



## Welcome messages

**Mr R Moropa**

Acting Director , Academic Information Service, University of Pretoria

The “Life” of our profession and that of our clients’ patients (i.e. animals) is in our hands.

A story is told of two boys who hedged a plan to trick an old man who was respected and revered by the villagers for his wisdom and ability to help people solve their problems. One of the boys said to the other, “ let us go up to that old man’s hut. I have a perfect trick that he has no way of resolving”. The other boy said, “the old man is wise. We will not be able to trick him. He is just too wise”.

The two boys arrived at the old man’s hut. They had a bird with them. Since there were many other people ahead of them who came to seek advice from the old man, they awaited their turn. When they finally got the chance to talk to the old man, the one boy said to him, after the old man had enquired how he could help them –“ what am I holding in my hand?” The boy was hiding his hands behind his back. While the man was helping other people he heard a sound made by a bird that seemed to be in distress, but he could not see it. So he said to the boy, “you are holding a bird”. The other boy elbowed his friend and said, “I told you, you cannot trick him”. The boy with the bird asked the old man whether the bird was alive or not. The old man said to the boy, “the life of that bird is in your hands”.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the “Life” of our profession and that of our clients’ patients (i.e. animals) is in our hands. As human beings we tend to blame adverse circumstances that exist in our environment for not being able to facilitate the free-flow of information that is required for sustaining the health of animals. Our mindset is such that we shift the blame to others for our failures. A wise man has pointed out that all the external things that we tend to blame are like the wind that blows at sea for all ships. There is no use blaming the wind since it will not stop blowing. Instead of blaming the wind adjust your sails. Set your sails in such a way that they enable you to take maximum advantage of the wind that blows.

If we approach this conference with this negative mindset, we are not going to benefit from it. Let us approach it with the determination to adjust our sails to enable us to use the wind that is blowing around us to take us where we want to go.

Ladies and gentlemen, you have overcome the many barriers that could have prevented you from being at this conference. These are tangible barriers such as funds, visas, distance etc. You are now here. That is the reason why it is, indeed, a great pleasure for me to welcome you. In welcoming you I wish to make you aware of the unseen barriers that can prevent you from contributing as you should or even benefiting maximally.

John C. Maxwell has said “There are no hopeless situations, only people who think hopelessly”.

We must believe in ourselves in our profession. Herb True has observed: “Many people succeed when others do not believe in them. But rarely does a person succeed when he does not believe in himself”.

The more serious barrier could be our mindset.

The Organizing Committee has worked hard at making this conference an interesting and different one. It is our fervent wish that you actively participate within the sessions that have been put together. Make use of this week to network, consult and share ideas with known and new colleagues. Attend as many sessions as possible and turn moments of inconvenience to that of opportunity!

As this conference is being held in Africa, we are encouraging our colleagues in other African countries to participate and we have been successful in raising funds for this purpose. There will be 8 coming from Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique, Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe, sponsored by the CTA in The Netherlands.

Altogether there will be 30 veterinary faculty libraries or veterinary institutions represented worldwide: 12 Africa, 9 USA, 5 Europe, 3 UK, and 1 Australia. We expect an attendance figure of approximately 60 persons.

Optimum access to quality animal health information is a critical issue for all of us in Africa to help improve the health of both animals and humans.

**WE DO NOT DISCRIMINATE AGAINST THE TWO-LEGGED ONES!**