

IUFoST 2024 Congress - Report



A Report written by the Immediate Past President on behalf of the Food Science and Technology Platform of Kenya



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Preamble

The 22nd World Congress of Food Science and Technology was held at Palacongressi in the city of Rimini Italy from 8 to 12 of September 2024. The Congress lined up an exciting programme that included industry-based workshops, distinguished plenary and keynote speakers, industry led concurrent sessions, applied research presentations and a number of networking opportunities. With more than 2,500 delegates from Americas, Europe, Africa, Asia-Pacific and worldwide, there was a great chance to meet and interact with Food Scientists, Food Industry Professionals, Key Opinion Leaders, and Start-ups.

The Congress was opened by Italian dignitaries with the occasion being laced with Italian culture and music, bringing the mood to Rimini, an amazing tourist city.



Personal experience from the Congress

The activities leading to the conference and the display during the one week at Rimini was a testament to good organization. The congress was planned and organized for slightly more than a year, a dedicated website and communication channels being in place with timely feedback to any response from the delegates. The venue of the congress was ideal and the choice of the city superb, a tourist city by the lakeside that ensured delegates had a chance to relax at the beach after congress. The congress shuttle buses were available for free use by the delegates and digital management on the same was something to appreciate. The congress doors opened daily from 8 am and would run up to 6 pm or thereabouts depending on the activity of the day. The program was fully available and advance copies were accessible online to help plan for the days as scheduled. The program document also had details and guidelines with clear floor plans for the plenary and breakout sessions, it showed delegates where one would access any other service during the period.

The congress kicked off on Sunday 8th September 2024 with several workshops. The Early Career Scientists Global Partnership for achieving SDGs focused on the role of Young Scientists, call for the Youth Action in Addressing Future Food System Challenges. This workshop was very well attended and I was glad to see the team

that picked from our team move forward the agenda through presentations of the early careers as well as seasoned food scientists. This was followed by group work and brainstorming sessions that responded to the key challenges of innovation and involvement of the youth in science and more so focusing on future prospects. Another pre-congress workshop was the Food Safety Validation and Verification with major focus on requirements for global food safety. The two workshops were followed by adhering bodies/IAFOST gathering which was meant to update the participants on the IUFOST programmes and key plans that were to be prioritized during and after the congress. In this meeting, participants also registered in the new working groups that were presented. I got the chance to represent FOSTEP-K in this meeting as the adhering body from Kenya.



A group session during the ECS pre-conference

The official opening ceremony took place on Monday 9th September and was spiced with Italian Food Tradition: a story that continues. This was followed immediately in the same plenary session with session ONE focusing on food processing for nutrition, diet and health. Critical advances in improved food processing food classification were presented. The next two sessions focused on multi-disciplinary panel discussion on the same before a young scientist award winner presentation. Other scientific sessions took place in breakaway rooms.

My interests rotated around nutrition and health alternative protein, new product development, food analysis, food safety, food processing industries in emerging economies, processing for nutrition, diet, and health. I was privileged to co-chair a session together with Antonio Jesus Melendez-Martinez from Italy. Our session was packed with research focused on next generation prebiotics, nano particles in Tamarindus indica pulp, sour-dough fermentation, precision nutrition strategies, clinical trials of lactobacillus brevis in improving exercise performance of athletes among others.



Co-chairing a session during the scientific sessions

Once the scientific sessions were concluded, I represented FOSTEP-K in the General Assembly where important decisions took place. The new officials including the IUFOST president was inaugurated into office and key decisions were ratified. A new Mid-Career Section was created and together with Prof. Obadina of Nigeria, I was privileged to selected part of the new team to spearhead and champion its activities and operations in the next 2 years.

Acknowledgements

The great number of participants provided an opportunity to connect with new scientists and re-connect with friends with whom we had been separated by

distance. The new connections provide great linkage to the world of science that we hope to exploit. Thanks to Prof. Ruth Oniang'o who is the FoSTeP-K Patron for encouraging me and following up to see that I attended the congress. Am also grateful to Judith Meech of IUFoST and Italian Planning Committee for the unwavering support I received. I appreciate the University of Nairobi that supported my requests to attend the conference, and FoSTeP-K for according me opportunity to serve and represent them.

