

SUMMARY
NIH INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES MEETING
July 12, 2005

Mr. Robert Eiss, Acting Director, FIC Division of International Relations (DIR), welcomed the IC representatives to the Stone House. He noted that he was leading the meeting because of Dr. Hrynkow's absence so that she could make a presentation at the NAS Institute of Medicine on global health issues. He indicated that Ms. Tina Chung, currently in the HHS Office of Global Health Affairs, is expected to join FIC to serve as Program Officer for Asian Regional Affairs in early August. He also noted that Dr. Zakir Bengali, currently on detail at FIC and responsible for Indian sub-continent issues, would be returning to CSR this month. He expressed thanks to Dr. Bengali's efforts at FIC.

U.S. Civilian Research and Development Foundation (CRDF): Mr. Eiss introduced Dr. David Lindeman, CRDF Director of Development and Ms. Siri Oswald, CRD Director of Cooperative Grants Programs to provide an update and status report on CRDF activities of interest to NIH. Dr. Lindeman and Ms. Oswald provided an overview of NIH-CRDF cooperation which has been manifested since 1996. CRDF has provided \$13.4 million of funding to 219 biomedical awards for Former Soviet Union (FSU) scientists. Most funds for the CRDF program awards have come from the U.S. State Department, NSF, and NIH. These awards have been made consistent with CRDF goals of: (1) supporting exceptional, peer-reviewed research projects that offer FSU scientists alternatives to emigration; (2) advancing the transition of FSU weapons scientists into civilian research activities; (3) developing industry-oriented collaborations to help move applied research to market; and, (4) strengthening research and education in universities abroad. The success rate of the CRDF Grants Program (CGP) is between 9 and 10 percent and awards usually are for a 2-year duration and average \$60,000 in size. Approximately 2,140 biomedical scientists have been supported under the program. CRDF funding also leverages significant NIH funding (over \$9 million since 1997) in support of biomedical research activities. CRDF-supported research has supported work in a range of areas, including prosthetic device research, TB resistance research, anti-terrorism research as well as research and workshops related to combating HIV/AIDS. In 2005-2006, CRDF plans to explore opportunities for further collaboration in HIV/AIDS and related infections, to expand NIH-CRDF efforts in central Asian countries, study the possibility of supporting activities in other geographic regions (e.g., the Middle East) and seek continued input from NIH priorities for biomedical research. Further information on the CRDF activities can be obtained at www.crdf.org or by emailing information@crdf.org.

Update on the U.S.-Egypt Joint Fund: Mr. Eiss next introduced Ms. Judy Levin, FIC/DIR Program Officer for the Middle East and Northern Africa, to provide an update on biomedical research activities undertaken through the U.S.-Egypt Joint Fund. She gave a brief history of the Joint S&T Fund, noting the increase in health-related proposals and increased interest in public health research-related workshops under the auspices of the Joint Fund. Recognizing the importance of health expertise on the Egyptian side of

the Board, U.S. Board members are proposing that the Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population be represented on the Joint Fund Board. Dr. Danuta Krotoski, NICHD, reported on the NICHD-led, Joint Board funded workshop on newborn jaundice that will take place in Cairo in February 2006.

Mental Health Conference with Iraqi Scientists: Mr. Eiss introduced Dr. Karen Babich, NIMH Director for International Activities, to provide her insights on efforts to assist Iraqi scientists in the field of mental health research and services. Dr. Babich noted that HHS's involvement in Iraq really began with a trip to Iraq by then Secretary Thompson and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency (SAMHSA) Director, Charles Curie. HHS's overall goal is the building of 130 primary care centers throughout Iraq, the establishment of a Center for Excellence (workforce training site), and developing a maternal and child center. The focus of work by SAMHSA and NIMH is on the integration of mental health into primary care centers, developing referral systems with community workers as the first line providers, updating clinical and research skills and knowledge of the Iraqi psychiatrists, nurses, social workers, and psychologists, and providing consultation on implementing the Iraqi Mental Health Services Plan. In March 2005, an action planning work group met in Amman, Jordan. Thirty Iraqi psychiatrists, nurses, judges, psychologists, and pharmacists attended the meeting that delineated the activities needed to research goals in service delivery, mental health training and education, scientific programs and research and mental health policy and support. To date educational experiences have been provided to psychiatrists by the UK, US, and WHO. To advance the primary care agenda, general practitioners and a team of nurses and social workers will attend sessions in Bahrain during the following months. Issues that must also be addressed in the near future are substance abuse problems and domestic violence. Based on a survey of women working in the Iraqi Ministry of Health, of the 325 who completed the instrument, 105 report experiencing violence in the home. The findings suggest that domestic violence is highest among educated, 30-40 yr old married women. Single women are also the targets in 44% of the cases. The perpetrator is the husband for married women, and either brothers or parents for single women. . Severe verbal insults and abusive words and gestures are the most prevalent form of abuse. Plans are underway to provide training in domestic violence treatment and research to a select group of Iraqi providers.

Other business: The next meeting of the Group will be held on Wednesday, September 14, at 1 p.m. in the NIH Stone House.

Attendance:

Mr. Robert Eiss, FIC Acting Director of the Division of International Relations ; Mr. George Herrfurth, Executive Secretary; Dr. Danuta Krotoski, Mr. Phillimon Ndubani, Ms. Christine Baning, NICHD; Dr. Lois Cohen, NIDCR; Drs. Karl Western, NIAID; Dr. Jose Serrano, NIDDK; Ms. Helen Wegman, NHLBI; Dr. John Haller, NIBIB; NCRR; Ms. Tamara Jones, NIA; Dr. Dale Weiss, NIDA; Dr. Karen Babich, NIMH; Dr. Isabel Ellis, NIAAA; Dr. Robert Eisinger, NIH/OAR, Ms. Stacey Chambers, NINDS. FIC staff: Ms. Sonja Madera; Ms. Judy Levin, Dr. Skip Francis, Dr. Kathy Michels, Dr. Aron Primack.