

Press Release

Academy of Dentistry International

Immediate Release

Advocacy for Oral Health and Sustainability at the United Nations – Academy of Dentistry International takes a Unique Role

New York, August 14, 2018. The Academy of Dentistry International (ADI) was granted Special Consultative Status to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) on 24 July 2018. This consultative status is unique for an oral health-related membership organization and as such, enables a loud and direct voice for global oral health to be heard at the highest levels of the United Nations' member states, the UN Secretariat and Agencies.

As an NGO with Special Consultative Status, the Academy will submit statements and provide advice on matters related to its areas of competence –

- Promotion of oral health as a critical element of general health;
- Role of oral health in the achievement of the UN's Agenda for 2030 – the Sustainable Development Goals; and
- Social responsibility and volunteerism of the dental profession.

This unique status is granted at a pivotal time for oral diseases when over half the world's population have no access to even basic and essential dental care. The 'Global Burden of Disease Studies' funded by The Gates Foundation report that *untreated dental decay* in permanent teeth is the single most prevalent disease on the planet, *severe chronic periodontal* (gum and underlying bone) disease the sixth most prevalent and *untreated decay in deciduous* ('milk') teeth the 12th most prevalent. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) 60% to 90% of children worldwide have dental caries. Unfortunately, oral diseases affect the most vulnerable individuals, children, elderly and members of racial and ethnic minorities. The economic burden of these preventable diseases is severe. The indirect costs, such as time away from school and work, amount to more than US\$140 billion per year, ranking the indirect costs of oral diseases among the top 10 causes of death. The World Oral Health Report (published by WHO) concluded that oral disease is still a major public health problem in high-income countries and the burden of oral diseases is growing in many low- and middle-income countries. Oral diseases are linked to diabetes, heart disease and stroke, and pre-term low birthweight babies among other conditions. Common risk factors for many of these diseases include sugar, tobacco, alcohol, lack of hygiene, unsafe water, and lack of injury prevention. There is a clear social gradient to the inequalities and disparities in oral health, and the social determinants for oral diseases are common to many other Non-Communicable Diseases.

In the build-up for this unique role the Academy, together with many other civil society organizations, has submitted statements to the forthcoming High-level Meeting on Non-Communicable Diseases to be attended by heads of State and Government during the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly in September 2018.

The Academy's mission is brought to life through the service of its members in volunteer work and oral health projects serving communities in need. The ADI spearheads social responsibility among the oral health community supporting its members and others to design and deliver health programs, and to provide advice on oral health to governments and other NGOs worldwide with focus on the under-privileged and under-served. Through a number of its members, the Academy has close working relationships with the WHO Global Oral Health Programme. The President of ADI, Dr. Gerhard

Seeberger, a dentist from Cagliari, Italy, views this new status as a major game-changer for the reductions in oral diseases and their harmful effects on general health and quality of life.

“As oral health professionals we need to talk less among ourselves, and truly reach out to Governments and other NGOs within the health sector and beyond, to work together to make health and improved well-being a reality for all peoples. Special Consultative Status brings the call for essential oral health and disease prevention closer toward achievement of the SDGs and the UN’s *2030 Agenda - Transforming our World*.”

The designated representative to the UN on behalf of the Academy of Dentistry International is the Academy’s Vice President for International Affairs, Dr. David Alexander a specialist in dental public health and the study of oral diseases. In describing the goals for the Academy with ECOSOC, Dr. Alexander added:

“We are strong supporters of the Sustainable Development Goals and put significant focus on a broad number of the goals which together will not only help prevent oral diseases but promote health and well-being in general. Currently the Academy is the only voice for oral health within ECOSOC and we hope others will join us and align around common goals for the betterment of mankind. It’s time to stop the needless suffering from these preventable diseases.”

About the Academy of Dentistry International

The Academy of Dentistry International is a global network of over 3000 oral and other healthcare professionals in more than 80 countries around the globe dedicated to the improvement in the oral health and quality of life for citizens of every nation. As an international honor society, ADI supports and undertakes service projects for the health and welfare of the underprivileged, underserved people of the world and advocates for the *2030 Agenda – Transforming our World*: the Sustainable Development Goals, rather than the needs and personal interests of members. See www.adint.org

Media Contacts:

Mr. Fred Herbst (Germany)
Chair, Public Relations, ADI
ChairPublicRelations@adint.org
+49 172 6900469

Dr. David Alexander (USA)
V-P International Affairs, ADI
david@appoloniaglobalhealth.com
+1 732 484 0582

Central Office

Academy of Dentistry International
3813 Gordon Creek Drive
Hicksville, OH 43526 USA
info@adint.org
+1 419 542 0101