Report of the 2014 General Meeting of the North America Caribbean Region of WCPT
23rd-27th April, 2014

By Stacy de Gale, Chair

The 2014 General Meeting of the North America Caribbean Region (NACR) of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy occurred in the beautiful and bustling city of Miami, Florida. And a more appropriate venue could not have been chosen, as Miami, being one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the US, was a true reflection of the representation of our meeting. Present were physical therapists from our host organization, the American Physical Therapy Association; and the Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, Canada, Curacao, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Panama, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago. To add further flavour and colour to our meeting, Ms. Sandra Thornhill, WCPT representative for the NACR was in attendance. To round things off, our very own Dr. Marilyn Moffat, President of the WCPT, actively participated in the 2 day business event.

Despite the NACR being one of the smallest regions of WCPT, the discussion, camaraderie and focus that occurred over 2 days of talks belied our size. With the equal participation of all member organizations and observers, true strides were made in issues such as licensure, representation, continuing education, recruitment and retention of staff, advocacy issues to name a few. The works of the WCPT were discussed and presented by Dr. Moffat and Ms. Thornhill.

To add even more value and practical information for participants, there were presentations from two of APTA’s staff. Marc Goldstein, Senior Director of Research, Data and Information Resources, reported on the recently concluded International Workforce Summit hosted by the APTA, CPA and WCPT in December 2013. This piqued the interest of participants and some have already offered their services as resource persons in upcoming workforce collaborations. Justin Moore, Vice President of Public Policy and Professional Affairs of the APTA, gave a practical and immediately usable guide to advocacy in physical therapy – an area of concern for many NACR member organisations. The International Federation of Orthopaedic Manipulative Physical Therapists (IFOMPT), represented by Rob Werstine and Jack Miller, also spoke of the goals and objectives of IFOMPT, their role in the manipulation sphere of physical therapy, and the high quality of educational standards related to manipulation.

Elections were held for the executive of the NACR for the period 2015 to 2019. These names will be announced at a later date, but we warmly welcome the incoming executive. In true Caribbean style, the meeting was kept flowing through an innovative mix of discussion, presentations and team building activities. These not only underscores the necessity of teamwork in the profession, but also loosen tied and revitalised legs!

The highlight of the meeting, however, was the announcement of a decision by the executive to recognise, albeit in a simple way, the indomitable works and achievements of our president, mentor, advocate and friend, Dr. Marilyn Moffat. This recognition is in the form of a NACR award entitled the Marilyn Moffat Advocacy Award. This award will recognise advocacy efforts by a physical therapist within the region. Details of this will be released soon. This was a warmly received announcement, and to add even more flavour, Dr. Moffat was presented with her own award from the NACR in recognition of her achievements. We can add that this may have been one of the few times Dr. Moffat was surprised about anything!
American businessman and motivational speaker Robert Kiyosaki once said: “The size of your success is measured by the strength of your desire; the size of your dream, and how you handle disappointment along the way.” The NACR is a shining example of a small organization with desires for the profession that are as strong as steel, as wide and deep as the ocean, and able to use disappointments and hurdles as cinder blocks. We are therefore already successful, and continue to be successful in moving the profession forward throughout North America and the Caribbean!