

**XXVII IUSSP International Population Conference
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Busan, Republic of Korea**

CLOSING ADDRESS FROM INCOMING IUSSP PRESIDENT

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Distinguished colleagues, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great honor/privilege for me to bring the XXVII IUSSP International Population Conference to a close. We have had over 1,500 scientific papers presented at over 250 sessions, including posters and plenary sessions, on topics covering 21 themes including family planning and other reproductive health issues, mortality, longevity and health, population aging, migration, union formation and marriage, maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS, as well as themes considering the interrelationship between population, development, climate change and the environment. These issues are vital to countries around the world which are counting on population scholars to provide the evidence base needed for policies and programs and to dialogue with policy makers and representatives of a wide variety of organizations to shape the agenda for action for the next decade.

The value of the research that we have presented, the ideas that we have exchanged, the collaborations we have forged, and the fires we have lit to keep our research and policy ideas burning cannot be underestimated. The presentations have underscored critical population issues in diverse settings of the world: high fertility and population growth and distribution in sub-Saharan Africa; the growing challenges of population aging; the growing scope, complexity and impact of international migration and urbanization; the importance of ensuring the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and youth; and the urgency of advancing human rights, women's empowerment and gender equality. I would like to express my appreciation to the theme conveners, moderators, panelists, discussants, presenters and colleagues for their excellent contributions. From the sessions that I had the chance to attend, it is clear that there is no shortage of ideas among us and there is no lack of passion for addressing the population challenges that we face.

The success of this conference is your success and even more so because these are demanding economic times. I would like to extend a special "thank you" to

those participants who accepted reduced travel support or did their best to find their own travel support in order to help our Union stay on course to achieve its mission. That mission is to promote the scientific study of population, encourage exchange between researchers around the globe, and stimulate interest in population issues. We count on the support and active participation of current and future members as the Union continues to adapt to the challenging economic environment and develops new strategies to expand and enrich its scientific agenda. As the saying goes, we cannot control the winds of change but we can adjust the sail.

We are highly indebted to the Government of Korea, the city of Busan and the National Organizing Committee and its sponsors for hosting this conference. On behalf of the IUSSP, I would like to extend our deepest gratitude to all our Korean colleagues at the National Organizing Committee, BEXCO and MECI and the volunteers who devoted so much of their time and energy to mobilizing in-country support and organizing such an impressive conference. The organization of this conference has been impeccable.

Every event such as this will have a hiccup but what makes a great Conference is whether the hiccup is effectively addressed. My personal thanks go to Dr. Park Un-tae for his leadership and dedication and for extending a personal touch to facilitate the participation of some of our members. Thanks to the special efforts of Dr. Park, the Government of Korea, the National Organizing Committee, and MECI, this Conference has been able to capture the diversity of our membership, enabled us to meet old friends and make new ones and provided us with opportunities to learn more about population issues in Korea and to savor all the cultural delights that the great city of Busan has to offer. This conference has been all that we ever dreamed it would be when the idea of hosting the Conference in Busan was presented four years ago in Marrakech. Let us rise and give our Korean friends and colleagues a resounding round of applause. They have done an outstanding job.

I would also like to thank the many institutions that have provided financial support for the IUSSP and the Conference. We are very grateful to William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); Wellcome Trust; Australian Government AUSAID; and Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques.

The work of the Union continues unabated because of the unwavering dedication of the IUSSP Secretariat and the Council. There are no words to

describe the role that the Executive Director, Mary Ellen Zuppan, has played in managing the affairs of the Union and in soliciting funds to support the many activities that further the mission of the Union, including its training and distance learning activities to improve research capacity and its seminars and workshops to further scientific knowledge. Expectations are high and Mary Ellen has surpassed them all. My heartfelt thanks go to Mary Ellen and her team including Fabienne Feuillade, Peggy Gelernter, Philippe Migrenne, and Paul Monet, and also to the Secretary General, Emily Grundy, for her excellent work. It has been a real pleasure to work with all of you.

I would also like to thank all the members of the outgoing Council for their collegiality and contributions over the past four years: Eileen Crimmins, Alex Ezeh, Véronique Hertrich; Shireen Jejeebhoy; Fatima Juarez; Marwan Khawaja; Tom LeGrand; Cheikh Mbacké; Alberto Palloni; Catherine Rollet. You will be missed.

Finally, I would like to convey to you, Peter, my heartiest congratulations for a successful International Population Conference and my appreciation for your service as vice-President of the International Organizing Committee. Your contributions during your many years of service to the Union have been extraordinary. Peter has served the Union for 16 years. This represents an enormous amount of unpaid time and dedication. Thank you, Peter, for your long and distinguished service to the Union. I have appreciated your good humor, your willingness to listen to everyone's ideas, the ease with which you approached the challenges we faced over the past four years and most of all, your competent leadership of the Council. We are grateful that you will continue to strongly support the Union in the years to come.

The success of every professional association lies in collaborative leadership and responsibility for implementing a coherent strategy over time. We are committed to maintaining a strong global network. We are committed to strengthening our collaborations with regional population associations in order to broaden the scope and depth of our scientific agenda. We are committed to delivering training and distance learning activities to improve research capacity. We are committed to organizing seminar and workshops to further scientific knowledge and the International Population Conference every four years to bring together world specialists in the population field. We are committed to supporting our junior scholars.

The IUSSP is your association and it has been successful due to the dedication of its members. So, to adapt a phrase I borrowed from the late President John F. Kennedy: Ask not what your IUSSP can do for you. Ask what you can do for your IUSSP. As you leave the conference today, asking yourself: “What can I do for my IUSSP?” permit me to make a few suggestions. A professional association cannot survive without its members:

1. **Join the IUSSP:** First, if you are not a member and wish to become a member, join the IUSSP. Take advantage of the opportunity to do so by signing up online now or completing a membership application form. Thank you for joining us. You will be glad you did.
2. **Renew your membership:** Second, for those of you, who are members, please renew your membership. If you do not renew your membership after this conference, how else will you be able to enjoy all the inter-conference opportunities for networking and connections that our new website and panels are able to offer?
3. **Refer a colleague:** Third, refer a colleague. Never has there been a better time to join the IUSSP. We help IUSSP members stay on the cutting edge of population issues, provide professional networking opportunities, an unmatched community of practice, and scientific exchanges you will not find elsewhere. Recommend IUSSP membership to as many of your colleagues as you like. It only takes an email, a phone call or a Facebook post.
4. **Encourage your national population association to sponsor an IUSSP seminar or workshop:** There are 20 current IUSSP panels to choose from and many opportunities to address particular population issues and needs of specific areas of the world.
5. **Close the research to policy gap:** The need for evidence-based policies and programs has never been greater than it is today. To survive as a union, we need to stay relevant to the needs of our stakeholders and think about how our research findings can be communicated to different audiences. We have tremendous, often underutilized, potential to contribute to current and future policy and programmatic discourse. Policies and programs are more likely to benefit society when they are informed by research and we have to help people outside our field understand how our research relates to the community and society at large.

I envisage three key initiatives over the next four years and look forward to discussing them with the New Council.

Communication: The first initiative is communication and will focus on devising effective and efficient ways to communicate our research findings in such a way as to support policy and programmatic decisions. We will work with the new Council to extend related activities that are being conducted in Francophone Africa to other settings. We will also brainstorm around how to use our new website as a social network platform that might enhance our capabilities to communicate with individuals within and outside our Union.

Capacity building: The second initiative is to increase the number of junior scholars with appropriate skills in research methods; data analysis and interpretation; and scientific writing. As access to data from health and demographic surveillance sites has increased in low and middle income countries, it is important for young demographers in these settings to have skills in longitudinal data analysis to avoid having these data analyzed as though they were cross-sectional. We are already making important contributions to filling these gaps but I believe that we need to be more proactive in defining the professional development needs of our junior scholars, determining what and whose capacities need to be strengthened, and building collaborative linkages with donors and IUSSP members to fill identified gaps.

How to increase the value we get from IUSSP membership: The third initiative revolves around how to increase the value we get from IUSSP membership. There are several possible options in this regard.

For knowledge and scholarship, these options could include providing an e-newsletter at more regular intervals to provide links to the latest publications, reports, and surveys.

For networking and connections, we need to think creatively about how we can enable all members to formally join sections around areas of scholarly interest that will be managed by panels. Such sections can offer newsletters, provide population bites consisting of interesting snippets from ground breaking research, and can organize online discussion forums.

In order to support our junior scholars take a more active role in the Union, we could set up a Junior Scholars Forum. The Junior Scholars Forum could be used as a gateway to promote research, improved application of research methods, and online discussion groups led by our younger

members. The Forum can also be used to connect junior members with career resources, grants and research opportunities to advance the discipline and encourage professional development.

Please send me your ideas as to what work needs to be done. Together we can take on the responsibility of maintaining the IUSSP's ability to deliver on the things that matter.

Finally, do **participate in the 2017 IUSSP International Population Conference**.

I cannot tell you yet where exactly the next conference will take place.

Whatever the place, the 2017 International Population Conference will be an event you cannot afford to miss. Safe travels everyone. See you in 2017.