

### Introduction by the IRCT President, Dr Bhogendra Sharma

*In September 2003, a new IRCT Council, democratically elected by members of the IRCT network of centres and programmes, met in Copenhagen and elected a new President, Vice-President and Executive Committee. It was agreed that the primary task of the new Executive Committee would be to further internationalise the organisation and to develop an elaborate fundraising strategy.*

*In view of the wish to internationalise the organisation, it was mutually agreed between Jens Modvig and the IRCT Executive Committee that Jens Modvig would leave his position as Secretary-General. This will allow the IRCT to announce the position internationally in the near future, and in this way, the new Executive Committee hopes to ensure that the first, important step towards a truly international IRCT has been taken. An interim management has been appointed at the IRCT, consisting of Dr Camelia Doru, Executive Vice President, Erik Lauritzen, Acting Director of Finance, and Dr Margriet Blaauw, Acting Medical Director. This group will automatically terminate its functions when a new Secretary-General has been appointed.*

*Over the last couple of years it has been increasingly difficult to raise funds internationally for the rehabilitation of torture victims, creating a situation where the funds available for rehabilitation activities are altogether insufficient to meet the needs of rehabilitation centres. This has also had an impact on the financial situation in the IRCT Secretariat and has recently led to a substantial reduction of the staff employed in Copenhagen.*

### Recent series of IRCT training seminars

The IRCT's Regional Strengthening Programme, Phase 2 (RSP2) is currently being completed through a series of five regional training seminars held in Kenya, Mexico, Sri Lanka, Romania, and Lebanon, the latter being the only seminar which has not yet taken place. The seminars focus on "Organisational Development" and "Treatment and Rehabilitation", aiming to increase institutional sustainability and improve the quality of rehabilitation centres and projects. Within these overall issues, each seminar has dealt with specific topics, which were identified by individual centres as areas where they felt a need for capacity-building. Issues within Organisational Development include strategic planning, project monitoring and evaluation, fundraising, etc. The Treatment and

Rehabilitation workshops deal with medical documentation, fact-finding, training of psychosocial counsellors, working standards as a tool in quality development, etc.

So far, 116 people from 64 different rehabilitation centres in 57 countries have participated in the seminars, where the training has been a mixture of group work, lectures, discussions, and case studies. The trainers have been resource persons from the rehabilitation centres and the IRCT as well as external consultants. In addition to the formal presentations, best practices and organisational requirements to improve services were discussed, and there was a constructive sharing of ideas and practical suggestions. At the workshops, there was debate and discussion on how to im-

plement effective south-south cooperation and how to harness the experience of rehabilitation centres to the advantage of other centres.

Furthermore, the seminars have helped identify areas for future development of the collaboration between the IRCT and the regional networks. There is general agreement that the resources in individual centres need to be utilised more systematically in the capacity-building of other centres, and that sharing experiences with other rehabilitation centre staff is very useful. In the future, the networks might also adopt new strategies for capacity-building, such as professional regional exchanges, individual organisation interventions, country level forums and focus groups, country-specific learning and training programmes, etc.

### New priorities for the IRCT

The IRCT is in the process of developing a new and more sustainable strategy for the work of the organisation. The overall objective is to internationalise the work and to facilitate a more elaborate collaboration between rehabilitation centres around the world. As a result of the recent accreditation process, there are now nearly 100 accredited centres and over 80 registered centres in the global network, and it is the objective of the IRCT Secretariat to work in a way that best serves their needs and supports them in their difficult work.

One step in this direction will be to utilise and further develop existing know-how and expertise in the centres in the area of fundraising, financial management, client registration and statistics, information and awareness campaigns, legal assistance, as well as rehabilitation methods and techniques. Through network activities, expert knowledge at one rehabilitation centre or programme will be shared with

other centres, which in turn might have different kinds of expert knowledge which they are able to share with others. In this way, the IRCT's priority will be to facilitate and coordinate, with the aim of ensuring that the most appropriate knowledge available within the torture rehabilitation network is made accessible to centres and programmes all over the world.

Likewise, the IRCT's efforts within advocacy and information activities will focus on more regional concerns and will build on centre staff in order to utilise their know-how and experiences while still maintaining the overriding focus on the global movement, the unique health professional approach and the overwhelming need for additional resources.

In the coming months, more information regarding both this development process and the funding situation will be provided.

### Global Directory of Centres and Programmes 2003-2004

The IRCT is currently finalising a new, updated version of the Global Directory, which describes the activities of 177 rehabilitation centres and programmes for torture victims in 75 countries. The organisations described in this publication represent the international movement against torture, and the Directory will help make the important work of rehabilitation centres visible to the international community of health professionals, international organisations, and donors.

Once the Directory has been published, all data will be placed on the IRCT's website ([www.irct.org](http://www.irct.org)), where it will be continuously updated.

Free copies of the printed Global Directory will be available upon request.

Please contact the IRCT on the above postal address or send an e-mail to: [publications@irct.org](mailto:publications@irct.org).