



**IAEE Board of Directors  
Policy Statement: Free Trade Among Nations**

The future and destiny of the exhibition industry is intrinsically linked to robust and free trade among the nations of the world. This is not a theoretical or philosophical statement but an immutable law of macro economics that has been demonstrated throughout the history of nations. The most recent example of this law in play is the substantial growth of the exhibition industry during the past three decades which coincides with the greatest expansion of economic trade in the history of the world.

Market-based economies that are largely unregulated and not subject to arbitrary government interference or control have been largely responsible for the promotion of prosperity and the reduction of poverty in nations that are both industrialized and emerging. Free trade among nations is beneficial to all types of economies.

Furthermore, it is in our vital national and global security interests for strong economic growth through trade to continue. Trade among nations creates new jobs and higher incomes thus allowing millions of people to emerge from lives of poverty and desperation. Free trade spurs both economic growth and real hope for measurable advancement by people in all nations.

Despite the obvious and beneficial results that are derived by free trade among nations there is growing and disturbing evidence that some members of the United States Congress, the public media, and individual citizens are seeking to erect artificial and protectionist barriers to free trade. These troubling developments are taking place at the same time that protectionist tariffs and regulations are being abandoned in other nations, including those that formerly touted state-control of market forces. This divergence, if left unchecked, has the potential to lead to the same kind of catastrophic isolationism and protectionism that ultimately resulted in worldwide conflict and economic failure in the twentieth century.

The Board of Directors of the International Association of Exhibitions and Events believes that the interests of all the nations of the world and the exhibition industry are served best by the preservation and expansion of free trade. We therefore call upon all public policy makers to embrace the fundamental tenets of free trade. Specifically we implore:

- The United States Congress to extend the Trade Promotion Authority of the President to negotiate trade treaties that are subject to Congressional approval; and,
- To support bi-lateral free trade agreements now pending before it including those of Colombia, Panama, and South Korea.

To ensure that facts and not rhetoric are the basis for further discussion and consideration of these important matters we expect:

- The media, especially the broadcast media, to exercise a higher degree of responsibility than it has heretofore demonstrated when reporting matters related to trade among nations. There are no reasonable linkages between the benefits of free trade and the serious issues attached to illegal immigration into the United States for example and to suggest otherwise is unfair and irresponsible.
- To this end, IAEE will actively seek to correct misstatements that are intended to link the free trade of among nations with any issues that while serious may be wholly unrelated.

To promote enhanced understanding of these vital issues, IAEE will redouble its efforts to provide its members with thoughtful and instructive information and facts with which they can make their own informed decisions.

The overwhelming benefits of free trade among nations as it relates to the future of the exhibition industry requires the vigilant and active involvement of IAEE and all of its members in the discussions and debates that lie ahead.

Adopted by action of the IAEE Board of Directors on 14 January 2008.