

Global Consultation on Oral Health through Fluoride

17-19 November 2006 / Geneva, Switzerland

Press release

Experts confirm the benefits of fluoride for dental health

GENEVA, 30 November 2006 – A panel of experts on fluoride urged government and other influential bodies during the Global Consultation on "Oral Health through Fluoride", which took place 17-19 November, to develop effective legislation, necessary directives and programmes to ensure access to fluoride for dental health in all countries.

In the declaration, the world experts expressed "their concern about growing disparities in dental health and the lack of progress in tackling the worldwide burden of tooth decay (dental caries), particularly in disadvantaged populations" The 80 experts on fluoride from 30 countries emphatically made clear that "prevention by using fluoride is the only realistic way of reducing this burden in populations."

"The benefits of fluoride for the prevention and control of dental caries have been known to the scientific and public health community for more than 60 years. While fluoride in various delivery systems is widely available in many developed countries, it is estimated that globally only 20 percent of the world's population benefit from appropriate exposure to fluoride," said Dr Poul Erik Petersen, Chief of the Oral Health Unit at the World Health Organization (WHO). "Regrettably, particularly people living in developing countries and disadvantaged communities are deprived of fluoride for dental health."

The consultation, jointly organised by the FDI World Dental Federation, the International Association for Dental Research (IADR), and the WHO, aimed to consider the actions needed to effectively reduce the global burden of dental caries. It draws on the alliance's range and areas of expertise: the FDI is the unified voice of oral health professionals around the world; the IADR advances research for the improvement of oral health worldwide; and the WHO, the accepted leader in global health matters, advises governmental bodies throughout the world.

"The FDI fully supports the promotion of fluoride worldwide. Representing nearly one million dentists worldwide, the FDI will use the strong messages from the experts and translate them into tangible advice for all oral health professionals. There is an urgent need to take action in order to ensure that optimal fluoride is available and affordable for all," said Dr JT Barnard, Executive Director of the FDI.

"It is very important that research knowledge is translated into tangible action because this is the only realistic way to improve oral health at a worldwide scale," added Prof J.M. ten Cate, Vice President of the IADR.

The adopted declaration will guide the work of the alliance and various international action groups that were established during the consultation. The full text of the declaration is available here.

ABOUT FDI WORLD DENTAL FEDERATION

The FDI World Dental Federation is the authoritative, worldwide voice of dentistry. With more than 150 member associations in more than 130 countries around the world, it represents nearly one million dentists internationally. For more information about the FDI, please visit the FDI website at www.fdiworldental.org.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR DENTAL RESEARCH

The International Association for Dental Research, headquartered in Alexandria, VA in the United States is a non-profit organization with more than 11,000 members worldwide. Its mission is: (1) to advance research and increase knowledge for the improvement of oral health worldwide; (2) to support and represent the oral health research community; and (3) to facilitate the communication and application of research findings.

ABOUT WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

The World Health Organization is the United Nations specialized agency for health. WHO's objective, as set out in its Constitution, is the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health.