

Report on the **World Diabetes Congress 2013 Melbourne**

Anne-Marie Felton



The city of Melbourne provided the platform for the World Diabetes Congress 2013 enabling the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) to speak to the city and the world, 'Urbi et Orbi', on the challenges facing mankind in the light of the global epidemic of diabetes. The Congress represented a kaleidoscope of excellence through its scientific programme and numerous satellite symposia bringing together key participants: people with diabetes, professionals, professional societies, politicians and policy makers.

The scale of the event was enormous and has been recognised as the largest medical conference ever held in Australia. A total of 10,300 participants attended the Congress which offered over 275 hours of scientific sessions delivered by 400 world-class experts. The dilemma for many attendees was making decisions between competing interests. However most of the keynote presentations are currently available to view on the IDF website as webcasts. All of the abstracts and oral presentations are also available.

The political significance of the Congress has gathered momentum with the formation of the Global Parliamentary Champions for Diabetes Forum, led by Mr. Adrian Sanders MP, as its President. This significant forum will now hold the centre ground for political advocacy for diabetes at a global level. It has had a long period of gestation and the commitment of Sir Michael Hirst, IDF President, and Guy Barnett, former Australian Senator, has nurtured and ensured its delivery. It is noteworthy that so many politicians including representatives from the EU, notably Commissioner Tonio Borg and

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his cabinet colleagues, and First Lady of South Africa, Bongi Ngema, actively contributed to forum discussions and have made formal commitments to sustaining its success. I have no doubt that the Global Parliamentary Champions for Diabetes Forum will become an integral part of IDF's global mission of political advocacy.

The eloquence of Sir Michael Hirst was evident in his opening address and his keynote lecture during the Congress. I had the great honour and pleasure of chairing the Opening Ceremony and, without exaggeration, one could hear a pin drop between the moment his address ended and the standing ovation began, illustrating the appreciation by all for his charismatic leadership and profound commitment to diabetes.

Youth was very evident throughout the Congress, not only in the Opening Ceremony but also in the IDF Young Leaders in Diabetes Programme. These Young Leaders are the future of national diabetes organisations and IDF. The leadership programme developed by IDF through the initiative of its Chair, Debbie Jones, will continue to be a beacon of hope and pertinence to ensure the future of IDF.



IDF President Sir Michael Hirst (right) presents former cricketer Wasim Akram (left) with an award for his work in regard to diabetes around the world

The scientific programme provided three and a half days of multi-streamed content. There were seven Streams in total including two new ones: *Diabetes Research in the 20th Century: a Historical Perspective* and *Diabetes in Indigenous Peoples*. The IDF Award Lectures for these two Streams were given respectively by Jesse Roth (USA) and Alex Brown (Australia). The other six IDF Award lecturers were: Michael Brownlee (USA) (*Basic Science*); Stephen O'Rahilly (UK) (*Clinical Science*); Jean-Philippe Assal (Switzerland) (*Education and Integrated Care*); Jean-Claude Mbanya (Cameroon) (*Global Challenges in Health*); Wasim Akram (Pakistan) (*Living with Diabetes*) and Nick Wareham (UK) (*Public Health and Epidemiology*).

The latest and sixth edition of the *IDF Diabetes Atlas* was presented in December, which has become the gold standard resource for referencing the worldwide diabetes crisis, and utilised by all multi-stakeholders working with IDF to stop the pandemic.



Young Leaders in Diabetes Programme



Morning run with Sir Michael Hirst (President, IDF), The Hon David Davis MLC (Minister for Health and Minister for Ageing, Victoria) and Bas van de Goor (Olympic gold medal-winning volleyball player and person with type 1 diabetes)



In summing up, the 2013 World Diabetes Congress built on the experience and success of previous congresses. There was a sense of marked inclusivity and everyone present felt truly inspired. The Congress undoubtedly offered a unique opportunity for both first-time participants and consummate diabetes experts to network. The experience provided a renewed commitment to diabetes and the chance to be inspired by youth and accomplished experts.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for participating in the 2013 World Diabetes Congress and to those who will engage the Congress webcasts. In addition, a personal thank you to the Organising Committee and the Congress Team in the IDF Executive Office, the Chair of the Programme Committee, Paul Zimmet, and the Chair of the National Advisory Committee, Trisha Dunning.

Also a special thank you to the IDF Media and Communications team who ensured that key messages were delivered globally. Last but certainly not least, a special thank you to the Diabetes Australia Victoria and Diabetes Australia for their generosity of support and commitment to all aspects of this Congress.

I have the privilege of chairing the Organising Committee for the upcoming World Diabetes Congress, 2015. I look forward to seeing you there.



Aboriginal Australian performance at the WDC 2013 Opening Ceremony

Anne-Marie Felton

Anne-Marie Felton is a Vice-President of IDF, and the Co-Founder and current Chair of the Federation of European Nurses in Diabetes (FEND).

The Melbourne Declaration on Diabetes

Adrian Sanders

At the 2013 World Diabetes Congress in Melbourne, Australia, a declaration on diabetes was agreed and signed by invited parliamentarians representing 50 countries. The *Melbourne Declaration on Diabetes* was agreed at the first-ever Global Parliamentary Champions for Diabetes Forum on the 2nd December 2013.

The Declaration calls for urgent action to address the diabetes pandemic and our dedicated signatories pledge to work across parliaments to help prevent the incidence of diabetes, ensure early diagnosis and improve the treatment of people with the condition.

The Global Parliamentary Champions for Diabetes Forum elected two Vice-Presidents, Dr. Rachael Nyamai MP (Kenya) and Simon Busuttil MP (Malta) and myself as the first President. My qualifications for this prestigious position include my work as Chairman of the

United Kingdom All-Party Parliamentary Group for Diabetes (APPG Diabetes) and Chairman of the European Policy Action Network for Diabetes (ExPAND). I have also lived with type 1 diabetes for a quarter of a century.

The priority of the group will be to build a coalition of diabetes advocates for action to tackle the pandemic at the local, regional, national and trans-national level raising urgent diabetes awareness in parliaments and assemblies across



The First Lady of South Africa signing the Melbourne Declaration on Diabetes

the globe. This new grouping will fill a missing gap, and I am determined we will do much more. There is a great deal of cross-national communication among

medical professionals, pharmaceutical companies, health ministers and patient groups but nothing for parliamentarians who can set the agenda, influence

budgets and vote for policies. As the first global network of parliamentarians for a specific medical condition, we will create a platform to raise the profile of diabetes within governments across the world. Through the communication of ideas and best practice and the encouragement of action within parliaments around the world we can move towards that tipping point where the allocation of resources and effort to prevent, diagnose and treat diabetes is no longer questioned.

The urgency required cannot be overstated given the rising tide of diabetes across all continents and countries rich and poor. Already the scale of the challenge threatens the healthcare budgets of most countries and the economies of many.

It is a great honour to be tasked with leading this group and I am grateful for the support and guidance of IDF through its President Sir Michael Hirst, his Co-Chair behind the initiative, former Australian Senator, Guy Barnett, and the global co-ordinator for the forum, the Hon. Judi Moylan. This formidable team will become a positive force governments will not be able to ignore.

Objectives for 'Parliamentarians for Diabetes' global network

1. Exchange policy views and practical initiatives of relevance and to hear from experts on opportunities for action and progress in the prevention and management of diabetes. To always strive for 'best practice', and advocate for people with diabetes, their families and carers, and those at risk and to become a powerful force internationally to respond in a co-ordinated and focussed way to the diabetes pandemic and to promote the diabetes cause.
2. Provide parliamentarians with the opportunity to attend meetings organised by the IDF and their Member Associations, aiming to improve health outcomes for people with diabetes, stop discrimination towards people with diabetes and prevent development of type 2 diabetes. A special focus should be the different regions of the globe to ensure practical solutions are offered.
3. Establish a platform for the dialogue between IDF Member Associations and other stakeholders to exchange information and discuss special areas of common interest. These will include prevention, workforce, costs of diabetes, access to medicines, and effective strategies to combat and manage the pandemic. To report back to ministers, parliamentarians and other key decision-makers in our home countries and to seek commitments to deliver on the targets set at the 66 WHA in 2013. The global network will support the sharing of resources such as research, legislative initiatives, prevention campaigns and joint initiatives relevant to the various regions of the globe.
4. Encourage all governments to acknowledge that diabetes is a national health priority that requires a comprehensive action plan leading to action.
5. Respond to and participate in relevant debate and discussion on and related to the World Health Assembly, World Health Organization, United Nations and other appropriate organisations or government bodies and specifically to ensure the inclusion of diabetes and NCDs in the post-2015 development framework noting this framework should be aligned with the goals and targets on diabetes agreed at the WHA. Diabetes intersects all major dimensions of global development, including poverty reduction, gender inequality, education, environmental sustainability and infectious diseases.
6. Confer honour and express gratitude to those Members of Parliament supporting the diabetes cause, wherever they may be and to use our best endeavours to recruit other Members of Parliament for this purpose.
7. Create opportunities for networking and building relationships between Members of Parliament, other key decision-makers, the IDF and its Member Associations and others. To hold meetings in various regions of the globe as agreed, and to meet again as a Global Forum at the next World Diabetes Congress in 2015.
8. Appoint a global co-ordinator with appropriate administrative and management support to assist the global network to achieve the above objectives.

Adrian Sanders

Adrian Sanders is the Member of Parliament for Torbay in Devon, UK.

To read the *Melbourne Declaration on Diabetes*, please visit:
www.idf.org/sites/default/files/Melbourne_Declaration.pdf

