REPORT ON VISIT TO TRINIDAD & TOBAGO FOR THE ISRRT COUNCIL MEETING & WORLD CONGRESS, 09 – 15 APRIL 2018

By : BIGBOY TENDAI RAKATA
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April 2018 in Port of Spain, Hyatt Regency was the inaugural appearance for the Radiography Association of Zimbabwe in the ISRRT council meeting. I was honoured to be the person representing radiographers from Zimbabwe in this council meeting. It was my first time to attend both the ISRRT council meeting and the World congress. The ISRRT World congress held from the 12th to the 15th of April 2018 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago under the theme “We Care” was a wonderful experience that I will forever cherish as a radiographer. Interacting with fellow radiographers from across the globe was exciting, humbling and such a wonderful learning experience. The hospitality of the people of Trinidad and Tobago made me feel at home.

Council meeting

For the first time Radiography Association of Zimbabwe was represented in the ISRRT council meeting in Port of Spain, 2018. Fruitful discussions, all aimed at improving the radiography profession were held. I was moved by the efforts and commitment of the ISRRT board to represent radiographers at international platforms. The efforts to engage International Labour Organisation, World Health Organisation and the ECR for issues affecting radiographers are really commendable. This made me realise how important it is for us as radiographers to speak with one voice for the advancement of our profession.

In the council meeting, applications to join the ISRRT by other societies were considered and this saw ISRRT membership rising to 100. As ISRRT grows so are the efforts to advance our profession. From the desire to see ISRRT growing, I committed myself to engage other societies in the Southern Africa region so that they can be part of this big family ISRRT. To date I have already engaged the
Botswana society to revive their membership with ISRRT. I have also been in contact with the Zambia society of radiographers so that they can join the ISRRT. It is my belief and hope that in Dublin 2020, these two societies will be represented.

The need to maintain ISRRT functions need funding. This was discussed together with the new funding model which was proposed and approved by the council. I realised how important it is for our association to keep their ISRRT subscription up to date and to increase our membership as RAZ so that our contributions to ISRRT also increase. As I write the RAZ committee is already working on ways to improve our membership and fundraise for our Association which in turn will lead to an increase in our revenue and eventually our contribution to ISRRT.

Elections were held in a transparent manner and a new ISRRT Board was elected together with Regional committees. This information has been relayed to the leadership of the Radiography Association of Zimbabwe. Radiography Association would like to wish all the best and pledge their support to the new ISRRT Board and Regional committees.

**Pre- Congress**

I also had the opportunity to attend the pre congress where we had interesting discussions on radiation protection. Radiographers from different countries shared their experiences and challenges. It was interesting how we could easily relate to some of the challenges and experiences from other countries. The issue of QA and QC in radiation protection is one of the major challenge we face as a country in Zimbabwe and the need for radiographers to extend their role into quality management issues can never be over emphasized especially in settings where we have few medical physicists.

A presentation on the Bonn Call for Action by Donna Newman, was quite interesting to note that other nations were on the evaluation stage on the Bonn Call for action whilst for Zimbabwean radiographers in was almost news. I realised I needed to spread the Bonn Call for Action message to all Zimbabwean radiographers. This was my topic which I presented during the Radiography Association of Zimbabwe CPD meeting on the 07th of July 2018.
Other interesting presentations by Elizabeth on Challenges for Africa and by Michael on Pediatric Imaging opened up very interesting discussions from the audience in which a lot of lessons were learnt and solutions proposed for different settings. From these discussions I realised that in our settings as Zimbabweans we need every stakeholder involvement in radiation protection issues and hence all radiographers, medical physicists and radiologists need to work together in protecting the patient and general public against medical exposure to ionising radiation.

**Congress**

It was inspiring to witness how fellow radiographers are getting involved in research. The scientific sessions were really interesting, I was spoilt for choice since many parallel sessions had interesting presentations going on at the same time. I really wished there was an online platform where these presentations could be uploaded as videos of the presenters so that one can revisit and can also have a chance to listen to presentations from other parallel sessions. If I am to make a recommendation for future congresses this would be my recommendation. I was also privileged to present our research findings on the *"Renal Resistive Index values among Zimbabwean patients with hydronephrosis"*, which was well received by the audience.

A lot of professional issues with regards to role development and extension were discussed during these scientific sessions. I realised these issues vary across the globe for example some areas have shortages of radiologists and radiographers have to extend their roles to take up some of the roles of the radiologists like reporting. Whilst in some areas, they do not see the need because they have enough radiologists. For our settings in Zimbabwe where we have no radiologist in the public sector there is need for radiographers to take up some of these roles.

The issues of different names for radiographers/radiological technologists/imaging scientists across the globe was also extensively discussed and it is my hope that soon and very soon we shall all be called by one name that every radiographer/RT/imaging scientist shall be proud to be associated with.

In conclusion, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to ISRRT for making it possible for me to attend this my very first World Congress and for all the support
they always give to our association RAZ. ISRRT I will forever be indebted. I would like to also thank Zimbabwean Radiographers for choosing me as their country representative and enabling me the opportunity to learn and share with fellow radiographers from across the globe. To NUST my employer I am grateful for allowing me time to attend the ISRRT World Congress. Thank You NUST. Thank You RAZ. Thank You ISRRT!!!

The knowledge and skills I learnt during the ISRRT Congress shall forever be useful in informing my lectures for my students and any future talks I might have in our CPD seminars or any platforms of sharing knowledge. I am forever grateful.

GALLERY OF PICTURES FROM VISIT

From Left to right: Dr Fozy Peer, Bigboy Tendai Rakata, Donna Newman
ISRRT Council members from Africa: Left to Right: Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Tunisia, Cameroon, Cameroon, South Africa and Tanzania

ISRRT council members, ISRRT outgoing President and the President of the Society of Radiographers for Trinidad and Tobago.
Left to Right: Simbarashe T Gashirai, Christopher Steelman, Bigboy Rakata

L-R: Simbarashe T Gashirai, Bigboy T Rakata, Polite Mukwada and Sindiso Nleya

NUST, Zimbabwe
Bigboy Tendai Rakata Bonn Call for Action Presentation at a RAZ Seminar 07/07/2018: NUST, Zimbabwe.

Part of the audience during the RAZ seminar 07/07/2018: NUST, Zimbabwe