

IAMP Meets in Beijing

The InterAcademy Medical Panel (IAMP), a global network of medical academies and medical divisions within science and engineering academies, has elected a new co-chair and a new executive committee. Representatives at the IAMP 2nd General Assembly in Beijing, China, also agreed to a broad-ranging, action-oriented agenda for 2006-2009.

Beijing. Anthony Mbewu, president of the Medical Research Council of South Africa, has been elected the new co-chair of the InterAcademy Medical Panel (IAMP). He will join Guy de Thé, professor emeritus, *Institut Pasteur*, France, in leading the IAMP for the next three years.

The election took place at IAMP's 2nd General Assembly, which was held in Beijing from 2-6 April and was attended by 36 representatives of IAMP member institutions. Mbewu succeeds David Challoner, foreign secretary of the US Institutes of Medicine.

“The globalization of trade, travel and telecommunications have brought the people of the world more closely together than ever before,” notes Mbewu. While such trends have generated significant benefits, he observes, they have also created greater risks, most notably in the field of global public health. “HIV/AIDS and avian influenza are just two examples of how health issues have increasingly become international issues of enormous consequence,” he says. As a result of these trends, which are likely to accelerate in the years ahead, Mbewu notes, “IAMP has the potential to directly influence the health of millions of people worldwide, especially the world’s poorest and most vulnerable people.”

During the General Assembly, IAMP delegates also elected a new executive committee. Committee members for 2006-2009 include representatives from the African Academy of Sciences, the Chinese Academy of Engineering, *Accademia dei Lincei*, Italy, the Science Council of Japan, the Mexican Academy of Sciences, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, the US Institutes of Medicine and the Polish Academy of Sciences. In addition, 11 institutions were officially elected members of IAMP. That brings IAMP's total membership to 63.

Representatives at the assembly also set out an agenda for the next three years. They agreed to continue IAMP's internet-based mother-and-child

programme launched by the French Academy of Sciences and now managed by the Canadian Academy of Medical Sciences. They also agreed to launch several new initiatives, including an assessment of perinatal care; a science communications programme; an activity focusing on mitigating and eventually eliminating rheumatic fever; an examination of networks in developing countries focusing on infectious diseases; and a broad-ranging programme on quality control in medical care throughout the world.

Each IAMP programme will be led by one or more academies that will shoulder responsibility for devising a detailed programmatic agenda and seeking external grant money. To assist in this effort, former IAMP co-chair Challoner will head an advisory committee for funding.

The IAMP General Assembly took place on the last day of a four-day conference highlighted by the launch of the publications of the Disease Control Priorities Project (DCPP), an initiative financed by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that is dedicated to devising effective strategies for mitigating critical public health problems, especially in the developing world.

“IAMP, which has been in existence for just six years, has gained both a great deal of credibility and visibility thanks in large measure to its association with the Disease Control Priorities Project,” says IAMP co-chair Guy de Thé. “We now hope to build upon our early success not only by supporting efforts to advance the goals of the DCPP, but also by establishing our own programmes. With the expertise represented by IAMP member institutions and the individual scientists who belong to these institutions, we believe that we are well positioned to make important contributions to global public health.”

For additional information, see www.iamp-online.org. For additional information about the Disease Control Priorities Project, see www.dcp2.org.