relatively small one and keeping peace in a small family is often more difficult than doing so in a large one.

Lest I appear too critical I have asked Etienne Krug to pen a footnote to these comments presenting the upside. I certainly share his view that the field needs an active, strong society that can organize these conferences, lobby, raise funds, and so on. The website (<http://www.isvip.org>) is impressive, especially the by-laws but less so the information about

membership. I am also pleased that two members of our Editorial Board (Lois Fingerhut and John Langley) were elected to the Board of Directors, although some characterized the election process as undemocratic and other elements of the meeting as "condescending". On any account Leif Svanstrom and Maria Isabel Gutierrez, the newly elected co-chairs of the ISVIP, have their work cut out.

Much needs to be done to ensure this baby survives the circumstances of its

difficult birth. Operational transparency will be crucial, especially with respect to governance, finances, and policy making. This Journal intends to be a well disposed friend to the ISVIP and will as such, from time to time, offer constructive criticism.

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International

The International Society for Violence and Injury Prevention

E Krug

The Director of WHO's Injury and Violence Prevention Department discusses the launch of a welcome initiative

The field needs a not-for-profit international non-governmental organization (NGO) that brings together scientific and civil society constituencies for the prevention of intentional as well as unintentional injury affecting all age groups. The International Society for Violence and Injury Prevention (ISVIP) was created in 2006 and should become the visible international champion in promoting the cause of injury prevention and safety promotion.

Over the years the need for an international body representing the field of injury experts and practitioners has emerged for two reasons in particular:

1. There is no active global NGO that speaks and lobbies for injury prevention globally. In other fields—such as HIV, cancer, or diabetes—there are global NGOs that lobby alongside WHO, that can speak at the World Health Assembly, conduct advocacy towards governments, and mobilize funds for the field.

2. The success of the World Conferences on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion has generated the demand for a new dynamic to ensure that these conferences are based on the needs and views of the broader injury prevention community. Recognizing these needs, the International Organizing Committee (IOC)—which is currently composed of past organizers of the World Conferences—proposed the establishment of the ISVIP. This NGO would be comprised of experts from different parts of the field and different regions who would collaborate on the scientific content of the conferences

A model for the ISVIP is the International AIDS Society (IAS). This society was created just a few years ago. It now has a staff of 20, conducts its own fundraising and activities, is a powerful voice in that field, and prepares the World Conferences on HIV

and AIDS. While it is unlikely that the size of the ISVIP will match the one of the IAS any time soon, the needs and possible responses are quite similar.

The decision to create the ISVIP was taken in Vienna. A wide invitation was issued—at the closing ceremony, on the WHO website, etc—for people to volunteer to become a member of an interim steering committee. A handful of committed people did so. They drafted the by-laws, a business plan, a fundraising strategy, and dealt with the legal hassles of creating an NGO. Having followed their deliberations on a number of occasions, I admire their commitment and dedication. We have to be grateful for their efforts to get this work done, in addition to their normal duties.

The election procedure took place in Durban. It was certainly not perfect and created concern about transparency. This is a pity because months of hard work behind the scenes, were overshadowed by a one hour meeting. The process should be analyzed and lessons should be learnt to improve. However, these shortcomings should not distract us from the main objective: we need a strong Society and the ISVIP now exists. It has a Board of 15 members from all regions with complementary backgrounds. Let us work with them to continue strengthening the field of injury and violence prevention.

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