

Third SMBBM International Congress of Biochemistry, IUBMB Special Meeting on Plant Stresses and Sixth FASBMB Congress organized as a Joint International Scientific Event in Marrakech (Morocco), April 20-25, 2009.

Web site: <http://www.smbbm.org/specialMeeting2009/home.html>

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Considering the fact that Agriculture in the world and in the Mediterranean countries and Morocco in particular, is facing many constraints such as drought and salinity (major abiotic stresses) and a lot of biotic stresses, the International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (IUBMB), the Moroccan Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (SMBBM), the Federation of African Societies of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (FASBMB) and all other organizing and sponsoring parties, judged it opportune to join a special meeting on the 'Mechanisms of plant resistance to biotic and abiotic stresses' with the Third SMBBM International Congress of Biochemistry and the sixth FASBMB Congress. The scientific event will be held in Marrakech (Morocco) during the period of April 20-25, 2009.

The aim of the Marrakech joint scientific event is threefold: the first is to review, assess and share information on the most recent scientific and technological advances in the fields of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology related to different topics such as genomics and proteomics, health, food biochemistry, biotechnologies and environment, oxidative stresses and mechanisms of plant resistance to abiotic and biotic stresses. The second objective is to create the opportunity for scientists from different areas to gather as one community, discuss and share their research findings, and to explore the possibilities of mutual cooperation. The third objective is to support young researchers to participate and exchange their knowledge around this scientific event. In addition, an education topic related to teaching and learning of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology is planned on April 25, 2009.

The last SMBBM International Congress was held in Agadir, Morocco, during May 9-12, 2006. In Marrakech, 2009, we hope to host the Third International Congress in a friendly and informal atmosphere, conducive to discussions and interaction between participants. The more interesting objective in 2009 is to share a detailed scientific program of the IUBMB special meeting covering advances in the field of biochemical and molecular aspects of plant resistance to biotic and abiotic stresses. Wilt diseases as example of biotic stresses, are represented in the Mediterranean region by many fusarioses such as palm wilts, caused by *Fusarium* fungi for each date palm and canary palm species. Drought and salinity, as another kind of stresses, have caused enormous damage to food production in the world and are currently assuming the character of a national disaster for many countries in Africa. Scientists tend more to understand the mechanisms involved in plant resistance to abiotic stresses and drought, in particular. A large number of studies have been performed on the RNA-Induced Silencing Complexes (RISC) containing small RNAs, namely micro RNAs (miRNAs) and small interfering RNAs (siRNAs) as molecules involved (among other phenomena) in resistance to abiotic stresses and pathogen attacks. Just as a reminder, in 2006 over 14000 articles on RNA interference have been published. Thus, the Marrakech joint scientific event will include a specific topic covering Small RNAs.

Many studies on plant stress tolerance have dealt with oxidant-scavenging mechanisms and antioxidant enzymes. Questions of how an improvement of antioxidant systems could protect from damages will be asked during the Marrakech joint event in a specific topic 'oxidative stresses'. Another constraint for forestry and agriculture is insect attacks. Enhancing our knowledge of the mechanisms of plant resistance to insects could be of great help in limiting the damage. This topic and many others will be discussed in the Marrakech scientific event scheduled for April 20-25, 2009.

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