

## Highlights of IUNS Activities for the 2005-09

As newly elected IUNS President after meeting with officers and council member we expressed our commitment to enhance the communications with the membership comprised by the Adhering Bodies (AB) and to increase our dialogue with the broad international nutrition community. We have done this by participating in each of regional meetings organized by the respective regional societies during this quadrennium (SLAN Florianopolis, Brazil -2006; FANUS Ouarzazate, Morocco -2007, FENS Paris, France -2007, FANS Taipei, Taiwan 2007, ASN New Orleans, USA 2009). At these meetings one or more IUNS officers, council members and or myself were present and met with the leadership of the respective regional societies. IUNS also co-sponsored leadership training workshops at SLAN, FANUS, and FANS in collaboration with the regional societies and/or the INF (International Nutrition Foundation). We met with the broader international nutrition community in Barcelona in October 2006 at the time of the First World Congress of Public Health Nutrition in Barcelona; which has requested to be an affiliated body of the Union. The time of the UN Standing committee on Nutrition (SCN) annual meetings Geneva (2006), Rome 2007, Hanoi 2008 served to meet with representatives of UN agencies, bilateral agencies and NGOs, we are honored by the SCN choice of Bangkok for the SCN 2009 annual meeting. Several IUNS officers or task force members were part of the evidence based review of maternal and childhood malnutrition published by the Lancet in 2008; I was directly involved in paper 5 that reviewed why we had made insufficient progress in addressing malnutrition and examined the functionality of the International Nutrition System, this series of papers we suggest be required reading for all nutrition scientists. The challenge we are presently confronting is how to become more results oriented, how to get more effective action, to concentrate more on the "how to get things" done rather than on the "why" and "what" we need to do. We will review on October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009 in Bangkok in partnership with the UN University Food and Nutrition Program (FNP) at Tufts and the International Nutrition Foundation (INF), the progress in capacity building for effective nutrition action since the Manila 1996 UNU-IUNS meeting, this is a key aspect of the permanent IUNS agenda; there will also be a special session of the ICN program on this topic.

The first formal council meeting occurred in Geneva early March 2006 at the time of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Standing Committee on Nutrition session. There was ample electronic interaction between council members prior to the meeting, and critical issues were discussed *in persona*. At the Geneva 2006 meeting council approved the global strategic plan and the respective regional action plans based on proposals from council members from the respective regions. The priorities set for the quadrennium were were:

1. Increase communication with adhering bodies, promote regional collaboration and network development. *We pledged to invest in updating and enhancing the content*

*of the website. We look forward to your constructive criticism and suggestions in this area, my view is that we have not done enough in this area. The move towards a professional administration of the IUNS is a step in the right direction. We will discuss this issue at the IUNS general assembly in Bangkok, Oct 6<sup>th</sup> before the new council and officers are elected, in order that this mode of work starts under the mandate of Professor I. Elmadfa.*

2. Review and assess the scientific quality of ongoing taskforces, establish new ones based on needs. *Report of the existing IUNS Task Forces and their plans for the next 4 years are on the website. We have been able to provide each task force with a modest budget to facilitate their work over the quadrennium. I thank the Chair and the members of IUNS task forces for their work and look forward to hearing their presentation of progress in Bangkok. I believe this has been partially accomplished Two new task forces (Prevention and Control of Severe Malnutrition and Redefining Quality of Diets for Life Long Health) were approved and initiated activities during 2006; these two task forces will report on their significant advances in Bangkok. I would like to highlight the work of the International Malnutrition Task Force ([www.IMTF.org](http://www.IMTF.org)) launched in Durban; this group has contributed to the standardization of the management of child malnutrition and also managed to integrate the theory and practice of community and hospital base treatment, working closely with WHO/IAEA/UNICEF in making progress.*

3. Strengthen and consolidate leadership training efforts. *The IUNS supported with the limited funding available the strengthening of leadership skills in food and nutrition as an essential component for national development held in June 06, Mysore, India. It also contributed to the Latin American Nutrition Leadership Meetings held in November 06, Florianopolis Brazil and will contribute to the one to be held in Rio Maipo Chile November 09, and to the African Nutrition Epidemiology Meeting held in Ghana August 06 and in October 08 in Cairo and the ANLP for francophone Africa in Ouarzazate in 2007. Additional IUNS nutrition leadership initiatives were conducted in Asia in collaboration with the national nutrition societies at the National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad with the Indian Nutrition Society in 2007; in Taiwan at the National Health Research Institutes/Hsin Chu in 2008; Zhejiang University and Fudan University China in 2008 with the collaboration of the Chinese Nutrition Society the national adhering body. The Korean Nutrition Society held a special Asian Nutrition Leadership session in August 2008 in Seoul with the participation of over 20 Asian countries. A special initiative launched by the European NLP alumni consisting of a Food and Nutrition Communication Channel was sponsored by the IUNS in partnership with others, fund raising efforts are in progress to materialize a business plan for this initiative. The European NLP effort initiated by Prof. Hautvast in the early 1990's sparked multiple others regional and national NLPs over the past decade. Prof. Hee Young Paik has summarized these activities, her report is available at the IUNS website. This review and comments*

*received from several groups served to define the need to dedicate part of the Oct 3 2009 pre ICN capacity building workshop to reviewing the NLPs; based on this analysis the IUNS considered the need to establish a global NLP committee to develop a minimum curricula to serve as a common base for NLP training, allowing for regional/cultural differences in these curricula. The Global NLP committee will define this minimum and provide the necessary support to NLPs to comply with this minimum. The concept behind a global NLP committee is to support the extension of NLPs within a framework that works across regions and cultures, but shares the basic requirements of what NLPs should deliver to all participants independent of place, language, culture and background. The ENLP organizers in conjunction with the IUNS have secured private sector funding for the establishment of this committee that will include representation of all partners including NLP graduates.*

4. Develop fund raising efforts with clear objectives and strategy. Increase visibility of IUNS at all levels. The IUNS *in partnership with the INF (International Nutrition Foundation) and others have worked together to develop a funding base to strengthen institutions in Developing Countries and promote participation from developing countries in major scientific meetings. An MOU (memorandum of understanding) was signed in 2006 to increase the synergies between the IUNS and the INF, this has been extended for 2009-2012. The IUNS has also signed an MOU with the WHO Nutrition Division, the work plan for the 2006-08 period included working together on technical issues, such as a re examination of the role of carbohydrates and of fats in health and disease. The support of dissemination efforts of major WHO reports related to Nutrition (i.e. the new growth standards); a new work plan for 2009-2011 is being finalized. We have expanded the IUNS guidelines on relationship with the private sector and have specified that IUNS officers may collaborate as technical advisors to industry but will not receive personal payment for this. Funds generated from consultancies to industry by IUNS officers will go to a special fund for capacity development to be disbursed after the term of the present council has been completed.*

*Earlier this year the IUNS signed its first collaboration agreement with a private sector industry; the objective are:*

- (a) to disseminate sound scientific information about food and nutrition amongst professionals and the general public in actionable ways, in order to promote and advance nutritional improvement focusing on the quality of diets;*
- (b) to collaborate with the food industry in the translation of nutritional recommendations into food guidelines (taking food composition, dietary patterns, claims, marketability, and technical feasibility into account);*
- (c) to promote optimal nutrition for children around the world based on exclusive breast feeding up to 6 months; coupled with appropriate complementary feeding after that age; and*

*(d) to establish mechanisms to enhance and align leadership and networking seminars aimed at assisting the development of future leaders in the area of human nutrition and health, and facilitating interactions between nutrition leaders around the globe. A core curriculum will be generated that will serve as a base for implementation and evaluation of local/regional and international programs.*

5. Ensure scientific quality and integrity of the program for the next ICN and other IUNS sponsored meetings. *The President of the next ICN Dr. Krausid Tontisirin returned to Thailand after completing his tenure at FAO nutrition division, a website providing detailed information on the scientific and social program has been set. We have worked closely with him and the local organizing committee in order to assure that the Bangkok October 2009 meeting will be a great success and an opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences. During 2005-09 IUNS sponsored meetings in virtually all continents and participated in joint session of the IUFoST and other ICSU related bodies. We have worked with UNU on both the scientific aspects of nutrition work as well as in capacity development efforts.*

*The relationship of science with the private sector has recently resurfaced in open discussions. The IUNS has contributed to the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition statement on this issue and has defined its own policies to better define the limits of conflict of interests introducing greater transparency and full disclosure. In addition, the IUNS on the topic of scientific integrity requested Prof. Barrie Margetts to examine present policies and practices, and suggest ways to assure zero tolerance in terms of prevention of gaps in the integrity of our science. The need to introduce sessions on conflict of interest and on scientific integrity at all major international meetings sponsored by IUNS has been established.*

6. Review and strengthen governance and participation systems. *The last IUNS General Assembly in Durban exemplified the need to better define the timing/staging of the nomination process and selection of the slate of candidates for IUNS officers and council to assure that the norms conform with the by laws and are clear to all before the Assembly meets. The present IUNS council approved norms and procedures to be followed in the future, these were prepared by the Vice Presidents and Secretary General, approved by council and ratified national adhering bodies. These norms will secure due process and prevent confusion within the limited time of the IUNS General Assembly meetings.*

The organizational aspects of the ICN bids and selection process of sites was reviewed by council, in close consultation with the Spanish Nutrition Society (Granada, Spain was the winner of for the 2013 ICN bid), we have revised the present agreement between the IUNS and the national organizing committees, so that starting in 2013 the IUNS will receive 50 % and of the total earnings from the meeting and not 10 % of the registration. Furthermore the ICN 2013 organizers are

contemplating working with a professional congress organizing (PCO) selected through competitive bidding to optimize the administrative process and financial outcome, leaving the organizers more time to concentrate in the program. We are working closely with the 2013 organizers to learn from this process and invite the regional nutrition societies representing Ibero-America to work closely in partnership with the IUNS in establishing a global congress organization that would serve as a clearing house for nutrition meetings with a global scope and enhance the efforts being made.

Need for greater coordination in the nutrition community international activities, the year 2007 brought the FANUS meeting in Ouarzazate Morocco in May, the FENS meeting in Paris-France in July and the FANS meeting in Taipei in September. We should be able to do better than that; at the very least a global coordination of meetings will permit better participation and greater impact of our meetings. It is time for the IUNS and the adhering bodies to think of a well structured global organization; we need to act jointly in order to have a greater impact. This is a challenge we need to address soonest.

Finally I would like to thank my fellow IUNS officers and Council members for their friendship and support over the past 4 years, what I report in these pages is only a fraction of what has been done, this is fruit of the labor of all, working as a team in terms of the thinking and the doing. On a more personal note I would like to thank my wife and family for their patience; and many others that have contributed in making the challenge of leading the IUNS a rewarding experience. The vote of the IUNS General assembly in Vienna named me president elect for 2006-2010, this was a turning point in my career; this call to duty demanded taking a broader look at what I was doing, in part this led me to take a part time position in London, which enabled me to have a greater global presence. It has been an exciting 4 years, I have worked hard... however most of what has been achieved is directly related to the support of the IUNS membership and the strength of the IUNS mission.

The IUNS website [www.iuns.org](http://www.iuns.org) provides further details on IUNS annual activities and the ICN program. The Congress theme is FOOD SECURITY FOR ALL, a crucial issue at a time where global recession twinned with high food prices is affecting all continents but specially the billion or more people that live on less than a dollar a day, many of them from Asia. This, the largest continent, with the greatest number of inhabitants and with many different cultures with long standing traditions will surely prove itself as a memorable site for nutrition scientists and practitioners from around the world to meet. I wish all of you safe travel to Thailand.

Prof. Ricardo Uauy  
IUNS President