21 February 2012

Dear Friends, Dear Colleagues

Warm greetings from the World Allergy Organization!

The beginning of 2012 marks the beginning of the 61st year of WAO’s existence. While this landmark of 60 years was celebrated last year both at the XXII World Allergy Congress in Cancún and via a series of articles that comprise part of the WAO History, the beginning of the 61st year should also be a time for some degree of self-reflection. While moving forward over the years to fulfill the mission of WAO, we need to ask ourselves how far we have progressed in meeting our objectives. Are we benefiting the millions of patients with allergies and asthma worldwide through our various outreach activities? Venturing into making this purpose a reality in the current global scenario, we truly need to increase our efforts towards education and capacity building and provide cutting edge information in our specialty at a global level.

With this very purpose in mind, and amongst our various initiatives this month WAO continues to prepare for the next WAO International Scientific Conference (WISC 2012) to be held in Hyderabad, India on 6-9 December. The scientific committee has worked very hard to put together an excellent state of the art program ranging from epigenetics, phenotypes of severe asthma, and pharmacogenetics to current and emerging treatments of allergic diseases including personalized medicine, preventative strategies, birth cohorts, impact of nutrition and the environment, eosinophilic disorders, food allergies, anaphylaxis, sleep disorders, skin allergies, and allergies in the context of other non-communicable diseases, and many other topics. The conference includes also practical sessions for the clinicians that will help them in their every day practice. Building upon the past achievements of WISC 2010 in Dubai, UAE and WAC 2011 in Cancún, México, we look forward to welcoming you in Hyderabad, India this December. Please continue to check the WISC 2012 website to get meeting updates, register for the meeting, and submit abstracts.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Richard Lockey, Thomas Casale, Noel Rodríguez Perez and his colleagues, the WAO Board of Directors, all the WAC 2011 Committee members and the WAO staff who worked so diligently to make the XXII World Allergy Congress in Cancún a success. WAO will continue to strive to further enhance the excellence of all of our future meetings and projects. Please take a moment to visit the WAC 2011 website to see the highlights from the meetings and view pictures from the various events.

Next month the WAO Board of Directors will meet at the AAAAI Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida, USA. WAO will once again host a Member Society Forum during the meeting, offering WAO’s member societies a chance to interact with the Board of Directors and share updates about their societies. We invite all member society representatives to join us on Monday, 5 March from 2:00 – 3:30 pm in the Peabody Hotel, Room Celebration 6.

WAO is also proud to host another World Allergy Forum (WAF) on the topic of “Food Allergy: Pathogenesis and Prevention.” The forum will take place on Sunday, 4 March in the Orlando Convention Center, Room S310ABFE, Level III. WAO is proud to announce that 2012 marks the
15th anniversary of the World Allergy Forum. The first WAF was presented at the AAAAI Annual Meeting in San Francisco in 1997, and WAO is appreciative that this symposium is an annual event at the AAAAI annual meetings.

The WAO Board Directors are looking forward to hosting the second annual World Allergy Week to be held 16–22 April 2012. WAO will again create for its Member Societies a number of online materials for the World Allergy Week on the theme of “The rising global burden of allergic diseases and asthma.” World Allergy Week is not intended to replace national allergy days or local activities that are planned in your country at other times during the year. However, WAO Member Societies are encouraged to collaborate in this global effort to highlight the complexity and severity of allergic and immunologic diseases and asthma, provide information about the increasing global prevalence and burden of these diseases, and explain the need for enhanced education and patient care services. More information will be posted on the WAO website in the next month.

I look forward to having the opportunity to see you in Orlando at the AAAAI Annual Meeting!

Sincere regards

Ruby Pawankar, MD, PhD
WAO President