

2025 General Assembly Opening Remarks by IUSSP President Shireen Jejeebhoy

Welcome to the General Assembly. Thank you for being here and showing your solidarity with the Union.

These last four years have had their ups and downs. Starting with some high points,

- Our scientific programme maintains its academic rigour. Over the last 4 years we have had 24 scientific panels, some of which have completed their task; we have held multiple seminars, webinars and training events about which you will hear more in the next presentation
- IPC2025 was a huge success, after 8 years, 1300 of us from almost 100 countries met again, plenaries and sessions were uniformly of excellent quality and gave us much food for thought, Brisbane and the arrangements were terrific and all in all, it was a memorable event.
- IUSSP became the proud winner of the 2025 United Nations Population award, for the evidence we have generated, the capacity we have built, and the networks we have facilitated across the globe
- IUSSP has maintained its focus on early career scholars – over these last four years, we shifted from an Early Career working group to an Early Career Panel, on par with all our other Panels, that addresses the needs and priorities of our early career members. We have instituted an Early Career Award and two rounds of awards have already been made to a brilliant group of young demographers. We made special efforts to support early career scholars to gain exposure to IPC and I am happy to say that two-thirds of those we supported were under 40.
- We have made significant efforts toward outreach with other associations. Regional associations, have joined us to serve on the Jury for the Early Career awards. And we have instituted an associate member invitation to scientific associations and universities across the globe and now have 6 affiliate member institutions.
- I could go on but time is short.

But these last four years have also been marked by areas of deep concern for the Union.

- Over these four years, priorities in many countries have shifted away from promoting academic freedom and scientific rigour to a more restrictive academic environment, and the population community has had to face significant challenges that have thwarted our work.
- Donor priorities are shifting too. In a world so full of turmoil, death and destruction, resources are flowing to addressing urgent humanitarian needs. For those donors that do support our field, resources are limited, the emphasis on decolonisation has affected the flow of funds to IUSSP and support for core funding has virtually disappeared.

So all in all, we are in an unenviable financial situation, relying on project funding for special activities. But we have been prudent – thanks in large part to our Honorary Treasurer and Executive Director, and remain solvent, but new strategies for sustainability will be much needed.

Bye and thanks

As I come to the end of my four-year term as IUSSP President, I would like to say what a privilege it has been to serve this community of demographers. Working with my fellow Council, Bureau and Secretariat members has been an enormously rewarding experience –all contributing passionately to ensure that IUSSP remains dynamic, and reimagines itself in small and big ways to cope with global realities, while continuing to serve our community effectively. Let me in particular, thank those with whom I worked most closely – Mary Ellen Zuppan, Paul Monet, Laura Wong and Nico van Nimmwegen – I could not have wished for a more dedicated, more efficient and more fun team.

Thank you all for giving me this enormous honour to serve as your President, it's an honour I will always cherish. And let us make a commitment to support the Union as best we can, intellectually, financially and through our networks.