2018 is the mid-term year in IRPA’s four yearly lifecycle, and we have held our four Regional Congresses:

- Latin American Congress - Havana, Cuba (April): Around 500 delegates, with a focus on radiation safety culture and a strong medical programme.
- Asia/Oceania Congress, Melbourne, Australia (May): Over 300 delegates, and a wide-ranging scientific programme including ‘Perceptions, Risks and Opportunities’.
- European Congress, The Hague, Netherlands (June): Over 600 delegates, and a wide-ranging scientific programme around the theme of ‘Sustainability in RP’.
- African Congress, Tunis, Tunisia (September): 200 delegates, with a strong medical emphasis and a strong focus on the theme ‘Towards Sustainability of RP in Africa’.

IRPA is very grateful for the support given to these events by the IAEA and WHO/PAHO. Forty IRPA societies were formally represented at these congresses, with delegates from many more countries.

Key common issues arising from the congresses included:

- The importance of positive programmes to secure the future of the RP profession through attracting and retaining young persons and addressing knowledge transfer.
- The need to work together towards developing and embedding a practical approach based on radiation safety culture.
- More emphasis is needed on practical aspects of protection, including the balance of prudence and (over-)conservatism, ‘Reasonableness’ in optimisation, and the effective use of the graded approach.
- The importance of cooperative working across borders, and (with particular emphasis in Latin America and Africa) the ongoing need for support from the key international organisations (including IAEA and WHO/PAHO).
- Public understanding of radiation risk remains a key concern.

IRPA’s ongoing programme aims to address these key issues. Relevant highlights are included below.

IRPA launched the Young Generation Network at each of the four congresses. The YGN aims to ‘encourage, inspire and develop the next generation of RP professionals across the world and promote communication and collaboration between the members’.

As part of the wider discussions on the future development of the system of protection we continue to generate awareness and explore views from our members relating to practical RP on issues including conservatism in assessments, ‘reasonableness’ in optimisation, and the graded approach.

We continue with Task Groups addressing Public Understanding, where we aim to develop guidance for RP professionals on the techniques of effective risk communication, and on Eye Lens issues with an emphasis on sharing learning on dosimetry and mitigation. We are working with IOMP, WHO and IAEA on producing guidance on developing radiation safety culture in healthcare facilities.

IRPA is also developing our role in the field of Non-Ionising Radiation, and exploring the possibility of new work on NORM issues in industry.

Roger Coates, IRPA President