

SUMMARY
NIH INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES MEETING
May 10, 2005

Dr. Sharon Hrynkow, Chair, and Acting Director, FIC, welcomed the IC representatives to the Stone House. She took the opportunity to recognize Dr. Ruth Hegyeli, NHLBI's Associate Director for International Programs, who is retiring on June 1. She reflected on Dr. Hegyeli's achievements over her more than 30 year career at NIH, including as a member of the NIH International Representatives Committee. In view of her outstanding efforts, Dr. Hrynkow presented Dr. Hegyeli with an honorary Fogarty medal for her achievements and service at NIH.

Israeli-Palestinian Science Organization (IPSO): Dr. Hrynkow introduced Nobel laureate Dr. Torsten Wiesel and Dr. Sari Nusseibeh, President, Al-Quds University. Drs. Wiesel and Nusseibeh provided an overview of IPSO and explained that it is a bi-national, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting scientific cooperation and collaborations between Israeli and Palestinian scientists. Both Drs. Wiesel and Nusseibeh currently serve as members of IPSO's International Scientific Council (ISC) as well as Executive Committee (EC). Established in 2002 and located in Jerusalem, IPSO will support joint research by Israeli and Palestinian scholars in all fields of science, usually in institutions of higher learning. IPSO issued its first call for proposals in fall 2004 and received a total of 62 applications from teams of researchers associated with 17 different Palestinian institutions and 18 different Israeli students. Most of the project proposals are in biomedical and related fields and are for up to 3 year durations. As of May 2005, it appears that approximately 25 proposals will be deemed eligible for funding. IPSO is now in the process of securing an initial budget of approximately \$6 million to fund the project proposals. Drs. Wiesel and Nusseibeh requested input and suggestions in regard to possible funding sources. To date, assistance has been received from the U.S. National Academies of Science, UNESCO, the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Foundation and the Rothschild Foundation. There is also an effort to have a "Friends of IPSO" organization incorporated in the United States as a fund-raising initiative.

Faith-based Organizations and HIV/AIDS: Mr. John Galbraith, CEO of the Catholic Medical Mission Board (CMMB), and Dr. Rabia Mathai of the same organization presented on the "Faith in Action" Report that was prepared to examine the role of Faith-based Organizations (FBOs) in Addressing HIV/AIDS in developing countries. CMMB commissioned the report's independent preparation by the Global Health Council to provide an analytical assessment of FBO activities in several developing countries to counter health challenges posed by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The Report provided analysis from decision-makers and over 200 interviewees working in Haiti, India, South Africa, Thailand and Uganda. Using an interview guide based on UNAID's "Global Strategy Framework for HIV/AIDS", the report's authors queried interlocutors to provide their perspectives and perceptions based on their own experiences on the past, present and future optimal roles of FBOs in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Some of the findings of

the report underscored and lauded the effectiveness of FBOs in communications, women's role in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS, public policy dialogue, health systems delivery (in some countries FBOs account for well over one-third of that country's provision of health-care in institutions and "in the field"). The report urges FBOs to engage more in cross-sectoral collaborations, in combating stigmatization of HIV/AIDS patients, improve the evidence-base of strategies and develop monitoring and evaluation capacities in the countries in which they serve. CMMB noted that many of its activities have qualified under the PEPFAR program and they underscored the desire to develop collaborations with NIH-funded HIV/AIDS researchers and trainers in developing countries (and provided some examples of where they do so already).

Frontiers of Science (FOS) Program: Mr. Kenneth Fulton, Executive Director of the National Academies of Science (NAS), provided an overview of the NAS "Frontiers of Science" symposium series. Since 1989, the NAS has hosted a series of national and international symposia targeted at talented young scientists under the age of 45 which challenges them to "look beyond" their respective disciplines of expertise and learn about cutting-edge research in fields well-removed from their own. This program affords the participants to share their ideas across a broad variety of fields. Participants in the FOS Program are selected from a pool of young researchers who have made significant contributions to science, including recipients of Sloan, Packard, Pew and MacArthur fellowships, winners of the Waterman award and other awards. The limited size of the symposium (usually about 80 participants) allows for a relaxed and intimate environment where discussions can range freely across disciplines. As of May 2005, 87 FOS alumni have been elected to the Academy and eight have been awarded the Nobel Prize. The NAS also cooperates with science institutions in other countries to conduct joint symposia. For example, there are German-U.S., Japan-U.S., China-U.S. and India-U.S. symposia and the NAS is looking to other regions to establish joint symposia, including in the Latin America region. The cost to the NAS for four U.S. symposia is currently approximately \$1,000,000. The NAS welcomes donations to offset the costs of producing the FOS program.

Perspectives from FIC: Dr. Hrynkow noted that FIC would seek to gather input from the IC representatives over the next week to send back to each presenter to provide feedback on the presentations as well as the issues and interests raised in the presentations. She noted that comments should be sent to FIC's George Herrfurth for compilation. She also reported that FIC's Advisory Board meeting will take place on May 24 in the Stone House and will include presentations by Mr. Vinton Cerf, Senior Vice President for Technology Strategy at MCI, and Dr. Ilona Kickbush, Senior Advisor on Health Policy in the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health. She invited IC representatives to attend the meeting. Dr. Hrynkow quickly reviewed the outcomes of the recent meeting of the HHS-wide Global Health Policy Core Group, expressed appreciation for IC representative comments on USG position for the upcoming World Health Assembly (WHA) meeting, and noted that HHS Secretary Leavitt is expected to travel to Russia, Ukraine and China over the next several months in addition to the WHA meeting this month in Geneva. The next meeting of the IC Representatives Committee is set for Tuesday, July 12 at the Stone House.

Attendance:

Dr. Sharon Hrynkow, FIC Acting Director; Mr. George Herrfurth, Executive Secretary; Drs. Danuta Krotoski and Daniel Raiten, NICHD; Dr. Lois Cohen, NIDCR; Drs. Karl Western and Michael Hollingdale and Ms. Katie Herz, NIAID; Dr. Jose Serrano and Ms. Carmen Mateo, NIDDK; Dr. Ruth Hegyeli and Ms. Helen Wegman, NHLBI; Dr. John Haller, NIBIB; Dr. Philip Chen, OD/OIR; Mr. John Whitaker, NEI; Mr. Craig Carlson, NCCAM; Dr. Michael Chang, NCRR; Ms. Tamara Jones, NIA; Mr. John Whitaker, NEI, Dr. Dale Weiss, NIDA; Dr. Karen Babich, NIMH; Dr. Isabel Ellis, NIAAA; Ms. Claudia Conti, NIH/OAR; Drs. Torsten Weisel and Sari Nusseibeh and Ms. Janet Lowenthal, IPSO; Mr. Ken Fulton, NAS; Mr. Jack Galbraith and Dr. Rabia Mathai, CMMB; Dr. Jill Concey, HHMI.

FIC staff: Dr. Jean Flagg Newton, Mr. Bruce Butram, Mr. John Makulowich, Dr. Ana Chepelinskey, Ms. Sonja Madera; Ms. Nalini Anand, Ms. Judy Levin, Dr. Skip Francis, Dr. Kathy Michels, Dr. Chris Schonwalder, Dr. Karen Hofman, Mr. Kevin Bialy, Ms. Mili Ferreira, Ms. Melanie Rouse