

Professor Frances Separovic speaking notes
Australia-Brazil Virtual Research Collaboration
Thursday 18 November 2021, 08:00-9:35 AEDT
Closing Session

Good morning and good evening colleagues in Brazil and Australia.

My name is Frances Separovic, and I am a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science. My area of research is **biochemistry**, and just last month I had the pleasure of being one of the speakers at a virtual conference of the International Union of Pure and Applied Biology that was hosted by Brazil and provided an international overview of research frontiers and recent developments in biophysics, biochemistry, and molecular biology.

Thank you for inviting me to be part of the closing session of the Australia-Brazil Virtual Research Collaboration and learn about the discussions that took place last week in three virtual sessions, and about potential areas of collaboration between Brazilian and Australian researchers.

These virtual events brought together outstanding researchers from both countries who have been working on COVID-19 related matters. I am impressed by the range of topics that were covered, from public health policies, data collection and analysis, the impact of the pandemic on Indigenous communities and on mental health, ethics, to One Health. All important areas for discussion and exchange of knowledge in times of a pandemic.

One of the strategic activities of the Australian Academy of Science is to support diversity and excellence in science and empower the next generation of scientists, and I am pleased that these virtual events had strong participation by early career researchers from both countries. They will be tomorrow's future scientific leaders in their respective countries and globally.

As Professor John Shine, President of the Academy noted at the opening session, this pandemic has seen an unprecedented level of international scientific cooperation and good will to combat the impact of the virus on the world. COVID-19 has highlighted the need for continued international scientific collaboration and we trust that these events provided opportunities for researchers to discuss and explore strategic bilateral collaborations in this scientific area.

The Academy hopes that these types of meetings will continue in the future and that they lay the foundation for stronger bilateral research linkages. Perhaps soon, there will be an opportunity for Australian and Brazilians researchers to come together face-to-face to continue to discuss the topics of these events and other research areas of importance to both countries.

These meetings highlighted the fact that Brazilians and Australians are already collaborating in several projects and identified areas of potential research partnerships. I hope that there is the opportunity for the event participants from both sides to identify sources of funding for their joint projects as this sort of support can be meaningful and catalytic to initiate or strengthen research linkages.

I would like to congratulate all the organisations involved in making these virtual events happen, and I thank all of the researchers from both countries for taking the time out of their very busy schedules to participate and share their expertise with their colleagues. I trust that the young researchers who also joined were able to network with their peers and renowned experts.

The Academy was pleased to have worked with colleagues from the Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment, from the Australian Embassy in Brazil, from CONFAP on these events.

It is nice to see Professor Helena Nader, Deputy President of the Brazilian Academy, at today's event. Both of our academies have collaborated in the past, and I hope that we will continue to strengthen ties between our organisations.

I am certain that as a result of these meetings, research partnerships between Australia and Brazil will continue to grow and flourish.

Thank you.