

Some words from the new president.

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We are coming to the end of an extraordinary General Assembly. The first in-person GA in 7 years! It has been marvelous to meet again so many old and new friends, to see in person people that I had only met online. It is so good to be together, side by side, to chat without the intermediation of a digital device, to embrace one another, to look at each other into the eyes. Being together is an essential part of our species. It makes us human. It is not merely something that we enjoy. These real human encounters are fundamental to build trust, to strengthen collaboration across borders and cultures, among people whose governments might have strained relations. As we always say, scientific collaboration is a driver for peace and real human encounters are a driver for science collaboration.

And for this collaborative atmosphere to be possible in this GA, the role of the local organizing committee was key. I want to thank them all, Lilu, the students and professors from Hainan university, the Chinese Physical Society, all the helpers. I want to thank them for their enormous generosity and for their amazing job, amazing not only from the organizational point of view, but most importantly, for its human quality, for the warmth and friendship with which they have received us. I want to thank all the participants for their lively and insightful interventions. It has been a very inspiring meeting. I think that we are all going back home with plenty new ideas on a variety of areas. I want to thank the co-organizers and participants of the celebration of WG5's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Lilia, Gillian, Jackie, Marcia, Bev, Ling-Ang, Prajval, Igle. It has been a long journey since the creation of this WG, a journey that had enormous impact on IUPAP. I want to thank the organizers of the very interesting inter-commission symposium on Physics for a Sustainable Planet, Nithaya, Pietro and especially Igle for her enormous work. I want to thank the coordinators of the two panels that we had during the GA, Shohini, Igle, and Sunil, and also their participants, Rosario, Kai-Liu, Young, Cyrus, Stefano, and the participant online.

These are my first words not as President designate but as "almost" President (I will be President for real on January 1<sup>st</sup>). It is an incredible honor for me to occupy this position and I am very thankful to all of those who have deposited their trust and confidence in me. I will do my best to fulfill your expectations. I want to thank Bruce McKellar and Michel Spiro who approached me during the EC&CC meeting in London in 2019 when Kennedy Reed resigned as President to explore if I would be willing to become acting President Designate. This was completely unexpected for me. I was thrilled. I accepted and that was the beginning of a new and quite amazing part of my journey with IUPAP. It has been five years since then. The covid19 pandemic postponed everything and I became "actual" President Designate in 2021. During these five years I got to work together with many people, always in a very "flexible", as Michel likes to say, and friendly atmosphere and I thank everybody for that. Thanks to Jens, Gabriella, Stefano, Sandro, Rudzani, Monica, Boris, Laura, Kwek, Maitri in the past, Nithaya. These have been very exciting times. We transitioned from Singapore to a Swiss association with an administrative secretariat in Trieste, we moved the website (and renewed it) away from Singapore as well, we defined a new strategic and action plan, the archives of the Union were digitized thanks to the work of Roberto Lalli, we celebrated the centenary of IUPAP with

numerous activities and a beautiful meeting in Trieste, we reached agreements with new associations, one of them, of physics students, creating two new affiliated commissions, we initiated an analysis of our union (both internal and external) to see how to better fulfill our purpose and advance with the aims of the new strategic plan. And we did all of this while we were performing the usual tasks. What a journey!

These are very exciting times for IUPAP. We are seeking to define a rejuvenation plan, to increase its impact, to embrace new areas. I feel that some of you might be worried that I could grab Michel's hammer and start to break everything. Many of you have warned me that we should go slowly. My conviction is that in organizations like ours, changes are not imposed "from the top", they are discussed in a way that everybody feels part of the decisions. I hope we can advance in this way. Change is the condition of a living organism and yet there is an identity that persists. This is how I like to see our Union, as a living organism, that changes, but keeps its identity intact.

When we wrote with Monica the preface to the book edited by Jaume Navarro and Roberto Lalli, I wanted to include something about the continuity of IUPAP. How there was this underlying line that connected the past with the present and the future, how, despite the changes, there was this identity, the identity of a scientific union that strived to have physics and science as uniting factor. We tried to include these ideas in the text we wrote but still I wanted to also include the lines of a poem as an epigraph, something we could not do because a special permission was required, and it was too complicated. So, I will share those lines with you now. It is from a poem by the Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges called *Arte Poetica* (the Art of Poetry), which starts with the image of a river ("To gaze at a river made of time and water, and remember Time is another river...") and ends with:

*También es como el río interminable  
que pasa y queda y es cristal de un mismo  
Heráclito inconstante, que es el mismo  
y es otro, como el río interminable.*

Which, in the translation of A. Kerrigan, reads:

*It is also endless like a river flowing,  
passing, yet remaining, a mirror to the same  
inconstant Heraclitus, who is the same  
and yet another, like the river flowing.*

IUPAP as a river that flows retaining its identity and its strength.

I invite you all to sail together.

Thank you.

Silvina