

News@SIOP – Africa – August 2016

SIOP Africa continental meeting, a biennial event, is due to be held from 5th – 7th April 2017 in Marrakech, Morocco under the theme 'Africa united against childhood cancer'. The chair of the local organising committee is Prof Laila Hessissen. The meeting promises to be very interesting covering a broad range of disease related and general topics. There will be a workshop the day after the main meeting. The focus of the workshop is yet to be finalised. The closing date for abstracts is 28th November 2017. There will be some scholarships for young investigators from Africa to cover registration and accommodation.

SIOP Africa members have decided that to be more effective, SIOP Africa should have its own executive representatives from North, South, East, West and Francophone Africa. These members would deliberate more frequently on issues affecting Paediatric Oncology in Africa and propose activities that would promote SIOP and improve childhood cancer care on the continent. There are plans to hold a meeting of SIOP Africa in Dublin to plan an agenda for Africa.

An example of how SIOP has been effective in putting childhood cancer on the front burner in a LMIC in Africa started with a meeting in January in Accra, Ghana. It was sponsored by SIOP (funds) together with CCI and WHO and some funding from World Child Cancer. Subsequent to this meeting, which was attended by policymakers and other stakeholders, Lorna Renner has been given the platform in July, to address the Ministry of Health Sector Working Group attended by all national and international stakeholders to try to get support for childhood cancer.

A comprehensive survey is soon to be undertaken to assess the current state of affairs of childhood cancer care in Africa. This is of importance as we strategize as to how to reach policymakers in Africa and get across the message that childhood cancer care should be a priority.

The SIOP Africa Wilms Tumour collaboration is in its third year. Countries currently participating are Malawi, Cameroon, Ghana, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia. Other countries have expressed the desire to join but have not been able to obtain ethical approval in time. Updates have been sent regularly to SIOP board by the coordinator, Dr Trijn Israels.

Lorna Renner

Continental President SIOP Africa

