



Newsletter December 2003

Dear Members:

We are at the end of the 2003, and I find myself presiding over a vibrant and growing *International Society for Equity in Health*.

3rd International Conference

We are six month away from our 3rd International Conference in Durban, South Africa and I am pleased to say that we have received and processed 120 abstracts to date. We are well ahead of the results we achieved at the same time last year for the 2nd conference. The President and the Executive Director are collaborating with the Board to promote the conference world-wide and we are getting a good response. The deadline for abstracts was extended to 20 December in response to a request from the African coordinators. **We welcome additional abstracts from our members.**

The Conference Theme is:

Pathways to Equity in Health: Using Research for Policy and Advocacy

Sub themes are:

- Research as a tool for advocacy to achieve greater equity in health;
- Identification and rationale for policies which produce improved health equity;
- Special issues of health equity in African contexts;
- Evaluation of projects and interventions which have led to greater equity in health;
- Pathways through which equity in health can be more effectively investigated such as cohort, gender differences and cross-sectional studies;
- The design and application of innovative methods for studying the interplay of health advocacy and equity in health;

We continue working closely with our partners HST, GEGA and Equinet to plan and implement the conference. Our executive board members have been working diligently contacting funding agencies to request financial support for the 3rd International Conference to take place in Durban, South Africa from June 10-12, 2003 and they have been quite successful in doing so. We have already secured funds to subsidize 25 participants to the International conference and we expect to meet our target of 50 subsidies early next year.

International Developments

We have seen the launching of the *Korean International Society for Equity in Health* and the *Colombian International Society for Equity in Health* thanks to the efficient work of Chang Yup Kim one of our board member and Carlos Agudelo, one of our members at large. Our collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization has strengthened this year and we are looking forward to build together *The Americas Chapter of ISEqH* early next year in Brazil. Our aim in the 3rd International Conference is to establish a *Pan African Health Equity Network*.

Board Members undertake Initiative

Two members of the Executive Board (**Bo Burstrom** and **Barbara Starfield**) are developing a mechanism by which individual or small groups of equity researchers can link themselves with equity researchers. These more senior equity researchers would be located in well-developed equity research programs and the linking with others would be for the purpose of facilitating more and/or improved equity research in other institutions. Bo and Barbara are currently looking for research groups that would be interested in being a host group, and for other groups of researchers who wish to be linked to a host group.

Eventually, these linkages are expected to develop into mutually beneficial collaborations between researchers from different parts of the world. The Durban meeting will serve as the vehicle for setting up at least some of these linkages. They would like to hear from those who might be interested in such linkages. (Bo's email address is bo.burstrom@phs.ki.se and Barbara's is bstarfie@jhsph.edu)

One of the main tasks of President of ISEqH is to promote the Society in international forums. I share this responsibility with our past-president Barbara Starfield. Recently we have attended several international gathering including meetings in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Australia, France and Sweden.

Secretariat News

Our International Secretariat in Toronto has been busy answering requests for information, processing abstracts, and communicating with the membership. Tasks have concentrated on fundraising and publicizing the conference and distributing information about it in English, French and Spanish, using traditional brochures as well as our web site. We are anxious to receive more abstracts in French and ask you to encourage your French-speaking colleagues to submit their work.

The Society, like most organizations, is relying increasingly on the Website. When the Website is used professionally, it is a powerful as well as empowering means of horizontal communication that offers the membership more opportunities to communicate amongst themselves. The challenge, of course, is to get people to engage in

a web-based communication, and we as a society need to become better at doing that and to improve our communications in general.

Feedback

I would very much like to receive feedback from you about this newsletter. We are also looking to improve the Website and any suggestions you may have would be welcome. 1.

Following suggestion from our members, this newsletter will come to you once a month starting January 2004.

I want to thank all of you for been part of the **International Society for Equity in Health** and **I look forward to your participation in the 3rd International Conference in Durban.**

Season's greetings to all of you and equity for everyone,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yves Talbot', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Yves Talbot
President