

**Minutes for the AGM**  
**African Society of Human Genetics**  
**Hilton Hotel, Yaounde, Cameroon**  
**14<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

**Presidents remarks:**

In his opening remarks, the AfSHG President Charles Rotimi welcomed everybody to the meeting highlighting the fact that this was now the 6<sup>th</sup> year that the Society had met and noted the progress and the growth of the Society to-date. Future sustainability of the Society is critical and the financial situation remains precarious.

**Scientific projects:**

The AfSHG curate data generated from African studies. The Society should link up with existing databases and develop other web based resources. Raj Ramesar and Alice Matimba are developing a resource mapping exercise, which will be available on the website to allow collaborators to connect with others working in the same field and also to catalogue research activity in Africa. However there will be ethical issues around consent for datasets that require further consideration.

Dominic Kwiatkowski (MalariaGen) highlighted potential challenges around ethics which would partly depend on the level of information to be presented on the website. There was a suggestion that we focus on one disease to start with. Different consent processes in different countries can cause constraints when multicentre studies are conducted. It was agreed to take a two step approach: firstly to document the resources already available among AfSHG members and what knowledge and collaborations are already developed. The second step would involve loading data, summary statistics and to develop questionnaires. Raj Ramesar is sending a questionnaire to all members and urged everybody to respond.

**The next meeting:**

There was a lively discussion about where the next meeting should be. Our current strategy has been to rotate around the different regions and we have now gone full cycle. It is therefore timely to review this approach. The advantages of selecting countries where genetics is not highly profiled allows the Society to help build local capacity and boost networks in regions. On the other hand there are advantages to going to well developed countries from a genetics perspective such as South Africa, as an opportunity to stop and consolidate. It was also suggested that given the wide spread of the diaspora that we are hardly tapping into at all, one might consider holding the meeting in Washington DC. There was a general consensus that the AfSHG should hold its meeting in Africa but we could still hold an extra meeting in the USA to raise the profile of the Society and its activities with influential contacts in the USA which could help with sustainability and fund raising.

Cases were made for Mali, Kenya, Cape Town, Nigeria and Washington during the course of the meeting. It was decided that those interested in hosting the meeting should submit a bid which will be circulated amongst members for vote. (Action MN to prepare proforma for expression of interest in host the next meeting and circulate via listserve)

**Income generating activities:**

The Society has developed tremendously in terms of its scientific activities and its reputation but needs stabilising financial support. We need a base in Africa and ideally an existing secretariat to which could adapt to the role. Raj Ramesar has offered his office at the University of Cape Town as an African address although they cannot provide any resources.

**Future officers:**

The current offices have now been in position for 6 years and elections for new officers are required. Nominations will be invited in the near future.

**Any other business:**

Branwen Hennig was thanked for her efforts as Membership secretary. Membership remains a problem in terms of up-to-date registration and collection of membership fees. We are moving towards an electronic database of members and again need an on-line method to collect payment.

Date of next meeting to be confirmed

M Newport June 2009