

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF PHYSIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

D. NOBLE, UK, President
Y. KURACHI, Japan, Vice President
X. WANG, People's Republic of China, Vice President
M. GORDON, USA, Treasurer
O. H. PETERSEN, UK, Secretary General

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

S. ORSONI, Paris, France



COUNCIL

A. CAMPOS de CARVALHO, Brazil
P. HUNTER, New Zealand
C. McMILLEN, Australia
P. MOODY-CORBETT, Canada
Q. PITTMAN, Canada
D. RICQUIER, France
M. RUPNIK, Slovenia
J. RETTIG, Germany
S. SEMNANIAN, Iran
T. WANG, Denmark

The IUPS Council has become aware of a potentially serious problem concerning scientific research, particularly in the field of physiology, at the Venezuelan Institute for Scientific Research (IVIC). As reported in *Science* on 4th September 2009 (vol 325, p. 1190), the prominent physiologist Reinaldo DiPolo has recently been dismissed from his position at IVIC for reasons that appear - to many observers (see *Science* 325, 1190, 2009) - to be political. DiPolo belongs to a special category of senior investigators known as PLI (Permanencia en labores de investigacion), which allows retired scientists to continue to work and to direct research programmes. For a variety of local reasons, there are many investigators at IVIC in this category (many of them not old) and these investigators are in fact the most productive (in terms of publications in highly rated scientific journals) and best known (internationally) scientists working in Venezuela. The administrative leadership of IVIC has indicated that it may abolish the PLI category, which would stop the most successful research programmes at IVIC, leading to effective dismissal of a substantial number of Venezuela's best known scientists. We consider this development extremely undesirable and indeed potentially disastrous for the future of physiological research in Venezuela. We call on the Venezuelan Government to reconsider the future of IVIC and to support those scientists who are doing scientific research of the highest international standards.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Denis Noble'.

Denis Noble CBE FRS
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ole Petersen'.

Ole Petersen CBE FRS
Secretary General

1 October 2009