

IMA Executive Committee meeting 2017

The IMA Executive Committee (EC) met on Saturday 2 September 2017 at the Westerdijk Fungal Biodiversity Institute in Utrecht. Those present included Keith Seifert (President), Jennifer Luangsa-ard (Vice-President), Pedro Crous (Secretary-General), David Hawksworth (Hon. President); EC members Dominik Begerow, Paul Dyer, Chiharu Nakashima, Mike Wingfield, Wieland Meyer; RMMO members: Wilhelm de Beer (representing Africa), Tom May (representing Australasia); SMMO representatives: Marc Stadler (German Society of Mycology) and Chiharu Nakashima (Mycological Society of Japan).

The meeting was officially opened by the President, Keith Seifert. Although unable to attend, IMA Treasurer Karen Hansen submitted a summary of the revenue, expenditures, and balance sheet of the IMA. There were no unexpected financial developments since last meeting. Most MMOs paid their dues as expected. A major issue for the future is the official registration of the IMA as a not-for-profit charitable association (possibly in The Netherlands, as the Association needs to have annual activities in the country where it is registered) to enable it to receive funds (bequests) without having to pay taxes. Karen Hansen confirmed that she will be stepping back as Treasurer at IMC11 in Puerto Rico, a position she has held since IMC8 in Cairns in 2006.

IMC11

In spite of Hurricane damage to Puerto Rico, the hotels and conference centre are largely unaffected, and the congress will continue as planned. Societies and organisations that require rooms for special meetings should contact Don Pfister. (Further information on progress for the Congress is provided in the News section of this issue (*see pp. (40)–(41)*).

Given the decisions at the International Botanical Congress in Shenzhen in July (*see pp. (40) and pp. 211–218 in this issue*), Tom May (representing the Fungal Bureau of Nomenclature), will be co-ordinating a special formal day on nomenclatural matters at the Congress which is now the decision-making body for rules related to the nomenclature of fungi.



Bids for IMC12

Two bids were chosen, and requested to submit full bids to the IMA, namely one from The Netherlands and one from China. It was also decided that the IMA component of the registration fee should be increased from 40 to 75 € per participant.

Officers and new EC members

A call for nominations for some officers of the IMA, and for new members of the EC, will be sent out by the Secretary-General to EC and RMMO's and SMMOs in January 2018. Documents for nominees should include a short *cv* and signed nomination form.

Awards

Chiharu Nakashima, as Vice-President Awards, will coordinate calls for nominations for IMA Young Mycologist Awards (*see IMA Fungus* 9(1): (16)–(17), June 2017) as well as the Ainsworth and de Bary Medals (*see this issue p. (53)*).

IMA Fungus

Given the new impact factor of 4.69 awarded to *IMA Fungus* in June, and a

consequent increase in quality submissions, the EC agreed to explore options for moving the journal to a professional publisher, with a view to generating some income *via* a new arrangement that would also enable it to continue to fulfil its' mandate.

IMA Statutes

The EC discussed some possible improvements to the IMA's Statutes, and David Hawksworth agreed to circulate a draft to the EC with a view to this being submitted to MMOs in the new year so that any changes could be ratified at IMC11.

Other matters

Other issues which could not be discussed due to the limited time available, and which will be carried over to the next meeting, include MycoBank, the website, use of social media, and preparation of a Manual of Operations. The EC also agreed to investigate the option to hold virtual meetings, as this has worked well in other societies, and may be a solution to enable the EC to meet prior to IMC11 in 2018.

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IX Latin American Mycological Congress (CLAMIX)



Magdalena Pavlich.



Patricia Wiltshire demonstrating sampling fungi from a "corpse".

The IX Latin American Congress of Mycology (CLAMIX) was held on 22–25 August 2017 in Lima, Peru, for the first time. This important event was held under the leadership of Magdalena Pavlich, President of the Latin American Association of Mycology (Asociación Latinoamericana de Micología, ALM), along with her organizing committee, and support of the Peruvian University Cayetano Heredia as co-organizer of the event

The total number of registered participants was 484, including specialists from Australia, Germany, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Puerto Rico, the United Kingdom, and Venezuela. There were 16 invited lectures (45 min), 26 symposia (2–3 h), 2 round tables (3–4 h), 85 other oral presentations (15 min), and 274 posters. These were organized into three main sections:

Diversity and Conservation: This included diverse topics such as mycorrhizas, endophytic fungi, taxonomy and phylogeny, neotropical lichens, microfungal diversity, ecology and evolution, neotropical polypores, aquatic ascomycetes, and entomopathogens.

Technology and Industry: With diverse topics including chemistry and bioprospecting, cultivation of edible fungi, bioremediation, food mycotoxins, human mycology, phytopathology, molecular biology, and metabarcoding.

Education: Which encompassed ethnomycology and fungal teaching strategies at colleges and universities.

Before the formal Congress started, nine pre-congress courses were held: Transformation of lignocellulosic biomass with edible fungi, Digital illustration of micro-fungi for scientific publication, Myxomycetes as educational tools for

teaching, Biological and physiological bases for cultivation of edible mushrooms, Fungi in colleges and universities, Taxonomy and phylogeny of ascomycetes, Taxonomy and phylogeny of basidiomycetes (including a field trip to the Lachay-Lima National Reserve), and Mycological Forensics (the first time such a course had been given in South America). The courses proved popular and together attracted 160 participants.

Participants also enjoyed a welcome local cocktail, traditional dances from Peru, a traditional Inca ceremony of thanks to the Pachamama (mother soil) made by guests to Cusco, and a closing dinner with dishes and traditional national dances.

The Congress was sponsored by several national institutions, including Ricardo Palma University, Agraria la Molina National University, San Ignacio de Loyola University, San Antonio Abad



CLAMIX Organizing Committee.



Ascomycete, basidiomycete, and forensic mycology workshop participants.

National University of Cusco, San Agustín National University of Arequipa, National Amazonian University of Madre de Dios, and Global Mountain. In addition, it had economic sponsorship from some national and international companies, notably Impala, Nikon microscopes, Paccu, Chipola, Inkaterra, Genlab, and Inkatours.

All activities of the Congress were

intended to bring together the international mycological community, improve and increase relationships between the mycologists in the region, and position Peru and the Peruvian University Cayetano Heredia as focal points for collaborative international mycological research. At the same time, it promoted interest in the study of fungi, provided an opportunity to

exchange experiences at the international level, and an opportunity to be updated on the newest technologies and developments in mycology.

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9th International Medicinal Mushrooms Conference (IMMC9)



In 24–28 September 2017 over 200 delegates gathered in Mondello (Palermo), Italy, for the 9th International Medicinal Mushrooms Conference (IMMC9). This biennial conference moves around the world – they have been held in Kiev (Ukraine) in 2001, Pathaya (Thailand) in 2003, Port Townsend (USA) in 2005, Ljubljana (Slovenia) in 2007, Nantong (China) in 2009, Zagreb (Croatia) in 2011, Beijing (China) in 2013, and Manizales (Colombia) in 2015. IMMC9 in Palermo was the first to be held in Italy, and the theme was “Advances in Medicinal Mushroom Science: Building Bridges between Western and Eastern Medicine”. The conference provides a unique event given its scientific relevance and an opportunity for meeting scientists engaged in research on medicinal mushrooms. IMMC9 participants had the opportunity to discuss and share scientific innovations in the medicinal mushroom sector and to become aware of current research results.

I was given the responsibility of organizing IMMC9, which sponsored by DXN Malaysia, Jangsu Alphay Biological

Technology, Funghi Energia e Salute di Funghi Meravigliato Sas, AVD Mico, Aloha Medicinals Inc., Freeland, Società Agricola IoBoscoVivo, Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Lickson s.r.l., Associazione Planthology, Gourmet Mushrooms, and Mycology Research Laboratories ed Energetica Pharm. Several donors supported the Conference: Gheos, Frantoio D’Orazio, Fondazione Internazionale pro Herbario Mediterraneo, Libera Accademia di Medicina Biologica, Italmiko, Azienda Agraria Castelluccio, Gruppo Micologico Siciliano, Erboristeria Galenus, Natural 1, Impresa Leone s.r.l., and Autoscuole Ragone e Fata Assicurazioni. IMMC9 was organized under the patronage of the Università degli Studi di Palermo, Ministero delle Politiche Agricole, Alimentari e Forestali, Città di Palermo, Unione Micologica Italiana, European Mycological Association, Società Botanica Italiana onlus, Project FUNGUS, Organization for the Phyto-Taxonomic Investigation in the Mediterranean Area (OPTIMA), and Istituto Euro-Mediterraneo di Scienza e Tecnologia.

It is impossible in a brief report to do full justice to the variety and scope of the six keynote lectures, 64 oral presentations (arranged in five symposia), and 61 e-posters. S.P. Wasser (Israel/Ukraine), P.C.K. Cheung (China), L. van Griensven (The Netherlands), U. Lindequist (Germany), P. Stamets (USA), and O. Isikhuemhen (USA) were keynote speakers.

Attendees were fascinated by a video provided by Paul Stamets on the use of mycelial extracts from polypore mushrooms to reduce viruses and extend life-spans of the European Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera*). The main congress was organized into six symposia.

Molecular Systematics and Evolution: This started with a presentation on “The

changing shape of mushrooms: toward the new science of fungal evo-devo” by David Hibbett (USA) which was followed by ones on the molecular systematics and phylogeny of *Ganoderma*, *Fomitopsis*, *Schizophyllum* and other medicinal mushrooms by V. Papp (Hungary), V. Fryssouli (Greece), A. Shnyreva (Russia), N. Purtseva (Russia), and E. Bošković (Serbia). Scott Redhead (Canada) then reported on changes made in the rules relevant to the nomenclature of mushrooms that would be included in the Shenzhen edition of the *International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants*.

Cultivation of medicinal mushrooms:

This session commenced with lectures on “Simplified and lower cost methods for mushroom cultivation using cold sterilization techniques” (J. Holliday, USA) and “Cultivation of medicinal fungi biomass and pharmaceutical compounds in bioreactors” (M. Berović, Slovenia). This was followed by others by C. Jaramillo (Colombia), S. Montoya (Colombia), I. Bandura (Ukraine), A. Jasińska (Poland), J. Okhuoya (Nigeria), C. Adenipekun (Nigeria), and M.L. Gargano (Italy) on topics ranging from the use different agricultural residues as a substrate, the effect of blue led-light on the production of *Ganoderma “lucidum”*, solid state fermentation, to ones on production of *Grifola frondosa* in the tropics, and influence of substrate on the zinc content of *Agaricus subrufescens*. Several contributions by the African speakers were greatly appreciated, and concerned cultivation of *Marasmius*, *Pleurotus*, and *Volvariella*, and work based on a culture collection of strains of potential nutraceutical interest.

Biochemistry of Medicinal Mushrooms:

Following a lecture on “Understanding diversity and potential of mushrooms derived low molecular weight aroma



Giuseppe Venturella (left) and Solomon Wasser (right) chair the Closing Ceremony.

and biologically active metabolites” (V. Varshney, India) this symposium included contributions by F. Cateni (Italy), T. Reid (Zimbabwe), S. Zhou (China), J.-Y. Wu (China), O. Isikuehmen (USA), A. Taylor (USA), G. Koutrotsios (Greece), and K. Tešanović, Serbia). These dealt with topics including anti-*Salmonella typhi* activity, nutritional composition, compounds with antioxidant potential, changes in triterpene and polysaccharide content in *Ganoderma “lucidum”* during basidiome growth, properties and biological activities of *Ophiocordyceps sinensis*, vegetative growth and polysaccharide secretion in *Lentinus squarulosus*, and quantifying growth rate and biomass in solid substrate fermentations. The symposium was completed by presentations on enhancement of bioactive compounds in *Pleurotus*, and the biopotential and phosphate metabolism of *Coprinus comatus* and *Coprinellus truncorum*.

Science, Technology and Potential Value of Medicinal Mushrooms: This symposium

started with a lecture of on the antiparasitic activity of ergosterol peroxide isolated from *Pleurotus ostreatus* f. sp. *florida* (A. Trigos, Mexico). The topic of the symposium attracted much interest and this lecture was followed by contributions from Ha Won Kim (South Korea), Qi Wang (China), A. M. Gammazza (Italy), O. Isikhuemhen (USA), M. Nikšić (Serbia), M. G. Cusimano (Italy), A. Bonanno (Italy), J. Robinson (USA), S. Masaphy (Israel), C. Gründemann (Germany), B. Jakopovic (Croatia), H.-C. Lo (Republic of China), C. Sales-Campos (Brazil), M. Mizuno (Japan), K.-I. Minato (Japan), M. Karaman (Serbia), L. Janjušević (Serbia), J. Okhuoya (Nigeria), E. Savino (Italy), X. Yang (China), U. Sandabe (Nigeria), S. Parola (Italy), P. Angelini (Italy), and J. Okhuoya (Nigeria). Subjects covered here included ones on

a wide range of mushrooms reporting on anti-allergic activity, antioxidant potential, anti-hypertensive mechanisms, anti-carcinogenic effects, new antimicrobial peptides, activation of the immune response, anti-inflammatory activity, inhibition of acetylcholinesterase, effects on trans-epithelial transport and activation of dendritic cells.

Medicinal Mushrooms: the importance of randomized clinical trials and evidence-based medicine: Consideration of this key issue was opened with a report on “micomedicine” in China (H.-Y. Bao, China). This was followed contributions followed by D. Yamanaka (Japan), F. Oliviero (Italy), W. Brand (Germany), M. Tutone (Italy), W. Ardigò (Italy), S. Cazzavillan (Italy), S. Duque Henao (Colombia), P. Rossi (Italy),

and N. Salviato (Italy). The topics included use of *Agaricus brasiliensis* as an oral vaccine to increase antibody production, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties of a preparation for the prevention of oxidative stress and autoimmune diseases, a clinical trial on HPV patients, a case study on arterial hypertension control, management of fecal calprotectin, benefits of yogurt enriched with β -glucans, reduction of mood and sleep disorders, and the prevention of metabolic syndrome.

New to IMMC9 was an e-poster session, an innovation never adopted in the previous congresses of the series. This provided a more immediate visualization of the contents, the opportunity to download the poster onto a mobile device, and also contributed to the environment in terms of paper savings.

Werner Greuter (Germany/Italy), Director of the Berlin Botanical Garden and Museum for many years, represented the Organization for the Phyto-Taxonomic Investigation in the Mediterranean Area (OPTIMA) and the International Foundation for Herbarium Mediterranean at the Closing Ceremony. A video in support of Nantong’s candidacy to host IMMC10 in 2019 was presented by Yu Li, who invited attendees to participate in that event. Afterwards, participants visited the medieval villages of Castelbuono and Cefalù where they were received and addressed by the Mayors of the two towns.

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IMMC9 Participants.

Westerdijk Fungal Biodiversity Institute Symposia 2017

Famous Fungi

This public symposium, attended by *ca.* 200 people (including scientists and the general public), was held in the aula of the Academy Building of Utrecht University on the evening of Monday 28 August 2017. It was also the official kick-off of the Westerdijk symposium week. The symposium focussed on fungi that became famous for their enormous impact on our lives, and fungi that may become famous in the future. The Famous Fungi symposium was also part of the 'Westerdijk'-year and honoured the work of the first Dutch female professor, Johanna Westerdijk,

who was also the first Director of what is now the Westerdijk Fungal Biodiversity Institute (formerly the CBS-KNAW). The first speaker, Patricia Faasse (a science historian and biographer of Johanna Westerdijk), addressed the question: who was Johanna Westerdijk and how did her team of women researchers discover and deal with the threat of *Ophiostoma ulmi*, the cause of the Dutch elm disease? The second speaker also needed no introduction, as Joan Bennett related the story of "Dutch penicillin" and how scientists at Gist-Brocades (the current

DSM) independently isolated penicillin under the radar of the Nazi's. The strains they tested were provided by Johanna Westerdijk – did this make her a traitor? Or precisely which strains did she give the Nazi's to work with? The third and final speaker, Kathrin Wittstein, focused on the enormous potential of fungi for industry, and posted the question: what are the potential famous fungi of the future? The evening was rounded off by delicious fungal snacks, and drinks subjected to fungal fermentation.



Famous Fungi Symposium. Top (*left to right*): Mariëtte Oosterwegel (Managing Director Westerdijk Fungal Biodiversity Institute); Patricia Faasse; Joan Bennett; Kathrin Wittstein. Bottom (*left to right*): the stately Aula of the Academy Building of the Utrecht University; drinks in the cloister garden of the Dom church. Photos Pedro Crous and Elroy Heijgen.

Leading Women in Fungal Biology

The theme of the main Institute symposium this year was “Leading Women in Fungal Biology” which was held on 30–31 August 2017 on the Utrecht University campus. The meeting, which was unique in the sense that all speakers were leading female mycologists, was attended by 170 participants (excluding students, of whom several arrived on the day).

The symposium was kicked off with the opening by the President of the Royal Dutch Academy of Arts and Sciences, José van Dijk, who addressed the audience, highlighting the recent actions undertaken by the Academy to promote the role of women in science, and also referring to Johanna Westerdijk as her role-model. Following her opening address, she was surprised by a framed copy of a new fungal genus, “*Vandijkella*”, which was isolated by

staff of the Westerdijk Institute from soil she collected in her garden in Amsterdam (as part of the citizen science project being run with different Dutch schools; the first set of species is to be officially published in the December volume of *Persoonia*). The first session focussed on Applied and Medical Mycology (speakers: Joan Bennett, Lene Lange, Isabelle Benoit-Gelber, Joanna Freeke, and Anne D. van Diepeningen). Lunch was followed by two further sessions, on Fungal Ecology (Lynne Boddy, Liesje Mommer, Meredith Blackwell, and Nina N. Gunde-Cimerman), and Fungal Biodiversity (Meike Piepenbring, Jennifer Luangsa-ard, and Amanda Chen).

The Thursday started with the announcement of the Johanna Westerdijk

Award made to Josepa Gena (*see this issue* p. (53)). The first scientific symposium focused on Fungal Genomes (Brenda Wingfield, Eva Stukenbrock, and Jolantha Miadlikowska), followed by Fungal Plant Pathogens (Francine Govers, Treena Burgess, Vivianne Vleeshouwers, Regine Kahman, and Joan Webber). After lunch, the final session on Fungal Biodiversity concluded the symposium (Heide-Marie Daniel, Josepa Gena, Cathy Aime, Birgitte Andersen, and Ulrike Damm), after which participants made their way to the Westerdijk Institute for the official opening and fungal barbecue (*see this issue* pp. (41)–(42)). Papers from the symposium (with female lead authors) are to be published in the March 2018 volume of *Studies in Mycology*.





Leading Women in Fungal Biology Symposium. Photos: Pedro Crous and Kasper Luijsterburg.

Cryptic Speciation in Classification Symposium

This symposium was held at the Westerdijk Institute in Utrecht on Friday 1 September 2017, and was attended by 70 participants. The main topic of debate was speciation in fungi, especially focusing on naming entities below the species level. In the past, these were dealt with as forms, special forms, varieties, races, subspecies, or pathovars. Given novel information about hybridization, disposable chromosomes, toxins, and gene flow, new questions now arise as to how best to recognize and name

species and intraspecies variation. These issues were debated in a series of invited lectures by prominent scientists.

The meeting was kicked off with a session on Nomenclatural Reflections (David Hawksworth, Lorenzo Lombard, Nani Maryani, and Nicomedes Valenzuela). A second session focused on Hybridisation, Disposable Chromosomes, Toxins, and Gene Flow (Wieland Meyer, Martijn Rep, Bart Theelen, Treena Burgess, Keith Seifert & Jens Frisvad, and Pradeep K. Divakar

& Ana Crespo). Following lunch saw a continuation of that session (Wilhelm De Beer, Irene Barnes, Yu-Pei Tan, Balazs Brankovics, Joao Siqueira, Lucile Wendt), with a final session on Nomenclature and Future Plans (Tom May, Wilhelm De Beer, and Marc Stadler), which was followed by a panel discussion, and dinner in Utrecht.

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Plant Biomass Conversion

The 2nd International Symposium on Plant Biomass Conversion by Fungi was organized at the Westerdijk Fungal Biodiversity Institute, on 28–29 August 2017. The symposium attracted around 90 participants from across the world and covered the whole range of this topic, including model, industrial, and plant pathogenic fungi, as well species from all fungal phyla. The symposium included five plenary lectures by Bernard Henrissat (France), Emma Master

(Canada), Monika Schmolz (Austria), Vincent Eijsink (Norway), and Antonio Pisabarro (Spain), as well as 15 talks selected from submitted abstracts and 40 poster presentations.

The highly interactive character of the symposium, with extensive discussion both during the talks and the poster sessions, made it a great success. Most current issues regarding the conversion of plant biomass were addressed and several recent

new insights were presented providing a comprehensive overview of the state of the field. All participants agreed on a continuation of this symposium series on a two-year cycle so the next one will be planned for 2019. This symposium is part of the Westerdijk symposium week.

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Mycology Session at 21st AETFAT Congress in Nairobi



Mycologists at the Nairobi Congress.

On 15–19 May 2017, the 21st tri-annual congress of the Association for the Taxonomic Study of the Flora of Tropical Africa (AETFAT) was hosted in Nairobi, Kenya, by the National Museums of Kenya and the University of Nairobi. Due to the activities of mycologists in tropical Africa, there has always been a strong mycological presence at AETFAT meetings, which was strengthened during the previous congress in Stellenbosch, South Africa, where the

African Mycological Association (AMA) hosted a special symposium on mycology that was well attended. During the 21st AETFAT congress, we were again fortunate in that the Organizing Committee was willing to provide us with a room for our own sessions on mycology, which were filled for three days. It was great to have our own venue and session devoted to mycology during a meeting attended by numerous African and non-African biologists passionate about

biodiversity and taxonomy in tropical Africa. Our sessions were also attended by a number of non-mycologists who were curious to learn more about African fungi.

Presentations and posters presented research from various countries in Africa, which represented various regions from arid to tropical. African mycologists and collaborators again continued to present along the lines of our solid history on edible fungi, ethnical uses, and biodiversity of macrofungi. However, there were also research presented on lichens, slime moulds, *Fusarium*, and the uses of next generation sequencing approaches. Networking was vibrant and will undoubtedly lead to further opportunities.

The number of mycologists who could attend was limited by financial constraints. This is a very real challenge for many African mycologists. The next AETFAT congress will be held in Zambia in 2020, and we again plan to have vibrant sessions on mycology, possibly accompanied by field surveys in the unique habitats of the country. Start planning!

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Towards a Natural Classification & Industrial Utilization of Fungi (COEIC-2017)

This international conference was held at the Centre of Excellence in Fungal Research, Mae Fah Luang University, Chiang Rai, Thailand, on 11–13 January 2017. It was convened by Kevin D. Hyde, the Centre's Director, the University, and research students to mark the 80th birthday of E. B. Gareth Jones, under whose guidance Kevin Hyde and many other students obtained PhDs on varied marine mycological topics (see also pp. (55)–(56) in this issue).

On the first day, Kevin Hyde traced in detail the family and academic life of Gareth Jones, including a documentary prepared by his students was presented during the inaugural session. The President of Mae Fah Luang University, Vanchai Sirichama, in opening the conference, elaborated on the academic and research activities and major



achievements of the University in the 18 years of its existence and specially lauded the efforts of the Centre of Excellence for the high quality of its research publications. The conference included six sessions spread over the three days:

Marine and Freshwater Fungi: In a keynote address, Gareth Jones, reviewed the growth of marine mycology in general and his contributions towards the understanding of the taxonomy, biology, ecology, and utilization of the marine biota. Other



papers in the session dealt in detail with the diversity of marine, freshwater, mangrove, and manglicolous fungi in sea waters and fungal diversity and metabolic products of deep-sea sediment-fungi.

Plant Pathology: Joanne E. Taylor (Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh), in her keynote address dealt with "The tree microbiome as part of the extended phenotypes". Further papers concerned ecological speciation in phytopathogenic fungi, fungal plant-biocontrol agents, *Botryosphaeriaceae*, genetic diversity of *Fusarium oxysporum* f.sp. *cubense*, tar-spot diseases, and fruit-crop diseases caused by fungi.

Phylogeny and Evolution of Fungi: This session commenced with two keynote addresses entitled: 'Establishing new fungal species: ramifications and recommendations' by Rajesh Jeeewon (University of Mauritius) and 'OFF, ON – did something change? One fungus-One name and its effect on basidiomycetous fungi' by Eric McKenzie (formerly of Landcare Research, New Zealand). Four further papers concerned

different aspects of fungal phylogeny and taxonomy by young mycologists from the region.

Ecological and economic roles of fungi across the SE Asian region: Peter Mortimer (Kunming Institute of Botany, China) delivered the keynote address of the session on 'Landscape scale distribution models and diversity of mushrooms in SE Asian forests'. Seven papers on different aspects of mushroom biology and economics followed. As mushrooms are a popular culinary and medicinal subject in the region, the topics of these papers became the focus of enthusiastic discussions.

Fungal Biotechnology: The keynote address in this session was by Marc Stadler (Mikrobielle Wirkstoffe, Germany) and entitled 'Phylogeny and functional biodiversity of *Xylariaceae*'. Four other papers were given here on various aspects of fungal biotechnology and economics.

Ranking and Evolution: Four papers on fungal ranking and evolution were presented, tracing evolutionary lineages

based on molecular evidence and statistical analyses.

In addition there were 25 poster papers on varied aspects of fungal taxonomy, molecular biology, utilization and bioeconomics, explained by young mycologists from South-East Asia. Social events included a grand welcome diner, at which delegates were enthralled by traditional Thai dances. On the second day, Gareth Jones' birthday was celebrated by a grand event which included several South-East Asian cultural programmes by research students, and I presented him with a traditional shawl from India.

I congratulate the organisers for their untiring efforts which made the programme a grand success. This meticulously organised and academically rich event is one more feather in the achievements of the Centre of Excellence in Fungal Research at Mae Fah Luang University.

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