

My name is Ashvin Das, current IFPAS council member and head of the bi-weekly editorial Tuesday Times. I am honoured to have interviewed one of the respectable members of the association, who is not only active in social and government related activities but as well as regional undertakings. Mr Edmund Wee, a financial practitioner from NTUC Income, is a Past President of IFPAS and Past Chairman of the Asia Pacific Financial Services Association of Singapore or APFinSA. With all the hats his wearing, from serving the clients to giving back to the community, Edmund's recent stint is co-chairing the 18th Asia Pacific Life Insurance Congress (APLIC), jointly organised by IFPAS & APFinSA, and to be held in Singapore in March 2021. Here's an in-depth get-to-know about Mr Edmund Wee and his commitments:

Edmund Wee (EW): I am in my early 50s and in the business for 32 years with NTUC Income - the first and only insurance company that I have worked with. I have served the association since early 1999 when it was still named as Life Underwriters Association (LUA) Singapore and became the President in 2003 (and in 2007), the same year when the name was changed to its current - IFPAS. Apart from IFPAS, I am also heavily involved in a regional association named APFinSA, which I served as Honorary Treasurer, Chairman and currently a Board Member. As much as I spend time with the financial industry pursuits, I also served with passion in a non-industry related platform like the Singapore League Club, which I was the former Vice President of Tanjong Pagar Football Club.



AD: Are there any other social engagements that you are involved with?

EW: Currently, I am chairman of Community Sports Club (CSC) of Toa Payoh West Balestier. My role involves helping out Active SG through CSC involving football academy with the boys and brings boys from our surroundings to the field every weekend, from 8.00 am to 9.30 pm.

AD: We heard that APFinSA is organising its very first Awards Night. What is this about and when will it happen?

EW: Yes, the inaugural APFinSA Awards is in April 2020 and will be held in Bangkok, Thailand. This award has been debated in the previous meetings and was finally given a go during the last Annual General Meeting of APFinSA. There are several categories where the agent can apply. The respective LUA or local association of each member country has to endorse each application prior to submission and be eligible for the award. We expect 500 to 800 awardees to attend this awards night.

AD: What's the gauge in determining these awards, is it based on production?

EW: APFinSA has set certain qualifications and yes, production is definitely one of the criteria.

AD: Does that mean that whoever who wins this award for whichever category, that person is the top agent in that particular category for the whole of Asia Pacific?

EW: The winner will be considered as top agent of that particular category in their respective country, so being the first to get this award is definitely an achievement.



AD: I have attended the 17th APLIC in Hong Kong in May 2019 and even wrote an article about it. The next APLIC in 2021 is going to be held in Singapore at Resorts World Sentosa and to which you will co-chair. Can you share with our readers the original purpose of APLIC?

EW: APLIC started in 1991 in Singapore. It consisted a few insurance associations in various countries across the Asia Pacific region, coming together to curate a platform for sharing industry knowledge and expertise. It was then headed by founder Robert Young. Then-member countries include Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Australia. In 2021, APLIC will be celebrating its 30th anniversary and from its inception, we grew by the numbers and have a total of 9 countries participating in APLIC, which include Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, India and Philippines.

AD: What does the committee achieve during APLIC?

EW: Besides networking and attending the main platforms and workshops during the conference, the committee also holds its annual meeting to discuss the respective member countries' industry performance and regulation changes/impacts and use this exchange of information to learn from each other and adopt, if applicable.

AD: What's the expected turnout for the next APLIC?

EW: The participants are mainly from the Asia Pacific and during the APLIC in Hong Kong, we had a great turnout of nearly 8000 attendees. For the next APLIC in Singapore, we have already 4000 participants who have signed up for this event and we still have more than a year left to market and get more sign ups.

AD: As one of the co-organisers of APLIC, could you tell us what is APFinSA, and what does APFinSA do?

EW: APFinSA is formed by the member countries, which are the countries that I have mentioned in your earlier question. These countries represent the practitioners in their respective countries and APFinSA serves as the main body. Every year or two, the member associations meet up and exchange ideas for the betterment of the industry. Singapore is always seen as a role model to the other countries. We learn something from the member countries and they learn something from us, making this opportunity as a very good platform.

AD: Who are the potential speakers for the next APLIC? As it is held in Singapore, will there be any local speakers to be invited?

EW: Of course, the event being in Singapore, there will be a Singaporean speaker. We are also getting the member countries to nominate and recommend speakers. But for now, we will leave this item for the speakers' committee to disclose very soon.



AD: What kind of attributes do you look for when choosing potential speakers? Does this person have to be an MDRT, a COT, a TOT qualifier?

EW: We look for traits and strengths in leadership, motivation and management. This will comprise the different segments during the 2-and-a-half-day event in 2021.

AD: So, each nominated speaker will have to undergo deliberation by the speakers' committee?

EW: Yes, that's correct.

AD: The 17th APLIC in Hong Kong was very well received and had some very good speakers, such as Chris Gardener and Carl Lewis. How will the next APLIC stand out from the previous APLICs?

EW: As shared earlier, APLIC will be celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2021. Aside from getting a good range of speakers, I believe we are into a pretty good start. Even before the APLIC 2021 was officially launched, we had already secured our official airline (Singapore Airlines), venue (Resorts World Sentosa) and supporting organisations like the Singapore Tourism Board. This is the first time in history since 2009 that we are able to confirm nearly 4000 signups from the launch alone and 85% of the registrations are from other countries, with both Philippines and Thailand leading the chart. With the much time we have left, I can safely say that 6000 signups is a breeze.

AD: All this time we have been speaking about foreign delegates, What's in it for our local delegates for APLIC 2021? Especially for the millennials, whose generation is more into everything online?

EW: As foreign delegates comprise about 80%, this is a great time for our local practitioners to network, exchange ideas and learn from the esteemed speakers across Asia and even other part of the globe. Even Vietnam, which is not a member country, sent in 200 delegates just to be in this conference as they are hungry for success. So, for Singaporeans, this is surely an event not to be missed and guaranteed once in a lifetime experience right at their door step!

Well I am sure that both APFinSA Awards and APLIC 2021 will be a resounding success!

