AUSTRALIAN TAKES OVER HELM OF GLOBAL ANTI-STROKE ORGANIZATION

GENEVA and BRASILIA | 10 October 2012 - Stephen Davis, MD, FRCP, Edin FRACP, of Melbourne, Australia was named as the new president of the World Stroke Organization (WSO), the Geneva-based international NGO leading the campaign to reduce the global burden of stroke. Prof. Davis assumed his prestigious position on the eve of the 8th World Stroke Congress being held in the Brazilian capital from 10 to 13 October.

Professor Davis will become the third president of the association since the International Stroke Society and the World Stroke Federation merged in 2006. He will succeed Prof. Bo Norrving, of Sweden, who stepped down after serving the society as its president for the past four years. Prof. Norrving will remain on the WSO Executive Board and will continue his role as the society’s ambassador working closely with public health and policy experts at the United Nations, the World Health Organization (WHO) and with governments worldwide, ensuring that the fight against stroke remains on the global health and development agenda.

Reflecting on his term as leader of the society, Norrving explains “I have had the privilege to serve as president during a period when the WSO has developed in a way I had never imagined when I took office four years ago. In particular, I am very pleased with the increasingly influential role of the WSO as the world voice for stroke within the WHO, other governmental bodies and in the community. Most importantly, the society will be in the best of hands with Steve Davis as my successor - he has all the qualifications needed and more.”

Stephen Davis is the inaugural Professor of Translational Neuroscience at the University of Melbourne. He is based at the Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH) where he is the Director of Neurosciences and Continuing Care, Director of Neurology and Director of the Melbourne Brain Centre (MBC). His major research interests involve clinical trials in stroke and the use of neuroimaging, particularly multimodal MRI, in the selection of acute stroke treatments. He is the co-principal investigator with Prof. Geoffrey Doonan, a past WSO president, of the EXTEND trial, aimed at extending the time window for thrombolysis using MRI and CTP in treatment selection.

Davis is the immediate past-president of the Australian and New Zealand Association of Neurologists (ANZAN) and a past-president of the Stroke Society of Australasia. An active member of the WSO, he is a long-standing board member of the organization and co-chair of the World Stroke Academy, the society’s educational platform.
There are 15 million people who have a stroke each year. According to the WHO, stroke is the second leading cause of death for people above the age of 60, and the fifth leading cause in people aged 15 to 59. Stroke also attacks children, including newborns. Each year, nearly six million people die from stroke. In fact, stroke is responsible for more deaths annually than those attributed to AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria put together. Stroke is also the leading cause of long-term disability irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity or country.

Asked about his priorities for WSO in the next four years, Davis eloquently notes "my key objectives are to closely engage with regional stroke bodies throughout the world and for the WSO to scale-up its contribution to reducing the impact of non-communicable diseases, notably stroke, by 25% and by 2025.” He adds "I wish to pay tribute to the superb efforts of my predecessors Professor Bo Norrving and Professor Geoffrey Donnan. Professor Norrving has been an outstanding President, has overseen many key strategies and established the role of the WSO as the lead international agency for stroke. Professor Donnan was instrumental in the formation of the WSO and remains the editor of our scientific journal, the International Journal of Stroke."

Stephen Davis has won a number of awards for clinical stroke research, including the 2011 William Feinberg Award from the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association. Professor Davis received his medical training from the University of Melbourne.

About the World Stroke Organization
The World Stroke Organization (WSO) was established in October 2006. As the lead international body for stroke, WSO aims to accomplish its mission by:

- Fostering the best standards of practice
- Increasing stroke awareness in the population and among health professionals
- Influencing policies for stroke prevention and improved health services
- Educating in collaboration with other public and private organizations
- Facilitating stroke research
- Advocacy for people with stroke

With individual and organizational members worldwide, including stroke support groups, WSO is the global voice for stroke. WSO is the only international stroke NGO in official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO).