

## **FDI President: Opening Ceremony address**

26th Annual Congress of the OMD - Portuguese Dental Association (Ordem dos Médicos Dentistas),

17 November, Lisbon, Portugal

**Honourable hosts**

**Distinguished guests**

**Thank you to the Portuguese Dental Association for your kind invitation to this 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress.**

**It is a privilege and an honor to be given the opportunity to speak before such inspirational leaders and key members of the oral health community in Portugal. It is also a pleasure to visit this wonderful country.**

**I am speaking today as President of FDI World Dental Federation – many of you probably already know FDI through the great leadership that was shown by Dr Orlando Monteiro da Silva as Past President of FDI.**

**For those who don't, FDI is one of the oldest professional organizations in the world. It is the representative body and international 'voice' of over 1 million dentists worldwide. FDI's membership is some 200 national dental associations and specialist groups in nearly 130 countries and we are privileged to have the Portuguese Dental Association (OMD) as our member.**

**As a federation, FDI commits to ensuring our members' interests are represented at the global level to help support their efforts at a national level.**



**We do this through active involvement in the worldwide community of dentists, engagement with United Nations agencies such as the World Health Organization, governments and other international partners to improve oral health by acting as a catalyst for positive change.**

**FDI's vision is 'Leading the World to Optimal Oral Health' and we could not do this without the support and excellent work done by our members, nationally.**

**In support of this vision, we have developed a definition of oral health:**

**“Oral health is multi-faceted and includes the ability to speak, smile, smell, taste, touch, chew, swallow and convey a range of emotions through facial expressions with confidence and without pain, discomfort and disease of the craniofacial complex.”**

**This definition is the result of a wider consultation among patients, oral health professionals, national dental associations, the public health community, academia, government, industry, and third-party payers.**

**This puts oral health right at the centre of health.**

**FDI recognizes the impact oral diseases have on general health and quality of life, and advocates good oral health and access to appropriate care as a basic human right.**

**FDI is committed to ensuring that oral diseases are integrated into policies addressing other non-communicable diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases to reduce their human, economic and social burden.**



**The new definition is the beginning of a process that will allow us to do this as well as help us to develop standardized assessment and measurement tools for consistent data collection on a global level.**

**Data collection is, as you know, an important tool for decision-makers to measure the impact of strategies to improve oral health over a number of years.**

**At FDI we stress that oral health is a fundamental component of overall health. That's why national dental associations need to talk to their government about the important role that oral health plays in the quality of life of the individual and set appropriate policies in place.**

**We commend the work done by the Portuguese Dental Association to date and the commitment shown by your Ministry of Health in the implementation of programmes such as the National Oral Health Programme – the dentist-cheque programme, which ensures access to care to priority groups such as children, pregnant women and elderly people as well as to children and young people with special needs and mental health issues or disorders.**

**You have shown great leadership and serve as a best practice example to other countries.**

**Together with our members, we have a common goal of increasing oral health literacy and targeting the public with messages about oral health and the risks of oral disease. In recent years, we have been communicating this message through our annual World Oral Health Day campaign. This special day, on March 20<sup>th</sup>, unites us every year with our members under a common theme.**

**We always insist on the importance of retaining oral function throughout life.**



**This is very much in line with the United Nations agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, and reflects the intent of SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.**

**Our 2017 World Oral Health Day campaign reached over 600 million people worldwide. We hope that you will join us in our 2018 “Say Ahh: Think Mouth, Think Health” campaign. The theme, brings to life the notion of the mouth serving as a mirror to the body and reflecting overall health and encourages people to make the connection between their oral health and general health and well-being.**

**It also pushes them to take positive action through controlling their risk factors – many of which are shared with other diseases – namely avoiding unhealthy diets, in particular one rich in sugar, as well as tobacco and alcohol and adopting good oral hygiene habits.**

**Another key development for FDI this year has been the development of our 2018-2021 strategic plan that will guide us through the next 4 years. Our members approved the three pillars of this plan – membership, advocacy, and knowledge transfer – and these areas are where we will put our resources.**

- **Our membership goal means that we will develop programmes and activities to meet the needs of our members and help raise the profile of oral health at national levels. Our membership is key to everything we do.**
- **Our advocacy goal means we will work to be a leader in improving oral health literacy, and achieving political commitment and action for oral health in all countries.**



- **Finally, our knowledge transfer goal means we will work to foster best practices in oral health science and education, and share knowledge in preventative care and treatment to advance the art, science, and practice of dentistry.**

**This is how we will promote oral health over the next years of our plan and roll out programmes of importance to the oral health community, members and their patients.**

**We thank you for your commitment to promote oral health and prevent oral disease and we congratulate you for your efforts. FDI would not be the success that it is without your dedication at the national level and we thank you for all your support. By uniting our efforts, we can help lead the world to optimal oral health.**

**Thank you once again for your kind invitation – on behalf of FDI, I wish you an excellent meeting and hope to see you all at our next World Dental Congress taking place in Buenos Aires, Argentina from 5-8 September 2018.**