Dear Colleagues,

As President of the International Union of Immunological Societies (IUIS), I want to convey my best wishes to all colleagues and friends, who will attend The 8th Conference of the Federation of the African Immunological Societies (FAIS), in Durban South Africa from 2–5 December, 2012.

Immunology remains in the heart of basic research. The last decades have witnessed an enormous explosion of insights into our immune system. This is mirrored, not the least, by the impressive number of Nobel Prizes given for immunologic achievements. To name the last awardees, Jules Hoffmann, Bruce Beutler and Ralph Steinman were honored for their work on the innate immune system in molecular and cellular terms, in 2011.

Immunology is also in the heart of applied medical research and has paved the way for an increasing number of strategies against malignant, infectious and inflammatory diseases. Even diseases that were not directly linked with the immune system turn out to have a major immunologic component, including many neurological and cardiovascular diseases.

Clearly, immunology is also ready to provide direct guidelines for the development of innovative intervention measures of particular relevance for the African continent. These notably include vaccines for prevention and therapy of, as well as immunologic biomarkers for various diseases. I could not agree more with Bill Gates, Co-Chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation that “immunology is very important because that’s the science that teaches us how to make vaccines”.

The FAIS is the federation of all national immunological societies from Africa. They, together with all national societies and their federations from all over the world, are represented by the IUIS. Currently we are 68 national societies and 4 regional federations of immunology. We at the IUIS know how important the federation conferences are. After all, they help IUIS to overcome borders between north and south, between basic and applied immunology, between public and private research, between the young PhD student and the experienced researcher, and between the
The 8th FAIS conference will provide a platform for dozens of internationally renowned speakers from the African continent and elsewhere in the world. In addition, it will host numerous workshops that will allow young researchers to present and discuss their data. Last but not least, this conference will facilitate meetings with colleagues, friends, post-doc candidates and mentors, and therefore, provide a wonderful opportunity for scientific discourse as well as for creating new friendships and renewing existing ones.

The 8th FAIS conference will take place in Durban South, Africa and thus will offer a unique framework for social activities in a fascinating and welcoming city. I wish the organizers of the FAIS conference all the best and most of all, I wish you, the attendants, a great rewarding time in Durban, both scientifically and socially.

Looking forward to meeting you at the 8th FAIS conference in Durban.

Stefan H.E. Kaufmann

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