

# President's Column

## CDA'S GLOBAL STRATEGY WILL PAY OFF



Dr. Tom Breneman

CDA has long been a contributing member of the FDI World Dental Federation. FDI membership now includes more than 140 national dental associations and over 700,000 dentists. Because FDI has a corporate membership structure, CDA's individual members are automatically affiliated with this far-reaching organization.

CDA is represented in the FDI's General Assembly — the “world dental parliament,” if you will. In this era of instant communications, all decisions made at FDI will have an impact here at home, so there is no question that CDA needs to be involved in FDI affairs. In this era of globalization, the goals of an international body have a positive impact on our profession locally — directly benefitting the individual dental practices of CDA's members.

“Research globally, benefit locally” is the way of the future for the Canadian dental profession.

Like CDA, FDI is now carrying out its own governance review and has spent considerable time and energy developing a new strategic plan that will transform “Missions into Actions,” as the FDI slogan goes. We need to ensure that FDI is as efficient and effective as it can be. With CDA's recent efforts in governance review, we can contribute to this process in a positive way, and are indeed fortunate to have past CDA president Dr. Burton Conrod as an FDI councillor.

A recent example of FDI advocacy and involvement came about at the April 2002 World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid. With the FDI representative's input, the United Nations Commission on Population and Development agreed to include dentistry and oral health in its plan of action. Specific dental goals include providing dental services to prevent and treat disorders that can impede eating and cause malnutrition.

As FDI's main aim is to disseminate information, policies and standards related to all aspects of oral health care, CDA needs to be involved politically *and* scientifically with this organization. We need to have a presence there to monitor issues as they emerge and ensure that CDA's policies are in line with those in other countries.

FDI and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) continue to work together to develop clinical standards for dental materials. Canadian dentistry must be well represented here as well. And indeed it is. Dr. Dennis C. Smith of Collingwood, Ontario, is the chair of ISO TC 106 Dentistry, which develops standardized terminology, test methods and specifications for

materials, instruments, appliances and equipment used in all branches of dentistry. Through his work on this committee, Dr. Smith is certainly raising the profile of Canadian dentistry and extending Canada's influence in this area.

FDI also works closely with the International Association for Dental Research and the World Medical Association. This cooperation allows organized dentistry in Canada to have some influence on the selection of research topics.

Over the years, we have been aware of individuals who have given of their time and professional expertise to provide dental care in developing nations. The University of Saskatchewan's Oral Health Project in Mozambique was recognized with a National Partnership Award by the Canadian International Development Agency. The project has trained a nucleus of community-oriented dental teachers and established an oral health training centre in that African country.

The FDI's World Dental Development Committee is ensuring that the work of various dental aid agencies is streamlined and harmonized. As FDI becomes more active and focused in this area, it can enhance the effectiveness of Canadian involvement, as we address our professional and social responsibilities to reduce inequalities in oral health care delivery.

Canada's dentists need to become more involved in international dental affairs. As FDI's only official member in Canada, CDA is playing an essential role in ensuring that the voice of Canadian dentistry is heard around the world.

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