



WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

## ASIA-PACIFIC eNEWS Number 28 August 2006

### From the (Acting) Regional Vice President

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Dear National President,

I am writing this very last Regional eNEWS a few days after my return from the 2006 OMEP Assembly held in Tromso.

Tromso is a small city set on an island close to the wild and savage polar region of Northern Norway, dominated by breathtaking snow-topped peaks and the starting point for many polar expeditions. The modern University of Tromso proved a wonderful location for the Assembly where 38 National Committees from OMEP's five regions were represented. I was very pleased to see so many enthusiastic delegates and members from our Asia Pacific Region.

**Good News.** Two items on the agenda were good news for the Region. First, the Assembly's approval of three new Preparatory Committees – Sri Lanka, Thailand and Pakistan. This was a particular pleasure for me as members in these countries have worked hard to fulfil all the requirements for acceptance. It is very satisfying for me to see our region strengthened in this way. I hope membership will continue to grow, and that well-established committees will develop and maintain their links with their new colleagues.

The second important and pleasing decision by the Assembly was the election of our new Regional Vice President, Doreen Launder, a foundation member of OMEP Aotearoa/New Zealand. Doreen has had a long career in early childhood education, with both a national and international focus. Since 1994 she has been working with PR China to develop community based programs in poor areas of China. One of her goals during her term is to increase membership of Pacific Islanders in OMEP. I'm sure you will all welcome and support Doreen as she undertakes this work.

**Assembly Business.** During her time as World President, Selma Simonstein has streamlined the formal business to allow more time for reports from working parties and projects and time for discussion and planning groups. This has meant a clear focus on the total picture of OMEP as a world-wide organisation, with a specific work program, *Children from Birth to Three Years*, supported by all members. The impressive Annual Report was distributed to Assembly members and copies will be sent to you. The Annual Report is a very effective 'marketing tool', a good

way to raise OMEP's profile, attract interest and encourage members. The World President asked that you circulate it as widely as possible in your country.

**Minutes** of the Assembly will be forwarded to you from Chile as soon as possible. Minutes of the Regional meeting on August 9 will be included.

**Reports** of interest were presented and discussed.

- Birth - 3 years Survey – Veronica Romo, Chile
- Alliances – World Forum and CINDE – Selma Simonstein
- International Study of Play – Ingrid Pramling, Sweden
- Research Forum – Jayne White, New Zealand

I presented a powerpoint account of my visits to the Post-Tsunami Projects in Sri Lanka and Indonesia funded by OMEP's Appeal in 2005. Members were pleased to hear how effectively their donations have been used, and unanimously approved my recommendation that the remaining funds be allocated equally to the two projects. The report will soon be on OMEP's web page: [www.omep-ong.net](http://www.omep-ong.net)

**Appointments and elections.** Ingrid Pramling was reappointed as Editor of IJEC. Subscriptions to Libraries and Teaching Institutions have increased. Ingrid asked National Presidents to promote the Journal to individual members, and to encourage them to submit articles or items for the Bulletin Board page.

Milada Rabusicova was elected Vice President for Europe. Milada is Associate Professor at the Department of Educational Sciences, Philosophical Faculty, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic.

Six new Honorary Members were elected. Details will be in the updated edition of the book, *We Honour Their Memory*. Especially interesting is the inclusion of Malfrid Grude Flekkoy of Norway. M. Flekkoy, daughter of Asa Skard (World President 1962-1968) was the world's first Ombudsman for Children, appointed in 1968.

**The Forum of the Host Country**, introduced as a permanent agenda item during the 2003 meeting in Turkey, was again a highlight of the Assembly, with Prof Ingrid Engdahl giving a vivid (and envy-making!) presentation of the provision of early childhood services in Norway, under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Research. The rhetoric about the importance of young children and the policies and practices which follow are as close as I have ever heard and seen.

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### **International Conference**

The focus of OMEP's work for 2005-2008, Children from Birth to Three Years, was reflected in the Conference which followed the Assembly. Over two packed days the theme, *The Great Little Researcher*, was thoroughly explored by the keynote speakers and many parallel sessions. As always, it was difficult for participants to choose their program. For me, the highlights were an outstanding keynote address 'Insights from the Child: Building Bridges between Developmental Science, Education and Neuroscience' by Dr Andrew Meltzoff, University of Washington and a workshop on Curiosity by Prof Donatha Elsenbroich of Germany.

**Social Events** included the reception hosted by the Mayor of Tromsø;, a ‘Nature Lunch’ modelled on the weekly excursion undertaken by all Norwegian preschool children, the Conference dinner on the island of Sommeroy and a midnight concert at the Ishavskatedralen, a magnificent cathedral designed to reflect the beauty of the surrounding Arctic region.

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### **Coming Events**

**Regional meeting 2006.** During the Conference of the Korean Society for Early Childhood Education. Seoul October 20-22, 2006. For details at [www.ksece.or.kr](http://www.ksece.or.kr) or Professor Chung on email [chung78@sookmyung.ac.kr](mailto:chung78@sookmyung.ac.kr)

**Regional meeting 2007.** The new Preparatory Committee of OMEP Thailand has indicated its willingness to host a regional Meeting in July 2007. This will coincide with national celebrations for the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of Thailand’s King. Details from the Secretary OMEP Thailand Preparatory Committee email [udomluck.k@chula.ac.th](mailto:udomluck.k@chula.ac.th)

**World Assembly and International Conference 2007** In Mexico City July 18-22.  
[omepmexico@hotmail.com](mailto:omepmexico@hotmail.com)

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**Farewell.** After four years as Vice President, I have learned a great deal about the Asia Pacific. I have thought much about your country, read much about your conditions and prayed for your welfare. Thank you for the support, kind words and your gifts given at the Tromsø meeting. I hope to maintain my involvement in OMEP’s work and projects in the future.

With warmest wishes to you all,  
Joan Waters