

Contributors: Rosemary Coates; Uwem Esiet; Luis Perelman; Pedro Nobre

Editor: Woet Gianotten

WORLD SEXUAL HEALTH DAY

On the 4th September this year WAS will be launching World Sexual Health Day with the involvement of at least 22 countries. We are expecting more countries to commit in the next few weeks. The theme of the Day is '**Let's talk about ...; an intergenerational discussion**'.

The focus will be on positive activities and mutually respectful discussions. Co-ordinators will have the option to engage in different activities, depending upon local resources and cultural preferences. WAS will be providing detailed information packages including guidelines on how to conduct specific activities, publicity materials and press statements. We look forward to your participation.

More news to come!

PRESIDENT'S ACTIVITIES

While being kept very busy with WAS administrative matters and organising the World Sexual Health Day, I have also attended two Federation Congresses.

The African Federation of Sexual Health and Sexual Rights Conference

This was held in Addis Ababa in February. I was very impressed with both the organisation and the content of the programme. The opening ceremony was graced by the presence of the President of the Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Minister for Health, a clear indication of the importance placed on sexual health and sexual rights in Ethiopia. Amongst the delegates there were several politicians from various African countries and one from the Pan-African Parliament. I took the opportunity to talk with them about establishing the All-Party Parliamentary Group and have since followed up with the representative of the Pan-African Parliament.



Rosemary Coates, President of WAS
Uwem Esiet, President of AFSHR

An informal poll taken by one of the keynote speakers indicated that the majority of participants were less than 35 years of age. There were many lively debates and challenges to speakers which were very stimulating. It also gave me a feeling of great optimism that the youth of Africa are not prepared to accept the status quo and have given a lot of thought to sexual health matters.

The Conference culminated in the production of a statement: **A Call to Action**, which appears as an attachment to this Newsletter.

As part of the activities during the Conference, I was invited to launch a book as a result of a training programme organised through Action Health Inc., under the guidance of Adenike Esiet. This book, **A Tapestry of Human Sexuality in Africa** is published by Jacana Media in association with Action Health Incorporated and the Africa Regional Sexuality Resource Centre.

Quoting from the publishers:

"This book is a collection of papers that intricately examine human sexuality on the continent. The voices are fresh and speak about often understudied aspects of human sexuality. Reflection on such issues as, the coverage of gender-based violence in Kenyan

print media, accessibility of shelters for LGBT people in South Africa, and how the Internet can be a valuable tool for communicating sexuality messages to Muslim people, provide lessons that can be translated into positive action in favour of sexuality on the continent at large”.



Three of the authors with 'Nike Esiet and the WAS President

The 10th Congress of the European Federation of Sexology

held in Porto from 9 to 13 May 2010 was a magnificent scientific and social event that brought more than 500 colleagues to one of the most charming European cities and the host of the world famous Port wine.

The Portuguese Society of Clinical Sexology was also celebrating its 25th anniversary and did its best to organize a memorable scientific and social event under the Topic: “Sexology, Past, Present & Future: Celebrating a Century of the Multidisciplinary Science of Sex”.

This was an European Congress with a world flavour including participants from almost 50 countries representing the five continents. The intense scientific activities (3 Gold Medal Lectures, 12 Master Lectures, 8 Plenary Sessions, 15 Symposia, 14 Oral Paper Sessions, and about 150 Posters) did not preclude a very interesting Social and Cultural program including a Welcome Dinner a Gala Dinner, site tours to the Old City and Port wine cellars, and art exhibitions.

I believe that the 2010 EFS Congress was a moment to celebrate Sexology (its history, the current status, and its future) but also a moment to celebrate Life.

Finally, I would like to express my profound gratitude to all participants, that despite the economic crisis and the volcanic clouds, did their best to overcome the difficulties and help making this Congress an extraordinary event.

Pedro Nobre, President of the Organizing Committee and President of the Portuguese Society of Clinical Sexology expressed the sentiment that the 2010 EFS Congress was a moment to celebrate Sexology (its history, the current status, and its future) and a moment to celebrate Life.

While there is much to say about the quality and content of many of the presentations, I would like to highlight two notable items. The first was the presentation by a Portuguese Member of Parliament Miguel Malmeida, who reported that the Portuguese Parliament had recently passed legislation supporting gay marriage. The second was a presentation by Luis Perelman (Mexico) and his colleagues on their project the **Family Acceptance Project** directed by Caitlin Ryan. The project is described by Caitlin thus:

“Families and LGBT young people are part of our research and our findings are extremely compelling. We have done the only research that has identified specific ways that families respond to their children's LGBT identity and gender variant behavior.



Antonio Palha, President of EFS
Rosemary Coates, President of WAS
Pedro Nobre, President of 10th EFS Congress

And we have linked each of these 100+ accepting and rejecting behaviors with health, mental health and well-being, including depression, suicide, substance abuse, HIV & STD, self-esteem, life satisfaction, etc.

We are developing a new evidence-based family approach to help diverse families decrease rejection and increase support for their LGBT children and adolescents which helps strengthen families, decreases risk for a range of negative health problems and promotes well-being of their LGBT children. Our work includes developing materials based on our research specifically for families with LGBT children”.

The research has been originally published in the Journal of Pediatrics January of 2009. Further information may be found on: <http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/>

The Pope’s visit to Portugal coincided with the latter days of the Conference. It included a visit to Porto on the day after the Conference closed. WAS took the opportunity to release a statement about the Catholic Church’s reaction to the current publicity about alleged sexual abuse by religious leaders and people in authority. The President was interviewed by a Portuguese TV station and a number of newspapers made reference to the statement.



Eusebio Rubio, Rosemary Coates and Pedro Nobre with the TV Reporter recording the interview

Oncosexology, a new branch of the sexological tree.

Whereas 4.3% of the adult population is in treatment or a survivor of cancer, over 50% of them have a disturbed sexual health. However oncology professionals are scared to talk sex, the majority of sexual health professionals are scared to talk cancer and the patients are ashamed to start that discussion. That’s why in 2002 ISSC (International Society for Sexuality and Cancer) was started. Cancer and sexual health professionals gathered during the 2nd Rotterdam Symposium on Cancer & Sexuality (June 4th 2010). Their combined expertise is shaping oncosexology. This is really work in progress! The presentations of this meeting can be found at www.issc.nu



www.kenes.com/was

WAS WORLD CONGRESSES

2011 WAS Glasgow

Preparations for the 20th World Congress are developing rapidly with Kevan Wiley and his colleagues Sheffield Society for the Study of Sexuality & Relationships working closely with Alain Giami and the WAS Scientific Committee and Pierre Assalian and the International Scientific Committee. Seven themes have been identified and people, within and outside of WAS have been chosen to guide the content and propose speakers within their respective themes.

2013 WAS Rio de Janeiro

The venue of the 2013 Congress has now been selected and we are confident it will have a solid scientific programme and a carnival atmosphere – so see you in **Rio de Janeiro!**

2015 WAS

Later this year we will be calling for bids for the 2015 World Congress.

WAS MEMBERSHIP

Our members are very important to us and we are still trying to up-date our membership data base. However, we are completely dependent upon **you**, the members, to up-date contact details including changes to the management of your society or organisation. Up-dating information should become easier once the WAS web site is properly organised, in the meantime, please send any changes to email and/or street addresses, personnel names etc. to the Secretary General/Treasurer, Pierre Assalian pierrehome@3web.net

Due to our current difficulties with the Web Builders we may be missing some applications for membership submissions. Please reassure any of your colleagues who have experienced a lack of response from WAS, that we are working on the problem and will retrieve all applications as soon as possible.

WAS WEB SITE

As mentioned above, we are having difficulty getting action from our web site builders. This is of great concern as the current issue of the **International Journal of Sexual Health** is now ready for distribution and we want to make an e-copy available to *all* members whose association has paid their 2010 dues.

The delay in action on the part of the web builders is also inhibiting our ability to place information and efficiently handling our applications for membership. Please be assured that the Executive Officers are doing all they can to get a response from the web builders and will take definitive action if necessary.

PROJECT FOR A WORLD DATA BASE ON SEXUAL HEALTH

The WAS Scientific Committee has proposed the development of a World Data Base, with the following goals to:

- ✚ create a database with information available from several organizations (e.g. WHO, Unaid, UNO, Unesco, Research centers, etc.) about sexuality, sexual health, sexual rights.

- ✚ establish cross-national partnerships in order to collect and organise such information.

- ✚ organise and present these data on a web site dedicated to this task, inside the web site of WAS. Data collected from this research projects should be stored in the WORLD DATA BASE, disseminated to the scientific community and the general public and serve as evidence base background to support the WAS mission.

A second phase will be aimed at promoting the development of comparable studies on a variety of key dimensions of sexuality (sexual behaviour, sexual health and sexual rights as main topics). In order to accomplish this goal we should be able to establish partnerships with key research centers across the world that would be interested and willing to write grants to fund this project. This could include regional grants or Cross-national funds (e.g., European Union, WHO, UNO, Ford Foundation, etc.).

In order to develop this ambitious mission, the Advisory Committee of the WAS approved the creation of a Task Group that should act under the supervision of the WAS Scientific Committee.

The WAS Scientific Committee is now working in order to develop a written project to be submitted for discussion within the WAS Advisory Committee

Pedro Nobre, project director
Alain Giami, president WAS Scientific Committee

OTHER MEETINGS

The 2nd International Conference on the Survivors of Rape, University Medical Centre UMC - Utrecht, Netherlands, 30 Sept – 2 Oct.
www.umcutrecht.nl/conferenceonrape

The 32nd NACS Conference (Nordic Assoc. Clinical Sexology). Oct 14-17 2010, Tallinn, Estonia. Birth-Death-Sexology
www.nacs.eu

15th CLASES and 30 yr Jubilee of FLASSES. 21-23 Oct 2010, Alicante, España
www.congresosexologia2010.com

ATTACHMENT 1

4TH AFRICA CONFERENCE ON SEXUAL HEALTH AND RIGHTS

8-12 Feb, 2010

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

CALL TO ACTION

Over 700 representatives of governments including members of parliament, Civil Society Organisations, development partners including UN Agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors attended the 4th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where the interrelationship between sexuality, sexual and reproductive health and rights and HIV/ AIDS were examined. This "Call to Action" is grounded on key observations, research evidence and demonstrated good practices presented at the Conference based on the work of sexual and reproductive health practitioners, advocates and service providers from across Africa and the world working within the human rights framework and ethical principles of choice, privacy, respect, responsibility, equality and non discrimination.

Participants shared knowledge and understanding as they seek to continue the momentum towards nondiscriminatory policy and program approaches to sexuality, gender equality and HIV/AIDS programming were highlighted.

Special attention was given to sexuality and gender relations as core dimensions of being human, and to their vital importance in human development, especially during adolescence and young adulthood.

It was observed that there was the need to commit to broader and more meaningful participation of young people, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex people (LGBTQI), People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA), sex workers, people with disabilities and others in future conferences.

It was also observed that there has been a positive shift in thinking around sexual and reproductive health and rights in the recent years with increased focus on sexuality particularly of key vulnerable groups in Africa.

It was further observed that there is an increasingly open and evidence-informed dialogue on sexuality, sexual health, equality between women and men and sexual rights in Africa over the last several years, and agree to foster continued conversation based on insights from all concerned communities, programmatic experience and research.

It is recognized that, it is imperative to discuss sexuality and gender to protect the human rights as well as to ensure sexual and reproductive health of all.

It was noted that various Governments, African Union, Civil Society Organisations, development partners, including the UN, bilateral and multilateral donors have made significant contributions towards addressing issues of sexuality, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and HIV/AIDS in Africa, including the ICPD, Maputo Plan of Action, the Abuja Declaration, the Paris Declaration and MDGs. Of particular commendation is the African Union for the recent launch of the Campaign Against Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA).

Despite all the gains made so far, there are still concerns that the poor status of sexual and reproductive health in Africa as characterised by the high unmet need for contraceptives and emergency obstetric care, high maternal mortality rates, unsafe abortions, high fertility rates and increasing new HIV infections especially among vulnerable and marginalised groups, including LGBTQI, people living with disabilities, young people, in particular, women and girls.

Of further concern is lack of consensus in Africa about how to approach integration of rights based sexuality programming within existing sexual and reproductive health and rights programmes including HIV/AIDS.

In order to enhance commitment to issues of sexuality, sexual and reproductive health and rights including HIV/AIDS urge

Governments and Parliamentarians

1. Accelerate implementation of the ICPD, the Maputo Plan of Action and renewed commitment by African governments to the CARMMA.
2. Allocate 15% of country GDP to the health sector, and prioritize integrated sexual and reproductive health services for all—including adolescents and young people, sexual minorities, sex workers, People with disabilities and PLWHA—that are nonjudgmental, respectful, and tailored to the specific needs of individuals.
3. Increase resources for SRHR and HIV/AIDS programmes to expand facilities, ensure SRHR commodity security, provide appropriate and rights based training and skills for health professionals.
4. Expand provision of information and education on sexuality, reproduction and HIV/AIDS that is gender-specific and accessible: in schools, for women, men, young people and other vulnerable populations – sexual minorities, people with disabilities, sex workers, PLWHAS, in slums and rural populations who are often underserved.
5. Expand access to sexual and reproductive health information and services for the most vulnerable persons including those in conflict areas, the poorest and young people through tailored interventions, training for service providers and embracing human rights based approach.
6. Rescind laws, policies and practices that criminalize same sex activities, sex work, abortion, and HIV transmission as these laws undermine other fundamental human rights of all persons, and continue to fuel the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Civil Society Organisations

7. Commit to promoting transformative programming that engages men in the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights and challenging the current construction of masculinity that puts men and women at risk of HIV/AIDS.

8. Initiate programs, public campaigns, and other initiatives that engage men in working for the empowerment of women, gender equality, and to end violence against women.
9. Initiate programs, public campaigns, and other initiatives that engage men in working for the empowerment of women, gender equality, and to end violence against women.
10. Continue multifaceted efforts to mobilize alliances with and among key communities for both strong policies and programs; increase knowledge and understanding among the public and the media of sexuality, sexual diversities, harmful traditional practices, inequalities between women and men, as well as attention to the positive dimensions of sexuality and sex.
11. Create and promote, in partnership with young people, programs that provide leadership opportunities; comprehensive and accurate information in multiple and accessible formats (print, electronic, Braille, closed captioned, sign language) on sexuality, gender and human rights; and develop their decision-making capacity and agency.
12. Support continuing the discourse through experience sharing and capacity building on sexuality, sexual and reproductive health/rights and HIV/AIDS.

Development Partners

13. Harmonize, align and coordinate resources behind robust national health plans for a more effective use of domestic and external resources, maximizing management for results and mutual accountability.
14. Increase resources to African NGOs to build their capacity to respond to the need to integrate sexuality into sexual and reproductive health and rights programmes as well as services, using the Paris Declaration Model.

AFSHR urges everyone to monitor and report on the implementation of this 'Call to Action' as we lead up to the 5th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights in Cairo, Egypt in 2012.