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Report from the Commonwealth Pharmacists Association (CPA) Biannual conference May28 – June 2 2011 Durban South Africa in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa:

The theme of the well attended conference was: Pharmacy: Versatile, Responsive, Aware. Analogies were made comparing pharmacists and leopards.

Opening and keynote addresses were delivered by a representative on behalf of the National Minister of Health, Christine Platt, and the BV Patel lecture by Dr. Sylvia Anie. A common theme through the speeches referred to the Millennium Development Goals.

The conference themes were:

- Access to medicine in developing countries
- Millennium Development Goals
- Pharmaceutical waste disposal
- Local production in developing countries
- Scenario planning in health
- National Health Insurance
- Human Resources for health

The largest discussion point of the conference was the national government's desire to institute a national health insurance scheme. I was invited to speak to that topic under the sub-topic "Value Proposition for Community Pharmacy – Is It Measurable?"

While it certainly seemed, from an observer, that the government was welcoming the involvement and participation of pharmacy in the development of the scheme, I also observed perhaps some level of disunity within the profession in South Africa and some distrust of the government in general.

The council of the CPA had a very efficient council meeting, considering the regional representatives had been elected prior to arrival in Durban, and the fact that the new President was acclaimed. Congratulation to both Ivan Kotze of South Africa on his 4 years as President, now past-president and to the incoming President from Northern Ireland Raymond Anderson.

The agenda for the meeting is attached. Certainly a matter of ongoing concern is the sustainable contribution of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain. However, given that the CEO was there and made a presentation to council, it may be inferred that continuing support may be evident.

And certainly, as in many associations, discussion was held on the role and value of the CPA, the need for better communication, and priorities for the next 2 years. A 2 hour workshop was held to focus some of these issues.

I did have a personal meeting with the new President to discuss with him some observations that CPhA would have re continued support of CPA, in particular, how to foster closer relationships with FIP.

The next CPA conference will be held in The Bahamas, with the proposal put forward by Philip Gray of the Bahamas. Considering that Canada is part of the America's region of the Commonwealth, it is hoped that we will be able to invite a large number of Canadian pharmacists to that conference.

And the Durban Declaration focused on the importance of pharmacists committing to combat non-communicable diseases.

Respectfully Submitted

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Delegate