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**TO: All National Societies
Corporate Members
Affiliate Members**

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

For Auld Lang Syne

(Some thoughts on the three years 1997 - 1999)

A good strategic plan has vision and gives direction. Interpreting these and translating them into actions are different challenges. On behalf of the 1997 - 1999 Executive Board I would like to thank you for having had the opportunity to work with all the members of the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine in putting the strategic plan into action. For all of us it has been a lot of work. There have been many challenges but it has always been satisfying and enjoyable. Your questions, the ability to express your needs, plus the time, talents and financial support from the National Societies and Corporate Members have been vitally important.

Clinical laboratory scientists and physicians have been facing unprecedented challenges, while at the same time the diagnostics industry has faced many organizational and financial changes. Nevertheless, the IFCC has grown to 78 member countries and our corporate member base has become wider.

The scientific reputation of the Federation has grown, especially in the areas of standardization and reference materials. We have improved scientific cooperation with other international laboratory professional organizations. The Education and Management Division has maintained its role in analytical quality and has expanded the IFCC role further into the pre-analytical and post-analytical phases. The Communications and Publications Divisions has restructured itself to meet the challenges of electronic publication and is now ready to benefit from this. The creation of the Congress and Conference Division was a recognition of the importance of these activities to the IFCC and to our national and corporate members.

Some of the other highlights in the past three years include the very important change of name to the International Federation of Clinical

Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine, highlighting the clinical relevance and importance of our profession. The Statutes of the Federation have been changed to limit the amount of time any one person can spend on the Executive Board. The voting procedures at the Triennial Council meeting have been made clearer and more practical, thus strengthening our democracy by avoiding confusion and misunderstanding. Representatives of the corporate members have been formally included in the structure of each of our Divisions. It has also been clearly demonstrated that the Triennial Congress will rotate to different parts of the world.

In all of the discussions about the strategic plan the Executive Board has been very clear that putting it into action would involve greater expense. A decision was made with your support that increased activity would justify a budget deficit, particularly in the early stages of starting new activities. A commitment was made by the Board that the deficit would be met from the financial reserves of the Federation, that it would not be allowed to continually increase, and that over a three year period there would be indications that it was beginning to decrease. In addition, this Board accepted the responsibility of presenting a financial plan that would move towards the end of deficit budgets. All of this has been put in place.

As an end of the millenium gift to our members, the Board has concluded discussions with the World Association of Societies of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. The IFCC and WASP have issued a joint policy statement on "Principles of Clinical Laboratory Accreditation". Among many other points it clearly states that a laboratory can be directed by a scientist or physician with the appropriate initial qualifications and with specialized post-graduate professional education and training in clinical laboratory work. This is a vitally important statement for your members.

None of this would have been possible without the professional and dedicated support of the IFCC Technical Secretariat. The complexity of the Federation has increased. The need to move to a larger and even stronger Head Office structure has been accepted by the Board. To maintain operational efficiency and effectiveness, while at the same time being financially responsible, this major change will be phased in over a three to five year period.

Large organizations can appear very distant and unreal. One of my goals has been that this Board should be present to you as real people, not simply as names holding official positions. We have tried to visit as many countries as possible, to get to know many of you so that we can indeed refer to you as friends and colleagues. To a great extent I think we have succeeded. However, to those of you who may feel left out, we apologize and hope that the next Board will be able to make good contact with you. There is so much professional, scientific and educational excitement and challenge to which we can all look forward. I have every confidence that under the leadership of Professor Mathias Müller, the next Executive Board will work hard to meet your needs and expectations and further expand the vision and role of the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine.

On behalf of the Board I would like to thank you for having given us the opportunity to both lead and serve. Please accept our very best wishes to you all for your personal and professional success and happiness.

Yours sincerely,



M. J. McQueen, President, 1997 - 1999