

PLENARY SESSION

Saturday 25 February 1984

- General Meeting of the Members of the International Leprosy Association

INTERNATIONAL LEPROSY ASSOCIATION General Meeting of Members

A General Meeting of Members of the International Leprosy Association was held on Saturday, 25 February 1984, during the XII International Leprosy Congress in New Delhi, India.

The President, Dr. M. F. Lechat, took the Chair and declared the meeting formally constituted, 246 Members being present.

Deaths of Association Members. The President, having paid tribute to the mem-

ory of Dr. R. Guinto who died while a member of the Council, called on the Secretary to read the names of members who had passed away since the XI International Leprosy Congress in Mexico City in 1978. The list included: **Former Office Holders** F. Contreras Duenas, T. Frank Davey, and C. G. S. Iyer; **Members** Dr. A. Belehu, Miss E. M. Clegg, Dr. H. Fieldsteel, Dr. T. Hirako, Sister Judy Saul (Kenneth), Drs. A. B. A. (Benty) Karat, R. Kooij, D. M. Mackay, R. Andrade Nunez, Sister Hilary Ross, and Dr. F. Sagher. **Non-members with special association with leprosy** Drs. L. Hartdegen, P. Laviron, E. Montestruc, and P. Richet.

Members of the Association stood in silent tribute as a mark of respect to the memory of their late colleagues.

Report of the Council's Proceedings. The President called upon the Secretary to give a brief summary of the main points of the agenda considered by the Council at its meeting on 19 February 1984.

Election of Officers and Councillors. The President referred to the list of nominations prepared by the Council. Copies of this list were distributed at the meeting.

Officers

President	Dr. M. F. Lechat
Secretary	Dr. R. H. Thangaraj
Treasurer	Dr. W. F. Ross
Editor	Dr. R. C. Hastings

<u>Europe/Africa</u>	<u>Asia/Far East</u>	<u>Americas</u>
<i>Vice-Presidents</i>		
Dr. Schaller	Dr. Job	Dr. Baliña

Councillors

Drs. de las Aguas	Drs. Abe	Drs. Azulay
Nkinda	Christian	W. Meyers
Rees	Desikan	Opromolla
Sansarricq	Ramasoota	Shepard
Waters		Trautman

No alternative nominations were made from the floor and the proposals of the Council were accepted by acclamation.

Honorary Vice-Presidents

The President nominated the three regional Vice-Presidents, who had each intimated that he does not wish to offer himself for re-election, as Honorary Vice-Presidents of the Association. They were: Europe/Africa, Dr. Languillon; Asia/Far East, Dr. Ramanujam; the Americas, Dr. Hanks.

The President acquainted the Meeting of Members of the wish of the Council to nominate the retiring Secretary, Dr. Browne, for the honor of Honorary Vice-President in recognition of his outstanding service to the Association.

The Members accepted these suggestions of the Council by acclamation.

President Emeritus. The President gave notice that he was introducing an amendment to the Constitution to create the title of President Emeritus. At present, the only holder was Dr. Robert G. Cochrane, who was accorded it because of his unique place in the Association and in the world of leprosy. The proposed amendment would be considered at the next Congress, and the President would, if it is passed, propose that Dr. J. Convit, who had served as President for two terms with conspicuous distinction, should be nominated for this special honor.

Amendment to the Constitution. Dr. Languillon proposed the following amendment to the Constitution: "A President should not be eligible for re-election." Since this proposed amendment had not been received at least six months before the date of the present Congress, it could not be con-

sidered at this Congress, but would be at the next.

Treasurer. Following the last Congress, we began our financial year 1979 with a debt of approximately US\$40,000. I am happy to be able to report that this debt has been liquidated and we have in addition been able to purchase equipment for the editorial office costing just over \$17,000. This satisfactory result has been achieved through payments received from members and subscribers and through the members of ILEP who donate to the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEPROSY upwards of US\$40,000 per year. This very substantial sum includes the direct support for over 280 members and subscribers.

With this as background I now turn to our situation in 1983 and projections for 1984 and beyond. In 1983 the paid circulation including those supported by ILEP was 1076. Total expenses were US\$98,886. This amounts to a cost per receiver of US\$91.90. This means that current membership in the International Leprosy Association is subsidized to the extent of US\$51.90 per person/per year. Our total income during 1983 was US\$88,924. This resulted in an operating deficit during the year of just over \$10,000 which has effectively wiped out our reserves. I anticipate publishing five issues of the JOURNAL during 1984 and in addition the abstracts of this Congress. I anticipate that our total expenses for publication of the JOURNAL will be over \$100,000. A number of steps to meet this need have been considered by the Board of Directors of the JOURNAL and by your Council. The most important of these steps are the following:

1. Increased circulation. For up to 1200 copies the printing costs amount to approximately US\$50 per copy per year. When the numbers printed rise to over 1200 copies costs fall to approximately US\$30 per copy per year. If circulation were to increase substantially, say to 2000 copies, financial problems would be solved and we might even be able to reduce ILA membership fees. I am appealing to you to help us with this task. Please make sure that your medical school, your local medical library, and your own institution

take and pay for copies of the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEPROSY.

2. Reduce the size of the JOURNAL. A reduction of 100 pages (15%) in the size of the JOURNAL would save about US\$6000 per year. The Board of Directors has not recommended that we take this route.

3. Try to increase donations. Donations already amount to over US\$40,000 per year and more than cover the cost of the editorial office in addition to the 280 members and subscribers paid for by ILEP. We shall be looking for increased donations but I do not anticipate a substantial increase in this source of funds.

4. Accept advertisements. We are not recommending accepting advertisements because we do not see this as a very fruitful source of funds and in addition if we were to accept advertisements, it would affect our status as a scientific journal from the postal service's point of view and substantially increase postage.

5. Reduce expenses. We are looking to some minor reductions in expenses, for instance by publishing the list of names and addresses of members alternate years instead of every year, but I am not optimistic that we can make substantial reductions.

6. Increase fees. As a matter of principle I believe that the fees which we pay should cover the cost of printing, mailing, and management. This is simply because if we do not do this then every additional member or subscriber will be an additional burden on our donated income. During 1985, unless a very substantial increase in circulation occurs, I anticipate the costs of printing, mailing, and management will amount to US\$65 per receiver of the JOURNAL. In view of this I have recommended to Council, and Council has accepted the recommendation, that we increase fees to members of the International Leprosy Association to US\$60 and subscribers to US\$80. These increases should give us a small surplus to eliminate the deficit I anticipate for 1984 and provide a small cushion for inflation. Inflation is of course unpre-

dictable but can be expected to be at the rate of at least 5% per year between now and the next Congress.

Editor. The Editor outlined the problems that the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEPROSY has experienced over the last five years together with the measures that have been taken to solve these problems. A recurrent problem has been that the JOURNAL has been late. This has been due to transitions in Assistant Editors, the inclusion of a detailed subject and author index in the December issue each year, and an overall increased workload due to the policy of refereeing each original article and an increased number of submissions. With a highly capable Assistant Editor, Mrs. Dee Goodman, with a computerized subject and author index, and with automated office equipment, the Editor was pleased to announce that the March 1984 issue is on schedule and that the June 1984 issue should be on time.

The JOURNAL has enjoyed successes in the last five years. There has been a modest growth in the number of submissions, the quality of the original articles has been maintained and hopefully measurably improved by the enormous and expert work of an unselfish group of reviewers. The Correspondence section has been used more as a means of relatively rapidly communicating brief research reports. The Current Literature section of the JOURNAL has remained one of its traditional strengths. The Editorial section of the JOURNAL has been enhanced by the ongoing series of review guest editorials.

On behalf of the JOURNAL and on behalf of its readers, the Editor expressed deep appreciation to the authors of guest editorials, the dozens of reviewers each year, the members of the Board of Directors of the JOURNAL, to the Contributing Editors of the JOURNAL, to Dee Goodman and her predecessors as Assistant Editor, and to the hundreds of authors who have entrusted their work to the JOURNAL over the last five years.

Secretary. The President called upon the Secretary to give a brief report of his activities since the last Congress. Dr. Browne summarized as follows some of his work on behalf of the Association:

a) Maintaining an up-to-date register of members. Since every year many members lapsed because of nonpayment of annual dues and many new members were approved, this was a huge undertaking. He paid tribute to the careful and methodical work of his wife, Mrs. Mali Browne, for her indispensable help in this task.

b) Representing the Association on international bodies. He had served as Vice-President and Executive Committee member of the CIOMS (Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences) of which the Association is a founder-member; member of the Executive Committee of the CWOIH (Council of World Organizations Interested in the Handicapped); and at various conferences and committee meetings.

c) As Secretary General of the present Congress, he had been responsible for the scientific organization. This included the acknowledgment, editing, and (with the President's Reading Committee) the selection of abstracts to be presented as papers (284), those to be recommended for poster presentation (168), and those to be read by title (58). Of the total 510 abstracts submitted, he was gratified that 35.3% were from Indian authors. All of the abstracts submitted would be published in the JOURNAL, and thus enter world literature.

Use of the word "leper". The President called upon the Secretary to report on his lengthy correspondence with Ms. Costa Neves of Brazil, for long a campaigner on behalf of leprosy sufferers. She asked the Association to reaffirm its abhorrence over the continuing use of the pejorative term "leper" in various European languages. The President proposed a resolution in the following terms that was unanimously adopted by the Meeting:

"That the International Leprosy Association reiterates its deep-rooted objection to the use of the word 'leper' and similar stigmatizing equivalent terms in many languages both in the press and in translations of the Christian Scriptures, and urges everybody concerned to avoid using a word that causes pain and gives offense to leprosy sufferers in many lands."

Venue of next (1988) Congress. The President called on the Secretary to report on

the invitations received by the Association from cities wishing to act as host for the next Congress, to be held in 1988.

Three invitations had been received and thoroughly investigated: West Berlin, Hamburg, and The Hague. A fourth had been received only a few weeks ago, too late for an on-the-spot examination. In order of receipt, these invitations were:

1) West Berlin. Since the First International Leprosy Congress had been held in Berlin in 1897, it would be singularly appropriate for the next Congress to be held in that city.

A warm invitation had been received from the Mayor of West Berlin. The Secretary had visited the Congress Center and had visited it again in company with the President and Dr. Schaller.

The Congress Center itself is a superb new building and has every facility for a meeting such as ours, with more than adequate halls and rooms for smaller meetings. Hotel accommodations are excellent. Full estimates and costing have been prepared, and generous grants would be forthcoming from both the city and state governments.

Berlin is easily accessible by air. One disadvantage might be that the Center is situated some distance from the hotels, and participants would have to be taken by coach from pick-up points.

2) Hamburg. The Secretary had visited Hamburg, and had subsequently revisited the city in company with the President and Dr. Schaller.

The Congress Center would be ideal for the purposes of the Association. The meeting halls are purpose-built, and everything is of a high standard. An organization responsible for all local arrangements for translation, simultaneous interpretation, printing, etc., is very experienced. All our contacts with the staff confirmed our earlier impression of their efficiency.

A strong local organizing committee could be built up from German leprologists and dermatologists.

A guarantee of DM150,000 would be forthcoming from the city of Hamburg, and a generous federal government grant would be offered in addition.

A warm invitation came from the Mayor of the city of Hamburg on behalf of the Senate.

There is a very good range of hotels conveniently situated near the Congress Center. Inexpensive accommodations are available, including youth hostels from which special coaches would transport participants to and from the Congress.

3) The Hague. Initial inquiries had been received from the Netherlands Leprosy Relief Association (NLS) in February 1983, and the Secretary had visited The Hague to inspect the Congress facilities available, hotels, etc.

A warm invitation had come from the Dutch government with a promise of very generous financial help—US\$160,000 from the government and US\$16,000 from the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

NLS would undertake to cover the Congress overhead not met by government grants.

The facilities of the Congress Center would be admirably suited to the Association's requirements, with halls, small meeting rooms for workshops, panelled rooms for the display of posters, etc. The very experienced firm of Congress organizers had submitted detailed plans and estimates.

The link between The Netherlands and the Third World countries, their help in finance and in doctors especially trained in leprosy and tropical medicine, are additional arguments in favor of The Hague.

There are excellent air links through Amsterdam. Fast trains and coaches link Amsterdam directly with the center of The Hague.

4) Abidjan, Ivory Coast. The first intimation of the invitation from Abidjan was received on 27 January 1984, and neither the President nor the Secretary had had the opportunity of visiting Abidjan to inspect the facilities.

A detailed application from Dr. Série and Monsieur Récipon had been presented on 19 February, the day of the meeting of the Council of the Association. This letter stressed the following facts: No International Leprosy Association Congress had been held in Africa since the V Congress in Cairo in 1938, and none had been held in "black Africa" in a country where leprosy is an endemic problem. Adequate facilities for a Congress such as ours and good hotel accommodations are available, as is government financial support on generous lines.

There would be encouragement from the municipality and from the President of the Ivory Coast personally. The Follereau Foundation of France would also help financially. The letter stressed that a Congress held in Abidjan would stimulate African governments to intensify their efforts to control the leprosy endemic and, it is to be hoped, would challenge African doctors to engage in the leprosy campaign. The leprosy activities in the Ivory Coast sponsored by the Follereau Foundation at Adzope and elsewhere are well worth visiting.

The President then invited any member to speak to the choice of venue. Among the speakers were: Mrs. E. Veder-Smit, President of the NLS; Dr. Felix Série, Inspector General of Public Health, Ivory Coast; Dr. K. Kouka-Bemba, Assistant Secretary of OCEAC, and Dr. Alfa Cisse from Niger.

The President called for a ballot. The result was that a majority of members voted to accept the invitation from Abidjan to hold the 1988 Congress in that city. The President intimated that he would have to be satisfied within three months that the promises made at the meeting could be fulfilled.

Other business

Frequency of Congresses. Dr. Paul Brand, supported by several members, suggested

that in view of the rapidity of acquisition of important new knowledge about leprosy the Council should give serious consideration to the advisability of holding the Congress at intervals shorter than every five years.

The Secretary pointed out that Article 5 of the Constitution reads: "8. Meetings. The Association shall hold Congresses at such intervals and under such conditions as may be determined by the Council." A small change would be necessary in the wording of Articles 4(b) and 4(d), which refer to "five years" as being the normal term of office for Officers and Councillors.

The President promised that the Council would consider this matter.

Geographic representation. A member suggested an amendment to the Constitution that would separate Europe from Africa in the geographical representation on the Council. This matter has been referred to the Council, since it had not been submitted in the manner laid down in Article 14 of the Constitution and Article 9 of the By-laws.

There being no other business, the President declared the meeting closed. He thanked all those present for their help and attention to the various important matters discussed.



Dr. Dharmendra, Dr. Azulay and Dr. R. H. Thangaraj, incoming ILA Secretary.