

IUSSP Laureate Award 2017

José Miguel Guzmán Molina

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. My name is Anastasia Gage and I am President of the IUSSP. Each year the IUSSP honors one of its members by bestowing its Laureate Award. The IUSSP Laureate Award was established in 1991 to recognize the life-time achievements of outstanding IUSSP members. Contributions to the advancement of population sciences and distinguished service rendered to the IUSSP are considered in making the award. The IUSSP membership nominates candidates for this award and members of the IUSSP Council select the successful candidate by secret ballot after careful review of each candidate's dossier and testimonials.

To be eligible for consideration, an individual must have been a member of the IUSSP for at least 20 years and be nominated by five or more IUSSP members from different countries. Members of the Council and Honorary Presidents may not be nominated for the award. The nomination letter (s) should include a supporting statement and be duly signed by at least five current IUSSP members from different countries. Self-nominations will not be considered. Nominated candidates remain eligible for the award for a period of two years.

I would like to thank the current IUSSP Council for working together on the selection of this year's Laureate. I would also like to thank the people who put in a lot of time and effort to nominate our colleagues for this distinction.

For his exemplary contributions to population and social policy, capacity strengthening, research and service for almost four decades, José Miguel Guzmán Molina, is the recipient of the 27th IUSSP Laureate Award. He has published more than 20 books and 50 articles. His accomplishments have been well acknowledged internationally and were recently given explicit recognition by the *Université de Montréal*, which honored him in 2010 with a *Diplôme d'Honneur en Démographie*, for his remarkable influence on "research, cooperation, training, knowledge dissemination and public policy, especially in countries of Latin America and the Caribbean."

The list of José Miguel's achievements in Latin America and the Caribbean is immense.

- Highpoints include being the first student in the Dominican Republic to graduate with a PhD in demography, which he earned from the University of Montreal in 1982.
- As a Demography Expert with CELADE, the Population Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, José Miguel is credited with coordinating demographic training activities in several countries in the region, and with training more than 400 demographers from Latin America and the Caribbean, and some from Africa as well – specifically Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde.
- Throughout his career, it has been clear to everyone that José Miguel seeks to do service to the greater good of the populations that we serve. He has continually emphasized how the data and evidence that we generate can be interpreted and used to help make the world a better place. While at CELADE, José Miguel generously shared his knowledge of socioeconomic disparities in infant survival with policy makers and the governments of Honduras and Bolivia and worked to ensure that those data were taken into consideration during the formulation and implementation of health policies and programmes.
- Some of José Miguel's most defining accomplishments occurred when he served as Chief of the Population and Development Branch, Technical Division, UNFPA from 2007-2013. At UNFPA, his signal achievements included spearheading an institutional commitment to pioneering research on climate change, urbanization, and ageing. He coordinated a series of

research projects (featuring contributions from the world's most prominent demographers and climate change scientists) that culminated in the publication of two internationally renowned publications: *Population Dynamics and Climate Change*, and *The Demography of Adaptation to Climate Change*. The first of these produced several critical breakthroughs on the importance of population size and growth for greenhouse gas emissions, and specifically on how the process of urbanization creates opportunities for climate change mitigation and adaptation. The latter publication underscored the vital roles that an understanding of population dynamics and extensive use of demographic data play in developing pre-emptive and effective adaptation policies and practices.

- At UNFPA, José Miguel is also recognized for his role in coordinating a landmark report published in 2012 on *Ageing in the Twenty-First Century: a Celebration and a Challenge*. This report, a collaborative effort of the United Nations and other international organizations, raised awareness of the speed of population aging and recommended urgent actions to incorporate aging issues into national development plans and poverty reduction strategies.
- José Miguel's accomplishments are similarly impressive in the area of service to the profession. Professional associations, such as the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, the Population Association of America, Population Association of Latin America, the Mexican Society of Demography and the Brazilian Association for Population Studies have benefitted from his international standing and networks, his scientific curiosity, and his openness to new ideas. He served for four years on the IUSSP Committee on Fertility and co-organized a seminar on the *Fertility Transition in Latin America*. The seminar led to the publication of a book of the same title by Oxford University Press, which generated a debate as to whether fertility decline in Latin America was stimulated by economic development in the 1960s and 1970s but by economic collapse in the 1980s. The book has been widely read by demographers interested in Latin America, as well as by those interested in Asia and Africa.
- Fast forwarding to the present, José Miguel is now Regional Coordinator of Demographic and Health Surveys at ICF and works to support surveys in Latin America and Francophone Africa. In his current position, he continues to advance global understanding of health and population trends in developing countries and provide technical assistance in the collection and use of data to monitor and evaluate population, health, and nutrition programs.

The limited time that I spent interacting with José Miguel during my years as IUSSP Vice President taught me that he is immensely generous with his time and that he is a firm believer in looking for program and policy meaning and action in numbers. Indeed, there are few IUSSP members whose achievements exemplify everything that the Union's Mission is about, namely, to promote the scientific study of population, encourage exchange between researchers around the globe, and stimulate interest in population issues. It is fitting, therefore, that the IUSSP offers the 2017 Laureate Award to Dr. José Miguel Guzmán Molina.

On behalf of the IUSSP, I offer José Miguel warm and enthusiastic congratulations for this well-deserved honor. It is now my pleasure to bring José Miguel Guzmán Molina to the podium to receive his award. Come on up.