

Madame President, Presidents of Honour, Members of the Executive Committee, Members of the Council, Office Staff members, and visitors,

I am so deeply honoured to be given the 2020 IFHE Distinguished Service Award and I thank you all for this totally unexpected recognition.

I became a member of IFHE in the 1970s, over 40 years ago, at a time when all IFHE business was conducted in four official languages and when timely communication and decision making were challenging. International telephone calls were expensive, the translation of documents into four languages was costly and time-consuming, and of course we did not have access to the computers and other technologies now taken for granted. Still we persevered and did the best we could under the conditions of the time, and it has been my privilege during my active years in IFHE to contribute in whatever way I could to the continual growth and development of the organization as it expanded its international presence and programmes. Two of the highlights for me over these years have been IFHE's important and central role in the United Nations International Year of the Family 1994, which brought new attention to IFHE as an international organization, and IFHE's 100th anniversary in 2008, celebrated appropriately in Switzerland where IFHE was founded.

It's important to acknowledge that my involvement in IFHE has not been a one-way street as IFHE has given a great deal back to me. I've had many wonderful IFHE-related professional and social experiences over the years, and I've treasured the opportunity to work with and to learn from many home economists from around the world, many who have become lifelong friends.

Like all of you, I had looked forward to being in Atlanta for the Congress, not only to meet again with some of these old friends but also to make some new friends and to hear of interesting home economics work going on around the world.

I wish you all well as you further the work of IFHE in this unique Council meeting.

Again my sincere thanks for giving me this wonderful honour.