

Words from the Presidents



Jean Christophe Fotso, Ph.D.
President, ISUH



David Vlahov, Ph.D., R.N
Founding President, ISUH

Dear Participants to the 8th ICUH,

As President and Founding President of the International Society for Urban Health (ISUH), it is our pleasure to welcome you to the 8th International Conference on Urban Health (ICUH) in Nairobi, Kenya under the theme “Meeting Urban Health Needs through Innovative Research, Policies and Interventions”. The Nairobi Conference is a landmark event; it is the first time that the ICUH is taking place out of North America and Europe.

The Government of Kenya and the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) - our partners in the planning of the Nairobi ICUH – have shown a great deal of commitment and dedication over the last 12 months, and we are very confident that the Conference will be a great success. We want to acknowledge the involvement of the Government of Kenya, in particular the Office of the Prime Minister, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry of Local Government, the National Coordination Agency for Population and Development (NCAPD), and the Ministries of Public Health and Sanitation, Nairobi Metropolitan Development, Tourism, Housing, and immigration, to mention a few.

We are very excited about the scientific component of the Conference scheduled on October 21-23: More than 760 abstracts were submitted from 47 countries, about 260 of which were selected for presentations in close to 50 oral sessions; about 275 scholarships were awarded to participants thanks to financial supports from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other donors; and a great line-up of keynote speakers from renowned universities, Foundations and Institutions worldwide will shed light on various urban health issues during the five scheduled plenary sessions.

Besides the scientific component, two major innovations have been included in this year's Conference. First, the **Urban Health Champions Forum** (UHCF) on Monday October 19 brings together close to 100 mayors, municipal leaders, and national-level government officials from 17 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The meeting which is hosted by the Kenya Ministry of Local Government and facilitated by renowned experts will engage participants in forging new partnerships for the rising challenges of urban health. A key outcome of the meeting will be the "Nairobi Statement on Urban Health" which will be shared during the closing ceremony on Friday. Second, a **Community Voices Forum** (CVF) organized for, and by, community-based organizations working in the slums of Nairobi, culminates on Sunday October 18 with a meeting to discuss urban health from the grassroots' perspectives. Findings and recommendations from the meeting will be presented during the closing of the Conference. The Rockefeller Foundation and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) provided the financial support for these two components.

Overall, this week-long conference is an excellent opportunity for sharing knowledge and experiences on issues pertaining to urban health, with emphasis on interventions to alleviate barriers to urban health care and to promote strategies and policies that enhance the health of urban populations.

The beautiful city of Nairobi provides an ideal setting for our deliberations. The warm tropical climate, rich cultural diversity and heritage of Kenya, coupled with the hospitality and warmth of its people, and the colorful contrasting landscape, create a fascinating backdrop for the Conference. We are fortunate that a Kenyan National holiday on October 20 falls within the conference period. This will give you an opportunity to tour the city to add fun and flavor to your trip. Additional sightseeing on Saturday October 24th and a unique opportunity to participate in the annual Nairobi Standard Chartered Marathon on Sunday October 25th will combine to make participation at this year's ICUH a fulfilling undertaking.

Welcome to what promises to be a stimulating and enjoyable event!

Karibu Kenya!