

Welcome Letter

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

On behalf of the Board and the Local Organising and Scientific Programme Committees, we warmly welcome you to the **13th Meeting of the International Society of Pneumonia and Pneumococcal Diseases (ISPPD-13)** in Cape Town, South Africa to be held from 17-20 March 2024 at the beautiful Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC). Historically, ISPPD was the premier meeting for pneumococcal researchers globally, bringing together individuals with a diverse range of interests and expertise. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, we recognise the need to expand the content and context of this meeting to include the clinical syndrome of pneumonia more broadly.

This is the second time that this meeting is being held in South Africa, the previous one being ISPPD-2 at Sun City in 2000. Over the past two decades, there have been transformational changes in the control of pneumonia and pneumococcal disease worldwide. This era has been defined by the introduction of pneumococcal conjugate vaccines globally, with a keen focus on assessing vaccine impact and serotype evolution. However, severe outcomes from pneumococcal diseases remain a concern for healthy as well as compromised hosts around the world. What transformational changes will define the next era of pneumococcal disease prevention? This new era will be characterised by a new generation of vaccines and strategies for their use, an improved understanding of genomics, next-generation sequencing, new diagnostics, the role of the microbiome, and better knowledge of host-pathogen interaction. In addition, we invite the submission of topics and research findings related to other, non-pneumococcal causes of pneumonia.

As was done at ISPPD-12, we plan to have an informative and exciting programme that highlights the areas of substantial

recent progress while also posing the tough questions where progress has been more challenging. Wherever possible, plenary sessions will take a cross-disciplinary approach to major areas in the field. Parallel sessions will allow us to explore specific topics that cover areas that include but are not limited to clinical and diagnostic issues, host-immune interactions, genomics, immunology, microbiology, epidemiology and the interface between these areas. Meet-the-Expert sessions will provide opportunities for interaction with professionals in smaller, structured settings. Researchers at all levels will have an opportunity to present their work in interactive poster sessions. Attention will be given to how to exchange knowledge and translate findings into policies that benefit individuals affected by or at risk of pneumonia worldwide.

ISPPD-13's programme will provide ample opportunities for networking professionally and socially. The social programme promises to be exciting and will allow you to experience the culture and warmth of Cape Town. Cape Town is one of the largest cities in South Africa and a thriving multi-cultural metropolis. We look forward to interacting with you as you enjoy the ISPPD-13 Meeting and hopefully spend a few extra days exploring the sights, nature and cuisine of South Africa.

We are delighted to welcome you to Cape Town and South Africa!

Best wishes,

Shabir Madhi, Anne von Gottberg and Mignon du Plessis
ISPPD-13 Co-Chairs, Local Organising Committee