The Responsibility of Leadership

By Dr. Samir E. Bishara

With the recent advances in technology and the means of communication, our world might not be getting smaller, but all who live in it are definitely getting closer together. We are no longer able to isolate ourselves from what is happening in the world, whether the changes are political, economic or professional. This improvement in communication has had a significant effect on our specialty: orthodontics. Essentially, it brought us together, made us more aware of each other, and the fact that regardless of geographic location, we are working for the same goal: to do our best for each one of our patients.

The World Federation of Orthodontists (WFO) was an inevitable and natural consequence of years of interaction among many orthodontists from all over the world who met, visited, and discussed the common goals and mutual concerns about the future of our specialty. These common objectives are eloquently summarized in Article 3 of the "Bylaws" of the WFO:

"Consistent with its purpose, the chief objectives of the Federation shall be to: encourage and assist in the formation of national associations and societies of orthodontists when requested; encourage and assist in the formation of national and regional certifying boards in the field of orthodontics when requested; promote orthodontic research; disseminate scientific information; promote desirable standards of training and certification for orthodontists; and, organize the International Orthodontic Congress to be held at least once every five years."

Now that the WFO is a reality with 74 organizations representing 61 countries or geographic entities, our focus should be directed to the future. Specifically, how can we ensure the advancement of these concepts that were espoused in San Francisco in May 1995?

In this context, there are a number of issues that need to be emphasized and addressed in detail in the WFO "Bylaws." Specifically, Articles 4.1.2 and 6.1 of the "Bylaws" contain the following provisions:

Article 4.1.2 states "A Full member is defined as an orthodontist member (as defined by the affiliated organization) who is entitled to all the privileges of membership in the national or regional association affiliated with the WFO; or an orthodontist member who has completed appropriate orthodontic training in accordance with the requirements of his/her national, state, or provincial laws, and is authorized by law to hold himself/herself out to the public as an orthodontist, and limits his/her practice exclusively to orthodontics if such is required by applicable law."

If an orthodontist by virtue of his or her residence is not entitled to belong to a national or regional association or society, he or she may apply in writing to the Executive Committee requesting membership in the WFO as a fellow. Any orthodontist so applying must have educational credentials equivalent to other fellows of the WFO in order to receive favorable consideration by the Executive Committee. In all cases the decision of the Executive Committee shall be final."

Furthermore, Article 6.1 provides greater details about the role of the orthodontic societies in each country. Specifically, it states: "Any national or regional association or society of orthodontists may apply in writing to the Executive Committee for affiliation with the World Federation of Orthodontists provided the following prerequisites are met: The bylaws of the national or regional association or society shall have a category of full membership as defined in Article 4.1.2. Full members shall be entitled to all the privileges of membership, including the right to hold office and vote; the bylaws of the national or regional association or society should provide for sponsorship or affiliation with a national or regional certifying board or agency in the field of orthodontics; and, in those countries where an official accrediting agency exists, only the national or regional association or society recognized by the official accrediting agency exists."

Executive committee holds second meeting

BRIGHTON, England — The WFO executive committee met in person for the second time on July 4 to welcome new affiliates and continue the organization of the Federation. It met at the Thistle Hotel during the 72nd Congress of the European Orthodontic Society.

The committee approved the applications for affiliation of four organizations: the Hungarian Orthodontic Society, the Belgische Beroepsgerrigen van de Universitaire Specialites in de Orthodontie—Union Professionelle Belge des Specialistes en Orthodontie, the Union Francophone Des Orthodontistes; and the Sociedade Brasileira de Ortodontia.

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Prospective fellows learn about the Federation at the WFO's booth during the American Association of Orthodontists Annual Session in Denver in May.

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Executive Committee

The committee also discussed the format and some features of the first WFO Council meeting, scheduled to be held during the 5th International Orthodontic Congress in Chicago, Illinois, USA in 2000. WFO President Dr. William H. Dellock of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA, will soon appoint a Congress committee based on nominations from the executive committee.

The group considered possible features for the 5th IOC, including special lectures, awards, tables, clinics and posterboards, pre-Congress courses sponsored by the WFO, meetings on certification standards, and a special dinner for the president or official representative of each WFO-affiliated organization. A study on the status of orthodontics throughout the world, sponsored by the WFO, was also suggested.

The committee then looked further ahead, considering criteria for selecting the host country for the 6th International Orthodontic Congress in 2005. Committee members agreed that it would be preferable if that meeting were held in Europe, with the 7th IOC to be held in Asia in 2010.

The major criteria for both selections will be sufficient facilities and direct air service. A component training program for staff members will also be planned.

In other business, the committee:
- decided that the names, addresses, phone and fax numbers and E-mail addresses of WFO affiliates and their respective officers be provided only to other affiliated organizations at this time.
- The information will not be sold to commercial companies;
- discussed distribution of the Gazette, and agreed to distribute it as widely as possible;
- accepted the fellowship application of Dr. Mota Telwarra; and
- decided that the WFO should seek affiliation status with the World Dental Federation as soon as possible.

The executive committee consists of Dr. Dellock; Vice President Dr. Lee W. Gruber of Kenilworth, Illinois, USA, Secretary-General Ronald S. Moore of St. Louis, Missouri, USA; Associate Professor Dr. A.E. Athanasou of the National University of Athens, Greece; Dr. Jee Chang Kim of Seoul, Korea; Professor Dr. Takayuki Kuroda of Toyo University, Japan; Dr. Robert F. Mel of Auckland, New Zealand; and Professor Dr. Per Nyhø of Bergen, Norway.

The next face-to-face meeting of the executive committee will be held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, in conjunction with the 97th Annual Session of the American Association of Orthodontists.
INTERNATIONAL NOTES

The Korean Association of Orthodontists has donated $2,000 to the World Federation of Orthodontists. The funds came at a very important time in the Federation's history, according to WFO President William H. DeKock.

"The contribution from our Korean colleagues will help ensure that the WFO establishes itself quickly as a self-supporting organization," Dr. DeKock said.

The Consejo Mexicano De Ortodoncia (Mexican Board of Orthodontists), which was legally constituted Oct. 5, 1994, announced during the annual meeting of the Mexican Association of Orthodontists that 268 orthodontists are considered to have the qualifications to be certified. All of these orthodontists will have to stand for recertification within three years to maintain good standing. The recently appointed 11-member board will begin conducting examinations soon.

The Swedish Association of Orthodontists lists as its top concern an excess of dentists and orthodontists in that country.

The 305-member Asociacion Latinoamericana de Ortodoncia (ALADO), which was officially chartered in 1979 in Lima, Peru, reports that it has strict educational requirements to ensure that all of its members are qualified orthodontic specialists. Five of the six presidents in its history are graduates of American orthodontic programs.

With more than 1,700 members, the Societe Francaise De Orthopedie Dentofaciale (SFODF) is one of the oldest orthodontic societies in Europe. The SFODF was founded by Dr. James Quirinato and a handful of French orthodontists on May 22, 1921 in Lyon. Each year, the society "publishes a three-volume edition of French Orthodontics" devoted to continuing education in orthodontics and distributes it to all SFODF members.

The first orthodontic meeting in New Zealand took place in Wellington in 1928 with the formation of the New Zealand Society for the Study of Orthodontics. A fully structured society became operational in the 1950s and in 1967 the society changed its name to the New Zealand Association of Orthodontists. The society now has 83 full members engaged in either full-time specialist practice or in teaching and research. The Association of Philippine Orthodontists (APO) was officially formed in February 1979 and the Philippine Board of Orthodontists (PBO) formally inaugurated on Sept. 3, 1980. In 1989, the PBO was formally recognized by the Dental Board of the Professional Regulations Commission to certify orthodontic specialist in the Philippines.

The Bulgarian Orthodontic Society (BOS) is a section of the Bulgarian Scientific Dental Association. The BOS has conducted an annual meeting since 1952 and currently has 120 members.

According to the Slovak Association of Orthodontists (SAO), the development of orthodontics in Slovakia was aided by German and Austrian orthodontists. The first orthodontic teaching clinic was opened in 1949 in Bratislava. The current president of the SAO, Mr. Dr. Martin Jurikova, has been working since 1970 as an orthodontist at the third Jesenice Medical School of Comenius University in Martin.

The Sociedad de Ortodoncia de Chile, organized on Dec. 1, 1942, will hold its 7th International Congress in Santiago together with the ALADO from Aug. 11-16, 1996. The Guatemalan Association of Orthodontists celebrated its 50th anniversary at its annual meeting in Guatemala City in July 1996. A complete scientific and social program was organized by the current president, Dr. Fernando Quevedo. A large number of orthodontists from North and Central America attended.

The Sociedad Dominicana de Ortodoncia was organized in 1979 and now has 29 orthodontist members.

The Sociedad Belge D'Orthodontie/Belgische Vereniging Voor Orthodontie is a national organization for orthodontists with French and Flemish-speaking members. The society was organized in 1958 and conducts approximately five scientific meetings per year for its members.

The Sociedad Espanola De Ortodoncia (SEBO), founded in Madrid in 1954, celebrated its 42nd anniversary on April 25. It is the oldest dental scientific society in Spain and publishes its own bimonthly journal, Ortodoncia Espanola, which is sent to all of its members as a benefit of membership.

The secretariat of the World Federation of Orthodontists is based in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, and follows or those interested in applying may direct questions and inquiries there.

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Dr. Jae Chan Kim, left, a member of the WFO executive committee, visits with AAO president Dr. David Hamilton during the 72nd Congress of the European Orthodontic Society.