

tion with them is one of the foundations of a well-coordinated organization.

The next important task of the WPA Secretariat is the logistic support to the effective work of the Executive Committee<sup>4</sup>. This includes the preparation of materials for meetings; verification and approval of reports; and many other daily and routine activities. As the WPA Secretary General, I am also expected to ensure the effective work of the WPA Council, maintaining constant communication with its chairperson. The responsibilities of the Secretary General also include the leadership of the Accreditation Committee, which starts its active work during the pre-election period.

An important component of my upcoming work will also be the assistance in the work of the WPA Standing Committees<sup>5</sup> on Planning, Publications, Education, Sections, Meetings, Ethics and Review, Finances and Fundraising. I hope that my previous three years of experience in the Committee on Planning will help me in this respect.

At present, all our efforts are focused on the implementation of the WPA Action Plan for 2020-2023<sup>6</sup>. The success of this implementation will largely depend on the well-coordinated interaction of all components of the WPA structure, and its Secretariat is called to help in this.

The key features of the Action Plan are: to promote psychiatry as a medical specialty in clinical, academic and research areas, and to promote public mental health as a guiding principle; to highlight the specific role of psychiatrists in working with other professionals in health, public

health, legal and social aspects of care; to ensure WPA's positive engagement with Member Societies and WPA components, mental health professionals and general health care workers.

The six areas of the WPA Action Plan 2020-2023 include: public mental health; child, adolescent and youth mental health; addressing comorbidity in mental health; developing partnerships for collaborative work and strengthening partnerships with mental health and other organizations; capacity building and training in global mental health and public mental health; continuation and completion of previous WPA Action Plans<sup>7,8</sup>.

I plan to assist the President in searching for educational grants and funds, and in preparing and monitoring specific proposals for sponsors. I will also assist in finding sites for Regional and Thematic Congresses. I also plan to prepare a report on the importance of a constant collaboration with the mass media, with the aim of exploring the possibility to create a working group, or establish a Section, to develop a charter for relations with the press. The ultimate goal would be to sign such a charter with the International Press Association.

Promoting mental health and increasing the popularity of psychiatry as a medical specialty are among the objectives of the WPA Action Plan. I intend to submit working materials in this area to the Executive Committee. I am also planning regular appearances in the mass media with the aim to promote psychiatry as a medical specialty in clinical, academic and research areas and to promote public mental health as a

guiding principle, as well as to disseminate information on WPA activities.

Concerning partnership with other professional mental health organizations, I am going to participate as an observer in the work of the World Health Organization (WHO) General Assembly and Executive Board, to cooperate with the World Medical Association, and – as a member of the Council of the European Psychiatric Association and one of the founders of the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ECNP) – to cultivate relationships with these latter associations.

Using my experience in the WHO and the ECNP, I am also planning to contribute to the Action Plan goal of “Promoting evidence-based psychopharmacotherapy”. I also expect to continue working in the WPA Expert Group on COVID-19 and the care for people with mental illness.

I am confident that the WPA will successfully overcome the difficulties associated with this critical period and continue its effective work. The WPA Secretariat will make every effort to contribute to this, relying on the full support from all components of the Association.

**Petr V. Morozov**  
WPA Secretary General

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## Plan of the WPA Secretary for Scientific Meetings for the triennium 2020-2023

It has been a great honor to be elected as the WPA Secretary for Scientific Meetings and to join the WPA Executive Committee. I am poised to do my utmost to promote the mission of the WPA and look forward to contributing to the achievements and success of the Association, supporting and advocating for the members and further advancing the best clinical care, education

and research in psychiatry globally<sup>1,2</sup>.

The WPA Secretary for Scientific Meetings is expected to: a) work with the Executive Committee and the Secretariat to oversee and co-ordinate all official scientific meetings of the WPA and manage applications for WPA co-sponsorship of scientific meetings; b) be responsible for the development of proposals to host the

World Congresses of Psychiatry and other WPA scientific meetings in accordance with the Association's policies; c) assist in all aspects of the organization of World Congresses and other WPA scientific meetings<sup>3</sup>.

The WPA goals for scientific meetings, as delineated in the policy approved by the Executive Committee in May 2019, are

to: a) increase the exchange of information between psychiatrists from different parts of the world, including networking, training and mentoring of early career psychiatrists<sup>4</sup>; b) contribute to the education of different categories of mental health workers by providing up-to-date scientific information<sup>5</sup>; c) increase exchange and collaboration between psychiatrists and their community, professional, government and development partners in all parts of the world; d) boost collaborative research by bringing together psychiatrists and others interested in research from various parts of the world; e) strengthen links among WPA Member Societies and between WPA and international and regional organizations in psychiatry; f) increase the visibility of psychiatry nationally and internationally; g) contribute to WPA funds.

The WPA Standing Committee for Scientific Meetings will continue to implement and improve the tasks and functions of the WPA related to congresses and co-sponsored meetings by: a) improving the scientific quality of these meetings with state-of-the-art presentations; b) working in close collaboration with the WPA Secretary for Education and Secretary General to provide continuing medical education (CME) credits for WPA meetings; c) working in close collaboration with the WPA Secretary for Finances to improve the financial income and stability of the WPA through sponsored events; d) increasing the number of WPA co-sponsored meetings to involve all the four Regions and eighteen Zones of the WPA, reaching high-, middle- and low-income countries; e) disseminating WPA information, knowledge, educational programs and expertise to all the WPA Regions, in coordination with the Association's Scientific Sections<sup>6,7</sup>; f) focusing on evidence-based knowledge by research oriented and educationally oriented presentations; g) addressing the mental health issues during and after the

COVID-19 era<sup>8,9</sup>.

From the very beginning of the current triennium 2020-2023, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted planned medical conferences across the entire world. While facing these uncertain, unpredictable and unprecedented times, the WPA remains sensitive and respectful not only to those affected by COVID-19 but also to our own safety and well-being<sup>10</sup>. Based on close monitoring of the global risk assessment by the World Health Organization regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of our congresses and co-sponsored meetings have since been cancelled, postponed or transformed into innovative online formats.

At present, it is difficult to predict when the pandemic will be mitigated and we will be able to travel safely and resume in-person meetings without jeopardizing our and others' personal health. We will closely monitor the future development of the COVID-19 pandemic and diligently make appropriate and sagacious adjustments in planning for future congresses. The WPA will not succumb to the "pandemic fatigue" and detour its path, but will move forward.

The Association is confident that, by working closely together, we will be able to face and overcome the challenges. While trusting the pandemic shall pass, we now set our sights on 2021 and beyond, begin to review and reflect on the relevant issues of the current year, especially mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic, then strategize how to plan what the future will hold for us and embrace whatever the new norm for the post-COVID-19 era would be.

The very first WPA scientific event of the new triennium was the Thematic Congress on Intersectional Collaboration entitled "Psychological Trauma: Global Burden on Mental and Physical Health", held virtually from 11 to 13 December 2020. The following WPA Congresses that have been held

or are confirmed or proposed include: the World Congress of Psychiatry "Psychiatry in a Troubled World", held virtually from 10 to 13 March 2021; the Regional Congress "Interdisciplinary Understanding of Comorbidity in Psychiatry: from Science to Integrated Care", held virtually from 16 to 18 May 2021; the Regional Congress "Psychopathology in Periods of Transition", scheduled in Kyiv, Ukraine, from 7 to 9 July 2021; the World Congress of Psychiatry "New World, New Challenges for Psychiatry and Mental Health", to take place in Cartagena, Colombia, from 18 to 21 October 2021; the World Congress of Psychiatry to be held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 3 to 6 August 2022; and a Thematic Congress scheduled in Moscow, Russia, in October 2022.

The future congresses and meetings may be transformed into virtual or "hybrid" formats until the world recovers from the pandemic, and it becomes safe to travel and to convene face-to-face meetings. The WPA has called for each zone to think of a thematic meeting and/or a regional meeting in collaboration with other zones. The latter provides a viable opportunity to get closer to the other zones in the region. There are more WPA congresses and co-sponsored meetings in the pipeline and we will regularly provide updates.

**Edmond H. Pi**

WPA Secretary for Scientific Meetings

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## Update from the WPA Secretary for Education

The year 2020 has been most challenging. The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected the physical and mental

health of virtually everyone in the world. There is an anticipated increased demand for mental health care. However, given the

limited mental health capacities around the world, especially in low- and middle-income countries, this will imply that more