Changes to the WAS Administration

The General Assembly held in Goteborg, Sweden in June 2009, saw a number of changes to the elected membership of the Advisory Committee. Every four years the WAS elects its representatives to the Advisory Committee. The Statutes and Bylaws do not allow a person to hold the same office twice. Thus, at this meeting Eusebio Rubio-Aurioles stepped down as President and Rosemary Coates was elected as President for the 2009—2013 period.

The Legacy from 2005—2009

At the beginning of his Presidency, Eusebio set out a ten point strategic plan aimed at strengthening WAS and setting some new directions. Under his stewardship a number of important goals were met. As reported in previous Newsletters, through the efforts of Eli Coleman a grant from the Ford Foundation enabled WAS to produce the Sexual Health for the Millennium document; conduct a series of advocacy workshops, hire our first paid employee, establish a new website and fund future efforts for fund raising. Other significant achievements have been the development and acceptance of the definitions of specialist areas in sexology; the Standards of Practice for three of the five specialist areas in Sexology (Counselling and Therapy; Education and Health Promotion, and Medical and Surgical), and the Guiding Ethical Principles for WAS.

Through the Herculean efforts of Beverly Whipple, Secretary General/Treasurer and Jim Whipple, Financial Advisor, the WAS accounts have been reorganised and now meet modern standards of accounting practices. Beverly has also improved the system for maintaining membership records, receiving and processing membership applications and maintaining the WAS archives.

The achievements during 2005—2009 has provided the new administration with a solid foundation upon which to continue the growth and development of the WAS.

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There are nineteen elected positions on the Advisory Committee. The new Advisory Committee elect the President and Vice President, and four Associate Secretaries and the President chooses the Secretary General/Treasurer. In addition a President and four people are elected to the Scientific Committee of WAS.

The 2009—2013 Team

The Executive Officers

Rosemary Coates (Australia)
President

Kevan Wylie (UK)
Vice President

Uwem Esiet (Nigeria)
Secretary General/Treasurer

Eusebio Rubio-Aurioles (Mexico)
Immediate Past President

WAS promotes Sexual Health throughout the world.

WAS PROMOTING GLOBAL SEXUAL HEALTH, SEXUAL RIGHTS & UNIVERSAL SEXUALITY EDUCATION
The role of the Associate Secretaries includes responsibilities for liaising with the Regional Federations, recruiting new WAS members, monitor the schedule of conferences, provide information on WAS activities and generally promote WAS.

Jaque Brendler, Brazil  
Ganesh Aidekan, Singapore  
Sara Nasserzadeh, Iran  
Woet Gianotten, The Netherlands

(Jacque is a resident in USA)

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEES

For the past eight years the Scientific Committee of WAS and the International Scientific Committee have been chaired by one person and the activities blended. One of the goals in Eusebio’s ten point plan was to improve the scientific quality of all WAS activities. Because of the volume of work the decision was made to return to the previous practice of having two separate committees. The International Scientific Committee is a large committee devoted to reviewing abstracts submitted to the biennial WAS Congress. The Scientific Committee of WAS is responsible for the overall quality of our scientific activities.

Pierre Assalian, (Canada)  
Chair ISC  
Alain Giami (France)  
President, SC of WAS

Cristina Fridman  
Argentina  
Luis Perelman  
Mexico  
Matt Tilley  
Australia  
Charlotta Lofgren-Martenson, Sweden  
Aminta Parra  
Venezuela

Emil Ng  
China  
Mariela Castro Espin  
Cuba  
Pedro Nobre  
Portugal  
Yuko Higashi  
Japan  
Nadine Terrein-Roccatti  
Mexico

Members of the Scientific Committee of WAS:
Pedro Nobre, representing Behavioural Sciences  
Lotta Lofgren-Martenson, representing Educational Sciences  
Ganesh Aidekan, representing Medical Sciences  
Yuko Higashi, representing Social Sciences

The Executive Director

The Ford Foundation grant has allowed WAS to appoint its first paid employee. Michael McGee, an experienced sexologist and certified educator was appointed in May 2009. The position is part-time and duties include management of the administrative functions of WAS and fund raising. Michael is located in New York City and works from his home office.
THE PRESIDENT’S GOALS

In her inaugural speech the President committed the team to continue to meet the goals of the ten point plan. In addition she set out two ambitious, long-term projects. The first is to establish a Trust Fund with the aim of building a sufficient financial base to establish a permanent office for WAS. She made it clear that this is a very long-term project. However, we must start somewhere. She is currently receiving advice on the facilities, legislation and security of banks in a number of different countries. A priority is to ensure the long-term security of donated funds. These funds will be raised through donations and endowments. A “Wall of Honour” will be established to allow the names of significant donors, or people who they wish to honour, to appear. Until our goal is reached and WAS has a permanent office, the Wall of Honour will be a virtual wall on the WAS website.

The President’s second major goal is to establish an International All-Party Parliamentary Group, involving as many countries as possible. The purpose of the group is to have a number of active politicians committed to sexual health and sexual rights who can take issues directly to their respective governments. WAS’s role will be to provide them with evidence-based position papers, provide general advice and suggested strategies to advance our goals through legislative change. Having such groups in a number of countries will strengthen our ability to effect change at the various international forums.

The UK and Australia already have such groups established and work has commenced on contacting key politicians in two other countries. It is hope that within the next two months we will have established an initial group of five or six countries. Of course this activity will require financial support and application for funding will be aimed at both the participating governments, political parties and donor organisations.

A NEW INITIATIVE FOR WAS

Recently WAS established a Middle East Sexual Health Committee. Sara Nasserzadeh is the Chair and has recruited a number of committee members from various countries in the region. The aim is to reach out to sexologists from Middle Eastern countries and to encourage further development of sexology associations and membership of WAS. Since its inauguration, expressions of interest have come from people from Muslim countries outside the region. Once activities are firmly established it is anticipated that the committee will expand to other regions. Then a change of name might be in order.

COUNTRY COMMENTS

THE AUSTRALIAN SEX PARTY

A legitimate political party has been registered in Australia and will field candidates at the next Federal election. The Australian Sex Party is standing on a platform of sexual rights for all. Many of their policies are wholly consistent with WAS’ principles.

Quoting from their official manifesto:

The Australian Sex Party is a political response to the sexual needs of Australia in the 21st century. It is an attempt to restore the balance between sexual privacy and sexual publicity that has been severely distorted by morals campaigners and prudish politicians.

Tolerance of sexual free speech and sexual expression is one of the main hallmarks of free and democratic nations. Intolerance of these qualities is one of the hallmarks of autocracies, dictatorships and theocracies.

Their policies on such matters as censorship, sexuality education, equality, sexual health, GLBT issues and sex workers are clearly stated so that the electorate will have no illusions about their platform. It is the intention to field candidates at all elections, at the various government levels: local, state and federal. We shall follow their fortunes with great interest.

WAS PROMOTING GLOBAL SEXUAL HEALTH, SEXUAL RIGHTS & UNIVERSAL SEXUALITY EDUCATION
The biennial WAS Congress unites international clinicians, researchers, educators, activists and policy makers specializing in the multitude of fields related to sexual health.

Under the auspices of the World Association for Sexual Health (WAS), attendees will share knowledge on diverse issues of behavioural, clinical, psychological, social and cultural aspects of sexual health; discover new information from experts and address the urgent need for action to ensure sexual health and rights for all.

Congress topics include:

- Body modifications
- Cancer and sexuality/sexual function
- Circumcision and HIV-prevention
- Ethnic and cultural differences (indigenous and immigrant populations)
- Gender Identity Disorder and Human Rights perspective
- Hypoactive sexual disorders among women and pharmacological treatments
- Same gender families: reproductive, fertility and adoption kinship issues
- Sexuality and death: palliative care, euthanasia issues, end of life Sexuality and sexual issues among people with sexual needs
- Sexuality education: effective approaches for diverse learners
- Sexuality in ageing
- Sexual violence; Teenage pregnancies: North and South
- Trafficking and sexual slave trade
- Treatment outcome studies for sexual dysfunction (psycho-sexual therapies)

...and many more!
The 19th WAS World Congress for Sexual Health was attended by almost 1,000 delegates from 90 different countries. It was a great time, with Scandinavia’s most beautiful weather. On Saturday, June 20, on Midsummer Day, there was sunshine all day and magic bright nights. We were very happy to welcome our international guests, with such excellent assistance from the weather gods!

The pre-congress workshops on Sunday were followed by the welcoming ceremony and a great get together party, hosted by the City of Göteborg. The atmosphere was friendly and warm, and full of expectation and energy.

Then on Monday morning off it went! Scientific sessions, posters, exhibitions, meetings – friendly people everywhere – the whole Convention Center bubbled!

The theme of the Congress was “Sexual Health and Rights – a Global Challenge”. Sexuality education and sexual health promotion were the topics for many sessions. There had been 840 abstracts submitted, and 300 were allocated to oral sessions. The rest were presented as posters, of which a considerable number were briefly discussed in oral poster sessions.

The organizing committee was very happy for the generous financial support by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which enabled us to welcome approximately 100 scholars from a number of developing countries. Thus we could meet colleagues from many different countries that had never before participated in a WAS Congress. Most were young, enthusiastic people who shared their knowledge, experiences and aspirations with the participants. One of them, a young man from Peru, was awarded the best scientific paper of the Congress!

While not every abstract was of top quality, the opportunities to have good discussions in the different sessions compensated for some occasionally weak content. In these times, when many professionals in Sexual Medicine have separated themselves from Sexology and are running their own conferences, it is of great value to attend a congress that has no limitations in its coverage of all the varied aspects of sexology. A broad range of disciplines all have their own ways to interpret and analyze the concept of sexuality. It is fascinating to listen to scientists from different fields and learn about their way ways of thinking.

For our professional activities, clinicians need our own models and understanding, to be able to work, but we think that international contacts make us better doctors, when we learn about other ways to understand and analyze the whole field.

A publication is on its way – the 200 best abstracts, according to the reviewers’ ratings, will be published as a supplement to the International Journal of Sexual Health.

By Axel Brattberg
President of SFS, the Swedish Association for Sexology
Head of the Local Organizing Committee

Per Olov Lundberg
Honorary President of the XIXth WAS Congress,
Head of the Local Scientific Committee
The World Association for Sexual Health is an international organization founded in Rome in 1978. WAS membership is composed of Regional Federations, National Societies and Institutes and individual supporting members WAS currently has active members Societies around the World and many Individual Supporting Members.

WAS MISSION:

The World Association for Sexual Health promotes sexual health throughout the lifespan and throughout the world by developing, promoting and supporting sexology and sexual rights for all. WAS accomplishes this by advocacy actions, networking, facilitating the exchange of information, ideas and experiences, and advancing scientifically-based sexuality research, sexuality education, and clinical sexology, with a trans-disciplinary approach.

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Our New Website is Coming Soon!
www.worldsexualhealth.org

Wishing all the members of the World Association for Sexual Health a wonderful holiday season, and a joyous New Year.