

Message from the President

Dear UAPS Members,
Dear Colleagues,
Dear Partners,

Greetings! I would like to wish our members and their families a spectacular New Year 2021, filled with peace, excellent health, happiness and prosperity!

As we reflect on the year 2020, we start the year 2021 with the hope it offers plenty of opportunities to UAPS members and partners. Despite the challenges we faced worldwide due to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, the Council did not spare any efforts to work towards keeping the promises made to you when it was elected in November 2019. During the past year, the Council has worked tirelessly to improve the Secretariat's mode of functioning with transparent administrative and financial management instruments for good governance and sustainability. The Council will continue working to bring our Union to operate under international standards.

The Council is always looking for new ways to make information more accessible to members while resolving the hurdles in paying membership dues. I am proud of the fact that for the first time, we have an interactive and a member-focused website with a new, secure and efficient payment system.

The Council is committed to ensuring that population scientists interested in Africa's development continue to make inputs into the formulation and implementation of population policies through the publication of sound population research findings. We entreat you to submit your manuscripts to the Union's journal, *African Population Studies*.

More so, we are persistently looking out for opportunities to extend our network as well as connect members with institutions and organizations worldwide who share our common interests. Despite the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, we ensured UAPS representation in discussions regarding population and sustainable development in Africa.

- UAPS was part of the series of webinars on *Demography and COVID-19 in Africa – Evidence and Policy Responses to Safeguard the Demographic Dividend* which was hosted between October 21st and November 25th 2020 by the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) under the leadership of South Africa's Department of Social Development and Stats SA.
- UAPS also participated in the roundtable “Regional Population Associations and Research Agenda” organized during the IX conference of the Latin American Population Association (ALAP) which took place from December 9th to 11th, 2020. These efforts will continue this year with expected participation at the Population Association of America (PAA) meeting planned for May 5th to 8th, 2021 and during which UAPS will organize special sessions.

We are extremely proud of our members' numerous outstanding achievements and look forward to seeing their continuous successes. We invite you to share all professional achievements with UAPS and encourage you to stay tuned as we engage you through our website, social media pages, workshops, quarterly newsletters, emails and other media.

Finally, and sadly, we lost a member of the Council in 2020 – Dr Leon Swartz – who was the Union's Southern Africa representative. Dr Swartz passionately supported UAPS and its objectives since joining the Union in 2007. He continuously helped secure funding for *African Population Studies*. Dr Swartz was a teacher and mentor to many demographers and population scientists in Southern Africa and made all efforts to encourage early career scholars to be UAPS members and participate in the Union's activities such as the African Population Conferences. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

On behalf of the UAPS Council, I would like to thank all our members and partners for your commitment to the Union's vision, mission and objectives. We will continue to provide you with periodic updates.

I wish you a successful and productive year 2021.

Dr. Donatien Beguy
President, UAPS