

## 13<sup>th</sup> World Conference of the Association for Infant Mental Health



*Babies in Mind – the Minds of Babies: A View from Africa*



**Cape Town, South Africa**

**17<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> April 2012**

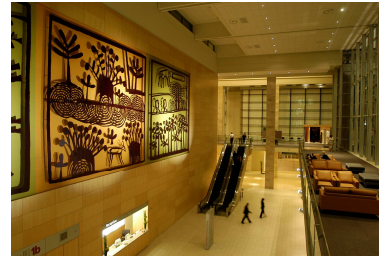
In 2012 the International Congress of WAIMH will for the first time be held on the African Continent. Cape Town was chosen because of its long-term professional and research involvement with infant mental health – it hosted two national infant mental health conferences in 1995 and 2002. We consider it not only a great honor, but also a great opportunity that Cape Town was chosen as the next host. It is a reflection of the interest in and commitment to work done in low and middle income countries and particularly the ongoing work in Africa.

The majority of infants live in low and middle income countries, but they are underrepresented in scientific studies. The evidence base for clinical interventions comes thus from the rich countries, resulting in interventions which are not necessarily applicable or practical in poorer countries. It is therefore imperative that this imbalance be addressed. This first international conference on infant mental health in Africa is the ideal platform from which this could happen. It is befitting that it will be organized by the World Association of Infant Mental Health which has made it its goal to be truly multi-national and culturally diverse.



South Africa and in particular Cape Town offers a unique context for this event to take place: The infra-structure of the city is sophisticated; Cape Town is one of South Africa's most popular attractions, a city of great and romantic beauty. It is set on the Cape Peninsula, a thin finger of land in the south-westernmost corner of Africa that juts dramatically into the Atlantic Ocean at Cape Point probably the most spectacular feature of the entire African coast. The peninsula contains extensive, unique and incredibly diverse flora and fauna, and its east and west coastlines are two sharply differentiated marine environments. The rest of Southern Africa offers many opportunities of observing wild-life and experiencing nature in its most pristine form.

Safari tours are available to the World renowned Kruger National Park and other Non – Malaria Game reserves. Other alternatives are the unspoilt "Garden Route". This is a strip of land like no other in the world in terms of beauty, natural attractions and unique flora and fauna. Numerous day tours will be available which include scenic beauty, culture and our unique history



The Congress will be held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre – a modern, spacious centre where the various hotels are within walking distance as is the Waterfront, a popular relaxation area for all, both local people and visitors. Safety is regarded as an absolute priority for the city and particular care is taken in the areas frequented by visitors. You will find this aspect no different to any other city in the world.

But besides these amenities and the natural beauty there is the wider perspective that South Africa brings with it: It has emerged from politically dark, repressive times into a vibrant nation where debate is open and vigorous and where many cultures and languages co-exist in tolerance and acceptance. Cape Town offers a host of important landmarks in the political struggle that resulted in the democracy we have today. Places like Robben Island, and the District Six Museum will help you contextualize some aspects of the country's past.

South Africans are known for their warmth and hospitality, their willingness to share their view points and experiences. Attending this Conference will indeed offer an opportunity for exchange and learning for all.

Looking forward to welcoming you in Cape Town in 2012  
Astrid Berg and the Local Organizing Committee



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