

President Report
2008 Council Meeting

This Council meeting is my last as President. At the close of the Cape Town Congress, I will hand over to Glynis, who will work with a new Executive and Council to take IASSID forward. I think that IASSID has continued to strengthen as an Association over the past four years. Responsibility for the growth of the Associations' activities lies with many people from many countries. It is also related to strategic decisions made earlier, such as the development of individual membership, creation of the SIRGs and initiation of regional meetings.

We have begun to discuss how the creation of individual membership and the network of SIRGs affects the way we would want to see the Association governed. Linked to this are questions about how SIRGs link to the centre, how much SIRG activity should be co-ordinated and whether IASSID should be more pro-active in developing a comprehensive network of SIRGs to cover all issues we are concerned about, and, if so, how many SIRGs and what overall structure makes sense. The decision to create an individual membership has changed the Association in a positive way and the Association needs to adapt. So too has the creation of SIRGs. IASSID is a more complicated organisation than it used to be and the co-ordination of its activities requires more effort. Achieving dialogue and agreement internationally takes time and our discussion of how to adapt and evolve is continuing. How to shape the Association will be important agenda item for the next Council.

I am not going to review all developments and activity in the last four years. I am going to be selective. I think that the initiative to hold regional conferences is proving successful, with those in Europe and Asia-Pacific becoming firmly established. There was also a good meeting in South America and it remains an ambition to hold a regular quadrennial research meeting in South America which highlights the research of the region. There has been a strong programme of SIRG meetings, which have also gone to different countries and continents. Bringing the World Congress to Africa was the right decision. I think it is a shame that there has been some background murmuring about the situation being too dangerous and the cost of travel too expensive. I feel that we cannot stay in a cocoon of comfort and financial privilege and live up to our Association's international purpose. In contrast, the Africa Research Fund shows our association and its members at their best. It was enthusiastically proposed by members of IASSID, we have gladly put money in, and when we were unsuccessful at gaining corporate or government sponsorship, individuals and research centres in our field willingly took the opportunity to donate to the fund instead.

In handing over to Glynis, I would like to thank her for her support as President-elect and wish her a successful and enjoyable four years as President. I would also like to thank the other seven people who have served on the Executive with me, Vianne, Matt, Stephen, Tony, Patricia, Henny and Neil, for all their help and support. Although I am ceasing to be President, there are more significant changes in leadership. Neil Ross will finish his period of office as Immediate Past President after serving as President, President-elect and Secretary: 16 years in office and longer than that on Council. Stephen Kealy is leaving Council after having served two terms as Secretary and one as Vice President: 12 years in office and longer than that on Council. Matt Janicki has finished his second term as Treasurer (while also being Editor of JPPID): 8 years in office and longer than that on Council. All three have given the Association tremendous

service and it is an honour to have the opportunity to thank them. Other Council members are also stepping down, including: Lisa Wang who organised the inaugural Asia-Pacific conference; Patricia Walsh who organised the inaugural European conference and, as Vice President and with Matt, the South America meeting last year; Henny Lantman who, with Maastricht colleagues, organised the second European conference and Tony Holland who has led the mental Health SIRG and IASSID's publications strategy (as well as co-editing JIDR). To all Council members who are stepping down, whether they are mentioned above or not, I would like to extend my thanks.

As you can see, there is substantial change at the top within IASSID. The next Executive and Council will look quite different.

David Felce
President