

Appendix I - President's Statement by Prof. William Carroll

We are in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic which has changed the world for all of us, changed our lives also and will continue to do so for some time, but there have been some silver linings, particularly for us as an organization. We have been forced to be more electronically orientated and we have made use of this. So the website and our COVID-19 pages have been actively used. This very meeting the virtual AGM is another example and we have been involved in groups collecting data on the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly that related to neurological involvement. We have members involved in the WHO Global Forum which is coming out of the Brain Health Unit and is known as Neuro COVID-19. We are also involved in the COVID-19 Neuro-research Coalition coming out of Munich and headed by Andrea Winkler, which is mirroring what the WHO is doing, but concentrating on low income countries. Our own Environmental Neurology Specialty Group (SG) Chaired by Gustavo Roman has started a registry of countries which are collecting data and so is another example of using the electronic medium within this pandemic.

I applaud the initiative of the Tropical and Geographical Neurology SG Chaired by Chandrashekhhar Meshram. They have just completed series one of their neuroinfection series. A weekly set of very good lectures, the YouTube links for which will soon be available on the WFN website.

Another important part of our activities this year has been building the cooperation between the European Academy of Neurology (EAN), the American Academy of Neurology (AAN) and the Global Neurological Alliance (GNA). At both the EAN and AAN, the WFN has been the beneficiary of a very warm and cooperative relationship with frequent interaction and sharing of a lot of information and assistance. We hope this continues and are grateful to Jim Stevens of the AAN and Claudio Bassetti of the EAN for this. Within the GNA, I highlight two members that we have been closely associated with this year. The International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE), where we supported their initiative at the WHO in the adoption by the WHO Executive Board in relation to epilepsy and other neurological disorders. This is the first time that neurological disorders have been referred to collectively in a WHO decision and provides the opportunity to promote neurological disorders including inequities of access to quality neurological care within it. It doesn't seem much, but I'm sure that those of you who have been involved in these activities will understand that it is quite a remarkable step forward. With the International Parkinson and Movement Disorder Society (MDS), we are in the throes of just winding up this year's World Brain Day (WBD). The 7th WBD. It has again been a more protracted campaign starting from 22nd July, the anniversary of the WFN's foundation, and it will be finishing shortly at

the MDS congress. There will be a press conference on the 14th September. The actual reach courtesy of our media partners and our own social media programmes has been phenomenal. So I thank those two members of the GNA in particular as well as the EAN and AAN.

On strategic matters, the Brain Health initiative is something which many of you may not have heard of yet, but it is proceeding, and the idea is that we produce a series of four, possibly five, videos of up to three minutes length. Looking at brain health and the consequences of not having brain health from a much more general population perspective. This has two goals. The first is to raise awareness of brain health and the second is to raise the profile of the WFN in this activity. We think that this is something which has been lacking and since we started this exercise there has been a large number of other organisations which have come out and asked to support us or asked for us to be involved with them in the same initiative. So it is something which I think will serve all of us very well. I am told by our media partner that the first video is only a week or so away from completion so that is really quite exciting.

The second thing is the promotional videos which we have been able to produce. I mentioned the ITN recording which we were able to undertake courtesy of the EAN last year. That has now been included into this year's WFN video, which is a video about us and what we do, what our goals are and how we are going about them. Also this year we have a World Congress of Neurology (WCN) video promoting the next WCN in Rome next year. These were being produced to be able to be used at physical exhibitions, in a booth, but with the change now to an electronic format we can have them on the website and in virtual booths. We get more exposure through this so it is again a win for us and for people with neurological diseases.

I want to talk briefly about our Needs Registry. This is the project which we started two years ago, and we have had almost a year's assistance from Kimberly Karlshoej who joined us as a senior manager. She, with the help of some of the others in the office, has been able to collect 95 member societies out of a total of 122, which is very good and I am told that shortly we will have 111 that have completed this, which is 90% of our membership who have engaged in this project, which is a phenomenal outcome and I thank them all and Kimberly.

Along with the change to the electronic format has been the need to rejuvenate our electronic communications database of member's addresses. This is critical for the implementation of this sort of meeting, electronic voting, the Needs Registry, and everything else that is happening these days. The office has worked enormously hard over the last 6-8 weeks to do this and I'm told that we have almost everybody updated. The plan is to keep doing this on a regular basis. So I ask you to work with

them when you receive requests for updating on your email addresses to do so quickly. It is to everybody's advantage.

Moving to Specialty Group Memoranda of Understanding. These have been developed by Wolfgang Grisold through the Trustees and head office. The idea is to provide a better and closer relation between the WFN and the Specialty Groups. Wolfgang may say more on this when he gives his address.

I think the Trustees' teamwork this year has been outstanding. Starting with the biennial strategy meeting in January, each has taken on an area of responsibility and I will just highlight a couple who are not going to speak today. Alla Guekht who has been invaluable with her knowledge and strategic view of how to work with the WHO. Marianne de Visser, who is a Co-opted Trustee from earlier this year, will move to look after regional organization liaison and we are very grateful for that. Thanks are also due to the others. To Wolfgang Grisold, Secretary General, Ryuji Kaji, First Vice President, Richard Stark, Treasurer, Steven Lewis the Chair of the Education Committee and Riadh Gouider. Finally, I have to acknowledge the efforts and commitment of the office, which has earned the gratitude of us all. Laura Druce, Kimberly Karlshoej, Chiu Keung Man, Jade Levy and Carlos Hunte. Have been working very hard under very trying conditions. We are particularly indebted for the hardship they experienced during the six weeks of lockdown in London and the ongoing threats to health that are now resurfacing. To the outside it looked as though it was business as usual throughout this time, which is an amazing feat. Without them this meeting would not have been possible. Nor would the smooth running of the ordinary everyday machinery of the WFN. I thank them on behalf of all of you.

Thank you for your attention.