

FDI/WHO PLANNING CONFERENCE FOR ORAL HEALTH IN THE AFRICAN REGION

Nairobi, Kenya - 14-16 April 2004

Summary Report By Dr Sam Thorpe CDA Executive Secretary

INTRODUCTION

The FDI/WHO Planning Conference for Oral Health in the African Region took place at the Safari Park Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya from 14-16 April 2004.

Participants included Health Ministers, Directors of Service, Responsible Officers for Health Budgets within the Ministries of Finance, Chief Dental Officers, Representatives of National Dental Associations, Academia and the dental industry.

Partner organizations present at the Conference were; African Regional Organization(ARO), Commonwealth Dental Association(CDA), Groupement de Associations Dentaires Francophone(GADEF), World Medical Association(WMA), Aide Odontologique Internationale(AOI), International Association for Dental Research(IADR) and Organization for Safety and Asepsis Procedures in Dentistry(OSAP).

CDA was represented by its Executive Secretary Dr Sam Thorpe. He presented a paper during the session on Framework and Partnerships, and was the Moderator on the third day of the Conference. A copy of the presentation by Dr Thorpe is attached.

OPENING AND CLOSING

The Conference was officially opened by the Honourable Vice-President of Kenya, and closed by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health, Kenya.

Also present at the Conference were Dr H.R. Yoon President of FDI World Dental Federation, Dr E.M. Samba Regional Director of WHO/AFRO, Honourable Charity Ngilu Minister of Health Kenya, Dr B. Piccard of Foundation Winds of Hope, who delivered the Keynote Lecture, and Dr T.J. Ocholla Chairman of Kenya Dental Association.

AIMS OBJECTIVES AND METHOD OF WORK

The Aims and Objectives of the Conference were:

- Get commitment of political leaders by sensitising them on the link between general and oral health as well as the existing inequalities;
- Increase the number of functioning national oral health strategies by training technical government officers and providing examples of innovative ways of financing;
- Develop and strengthen public-private partnerships to improve oral health and oral health services;
- Agree on recommendations resulting from the meeting.

The Method of Work included presentations and discussions at plenary sessions, and working group sessions.

MAIN OUTCOMES

At the final session of the second day, Participants approved the *Nairobi Declaration on Oral Health in Africa*, by popular acclaim. The Declaration emphasized the following:

- Develop oral health policies for African countries;
- Address the environmental and lifestyle determinants of oral diseases, such as tobacco/alcohol, fluoride, nutrition, causes of facial trauma and others;
- Actively pursue health promotion/disease prevention strategies;
- Integrate oral health strategies within broader general health policies and programmes;
- Improve access to essential oral health care for the communities.

The following Action Plan was also adopted on the final day of the Conference:

- Assure wide distribution of the Conference Report to all stakeholders;
- Wide distribution of the *Nairobi Declaration*;
- Exploration of alternative ways of financing – encourage research;
- Further promotion of lifestyle changes (particularly tobacco and diet), by dissemination of papers and information;
- Shaping of experiences of different training programmes, human resources, primary health care and access problems;
- Guidance on infection control
- Setting up of appropriate and sustained data collection
- Survey of existing oral health policies – development and distribution of templates for oral health policies.

CONCLUSION

The final report of the Conference is being prepared by the organizers and will soon be circulated to all participants.