**PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT**

**XIV WORLD CONGRESS OF RURAL SOCIOLOGY**

**Toronto, Canada**

**August 10-14, 2016**

***Sustainable and Just Rural Transitions: Connections and Complexities***

Global environmental changes, shifting resource scarcities, deepening social inequalities, both innovation and crisis in urban centers, and new patterns of voluntary and involuntary migrations are among the conditions and dynamics now shaping the futures of rural places and people. Intensifying and intertwining forces of commodification, industrialization, neoliberalization and globalization over the last several decades have produced uneven and arguably illusory gains, given evidence of the increasingly precarious position of labor and livelihoods throughout the rural world and the widespread distribution of environmental harm and ecological degradation. Within these general patterns and trends, circumstances can vary greatly across rural contexts within and between continents.

Rigorous analysis of the interconnected challenges now experienced by rural people and places, as well as comprehensive assessment of the proposed solutions and diverse experiments now underway will increase our understanding of the pathways which may be open, blocked or yet to be created for movement towards more sustainable and just rural futures. Sociologists and other social scientists addressing rural concerns play indispensable roles in identifying, analyzing and assessing the forms and consequences—both intended and unintended—of the diverse transition aspirations and experiences of rural people and places.

In the coming months, we will invite session submissions that invoke the overarching theme of the XIV World Congress of Rural Sociology: ***the connections and complexities shaping the prospects for sustainable and just rural transitions in the present era of crisis and change***.

The XIV World Congress of Rural Sociology encourages interdisciplinary dialogue, exchange and collaboration in order to enhance the contributions and applications of sociological inquiry for understanding and improving the life conditions and experiences of people located in, identified with, and concerned about, rural places and communities worldwide. The program for the Congress will include keynote lectures by invited speakers who will provide fresh, integrative insights and challenges for rural sociological inquiry and practice. It will also include varied opportunities and venues for participants to present results of their research and engage with other scholars and practitioners from around the world, within traditional paper sessions, thematic panel discussions or debates, roundtables, workshops or performances.

XIV WCRS Program Committee: Clare Hinrichs and Phil Mount, Co-Chairs; Carmen Bain; Hilde Bjørkhaug; Doug Constance; Maria Fonte; Vaughan Higgins; Diego Piñiero