



**VISION 2020 LATIN AMERICA
Report from August – December 2005**

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Meetings and Congresses

September 15th to 16th Annual IAPB meeting, Hanoi, Vietnam.

During the meeting it was highlighted that IAPB has identified priority countries for each region. In Latin America, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Peru were designated as the countries in which more activities are hoped to be promoted.

The chairs of IAPB North America (Mrs. Pat Ferguson) and Latin America (Dr. Rainald Duerksen) had a meeting with Dr. Louis Pizzarello, IAPB secretariat, in order to define which countries in the WHO corresponding region would fall under the scope of influence of each chairperson. IAPB Latin America, will be responsible for a total of 19 out of the 33 countries, which include all those Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries of Continental America and the Caribbean Basin, with the exception of Puerto Rico.

It was noted that 7 new VISION 2020/Prevention of Blindness Committees were formed in 2005 in our region. Those in attendance suggested that it would be a very good idea to hold a meeting with all the representatives of these committees in 2006 in order to exchange experiences, support mutual efforts, etc. This would also help in obtaining necessary indicators and information to document advances in VISION 2020 implementation, including networking and information about the NGOs working in the region.



New Vision 2020 or Prevention of Blindness Committees

November 26th

Official launching of the Prevention of Blindness Committee in Ecuador.

On this date, an under the name of “Asociacion Ecuatoriana de Prevencion de la Ceguera “AEPREC” (Ecuadorian Society for the Prevention of Blindness), the committee was officially installed with the participation of 39 ophthalmologists from different regions working with VISION 2020 guidelines. Its first president is Dr. Felipe Chiriboga, a longstanding champion in PBL activities in the country. Other authorities are Dr. Eduardo Viteri as vice president and Dr. Carmen Almeida as secretary amongst other personalities.



The Committee will hold its first working meeting on January 10th 2006 in Quito (capital city of Ecuador) with the following working groups established: cataract and glaucoma, paediatric ophthalmology, low vision, diabetic retinopathy, public health, international affairs and continuous education/training.

November 30th

Official launching of the VISION 2020 Committee in Honduras.

With the presence of over 80 people, including the Minister for Health, Dr. Merlin Fernandez, the Committee was officially constituted under the name of VISION 2020 Committee in Honduras. Its first authorities are as follows: Dr. Doris Alvarado (president), Mr. James Bahr as treasurer, an active member of Lions Club, as well as several ophthalmologists representing the 5 regions in which Honduras is divided and a nominated representative of the Ministry of Health.

CEH Courses

October 27th to 28th Montemorelos, Mexico.

The course was sponsored by CBM and organized by IAPB, the Ophthalmology Society of Nuevo Leon and primarily directed for residents and directors of residency training programmes from Monterrey and neighboring communities as Montemorelos, Ciudad Juarez and Culiacan a bit further away.

Faculty members included Dr. David Yorston (CBM consultant and Moorfields Eye Hospital in London), Dr. Pedro Gomez (head of the ophthalmology department of the University of Montemorelos), Dr. Joseph Michon (CBM adviser), Ms. Linda Arendes (CBM – CARO programme officer), Dr. Lourdes Medina (head of the low vision department of the Conde de la Valenciana Hospital in Mexico City), Dr. Francisco Martinez Castro (facilitator of advocacy and the diabetic retinopathy subcommittees of VISION 2020 LA and portrayed below), Dr. Lilia Guizar (CBM medical adviser), Dr. Luz Maria Ortiz (CBM medical adviser) and Dr. Jorge Valdez (ophthalmology college of Nuevo Leon).

Participants were informed about the VISION 2020 programme as well as its priorities, with working groups being formed amongst the participants and facilitators in order to further discuss the different topics. The priorities identified for Mexico were on strategies to increase CSR and lowering costs. The importance of diabetic retinopathy and its impact, probably the worst in all of Latin America was also stressed.

Future plans were discussed in order to include CEH as a subject of residency training programmes, the RACSS study to be conducted in Montemorelos in December 2005 with the help of Dr. Hans Limburg and Dr. Juan Carlos Silva as well as to improve communication amongst the different stakeholders of the National Prevention of Blindness Committee in order to be able to start its activities as designed in its launching in April of this year.



Other Courses

October 25th to 26th CEH curricula development, Brasilia, Brazil.

The course was designed to attract heads of residency training programmes (a total of 28 participants from various universities and hospitals of the country), in order to develop a draft of CEH concepts for residency programmes. It was organized by CBO, CBM, ICEH and IAPB as well as the host institution, the Brazilian Center for Vision in Brasilia (capital city of Brazil). Many of the participants were identified and invited in previous visits to selected centers and cities conducted by Dr. Rainald Duerksen and Dr. Martin Ruppenthal.



Faculty included Professor Allen Foster, Dr. Rainald Duerksen and Dr. Andrea Zin, and topics included basic Epidemiology and Statistics, strategies for disease control, project administration, planning principles and research methodology.

As a result of the course, some institutions will begin with CEH classes in 2006 and a CEH department created within the CBO in December 2005, with a follow up course to take place in 2006.

November 14th to 16th ROP Workshop, Lima, Peru.

It was the first course on the topic at the regional level, with the participation of 34 ophthalmologist and 14 neonatologists from Latin America and the Caribbean. It was organized by CBM – LARO with facilitators that included Dr. Luz Gordillo (CBM medical adviser), Dr. Claire Gilbert (ICEH), Dr. Graham Quinn and Dr. Andrea Zin (facilitator of the ROP technical subcommittee). Other speakers included Dr. Celia Nakanami (head of the paediatric ophthalmology and low vision units of UNIFESP in Brazil), Dr. Pablo Cibils (academic director

of Fundacion Vision in Paraguay) and Ms. Irene Rivadeneira (from the CBM regional office).



The purpose of this workshop was to develop a situational analysis of ROP in the different countries of the region, identify constraints and barriers as well as to elaborate strategies and specific plans to increase coverage and quality of services. These will be further developed during the upcoming meeting in February 2006 during the WOC in order to help countries develop action plans, ROP programmes and monitoring progress through the recently established ROP regional working group in association with the PAAO.

**December 1st
ROP Workshop, Brazil.**

The course was organized by Doctors Rosa Graziano, Celia Nakanami (UNIFESP) and Andrea Zin (CBM) who were included amongst the main speakers. There were 68 participants, both ophthalmologists and neonatologists, in order to create a directory of those involved in the field, elaborate a registry of the neonatal units already conducting ROP screening and identify those not yet doing it to assist them in developing such programmes. Another mayor objective was to develop instruments to assess prevalence and monitoring of the impact of ROP, including registry of schools for the blind and special education as well as basic indicators that could be monitored on a regular basis.

The workshop was a joint activity of the Brazilian Society of Ophthalmology, the Brazilian Council of Ophthalmology (CBO), the Brazilian Society of Paediatrics and IAPB LA, through the generous support of CBM and sponsorship of Albert Einstein Hospital, OPTO, Allergan, Novartis, Alcon and Hoya.

**December 2nd to 3rd
Low Vision Course, Buenos Aires, Argentina.**

This was the first low vision course specifically tailored for ophthalmology residents in Argentina with the support of the Ophthalmology Council of Argentina (CAO), PAHO, WHO, IAPB LA and CBM. Faculty included Dr. Lourdes Medina, Dr. Veronica Lopez, Dr. Julio Manzitti (CAO president) and Dr. Olivera Roulet amongst others.



During the meeting, Professor Hugo Nano (distinguished ophthalmologist and IAPB LA co-chair) received an award for his work in low vision in Argentina presented by Dr. Manzitti.



Other Developments

October 11th

Update on the National Eye Health Plan for Paraguay.

A one day workshop in order to update the National Eye Health Plan for Paraguay was hosted by the local office of PAHO and VISION 2020 LA as a facilitator, with participation of a representative of all the member organizations of the National VISION 2020 Committee CONAVIP.



An update on available epidemiology data and statistics from the different organizations was included; priorities and objectives were redrafted as well as more realistic goals described. The final version will be sent to Dr. Juan Carlos Silva for further input and discussed with the Minister for Health and Dr. Nag Rao in his scheduled visit to the country on February 28th 2006.

October 13th

World Sight Day 2005.

Please click on the following link to see the report for our region on World Sight Day 2005

<http://www.v2020la.org/english/docs/WSD%202005%20-%20Latin%20America%20 final%20report.pdf>