

Following the schedule of our biannual conferences on polymers, I am happy to present here a number of papers that were given at the 12th UNESCO/IUPAC Workshop and Conference on Polymers and Materials that took place at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, in March 2013. This UNESCO/IUPAC Workshop and Conference is part of the activities of the UNESCO Associated Centre for Macromolecules & Materials that has been established in Stellenbosch roughly 15 years ago. More than 150 delegates attended the conference representing 32 countries other than South Africa. The total number of students who actively participated in the UNESCO/IUPAC Conference was 53.

The UNESCO/IUPAC Workshop and Conference is held biannually at different locations in South Africa (website: <http://www.sun.ac.za/unesco/unesco.htm>). World authorities in various fields of macromolecular and materials sciences are invited to give tutorials at the workshop and keynote and plenary lectures at the conference. In

addition, contributing lectures are presented by junior academics from around the world.

The exposure to new ideas and advanced concepts in macromolecular and materials sciences is of great importance for African students and academics coming from different universities and research institutions and being invited to present their research as orals or posters. It is particularly valuable that with the support of the UNESCO/IUPAC and industrial sponsors concessions can be made for attendees from disadvantaged communities and from countries with emerging technologies.

The 12th UNESCO/IUPAC Workshop and Conference focused on the synthesis, advanced characterization and properties of biopolymers, polyolefins, medical applications of polymers and novel materials. Abridged versions of a number of important papers are compiled to create the present volume of Macromolecular Symposia.

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