

Opening Ceremony

Welcome Remarks by Shireen Jejeebhoy, IUSSP President, 13 July, 2025, 17:30-19:00

Professor Ann Evans, Chair and Convenor of the International Organising Committee

Professor Edith Gray, Convenor of the National Organising Committee

Mr Nick Latimer, Representative of the Australian Government, and the Executive Director of the Centre for Population at the Australian Treasury

Representatives from UNFPA

Distinguished guests

Dear colleagues

Ladies and gentlemen

On behalf of IUSSP and on my own behalf, let me say how delighted we are to add our welcome to you to the 30th International Population Conference. I know many have travelled long distances, support from donors has dwindled, and visa issues and closure of projects have posed many challenges. And yet here we are. Welcome.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Governments of Australia and Queensland for their generous support. Thank you to Tribal Experiences for that generous and powerful Welcome to Country. It is a privilege for us to hold this international gathering on Country. As we begin this conference — focused on population, communities, and our shared future — may we be mindful of the histories, voices, and knowledge systems that have shaped this place for thousands of generations.

IUSSP is the worldwide network of population scientists. Our mission is to promote the scientific study of population, encourage exchange between researchers around the globe, and stimulate interest in population issues. This, the IPC, is our flagship event. The IPC is the world's largest international scientific conference on population sciences and demography, bringing together researchers and policy-makers from diverse disciplines across the globe. This marks the 30th time we have held such a conference since the Union was first founded in 1928. As you may recall, our 29th IPC was to be held in Hyderabad, India, and we were disappointed to have to convert it to virtual because of Covid. We missed the chance to meet in Hyderabad, but are delighted to be meeting here, eight years after we met in Cape Town.

Population Sciences have been evolving in tune with the changing global landscape and the new challenges facing our world. We are living in unprecedentedly challenging times and documenting the demographic patterns, correlates and consequences of these changing times are very much the task of demographers. Challenges are wide ranging. Many of our countries are facing formidable challenges in meeting Sustainable Development Goals within the next five years. Threats to gender equity and sexual and reproductive health and rights, widening gaps between rich and poor, limited decent work opportunities for the growing number of young people, ultra low fertility and pronatalism, climate change, political strife, forced movements of people, and risks of pandemics are some examples of the challenges facing our world. Respect for the integrity and even availability of data is being threatened. These are the challenges occupying the work of many demographers. And demographers have a huge responsibility at this moment in time to help the world make sense of these challenges.

These priority issues are centre-stage among the sessions we are about to attend in this IPC. Altogether we have 210 oral sessions on 25 different thematic areas, along with poster presentations, special side meetings and exhibition booths. We also have exciting panels and roundtables, and research leader sessions organized by key institutions across the world. I have no doubt there are multiple sessions, even in each time slot in the programme, that will be of interest to you.

Let me proudly acknowledge the dedication and support of many, without whom we would not be here today.

- To the Australian National Organising Committee — who generously proposed that we hold the conference here, and have worked tirelessly to meet their commitments. In particular, please join me in thanking Edith Gray and Ann Evans for their hard work and attention to detail.
- To the IUSSP secretariat, under the very able leadership of Mary Ellen Zuppan and Paul Monet, for their exceptional dedication and enormous amount of hard work accomplished over the past 4 years and leading up to this conference. We could not have organized an event of this quality and breadth without them.
- To all my colleagues on the IUSSP council, who contributed greatly and in multiple ways to shaping this conference and to our many other activities.
- Many members have helped us put together this programme. I want to specially recognize:
 - Those who served as reviewers. All papers were peer-reviewed by 2 people, setting the IUSSP off from most other scientific associations in this regard. And
 - The conveners who created the sessions for the 25 themes and had the difficult task of sifting through a group of exceptionally strong abstracts.
 - Session chairs, who have been called upon to ensure that sessions run smoothly.
- We acknowledge with much gratitude, our partners: the UNFPA, the UN Population Division, and many other institutions that have been involved in supporting this conference and sponsoring sessions.
- Finally, to you IUSSP members: it is your research and participation in IUSSP activities upon which this conference is built. In these hard financial times, let me request you most passionately to keep your membership active and thereby help keep IUSSP active.

Before closing, I would like to acknowledge what an honour it is to have in our midst, a great demographer, and a great champion of IUSSP over many years – our current Honorary President and IUSSP laureate -- Peter McDonald, who will say a few words later in this programme.

We have put together an engaging programme and we sincerely hope that you will enjoy the next five days of discussion, debate, networking, and knowledge exchange. We hope you come out of this conference with new ideas to shape your research questions going forward. I am sure you will find the conference sessions stimulating, and do take a moment to visit what this beautiful city and beautiful country have to offer, Welcome to Brisbane and enjoy the Conference!

Introduction to UN Award video

And now we have something very special to share with you. IUSSP's contributions -- and your efforts as demographers -- have been globally recognised in many forums. Now it is my very proud privilege to announce that IUSSP has been granted the United Nations Population Award for 2025, and just last Friday, on World Population Day, our next President, Dr Laura Wong, was in New York to receive this award. As Natalia Kanem said in her remarks on Friday, "The IUSSP ensures lives are not only counted but also understood and supported."

Here is a small video of the event, and the award certificate, which will be proudly displayed in our Secretariat.