In September I was bestowed the great privilege—and responsibility—of representing the international voice of dentistry as its elected leader. Throughout the last few months, I have met FDI members and delegates at their national and regional events around the world, such as the Annual Meeting of the Portuguese Dental Association and the International Association for Dental Research (IADR) World Congress on Preventive Dentistry. In doing so, I am struck by the vast reach of this great organisation. It barters its collaborating with fellow Council and Committee volunteers on the many FDI projects in development, participating in important governmental meetings, spending time with staff at the head office to better understand the day-to-day workings of the organisation, I am continually impressed with how each one of FDI’s many parts contributes to our achievements as a whole.

One of the questions I am asked repeatedly when meeting people for the first time as Dr Roberto Vianna, FDI President—as opposed to Dr Roberto Vianna the dentist, professor, dean or entrepreneur—relates to the topic of dental amalgam. During this upcoming two-year term, my answer to this question is that my vision for the FDI is to be true to the FDI vision: bringing together the world of dentistry, representing the dental profession of the world, and stimulating and facilitating the exchange of information across all borders with the aim of optimal oral health for all people. The FDI vision is a collective one, developed by and for our members, and should serve as the guiding light to our representatives, elected delegates, partners and supporters, and individual volunteers that dedicate time and energy to advancing the profession, whether in the clinical, scientifically, educationally or socially.

Volunteer commitment is an essential component of a strong FDI. I hope you will join me in recognising the contribution of long-standing FDI volunteer, Dr Peter Swiss. Dr Swiss will be “retiring” from the FDI next year, after more than 40 years of tireless service in a variety of roles across the organisation. His spirit of giving time through volunteering is an example for others to follow. His work is greatly appreciated and will be missed. And as we say thank you to Dr Swiss and reflect on the year he has dedicated to FDI, we welcome seven new and one returning member(s): Barbados Dental Association, Association Burundaise des Chirurgiens-Dentistes, Sociedad Dental de El Salvador, European Federation of Orthodontics, European Dental Students’ Association, National Children’s Oral Health Foundation, and the Guam Dental Society. This month we take a closer look at the European Dental Students’ Association: the eagerness of this group of dental students to get involved in volunteer and advocacy activities related to oral health promotion promises a bright future for dentistry.

As the sum of many diverse parts, FDI is only as strong as its relationships and in this respect, I hope that my service as FDI President can help strengthen existing bonds and build new bridges for the organisation. Such bridges might come through increased cross-Council collaboration, external partnerships with neighbouring NGOs dedicated to health promotion, or a forum for intra-member communication and exchange. In November, FDI took an important step in a significant meeting co-hosted by the World Health Organization and United Nations Environmental Programme and participated in the 2009 Greater New York Dental Meeting, with a progressive continuing education programme entitled, Dental Caries: Can the Paradigm of Care Shift?

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FDI President

Message from the president

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FDI President

FDI participates at WHO/UNEP meeting on future use of materials for dental restoration

FDI World Dental Federation participated in a joint meeting of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) on 16-17 November 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Experts from around the world were invited to the meeting to assess the scientific evidence available on the use of restorative materials, including dental amalgam, and the implications of using alternatives to amalgam in dental restorative care.

FDI President, Dr Roberto Vianna, and Executive Director, Dr David Alexander, attended the meeting, presenting a unified position for dentistry based on the resolution on amalgam drafted and passed at General Assembly during the 2009 FDI Annual World Dental Congress (AWDC) in Singapore.

In a presentation entitled “Dental restorative materials in clinical practice versus the dental profession”, Drs Vianna and Alexander argued that no ban or phase-down of mercury used in the dental profession should occur before a true alternative to dental amalgam is widely available in all communities. This FDI position is based upon several key issues that bridges might come through increased cross-Council collaboration, external partnerships with neighbouring NGOs dedicated to health promotion, or a forum for intra-member communication and exchange. In November, FDI took an important step in a significant meeting co-hosted by the World Health Organization and United Nations Environmental Programme and participated in the 2009 Greater New York Dental Meeting, with a progressive continuing education programme entitled, Dental Caries: Can the Paradigm of Care Shift?

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FDI supporting member: The European Dental Students’ Association

The European Dental Students’ Association (EDSA) was accepted as an FDI Supporting Member at General Assembly during the 2009 Annual World Dental Congress in Singapore.

The European Dental Students’ Association (EDSA) was accepted as an FDI Supporting Member at the Annual World Dental Congress in Singapore last September. Our direct involvement with FDI is of great importance to us as an organisation: we are eager to learn from established dentists, gaining knowledge from their experiences and expertise. We will also be able to keep dentists abreast of the dental field and what the future holds for us as dentists. The relationship between EDSA and FDI will be beneficial for us, in terms of gaining knowledge from their experiences and expertise. We will also be able to keep dentists abreast of the dental field and what the future holds for us as dentists. The relationship between EDSA and FDI will be beneficial for us, in terms of gaining knowledge from their experiences and expertise.

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Dr Roberto Vianna
FDI President
FDI website undergoes “makeover”

The FDI website (www.fdiworldental.org) will have a new look beginning January 2010, featuring a simplified navigation structure and menu tabs so that FDI’s members and partners can access relevant information about the organisation’s history, structure, projects, activities, and Annual World Dental Congress more easily, and in fewer clicks.

Some features of the new FDI front page will include:
- Direct links to current FDI projects and activities
- Quick Links to the members section, latest news stories, FDI publications and a sign-up form for the Worldental Communic
- Updated front page menu to simplify website navigation
-Expanded Congress & Events section, including a section to highlight FDI members’ events

For more information, contact the FDI at media@fdiworldental.org.

Inside the FDI

By Dr David Alexander, FDI Executive Director

The FDI saw some significant changes at the head office in 2009 and as we settle into our new home in Geneva, Switzerland, FDI is now entering a new phase in the organisation’s history.

The relocation from Ferney-Voltaire (France) to Geneva ran smoothly thanks to the notable efforts of FDI staff and in particular, Ms Laurence Jocaille, who managed the logistics of the move, ensuring that no small detail was overlooked. In an effort to offset the very significant costs associated with the relocation, the FDI created the Sponsor-a-Window Programme, whereby participants could adopt one of the 54 windows that offer a 560-degree view from the Geneva office. Thanks to the generosity of numerous donors, FDI has raised a total of 250,000 euros to date (more details coming soon).

As with many businesses and activities around the world, the FDI has been struggling to weather the economic storm. We face particular challenges—as a non-governmental, charitable organisation—to maintain existing channels and develop new avenues of revenue at a time when budget cuts and belt-tightening are standard practice. Nevertheless, we are well poised to move into 2010 under the financial discipline of our new Finance and Operations Director, Mr Jérôme Estignard. Finances are at the heart of every FDI project and Jérôme brings a strategic approach that translates to clear management accountability of FDI finances together with greater outcomes’ evaluation of what we achieved for what we spent. This positions us vital to our future and it gives me much pleasure to welcome Jérôme to the team.

I am also pleased to announce that Mr Bio Khaw has joined our permanent staff as Senior Accountant. And beginning January 2010, Dr S.D. Shankuntala will join us as Head of Public Health. Of course, when welcoming additions to staff, goodbyes must sometimes also be said: Ms Heather Sheppard and Ms Berit Pedersen, both of whom were part of the FDI family for more than six years, have decided to leave us to pursue new and exciting opportunities elsewhere. We wish them well in their endeavours.

Members’ corner: The spirit of volunteerism

Dr Peter Swiss, Chairman of the Working Group on Ethics & Dental Legislation, and volunteer support staff to the Dental Practice Committee, will retire from his FDI activities next year after more than 40 years of service to the FDI.

Dr Swiss has been affiliated with the FDI since his student days, when, in 1966, he was Trea- surer of the International Association of Dental Students (IADS), an organisation strongly supported by the FDI. A year later Dr Gerald Leatherman, then FDI Executive Director, appointed Dr Swiss as the first Student Liaison Officer. One of Dr Swiss’s responsibilities in this role was to attend IADS annual congresses on behalf of the FDI and to chair its General Assembly. Dr Swiss’s interest in international organised dentistry developed as a result of this role and was further strengthened when he was ap- pointed a member of the British Dental Association Organising Committee for the 1974 FDI An- nual World Dental Congress (AWDC) in London.

Following the AWDC in 1974, Dr Swiss was invited by Dr Leatherman to assist with the organisation of future FDI congresses. He also continued his commitment with the FDI as a speaker at several FDI con- gresses and as a member of the Commission on Dental Educa- tion & Practice (1985) and the UK delegation, becoming National Secretary in 1994. His particular interest in international dental ethics developed in the 1980s, following his appointment as Dental Secretary of the Medical Defence Union in 1982. Dr Swiss became a member of the FDI Ethics Committee, and in 2000, was elected Chairman. In 1998 he chaired the 5th International Congress on Dental Law & Ethics and in 2007 he coordinated the production of the FDI Dental Ethics Manual.

In 1999 the FDI became urgently in need of an Editor of FDI World and turned to Dr Swiss, who agreed to take on the role for two years. Later, in 2006, when the FDI was seeking a part-time Dental Practice Committee Coordinator, once again it turned to Dr Swiss for his assistance. Dr Swiss has brought an invaluable amount of support to the FDI and the Committee. He ended his contract with the FDI earlier this year, but has agreed to continue volunteering his time to the Committee until after the 2010 mid-year meeting.

In contemplating his involve- ment with the FDI, Dr Swiss said he has seen the FDI develop and improve. “Until about 20 years ago, the focus of the FDI was largely on the interests of the developed countries and its con- gresses were attended predominately by participants from these member associations,” said Dr Swiss. “More recently, however, the FDI has expanded its work to cover a much wider area of the world and now has some of its major influence in the developing countries”. Over the years, Dr Swiss has attended 27 FDI congresses, beginning with the AWDC in 1974. He feels the time has now come for him to stand back and watch others to continue the great work of the FDI.

Save the date:
2010 Annual World Dental Congress

The 2010 FDI Annual World Dental Congress will be held from 2-5 September in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil.

FDI World Dental Federation and the Local Organising Committee of the 2010 FDI Annual World Dental Congress (AWDC) are busy preparing for next year’s event, which will be held in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, from 2 – 5 Sep- tember.

Located on the northeast coast of Brazil, Salvador is the country’s third-largest city, boasting 54 km of beaches, a blend of American, African and European cultures, and an historical centre designated an official UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985. As the country’s first capital (from 1549 to 1763), Salvador has a long and rich history, evident in the distinctive architecture, cuisine and culture that continue to define the city, drawing visitors from around the world and making Salvador one of Brazil’s top tourist destinations.