

COMMONWEALTH DENTAL ASSOCIATION

REPORT OF 6TH TRIENNIAL MEETING Singapore – 5th September 2009

By
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INTRODUCTION

The 6th Triennial Meeting of the Commonwealth Dental Association (CDA) took place at the Suntec International Conference Centre, Singapore on 5th September 2009.

The programme included a Workshop chaired by Dr John Hunt (CDA Regional Vice-President for Europe) followed by the Triennial General Assembly, chaired by Professor Jacob Kaimenyi (CDA President).

CDA WORKSHOP

The CDA Workshop took place in the morning of Saturday 5th September. There were 35 participants from 15 Commonwealth countries and the theme was: *The Challenges of Infection Control in a Rural Dental Practice*. The following were the objectives of the Workshop:

- To make the oral health personnel – dentists, dental hygienists, therapists and clinical dental and laboratory technicians - aware of the need for appropriate infection control in a rural setting
- To enable them make use of the facilities available in that setting
- To empower them with the expertise to upgrade the techniques they are using at present, in order to bring about some improvement within the resources available.

During the first plenary session, there were three presentations:

- *Improving Infection Control in Resource Limited Settings*, by Associate Professor Robert Yee (Singapore)
- *Training and Monitoring for Infection Control in Rural and Urban Settings*, by Associate Professor Sanjay Joshi (India)
- *Update on Infection Control and Antibiotic Prophylaxis in Dentistry*, by Dr Christopher Vincent (Malaysia).

The presentations were followed by three working group sessions to examine the following topics:

- How to raise awareness on infection control
- The role of governments on infection control
- Cost effective methods of training in infection control.

There was a second plenary session during which the working groups presented their reports. This was followed by lively discussions at the end of which a CDA Policy Statement on Infection Control was adopted.

CDA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

At the CDA General Assembly which took place in the afternoon; there were 40 representatives from the following 16 Commonwealth countries: Australia, Bahamas, Canada, The Gambia, India, Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and the United Kingdom.

President's address

In his report, the outgoing President Professor Jacob Kaimenyi thanked members for the support accorded him and the entire CDA Executive in the discharge of their duties. He paid special tribute to the late Julia Champion who had died so unexpectedly in November 2007.

He highlighted the aims and objectives of the CDA and stated that when elected into office in 2006, the Executive members promised to do all they could to meet these aims and objectives, with a view to making it a vibrant body. He then catalogued the achievements and activities of CDA for the past five years, which demonstrate that the Executive "had done the Association proud". However, he noted that the Executive committee experienced real challenges in the course of its duties and listed the following as some of the challenges:

- Delayed payment of subscriptions by some NDAs;
- Reluctance of a few key Commonwealth countries to pay their subscriptions;
- Failure of some NDAs to respond to questionnaires sent to them by the CDA;
- Irregular quarterly reports by some Regional Vice-Presidents;
- Non-participation in CDA electronic meetings by some Executive committee members;
- Decreasing funding from the Commonwealth Foundation
- Inadequacy in the number of dentists who attend workshops and other professional meetings organised by the CDA.

He stressed that these challenges were not unique to CDA, but were shared by other Commonwealth health professional associations and national dental associations. He urged members to work hard and devise innovative ways of facing these challenges. Finally, Professor Kaimenyi thanked the CDA Treasurer, Executive Secretary and Editor for their work; he also thanked all those who have continued to fund the activities of CDA.

The Executive Secretary's report

The Executive Secretary, Dr Sam Thorpe, in his report, highlighted some major achievements of the CDA during the 2006 to 2009 triennium. These included:

- the system of *Virtual* meetings of the CDA Executive Committee - conducted by e-mail - which made it possible for Committee meetings to be held regularly;
- preparation and adoption of '*Guidelines for Hosting CDA Triennial Meetings*';
- preparation and adoption of '*Welcome Pack for New CDA Executive Members*';
- and participation of the CDA at the annual meetings of Commonwealth Health Ministers Meetings in Geneva and the Commonwealth People's Forum in Uganda in November 2007.

He also made special mention of the CDA workshop on '*The Integration of Oral Health Workers in Disaster Management*' in Australia in May 2008; and the workshop on '*Training of Rural Clinical Officers in Urgent Oral Treatment*' in Tanzania in February 2009, in collaboration with Bridge2Aid and the Tanzania Dental Association.

He mentioned the appointment of Ms Ulrike Matthesius as the new CDA Administrator in April 2008 following the death of Mrs Julia Campion, and stated that in future only two CDA Bulletins will be published every year, in January and in July.

He noted the formation of the Commonwealth Health Professions Alliance (CHPA) in March 2009, the founding membership of which includes the CDA. He stated that UK-based CDA Executive members regularly represented the Association at various meetings and functions in London organised by the Commonwealth Foundation, the Commonwealth Secretariat and other organisations. Finally, Dr Thorpe thanked the Commonwealth Foundation, Dr Michael Knowles, Quayle Dental Manufacturing Company and all others who supported the CDA financially and otherwise during the past three years.

The Treasurer's report

In his financial report, the Treasurer Dr Anthony Kravitz, outlined the sources of income which in 2008/2009 came mainly from the Commonwealth Foundation (61%) and subscriptions from NDAs and CDA Friends (31%).

Principal expenditure during the same period was for conferences and workshops (66%) and Administration (26%). The costs for the CDA Bulletin were now not exceeding 1%.

He stressed the fact that although the Commonwealth Foundation continued to be the biggest contributor to the income of CDA, its contributions have been gradually reduced:

2006/2007 (£20,000)
2007/2008 (£16,660)
2008/2009 (£14,000)
2009/2010 (£13,500)

Proposals by Dr Kravitz for the Triennium starting January 2010 were unanimously adopted:

- Subscriptions to be raised by 10% to 13.3 pence per member;
- The minimum subscription to be raised to £35;
- The maximum subscription to be limited to £2,000.

The Regional Vice Presidents' reports

CDA Regional Vice-Presidents for South-East Asia, West Africa, Europe and the Pacific presented brief reports on significant activities in their respective regions during the triennium.

Proposals

After the presentation of all the reports, the Assembly discussed a formal proposal on the future of the CDA. The proposal put forward by the British Dental Association called for suspension of the constitution and activities of CDA for a period of two years to enable CDA to review its recent work and explore whether it continues to have a purpose in the support of Commonwealth dentists. Dr Anthony Kravitz (CDA Treasurer) introduced the proposal. He commenced by offering the formula:

Enthusiasm + Finance = Success

He presented several instances of the lack of enthusiasm in the activities of the CDA, as well as non-payment of subscriptions by many NDAs. During a lengthy debate that followed, several country representatives spoke against the proposal, after which Dr Kravitz suggested that a motion was adopted for the proposal to be withdrawn. It was agreed that restoring enthusiasm for CDA activities had been achieved. It was therefore not necessary to discuss a further proposal from the Sri Lanka Dental Association which reaffirmed that the CDA had contributed significantly to the improvement of oral health especially of the people of less developed Commonwealth countries and called on the Association to continue this laudable service.

Constitution

The General Assembly then adopted several amendments to the current CDA Constitution, presented by Dr Kravitz. He said that copies of the updated Constitution will be sent to all NDAs.

Regarding the next agenda item "An open forum on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)", it was agreed that NDAs would provide

feedbacks from their meetings within three weeks of the end of the present triennial meeting.

Elections

The election of Officers for the period 2009 to 2012 was then conducted. The new CDA Executive Committee is now composed of the following officers:

- President Dr Hilary Cooray (*Sri Lanka*)
- Executive Secretary Dr Sam Thorpe OOR (*Sierra Leone*)
- Treasurer Dr Anthony Kravitz OBE (*UK*)
- President-Elect Dr William O'Reilly (*Australia*)
- Immediate Past-President Prof Jacob Kaimenyi (*Kenya*)
- Regional Vice-Presidents:
 - Europe Dr Sue Greening (*UK*)
 - South East Asia Dr Lee Soon Boon (*Malaysia*)
 - Pacific/Australasia VACANT
 - Canada/Caribbean Dr Tanya Mortemore (*Bahamas*)
 - West Africa Prof Adeyemi Olusile (*Nigeria*)
 - East, Central and Southern Africa Prof Flora Fabian-Taylor (*Tanzania*)

The following were appointed to support the Executive Committee:

- CDA Administrator Ulrike Matthesius (*UK*)
- Editor CDA Bulletin Professor D Y D Samarawickrama (*UK*)

Installations and Awards

The election of officers was followed by:

- the installation of the new CDA President for the 2009-2012 triennium by the outgoing President;
- the installation of the Immediate Past-President by the new CDA President

In his installation address, the new CDA President, Dr Hilary Cooray, thanked all NDAs in the Commonwealth and the Executive for electing him as their President for the period 2009/2012. He said that he accepted the prestigious office with utmost humility and promised to strive to do his best to fulfil the aims and objectives of the Association. He gave a brief history of the CDA, highlighting its aims and objectives and recalling his predecessors who had provided the Association with good leadership. He noted that the Commonwealth was unique in that it consists of nations of many diversities such as race, colour, religion, language, culture, health and wealth, and that it is rich in professional networks, of which the CDA is one.

Dr Cooray assured the meeting that he and the new Executive would strive harmoniously and diligently to share new ideas and expertise in oral health

care from all regions of the world. Finally, he emphasised the fact that to assist in improving the oral health of the people of the Commonwealth, the full cooperation and support of all members of the Association would be needed.

Dr John Hunt, one of the two nominees for the first CDA Awards, for outstanding and dedicated service to the CDA, was presented with his certificate by the CDA President. The other nominee, Professor Martin Hobdell, had received his certificate the day before, as he was leaving Singapore. Inscribed cut glass bowls, pictures of which were shown on the screen, will be presented to the two recipients in London at a later date.

All participants were hosted to a Reception at the end of the Triennial Meeting.

FIRST MEETING OF CDA NEW EXECUTIVE

The new CDA Executive held its first meeting in the Pan Pacific Hotel, Singapore on Sunday 6th September 2009. Among the issues discussed were:

- Revision of the current CDA Standing Orders;
- Projects/Activities for the new triennium including the next CDA Triennial Meeting ;
- Financial matters including funding submission for 2010/2011 to the Commonwealth Foundation;
- CDA Bulletin including news from the Regions;
- Participation of CDA Executive members in electronic meetings.

CONCLUSION

The CDA 6th Triennial Meeting was very successful. The CDA thanks its sponsors – the Commonwealth Foundation, ILSI (Dr Mike Knowles) and the National Australia Bank – without whose generous funding support the meetings could not have taken place.

The CDA would like to thank also the FDI World Dental Federation and all concerned for the excellent arrangements for the meeting. Everybody enjoyed the very polite and extremely warm Singapore hospitality.