Da Silva assumes presidency of World Dental Federation

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MEXICO CITY, Mexico: The FDI World Dental Federation is the United Nations of Dentistry, remarked one of the speakers at the opening ceremony of the 99th FDI Annual World Dental Congress in Mexico City. Proof of this is the intense lobbying, discussions and negotiations that take place amongst delegations and committees representing all the national dental associations in the world.

The chair of the organising committee, Dr Víctor Guerrero Reynoso, said that he was very proud because 98 different countries were represented at the congress, which “means it is a truly global event”. For his part, the President of the Mexican Dental Association, Dr Jaime Edelson, said that “the dentists are an integral part of the health system of every country” and demanded “an end to the separation between oral health and general health.”

He added that it was a moment to feel proud to be a dentist and especially Mexican. “It’s also time to share and learn from more than 90 foreign dentists who have come to bring their knowledge and experiences” to the FDI congress.

Ayub Safar, President of Mexican Dental Trade Association, agreed that it was a historic moment to be part of the FDI World Congress in Mexico. Safar thanked the foreign and domestic industry for supporting “this commercial and scientific event”, which he described as a great opportunity to update knowledge and to benefit the Mexican population.

One of the most emotional moments of the ceremony was when outgoing President, Dr Roberto Vianna, passed the presidency of the federation to Dr Orlando Monteiro da Silva of Portugal, who will serve in this capacity for two years. Vianna said that his serving in office has given him great satisfaction and that he envisions a bright future for the profession.

Monteiro da Silva said that when he first attended an FDI World Dental Congress in Paris in 2000 “I was far from imagining that 11 years later I would be president of the federation. The president’s job is to lead, strengthen, and update the policy strategy to address new developments at social, political, economic and technological levels.” Monteiro da Silva added that for decades the profession “Or dental medicina, as it should be called, had limited its scope to a restorative approach. Today, everyone agrees on the need to embrace the medical field, especially because some areas related with traditional dentistry, such as education, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, demand it.”

The newly appointed Secretary of Health of Mexico, Salomon Chertorivski, opened the congress as his first official act. Chertorivski said that as he entered the Centro Banamex he met the dentist who treated him as a child. He went on to describe a series of measures that met with broad support amongst the practitioners attending. The Health Secretary said that he will implement steps to reduce red tape eligibility for dental care now demanded by the Mexican social security system. He added that Mexico agrees with the proposal of Dr Margaret Chan, director-general of the World Health Organization, who stated that oral health is a neglected area of international health. Therefore, “Mexico adheres to the FDI initiative to obtain official recognition by WHO of dental diseases as non-communicable diseases.”

The new FDI President justified the above by saying that, on the one hand, we are seeing an increasing number of invasive dental treatments and, on other hand, there is a need to help people achieve optimal dental health. Other reasons cited were the ageing population in some countries, the growing number of medically compromised patients and awareness of the importance of patient safety. Finally, he mentioned the relationship between non-communicable diseases, such as cancer, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and diabetes, and dental caries and periodontal disease, which affect over 90% of people worldwide.

Monteiro da Silva concluded by saying that one of his goals is to achieve a better integration of the Portuguese-speaking communities worldwide in FDI.