
 Photo credit: WTC Valencia

Some of the directors from other Latin American WTCs participated in our event as panelists, further growing our community throughout the region. With a growing audience without borders, extraordinary worldwide speakers, and fewer costs than physical events, we can affirm that our Digital Agenda will be part of our regular programming moving forward.

In parallel, our team has also coordinated with Jorge Acevedo, President of WTC Guanajuato and Nuevo Laredo, and Guillermo Acevedo, Executive Director at WTC Cali and Medellin, to explore joint efforts. With the support of Carlos Ronderos, WTCA Regional Director for Latin America, and his team, we have promoted and participated in virtual weekly meetings with the regional representatives of each country within the Latin American region to share experiences, ideas, and projects to collaborate on.

MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA

WTC Algiers

MAHMOUD NEDJAI

International Relations Manager, WTC Algiers

World Trade Center Algiers started its operations more than 20 years ago and has grown into a respected and recognizable local brand. By offering companies the necessary supporting tools to grow in Algeria — from consultancy to trade services, real estate management to corporate events and trade fairs — we have contributed in the creation of a productive and prosperous business environment in the country. However today, during the challenging times of the current global health crisis, most businesses have experienced considerable decreases in revenue due to the application of strict and preventive measures such as population lockdowns, travel restrictions, and other policies aimed at protecting the population and controlling the spread of COVID-19.

These measures had a direct impact on some of our World Trade Center's key activities. As trade fairs, conferences, and seminars require people to gather in-person, World Trade Center Algiers decided to transform some parts of its current business model to remain operational, visible, active and profitable. And today, more than ever, we understand that technology is the best, if not the only, way to keep us moving forward. Further, we have been working on new concepts for seminars, conferences and other events which involves the use of digital platforms such as Zoom™, Microsoft Teams™, and other similar platforms that are fantastic and very

effective ways to keep relationships active with our members, clients, and partners all around the world. We are currently in the testing phase for our e-learning platform and will be able to provide updates as soon as we finalize the launch in July.

For the past three months, WTC Algiers — along with many other World Trade Centers around the world — has been very active in exchanging information, sharing leads, and new ideas to maintain and develop our WTCA network via the [WTCA Resource Center](#) and [WTCA COVID-19 page](#). Through these efforts, we have been able to work with multiple World Trade Centers — from New Delhi, Lisbon, and Rennes Bretagne, to Venlo, Cyprus, Moscow, and Barranquilla — on some exciting projects. Stay tuned for updates! WTC Algiers will also be participating in a panel discussion, alongside several WTCA Members around the world, on June 12 for a virtual WTCA Day event hosted by WTC Brest and WTC Rennes Bretagne. For more information, click [here](#).

The world as we knew it has changed. The population's work behaviors, consumer trends and commercial relations — which are key elements in the business world — have integrated new codes and patterns that obliges us to adapt to new ways of interacting with each other. And the use of technology will be at the heart of this transformation.

WTC Sharjah

SAIF MOHAMED AL MIDFA

Chief Executive Officer,
Expo Centre Sharjah

Similar to other WTCs, Expo Centre Sharjah (WTC Sharjah) has faced challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic to make the decision to postpone, cancel, or move its in-person exhibitions to a digital environment. Considering parameters, we took varying approaches to four events so far this year.

First, we take the case of our [5th Al Dhaid Dates Festival](#). The United Arab Emirates is one of the largest producers of dates around the world, and this delectable, prized fruit has sustained generations of people, becoming an integral part of our country's culture, heritage, and identity. Expo Centre Sharjah usually holds the event during the month of July, but with the lockdown yet to loosen, a virtual fair would seem to be the only solution.

However, we are choosing to go ahead with the fair as scheduled, taking extreme safety precautions — conducting thermal screening on exhibitors and visitors, staggering entry, enforcing social distancing, incorporating sanitization facilities, and providing face masks, etc. We have made this decision as the sense of touch, smell, and taste, in addition to face-to-face interaction with the exhibiting farmers, play vital roles in the experience, and cannot be replicated in a virtual environment. For events such as this that need to be held in-person, the exhibitions industry is adapting with lessons learned from the pandemic. Currently, a global framework created by UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, is available with guidelines for the safe and controlled re-openings of exhibitions.

In contrast, we decided to postpone the biannual [Watch & Jewelry Middle East Show](#) from March to September, and chose to cancel the Ramadan Nights event, which was scheduled for May. Lastly, we are in advanced stages of



The 16th International Education Show was held January 22-24, 2020 at the exhibition halls at Expo Centre Sharjah, the United Arab Emirates. The next iteration will be held virtually in October. Photo credit: Expo Centre Sharjah

planning to move our [International Education Show](#) to a virtual platform and conduct digital showcases, which will be held in October.

Separately, Expo Centre Sharjah has played an active role in sending a virtual message of assurance to investors and the business community through a social media campaign called [#We'llGetThroughThis](#) (for more information, click [here](#)). Along with the Financial, Economic and Industrial Affairs Committee of the Sharjah Consultative Council, we are spreading awareness about the government's economic stimulus package.

While the pandemic has shut down industries around the world, Expo Centre Sharjah is working with all stakeholders to navigate the new normal. We have discovered that through today's technology, we can conduct meetings and webinars from our living rooms via Microsoft Teams™, and develop new exhibition concepts to create something even better. Starting with the International Education Show, virtual shows as well as other digital and social media-based programming will be part of our tools moving forward post-pandemic.

NORTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

WTC Denver

KAREN A. GERWITZ

President & CEO, World Trade Center Denver

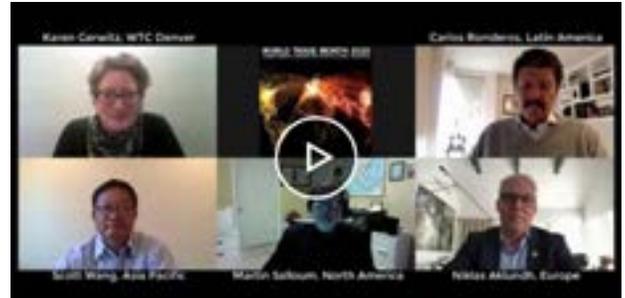
WTC Denver has been an active WTCA Member since 1987, and concentrates on delivering quality trade education, global business consulting services, and trade research for all industries in the Rocky Mountain region. Since 1973, Denver has hosted one of the most popular World Trade Day Conferences in the United States, which typically attracts 700 attendees at its in-person gatherings every May.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, WTC Denver had to innovate and leveraged the latest technology to convert this annual in-person conference into a five-part virtual series, with only three weeks to plan the transition from in-person to online. This became the first-ever virtual ["World Trade Month 2020."](#)

We used Zoom™ Webinars, which allowed for weekly speakers and sponsors to be seen and heard, and participants were able to network via the chat function and ask questions via the Q&A feature. Sessions were recorded and shared with all participants afterwards, and the series, along with the attendee list, will be housed on WTC Denver's Learning Management System for future access and networking.

Kicking off this year's conference was a keynote speech from renowned author, Dr. Parag Khanna of Singapore, titled *"Connectography: Mapping the Future of Globalization in a Post Pandemic World."* Dr. Khanna set the stage and shared global trends of the importance of supply chain connectivity, and how cities play a key role in driving change despite global challenges like climate change and, now, a global pandemic.

Other topics covered throughout the weekly series included: a panel discussion with WTCA's Regional Teams on different approaches to recover from



World Trade Centers Association Executive Panel speaking on international trade during COVID-19.

Photo Credit: World Trade Center Denver

the pandemic, and panel discussions on the importance of global supply chains and sustainable supply chains; the intersection of immigration and innovation; the impact on the aviation industry and Denver's International Airport; the global entry of Colorado's newest industry (the CBD industry); and the future of blockchain, fintech, and API, and its impact on trade. We were pleased that this year's online conference series included nearly 500 attendees from 10 countries and 14 WTCs, many of whom even participated in our final Zoom™ Happy Hour closing the conference.

Converting these conferences into an online series created the ability to provide content to WTCs throughout the North American Region and beyond. Never has there been a better opportunity for us all to come together and share content, best practices, excess capacity, and support throughout our network! Be sure to take the opportunity to tune in to a number of webinars and virtual programs hosted by other WTCs around the world.

How can we continue this virtual connectivity for years to come in our Association? I hope this crisis — that has brought us to our knees economically — sparks unfettered innovation from all WTCs, and fosters our connectivity and ability to better serve the companies that rely on us for support to get back on track.

WTC Kansas City

KAITLIN BAST

Manager, World Trade Center Kansas City

Like many of our counterparts, WTC Kansas City's initial days of working remotely and understanding the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic involved postponing and delaying programs and events until we could formulate a plan to continue our mission: Education, Connect, and Trade. Shortly after transitioning to remote work, we made the difficult decision to postpone our largest and most profitable event, [Go Global KC](#), from June 2 to August 11.

We had already secured the Kansas City Mayor as the keynote speaker, which now proves to be ideal since local governments have been in the spotlight throughout the crisis. We cannot think of anyone better to talk about Kansas City going global and reinforcing the positivity of trade to recover our economy. When we reconvened to discuss the event several weeks into the crisis, the mentality had shifted, and we were decisive — the event will be virtual. We were no longer looking to delay until we could have our *normal* event — we were innovating and thinking creatively.

While on a brainstorming call, we decided to bring the WTCA network into the event in a way we could not do when the event was in-person. Our team has been experimenting with breakout rooms with great success. And collectively, we all agreed that our local businesses could gain networking opportunities from a virtual event that would not otherwise be possible to coordinate with different parties around the world.

One of the challenges we have encountered in past years is creating an event that was valuable for our large sponsors and small export clients alike. By taking the event virtually, we can add value for all parties. From hosting a VIP room ahead of time with our keynotes and sponsors, to holding breakout rooms so small and medium businesses trying to enter the



Last year's keynote speaker Colonel Miguel Howe at WTC Kansas City's "Go Global KC 2019" event.

Photo Credit: Kyle Rivas Photography

Canadian, European or Asian markets can network with the respective WTCs and, simultaneously, with their peers and service providers, every attendee is bound to gain something by attending this virtual event.

The technology we're considering allows a company to spend some of their time in one breakout room and then leave to enter another. Attendees can virtually travel from Singapore to Toronto to meet with those representatives in less than two seconds. Further, this technology saves costs. Our entrepreneurial clients who do not yet have the capital to enter trade shows can now connect with experts in their target markets from their living room.

The idea of going virtual, while not finalized, has WTC Kansas City more energized than ever to refresh this event and enhance the experience.

NEW DATE!

TAIPEI

MARCH 14-17

2021

The new date for WTCA's 51st
Annual General Assembly is
March 14-17, 2021 in Taipei.

Please stay tuned for more
information – in the meantime,
[click here.](#)

For any questions, please
reach out to events@wtca.org.



WORLD TRADE CENTER®
TAIPEI



Ms. Zelinskaya and colleagues focus on crisis management for a socially significant client.



Ms. Zelinskaya, founder and CEO of Zelinskaya Risk Management in Business.

Photo Credits: Zelinskaya Risk Management in Business



Name of the SME Member: Zelinskaya Risk Management in Business

Brief description about the SME: Zelinskaya Risk Management in Business specializes in supporting multi-level transactions with various types of capital and property assets as well as developing and implementing strategies to minimize risk. The firm provides assistance to national business, international organizations, and financial institutions throughout the Russian Federation.

When the SME was founded: 2018

How many employees work for the SME: 5 employees

The SME's most recent accomplishment: The firm's new concept of legal protection for a domestic regional production enterprise, which included work with a foreign partner and government authorities, allowed the enterprise to reach a new level of work with systemically important banking structures.

Any tips for other SMEs: In law, the professionalism of your colleagues and employees is your main competitive advantage. The team is the key! And, thanks to your team of professionals, your firm will no doubt maintain its position and grow despite difficult times, such as the present.

Link to the SME's website: <http://z-mbr.ru/wp/>

AROUND THE NETWORK

WTCA COVID-19 RESOURCES AND UPDATES

As the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting communities worldwide, the WTCA is providing the public with a resource page to learn more about how World Trade Centers are providing assistance to their local communities. Learn more [here](#).

ASIA PACIFIC

MANAGING THE CHALLENGES IN RETAIL SECTOR

World Trade Center Bengaluru

World Trade Center Bengaluru and the Indian Institute of Materials Management, Bangalore Branch...

[Full Story](#)

RETHINKING URBAN PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE

World Trade Center Bengaluru

World Trade Center Bengaluru, together with the Smart Cities India Foundation, are organizing a...

[Full Story](#)

LAW UNDER LOCKDOWN IMPACTS EMPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

World Trade Center Bhubaneswar

The global pandemic of COVID-19 posed one of the biggest challenges ever witnessed by the Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises...

[Full Story](#)

REVERSE MIGRATION: RESTRUCTURING RURAL RESOURCES

World Trade Center Bhubaneswar

Coronavirus pandemic has triggered a massive reverse migration from the “destination” to “source” in large parts of the country. We witness...

[Full Story](#)

DOING BUSINESS WITH THE U.S. DURING COVID-19

World Trade Center Chennai

World Trade Center Chennai, together with the Indo American Chamber of Commerce and KNAV & Co., organized a webinar on “Doing Business with the U.S...”

[Full Story](#)

FUTURE OF WORK AND IMPACT ON THE HR PROFESSION

World Trade Center Chennai

World Trade Center Chennai, in association with Greytip HR, organized an interactive session with Mr. M.P. Sriram, Founding Partner, Aventus Partners...

[Full Story](#)

WTC GIFT CITY RESUMES THE CONSTRUCTION WORK

World Trade Center GIFT City

Following the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, WTC GIFT City has resumed its construction work...

[Full Story](#)

ETHICAL CHANGES IN BUSINESS OF SPICES EXPORT

World Trade Center Jaipur

World Trade Center Jaipur organized a webinar on “Understanding the Ethical Changes in Business of Spices Export from India” on May 25. The world today is looking...

[Full Story](#)

BUSINESS AFTER LOCKDOWN

World Trade Center Kochi

World Trade Center Kochi and the Indo American Chamber of Commerce jointly organized a webinar on “Business After Lockdown.” Mr. Vijayaraghavan...

[Full Story](#)

WEBINAR ON “WORLD AS A COVID VILLAGE”

World Trade Center Kochi

A virtual live session “World as a COVID Village” was organized by World Trade Center Kochi. Mr. Jacob...

[Full Story](#)

WTCMM PREPARES FOR “NEW NORMAL” IN EXHIBITIONS

World Trade Center Metro Manila

World Trade Center Metro Manila (WTCMM), a key player in the Philippine MICE industry, is preparing for the transition to the “new normal”...

[Full Story](#)

MAHARASHTRA INTRODUCES MAHAPRAMAN PATRA SCHEME

World Trade Center Mumbai

A virtual trade dialogue on “Creating Opportunities for Trade & Industry in Maharashtra Post-COVID-19” was organized by MVIRDC World Trade Center...

[Full Story](#)

WTPF INVITES INDIAN MSMEs TO USE E-TRADE DESK

World Trade Center Mumbai

A webinar on “Global Trade 2.0 Post COVID-19: MSMEs and E-trade in Trusted Ecosystems” was organized by MVIDC World Trade Center (WTC) Mumbai...

[Full Story](#)

IMTDUO LAUNCHES VALUE-ADD ONLINE SERVICES

World Trade Center Taipei

The Taipei Intelligent Machinery & Manufacturing Technology Show (iMTduo) will be concurrently held with two other machinery exhibitions in...

[Full Story](#)

EUROPE

GHAZI ABU NAHL INTERVIEW GOLD BUSINESS MAGAZINE

World Trade Center Cyprus

Ghazi Abu Nahl from WTC Cyprus was interviewed by *Gold Business Magazine*. How is your company currently coping with the...

[Full Story](#)

COMMUNICATING ACROSS CULTURES

World Trade Center Dublin

On May 20, World Trade Day, World Trade Center Dublin and WebPort Global, in conjunction with the PR Training Academy hosted a special webinar...

[Full Story](#)

WTC MOSCOW: IN HONOR OF THE GREAT VICTORY DAY

World Trade Center Moscow

In honor of the Great Victory Day: On the Victory Day's eve, World Trade Center Moscow congratulated World War II veterans — former WTC employees...

[Full Story](#)

THE VICTORY LIGHTS: GRATITUDE TO OUR VETERANS

World Trade Center Moscow

The Victory Lights: World Trade Center Moscow expressed gratitude to veterans. On May 9, a light composition in the form of the...

[Full Story](#)

WTC MARSEILLE BACK TO WORK IN A BUSINESS CENTER

World Trade Center Marseille Provence

As we gradually leave our home to de-confine, we must all think of resuming our professional activity. Indeed, this period was often...

[Full Story](#)

COVID-19 & ITS IMPACT ON MARITIME TRADE IN BRITTANY

World Trade Center Rennes Bretagne

Although the COVID-19 crisis has caused slowdowns in almost all sectors in Brittany (region located in Western France) for the months...

[Full Story](#)

DEMCON'S VENTILATION MODULES VITAL IN COVID FIGHT

World Trade Center Twente

The increasing number of patients suffering from the Coronavirus also increases the request for medical equipment. Especially...

[Full Story](#)

NORTH AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

WORLD TRADE DAY 2020 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

June 25 – July 26, 2020 | *Upcoming Event*

World Trade Center Atlanta

World Trade Center Atlanta is excited to present its World Trade Day 2020 Conference in...

[Register](#)

LVCC SEEKS GBAC STAR™ ACCREDITATION

World Trade Center Las Vegas

Las Vegas continues to prove itself as a leader in safety and sanitation practices as the country prepares for the return of travel. The Las Vegas...

[Full Story](#)

KIBOW BIOTECH OPEN DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

World Trade Center Philadelphia

The phone rang and I was started to hear her voice. “Thank you for calling Kibow Biotech, how may...

[Full Story](#)

SUNLAND LOGISTICS EXPANDS TO EFFINGHAM COUNTY, GA

World Trade Center Savannah

Sunland Logistics Solutions Inc. (Sunland) has expanded its network to the Savannah market after being selected to manage a...

[Full Story](#)

SAVANNAH MANUFACTURING CENTER NEARS COMPLETION

World Trade Center Savannah

A little more than two years after its groundbreaking work on the Savannah Economic Development...

[Full Story](#)

UTAH RAPID RESPONSE TEAM ASSISTS SMALL BUSINESSES

World Trade Center Utah

The Utah Economic Response Task Force announced that the Rapid Response Team (RRT) had provided...

[Full Story](#)

WTC VERACRUZ: REACTIVATING MEETINGS INDUSTRY

World Trade Center Veracruz

On May 11, World Trade Center Veracruz developed the webinar named “Veracruz, Prepared...

[Full Story](#)



MEMO: WTCA Global Town Hall Recap (May 19)

Maintaining our initiative to host monthly town halls during the COVID-19 pandemic, the WTCA hosted a global town hall meeting on May 19 via video conference. In total, 52 Member representatives from 17 countries participated — including Brazil, Canada, India, Syria, and Spain — to listen to a presentation from guest speaker [Professor Dale Fisher](#) – Chair of the World Health Organization’s Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN) – and have a discussion on possible re-opening strategies.

During his presentation titled “The Unappreciated Asymmetry of the COVID-19 Outbreak,” Professor Fisher shared his perspectives on how the situation will continue to unfold, the lessons from China and other countries, and the ways in which companies may need to rethink their way of doing business post-pandemic. He also shared publicly-available data from the World Health Organization and Johns Hopkins University to explain the evolution of the pandemic in various regions around the world, and how data input delays explain abrupt bumps in the amount of positive cases and confirmed deaths.

Following Professor Fisher’s presentation and Q&A, Members discussed re-opening and business continuity strategies. Some updates included:

WTC Atlanta is hosting its [World Trade Day 2020 Virtual Conference](#) titled “Cybersecurity and the Global Impact on Trade and Investments” on June 26. Click [here](#) to register.

WTC Brest, along with WTC Rennes Bretagne, will be hosting a [virtual event on June 12](#) in honor of WTCA Day.

WTC Toronto shared a recovery support framework titled “[Reimagining Recovery: A Path Forward for Our](#)

[Economy and the Businesses that Power It](#)” which was developed in conjunction with the Toronto Board of Trade. The framework convenes their business community’s researchers, innovators and incumbents to foster a consolidated point of view for governments to consider as they navigate this new normal, and provide their members with advocacy, information and programs to reimagine their future economy.

WTC Twente shared that they recently re-opened their Business Club. To achieve a safe re-opening, WTC Twente adapted a space that allows people to stay 1.5 meters from each other, with markings to indicate where people may sit to maintain social distancing. There has also been increased interest in membership from people in the area looking to reduce their commute, and access small and individual offices as an alternative to open offices and co-working spaces.

Lastly, WTCs throughout the Latin American region added that they are currently hosting weekly Zoom™ meetings in Spanish every Tuesday at 14:00 p.m. EDT to discuss re-opening strategies and regional partnerships. For information on how to join, please contact mtorres@wtca.org.

As a reminder, Member-submitted materials including re-opening guidelines and best practices can be found in the Resource Center [here](#). The WTCA will continue to host these global town halls monthly – please be on the lookout for details on when these will be scheduled. Call notes from the March, April, and May global town halls are available [here](#). If you have any questions or comments, please reach out to media@wtca.org.

HEADQUARTERS STAFF ANNOUNCEMENT!



Robin van Puyenbroeck
*Executive Director-
Business Development*

WTCA Names Robin van Puyenbroeck as Executive Director-Business Development

The WTCA is delighted to announce that it has named Robin van Puyenbroeck as its new Executive Director-Business Development. He will assume his new responsibilities on June 15, and will join Arun Manansingh, WTCA’s Executive Director-Corporate Services, and Joanne Thelmo, WTCA’s Corporate Counsel, in leading the Headquarters and regional staff operations.

Robin has more than 20 years’ experience in international business development, corporate strategy, and non-profit leadership. He most recently served as Vice President-Business Development for Ethan Allen Global where he effectively managed and grew a network of international licensees, and developed strategies for building B2B contact business. He holds J.D. and L.L.M degrees in international law from Ghent University and Université Libre de Bruxelles in Belgium.

We look forward to Robin’s tenure with the WTCA.



**WORLD TRADE CENTERS
ASSOCIATION**

June

MEMBER

ANNIVERSARIES

The WTCA extends their warmest congratulations to those World Trade Centers celebrating yet another milestone. June marks the month when you joined our Association. The WTCA is stronger because you are a part of our community, and we wish you all a Happy Anniversary!

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| World Trade Center Marseille Provence | 41 years |
| World Trade Center Norfolk | 41 years |
| World Trade Center Long Beach | 38 years |
| World Trade Center Suwon | 18 years |
| World Trade Center Daejeon | 17 years |
| World Trade Center Buenos Aires | 9 years |
| World Trade Center Cartagena | 9 years |
| World Trade Center Anyang | 7 years |
| World Trade Center Changsha Wanjiali | 7 years |
| World Trade Center Erbil | 7 years |
| World Trade Center Amritsar | 5 years |
| World Trade Center Patna | 5 years |
| World Trade Center Birmingham | 3 years |
| World Trade Center Cordoba | 3 years |
| World Trade Center New Delhi | 3 years |
| World Trade Center Ningbo | 3 years |
| World Trade Center Pimpri Chinchwad | 3 years |
| World Trade Center Saskatoon | 3 years |
| World Trade Center Varanasi | 3 years |



**WORLD TRADE CENTERS
ASSOCIATION**

Questions? Do you have any story ideas?

Write to us at media@wtca.org.

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