



## **Marilyn Gentry – Introduction to the World Cancer Research Fund Global Network**

Thank you. And welcome everybody. I'm going to tell you a little bit about the World Cancer Research Fund network.

The World Cancer Research Fund in the UK is putting on this conference but they are part of a larger network, which is what my presentation is about. The World Cancer Research Fund network has a mission and our mission is about diet and cancer. The network started in 1982. It started because of a report that was put out by the National Academy of Science. It was commissioned by Richard Nixon in the US as part of his campaign. That report was published in 1982 and it said that 30 to 40% of cancers are related to what you eat.

When our organisation started, we took that little publication and shrunk it and sent it to 50,000 scientists in the US and abroad to try to highlight this area. And since then we've grown into a network of several organisations in several countries. And, as I said, our mission is to raise awareness. It's education about the area of diet, nutrition and cancer. And now we're talking about physical activity and weight maintenance as these are also an important part of that equation. And we also have worked very hard in the last 24 years to strengthen and to fund and to encourage others to fund research in this area.

We started in the US and the name of the organisation is the American Institute for Cancer Research. And then in 1990 we founded the World Cancer Research Fund in the UK. And '94 in the Netherlands, '97 in Hong Kong. In fact, in Hong Kong we were part of the movement that put out the very first diet and health recommendations ever for the people in Hong Kong, which we're very proud of. In 2004 we started in France and in '99 we set up our World Cancer Research Fund International Association, which is an umbrella association, which helps all of the organisations to stay on track and protect our branding.

As a charity we have 5 million combined supporters within all of our organisations. About 9 million newsletters are circulated annually - that's a lot of newsletters. The newsletter, I'll just say, is not a PR piece. The newsletter is actually an education piece - it talks about our health recommendations and is very much based on the science that's coming out of this area. It gives lots of advice and tips on how to eat healthy and live healthy and how to exercise and maintain your weight. And we've given more than £55 million in this area of research.

Our programmes include websites, newsletters and all sorts of brochures. In the US we have a campaign that's about six years old now, called the New American Plate. We do obesity campaigns. We'd like to do much more in obesity as it is a very serious problem today and we'd like to get more involved in that. We target certain audiences, for example in the UK we have a men's' health campaign. We all have children's programmes with children's newsletters that try to encourage children to eat healthier foods. And some organisations within our network have programmes that go beyond the newsletter.

We do mailings to health professionals and I think that's how you found out about our conference. We do all sorts of media programmes and present at conferences around the world. We put on health conferences such as this. We also have a research conference in the US which is in its fourteenth year. It's an international conference with a technical research focus.



We are also part of the five a day campaigns and you saw the information out in the open area about the five a day campaign from the government. We also are starting to talk a lot more about the cancer patient and the cancer survivor. We want to encourage much more research in this area. We started several years ago in the US with a conference for cancer survivors. There's some 10 million cancer survivors in the US. And we are starting to work more and more with that in this country and trying to encourage more research in that area. We want to be able to say something to them, what can they do to prevent the re-occurrence of cancer.

And we have Fellowship programmes. We're trying to encourage people to go into this area of diet and cancer research. I know that when we've met with several scientists throughout Europe they'll say, well you know, young people today are coming out of school and they're going into technology, they're going into marketing. We're really losing a lot of the people that are going into our sciences and it's scary. And so we have a fellowship programme started to try to encourage more people in that area.

And we have our research grants and our science programme that includes our expert report which I'll talk about next. One part of our research grant programme is run from the US, the North American Programme, and one part is run from the London office, which is our International Research Programme. The two are very complimentary. The North American one, focuses on basic research. So if applications come in to either organisation we share them and make sure that they get to the right research panel so that they're judged appropriately. The International Research Programme looks at human studies and deals with epidemiology. When it comes to funding our research we really are a global organisation.

And I wanted to also talk about a particular niche that we have and that is research on research – interpreting the data. As I said, we are here because of that little green book. That is the first book, the landmark study as I call it, that was set up and was put out by the US National Academy of Science and it states that cancer is in a large part a preventable disease. We then decided in 1993 to start a project in this country and the result of that project was the report '*Food, Nutrition and the Prevention of Cancer: a global perspective*' It was launched in 1997 and is a global report.

Today we're working on the next report. It'll be launched in November of 2007 and we have a tremendous group working with us. Steve Heggie, who's here in the audience, is the Project Manager of this very important project. And we have observers from a number of different organisation including WHO, FAO and UNICEF. We have all sorts of very, very important people that are helping with this project. It's a very intense project, they're looking at the data that by certain criteria that has come out of the research in this area and they're trying to come up with diet and health recommendations that everyone can agree to so that our education messages to the public are consistent and sound, based in science.

This conference as you've heard earlier is going to discuss how all of us in this room can help people adopt a healthier lifestyle to reduce the risk of cancer and many, many other chronic diseases. It's very important. The way the world is spinning so fast these days and the kinds of foods that we're eating because we are so busy it's so important that we continue to preach this message to people. And we also want to tell you a little bit about this new emerging area of diet and lifestyle, for the cancer patient, for the person living with cancer and for those that have survived cancers. I'm really excited about today's conference, I hope you are too, and I'm sure we'll learn an awful lot from all the good speakers.