Does the FDI have an impact in people’s lives? Yes, in quite specific ways, from the dental materials used by the dentist to a number of issues on dental practice and ethics. FDI’s continuing education programs have an impact on the good art of the profession, as do other FDI issues such as waste management in dental practices, guidelines, good practice recommendations and public information messages. All of these together have a tremendous impact on health professionals - but on also patients, both directly and indirectly.

What’s the role of FDI on health and dentistry in a global context? FDI deals directly with the United Nations in a general way, but more specifically with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It is very important to be globally present and to make sure that the interests of the profession, and of the public, are well represented, promoted and defended.

We are part of an alliance of non-governmental organizations called the World Health Professions Alliance or WHPA and our recent focus has been in noncommunicable diseases. This issue has come to the surface in the past few years due to the health burden they represent. FDI has fronted other systemic diseases, especially NCD’s. FDI is part of general health. Oral health has a huge impact on the general health of individuals and communities, both within developed and developing countries, particularly in disadvantaged and vulnerable populations. FDI is working to have this reality reflected in official UN and WHO NCD policy and statements.

Are these recommendations for all health professionals? FDI’s particular goal is to have oral diseases listed among noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). The current WHO list refers only to cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular and respiratory disease. Yet people all over the world – governments, politicians, important bodies like WHO and others - are becoming increasingly aware that oral health is part of general health. Oral health has a huge impact on the general health of individuals and other systemic diseases, especially NCD’s. FDI is working to have this reality reflected in official UN and WHO NCD policy and statements.

What is your personal goal as FDI President? I would like to give more visibility to some Portuguese-speaking countries like Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, East Timor and São Tomé and Principe ... these countries have tremendous needs in terms of oral health professions and in terms of the oral health needs of the millions of people that live there.

“FDI makes a difference in people’s lives”