

It has been more than a year since I wrote my message as the incoming President, and it is therefore an appropriate time to report on the progress that the Executive and Council have made since then.

The INF is now incorporated as a Non Profit Organization in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service of the US Department of the Treasury. As a consequence we are now governed by Bylaws, which were derived from and reflect the original Constitution that guided the activities of the INF initially. The Federation can now seek sponsorship and maintain an independent bank account that will enable us to obtain investment income without tax liability.

Intense efforts have been made by the Executive and the Strategic Action Committee to expand the geographic base of the Federation, and at the 2008 meeting of Council (Washington DC, November) applications for membership to the INF from the Hungarian Neuroendocrine Section, a Neuroendocrinology Society from Turkey and the South Mediterranean Neuroendocrine Group were formally approved. The Council representatives from the three new organizations are Zsolt Liposits, Bayram Yilmaz and Maria Mofta (acting), respectively. Additionally, a major expansion in the size of the membership of the Latin American group was recently achieved as a result of the efforts of Janete Anselmo Franci and Carlos Liberton. Currently, the Executive is trying hard to re-establish a member group in China and would greatly appreciate hearing from Chinese neuroendocrinologist who might be interested in becoming involved in this endeavor.

The regional groups of Canada, Europe, India, Korea and Latin America have elected new representatives to serve on Council. These are Dean Van Vugt, GianCarlo Panzica, K.P. Joy, Wan Sung Choi and Janete Anselmo Franci, respectively. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the former representatives, Dominique Walker, Roberto Melcangi, Edathil Vijayan, Kyungjin Kim and Carlos Libertun for their contributions, which have strengthened the Federation and enhanced its activities.

As part of the Federation's mission, the INF has provided or committed modest financial support to the following meetings: the First World Congress on Kisspeptin (Cordoba, September 2008); the 5th International Meeting on Steroids and the Nervous System (Torino, February 2009); a Festschrift in honour of the career of John Russell, INF President 2003-2006 (Edinburgh, July 2009); and the 2009 Summer Neuroendocrinology School (Kitakyushu, August 2009). INF sponsorship of these meetings is used to provide travel grants to young investigators to enable them to attend these important events in Neuroendocrinology.

The 2009 Summer School in Kitakyushu (August 2-4, 2009) is being organized by Yoichi Ueta, and will be held back to back with the IUPS meeting in Kyoto immediately before the School. The School website is www.uoeh-u.ac.jp/kouza/1seiri/school2009.html. A big thank you is due to John Bicknell, who recently stepped down as Chair of the Publications Committee after serving in this role since the founding of the Federation in

2000. John was instrumental in setting up the Federation's website and his ideas and suggestions were greatly valued. The leadership of this Committee represents a significant effort, and I'm therefore very pleased to be able to let you know that William Armstrong graciously agreed to Chair this committee. Bill's leadership began January of this year.

It is hard to believe but the deadline for submission of Abstracts for **ICN 2010** (March 1st 2010) is now less than 12 months away, and I urge all of you to submit your very best original work for presentation in Rouen. While outstanding plenary lectures and symposia are obviously important to the success of any Congress, it will be the quality of the new science presented either as 10-minute talks or as posters that will be critical to setting the vitality and level of excitement in Rouen. In this regard, Hubert Vaudry, Chair of the Local Organizing Committee, will be inviting selected contributions from authors of submitted abstracts to contribute to a volume titled "Trends in Neuroendocrinology" that he will be editing and which will be published by the New York Academy of Sciences. Gareth Leng as Chair of the Program Organizing Committee has taken a novel approach to constructing the overall program by creating four major themes: Growth, Metabolism and Obesity; Stress; Reproduction; and Peptidergic Systems. Within a theme, the level of analysis will range from the molecular to the behavioural and this horizontal stratification will be programmed throughout the Congress in such a manner that will provide the opportunity for individuals interested in molecular neuroendocrinology, for example, to move from one theme to another while remaining at the molecular level. As for ICN 2006, the INF will be providing a substantial number of travel grants to help young neuroendocrinologists, particularly those from less developed regions of the world, to attend ICN 2010.

In closing, I wish you every success with your research in the coming months and, as a result, look forward to learning of many new and exciting breakthroughs at the 7th ICN which, together with the Congress' venue in beautiful and historic Rouen, will make for a truly stellar meeting.

Tony M. Plant
INF President