

Report of visit of Dr. Francisco Couto, Vice President for Asia of IAP to Nepal as IAP Goodwill Ambassador to Nepal

As per the decision of the International Academy of Pathology (IAP) to send Dr. Francisco Couto as its Goodwill Ambassador to Nepal Dr. Francisco Couto was asked by the Nepalese Pathologists to visit Nepal during the meeting of the Association of Clinical Pathologists of Nepal (ACPN) being held on 28th and 29th March 2014 at the Hotel Yak & Yeti, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Soon after arrival of Dr. Francisco Couto in Kathmandu on the evening of 27th March 2014 Dr. Couto had fixed a meeting at the Hotel Yak & Yeti with Dr. Gopi Aryal (Senior Professor of Pathology), Dr. Santosh Kafle and Dr. Sujan Sharma who had been previously in correspondence with Dr. Francisco Couto and other dignitaries of the IAP regarding the affairs in Nepal. We were later joined by Dr. Ram Chandra Adhikari (then Vice President of ACPN) and Dr. Anjan Shrestha (Secretary ACPN). Over the next two hours Dr. Francisco Couto discussed in great detail with Dr. Gopi Aryal and the others the various problems being faced by Pathology and Pathologists in Nepal and again reiterated the stand of the IAP that it would help in providing Academic support but would not be able to provide funds for infrastructural development like microscopes, improving internet connectivity, electricity problems, etc which were beyond the scope of the IAP. Dr. Francisco Couto also emphasised his wish and need to interact with the last known Office Bearers of the IAP Nepalese Division and also to have a formal meeting with all the Nepalese stake holders including officials of the ACPN and these meetings were confirmed for the 28th March 2014. Later in the evening there were more informal discussions with some of the senior members of the ACPN like Dr. Rajesh Panth (then President ACPN), Dr. Ranga Basnet and others regarding problems faced by Pathology in Nepal and possible solutions.

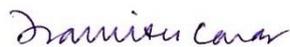
On 28th March 2014 Dr. Francisco Couto attended the Inauguration Ceremony and scientific sessions of the ACPN Conference. The conference was well attended and more than 120 Pathologists and trainee Pathologists from all over Nepal were in attendance. In his inaugural speech Dr. Rajesh Panth (President ACPN) thanked the IAP for its support to Nepal and for sending Dr. Francisco Couto as its Goodwill Ambassador to Nepal. During the meeting Dr. Couto was able to interact and get feedback from various Pathologists (both young and old) about what ailed Pathology in Nepal and how they may be helped. Dr. Francisco Couto was also able to meet the three last known Office Bearers of the IAP Nepalese Division Dr. H. G. Shrestha (President), Dr. Susheila Dali (Secretary) and Dr. Gita Sayami (Treasurer) and had fruitful discussions with them regarding various facets of the IAP Nepalese Division, its founding and early years and the reasons for which it was not able to grow and prosper. Later on the same evening after the Scientific Sessions were over there was an official meeting between Dr. Francisco Couto representing the IAP and the Office Bearers and senior officials of the ACPN. The meeting was Chaired by Dr. H. G. Shrestha and had Dr. Francisco Couto, Dr. Rajesh Panth (President ACPN), Dr. Gopi Aryal, senior officials of ACPN and others like Dr. Santosh Kafle and Dr. Sujan Sharma attending. The members attending the meeting were briefed by Dr. Couto, Dr. Gopi Aryal and others as to the various sequence of events which lead to the IAP to send Dr. Couto to Nepal as a Goodwill Ambassador. Dr. Francisco Couto informed the meeting as to the various measures proposed to be taken by the IAP to strengthen Pathology in Nepal and how it was proposed to reactivate the Nepalese Division of the IAP and the measures being undertaken to achieve this. It was decided at the meeting that the best way would be to have the ACPN and Nepalese Division of the IAP as one organization with common members so as the IAP Nepalese Division could be sustained and grow. Accordingly Dr. Couto informed them about the need to prepare a fresh Constitution and also other documentation required for the reactivation of the Nepalese Division of the IAP. It was also informed that the appropriate resolutions would have to be passed by the Executive and General Body of the ACPN to achieve this.

On 29th March 2014 morning Dr. Francisco Couto delivered a lecture on “The International Academy of Pathology (IAP) and its role in Global Pathology Education” as part of the scientific sessions of the ACPN meeting. Dr. Couto elucidated in detail about various facets of the IAP and how it acts to promote Pathology worldwide. Dr. Couto also spoke about the IAP Nepalese Division and about the efforts of the IAP to strengthen Pathology in Nepal and about the benefits and advantages for Nepal in being a part of the IAP and one of its Divisions. Dr. Francisco Couto also highlighted the various facilities available from the IAP towards educational initiatives like funding for Divisional meetings and bursaries for young Pathologists. He urged Pathologists from Nepal to attend in good numbers the IAP Congress 2014 in Bangkok and also urged the young Pathologists to apply for the bursaries to enable them to attend the IAP Congress. Dr. Francisco Couto also indicated to the Nepalese that the IAP Indian Division was also willing to help and the type of assistance that was available. The lecture evoked great interest and good response from the audience and there were lot of queries both at the end of the lecture and subsequently and the Nepalese Pathologists became aware on the whole about the IAP and its many facets. At the end of the scientific sessions of the Conference the Executive and General Body (Business) meetings of the ACPN were held and a new Committee was elected with Dr. Gopi Aryal as the new President and other Executive members. Resolutions were passed amalgamating the ACPN and Nepalese Division of the IAP and to prepare and pass fresh Constitution, etc. These were subsequently submitted to the IAP.

On 30th March 2014 in the morning Dr. Francisco Couto along with Dr. Sujan Sharma visited the campus of Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences which is one of many Medical Schools under Kathmandu University. Dr. Francisco Couto also had a meeting with Dr. Ramesh Makaju, Dean and Programme Director of Medical Sciences of Kathmandu University and had discussions with him as to how Kathmandu University could help Pathology and Pathologists in various Institutions under it and how the IAP could also help by co-operating in organizing CME programmes, etc.

From past interactions and from observations and interactions with various Pathologists and others during the visit Dr. Francisco Couto came to the conclusion that the Pathology scenario in Nepal is not that dismal as was earlier thought to be. At last count there were 18 Medical schools (under different Universities) in various parts of Nepal imparting Medical Education and most had post graduate facilities for training Pathology trainees. There was a problem of infrastructure in many of these Medical schools but others appeared to adequately equipped and had senior teachers who could impart Pathology training to pathology trainees. Dr. Couto also has been encouraging the Nepalese Pathologists to take their own initiatives (besides help from the IAP) so as soon the Nepalese Pathologists can have a sustainable programme of their own without help from outside.

Good progress has been made and it is hoped the Nepalese Division of the IAP will soon be reactivated and Nepal will be back in the main stream of the IAP



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