Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Greetings from the World Allergy Organization!

This year the World Allergy Organization (WAO) has partnered with the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) to jointly organize the largest congress in the field of allergy and clinical immunology, the **EAACI–WAO World Allergy & Asthma Congress 2013** from 22–26 June at the MiCo Milano Congressi, in Milan, Italy. Both societies are excited to partner for this congress and look forward to bringing together over 10,000 delegates from our combined members around the globe!

Delegates will have wonderful opportunities to exchange knowledge and discuss the latest advances in allergy and clinical immunology through state of the art plenary sessions, symposia, poster discussions, postgraduate courses, workshops, pro and con sessions, hot topics, new horizons and more. We expect participants from many specialties including allergists, pulmonologists, ENTs, dermatologists, internists, pediatricians, gastroenterologists, clinical immunologists, basic scientists, and primary care physicians.

The **Preliminary Program** has been developed, thanks to the suggestions and proposals from WAO members and EAACI interest section members and the hard work of the Scientific Program Committee, especially the chairs: Lanny J. Rosenwasser and Marek Jutel. Please take a minute to review the outstanding Scientific Program that has been developed ([www.eaaciwao2013.com](http://www.eaaciwao2013.com)). Also on the website please watch for up-to-date information on the scientific program, CME credits, registration info, and travel grant applications. Lastly, we would like to personally invite all members of WAO to this groundbreaking congress. We are committed to providing an exciting and very attractive meeting for our members throughout the world.

*We look forward to welcoming you to Milan in 2013!*

**YEAR IN REVIEW - WAO Activities in 2012**

Along with a very successful WAO International Scientific Conference (WISC 2012) in December, WAO was very busy during the last year, and I would like to share with you a few highlights.

**WAO Position Papers and Statements:** Several scholarly papers developed by WAO councils, committees, and collaborations were completed and published in 2012:


- **Grading Local Side Effects of Sublingual Immunotherapy: Speaking the Same Language.** Submitted for Publication.


*Upcoming manuscripts in their final stages of development:*

- WAO-ARIA-GA²LEN consensus document on **Molecular-based Allergy Diagnosis**


**WAO OUTREACH – Emerging Societies Program and World Allergy Training School:** The Emerging Societies Program (ESP) in collaboration with the American College of Allergy Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) expands education in allergy, asthma and clinical immunology through its World Allergy Training Schools (WATS). The training schools continue to be well received in emerging regions.

The 2012 and 2013 training schools include:

**2012 WATS**
- Nairobi, Kenya – 10-12 September 2012
- Hyderabad, India – 9 December 2012

**2013 WATS**
- Guatemala City, Guatemala – August 2013
- Zimbabwe – Date: TBA
- Indonesia – Date: TBA

The ESP formally began its training schools in Dubai, UAE in 2009 and continues to grow and educate physicians in emerging regions. One of the many successful outcomes of the program had its roots in the 2010 WATS in Hanoi, Vietnam. A participant in the Vietnam WATS, Dr. Somxay Billamay, from Laos, recently shared with me the following news:

> “I am very proud to inform you that we have made a big successful step in allergy in our country. We are now well known and many patients have visited our allergy clinic in Children's Hospital, which is the only one in our country. One of the great success stories is to bring allergy into the university undergraduate curriculum for 4th year medical students, and one month of practicals in allergy in the hospital for 5th year students. More than 1000 allergic patients have visited our clinic since we started on 11 November 2011.”

> “All of this success mentioned above is beginning from the WATS in Hanoi, Vietnam in March 2010. One more time I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and WAO for your kind support and assistance and I do hope that we will have a great cooperation more and more.”

Together with the WAO Board of Directors, and the ESP Committee, I would like to extend my heartiest congratulations to Dr. Billamay for his great success, and I look forward to hearing more about this important recognition of allergic disease and educational endeavors in Laos. I would also like to thank the ACAAI for the continued support and partnership in the ESP.

**WAO Outreach to Patients and the Public:** On 9 December 2012, the *1st WAO Patient & Public Forum and Children’s Painting Competition* was held at Apollo Hospital - Jubilee Hills in Hyderabad, India, in
conjunction with the WAO International Scientific Conference (WISC 2012). The day began with a Patient Organization Panel Discussion, followed by informative talks from physicians around the globe to patients that had gathered to learn more about allergic diseases. Free spirometry testing was also provided to anyone interested in participating. Concluding this most important day was the Children’s Painting Competition. More than 90 local students ranging in age from 8-12 participated in our Competition. The top 6 students from each age group were awarded a prize based on their best depiction of the theme, “What Do Allergies Look Like?”

A very big thank you to the Patient Organizations and Physicians that contributed to making this day a great achievement! We would also like to extend a huge thank you to the staff and administration at Apollo Hospital! Without your efforts, this day would not have happened.

**WAO Educational Offerings**: WAO continues to offer many educational resources through live lectures, training schools and our extensive online content. Please visit our website to be updated on our new and upcoming initiatives.

**WAO Website and Social Media**: WAO has taken great strides to increase awareness and usage of the resources at [www.worldallergy.org](http://www.worldallergy.org) through social media avenues. WAO now has a presence on Twitter (@worldallergy), Facebook (WorldAllergyOrg), LinkedIn (World Allergy Organization) and YouTube (TheWAOChannel). If you are an active user of Social Media tools, please take a moment to “like” WAO’s Facebook page, “follow” us Twitter or “connect” with us on LinkedIn. Further social media initiatives are in process for 2013.

**Ask the Expert Now Online**: The [Ask the Expert](http://www.worldallergy.org) feature on the WAO website has been re-launched under the editorship of Dr. Dana Wallace and Dr. John Weiner. Qualified questions will be answered by one or more international experts, presenting a global perspective as much as possible.

**WAO Journal Now an Open Access Publication!** The [World Allergy Organization Journal](http://www.worldallergy.org) (WAO Journal), thanks to the guidance of Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Lanny Rosenwasser, successfully transferred publishing of the Journal to BioMed Central, beginning 1 January 2013. *WAO Journal* readers have free, instant online access to all published articles not only on BioMed Central's website, but also through PubMed Central and other open access repositories, free from the constraints of print publication cycles. Please continue to encourage your colleagues, fellows and peers to submit manuscripts to the *WAO Journal*.

**World Allergy Week 2013**: Building from the success of World Allergy Week 2012, this year WAO will host the third annual *World Allergy Week (8 – 14 April 2013)*, on the theme of “*Food Allergy – A Rising Global Health Problem*.” Check the website for ongoing updates.

I wish all of you a very happy, peaceful and prosperous 2013.

Yours sincerely,

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