

## ***PRESIDENT'S WELCOME***

**Maria Kalentsits**

IAMSLIC President, 2013

Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Fisheries and Aquaculture Branch library

Rome, ITALY

Next year, IAMSLIC will celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. As an organization, we have reached considerable new heights and met many challenges over the past years.

The first IAMSLIC conference was held in October 1975 in Woods Hole, MA, USA. Since that very first meeting, almost 40 years ago, IAMSLIC members have met every year to discuss topics of mutual interest, to share their ideas and concerns, to establish new professional contacts and develop new partnerships. IAMSLIC conferences have always been a success thanks to many enthusiastic members from different countries who volunteered their time and efforts for planning and organizing meetings, preparing presentations, and chairing sessions and panels. IAMSLIC conferences have been held in North and Latin America, Europe, Africa, Australia and Oceania. We are truly an international organization with several regional groups and many active members on every continent. Thanks to Pauline Simpson, who came up with the idea of visualization of the IAMSLIC membership, and Steve Watkins, who put this idea into life, you can now easily find your or any other IAMSLIC library on the Membership's map. This map made me feel proud that I am part of a professional network ... a network that is spread over the globe and that still has a huge potential for growth in some regions.

I'd like to mention progress achieved by our regional groups, two of which – EURASLIC and SAIL - held their conferences earlier this year. Members of regional groups are actively contributing to the work of many IAMSLIC Committees and Task Forces during the inter-sessional period. And we are also looking forward to establishing an Asian Regional Group and to promoting IAMSLIC resource sharing activities in this region.

I would also like to mention a personal achievement by Janet Webster, who has recently been awarded 2013 Distinguished Service Award by the Oregon Library Association. Congratulations, Janet!

In the past year we have strengthened our cooperation with the IOC International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange Program (IODE) through the establishing of the Joint IODE/IAMSLIC GE-MIM. Participation in the GE-MIM provide IAMSLIC with the opportunity to communicate needs and priorities of marine libraries to high-level policy makers at the national level as well as to jointly develop global marine information management services and products.

We all know it is not an easy time for marine and aquatic libraries. We are facing continuous budget cuts; several libraries have already been consolidated into centralized facilities or are undergoing consolidation right now. Libraries lose positions and subscriptions. But at the same time that we are facing new challenges we are implementing new technologies and concepts and looking at new ways to provide our services. Is there a space for decentralized services in the overall trend for optimization of investments? Has the embedded librarianship model found many supporters and followers among

marine and aquatic libraries? Our 39<sup>th</sup> conference addressed many of these questions and provided opportunities to discuss these topics during coffee breaks and informal conference events.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Conference Planning Committee headed by Sally Taylor and the Local Organizing Committee, chaired by Jaime Goldman, for their hard work and effort in planning and coordinating IAMSLIC's 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference.