

Edith Feskens - Motivation and Vision for IUNS President-Elect / Board Member

We live in turbulent times. Political disputes, polarization, and even war in various parts of the world - causes for food insecurity and hunger. And at the same time we have a global obesity epidemic, increasing rates of non-communicable diseases, and serious concerns regarding planetary health and climate change. These interconnected crises underscore that our work as nutrition scientists is far from complete!

This requires a nutrition science community that is strong, globally connected, and highly influential. We must equip the next generation with cutting-edge methods and topics while expanding our approaches to dissemination.

Involve nutrition scientists from all fields and all corners of the world, and advance our field over the full range from molecular nutrition to food systems transformations & implementation science.

Currently I am professor of Global Nutrition at Wageningen University, the Netherlands, and member of the IUNS board. In addition, I am active in HDHL, the partnership 'Healthy Diets for Healthy Life' originating from Europe but also involving other countries such as Canada, New Zealand and Brazil. In HDHL we aim to bridge agriculture and health science and policies. Indeed, I have a great passion for developing nutrition science and building strong nutrition communities. I also have a broader role at my university, as Dean of Research. This has made me even more aware of the challenges the current generation of early career researchers face.

As president-elect I would strive for efficient and inclusive governance of IUNS, supporting the president, secretary and treasurer when needed. An important issue in our field, also in IUNS, is the one regarding public versus private funding and employments.

I hold a nuanced perspective on this issue. As a public health nutritionist, I advocate for primary prevention, which necessarily includes transforming food environments and supply chains. Private sector actors, including the food industry and retail, must recognize their direct impact on health and embrace responsible practices. At the same time, we must acknowledge that many of our graduates pursue careers in the private sector; it is imperative to equip them with the expertise and ethical grounding to drive positive change from within. What this means for the funding of our IUNS conferences and their accessibility by members of our affiliating bodies and early career researchers, is an issue which we need to address carefully.

In addition to help navigating this thorny issue, I am especially interested in (continuing) to set up training possibilities for our early career researchers, by developing or opening up MOOCs, and continuing with other online resources such as webinars, also in close collaboration with our affiliating bodies.

Looking ahead, I see several critical priorities for IUNS in the coming years:

- **Global sustainable nutrition** as a cornerstone of food security and safety, driving food systems transformation.
- **Policy engagement** to ensure robust support for nutrition research worldwide.
- **Transparency and integrity** in nutrition science, including thoughtful public-private collaborations.
- **Integration of emerging technologies**, such as AI, to accelerate discovery and application.
- **Accurate, accessible science communication** to combat misinformation and promote public trust.
- **Effective implementation** of research findings and policies at scale.
- **Diversity and capacity building**, preparing future generations of nutrition scientists to sustain and evolve the field.