



IFSSH Newsletter

May 2021

Message from the Secretary-General: S. Raja Sabapathy

55 and Growing

The IFSSH has now been in existence for 55 years. The IFSSH was formed in 1966 for the purpose of coordinating the activities of the various Societies for Surgery of the Hand throughout the world and in this way to increase and spread knowledge of surgery of the hand. During this period, it has been led by 19 Hand Surgeons with vision and we have had 14 congresses. The triennial congresses started only in the year 1980.

Fifty-five years is a considerable period in the life of an individual but for an organization it is just another milestone. Few organizations remain healthy and vibrant at 50 years. When they look forward to the next 50, they understand that to remain relevant they have to make meaningful progress. Progress is impossible without change. Change without letting go of the values the organization stands for is the challenge for the leadership. The current leadership, being fully aware of these demands, made efforts to meet the challenge when they introduced changes in the constitution.

Ensuring Greater Member participation

In the erstwhile council with only one member-at-large, an infrequent change in the Historian position and a triennial congress schedule, there was opportunity for only 3 to 4 persons in a decade to enter the Executive Committee. With a membership of 60 societies from 58 nations this looked grossly inadequate. With the Delegates' Council's adoption of the new bylaws we have increased the number of member-at-large positions to five and this will enhance greater member participation in the affairs of the Executive Committee. More than that, now the delegates will have a greater talent pool from which they can choose the Secretary-General.

Increasing the Opportunity to Lead

As hand surgeons we can be proud that we have many great men and woman who have shown exemplary leadership qualities. Some with their great surgical skill and academic talent helped push the boundaries of care. Some have organized institutions and done heroic work in impossible circumstances. We need to have them all lead the IFSSH. We now have reduced the leadership cycle to 2 years from 3. This in effect will see that we will have 5 presidents in a decade. Further, by abolishing the Secretary-General Elect and President Elect positions, the length of tenure of members in the Executive Committee is reduced. These alterations allow us to maintain continuity with change. Though the leadership changes once in two years, we will continue the triennial cycle of our conferences as per the majority wish of the members.

Reaching out to the Needs of the Member nations

We have now enhanced our capability to reach out. The IFSSH can help sponsor educational initiatives of member societies. The Committee for Educational Sponsorship is looking for opportunities to make a difference in the lives of people. We look forward to receiving applications and information can be obtained through our website: www.ifssh.info. As a surgeon hailing from a developing country and knowing the value of help, I firmly believe in the statement of Bill Gates when asked about sponsorship and charity work. He said, *'Charity projects must be done with the same efficiency as the main business which allowed us to do charity'*. A professionally written project plan is a great first step. The IFSSH Harold Kleinert Visiting Professorship is another great scheme, and we are sure that once the pandemic settles, we will recommence this initiative.

Ezine – 10 years and Flourishing ...

It is a decade since we started Ezine, our online magazine, and I take this opportunity to congratulate Prof Ulrich Mennen for guiding it through so well over these years. Published four times a year, it is a mixture of IFSSH organizational matters, news from member societies and high quality scientific articles. The stories of the IFSSH Pioneers of Hand Surgery have always been inspirational to read. All the issues are available in our website (www.ifssh.info) and the contents don't seem to age. I request everyone who reads this publication to also visit our website, not only to read the back issues but also to see the newly created webpages so well done by our Historian, David Warwick.

Looking Beyond the Pandemic

The pandemic has affected all of us in ways that we could have never imagined. On behalf of the IFSSH ExCo, I wish you all good health. For those in the front line, we wish 'Stay safe as you keep working'. In these times I like to believe in the words of FD Roosevelt, *"We have always held to the hope, the belief, the conviction that there is a better life, a better world, beyond the horizon."* I am sure we will reach that horizon well before the London IFSSH Congress which is scheduled to be held from the 6th to 10th June, 2022. It will be a great event. Many of us have missed meeting so many for so long. Let us all come together to make the London IFSSH an event to remember

With very best wishes

S. Raja Sabapathy

Secretary-General, IFSSH

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Executive Committee: 2022 Elections

In September 2020 the IFSSH Delegates' Council adopted a revised set of bylaws. The amendments allowed for compliance with current not-for-profit best practices and legal conventions within our US registration.

Under these bylaws, a number of changes have occurred to the composition of the Executive Committee as well as the nomination and election processes. In summary, the following will occur in 2022:

- The President will move to Immediate Past President
- The President Elect will move to President
- The Secretary-General will move to President Elect
- The Secretary-General Elect position (currently vacant) and Historian position will be officially retired in 2022 as part of the ongoing process to redesign the ExCo composition.
- Elections will occur for:
 - Secretary-General
 - Communications Director
 - 5 Members-at-Large
 - 2 Nominating Committee Members-at-Large

A full description of the nomination and election process for each of the above-named positions, including the pre-requisites and timing for submissions, will be distributed via email to all Delegates in August 2021. The full information will also be published in the August 2021 Ezine.

2028 IFSSH Congress Host Society: Call for bids

The IFSSH Executive Committee has recommended that member societies from the Asian-Pacific region be invited to host the 2028 triennial congress. This main scientific event of the IFSSH will be celebrated every three years in a member society country that is in good standing with the IFSSH, including payment of their annual dues.

The society hosting the event will be selected from applications six years before at the annual Delegates' Council meeting. Those societies from countries which also have a hand therapy association/society should discuss the possibility of hosting a combined meeting. Information regarding the application process is on the IFSSH website: <https://ifssh.info/guidelines.php>

The societies which are applicants must submit a formal petition to the Secretary General at least three months ahead of the Council meeting. The same documentation should be

sent by the bidding society to each member country delegate and IFSHT representative for evaluation at least three months before the Council Meeting.

Any Asian-Pacific member society that is interested in hosting the 2028 IFSSH Congress should inform the IFSSH Executive of their intentions and ensure that the full bid is forwarded, as detailed in the instructions above, by March 6th 2022, for consideration at the London meeting (June 6-10, 2022).

Educational Sponsorship

The IFSSH Committee for Educational Sponsorship (CES) is calling for applications from any interested group who requires financial support to undertake hand surgery education programmes worldwide. Applications should fulfil the guidelines (https://ifssh.info/educational_sponsorship.php) and be forwarded to the Secretary-General (administration@ifssh.info) at least 3 months prior to the commencement of the event/project.

Submissions to the IFSSH CES require the support of the applicant's society. If your society is not an IFSSH member society, funding is possible if a letter of endorsement is provided by an IFSSH member society.

Future Meetings

A detailed list of national and regional hand surgery meetings is available on the IFSSH website. The triennial IFSSH Congresses are as follows:

*XVth IFSSH – XIIth IFSHT Congress – London, United Kingdom
6th - 10th June, 2022*

*XVIth IFSSH – XIIIth IFSHT Congress – Washington D.C., USA
29th March - 3rd April, 2025*