In September I was bestowed the great privilege—and responsibility—of representing the international voice of dentistry as its elected leader. Throughout the last few months, I have met FDI members and delegates at their national and regional events around the world, such as the Annual Meeting of the Portuguese Dental Association and International Association for Dental Research (IADR). The World Congress on Preventive Dentistry. In doing so, I am struck by the vast reach of this great organisation. Whether it’s collaborating with bilateral Council and Committee volunteers on the many FDI projects in development, participating in important meetings or spending time with staff at the head office to better understand the daily workings of the organisation, I am continually impressed with how each one of FDI’s many parts contributes to our achievements as a whole.

One of the questions I am asked repeatedly when meeting people for the first time as Dr Roberto Vianna, FDI President—as opposed to Dr Roberto Vianna the dentist, professor, dean or entrepreneur—concerned the future of dental amalgam. This is perhaps not surprising considering during this upcoming two-year term. My answer to this question is that my vision for the FDI is to be true to the FDI vision: bringing together the world of dentistry, representing the dental profession of the world, and stimulating and facilitating the exchange of information across all borders with the aim of optimal oral health for all people. The FDI vision is a collective one developed by and for our members, and should serve as the guiding light to our representatives, elected delegates, partners and supporters, and individual volunteers that dedicate time and energy to advancing the profession, working with partners, scientifically, educationally or socially.

Volunteerism is an essential component of a strong FDI. I hope you will join me in recognising the contribution of long-standing FDI volunteer, Dr Peter Swiss. Dr Swiss will be “retiring” from the FDI next year, after more than 40 years of tireless service in a variety of roles across the organisation. His spirit of giving time through volunteerism is an example for others to follow. His work is greatly appreciated and will be missed. And as we say thank you to Dr Swiss and reflect on the years he has dedicated to FDI, we welcome seven new and one returning member(s): Barbados Dental Association, Association Rondine da Spugna, Canadian Dental Association, European Federation of Orthodontics, European Dental Students’ Association, National Children’s Oral Health Foundation, Medicine and Dentistry. This month we take a closer look at the European Dental Students Association: the eagerness of this group of dental students to get involved in volunteer and advocacy activities related to oral health promotion promises a bright future for dentistry.

As the sum of many diverse parts, FDI is only as strong as its relationships and in this respect, I hope that as my service as FDI President, FDI can help strengthen existing bonds and build new bridges for the organisation. These bridges might come through increased cross-Council collaboration, external partnerships with neighbouring countries’ NGOs dedicated to health promotion, or a forum for intra-member communication and exchange. In November, FDI took part in a significant meeting co-hosted by the World Health Organization and United Nations Environmental Programme, entitled “Dental Caries: Can the Paradigm of Care Shift?”

Looking ahead to 2010 there are many exciting opportunities on the horizon. In particular, I would like to thank Dr Gerhard Seerberger, President-elect of the 8th FDI Congress, for encouraging this connection. FDI members are welcome to join us for the 45th FDI Meeting & Congress in Bucharest, Romania. More information about EDSA, including the contact details for the members of our Executive Committee and information about the upcoming meeting and congress, can be found on the FDI website (www.fdiworld.org).
FDI website undergoes “makeover”

The FDI website (www.fdiworldental.org) will have a new look beginning January 2010, featuring a simplified navigation structure and menu tabs so that FDI’s members and partners can access relevant information about the organisation’s history, structure, projects, activities, and Annual World Dental Congress more easily and, in fewer clicks.

Some features of the new FDI front page will include:
• Direct links to current FDI projects and activities
• Quick Links to the members section, latest news stories, FDI publications and a sign up form for the Worldental Communicato
• Updated front page menu (to simplify website navigation)
• Expanded Congress & Events section, including a section to highlight FDI members’ events
• Media section, with a direct link to press releases, archives and press contact information
• Improved Search functionality
• Contact Us tab in the front page menu with FDI address and phone number in Geneva

For more information, contact the FDI at media@fdiworldental.org.

FDI staff at head office in Geneva

The FDI saw some significant changes at the head office in 2009 and as we settle into our new home in Geneva, Switzerland, FDI is now entering a new phase in the organisation’s history.

The relocation from Ferney-Voltaire (France) to Geneva ran smoothly thanks to the notable efforts of FDI staff and in particular, Ms Lawrence Jocquelle, who managed the logistics of the move, ensuring that no small detail was overlooked. In an effort to offset the very significant costs associated with the relocation, the FDI created the Sponsor’s–A Window Programme, whereby participants could adopt one of the 54 windows that offer a 560-degree view from the Geneva office. Thanks to the generosity of numerous donors, FDI has raised a total of 250,000 euros to date (more details coming soon).

As with many businesses and activities around the world, FDI has been struggling to weather the economic storm. We face particular challenges—as a non-governmental, charitable organisation—to maintain existing channels and develop new avenues of revenue at a time when budget cuts and belt-tightening are standard practice. Nevertheless, we are well poised to move into 2010 under the financial discipline of our new Finance and Operations Director, Mr Jérôme Lénaiguard. Finances are at the heart of every FDI project and Jérôme brings a strategic approach that translates to clear management accountability of FDI finances together with greater outcomes’ evaluation of what we achieved for what we spent. This position is vital to our future and it gives me much pleasure to welcome Jérôme to the team.

I am also pleased to announce that Mr Bho Khaw has joined our permanent staff as Senior Accountant. And beginning January 2010, Dr S.D. Shantinath will join us as Head of Public Health. Of course, when welcoming additions to staff, goodies will sometimes also be said: Ms Heather Shipard and Ms Berit Pedersen, both of whom were part of the FDI family for more than six years, have decided to leave us to pursue new and exciting opportunities elsewhere. We wish them well in their endeavours.

Save the date: 2010 Annual World Dental Congress

The 2010 FDI Annual World Dental Congress will be held from 2–3 September in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil.

FDI World Dental Federation and the Local Organising Committee of the 2010 FDI Annual World Dental Congress (AWDC) are busy preparing for next year’s event, which will be held in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, from 2 – 5 September.

Located on the northeast coast of Brazil, Salvador is the country’s third-largest city, boasting 54 km of beaches, a blend of Americanist, African and European cultures, and a historical centre designated an official UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985. As the country’s first capital (from 1549 to 1765), Salvador has a long and rich history, evident in the distinctive architecture, cuisine and culture that continue to define the city, drawing visitors from around the world and making Salvador one of Brazil’s top tourist destinations.

The FDI Annual World Dental Congress provides a unique gathering place for dentists to explore the profession’s latest technological, political, and social developments through a World Dental Exhibition, FDI General Assembly and business meetings, the Scientific Programme (including limited attendance events, fully-locally-inspired social events.

FDI World Dental Federation and the Brazilian Dental Association (ABD) have collaborated closely with local organisations and representatives to bring you a world-class event next September. More information about the Salvador congress is available on the FDI website.

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