

Linking across statistics and with the worlds of banking and government

The breadth of statistical interests involved with ISI and its Associations often takes people by surprise – both inside and outside the ISI family. Interests within the ISI, its Associations and its Special Interest Groups range from the most theoretical to the most applied, and over a wide diversity of disciplines and workplaces, and these are again greatly extended through collaborative partnerships and Memoranda of Understanding (MoU's) between ISI and other organisations.



The rich diversity of statistical interests of the whole ISI family and these collaborative partnerships is well demonstrated in the list of over 130 Invited Paper Sessions (IPS) for WSC 2019 <http://www.isi2019.org/approved-invited-paper-sessions/> and even more so when the lists of Special Topic Sessions and Contributed Paper Sessions are also decided. In addition there are enticing Special Invited Paper Sessions, of which more news will be provided in future messages and on the WSC website.

The MoU's between ISI and a variety of other organisations give rise to diverse and fruitful developments. In other news items this month, we see a new ISI-Esri student competition, and calls for submissions to ICSA conferences. In my August message, I reported on the collaborations with IBS at the 2018 IBC, demonstrating the significant and rapidly burgeoned fruits of the ISI-IBS MoU, signed in only 2016. These initiatives will continue with WSC 2019, including a very interesting IBS Special Invited Session on Food Security for Our Future. Another Special Invited Session in WSC 2019 is the result of a very recent MoU with ISBA, signed only 4 months ago.

A most fruitful and ever-growing partnership is with the Irving Fisher Committee on Central Bank Statistics (IFC), with the MoU signed in 2013. The strength and value of this partnership has been in great evidence in ISI's first two Regional Statistics Conferences and Bank Negara's key role in WSC 2019, and is again in evidence in no fewer than seven IFC IPS for WSC 2019, together with two satellite seminars. ISI has been represented at IFC biennial conferences, with Pedro Silva speaking at the Eighth IFC conference in 2016, and, most recently in August, Vice-President Fabrizio Ruggeri participating in the Ninth IFC conference in Basel, speaking on a panel examining the question "Are post-crisis statistical initiatives completed?" Fabrizio noted the interesting problems of the banks, and contributed comments on the importance of stochastic modelling wrt black box tools, aka machine learning, and possibilities for ISI and IFC collaboration in developing countries.

In at least 11 of the IPS for WSC 2019, I noted mention of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), demonstrating again ISI's very strong links across all aspects of official statistics and with the UN Statistical Commission. The challenges of the SDG's for data, official statistics and across all of government were well-aired in the first UN World Data Forum (WDF) in Cape Town in February, 2017, in which ISI representatives played

major roles. The second UN WDF is in Dubai, October 22-24, and the importance and challenges of the SDG's are evidenced by a total of 378 session proposals received, of which 70 had to be selected. Irena Križman, a past ISI Vice-President and past IAOS President, again contributed an enormous amount of work on the UN WDF Program Committee. ISI submitted 4 proposals, organised by Irena Križman, Stephen Penneck, Fabrizio Ruggeri and myself, of which 3 were selected for the UN WDF albeit adjusted or combined with others. For example, the session I proposed received the high score of 18/20 from the Secretariat and yet was still combined with four other proposals. ISI will be represented at this important UN event by myself as President and Vice-President Penneck who is speaking in his own session and chairing another, and also Jim Ridgway speaking in the session into which my proposal was 'folded', namely, *Relevant to everyone's sense of "me, here, now": data literacy as the means towards a social inclusion revolution.*

Associated with the UN SDG's is the recently established GIST, Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training, as reported in my message of April, and of which the ISI President was asked to be the first chair. In order to tackle the very ambitious and general aims, I set up 5 work streams for which task teams have been formed from the GIST Founding Members, have met and planned their work programs. The GIST Board consisting of the Chair, the leaders of these task teams, and UNSD secretariat representatives, has held its first Webex meeting. The UN has appointed a consultant to assist with data gathering, and it is planned to hold a meeting at the UN WDF of GIST Board members present.

Official statistics has been one of the most important areas of involvement for ISI since its inception in 1885, and the very important 2018 IAOS-OECD Conference "Better Statistics for Better Lives" is soon happening in Paris on 19-21 September, preceded by the IAOS Special Meeting on "NSOs Professional Independence: Threats and Responses". I will report on these significant events in my October message.

This and the August President's message illustrate just some of the enormous diversity of statistical interests and international events which ISI, its Associations and Special Interest Groups develop or are significantly involved with. On top of this diversity, we have members spread widely across many countries. Such statistical and geographical diversity means that this spread may be thin in some countries and regions, making it of increasing importance to network and grow the ISI. All ISI and Association members can help in this endeavour.

Helen MacGillivray
ISI President