

President's Message – January 2018

## Happy New Year!

My very best wishes to the whole ISI family for a joyful, bright, healthy, prosperous and happiest New Year ahead!

We thank you for your many contributions to statistics and being ISI ambassadors to the world.

ISI has challenges and opportunities ahead, and I like the following quote from Anatole France:

*To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe.*

May we continue to act together to accomplish great things in the world of statistics.



We often hear the term 'big tent of statistics' referring to the extent and diversity of statistical areas, applications, collaborations and intersections across other disciplines, workplaces and pursuits. This is an outstanding analogy to emphasize a welcome to all, in any discipline, who have interest in statistics and data. Other analogies can illustrate further aspects of the amazing world of statistics. Here's my humble contribution - for fun and for seriousness – the 'big sea of statistics' or even the 'big ocean of statistics'. The 'big sea of statistics' is always rich; ever-changing and ever-adapting but with an ongoing underlying constancy; reaches into and is essential to the health of innumerable coves, bays and harbours of other disciplines; and feeds into, takes from, and shares across all its 'landfalls'. In addition, not being able to readily see from any one inlet or 'landfall' to another illustrates the challenges for statisticians of moving between contexts, and how it can sometimes be mistakenly perceived that an area of statistics or statistical collaboration belongs to a particular context or is not part of the 'big sea of statistics'. I'm sure ISI members can develop or debate further this analogy – and invent others.

A serious aspect of this is that ISI is both seen as, and expected to, represent the international 'big sea of statistics'. ISI's Associations represent some of the diversity and reach of the 'big sea of statistics', and tribute is due to the foresight of the post-WWII ISI leaders who set up the concept of the Associations as well as sowing the seeds which eventually grew into our Associations, and are still growing into special interest groups and regional networks. In addition, other organisations are increasingly seeking Memoranda of Understanding with ISI.

ISI and its international roles are often taken for granted both across, and by those interacting with, the 'big sea of statistics'. But, like all professional associations, ISI is its members, both individual and institutional, and its impact and ability to make a difference worldwide are built on its membership.

New Year is also a time of renewal. ISI and Association members will soon be receiving membership renewals. Renewing membership is as important and beneficial to members as it is to the capacity of ISI to accomplish, act, dream, plan and believe.

Member benefits are both tangible and intangible. Tangible benefits include reduced registration rates, free or reduced publication rates, and, in particular, free or reduced combined memberships and publications. For example, our 2016 survey demonstrated that elected ISI membership is valued in itself, but elected membership also includes the option of an Association membership at no extra charge, with all the extra tangible and intangible benefits of Association membership. We have a complex interwoven membership structure across ISI and Associations, incorporating publications, special memberships and generous support of all countries classified as low, lower-middle and upper-middle income by the UN and World Bank. This complexity and interlinking have grown from the total commitment of ISI and Associations to supporting and widening membership.

For the intangible benefits, we need look no further than to what members say. In the 2016 members' survey, the overwhelmingly most frequent reasons to recommend ISI membership to a friend or colleague emphatically demonstrate the importance to members of belonging, and were as follows:

- Professionalism: part of being professional, excellent for personal development, important for statistics;
- Big family: share, meet, network, solid membership, fun, information, newsletters and Associations, forum, opportunity to participate in statistics globally;
- International excellence and cooperation (prestigious, influential, great value, best globally, uniquely positioned, important to society, ...)

The ISI Executive Committee and Council have approved a small increase in most ISI subscription rates for 2018, with slightly more in some categories to remove some anomalies, in particular where some combined memberships were less than a non-combined membership. Associations also have either a small increase or no increase. The whole ISI family has very reasonable subscription rates and is committed to keeping these as low as possible while maximising ISI's international impact and value across the 'big sea of statistics'.

We encourage all members to renew their membership and to help the EC and Council in bringing new members into the ISI family.

Helen MacGillivray  
ISI President