INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF DERMATOLOGY
ANNOUNCES NEW INITIATIVE TO EDUCATE AND TRACK
HOW CLIMATE CHANGE MAY AFFECT SKIN CONDITIONS

PRAGUE, Czech Republic (May 21, 2009) – The International Society of Dermatology (ISD) has taken the lead within the international medical community in announcing a major commitment to working in conjunction with world medical, scientific and political leaders to address how global warming may impact the incidence of dermatologic conditions. The announcement was made today in Prague during the ISD’s 10th International Congress of Dermatology, which is held every five years and draws thousands of members of the international dermatology community.

“Climate change is one of the defining issues of the 21st century,” said Sigfrid A. Muller, MD, interim president of the ISD. “Since we know that climate change may have significant implications on our entire planet and not just one isolated region, we believe that spearheading this effort to educate others about the impact that global warming may have on the occurrence of dermatologic conditions was the perfect match for the ISD’s vast global network of dedicated members.”

Dr. Muller noted that over the years ISD members have convened at various regional meetings and presented data on diseases by their region of the world, which has allowed the Society to compare these diseases and their - more -
manifestations. While many dermatological conditions maintain a high sensitivity to climate and ecologic changes, there is currently little research and no systemized tracking of how climate change may be affecting dermatologic conditions.

Various committees and subcommittees of the United Nations and World Health Organization have reported changes in the occurrence of infectious diseases and their transmission patterns, thought to be a major consequence of climate change. Dr. Muller explained that several dermatological diseases maintain a high sensitivity to climate and ecologic changes and cause a significant global burden. For example, schistosomiasis, filariasis, and onchocerciasis in cultivated and inland water systems in the tropics; leishmaniasis and Chagas disease in forest and dry land systems; and West Nile virus and Lyme disease in urban and suburban systems of Europe and North America.

As a first step in this initiative, the ISD is holding its first conference on climate change and health issues on October 7, 2009, in Berlin as part of the annual meeting of the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV). The conference is co-chaired by Dr. Uwe Wollina, Chair, Department of Dermatology and Allergology, Hospital Dresden-Friedrichstadt (Dresden, Germany). Representatives from the World Meteorological Association and the United Nations Environmental Program have been invited to help provide the latest science and information on the monitoring of the ozone layer and greenhouse gases.

The conference’s preliminary schedule includes international case studies and reports from dermatologists ranging from *Pollution, Warming and Skin Disease* to *Global Warming and Poverty-Related Diseases*.

“With members in over 100 countries, the ISD is the only truly global dermatology society and is uniquely positioned to identify trends in health conditions induced by climate change,” said Dr. Muller. “It is our hope that this meeting is the first of many regional meetings that will address deforestation,
extreme heat, large-scale forest fires, fossil fuel emission and ozone depletion and their effects on dermatologic conditions.”

For more information on the ISD’s climate change initiative, ISD members and physicians interested in health and public policy are encouraged to visit the Society’s website at www.intsocderm.org. The Society plans to present any observations related to climate change and health on a global scale through its Journal, the *International Journal of Dermatology*, and its website.

Founded in 1959, the International Society of Dermatology is the only international society consisting of individual dermatologists from all fields of dermatology with a focus on global issues in dermatology. The Society’s mission is to facilitate the exchange of information among dermatologists on a global basis and remains true to its roots by concentrating on issues relating to global dermatology and tropical skin diseases – including basic sciences, venereology and public health, and teaching dermatology in developing countries. For more information, visit the ISD website at www.intsocderm.org.

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