



# Message from the President



January 2018

Welcome to 2018 and to the new triennium for WPA. I am excited about the opportunities we have ahead and delighted to be able to get to work on our new action plan. I begin by offering sincere congratulations to the four colleagues newly elected to the WPA Executive Committee. I welcome Afzal Javed as the new President-Elect, Michel Botbol, Secretary for Scientific Publications, Roger Ng, Secretary for Education and Thomas Schulze, Secretary for Scientific Sections, and look forward to working with them over the next three years. I also welcome and thank two colleagues who have consented to act as Special Advisors to the President: Maria Lopez-Ibor (Finance) and Levent Küey (support for the Meetings program).

We began the triennium with a productive two-day meeting in early December of the executive committee, secretariat and advisors in the WPA's Geneva office. We were able to lay the foundation for the work ahead, which aims to build on WPA's previous achievements and reinforce the role and positive influence of psychiatry on global mental health. While in Geneva we met Shekhar Saxena, Director of the Department of Mental Health at the World Health Organization in Geneva. He joined us for a stimulating discussion of the possibilities and plans for collaboration between our organisations, and the role of the WPA as a United Nations non-state actor.

We also enjoyed an informative conversation with Norman and Vera Sartorius. In his capacity as chair of the WPA Council, Norman congratulated the committee on its program and first meeting.

Three main topics will drive our focus over the next triennium:

1. How we can better support psychiatrists working with vulnerable populations.
2. How we can support psychiatrists in more effectively promoting mental health and improving care capacity in health and other systems.
3. How we can build more collaborative mental health services and primary care relationships in urban and rural areas, as well as more effective partnerships with service users and family carers.

Within each of these focus areas, we have developed a number of themes that address some of our world's most pressing mental health challenges and will enable us to effect real and impactful change. You can read the full action plan here:

I hope to see many of you at the WPA Thematic Congress in Melbourne, 25-28 February 2018. A lively program awaits you. Preparations are also well underway for the World Congress of Psychiatry in Mexico City, 27-30 September 2018. These two congresses represent our new partnership with Kenes International and I am grateful for the strong and creative alliance already developing. I plan to share updates on the work with you regularly through the next three years. One of my personal goals over this triennium is to invite consistent two-way communication between WPA and its members. I look forward to working with the Executive Committee to ensure that WPA is not only supporting the needs of the greater global community, but also the needs of our global psychiatric community.

**Prof Helen Herrman**  
**President, World Psychiatric Association**