

Dear colleagues,

It is indeed a great honour and privilege for me to assume the role of President of SOMED. I would like to thank all of you for your support and for giving me the opportunity to have this prominent role. Therefore, I commit to provide the leadership our Society requires in order to achieve its objectives and implement its strategies, and commit to listen and respond to your needs as members and work very closely with all members of the Board. Our Scientific Society plays a critical role in helping to resolve important scientific questions focusing specifically in the domain of the intestinal microbiota and food. However, any aspect of microbial ecology in health and disease is considered for investigation. We have come a long way since the Society began and came into existence in the mid's 70 by a group of American and European Scientists actively involved in the study of human intestinal flora which decided to found the Society for Intestinal Microbial Ecology and Disease (SIMED). The first meeting was organized at the States in 1976. I joined the Society 10 years later, as young PhD student from France at the San Antonio Congress and since then, I could say almost every year I participated to the Society activities and I had the opportunity to meet all these famous scientists which for me were ...just names for 'bibliographical citation'!After the first decade, the scope of the Society has broadened considerably. This reflects the expanding uses to which new acquired scientific capacity and technology is actually able to be deployed, the increasing diversity of new methods and skills now using this capacity, and the corresponding expansion in demands of the Society members. Those who have steered the Society along this dynamic road have done so in a responsive and measured way, ensuring appropriate adjustment and continuity in Society affairs. Many people have contributed to this outcome, far too many people to mention here by name. I had the chance to meet Tore Midtvedt, Sydney Finegold, Andrew Onderdonk, Tracy Wilkins, Sherwood Gorbach, Peter Boriello and many other.... Moreover, I had the great fortune to work in their famous laboratories under their supervision and I was honored twice to organize the International Congresses of our Society in my country. Finally, the Society name turns to its current name SOMED (Society for Microbial Ecology and Disease) at the late 80', as this change should better accommodate areas of microbial ecology in addition to intestinal ecology. I must recognise that through all the previous years, prominent colleagues on top of the Board performed excellent work and offered their expertise to organize huge size conference programs to build bridges across scientific disciplines and borders to make life healthier on this planet we all share. An important priority for us is to enhance our inclusivity so that we better respond to the individual needs of our Society members, specifically the young scientists by accommodating to the ideas of others and drawing people from different scientific orientations into our Society. I believe the essence of what we do in the Society is helpful to create an enabling environment that enhances outcomes in Health and the Microbial Ecology environment. It is known that we are living in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world, our relationships with our physical world and the way we use our microenvironment are changing as we deploy technology to create new ways of interacting with each other. Unfortunately, the number of SOMED members seems to decrease during the last years. The financial downturn of the last few years has led to tough austerity measures in funding University scientific research and restructuring the life sciences industry. Despite signs of enhancing crisis, the global economy remains fragile, and the future of science funding continues to be uncertain.

The financial crisis could explain the limited participation at the Congresses from Transatlantic countries. We must attract more scientists from the States to the SOMED as it was at the previous times. We must attract as well Gold sponsors to support our Congresses and offers Grants to young students. I would like to congratulate all new elected members' board for their new duties. I look forward to working with you and receiving your contributions. Once again thank you for your support .