

## IS-MPMI *Reporter*

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### IS-MPMI REPORTER DEADLINE

**The deadline for submitting items for the next issue is September 26, 2014.**

Share your news, accomplishments, and upcoming meeting details with your colleagues. Submit articles, announcements, and any ideas you may have for the next issue. You can send an e-mail ([ismpmireportereditor@scisoc.org](mailto:ismpmireportereditor@scisoc.org)) or submit your item online ([www.ismpmi.org/newsletter/submissionform.asp](http://www.ismpmi.org/newsletter/submissionform.asp)).

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## A Letter from the President



Sophien Kamoun,  
President

### Wonders of the Plant-Microbe Interactions World

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The XVI International Congress on Molecular Plant-Microbe Interactions (IC-MPMI) will take place on 6–10 July in the beautiful and historic Greek island of Rhodes. In this issue of *IS-MPMI Reporter*, Congress Chief Organizer **Eris Tjamos** provides a final update on the congress. With more than 1,100 registered participants, the congress organizers have already achieved one of their objectives in drawing many of you to attend. They also validated the choice of Rhodes, a popular destination on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, as a fitting venue for the congress. The registration cost structure, which favored students, also turned out to be a pertinent decision. With more than 400 students registered, the congress is poised to be a memorable event and networking opportunity not just for established scientists but also for the younger contingent of our community. On behalf of our membership and the congress participants, I express my most sincere thanks to Eris and his Local Organizing Committee for their hard and sustained work over the last two years. I am very much looking forward to what will certainly be a popular and high-quality event.

The island of Rhodes has a rich and fascinating history. During antiquity, the Colossus of Rhodes, a 30-meter-high statue of the Greek god Helios, was erected after a war victory. Along with other Greek, Egyptian, and Babylonian monuments, the Colossus is known as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It is therefore appropriate that the Rhodes IC-MPMI will mark the anniversary of some of the most influential publications in the MPMI field. First, we will celebrate the cloning of the first avirulence effector gene, which was published 30 years ago. Second, we will recognize a series of papers published ~20 years ago that reported the cloning of the first plant immune receptor genes. These are monumental findings—wonders of the plant-microbe interactions world. I encourage you to highlight in your congress presentations how your present work relates to these colossal discoveries. (Publication titles and authors are on page 3)

The IC-MPMI Local Organizing Committee has been painstakingly finalizing the scientific program and selecting the remaining oral presentations from the ~950 abstracts received. As reported in earlier issues of *IS-MPMI Reporter*, ~60% of all oral presentations have been selected from the abstracts to reward participants who submitted their best work. To ensure a fair and equitable system, the organizers devised an online voting system and collated votes from 90 reviewers representing the concurrent session chairs and plenary speakers. Additional concurrent sessions are being considered to enable more of you to make oral presentations.

I congratulate 45 early-stage scientists from 16 countries who received the 2014 XVI International Congress Travel Award in honor of the late Professor **Ko Shimamoto**. Many thanks to **Mary Beth Mudgett**, **Roger Innes**, and other IS-MPMI directors for overseeing the Travel Award and seeking additional student travel funds from U.S. federal agencies. One excellent innovation they introduced to this year's congress is to arrange for the travel awardees to have lunch with the plenary speakers on the day of their talks.

Our scientific community is vibrant and dynamic, but it is also built on robust knowledge that forms a solid platform for future progress. Unlike the Colossus of Rhodes, which ended up being destroyed by an earthquake only years after its construction, the wonders of the plant-microbe interactions world will continue to stand the test of time. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that our field recognizes and rewards excellent science to ensure that the next generation of plant-microbe interactions scientists stands on the shoulder of giants and delivers another round of high-impact discoveries and concepts.

It is with these thoughts that I conclude my final column for the *IS-MPMI Reporter*. My term will end after the XVI IC-MPMI, and I thank you for offering me the opportunity to serve the society. Please join me in welcoming President-Elect **Sheng Yang He** as he takes over this position after the Rhodes Congress. ■