**ISSFAL BOARD NOMINATION 2016**

**Candidate Statement**

**Professor Marius Smuts**

**Background:**

I obtained my PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, in 1996 and am currently the director of the Centre for Excellence in Nutrition at the North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa. Previously I worked at the Medical Research Council for more than 22 years. My career started by studying the effect of the quantity and quality of dietary lipids on plasma lipoprotein metabolism and atherosclerosis. I then focused on the effect of fish oil (omega-3 fatty acid) supplementation on established atherosclerosis in the Vervet monkey model. My interest in omega-3 fatty acids extends over a period of more than 20 years and includes work on plasma and erythrocyte membrane fatty acid profiles in very low birth weight (VLBW) infants on different parental nutrition regimes; the effect of omega-3 (DHA) essential fatty acid supplementation on maternal outcomes (post-doctoral work under the supervision of Dr Susan Carlson); the effect of using omega-3-containing products in school feeding schemes and cognition; the interactions between omega-3 fatty acids and micronutrients in cognitive development and behavior and the effects of lipid-based nutrient supplements on infant growth and development. I have published more than 90 refereed papers as first and co-author and am currently an ISSFAL Board Member.

**Statement:**

I accept the challenge if I am elected to serve on the Board of Directors of ISSFAL as I value the Mission Statement of ISSFAL *to increase understanding through research and education of the role of fatty acids and lipids in health and disease* almost as my own mission in my training and research environment. I have experienced and witnessed how ISSFAL has grown in terms of the quality and depth of research presented at various meetings since 2000. The relevance of ISSFAL is indisputable and is growing on an annual basis, as experienced, again, at the Stockholm meeting earlier this year.

As in the past I will commit myself to attract and keep members, as there is still a huge marketing role to play on behalf of the Society. We need to attract more people from a broader spectrum of disciplines attending our biennial and other meetings, i.e. more people involved in cancer research and fatty acids, lipids in the developing world, etc. As Chair of the ISSFAL 2016 Organizing Committee I am proud that South Africa successfully hosted for the first time an ISSFAL meeting on the Africa continent. This motivated me to serve ISSFAL with even more dedication.

To summarize, ISSFAL is an important society that should be seen as a leader in creating opportunities to present cutting edge research and give education on the role of fatty acids in health and disease. I, Marius Smuts, believe that I can contribute to ISSFAL leadership and I am thrilled to be considered as a candidate for the Board of Directors.

Professor Marius Smuts

North-West University, South Africa