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## Letter from the President, February 2021

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Sari Hanafi <isa@isa-sociology.org>  
Reply-To: Sari Hanafi <isa@isa-sociology.org>  
To: "Mr. Pranay Aggarwal" <pranayaggarwal01@gmail.com>

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### Letter from the President to ISA Members

#### President's Perspective

February 2021

Greetings!

So far, 2021 has certainly not lived up to our wishes for this new year. We are currently experiencing one of the most disruptive pandemics in modern history, with 106 million confirmed cases and more than two million deaths globally. Against this background, the ISA seeks to pursue its mission working with the international sociological community through the pandemic-induced switch to online teaching/lecturing. We try to turn these predicaments into assets by democratizing the participation in scientific events with the possibility of reaching scholarly communities that cannot afford traveling, but also by reducing sociologists' carbon footprint of air travel. Of course, we all miss the conviviality of face-to-face encounters as well as the opportunities for networking, especially for early-career researchers looking for research partners or jobs. Let us hope that the post-COVID-19 era will strike a better balance between knowledge accessibility, climate change mitigation, conviviality, and networking.

As ISA president, while all my travel plans have been cancelled, I have been honored to give many keynotes with the national associations and in other conferences and workshops and interact virtually with our scholarly community. Each time, I remind sociologists that post-COVID-19 sociology should take a serious ethical turn by proposing normative methods, presuppositions, and explicit commitments.

#### ISA IV Forum of Sociology: in a couple of weeks

Starting on February 23, 2021 and during six days, this [IV ISA Forum of Sociology](#) will be our first virtual Forum, with over 800 sessions, more than 3,000 papers, and the participation of sociologists from 125 countries. We owe it to the endless effort made by the Program Coordinators and Session Organizers of 53 Research Committees, 4 Working Groups, and 3 Thematic Groups.

I strongly welcome your active participation. For those who will not present a paper or chair a session, you can opt for [View-Only Registration](#). The technology to organise a virtual meeting of this size is very expensive and many financial decisions have been taken after very thorough discussions at different levels of our Association, taking into account the difficult situation worldwide not only for ISA individual members but also for collective ones. In total, 457 registration grants have been allocated. Besides, registration fees have been reduced by 50% while a Solidarity Fund has been created for those wishing to enable sociologists experiencing hardship to participate.

Leading scholars from different continents will share their perspectives in the Forum's Opening and Closing Plenaries: Michael Burawoy, Isabel Casimiro, Manuel Castells, Ashish Kothari, Rita Segato, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, and Maristella Svampa. This Forum will also be an opportunity for our global community to pay tribute to three of our most distinguished colleagues to which special panels are dedicated: Immanuel Wallerstein, Erik Olin Wright, and Marielle Franco. Besides hundreds of panels, let me highlight the Professional Development Sessions focusing on ISA publications, teaching sociology and social theory. There is also a special session designed for early-career sociologists, *In Conversation with Senior Sociologists: Making Connections, Bridging Generations*, as well as a Sociological Movies session. Check

out the Forum on-line program [here](#).

This Forum wouldn't have been possible without the amazing and patient work of Geoffrey Pleyers, Forum President, the Research Coordinating Committee, the Local Organizing Committee headed by Hermilio Santos, and the ISA Secretariat in Madrid.

### **The XX ISA World Congress of Sociology**

The XX ISA World Congress of Sociology scheduled for 24-30 July, 2022 in Melbourne, Australia, will focus on the theme "Resurgent Authoritarianism: The Sociology of New Entanglements of Religions, Politics, and Economies." The vertiginous rise of authoritarianism, as well as populism, xenophobia, and racism make our task as sociologists more crucial than ever. For more information on the theme, go to the [Congress webpage](#).

Please note the April 15, 2021 deadline for submitting to [isa@isa-sociology.org](mailto:isa@isa-sociology.org) proposals for:

- Integrative sessions which involve at least 3 Research Committees, 3 National Associations or a combination of the two
- Regular sessions by National, Regional, Linguistic and Thematic Associations

### **New collective members**

I am glad to welcome new regular collective members that have joined the ISA recently: the Colombian, Serbian, and Vietnamese Sociological Associations and the Paraguayan Society of Sociology. My special thanks to Filomin Gutierrez, Vice-President for National Associations.

### **ISA forthcoming events**

Due to uncertain travel protocols, the [5th Conference of the Council of National Associations](#) (CNA) to be held in Slovenia on the theme "Social Transformations and Sociology: Disposessions and Empowerment" has been moved from May 10-13, 2021 to November 22-25, 2021. Each national association is expected to send a representative who will present a paper and attend the CNA business meetings. A new deadline will be announced shortly to ensure a wider participation.

### **And finally**

Much of what is accomplished by the ISA is the result of all the hard work and diverse contributions of our members. I also take this opportunity to thank our four vice-presidents, Filomin Gutierrez, Eloisa Martín, Geoffrey Pleyers, and Sawako Shirahase, as well as ISA Executive Committee members, ISA editors, ISA Executive Secretary Izabela Barlinska, and the ISA Secretariat for their work and dedication to the Association.

Stay safe!

Salam,

Sari Hanafi  
President, International Sociological Association  
Prof. of Sociology, American University of Beirut  
[sh41@aub.edu.lb](mailto:sh41@aub.edu.lb)  
<https://sites.aub.edu.lb/sarihanafi/>