

2004-2008

Meetings of the ISPRM Board of Governors in Antalya, Turkey, on September 30 and October 02, 2004

Next to the Executive Committee 10 members at large and representatives of national societies were present at these meetings.

In the first meeting Jose Jimenez, after having moved again a number of additions and alterations to the bylaws which were accepted and approved by the Board, resigned from the Bylaws Committee. He was thanked and praised by the President for the tremendous lot of work he has done for this committee in the past years and he got a well-deserved applause.

The new Board of Governors 2004-2006 was elected. It was decided to create a Council of Past Presidents, formed by all Past Presidents of IRMA, IFPMR and ISPRM. The Council shall have only a consultative capacity and will not have any executive and/or administrative role in the ISPRM affairs. The immediate Past President will be Honorary President and the President of the Council. John Melvin was appointed as such.

In this meeting, for the first time, according to the decision taken in 2001 in Amsterdam to separate the Presidency of the ISPRM from the Presidency of the ISPRM World Congresses, Dr. Joel de Lisa was elected as Vice-President, to be the President in 2008.

Presidency of ISPRM was handed over by Haim Ring to Linamara Battistella.

In the second meeting the new members of the Executive Committee presented themselves with their working plan for the next two years.

ISPRM Executive Committee 2004-2006

President	Linamara Battistella	Regional Vice Presidents	.
Past President	Haim Ring	Africa & Middle East	Abdullah Eyadeh
President Elect	Chang-il Park	Asia & Pacific	Sae-il Chun
Vice President	Joel DeLisa	Caribbean, Central & South America	Matilde Sposito
Secretary	Marta Imamura	Europe	Christoph Gutenbrunner
Treasurer	Martin Grabois	North America	Andrew Haig
Honorary President	John Melvin	.	.
Members at Large	.	.	.
.	Society	Xanthi Michail	.
.	Individual	Gulseren Akyuz	.

The Third ISPRM World Congress was held in São Paulo, Brazil, April 10-15, 2005.

To the 1,821 participants from 92 countries, who came to São Paulo to attend this congress, the Organizing Committee offered a well-organized and outstanding scientific program in an atmosphere of warmth, congeniality and hospitality, and next to that a sparkling social program, Brazilian style.

Research based information, results from randomized controlled clinical trials and developments of new technologies were presented in 187 oral presentations and 764 posters in 61 structured poster sessions. The program included ten courses on topics of general interest, four symposia, six main conferences, 78 keynote lectures, 32 conferences, sixteen "meet the experts" sessions, at which attendees had the opportunity to discuss clinical cases and research projects with prominent

authorities in rehabilitation medicine, as well as international panels on the scope of the specialty and educational needs. 23 exhibitors presented the most recent technologies in rehabilitation medicine.

The social program started with a Welcome Reception on Sunday evening at Sala São Paulo, an ancient railway station in downtown São Paulo, now “the most modern concert hall of the world”, with participation of the São Paulo State Jazz Symphonic Orchestra.

At the Opening Ceremony the next morning which was attended by the State Governor and the Secretary of Health, there was a special presentation of the “Bachiana Chamber Orchestra”. Its conductor, João Carlos Martins, is a pianist whose career was impeded by severe dystonia. Thanks to taking part in an intensive and advanced rehabilitation medicine treatment he had succeeded in the recovery of a great part of the movements of his hands. His performance of “Villa Lobos” on the piano was virtuoso indeed.

During this ceremony John Melvin was awarded the Herman Flax Lifetime Achievement Award. The Individual Honor Role Membership was given to Carl V. Granger from the USA and Satiko T. Imamura from Brazil.

A Talent Show on Monday night displayed unthought-of creative talents among the participants.

The President’s Dinner in the “Casa da Fazenda do Morumbi”, a restaurant in a historical building in colonial style, was a wonderful, swinging event, as well as the Gala Dinner which was in “Venetian fashion”: black tie, evening dress and mask compulsory.

The Closing Ceremony on Thursday afternoon was a surprising mixture of seriousness and entertainment. Prof. Gerold Stucki from Germany presented the Sydney Licht Memorial Lecture and was awarded the Sydney Licht Lectureship Award. The Best Oral Presentation Award was given to Xia Guo et al. from Hong Kong, the Best Poster Presentation Award to Albert Recio and David Burke from Harvard Medical School and the Young Scientists Award to Jung-Keung Hyun and Jin-Young Park from Korea.

Prof. Chang-il Park, the president of the Organizing Committee of ISPRM IV, presented a breathtaking impression of the venue of this congress, to be held in Seoul, Korea, in June 10-14, 2007, followed by a traditional Korean performance.

At the end of the Ceremony there was a thrilling, swinging and ear-splitting performance of a real Brazilian samba dancing band, the Third ISPRM World Congress finally being closed by the whole attendance, swinging and dancing in more or less Brazilian style, following the band throughout the corridors of the venue to the exit. No doubt the attendants will remember this congress as a real “celebração brasileiro”.

The ISPRM Board meetings were held on April 10 and April 13, 2005, presided by Linamara Battistella.

Next to the Executive Committee 39 members took part in these meetings.

In the first meeting mainly the reports of the Officers and the Committee reports were presented and discussed. The Secretary, Marta Imamura, announced the intention of the Executive Committee to make more use of the ISPRM web site as a tool of communication, creating a restricted area on the site for the ISPRM governing bodies as well as individual members in good standing, and to create a web site committee. Other things mentioned were the proposal of a strategic plan for the 2006 board meeting, the requirements for a national society to become a member, the creation of special interest groups and the needs of News and Views.

The Treasurer, Martin Grabois, reported about the audit done by an external agency, the recommendations done by the auditors and what was done by him and the Executive Director to meet these recommendations. He made a motion to have an internal audit every year, done by the treasurer reviewing all the books and records at the Executive Office, and an external audit every two years.

After some discussion it was decided to have an internal audit every year and to decide about the necessity of an external audit on basis of the report of the Finance Committee.

Commenting on a proposal to become a member of the International Osteoporosis Foundation, which could be advantageous for a good contact with sponsors, the President broke a lance for improving the financial situation of the Society by actively looking for sponsors. She advocated putting more demands in the future to bids for organizing the ISPRM World Congress. Each society making a bid should demonstrate its capacity to promote the Society on regional and national meetings supported by eventual sponsors of ISPRM.

Again there was a lot of discussion about membership, especially about the dues that should be owed by the different categories of national society members.

Another item to be amply discussed was setting up a page on the ISPRM web site for sponsors to display their name, logo and link in return for a specific rate.

It was decided to create a restricted section on the ISPRM web site for members in good standing, as mentioned above. Members will receive a login and password. In a later stage there will also be a section for executive members and president's cabinet.

There were 5 national societies applying to organize the Sixth ISPRM World Congress in 2011: China (Beijing), Australia (Cairns), Mexico (Mexico City), Austria (Salzburg) and Puerto Rico (San Juan). Puerto Rico won the vote.

Venue for the Board meeting in 2006 was decided to be Villamoura, Portugal, in conjunction with the 6th Mediterranean Congress of PRM.

Meetings of the ISPRM Board of Governors on October 18 and 21, 2006, in Vilamoura, Portugal.

Not surprisingly, again membership and dues were major issues on the agenda of these meetings. Being the merger of the IFPMR, an international federation of national societies, and the IRMA, an association of individual practitioners, the ISPRM had to deal with two categories of membership, their dues and their benefits. In former meetings it had already been decided to raise the membership dues for Individual Active Members, and in São Paulo, in April 2005, it had been decided after ample discussion to develop a new dues structure for National Societies Members, based on the World Bank classification of high, middle and low developed countries.

During the meeting on October 18, the so-called Italian model was discussed, referring to the proposal of the Italian National Society to become an ISPRM National Society Member and to make all members of the society Individual Active Members as well, paying a discounted membership fee and receiving all the benefits. It was decided that there would be a proposal for discussion in the Board meeting in Seoul next year. Meanwhile it was agreed to raise the dues for National Societies Members by a maximum of 20% in the next five years in order to achieve the final dues calculation according with the WHO classification of countries in 2011.

It was decided to accept the Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine as the second official journal of ISPRM, next to Disability and Rehabilitation. The Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine is an international peer-reviewed journal, edited in Sweden, published in English, with Prof. Gunnar Grimby being editor-in-chief.

At the meeting on October 21 the new Executive Committee and Board of Governors was installed: Dr. Chang-il Park became the new President and Dr. Joel DeLisa President Elect. Dr. Gerold Stucki was nominated and appointed as Vice-President, i.e. to be the President in 2010. The position of Assistant Secretary and Assistant Treasurer were proposed to be added to the Executive Committee, as well as an additional representative of the Individual and of the National Societies members. It was decided that, in advance of a review of the Bylaws on that matter, to be presented by the Bylaws Committee in the Board Meetings in Seoul in June 2007, these officers could be added to the Executive Committee as advisors of the President.

ISPRM Executive Committee 2006-2008

President	Chang-il Park	Regional Vice Presidents	.
Past President	Linamara Battistella	Africa & Middle East	Nachum Soroker
President Elect	Joel DeLisa	Asia & Pacific	Satochi Miyano
Vice President	Gerold Stucki	Caribbean, Latin & Central America	Joyce Bolanos de Rodriguez
Secretary	Leonard SW Li	North America	Andrew Haig
Treasurer	Martin Grabois	Europe	Christoph Gutenbrunner
Honorary Presidents	.	.	.
Chair	Haim Ring	.	.
Past	John Melvin	.	.
Ad hoc Assistants	.	Representatives of the Members	.
Assistant Secretary	Jorge Lains	Active Individual Members	Alessandro Giustini Abdullah Eyadeh
Assistant Treasurer	John Olver	Active National Societies	Jianan Li Gulseren Akyuz

The Fourth ISPRM World Congress was held in Seoul, Korea, on June 10 – 14, 2007

in the impressive Convention & Exhibition Center, under the theme of: “West Meets East in Rehabilitation Medicine: New Challenges for a Better World”.

The Congress was attended by 2,351 participants from 75 countries. As could be expected from our colleagues in ‘The Country of Courtesy’, the scientific program as well as the social program was organised in a friendly and very hospitable atmosphere. More than 190 invited speakers put the basis under the comprehensive and well organized scientific program, the quality of it enhanced by the amply available audiovisual facilities.

There were Young Scientist Awards for Tim Pauley from Canada, Xiao Lu from China, Brenda Chan from the USA and Chi Keung Yeung from Hongkong, China. Best Poster Prizes went to Angelaar Tulaar from Indonesia, Linamara Battistella from Brazil, and Jong Youb Lim and Dong Hwan Kim from Korea.

Mentioned must be too, the spaciouly fitted and very well visited commercial exhibition which counted 133 booths of 65 companies from 9 countries.

Among the congress-related meetings held during the congress should be mentioned the Academic Discussion Meeting organized by the ISPRM Education Committee on June 12, 2007. It was attended by more than 60 participants, discussing worldwide PRM education programs, didactic resources and teaching strategies. Mentioned, and later on presented at the Board of Governors meeting, was the working plan of the ISPRM Education Committee, in connexion with what had been developed on European level and published in the White Book on Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine in Europe. Announced was the presentation of the World Action Plan on Initial Education in PRM in September 2007, in Europe in the PRM Section of the UEMS and in the USA at the AAPMR meeting.

The Welcome Reception on Sunday, June 10, was an overwhelming event. The more than 1,000 participants were entertained with a splendid show of marvellous colourful and elegant Korean clothing, showed by beautiful Korean women.

During the Opening Ceremony the Herman Flax Lifetime Achievement Award was granted to Dr. Gunnar Grimby, the Sidney Licht Lectureship Award to Dr. Joel DeLisa and the Individual Honor Role Membership of ISPRM to Dr. John Melvin, Dr. Haim Ring and Dr. Sae-il Chun.

The other parts of the Social Programme: the Presidential Dinner, the Gala Dinner and the Closing Ceremony, were all sparkling events with a wonderful show of Korean music, dance, and surprising performances, competing with each other in radiance and abundance.

The Talent Show was an animated happening which made clear, once again, how many psychiatrists have hidden and unknown other abilities than practicing PM&R.

The meetings of the ISPRM Board of Governors were held on June 10 and 13, 2007

There were a lot of major issues on the agenda of these meetings, such as: membership and membership dues as announced at the meeting in Vilamoura in 2006, the ISPRM web site, the ISPRM official journals, revision of the bylaws, a proposal submitted by the Congress Committee concerning rules and regulations for congresses that offer to be the venue of the ISPRM Board meetings in between the years of the ISPRM World congresses, the activities of the Educational Committee, the suggestion to transform the International Education and Development Fund into a foundation, and, of course, the election of the venue for ISPRM VII in 2013.

As to the web site: the ISPRM web site started in November 1998, built and maintained by William Peek on a very low budget, technically assisted by his son Ard. Initially being the site of the merger of IRMA and IFPMR, it became, from November 1999 on, the official ISPRM site.

Although in these first years still under structure, it functioned satisfactorily. However, in 2002 it was decided to transfer the site to Tom Haig Communications, a professional web site designer. Probably because the site after a while was feed and influenced from different directions, it did not function as it should anymore.

In the previous Board meeting in Vilamoura a decision was taken to set up a task force to summarize the problems and create a solution. Meanwhile two companies have made an offer to redesign the existing site, the money it will cost is available, a new structure to maintain the site has been set up, so it was agreed that that should be realized as soon as possible.

Another issue concerning communication was: official journals of ISPRM. The journal Disability and Rehabilitation, a peer reviewed journal, edited by Taylor and Francis, UK, has been for years the official scientific journal of formerly IRMA and later on ISPRM. In the previous Board meeting in Vilamoura it was decided to accept also the Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine as an official ISPRM journal, next to Disability and Rehabilitation. However, a journal can only be an official ISPRM journal if it offers an acceptable discount rate to ISPRM members, which D&R has done for years. But, due to financial problems, it can not be prolonged anymore at the same level and must be raised. JRM is now offering discount rates on the paper version as well as on the electronic version, which means that all individual members of ISPRM have free access to the e-journals of JRM (including the previous journals since 2001).

It was decided to accept the JRM offer for one year and to prolong the link with D&R for one year meanwhile continuing the negotiations with the editing manager about the discount rate they are prepared to offer.

About membership and dues some very important decisions have been taken, especially related to the National Societies membership. As indicated before, as the merger of an association of individual members and a federation of national societies, ISPRM has to deal with these two different categories of members, their benefits and their dues.

The benefits of the Individual Active Member are:

- entitled to vote for representatives to the Board of Governors who will have the right to vote
- eligible to be elected or appointed to any position in the Board and Executive Committee
- receipt of the News and Views on the individual proper e-mail address
- eligible to a reduced registration fee for the ISPRM World congresses and endorsed conferences
- eligible to reduced subscription fee of official journal(s) of ISPRM

- access to members-only part of the ISPRM web site
- free access to electronic version of Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine
- eligible to publish announcements or articles in N&V about their own congress or activity
- provision of membership card and diploma
- eligible to permanent support from the Central Office.

The benefits of the National Societies Member are:

- entitled to nominate one representative to the Board with the right to vote
- members of the National Society are eligible to be elected to the Board
- receipt of the News and Views monthly on the e-mail address appointed by the Society
- eligible to publish announcements or articles in N&V about the activities of the Society
- eligible to a bid for organizing an ISPRM World Congress according to the rules set up by ISPRM
- the advantage of belonging to the international society that is defending the rights of the specialty
- the advantage to have ISPRM as spokesman towards the WHO
- members of the Society are not individually eligible to the benefits of the Individual Active Member.

To be eligible to these benefits, the Individual Active Member has to pay nowadays (2007) € 30 a year or € 50 for two years. The National Societies are charged a fee per member of the Society, the amount of this fee being related to the number of members with a maximum of the total dues, from 2007 on calculated in accordance with the WHO classification of countries, the increase or decrease of these dues being maximal 20% a year in order to achieve the final dues calculation within five years.

As mentioned before, in Vilamoura in 2006 the so-called Italian model was discussed, referring to the proposal of the Italian National Society to become an ISPRM National Society Member and to make all members of the Society Individual Active Members as well, paying a discounted individual membership fee for each member, the Society receiving the benefits of a National Society Member and the members all those of the Individual Active Member.

Now it was decided by the Board to offer all National Societies Members to make a choice out of two options: from January 2008 on choose for the National Societies Membership as it has been until now, or choose for the combined National Societies/Individual Membership as mentioned above.

The reduced fee that the National Society has to pay yearly for its members is related to the number of members of the society with a minimum and a maximum amount. The offer has been made in the September 2007 edition of News and Views.

Furthermore it was decided that from the 2013 ISPRM congress onwards the part of the profit of the congress due to the ISPRM (30% of the profit of the congress) will have a minimum of € 30,000.

The Executive Director reported that at the end of 2006 ISPRM had 1688 Active Individual Members in good standing and 46 National Societies Members.

The proposal of the Bylaws Committee to add the presidents of the ISPRM congresses to the Executive Committee four years prior to the date of their congress in order to offer them the opportunity to discuss items that may become important for their congress, was accepted

The Bylaws Committee had been occupied with the suggestion made in the Vilamoura meeting to appoint an assistant secretary and an assistant treasurer. The committee supports the suggestion but should they be appointed by the President or as identified positions in the Board and the Executive Committee which have to be voted on?

The other suggestion in Vilamoura was to appoint two representatives of the Individual and National Societies Members in the Board instead of one. The Bylaws Committee advised to firstly better define these positions before to decide.

Next item being the proposal to appoint a Publication Committee to coordinate the various means of communication such as web site, N&V, journals, it was decided that the bylaws and policies and procedures should be revised on these matters and discussed in the 2008 meeting.

The Congress Committee had in its report proposed rules and regulations for congresses that are

interested in hosting the ISPRM Board meetings in the years in between the ISPRM World congresses. Societies or organizations, national or multinational, active in the field of PRM and organizing a congress in such a year should have the right to submit a bid to the ISPRM Executive Director. After the application is reviewed by the ISPRM Congress Committee and approved by the Board of Governors, ISPRM will officially endorse the congress, allowing the right to use the ISPRM logo on the congress publications.

The congress organization will be responsible for ensuring time and space allocations for the meetings of the ISPRM Presidents Cabinet, Executive Committee, Board of Governors and ISPRM Committees. ISPRM will have no financial responsibilities to the congress. The proposal was accepted by the Board with some slight changes in the proposed rules and regulations.

Related to the Academic Discussion Meeting, organized by the Educational Committee on June 12 (as mentioned above), the working plan 2007 – 2009 of the Educational Committee was presented, connected with what had been developed on PMR education and training on European level. Prof. Alain Delargue from France, president of the PMR section of the UEMS, handed out a copy of the White Book on PRM in Europe and announced the presentation of the World Action Plan on Initial Education in PRM in September 2007 in Europe as well as in the USA.

In the report of the International Education and Development Fund was mentioned the idea to transform the Fund into a foundation. A legal advisor will be contacted to work out this idea.

There were two bids for the Seventh ISPRM World Congress in 2013: Beijing, China and Berlin, Germany. After presentation of the Chinese bid by Dr. Jianan Li and of the German bid by Dr. Gutenbrunner, Germany decided to withdraw the bid before voting and to present Berlin again in 2009 as candidate for the congress in 2015. Beijing was accepted by the Board as the venue for the 2013 congress.

The venue of the meeting of the ISPRM Board in 2008 will be Bruges (Flemish name: Brugge), Belgium, in conjunction with the 16th European Congress of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine on June 3 – 6, 2008.

The 2008 meetings of the ISPRM Board of Governors on June 3 and June 6, 2008

These meetings were held in the historical surroundings of the city of Brugge (Bruges) in Belgium, in conjunction with the 16th European Congress of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine.

The first meeting, on June 3, was presided by Dr. Chang-il Park. In his welcome he thanked the Board for the collaboration during the two past years of his presidency, with a special word of thanks to Dr. Leonard Li for his hard work as the Secretary as well as for the web site task force.

The extensive book of reports (66 pages) gave an impressive overview of all the activities going on in and related to the ISPRM. As usually this first meeting was mostly dedicated to a short presentation of these reports.

The Secretary, Dr. Li, announced the presentation of the new web site and asked for comments and suggestions. The site contains a restricted area for members only.

The Executive Director reported that at the beginning of May 2008 the ISPRM had a number of 2311 individual members, of which 1915 from 5 countries with a combined society membership conform the so-called Italian model. 15 National Societies had paid their dues for 2008.

2007 was a financially propitious year for the ISPRM. The total income had been more than 110.000 Euro, inclusive 35.500 Euro profit share from the 4th ISPRM World Congress in Seoul.

According to the decisions taken in Seoul in 2007, the Assistant Secretary and the Assistant Treasurer will be members of the Executive Committee. The presidents of the upcoming congresses will be

added too, 5 years before the congress will be held. Furthermore the Bylaws Committee advised that two members at large of each category, Active National Society Members and Active Individual Members, should take part in the Executive Committee instead of one.

One of the most interesting activities which are developed now in ISPRM and mentioned in the report of the Educational Committee, chaired by Marta Imamura, is the, in 2007 in Seoul announced, World Action Plan on Initial Education in PRM (WAPIE.PRM).

This plan is based on the European Work Plan for Initial Education in Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine, having three main objectives:

- to present handicap and the ICF to the trainees of all the medical schools during their undergraduate Program.
- to facilitate access to the best level of education in PRM for the PRM trainees during their postgraduate teaching and training programs.
- to facilitate access to research and research activities for the PRM trainees.

The WAPIE.PRM is presented and adopted during the meeting of the PRM Section and Board of the UEMS in Bucharest in September 2007, and in the same month presented at the 68th meeting of the AAPMR in Boston. In Boston it was discussed that the first objective should be expanded to a more general presentation of the specialty to the undergraduate students and the text of the first objective should be: to create an undergraduate and a postgraduate minimum curriculum endorsed by the ISPRM that could be used on an international level.

The Plan has also been on the program of the Asia Oceania Conference of PRM in May 2008 in Nanjing, China, and discussed by the Latin American National Societies at their regional meeting in Punta del Este, Uruguay, on October 2008. The ISPRM Educational Committee is stimulating all national and regional societies on PRM to further discuss their role in the development of this Action Plan and to update the Committee with reports of these discussions. This activity of the Educational Committee seems to be of great importance for the further worldwide development of PRM and should have full support of the Executive Committee and all other members of the Board. It should be a major item to be presented and discussed during the next ISPRM Board meetings.

The presentation of the slate of nominees for the different functions in the new Executive Committee caused a long and rather confusing discussion. The Nominating Committee received suggestions from more than 60 members and especially the nomination of the representatives of the National Society Members and an equal number of representatives of the Individual Members gave quite some problems. But finally it came to a voting. Anyway, it was quite clear that, due to the increase and especially too the alterations in membership caused by the Italian model, the nomination procedure needed some adjustment.

At the end of the meeting Dr. Chang-il Park thanked the audience and handed over the presidency of ISPRM to Dr. Joel DeLisa.

The second meeting, on June 6, started with the presentation of the new officers by the new president.

Here has to be memorized that Dr. Joel DeLisa is the first ISPRM President whose presidency is not connected with the presidency of one of the ISPRM World Congresses, as always had been customary in the IRMA and the International Federation of PMR and was continued until now in the ISPRM.

In 2001 in Amsterdam it was decided to separate these functions after the 4th ISPRM World Congress. After having been elected as Vice President in 2004 in Antalya, Joel DeLisa automatically succeeded to President-Elect in 2006 and to be President from 2008 till 2010.

The next coming Presidents will be Dr. Gerold Stucki in 2010 and Dr. Marta Imamura in 2012.

In his introductory speech Dr. DeLisa thanked Dr. Chang-il Park for the excellent job he did as President. He indicated that he was honored to serve as President for the next two years. He made

clear his intention to get things moving and done, involving very much the President-Elect and the Vice President in all issues and correspondence, and gave a review of the charges put by him on the Board, the Committees and its chairs. "Our philosophy is to award performance". He announced to have established two additional task forces: the Organization Structure Task Force, chaired by John Melvin, "to provide recommendations to the President and Executive Committee regarding an organizational structure of the ISPRM that best facilitates achieving its mission and goals and results in efficient operations". It also will make recommendations "regarding organizational structure that facilitates efficiency and timeliness of ISPRM activities and communications". The second Task Force, chaired by Christoph Gutenbrunner, concerns the Central Office, with the charge: "how to strengthen this critical support element and to access it more efficiently".

Some interesting points were discussed concerning the role that ISPRM should play internationally.

Gerold Stucki asked once more the attention of the Board for the input of ISPRM in WHO meetings and activities. WHO is not interested in our scientific activities but in our input in the work of WHO. We need to monitor all current activities. In nearly all issues there is something relevant in the perspective of rehabilitation. We need to work together in the stakeholder groups such as the Professional Organisations, involving ISPRM, ISPO, World Federation of Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, etc. But also with the patient organizations of which the most important is the DPI (Disabled People International). WHO always wants to work with the umbrella organizations first.

Next point related to the international role of ISPRM: Can ISPRM as an organization help when a major disaster happens somewhere in the world? Leonard Li explained what happened in China after the earthquake. Different medical groups helped, some have disaster plans. Apart from the high number of dead persons, there were approximately 300,000 persons injured, of which approximately 1,000 had spine and brain injuries. ISPRM should also have a role in such a disaster. It can have direct approach to countries through its members and, more systematically, through its Regional Vice Presidents. The help should have three aspects: offering expertise, donations and a long term rehabilitation medicine support. We should be involved from the beginning after the disastrous event. It was decided that the President's Cabinet would send a letter to the Chinese authorities on this matter. And on the web site there should be mentioned the possibility of rehabilitation medicine support in cases of disasters.

Joel DeLisa raised the issue of ISPRM working for a kind of worldwide 'disability day', authorized by an organization such as WHO. The Executive Director was asked to ask the Regional Vice Presidents to report whether countries in their region have such a day and how it is called, and whether their region would support such an initiative.

The next meeting of the Board of Governors will take place during the 5th ISPRM World Congress in Istanbul, June 13-17, 2009

For organizational reasons, voting for the venue of the next Interim Board Meeting in 2010 had to be postponed until the meeting in Istanbul.

A few months after these meetings the Secretary had to inform the members of ISPRM that on September 16, 2008 **Professor Haim Ring** had passed away after a short, severe illness. Haim Ring was during many years very actively involved in the IRMA and the International Federation of PMR as well as in the ISPRM and a well-known participant in nearly all international congresses. From 1994 till 1997 he was the IRMA Regional Vice President for Africa and the Middle East and from 1995 till 1999 the same for the International Federation. In 1997 he became Vice President of IRMA and kept the same position in the ISPRM Executive Committee in 1999. As President of the Second ISPRM World Congress in Prague in 2003, he was the President of ISPRM from 2002 till 2004, Past President from 2004 till 2006 and thereafter Honorary President.