

Annual Report of the Secretary-Treasurer General for 2008

The year 2008 witnessed worldwide financial turmoil not experienced for two decades. As I reported last year, the WFN had taken steps to invest in a number of high interest accounts through the UK's Charity Aid Foundation and the monthly income these have generated has contributed a great deal to our running costs as well as helping to finance the organisation's charitable objects.

I also noted last year that it was important for the Federation to diversify with regard to its revenue sources so as to be less reliant than in the past on surpluses hopefully generated by each World Congress of Neurology. The global financial crisis of this past year, added to some concerns about international political developments, has demonstrated already the need for this strategy. Thankfully stability seems to be returning to Thailand, the venue of our Congress later this year, and we look forward to an exciting and successful scientific, educational and social programme in the "Land of Smiles".

Thereafter we shall embark on our new biennial rota of meetings, starting in 2011 with Marrakesh in Morocco, the location chosen by the Council of Delegates at their October 2008 session in New Delhi, followed by a European destination in 2013.

The WFN continues to grow and extend its global coverage, and to pursue its mission on the African continent. Three of the four neurological societies approved by the Council for WFN membership in 2008 - Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Guinea - are from that region of the world. Welcome to them, and to Armenia. We are now an association of some 107 neurological societies in 106 countries and regions. **More than 40 of these countries with economies classified by the World Bank as Low or Lower-middle Income benefit from participation in our CME programme, and only thanks to the altruistic and generous support of the American Academy of Neurology, through donation of copies of its publication *Continuum*, can the Federation fulfil this essential part of its mission. This serves as a fine example of how a developed nation recognizes its advantages and selflessly supports fellow professionals in less fortunate circumstances elsewhere.**

With so many neurological societies now part of the WFN family, communication is key to maintaining awareness of Federation initiatives amongst almost 30,000 individual neurologists linked in this way through our organisation. The medium through which this goal is primarily achieved is

our newsletter, World Neurology. As reported elsewhere, we have moved to a new format, changed its appearance, appointed a new Editor, increased its frequency to bi-monthly and entered into a more favourable arrangement with our publisher. We fully expect that all these changes will pay dividends and that the publication will soon begin to fulfil its potential by attracting greater advertising and other revenue.

It is a sign of the healthy state of Federation finances that even in these difficult times, we are in a position to continue to support well-established projects and take on some new ones. Prudent financial management remains essential, however, and will be the watchword of the remaining term of office of the present administration.

Respectfully submitted

Dr Raad Shakir