

Report to the IUIS: Federation of African Immunological Societies  
Willem Hanekom, President, FAIS  
To be reported by Tom Kariuki, Vice-President, FAIS  
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The FAIS executive has elected to set step-wise priorities and goals:

1. First priority: Establishing a central office

We identified inadequate administrative and fiscal support as hampering FAIS's activities in the past. Therefore, a central office was established at the University of Cape Town, in South Africa. We recruited an administrator, Nobuntu Mbebetho, who spends 50% of her time on FAIS activities. The University of Cape Town has kindly agreed to oversee fiscal aspects of the FAIS, through its structures, without charging indirect fees. This office and the fiscal structures are now in place.

2. Second priority: Establishing effective communication

Optimal communication within FAIS, and within FAIS-affiliated groups in Africa, remains a challenge. Our first priority was to focus on optimal communication tools for the executive: we now have monthly telephone conferences, via Skype – we have also established structures that allow optimal internet access of all executive members for Skype, where these did not exist.

Second, the Secretary General, Pa Tamba Ngom, has gathered wide email distribution lists, to reach immunologists throughout Africa. He is distributing information regarding training and career opportunities, and funding opportunities, on a regular basis through these channels.

Our priority in communication is establishing a new website, as a portal for regular communication of the opportunities mentioned above. The website is in an advanced stage of design, and will also include information about the FAIS, member societies in Africa, and the IUIS. There will also be information on how to establish a national immunology society, and links to educational resources in immunology. We have secured services of a web design company in Cape Town, Rothko, and hope to have the new domain live by mid July.

3. Third priority: FAIS conference, December 2012

We have decided to start organising this conference early, to be able to ensure adequate funding and support. The South African Immunology Society will co-host the conference. A conference organising committee, which includes key stakeholders, has been established. Below, some detail about the conference:

- Primary goals:
  1. Communication and networking among African immunologists.
  2. Defining specific needs of African immunologists from the FAIS.
- Secondary:
  1. Dissemination of cutting edge research results.
  2. Focus on African immunological problems, both infectious and non-communicable, both human and animal, priority to the most pressing.
  3. Focus on translational research.
- Themes:

1. The big 3: TB, malaria, HIV. Rationale: our main problems, still, and most immunologists work in this area.
2. Neglected diseases in African humans, e.g., malnutrition, primary immune deficiency, other parasitic diseases, etc. Rationale: neglected!
3. Emerging non-communicable diseases in Africa. Rationale: major part of "immunology".
4. Vaccinology. Rationale: major development in Africa, yet, still <70% DPT3!!
5. Vet diseases in Africa. Rationale: incorporate excellent research going on in this arena within Africa.

- Structure:

	8.30-10.30	11-1	2-4	4.30-6.30	7
Opening evening					Opening session. Plenary and cocktail.
Day 2	Plenary	Parallel	Plenary	Poster	Cocktail
Day 3	Plenary	Parallel	Plenary	Poster	Cocktail
Day 4	Plenary	FAIS session	Plenary	Poster	Closing dinner

- Logistics:
  1. Conference organising group - Jolandi et al. – venue, all logistics, budget, etc
  2. Aim 500 people
  3. Opening session with major politician/advocate
  4. Closing ceremony with dinner, prize giving. Sponsored cocktails other evenings.
- Money:
  1. Prize giving: best abstracts.
  2. Funding for about 50 scholarships.
  3. Fund raising - NIH, BMGF, WT, NRF; industry (Bill); local; cocktails.
- Marketing:
  1. Involve FIDSSA, other societies, websites, etc. etc.
- Satellites:
  - Invite training course before/after. SAIS will organise.

#### 4. Other activities and priorities

- Recruitment of more member societies within Africa. This process has to involve support in establishing these societies. In the interim, Tom Kariuki from our executive supported the relaunch of the Kenya Society for Immunology, which was timed to coincide with World Day of Immunology.

This year's World day of immunology (2011) was a major milestone for immunologists in Kenya as it marked the re-launch of the Kenya Society for Immunology (KSI). KSI is one of the founding societies of FAIS and hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> FAIS general congress in 1995. However in recent times the society has not operated as expected and its basic programs became more or less moribund. The ceremony and celebrations took place at the world famous National Museums of Kenya Louis Leakey Auditorium, which hosts Kenya most valued heritage treasures of ancient human fossils. The ceremony was graced by various dignitaries and guests from Kenya Ministry of Science and Technology, ministry of health, universities, senior researchers working on infectious and non-communicable diseases, lecturers, fellows, students, exhibitors and members of the public. Over a 120 guests attended the launch and listened to various presentations on the role of FAIS and IUIS (Tom Kariuki, FAIS); the importance of immunology in our daily lives (Jan Naessens, ILRI); the future programs that KSI will spearhead (Simeon Mining, KSI); basic immunology and its contribution to the development of vaccines against infectious diseases (Njeri Wamae, KeMU; Kevin Marsh, KEMRI-Wellcome Trust; E. Njagi, UoN). KSI is now officially registered with IUIS and has recruited 106 members since its re-launch and we continue to register new members. The future plans is to hold a national immunology

conference in April 2012 that will be preceded by a training workshop to which FAIS and IUIS members will be invited.

We will work on the following as soon as priorities above have been addressed.

- Formal educational initiatives.
- Advocacy initiatives.
- Preparation for bid for possible hosting of the IUIS meeting.
- More formal links with other federations, for synchronous activities.
- Establishing a FAIS research communications journal.