

P R E S I D E N T ’ S P E R S P E C T I V E



FAREWELL AND
WELCOME

By
Professor Tuula Tamminen
President of WAIMH

This is the last President's Perspective that I write as the president of WAIMH. Although January 2004, when I started my presidency in Melbourne seems like yesterday, the four-year term will be fulfilled in Yokohama in August 2008. And of course, I am full of mixed feelings! On the one hand I am content and grateful, it has been wonderful to work together with so many friends and colleagues in infant mental health around the world – truly “the best days of my life”. On the other hand I realize that only a part of the aims, ideas and dreams that I had in the beginning has proceeded into something concrete. One always learns something new about one's limitations and the borders of reality when one tries to do something new to oneself. So, I have had the best lessons of my life, too.

But it's not me, it's we, both horizontally and vertically. Many presidents before me have had similar ideas and those who come after may have the same aims, the chain of active, dedicated individuals

is what matters. Also, it is never only one person that counts. We are many and only interactions and relationships change the world and promote development. So, the transgenerational attachment in the world-wide WAIMH family is the key issue, isn't it!

Two important steps have been taken during the past four years. The revision of our By-laws will start to function in Yokohama Business Meeting after a long process. The aim of the revision is of the utmost importance: to increase the role and power of WAIMH Affiliates without losing the true nature of WAIMH based on personal memberships. I want to thank the Executive Committee, the By-laws Committee – especially Hiram Fitzgerald and Robert Emde – and all voting members of WAIMH for their input in this task. But in order to complete the task it will be essential for as many WAIMH Affiliate Presidents as possible to participate in the Yokohama Congress, where we will have for the very first time the official Affiliate Council based on the new By-laws. So, welcome to Yokohama!

The second historical task is also in its final stage. The WAIMH Central Office's move from USA to Europe, from the Michigan State University to the University of Tampere, Finland, has been a much bigger task than at least I understood. During those 16 years that Hiram Fitzgerald worked as the Executive Director in the Central Office he accomplished more than a small army! I express my admiring thanks to Hiram and also to the Associate Executive Director, Pälvi Kaukonen in Tampere.

The one issue that I am pleased with – and perhaps proud of – is the collaboration between international and world associations in the mental health field. For about two years the presidents and past-presidents of International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions (IACAPAP), International Society for Adolescent Psychiatry and Psychology (ISAPP) and WAIMH as world-wide scientific

organizations and World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH), International Alliance for Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Schools (Intercamhs) – and from now on Zero-to-Three – have been meeting together. The group named itself the Consortium and its aim is to promote infant, child and adolescent mental health all around the world. This group will hold its first and very special symposium in the 11th WAIMH Congress in Yokohama. We wish to let the world know why infant, child and adolescent mental health is the first priority in building up the world's future. I hope all of you will join us and participate in the Consortium Symposium. So, again, welcome to Yokohama!

Ever since my first WAIMH Congress in Stockholm in 1986 when I was a young infant psychiatrist and researcher, I had a wild dream. With the support of many WAIMH people, through the wise guidance of WAIMH directors and based on the confidence shown by WAIMH members I have had this unique opportunity to grow and mature to fulfill my dream. WAIMH is, indeed, a skillful organization in promoting human development through interactions and relationships!

I thank all of you!

Tuula