International Society of Nephrology

REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT

In the initial twenty to thirty years of the creation of our Society in 1960, international congresses have been a very effective means of communication and information gathering in addition to our official journal, Kidney International. This principle of our missions applies to any other professional societies. However, the era of rapid communication and transportation that has developed over the last ten to twenty years has made the world much smaller. In particular, the means of communications have become much easier and revolutionary, such as Internet. Such technological developments and advancements have impacted upon, to a major magnitude, the missions of all international societies. With the able guidance and cooperation of all members, and the expertise and wisdom of the Council and Executive members, our Society has grown to a truly international society among many medical disciplines, through many innovative mechanisms such as Fellowship, Visiting Scholars Program, Presidential Educational Funds, Fellows’ Travel Grants, and the Library Enhancement Program. More recently, special Commissions have been created to meet the specific needs of our membership. They include the Commission for Acute Renal Failure, Commission for Global Advancement of Nephrology (COMGAN), Commission for Informatics, Commission for History of Nephrology, and Clinical Trial Commission. In addition, Joint Membership and the Renal Sister Center Program have been introduced to further enhance the Society’s mission to reach out to economically more handicapped countries and regions throughout the world. These activities of our Society have been summarized in an article by Weening et al entitled “Toward global advancement of medicine: The International Society of Nephrology experience” (Kidney Int 54:1017–1021, 1998). We are proud to be the first in the world to become a truly international society. Our programs should become the model for other societies to better serve the people of the world, be it the professionals, the patients, or the public.

The past two years of presidency of our Society have been a privilege and an honor for me. I was fortunate to have been given many opportunities to meet with many nephrologists of the many regions and countries of the world through participating educational courses and nephrology conferences and congresses. I am proud of our Society, its heritage, and its future, and I hope I have done something, albeit tiny, for our Society, and all nephrologists and allied health professionals, as well as those who suffer from various types of renal diseases, fluid and electrolyte disorders and hypertension. I thank you all for allowing me to serve our Society over the last two years. I also thank the Organizing Committee and the Scientific Program Committee members of this Buenos Aires Congress, who have done such a magnificent job. Without their dedicated efforts, we would not be here today. The Congress has been just outstanding.

Now, I would like to invite Dr. Thomas Andreoli to the stage for the transfer of the gavel. From this moment on, he is our President. Dr. Andreoli, please.

Kiyoshi Kurokawa
ICN General Assembly
Buenos Aires, Argentina
May 5, 1999

REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

I am privileged to follow Kiyoshi Kurokawa as President of our Society. He has done much to enhance the primary mission of our Society, which is, in essence, to make clinical and investigative Nephrology available to the entire renal community.

On a historical basis, the ISN began, in a real sense, as a Western European-North American alliance. By that, I imply that our forebears, who were the major individuals responsible for forming ISN, came predominantly from Western Europe and from North America. Over time, with the entrainment of much of the Pacific Rim, the ISN has become an increasingly more global Society. Yet, factually, more than 70% of the world’s population, including particularly China, India, Africa and many regions of South America, have relatively little input into ISN activities, although members of each of the countries noted above have served on the ISN Council, and we are fortunate that Rashad Barsoum, from Cairo, is now Secretary-General of ISN. Yet when one reflects that these regions represent close to two-thirds of the world’s population, it is fair to say that they have had a disproportionately small involvement in ISN activities.

The overwhelming task that the Society faces is to maintain a balance between the exceptionally high scholarship provided by various vehicles of ISN—including particularly Kidney International, our international meetings, COMGAN, and our Fellowship Programs—and extending the ISN activities into those regions of the world.