IUPS 38th World Congress in the Rhythms of Life

After recent very successful IUPS Congresses in San Diego (U.S., 2005), Kyoto (Japan, 2009), and Birmingham (UK, 2013), now it is the time for a new journey for the physiologists to stop in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil, 2017). The World Congress of the International Union of Physiological Sciences (IUPS) is back to South America 58 years after the 21st IUPS Congress held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1959. In the 38th edition of the IUPS World Congress, the theme is the “Rhythms of Life,” and it is inspired on the fundamental physiological process from the cells to the integrative systems, which are based on rhythms and cycles. As physiologists, we are handling the processes that determine the life, the theme, and the scientific program of this Congress are oriented to the “Rhythms of Life.” This theme also combines with the culture and natural environment of the city of Rio de Janeiro, the portrait of Brazil, in which the music and sports make a perfect scenario for a real experience about the “Rhythms of Life.”

We are few months from the opening ceremony of the 38th IUPS World Congress on August 1, 2017, and it is timely to look back and see how the members and executives of the Brazilian Society of Physiology (SBFis), an active scientific society but with a limited annual budget, were able to organize such a large global event. In this context, it is important to highlight that most of the SBFis members are students or early career investigators, and this youthfulness gives to the Annual Congress of our Society a dynamic and interactive scientific engagement, which makes each of our congresses a successful event.

Certainly only the enthusiastic involvement of SBFis membership in our national congresses was not enough to take the challenge to organize a World Congress. To reach this goal, the executives of SBFis organized a strategic plan for the last several years to stimulate a group of leaders to be prepared for big challenges such as the organization of large national and international congresses. Since 2011, SBFis was able to organize, in an independent and innovative manner, its annual national congresses, and we should highlight the year of 2014 when the SBFis organized the I PanAmerican Congress of Physiological Sciences, in Iguassu Falls, Brazil. The PanAm 2014, in partnership with several societies of physiology from all over the world, was a scientific success and brought physiologists from 33 countries to Brazil. This successful experience had provided to the SBFis members and executives the expertise required for handling large international events.

In addition to these national and international events organized in Brazil, in the recent past, SBFis also organized several symposia, courses, and workshops with our main partner societies namely, American Physiological Society (APS), The Physiological Society (PhySoc), and Scandinavian Physiological Society (SPS). These activities held in Brazil, the U.S., the UK, and Sweden contributed to strengthen the ties between SBFis and these three largest societies of physiology, and for this reason we are proud that APS, PhySoc, and SPS are our partner societies in the organization of the IUPS 38th World Congress.

As part of the organization of the scientific program of the 38th World Congress of IUPS, the executives of SBFis and the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) for the IUPS 2017 Congress were also innovative in organizing two face-to-face meetings of the International Scientific Programming Committee (ISPC). The first face-to-face meeting of the 26 members of the ISPC occurred in 2015 in the context of the 1st Annual Congress of SBFis in the city of Águas de Lindóia, Brazil. During this Congress, all members of the ISPC participated as invited speakers, which contribute to a productive interaction with the Brazilian community of physiologists. In 2016, the second ISPC face-to-face meeting was held at the campus of the University of São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil, as part of the strategic workshop entitled “Perspectives for the Physiological Sciences in the 21st Century,” which was a satellite for the Annual Congress of SBFis. Most of the ISPC members were speakers at this strategic workshop, and their lectures were published in a special issue of the Physiology Mini Review, edited by the Physiological Society of Argentina (http://pmr.safisiol.org.ar/archive/id/66). During this workshop, the ISPC members had the opportunity to interact with the audience, mostly students and faculties from the University of São Paulo. Another important issue about the ISPC 26 members is that the broad international representation of those 13 nominated by IUPS and also of some of those 13 nominated by SBFis. On the side of SBFis, eight members are Brazilians physiologists and five are physiologists representative of the partner societies of physiology from Argentina, Chile, Scandinavia, UK, and U.S. This large diversity of the members of the ISPC contributed very much to the selection of a world-class scientific program for the IUPS-2017 Congress, which is available at the congress website (http://www.iups2017.com).

All together, these initiatives by SBFis-LOC are part of an innovative experience at the international scenario, which probably will impact the organization of any future world congress of physiology, because, from our perspective, the partnership between the strongest and most traditional societies (APS, PhySoc, and SPS) with those from the developing countries, such as SBFis in Brazil, are able to create appropriate conditions for the organization of such large events as the IUPS World Congress. This partnership is even more important at this time and in the near future since we physiologists are facing budget restrictions at the level of the national agencies to support scientific activities, including the organization of large congresses. The harmonic combination between the enthusiastic involvement of SBFis membership, the motivation of our partner societies, and the expertise and hard work by the members of the ISPC and the LOC allow us to affirm that we are...
ready to host physiologists from all over the world to experience the “Rhythms of Life” in Rio de Janeiro, this August.

Why are we so optimistic about the success of the IUPS 38th World Congress in Rio de Janeiro? We can list many of reasons. 1) The scientific program of the Congress, including the plenaries, keynote lectures, and symposia, is world class, and it was concluded 8 months before the Congress. 2) The ISPC was able to build a scientific program with a fine balance among the areas of physiology, geographical representation, gender, and mainly with high-quality selected speakers. 3) The registration system was open on August 22, 2016, and the number of early bird registrations is above our expectations. 4) The call for abstract submission was announced on December 1, 2016, and a large number of abstracts already have been submitted. 5) The posters sessions will be the main core of the Congress, and they are set in the center of the scientific timetable. 6) The number of visitors from all over the world to the Congress website is increasing day-by-day. 7) The federal and states agencies for scientific activities in Brazil are providing financial support to the organization of the World Congress. 8) The city of Rio de Janeiro and the Riocentro Convention Center, located near the Olympic Park and the Olympic Village, were well prepared and approved in terms of public transportation, accommodation, and facilities during the successful 2016 Olympic Games.

At this time, we wish to invite you to join us in Rio de Janeiro this August 1–5. We are sure that you will enjoy the Congress and the interaction with the top physiologists from all over the world, as well as the opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones in the city of Rio de Janeiro. We will celebrate together that physiology is alive and that its bright future is in our hands. In fact, we will have a unique experience in Rio de Janeiro, and you will be more than welcome to the “Rhythms of Life.”