

XXIst INQUA Congress 2023: Time for Change

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The XXIst International Union for Quaternary Research (INQUA) Congress 2023 (XXI INQUA Congress 2023) was held during July 14-20, 2023 at the Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy. The INQUA Congress is organized once in every four years. The main theme of the INQUA Congress 2023 was “Time for Change”, emphasizing the critical role of Quaternary sciences in contributing the knowledge we need to face current societal and climate challenges. The changing world and the pandemic, in particular, have a major impact on INQUA’s core objectives i.e. to promote improved communication and international collaboration in experimental and applied aspects of Quaternary research. About 3000 participants from 103 countries participated and presented their research findings as oral and poster presentations. The Congress was inaugurated by His Excellency Sergio Mattarella, President of the Italian Republic, and Mrs. Anna Maria Bernini, Minister of University and Research, Government of Italy, Italy, in the august presence of Prof. Thijs von Kolfschoten, President of INQUA, Prof. Francesco Latino Chiocci, Chairperson of the Organising Committee, XXIst INQUA Congress 2023, and Prof. Laura Sadori, Vice-Chairperson (of the Organising Committee, XXIst INQUA Congress 2023). Prof. Laura Sadori welcomed esteemed guests and participants of the XXIst INQUA Congress, who have contributed to this momentous event at the opening ceremony. Prof. Francisco L. Chiocci provided an overview of INQUA’s history and the agenda for the Congress. Prof. Thijs van Kolfschoten emphasized the critical role of Quaternary science and the need for INQUA to lead the debate and foster International cooperation. He underscored the theme of “Time for Change,” stating that it not only applies to reducing our ecological footprint but also necessitates a shift in attitude, with solidarity being a key component. Furthermore, he called for the combination of responsibility and solidarity to address the challenges ahead. Mrs. Anna Maria Bernini highlighted the significance of specialized branches of science in comprehending and addressing the environmental impact of human activities. She urged young students, researchers, and the scientific community to contribute to collective well-being and shape a positive agenda regarding the role of science in global debates.

After the completion of the opening ceremony and the end of the inaugural function, the scientific sessions of the International Congress started. Keynote lectures were delivered and technical session followed in 14 parallel sessions to address key issues in Quaternary research falling under 7 different themes: (1) From Natural Processes to Geohazards, (2) Landforms, Facies architecture and Sequence stratigraphy, (3) Quaternary environments and Human evolution: fossil record, phylogeny, palaeobiology, palaeoecology and cultural models, (4) Ecosystems and biogeography from latest Pliocene to “Anthropocene”, (5) Climate record, processes and models, (6) The Quaternary time machine and (7) Time for Change in Quaternary

Sciences. These seven themes were also divided into various sub-themes (4-7), which were further divided into various sessions (209) of the Congress under which the different lectures were delivered. There were 5 plenary talks, as well as > 1000 posters and oral presentations. Various workshops and short courses on the above-said themes and sub-themes were also organized during the Congress. Meanwhile, special meetings of INQUA commissions, such as HABCOM, PALCOM, SACCOM, TERPRO, etc. also took place during the congress. A one-day mid-Congress trip on July 16, 2023) was also organized for site seeing in and around Rome. Pre-, Mid-, and Post-field excursions (20), which cover all the fields of Quaternary Sciences, moreover, were also made at various places of Rome.

During the Valedictory function on 20th July, 2023, election for the next INQUA President and Vice-President was held and only the International Council (IC) of the INQUA voted. Prof. Laura Sadori (Sapienza University, Rome, Italy) was elected as the next INQUA President (2023-2027) and Dr. Pradeep Srivastava (IIT, Roorkee, India) was elected as Vice-President (2023-2027) of the INQUA. India won the bid for the next INQUA Congress i.e. XXIInd INQUA Congress 2027, and the baton was given to Dr. Neena Malhotra, IFS, Ambassador of India to the Republic of Italy (Italy) by Prof. Thijs von Kolfschoten, President of INQUA, in the esteemed presence of Prof. Francesco Latino Chiocci, Prof. Laura Sadori, Prof. D.M. Banerjee (INSA Honorary Scientist, New Delhi, India, who served as the Chair of the National Committee for INQUA, and, hence, performed the role of the leader of the Indian delegation), Dr. Vandana Prasad, Director, BSIP, Lucknow, Dr. Pradeep Srivastava, Dr. Binita Phartiyal (BSIP), Dr. Rahul Mohan, (National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research: NCPOR, Goa), and various other members of the Organising Committee (XXIst INQUA Congress 2023), as well as about 80 participants from various Colleges, Universities, IITs, and Research Organizations of India and other participants from 102 countries. The XXIInd INQUA Congress 2027 will be organized jointly by the Association of Quaternary Researchers (AoQR), Lucknow, the BSIP (Lucknow), and the NCPOR (Goa, India), and hosted by INSA, MoES and DST, New Delhi, India. The XXIInd INQUA Congress 2027, with a theme “Quaternary Sciences as Societal Services”, will take place in India in 2027 (February 01-07, 2027) in Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh), India, with Dr. Pradeep Srivastava as President, Dr. Rahul Mohan as Vice-President, and Dr. Binita Phartiyal as Secretary General (Organising Secretary). Dr. Binita Phartiyal, later on, during the concluding session, underscored the research opportunities, to be offered by India covering the entire Quaternary Period.

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