

## **IUNS 2007 summary report to the International Nutrition Community**

***Greater interactions with regional and national bodies.*** During the past year, IUNS officers and the new Council were actively engaged in addressing the main challenges posed by the strategic development plan (See the IUNS website under Features at <http://www.iuns.org/features.htm>). A key point in this development plan is the strengthening of links with regional bodies, this includes being present at the corresponding regional meetings. From November 2006 to September 2007 the 3 established Regional Bodies (SLAN/Latin America, FENS/Europe, FANS/Asia) plus the newly established Federation of African Nutrition Societies (FANUS) met. In addition considering the ASN (American Society for Nutrition) as the regional body for North America the IUNS officers and Council members participated in a meaningful way in either plenary sessions or symposia at these 5 meetings. The need to further strengthen the operational links with the ASN was identified, particularly working closely with the newly established International Nutrition Council lead presently by Prof. Andrew Prentice. Regional activities sponsored by IUNS included in the case of Latin America, Africa and Asia Leadership Training (SLAN and FANUS) or Nutrition Research Management (FANS) workshops organized within the regions with the joint support of the IUNS and the INF (International Nutrition Foundation) as part of the program of activities defined under a memorandum of understanding signed last year by the IUNS President and the President of the INF (Prof. Nevin Scrimshaw). As part of the efforts to strengthen regional affiliates the Secretary General Prof. Galal worked closely with the Middle East and North Africa IUNS Adhering Bodies established a Middle East and North African Nutrition Association known as MENANA, founded in July 2004. MENANA sponsored Nutrition Capacity Building Initiatives jointly supported by UNU - FNP and IUNS included two workshops hosted by the National Nutrition Institute in Egypt and attended by Professors Galal (Secretary / IUNS) and Elmadfa representing IUNS as part of the 10-year plan for regional capacity building in nutrition. The first General Assembly was held in Egypt in December 2006 chaired by Professor Mamdouh Gabr / Egypt (former IUNS President). Dr. Azza Gohar, Director of the National Nutrition Institute in Cairo was elected as President of MENANA; a report on priority food and nutrition problems in the Middle East was presented at the SCN meeting in Hanoi Vietnam, early 2008. The IUNS presently is interacting with its regional affiliated bodies in every region; these efforts should lead to a greater contribution of the international nutrition academic community at the regional and global level in order to strengthen the international nutrition system and make it more effective (see Lancet Series on Undernutrition launched January 2008 or the IUNS web site for details).

***Strengthening organizational structure and financial support for global activities.*** The IUNS officers working closely with the Spanish Nutrition Society SNS (winners of the bid for the 2013 ICN) developed detailed specifications for the international selection process conducted to define the professional congress organization (PCO) responsible for the Granada ICN. Six from a total of 9 competing PCOs were closely examined and asked to present their proposals in persona to a joint SNS/IUNS team in London early in 2007; from this process three were pre-selected meeting all requirements and one was finally chosen Dr. Gil in consultation with the IUNS officers.

The SNS through its President A. Marcos signed the agreement with IUNS defining the administrative and financial commitments of both parties including the agreed disposition of the proceeds of the 2013 ICN. Considering the importance of improving the financial standing of the IUNS, the SNS agreed to share in equal proportion with the IUNS the benefits derived from the 2013 in equal parts. Following the example set by South Africa in establishing a non profit foundation for the development of nutrition sciences in Africa with the surplus obtained from the Durban ICN, the arrangement establishes the interest of both parties to set aside in equal parts a portion of the proceeds to support initiatives to strengthen nutrition in the Ibero-American region. We expect that this precedent will serve to provide financial support to strengthen regional organizations, promoting the shared objectives of national adhering bodies, regional affiliates and the IUNS, supporting nutrition capacity development at all levels in a sustainable manner.

Council, after several months of careful review and discussion, approved the proposal to transfer the secretarial/administrative support to the IUNS Secretary General and Treasury to the PCO of the 2013 ICN (Iberia congress and travel). The PCO agreed as part of the bidding process to provide pro bono administrative support for an initial 2 year test period. This transition will be gradually implemented during 2008 under the direct supervision of Prof. Elmadfa, the incoming IUNS President. He, in consultation with council, will define whether to continue with this arrangement in 2010 based on the two year experience considering the actual cost effectiveness of this option. A professional administration and a fund raising effort to support the program development needs of the IUNS are clearly necessary to strengthen the Union and to advance its objectives. Council agreed that greater harmonization of national, regional and global nutrition scientific activities was desirable and the IUNS should lead this effort. At the very least a global coordination of meetings should be undertaken to achieve better participation and greater impact of our meetings. It is time for the IUNS, the regional affiliates and the adhering bodies to contribute to a stronger and better structured global organization; we need to act jointly and in many cases with a single voice in order to have a greater impact. This is a challenge we need to address as soon as possible.

***Council Meeting held in Taipei September 9-12 2007 with a special focus on Asia.***

The second official annual council meeting was held in Taipei in September in conjunction with the meeting of the FANS/Federation of Asian Nutrition Societies. There was ample electronic interaction between council members prior to the Taipei Council meeting, however critical issues were discussed live in Taipei. A successful special dinner session of the IUNS council with the national representatives and the FANS leadership was held in Taipei. We thank Prof. Po Chao Huang for the gracious hospitality and the opportunity to strengthen the links with the Asian representatives in developing a complementary agenda for work in Asia. Many Asian adhering bodies (Taiwan, Malaysia, and others) expressed their wish to develop a graduate training program in nutrition (MSc, PhD). A workshop on this topic was proposed by FANS members and coordinated by South Korea. The detailed information on the agenda, main resolutions of the council and the minutes will be published to the IUNS website <http://www.iuns.org> when revised and approved.

The main outcomes of the meeting were:

1) The Nutrition Leadership Programme (NLP) implemented by IUNS with regional bodies received pledges for additional funding from Pepsico and Nestle for developing a business plan in nutrition leadership starting from the European experience (ENLP). This donation is to be spent specifically in the NLP project. A special initiative launched by the European NLP alumni consisting of a Food and Nutrition Communication Channel is being sponsored by the IUNS in partnership with others; funds are being sought to materialize a business plan for this initiative.

2) The work of the task forces was reviewed (for full report see the IUNS website under Features at <http://www.iuns.org/features.htm>). IUNS was able to secure some funds to most of the task forces after the Task Force chairs discussed the summaries and the council considered it positive.

3) A plan was outlined with an agenda for the Secretary General and the Treasurer to allow a grace period of two years as a transition time needed for VIC to take over the responsibility of the Secretary General's and Treasurer's office of IUNS .

4) IUNS accepted two new Adhering Bodies from Asia (Mongolia and Vietnam) making the total number of Adhering Bodies to 80.

5) The importance of the joint projects of UNU/INF and IUNS was appreciated. Possible additional funds to continue these joint projects were planned.

***Review of Progress in the preparation of the 19<sup>th</sup> ICN Scientific Program.*** The work of the Thai Nutrition Society for the preparation of the 19<sup>th</sup> ICN is proceeding under the direction of Dr. Kraissid Tontisirin the President of the next ICN and Dr. Thep Himathongkam the Chair of Thailand IUNS Adhering Body. The Draft Scientific Program prepared by the organizers was discussed by IUNS council, based on the suggestions provided and input from the multiple stakeholders a final program is underway. The ICN 2009 is being promoted globally and especially in Asia in order to display the achievements of ASIA in securing the right to food (sufficient in quantity and of adequate quality) as well the challenges that still remain. The ICN will include special sessions on India, China and other specific situations that require attention. The IUNS was present through the participation of Professors P. James, N. Scrimshaw and R. Uauy in the celebration of the 30 years of INMU/Thailand in December the meeting hosted by Profs. A. Valyasevi and K. Tontisirin. This provided an opportunity to review the draft for the ICN program, this will be circulated to regional affiliates, IUNS task forces and national adhering bodies. The ICN website (<http://www.icn2009.com>) provides detailed information on the scientific and social program; instructions for sponsorships, free communications and registration are also included. The IUNS council and officers are working closely with the ICN organizers to assure both an excellent scientific program and the widest possible representation from Asia and other regions. We expect that the Bangkok October 4-9, 2009 Congress will be a great success and provide an opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences on the present

meaning of Food and Nutrition Security in a world where inequalities in access to safe and nutritious foods still represents a problem for virtually half of humanity.

***Interactions with the private sector.*** Interactions with the private sector in accordance with IUNS policies have continued and will likely be expanded during 2008. There will also be fund raising efforts for capacity building in form of short term fellowships (congresses, workshops) as a partnership between IUNS and INF. Develop fund raising efforts with clear objectives and strategy. Increase visibility of IUNS at all levels. We in partnership with the INF (International Nutrition Foundation) and others are developing fund raising efforts to support Leadership Training in Nutrition to strengthen institutions in Developing Countries. The proposal to introduce discussion sessions on conflict of interest and on scientific integrity at all IUNS sponsored meetings and other major international conference is being implemented; this will certainly be displayed prominently at the next ICN.

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