

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

41st IAMSLIC Conference, Rome, Italy

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Welcome to our 41st IAMSLIC Annual Conference presentations, a great meeting that the organizing committee aligned perfectly within the FAO strategic topic: the Blue Growth Initiative (BGI), which aims at supporting food security, poverty alleviation and sustainable management of aquatic resources. From that special session, I would like to especially thank our keynote speakers, Lahsen Ababouch and Marc Taconet from the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, and guest Suzuette Soomai, from Dalhousie University in Halifax, with such an interesting presentation on the Critical Role of Marine Information Use at the Science-Policy Interface. ALSO

IAMSLIC Conferences are always a success because they are born from the enthusiastic volunteer collaboration of all the members, and here I have to mention and thank our experienced host Maria Kalentsits, who together with Armand Gribling and a great working team from FAO, reached every goal, even under difficult circumstances.

It was indeed a very visible conference, trying to reach and share with members who could not attend. Bloggers and twitters were updating every moment with news and photos - <http://www.iamslc.org/blog/?m=201509> and even a story after the conference was finished - <https://storify.com/StephanieRonan/new-story-55f3244492765f6408ac8ed2>.

Our six Regional Groups are representative of this international association, reflecting the spirit of IAMSLIC born 41 years ago. We have had talks for a long while, but for the first time during this conference a preliminary meeting was held to consider the possibility of creating another Group, an Asian one since IAMSLIC already has 17 Asian members. The meeting was coordinated by Stephen Alayon (SEAFDEC, Philippines) who showed results of a survey in the region and will continue leading the discussion.

We had attendees from all over the world: Argentina, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Cayman Islands, Croatia, China, Estonia, Fiji, France, Germany, Greece, India, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malawi, Mexico, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Russia, Senegal, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States, Ukraine, Vietnam, 30 countries and more than 80 participants! But it is also important is to mention the collective efforts made to bring members to the conference, and together with IODE and FAO funding 38 colleagues with total or partial grants for travelling, per diem and registrations, for a total sum of \$23,000. We are thankful to both organizations for their permanent support for our librarians, as well as to ASFA-FAO for allowing us to increase our membership.

The pre and post conference meetings and workshops are always in the agenda and they are great opportunities for members to receive training, exchange opinions and do personal networking; the 16th EURASLIC Biennial Meeting was held with success starting Bart Goossens (INBO, Belgium) as the new two-years Chair; the new Joint GE-MIM (Group of Experts in Marine Information Management) met for the first time and was chaired by Linda Pikula (NOAA, EEUU), coming up with recommendations and a final report at http://ioc-unesco.org/index.php?option=com_oe&task=viewDocumentRecord&docID=15995; the Work Party for Aquatic Commons was organized for the third year with 15 volunteers practicing or learning to input into our repository the documents from a previously selected institution (thanks to Pauline Simpson, it was again the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute); and a mini-meeting with the AFRIAMSLIC Regional Group with five participants and myself, focusing on future activities. During several meetings, we discussed whether we should change the annual conference format into only capacity building meetings. It was agreed that we will continue with the pre- and post-trainings as we have done until now, and to keep exploring new ideas and developments within our specialized field.

In 2005, the 31st IAMSLIC was also held within FAO and the topic was Information for Responsible Fisheries: Libraries as Mediators. Conferences at FAO in Rome are always a landmark for IAMSLIC because of the great interest that all members show in participating in such a meeting and melting pot. In my case, I will always remember how honored I felt at that time listening to the guest speaker Sydney Holt (England), so well known because of his Beverton and Holt model. I hope this 41st Conference, which I had the honor to chair, also remains as important for all those who participated.

Thank you all and see you next October 2016 in Mexico!