



**FDI World Dental Federation**  
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**EMBARGOED UNTIL FRIDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2008, 9 AM CEST**

To all oral health professionals, dental patients and people around the world:

The FDI World Dental Federation is pleased to celebrate the first-ever World Oral Health Day. This special day was officially established last year by the FDI General Assembly, representing more than one million dentists worldwide.

Oral health is a neglected area of international health. The FDI hopes that added focus will be drawn to the importance of the prevention of oral diseases through educational, community and promotional activities commemorating World Oral Health Day.

Dental caries is the most common chronic disease worldwide, affecting children, adults and elderly and resulting in great impact on wellbeing, daily performance and, of course, treatment costs. Dental caries and other oral diseases are largely preventable by simple, proven and effective measures. However, even simple things like daily oral hygiene using fluoride toothpaste are not yet a common practice everywhere and for all.

A healthy smile and the ability to speak and eat without pain or discomfort are critical to general health and well being. Easily preventable or treatable oral diseases left unchecked can lead to major negative health consequences. The FDI believes that good oral health is essential to general health and overall well-being of all – it is a recognised human right. It is time to speak openly about and to address the great inequities that exist around the world in terms of oral health. Appropriate services are not available for many people in low-income and middle-income countries. Many also suffer from access to care in high-income countries as well.

On the occasion of World Oral Health Day the FDI urges all stakeholders to recognise and to emphasise the significance of good oral health for a healthy society. Much has been achieved, but even more remains to be done. The FDI is committed to work in partnership with professional associations, government health ministries and the dental industry to fulfil its mission of "leading the world to optimal oral health".

Each and every one of us, as dentists and citizens, as professional associations and public health advocates, are able to contribute to better oral health worldwide. Let us on this first World Oral Health Day join together to recognise that oral health is a vital part of wellbeing for all, celebrate the progress we have made to date, but at the same time commit ourselves to continue working towards better oral health for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B.C. Conrod'.

Dr Burton Conrod  
FDI President