FIDI World Dental Congress 2020—China is shaping future of oral health

By FIDI World Dental Federation

SHANGHAI, China: China is a powerful ally in achieving a global community commitment to health. Recognising that health is fundamentally linked to successful economic and social development, the Chinese government is making progress to protect and promote the health and well-being of its citizens. When its World Dental Congress is held in Shanghai from 1 to 4 September 2020, FDI will be putting special focus on the country.

In China, significant differences exist between urban and rural populations in terms of oral hygiene practices and access to oral care. Results of a study published in the International Dental Journal in 2005 revealed that regular toothbrushing was three times more frequent in urban than in rural areas. There are also a limited number of oral health professionals to serve the population: the dentist to population ratio is 1:100,000. As might be expected, the use of oral health services is somewhat lower in rural than urban areas: significantly more rural residents in the study had never seen a dentist during their lifetime. Owing to the limited availability of dentists, most people have a symptomatic, rather than preventive, approach to dental care. The most frequently cited reasons for dental visits are toothache, need for tooth extraction and prosthetic treatment.

Dental care is offered on a fee-for-service basis that not everyone can afford: the fees for restorative services are approximately twice the cost of tooth extraction and are ten times higher than for preventive services. The 2005 study reported that many people living in urban areas had at least part of their dental costs covered by their employers, which was not the case in rural areas, keeping oral care in these areas even more out of reach.

Healthy China 2030

The Healthy China 2030 initiative is an ambitious vision to incorporate health into all policies and engage the whole of government in health. Healthy China 2030 includes special provisions to improve oral health. As part of its vision, Healthy China 2030 implements special campaigns to raise awareness of oral diseases, among other health concerns. FDI congratulates the Chinese government for ensuring that oral health is recognised as being integral to overall health and well-being and is grateful that the policy landscape provides such a welcoming setting for the 2020 FDI World Dental Congress.

FDI and Chinese Stomatological Association join forces for better oral health outcomes

FDI and the Chinese Stomatological Association (CSA) have worked side by side to increase access to oral care and improve oral hygiene habits in China’s rural areas, most notably through the Smile Around the World initiative. Smile Around the World aims to introduce the importance of oral health through a series of educational workshops that will help children establish good oral health habits from a young age. The latest initiative was implemented earlier this year in three elementary schools in the cities of Pingxiang and Ganzhou in Jiangxi province.

The 2020 FDI World Dental Congress, which is being co-hosted by the CSA, shows a joint commitment to continue strengthening this partnership to improve the oral health of populations. By working together to build the scientific programme, the goal is to give global relevance to local research and learning, as well as share best practices on how to address the oral health challenges that are common to all geographical settings. Attendees will also learn more about the Healthy China 2030 initiative and how this translates globally. The congress will offer hundreds of continuing education opportunities and cover hot topics in clinical practice, research and public health and will feature numerous hands-on workshops.