

Report of VP for Liaison with WHO and other organizations

IASSID Council Meeting

August, 2008

Summary of Past Year Activities

Although David Felce and I met Shekhar Saxena at WHO headquarters in Geneva in 2005 and agreed on a work plan to fit the revised policy of WHO on liaison with NGOs, our aspirations have not been fulfilled and it is not easy to say why this is so. However, IASSID subsequently consulted with the team in Montreal charged with preparing the WHO **Atlas** (2007). In addition, the co-editors of the recent special issue of JPPID (Emerson, Felce, McConkey & Walsh) invited some of the Montreal team to contribute an article and this has now been published.

Since the 2nd Regional Conference in Santiago de Chile in September 2007, our contact with PAHO has been negligible. Members of Council may recall that the Santiago event attracted 300 participants, and was co-hosted by IASSID, the Faculty of Law at Diego Portales University and by PAHO – which is the WHO body in North and South America. While the cooperation from Javier Vasquez, human rights expert at PAHO in Washington DC, was most helpful, we have not established a longstanding relationship with PAHO.

In May 2008, I wrote to Shekhar Saxena (WHO, Geneva) about various matters, and include here the section of his reply of particular interest to IASSID:

As you are aware, we at WHO are very keen to take the large agenda for ID forward, but find our resources quite insufficient to do this. The Atlas-ID has been our small step in this area and we do want to build upon its success.

I will be very interested in further exploring the plans for collaboration with IASSID, with you and Professor Murphy, when convenient to you. We really need to make some concrete plans and then implement them; otherwise the risk of discontinuation of the official relationship is high.

I also wish you a great conference at Cape Town.

Plans for Upcoming Year

I recommend that IASSID make all appropriate efforts to continue its present relationship as recognized NGO with WHO. Although challenging and perhaps awkward, it is nonetheless important – in my view – for IASSID to have recognition as the only scientific and international body in our field.

Issues or Acting Items

It is likely that Council should now consider a decision on whether IASSID should build on its existing links in the South America region, for example, by promoting a research event in collaboration with some of the agents who helped in Santiago, as well as with PAHO.

Discussion Points for Council

It is for the incoming Executive and Council to decide whether to build strong links with WHO and/or PAHO. If the decision is positive, I suggest that 1-2 members of Council might be delegated to strengthen these relationships through further, quite focused collaboration and regular exchanges of information.

Patricia Noonan Walsh
Vice-President, IASSID (2004-2008)

Dublin
August 2008