



Dear ISEE colleagues and friends,

It has been an honor and great pleasure to serve as your President for the past two years. What we accomplished during my tenure would not have been possible without the work of ISEE past presidents, councilors, secretary treasurers, committee and chapter members, conference organizers and our administrator, Doreen Albertson. The society will be well served by our incoming President Mark Nieuwenhuijsen. Please join me in welcoming and supporting his leadership. I encourage all of you to come to us with new ideas and initiatives and provide us with a broad basis for our profession's voice.

I have witnessed the growth of our regional ISEE chapters. The very energetic Africa Chapter offered a 3-day training course that attracted almost 500 applicants last fall. The Latin American Chapter enrolled thousands in an online course in cooperation with PAHO. The Asia Chapter regional conferences are well attended and of excellent quality, while the European Chapter conferences showcase exceptional young talent. Our newly formed North America Chapter is planning to hold its first ever young researcher North America meeting in June 2021 in San Diego. In times of heightened Middle Eastern tensions, I am delighted to report that our Eastern Mediterranean Chapter was able to meet in Jordan in early December due to the extraordinary dedication of 14 ISEE members from 10 countries and with support from the WHO Center for Environmental Health Action.

Many chapter activities have been supported by hard-working ISEE committees. The *Capacity Building and Education Committee (CAPE)* has been growing our online presence, archiving and making available keynote talks and webinars. The *Policy* and the *Ethics Committees* have become a strong and steady backbone of our society. *Communications* are growing and so is our social media presence. The new *Membership Committee* is looking for creative input on what are new and important benefits to our members. The spontaneity of our *Student and New Researcher Network (SNRN)* inspire all of us to move the goal posts at our meetings and get active. The *Conference Committee* has formulated helpful guidelines for future organizers sorely needed to address the attendance growth we are experiencing. I wholeheartedly thank our local hosts for putting their professional lives on hold to organize our meetings.

The future has arrived. Time is running out. Environmental changes are impacting human and ecosystem health at an unprecedented scale. I personally witness a growing number of fires in California every fall. Fires currently raging in Australia are devastating, their smoke travelling around our globe. Djakarta has recently been under water and India is suffocating in exhaust. ISEE is a place where we can forge alliances and join forces. It is a sign of the success of our maturing science that we face opposition. Let's arm ourselves with the tools of our profession, defend environmental public health, competently and loudly counter those who dismiss our science. Let's engage in constructive scientific dialogue with the public. Let's join our minds and souls and enjoy our work in protecting our planet's health and our children's future.

See you all at our annual conference in DC this summer!

Beate Ritz
ISEE Immediate Past President