



## FIGO / NFOG Newsletter Summer 2014

**Dear colleagues,**

In order to up-date you on the most recent FIGO Executive Board meeting and to also let you know about some of the latest exciting FIGO activities and initiatives, I have enclosed a brief summary below.

### **Executive Board meeting (Tokyo, July 2014)**

The FIGO Executive Board generally meets once a year with the latest meeting taking place in Tokyo in July 2014.

The logistics, arrangements and generous hospitality were exceptional with great attention to detail resulting in a highly effective, productive event which has received very positive feedback from the participants. This was largely thanks to the superb combined efforts of Professor Tadashi Kimura, the Japan Society of Obstetrics & Gynecology and the respective Japanese and UK Secretariats.

During the last evening of the meeting, it became apparent that the Chairman of the Japanese Society, Professor Ikuo Konishi is also an excellent karaoke singer!

The vast majority of FIGO's work is undertaken by the various Projects, Committees and Working Groups and the discussions during the Executive Board meeting are focused on these. In addition, the Board discussed the current voting system at the FIGO General Assembly (which takes place every 3 years at Congress). Previously, the votes have been cast for candidate countries without knowing who will represent the country if it is nominated. After some discussion the board decided, that in future the Societies are expected to indicate the name of their candidate. In addition, the very complicated voting system was discussed in an effort to simplify the process.

For example, the number of votes per society is dependent on the number of its members. The board decided to suggest, at the 2015 General Assembly, a modification to the existing vote allocation which would result in increased interest, reporting and participation of the countries with higher numbers of members.

A potential addition to the existing membership-votes correlation could be as follows:

#### **Existing current allocation**

Up to 500	1 vote
501 - 1000	2 votes
1001 - 1500	3 votes
1501 - 3000	4 votes
Over 3000	5 votes

#### **Possible amendment to allocation**

Up to 3000	As above
3001 - 5000	5 votes
5001 - 7000	6 votes
7001 - 12000	7 votes

N.B. Under the terms of our Constitution, this would also require a constitutional change. This could not take effect until, at the earliest, the 2018 General Assembly.

#### **FIGO - NFOG**

FIGO has 125 member countries or territories, which are represented at the Executive Board by representatives from 24 countries. The Secretariat Office is in London and the current President is Professor Sir Sabaratman Arulkumaran.

‘Sir Arul’ is also the President of the British Medical Association and Professor Emeritus of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at St George's University, London. He also served as President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) from 2007-2010. Many of us had the pleasure to listen to his plenary lecture at the NFOG 2014 congress in Stockholm.

Through mutual effort, understanding and co-operation, the Nordic countries have consistently managed to maintain a member on the FIGO Executive Board for many consecutive terms: previously, among others, Unni Kirste (Norway), Elisabeth Person (Sweden) and currently Anette Tonnes Pedersen (Denmark) and myself (Finland). In addition, Jerker Liljestrand (Sweden) is a former Honorary Treasurer and the Chair of the FIGO Safe Motherhood Committee, Professor Markku Seppälä (Finland), served as the FIGO President 1997-2000.

To initiate a new collaboration between FIGO and NFOG, it was agreed that Professor Lesley Regan, the Chairperson of FIGO Committee for Women's Sexual and Reproductive Rights, will attend the NFOG board meeting in November.

#### **FIGO committees and working groups**

Currently FIGO has eight task-oriented committees and four working groups (each with a specific terms of reference approved by the FIGO Executive Board). Usually they meet once a year and work mostly by e-mail.

## **Committees**

- Capacity Building in Education and Training
- Ethical Aspects of Human Reproduction and Women's Health
- Fistula
- Gynecologic Oncology
- Menstrual Disorders
- Reproductive Medicine
- Safe Motherhood and Newborn Health
- Women's Sexual and Reproductive Rights

## **Working groups**

- Best Practice in Maternal-Foetal Medicine
- Challenges in Care of Mothers and Infants during Labour and Delivery
- Pelvic Floor Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery
- Prevention of Unsafe Abortion

There is a pressure to establish new committees e.g. to improve diagnostics and treatment of breast cancer and to decrease gender violence. The wide range of issues included in any mandate of a FIGO committee on gender violence would also include 'child marriage'. Final decisions on prospective committees will be made in 2015.

The work of these committees and working groups is mostly funded by donations and, to some extent, by membership fees. Some of our most important support comes from the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation, which has among other activities made possible the FIGO LOGIC-project (Leadership in Obstetrics and Gynecology). This Project ran from 2008-2013 with the primary aim of strengthening the national societies in 'low to medium resource' nations.

## **FIGO guidelines**

The committees and working groups also produce valuable guidelines and material to enhance clinical work, teaching and problem-solving e.g. difficult ethical issues. I have set out below some of the most frequently used resources:

- The FIGO Recommendations on Terminologies and Definitions for Normal and Abnormal Uterine Bleeding
- FIGO Cancer Report 2012
- FIGO Infertility Tool Box
- FIGO Ethical Guidelines

## **The FIGO 2015 Congress**

The next FIGO congress takes place from 4<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> October 2015 in Vancouver, Canada. The congress venue is excellent and the preliminary scientific program looks very

promising indeed. The chair of the scientific committee is Joanna Cain from Canada (with Anette Tonnes Pedersen representing Europe). The FIGO 2015 Congress is **the** hotly anticipated, premier event within our global community. Take time out among your peers to share experiences & learning, to network and to also build collaborative relationships – mark the dates in your calendars now!

**ALSO COMING SOON IN AUGUST – OUR NEW LOOK FIGO WEBSITE!**

**Read more at [www.figo.org](http://www.figo.org)** to see what the International Federation of Gynecology & Obstetrics offers its members!

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