

## **REPORT OF THE MDA/CDA MEETING AND WORKSHOP IN KUCHING, MAY 2012**

### **“Bridging Technologies: Past, Present and Future”**

The Malaysian Dental Association hosted an International Scientific Conference & Trade Exhibition and their 69th Annual General Meeting, in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia, on May 24<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> 2012.

During this event, the Commonwealth Dental Association also ran a half-day workshop entitled:

**“Transfer of Technologies Amongst Commonwealth Countries (Prevention, Promotion, Curative and Rehabilitative)”.**

At the formal opening ceremony on May 25<sup>th</sup> at the Borneo Convention Centre Kuching (BCKK), the event was declared open by a state junior minister, representing the Chief Minister of Sarawak.

Speeches were made by

- The chairman of the Local Organizing Committee
- The Vice-President and General Manager (Asia) of GlaxoSmithKline
- The President of the Commonwealth Dental Association (CDA)
- The President of the Malaysian Dental Association (MDA)
- The Representative of the Chief Minister

In his speech, the President of the CDA thanked the Commonwealth Foundation and the MDA for making the event possible and the collaboration; he also welcomed delegates from all the Commonwealth nations who were present.

### **The formal CDA meeting/Workshop**

The CDA workshop/meeting was held on May 25<sup>th</sup> in room 4 of the BCKK, between 2.15pm and 5pm. The national associations of the following countries were represented.

- Malaysia
- Sri Lanka
- Pakistan
- Nigeria
- Seychelles
- South Africa and
- Singapore

In all there were 28 delegates at the meeting, including 10 sponsored by the Commonwealth Foundation. Also present were the CDA Vice-President for South East Asia, Dr Lee Soon Boon and a past president of the CDA, Dr Ratnanesan. Dr Lee Soon Boon welcomed all those present.

The meeting was chaired by the President of CDA, Dr Hilary Cooray, while Professor Adeyemi Olusile of Nigeria served as the Rapporteur.

Dr Cooray welcomed everybody to the meeting and gave the key-note address: *“Transfer of Skills and Knowledge of Oral Health Care amongst Commonwealth Countries”*.

The lecture began with the history of the Commonwealth of Nations, 54 different nations of about 2 billion people of different races, with different religions, cultures and traditions. There was a similar educational system, with per capita income that ranged from as low as \$600 to as high as \$43,300, but linked by the English language, spoken by all.



Dr Lee Soon Boon (Malaysia) and Dr Sello Matjila (South Africa)

The lecture delved into the oral health care status of Commonwealth countries, looked at the determinants of oral health and factors contributing to oral health and compared the oral health status of the high, middle and the low income countries. In summary, the lecture concluded that access to affordable and quality oral health care was limited in certain countries, especially the low income ones. There was a need for transfer of technology and innovative skills in promotion of health, including oral health and prevention of diseases, especially oral diseases. Transfer of skills and knowledge should be through:

- National Dental Associations
- Universities and academic institutions that operate for profit
- Workshops, seminars and courses including distance education courses
- International organizations such as the FDI, CDA and APDF
- Internet, Teleconferencing, Webinars.

The lecture recommended:

- The transfer of skills and knowledge among Commonwealth countries.
- Identifying opportunities for sharing the broad range of knowledge and experience in relation to oral care that existed within Commonwealth countries
- Facilitating initiatives such as secondments and scholarships between individual Commonwealth countries to help build capacity
- CPD programs for all categories of oral health personnel
- Oral health research, including oral health delivery systems
- Establishment of management information systems
- Standardizing technology and equipments
- Fostering Public-Private partnership in delivering oral health services
- Utilization of mass media and advertising

All the above features need to be defined by each country and adjusted at local, regional/state and national levels to suit the society being served.

Dr Ratnanesan thanked the lecturer and went on to explain why he felt that the CDA should continue; “The bond must stay”. He reiterated the history of the CDA and concluded that so that the efforts of those that founded the CDA would not be in vain, the CDA must continue to be.

Thereafter followed the individual country presentations;

- Dr Saima Butt (Pakistan) gave a dental profile of the country; 37 dental schools and new ones being set up. Dentist: population ratio is about 1:16,000. The main journal is the JPDA published quarterly and indexed and 7 others. There is also a newsletter that has large circulation. Members attended international dental meetings regularly and the association also organizes some. CPD is compulsory, as is recertification after 5 years.
- Dr E Fernando (Sri Lanka) also gave a dental profile of the country, including manpower, and mentioned that training (basic, postgraduate and in-service), is being provided by different bodies; that specialization training is provided more domestically now than abroad, but that there are exchange programs with institutions abroad and External Examiners also come in to participate in examinations at different levels of training.
- Dr N Z Junid (Malaysia) informed the workshop that the health system is based on the British system, and went on to give the history of dentistry and dental education in Malaysia and the oral health profile of the country. Strategic plans to improve the oral health status of the country has yielded good results. Specialists were brought in from abroad to train individuals at home to become specialists. The conclusion was that dental skills and knowledge were being transferred into Malaysia.
- Dr Sello Matjila (South Africa) gave a profile of the country and its oral health profile. He mentioned that the focus now is on oral health care, that there is a recent change in the oral health policy of the country but it is still not very clear. SADJ is published monthly and regularly organized CPD, attendance at which is compulsory for annual registration, is provided. Dr Matjila concluded by inviting all delegates present to attend the SADA/CDA meeting being held in November 2012, in Cape Town
- Dr Gloria Agboghroma (Nigeria) gave the profile of her country and its oral health profile. The decision making in oral health matters is often not formulated by the dentists. The Nigerian Dental Journal is indexed and published biannually; in addition there is a newsletter, although it is not published regularly. Attendance at CPD is compulsory for annual registration.

During the discussion that followed the presentations, the following issues were raised

- There needs to be better use of the internet, including webinars
- Exchange program for dental personnel; during the discussion the issue of funding was prominent but it was suggested that it could be easier if there were volunteers for such exchange programs.
- There should be arrangements for dentists to have attachments to improve clinical skills
- Experienced lecturers should be encouraged to go to various countries to train specific groups
- There need to be research collaborations

Recommendations of the workshop were

- The CDA should compile a list of experts who may be prepared to visit member countries, to render their expertise. The CDA would sponsor the travel while the host country will offer local hospitality
- The CDA should compile a list of volunteer dentists from member countries who may want to go to countries with dire need for their services
- There is a need for data exchange and research collaboration
- On the use of internet facilities;
  - a. Improve the CDA website, create interactive forum in different subjects for question and answer session
  - b. The website to download possible journals of national associations.

#### **OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE CONFERENCE**

The scientific lectures were very stimulating and beneficial to members who attended; there were enough topics to attract individuals' interest, because the topics covered a large span of dentistry.

The informal and Gala dinners were very nice and very well organized; so were the different cultural activities.

There was a large trade exhibition that displayed a wide variety of modern dental equipment and materials.

#### **Acknowledgement**

**The CDA wishes to sincerely thank the Commonwealth Foundation for the travel sponsorship for the 10 delegates and also thank the Malaysian Dental Association for the free conference registration and hotel accommodation for all the Commonwealth Dental Association delegates and, more importantly, for their very warm hospitality.**