

World Federation of Neurology

Annual Report 2008

2008 has been a good year for international neurology and witnessed many important decisions for the future of WFN. While the World Congresses of Neurology until 2009 have been quadrennial, the Annual Delegate Meeting in Brussels 2007 decided that they will become biennial from 2009. We also decided that the 2011 congress will take place on the African continent. At the Annual Delegate meeting in New Delhi in October 2009 during the meeting of the Asian and Oceanian Association of Neurology, Marrakesh was elected as the venue for the World Congress in 2011. Marrakesh was also the venue for the successful 10th Congress of the Pan African Association of Neurological Sciences in 1992. The increased frequency of the world congresses makes a revision of the congress contract necessary, and this work has already started.

The World Congress of Neurology 2009 will take place in Bangkok, Thailand. The Organizing Committee has been hard-working and very effective, and it is a pleasure to inform that the Scientific, Educational and Social programmes were finished long ago. The political situation in Bangkok was transitorily turbulent toward the end of the year, but Thailand has an international reputation being a land of smiles and of an ability to solve political problems without dramatic events. We all look forward to Bangkok as an exotic and rewarding destination in October 2009.

Biennial congresses will present a new challenge to World Federation of Neurology. We have therefore interviewed representatives from various professional congress organizers and have appointed Kenes as a core PCO for the world congresses of 2011, 2013 and 2015. Kenes is already the PCO for EFNS. The WCN 2013 will take place in Europe, and there will be no EFNS congress that year.

According to our constitution, the World Federation of Neurology shall hold an Annual Council of Delegates meeting every year which all Member Societies, associate members, the Officers and the Trustees are entitled to attend. These meetings have usually taken place in USA or Europe, but this time we decided to have it in Asia, at the 12th Asian

Oceanian Congress of Neurology in New Delhi. The meeting, which was organised together with the 16th Annual Conference of the Indian Academy of Neurology at the Ashok Hotel with Professor Man Mohan Mehndiratta as Organizing Secretary, and former President of India, Mr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam as Chief Guest, became an exciting venue for presentations of excellent and high-standard contributions to international neuroscience.

The Atlas of Neurological Resources, a joint publication with the World Health organization, has underlined the seriousness of the situation for neurology in Africa. This is the background for the Africa initiative, which started in 2006, has gained a strong foothold in international neurology. Much has happened in 2008. The Africa initiative has two arms, TAFNA and the Africa Committee. It is the Africa Committee that is drawing the roadmap for neurology in Africa, while TAFNA represents the advisory element.

The Task and Advisory Force for Neurology in Africa (TAFNA), chaired by Amadou Gallo Diop and Johan A. Aarli, was established in London 2006. TAFNA has a link with IBRO and SONA (Society of Neuroscientists of Africa). The Africa Committee was established at a meeting in Stellenbosch, South Africa, in 2008, with a membership predominantly of Africans themselves or those who are working in African countries. Professor Amadou Gallo Diop is the chairman.

An important topic for discussion at Stellenbosch was the training of neurologists from the African continent. Senegal, Cameroon and Cote d'Ivoire have well established neurological service and a good contact with France and with Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria also for neurology training. South Africa has excellent neurology departments while the neighbouring countries are smaller and have a less developed medical infrastructure. South Africa may have a capacity for training of neurologists from these countries. The first neurologist in Namibia has recently finished his training in Johannesburg. The East African countries (Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Malawi) are in a different situation and have at present no consensus on future training centers. The Italian Society of Neurology has recently initiated a training programme for Ethiopian neurologists which may serve as a recommendable model also for other national neurological societies.

The Pan African Association of Neurological Sciences (PAANS) was founded in 1972 and consists of neurologists and neurosurgeons from the African continent. I had the pleasure

to attend the PAANS congress in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in November 2008. Difficulties in travelling in Africa and high air fares make attendance to PAANS difficult, but the congress was well attended in spite of this, especially from Central and West Africa, and served as an important information and discussion forum for African neurology. The meeting was also attended by local politicians and representatives from the government, which is essential in increasing the visibility of neurology. Professor Alfred Njamnshi, Cameroon, was elected President of the PAANS and is also ex officio WFN Regional Director for Africa.

The first international teaching course in neurology in Africa which took place in Dakar, Senegal, June 26-28 was organized by EFNS, and became a great success. It reflected the basic idea of the Africa initiative: With Africa – for Africa, and came as a joint venture between several international organizations, WFN, IBRO, WNFo, PAUNS, in addition to EFNS which was the prime organizer. EFNS is already planning the successor to this meeting, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in June 2009.

In 2008, World Neurology has changed its image. Mark Hallett has taken over as the new editor-in-chief, and the newsletter aims to emphasize new and emerging clinical and basic neuroscientific reports in the neurological literature. For 2008, we have as before had 4 issues. We now aim to print 6 issues for 2009. We also have a new website, and Wolfgang Grisold is the website editor. I hope these changes have proven positive and contributed to an increase the visibility of neurology in all parts of the world.

Johan A. Aarli