

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It is a great honour for me to take up the Presidency of International Mycological Association (IMA). Being the first medical molecular mycologist in this position reflects the increasing importance fungi play in global health and the close interaction between the different aspects of mycology, each of them contributing to a better understanding of the interactions between the members of this fascinating kingdom in the environment. As the incoming President I would like to thank the Past-President of the IMA, Keith A. Seifert from the Ottawa Research and Development Centre of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and his team of officers, Pedro W. Crous (Past IMA Secretary-General), Karen Hansen (Past-Treasurer), and Jennifer Luangsaard and Sharon A. Cantrell Rodríguez (Past-Vice-Presidents) for their dedicated work to put mycology firmly on the global platform. I also thank Tetiana Andrianova (Russia), Paul Dyer (UK), Ana Esperanza Franco Molano (Colombia), and Michael J. Wingfield (South Africa) who retired from the IMA Executive Committee in June 2018 for their services for IMA and the global mycological community over many years.

Over the last four years the IMA supported the organization of the very successful International Mycological Congress (IMC11) in Puerto Rico, which took place on 16–21 July 2018, being the first

IMC ever to be held in Latin America. I would like to thank the local organizing committee, under the leadership of Sharon A. Cantrell Rodríguez and Christopher L. Schardl, for their enormous work, managing complicated circumstances, especially after Hurricane Maria. Puerto Rico enthusiastically welcomed IMC11 with its 701 attendants from 53 countries, presenting their research, reaching from fungal taxonomy and nomenclature, fungal genetics, evolution, phylogeny, molecular biology, cell biology, proteomics, ecology, biotechnology into plant and medical mycology in 45 Symposia over five days. The Congress was opened by a keynote lecture from Paola Bonfante (University of Torino, Italy), addressing the network of dialogues and interactions between fungi, plants and bacteria. There were seven plenary lectures covering the themes: Application (Russell Cox, Leibniz University Hannover, Germany); Ecology (Thomas Bruns, University of California, Berkeley, USA); Pathology (Anuradha Chowdhary, University of Delhi, India); Evolution (Priscila Chaverri, University of Maryland, USA); Cell Biology (Jesús Aguirre, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Mexico); Genomics (Chengshu Wang, Shanghai Institute for Biological Sciences, China; and Environment (Matthew Fisher, Imperial College London, UK). In addition to the official symposia the congress featured a number of workshops and field trips, showcasing the wonderful tropical rainforests of Puerto Rico, offering endless opportunities to study first-hand the mycological diversity present on this wonderful Caribbean island.

During the last four years the IMA focused on the transfer of the governance of aspects of nomenclature only concerning organisms treated as fungi from International Botanical Congresses (IBCs) to International Mycological Congresses (IMCs), being reflected in a formal Nomenclature Session being held at IMC11. One group of proposals covered the controversial topic of naming fungal species based only on the existence of DNA sequences, an increasingly growing dataset coming out of the large number of metagenomic studies. Both sides of the debate were heard, and a decision

was made to establish a Special Purpose Committee to consider how to take this very important issue forward.

IMA continued hosting, curating and expanding MycoBank (www.mycobank.org), the ultimate online databank aimed to serve the mycological and scientific community, and also one of the three online repositories for fungal nomenclatural data. MycoBank includes phenotypic and genetic data where available. Special thanks go to Konstanze Bensch (Botanische Sammlungen München, Germany), for her curation of the nomenclatorial part of the database, and Vincent Robert (Westerdijk Fungal Biodiversity Institute and Bioaware, Utrecht, The Netherlands), for the provision and maintenance of the underlying software – BioloMICS. The database is now accessible in Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, German, Farsi, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Thai.

Under the leadership of David L. Hawksworth (Editor-in-Chief) and Pedro W. Crous (Managing Editor) and the enormous help of Manon van den Hoeven-Verweij (Layout) the IMA flagship journal, *IMA Fungus*, was awarded its first impact factor, 4.69 for 2016, followed by one of 4.3 for 2017. Congratulations to the editorial team and referees. The journal has been sustained since its inception by the dedication and resources of the Westerdijk Fungal Biodiversity Institute at no cost to the IMA, The Association is immensely grateful to Pedro W. Crous for this consistent and generous support. In order to develop the journal further and give it a secure and viable future, the last Executive Committee started the process of finding a professional publisher for the journal. Several professional publishing houses were approached and after careful considerations BMC/Springer was selected as the new publisher for IMA fungus. As I write, final preparations with BMC/Springer are underway for the transition phase. The move to a professional publisher brings with it the introduction of APC charges, which will be implemented in a stepwise process over the next 2 years. It is envisaged that the journal will have a team of Senior Editors of leading mycologist who will represent diverse aspects of the subject and propose members for a new Editorial Board.

At IMC11 in Puerto Rico the IMA honoured two outstanding mycologists by awarding the De Bary Medal to Salomon Bartnicki-Garcia and John Taylor, and the Ainsworth Medal for extraordinary services to the global mycology community to Pedro W. Crous. In addition, the IMA named Mary L. Berbee, Sharon A. Cantrell Rodríguez, David L. Hawksworth, Lene Lange, Jennifer Luangsa-ard, John I. Pitt, Nick D. Read, Trond Schumacher, Junta Sugiyama, John W. Taylor, and Michael J. Wingfield as IMA Fellows in recognition for their services to IMA and world mycology. Awards to honour the outstanding contribution of six early career mycologists from different regions of the world were also made. Further details of all these awards and their recipients are provided elsewhere in this issue (see pp. (60)–(62)).

I would also like to thank the mycological societies of both China and The Netherlands for preparing detailed bids to host the next International Mycological Congress. It is my pleasure to announce that the IMA Executive Committee decided that IMC12 will be held in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, on 25–29 July 2022, organized by the Dutch Mycological Society under the leadership of Pedro W. Crous with the support of the Westerdijk Fungal Biodiversity Institute. The IMA Executive Committee will work together with the local organizing committee to prepare an exciting scientific programme over the next four years.

My vision for the next four years of IMA is to provide an overarching framework

to allow the connection of our enormous morphology-based knowledge with the exponentially growing molecular datasets (including single/multilocus and whole genome based phylogeny, population genetics, and epidemiology), and to administer and provide the missing links for data integration, by: (1) indexing known and new fungal species *via* close links between MycoBank, Index Fungorum, and Fungal Names; (2) working towards the establishment of a centralized database for strain information; (3) coordinating access to quality controlled sequence databases to accelerate fungal DNA barcoding (e.g. UNITE, ISHAM-ITS/EF1alpha reference sequence databases for human and animal pathogenic fungi and RefSeq/GenBank); (4) facilitating access to databases storing sequences of un-named fungi identified from the environment *via* metagenomics; and (5) providing coordinated access to fungal genome databases. In addition, also to (6) catalyse global intra- and interdisciplinary collaborations; (7) enhance local and global mycology education initiatives; and to (8) increase involvement and support to the organization of regional and international mycological congresses.

It is now time for IMA to further manifest its role as the leading mycological organization, by fostering closer links between all national, regional and international scientific societies focusing on mycology, including the International Society for Plant Pathology (ISPP), the International Society for Human and Animal Mycology (ISHAM), International Association for Lichenology (IAL), the Mycology Division of the International Union of Microbiology

Societies (IUMS), the Global Action Fund for Fungal Infections (GAFFI), etc. to raise global awareness, on subjects such as: (1) the increasing importance of fungi as biological resources; (2) the continuous emergence of plant, human and animal pathogens; and (3) the challenge in dealing with the vast undescribed fungal biodiversity discovered by the ever-growing metagenomics approaches.

To achieve these goals a crucial change in the organizational structure of IMA needs to take place, with each of the IMA Executive Committee members taking on a specific portfolio. I welcome as members of the newly elected Executive Committee, to serve until IMC12 in 2022: Ahmed M. Abdel-Azeem (Egypt), Irene Barnes (South Africa), Dominik Begerow (Germany), Mary Berbee (Canada), Paola Bonfante (Italy), Dee Carter (Australia), Matthew Fisher (UK), Tatiana Gibertoni (Brazil), David Hibbett (USA), Xingzhong Liu (China), Chiharu Nakashima (Japan), and Meritxell Riquelme (Mexico).

I am looking forward to working over the next four years with the new IMA officers: Jennifer Luangsa-ard (Secretary-General, Thailand), Andrey Yurkov (Treasurer, Germany), Pedro W. Crous (The Netherlands), and Sharon A. Cantrell Rodríguez (Puerto Rico, USA, as Vice-Presidents), Keith A. Seifert (Past-President), and all of the Executive Committee to foster mycology in all its aspects.

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