

Dear colleagues,

Wishing you all a new year full of professional success and satisfaction, I am sending my regards as I take office as the new IUSS President. My first words can only be those of thanks and appreciation to the IUSS President from whom I take the baton, Prof. Laura Bertha Reyes Sanchez, the former Past President, Prof. Takashi Kosaki and the Vice President Congress Dr. Bruce Lascelles, and all the officers who served the Executive Committee of IUSS during the last term, starting with the former Presidents of Division Prof. Erika Micheli, Damien Field, Ryusuke Hatano and Bal Ram Singh, and of the Standing Committees, Dr. Tom Sauer, Prof. Alfred Hartemink and Stephen Nortcliff, and all the Presidents of Commissions and Working Groups who have given their contributions to the IUSS. A special thanks must be given to our past Secretary, Dr. Sigbert Huber, who facilitated all the activities of the IUSS during the last 8 years. I am sure that all these good fellows will continue to help the officers who are still in charge and also the new officers.

We live in times of change. The IUSS needs continuous improvement to remain up to date and able to cope with the challenges posed by global changes, in a scientific and political arena that sees soil becoming more and more of interest for global institutions, governments, and private companies. We must collaborate with all stakeholders, but well equipped and dynamic, to efficiently support the scientific evidence of the importance of soil as a resource for life. Food security, the fight against desertification, combating climate change and loss of biodiversity, improving the well-being and health of citizens, recycling of effluents and organic materials, hydrogeological protection, and water safety, are all global challenges that cannot be achieved without deep scientific soil knowledge. It is our obligation to provide this knowledge in an effective, unbiased, and convincing way. As you know, the Council approved a new Strategic Plan for the IUSS, with a set of new goals that will be implemented in the next years. New Bye-laws have also been endorsed by the Executive Committee and some related changes to the Statutes are on the way. A document summarizing how IUSS works has been produced. We are also going to have a time of transition with the new Secretariat; it is envisaged that it will take a short time, but the new Secretariat will need the patience and collaboration of all.

The new strategic plan poses important novelties. One of the most relevant ones is a stronger involvement of the Council in the further development of the IUSS, with an annual instead of a biannual meeting. This will increase the dynamics of the IUSS and favour the involvement of the Full members. We shall, however, keep our major events: the World Congress in 2026 and the Inter-Congress meeting in 2024 which will be held in China. We are also going to celebrate the Centennial of the IUSS in Italy in 2024. The programme is available at <https://centennialiuiss2024.org/> and the call for sessions has been already launched. I hope to see many of you there!

The IUSS is built on collaboration among its members, both the individual and the full members, based on voluntary work and strong commitment. We do not have powerful and rich economic Institutions supporting us, important governmental bodies, or big companies, we fully rely upon our in-kind work, but we are free of any conditioning and bias, and anyone within the IUSS is only valued for their work and scientific merit. We all eagerly spend our precious time for the IUSS not only for the high reputation that is given to the largest community of soil scientists in the world but especially for our passion for contributing to humanity's well-being through the promotion of one of its most important and precious resources.

The IUSS aims to advance the development of all soil-related sciences, in all countries on every continent, involving all interested scientists and particularly supporting young people and those who live in relatively less favourable conditions. The IUSS works democratically and in teams. From the Presidents' Committee to the Working groups, all bodies of the IUSS are intended to work as teams of fellows that share decisions and carry out the activities valorizing the availability and capacity of each one. It is the responsibility of the officers to promote teamwork and involve their colleagues.

All the IUSS officers and I are committed to working hard and doing our best to serve the IUSS in the next years, however, .....not only ask what the IUSS can do for you but also ask what you can do for the IUSS!

My warmest regards,

Edoardo A.C. Costantini

IUSS President 2023-2024