

# ALAI Havana 2002

6th Latin American Immunology Congress

3rd Cuban Congress of Immunology

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Dear colleagues:

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After three years of intense organization, we are now opening the 6th ALAI Congress of Immunology. The ALAI meetings that started in Argentina in 1987 are representative of the sustained effort of the Latin American immunology community to continue teaching, investigating, treating, and preventing disease, under the constant stress of difficult economical and political situations. Probably nowhere as in Latin America these factors have taken such a heavy toll on established traditions of education and science. The meeting in Cuba is a refreshing message of ALAI's commitment to continue its pace and, in consonance with what the host country has shown to the World, of its overall endurance.

The Organizing Committee acknowledges the support of the different Latin American immunology societies affiliated to ALAI and would like to express a special recognition for the International Union of Immunological Societies, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) headquarters, and the Wellcome Trust, that provided us with the basic funding for the meeting. In the case of the latter, these organizations are responsible of the fellowships for young immunologists of the region. In fact, ALAI Havana 2002 is dedicated to the Centennial of PAHO, that has done so much for the health of the peoples of the Americas, with outstanding Latin American immunologists among its founders, experts, and directory boards.

ALAI Havana 2002 coincides with the 3rd Cuban Immunology Congress, the main event of the young Cuban Immunology Society (SCI), our co-organizer. We are happy to have with us almost 400 members of the SCI, with over 300 conferences and posters as a palpable proof that if a developing country with limited resources can exhibit a definite social impact of immunology-derived knowledge and products, that case is the host one.

Finally, we want to thank the presence of all of you coming from 43 countries. You decided that the 6th ALAI Congress in Havana was a top-level quality academic event, worthwhile to attend, and a special opportunity to meet and discuss about our favoured science, without distinctions between those that engage themselves in patient care, teaching, clinical trials, or laboratory experiments. Immunology is, above all, a science of integration. The highly international character of ALAI Havana 2002 reflects the strength and gathering power of Latin American science and culture, a is good precedent for the 2007 ICI, recently awarded to Rio de Janeiro.

Let's then get to work. Enjoy the hospitality and scientific talents of the Cuban people. We wish you a rewarding stay in Havana.

**Jorge V. Gavilondo**

President ALAI

**Gustavo Sierra**

President SCI

**Oliver Pérez**

Sec. General ALAI & SCI

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