

General Meeting of ILA Members

Minutes

9 August 2002
Salvador, Brazil

1. The meeting was opened by the President, Dr. Yo Yuasa. He expressed his sincere gratitude to the Congress Organizing Committee, for having excellently organized a very successful Congress.

2. A list of names of ILA Members who passed away since the previous Congress was read by the Secretary, followed by a brief period of silence by the participants as a tribute to the deceased members:

Gjalt Boerrighter
He Daxun
Gordon Ellard
Melville Furness
Dolores "Dee" Goodman
Le Kinh Due
Waldemar F. Kirchheimer
Andy Louhenapessy
Jal Mehta
Robert N. Mshana
Richard J.W. Rees
Gerald Walsh

3. The minutes of the General Meeting of Members at the occasion of the 15th Congress on 12 September 1998 at Beijing were approved.

4. Reports

4.1 Secretary's report

Since the Council meeting after the ILC in Beijing on 12 September 1998, the Council has met at two other occasions:

17 November 1999, Abijan Ivory Coast: Informal brainstorming meeting on the future of ILA:

13 November 2000 Agra, India:

During the Agra meeting a working group was set up (P. Saunderson, Chair, P. Feenstra, S.K. Noordeen, W.C.S. Smith) to submit detailed proposals regarding the future of the journal, including related changes required in the Constitution and Bylaws. During its meeting in Agra the Council also

agreed that there is a need to organize a technical forum to review the major technical issues related to the elimination of leprosy and to prepare recommendations to be discussed in detail during the next ILC in Brazil. Dr. B. Ji was requested to prepare a detailed proposal and to submit this to the President and Secretary, who then should decide on further action to be taken.

The meeting of the ILA Technical Forum was held from 25–28 Feb, Paris, after two preparatory meetings of the organizing committee. The report of the ILA Technical Forum was published in the *IJL*, *Leprosy Review*, the *Indian Journal of Leprosy* and *Le Bulletin de l'ALLF* (in French).

Two questionnaires had been circulated among the members:

1. ILC survey. Opinions, comments on the content and organization of the 15th ILC and suggestions for the next ILC were requested to all who attended the 15th in Beijing: the results have been published in the ILA Forum and were taken into account for the organization of the 16th ILC.

2. *IJL* Survey. In December 2000 questionnaires were sent to all 1010 of the *IJL* recipients (approximately 300 ILA members and 700 institutions). 160 responses were received. The respondents are resident in 45 different countries, 69% are MDs. The institutions in which they work include 37 medical schools, 43 research centers, and 26 leprosy control programs. 57% want the *IJL* to be continued as a peer reviewed scientific publication and 29% would like more emphasis on needs on the field. 65% are willing to make a commitment to submit articles for publication to the *IJL* and 58% to give priority to the *IJL* for publication of their own articles. 79% agreed that the journal should be published electronically and 73% prefer this to be in conjunction with the printed edition. 79% had, or

expect to have within one year, access to the internet.

4.2 Editor's Report

The report was presented by Dr. D. M. Scollard on behalf of the Editor, who unfortunately could not attend the Congress. Dr. Scollard noted that the *International Journal of Leprosy* is now in its 70th year of distinguished service to the ILA, the last 24 of which have benefitted from the outstanding leadership of Dr. Robert C. Hastings, Editor. The JOURNAL staff also note with sadness the recent passing of Mrs. Dee Goodman, who so ably assisted Dr. Hastings as the Assistant Editor for many years. The mission of the JOURNAL was reviewed, detailing the categories of information published, and noting that the number of pages printed annually has been relatively stable since 1995. Original Articles and Current Literature constitute the 2 largest sections of the JOURNAL; Original Articles have come from over 20 countries. The time required for different parts of the review and publication process were also summarized, and the hope expressed that the time from submission to publication can be reduced. The future plans for the JOURNAL were also presented, including plans for on-line publication and the development of a web site for the ILA, linked to the JOURNAL. During the transition period, when the JOURNAL will be published in print as well as on-line, the total annual costs will be greater, but the costs will be somewhat reduced when the JOURNAL is published on-line only. Finally, thanks were expressed to the members of the ILA for their many years of support for the Journal, and the hope expressed that the membership will continue to support it, both as subscribers and authors.

4.3 Treasurer's Report

The average circulation of the IJL over the past three years has been 1044 of which 1000 generated income and 44 were exchange and complimentary copies. 353 journals were sent to ILA members and 647 to institutions. The JOURNAL is distributed to 81 different countries. The annual cost for each recipient is \$129 for four issues. For the past three years the average annual cost of operating the IJL has been \$129,807 and the average annual income has been \$120,608. The deficit has been made up from reserves

accumulated in previous years. The income is comprised of payments from members (\$15,111), from subscribers (\$18,160), from grants and contributions (\$84,570) and miscellaneous income (\$2,767).

As these figures make clear the JOURNAL is dependent on grants and contribution, mainly from ILEP member agencies, for 70% of its income.

The costs of publishing the JOURNAL consist of publication and distribution (\$75,359), peer review and editing (\$44,043) and management and auditing (\$10,375). One of the realities of the cost of publishing a journal like the IJL, with relatively small circulation, is the relatively high level of fixed costs not affected by the actual numbers circulated. The costs of editing are entirely in this category. The cost of auditing is fixed and the cost of keeping track of payments and address changes does fall as circulation falls. Mailing costs (\$16,883), comprising approximately \$4 per recipient per mailing, are clearly directly affected by the number of journals mailed but printing costs, which consist largely of the costs of composition, are little affected. These factors need to be kept in mind when electronic publication is considered. Printing and distributions cost will be eliminated but peer review, editing and management will still be needed.

The President thanked the Officers for their contribution and the reports were accepted. The President acknowledged the outstanding contribution made to the ILA by Bob Hastings, who has been the Editor of the IJL for more than 25 years. He also commemorated the important role of Dee Goodman, who passed away last year and has been the Assistant Editor for twenty years.

5. ILA Technical Forum

The President was pleased with the important role of the Technical Forum Report as a source for the lively discussions during the Congress. He expressed his gratitude to the members of the Forum and acknowledged the contribution of Dr. B. Ji as the initiator and main organizer of the Technical Forum.

After a thorough discussion the Meeting adopted the following resolution with an overwhelming majority of votes:

The ILA General Meeting of Members thanks the ILA Technical Forum for the excellent work done and endorses the Report (as published in the International Journal of Leprosy and other Mycobacterial Diseases, Volume 70, number 1 (supplement), dated March 2002.

The ILA General Meeting of Members wishes to make it clear that the available evidence strongly suggests that a significant leprosy problem will continue to exist for many years to come and that services to detect and to manage cases of leprosy must therefore be sustained.

The ILA General Meeting of Members calls on all stakeholders (including national governments, international organizations and non governmental organizations) to review their recommendations and guidelines for leprosy-related activities in the light of the Report.

6. History of Leprosy Project

The President briefly reported on the ILA Global Project on the History of Leprosy, now based at the Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, associated with the Green College, University of Oxford, and requested Dr. Jo Robertson, who is in charge of the project to make a short presentation.

After mentioning a brief background, aims and strategies, she explained the three priority areas of the project, which are:

1. to develop a database of historical collections, accessible electronically to those interested.
2. to encourage preservation of archives, and provide how to do so, if requested.
3. to encourage historical research on leprosy and promote networking among researchers

At the end, she requested assistance from all the participants by providing her with relevant information to expand the database.

The database may be accessed through URL: <http://www.leprosyhistory.org>

7. Future of the IJL

The JOURNAL will be published online, with a transitional period of at least one year. This can be done at a reasonable cost.

An ILA web-site will be developed, which will have an area free to the public

and a members-only area, which could include many different features, including the ILA Forum and other discussion groups. Email newsletters, or perhaps locally printed material, containing material from the restricted part of the web-site could be produced for members without access to the web-site. It is assumed that electronic access will continue to increase rapidly in all parts of the world, making this provision less and less necessary.

The Editor will have overall responsibility for the JOURNAL and the web-site, with an Editorial Board.

8. Amendments of the Constitution and Bylaws.

In order to effectuate increased membership and the proposed changes regarding the IJL, a number of amendments of the ILA Constitution and Bylaws as proposed by the Council were discussed and accepted (after some minor modifications) as follows:

Constitution:

Article 2: 'objects' to be changed into 'objectives'.

'... concerned with leprosy.' to be replaced by '... with an interest in leprosy.'

Article 4b: Add: '... Europe, 3, subject to a reasonable distribution of disciplines.'

Article 4d: Delete: '(of five years each)'.

Article 4e: 'a period of five years' to be changed into 'one term'.

Bylaws

Article 1b: Replace 'be sent' by 'have access to'.

Article 1c: Replace 'he shall receive a copy of each issue so withheld, provided that copies are available' by 'access to all issues and other privileges of membership shall be restored'.

9. Venue of the 17th International Leprosy Congress

The President had received an information through the South East Regional Office of WHO in Delhi that the Minister of Health of India is interested to host the next meeting. This was applauded by the Members. The president remarked, however, that a possible initiative to have the congress in Berlin on the 110th anniversary year of the First Congress, will still be explored, as a possible alternative to India.

	T. Shwe (Asia)
	D. Lockwood (Europe)
Councilors Africa:	Y. Aziz A. Guedenon O. Ogbeiwi
Councilors Americas:	N.T. Foss J. Justice A. Law G.O. Penna
Councilors Asia:	W. van Brakel P.K. Gopal M.T. Htoon R. Hussain I. Nath.
Councilors Europe:	B. Ji J.W. König J. Terencio de las Aguas.

Secretary

Officers

Councillors

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Dr. A. Guedenon, Cotonou, Benin
Dr. O. Ogbeiwi, Minna, Nigeria