Secretariat update
John Hewko
General Secretary

Bom dia a todos! É ótimo estar aqui em Lisboa, nesta cidade incrível e nesta incrível Convenção do Rotary!

Good morning, everyone! It's great to be here in Lisbon, in this amazing city and at this amazing Rotary convention.

As Rotarians, all of you here already know why an International Convention is so special. It's a chance to see old friends, find new ideas, and learn more about Rotary. It's a chance to connect to every corner of the Rotary world and really feel how truly international Rotary is. And most of all, a convention is a chance to be inspired — by everything that Rotary does, in so many places, and in so many ways.

For those of us working in the Secretariat at One Rotary Center in Evanston and at Rotary's seven international offices, the inspiration we find at convention carries a special satisfaction. Every day, the Rotary International staff goes to work absolutely committed to helping Rotarians serve as well and as effectively as possible. Everything we do, we do with all our heart — knowing that our work is supporting your work; and that your work is changing the world.

So today, here in Lisbon, I'd like to take a few minutes to tell you a little bit about what we at Rotary International headquarters have been doing over the last Rotary year.

One of the top Secretariat priorities of the 2012-13 Rotary year has, of course, been preparing for full rollout of the new grants structure of the Rotary Foundation that we've been calling Future Vision. We're very excited about this change, and proud that this past April Rotary received a silver Edison Award recognizing the Foundation's innovative and effective new model. As of 1 July, that model will be the way our Foundation does business, and we in Evanston have been working very hard making sure that everything is ready.

Some of you have already spent time exploring the new Rotary Grants area of rotary.org. If you're ready to apply for a district, global, or packaged grant, or need to manage or report on an ongoing grant, all of that can now be done online. You can also go to the site to participate in webinars on grant management, learn more about policies and procedures, and find out just about anything you want to know about the new grant system.

When you visit rotary.org to learn more about our Foundation, I very much hope you'll take the time to explore one of the most fun, and most inspiring, new features on the site, and that's something called Rotary Showcase. It's the quickest and easiest way to see just what your fellow Rotarians are doing in their clubs and districts. Whether they're donating books to earthquake-damaged libraries in Japan, restoring a school in Panama, or building a pedestrian

footbridge in India so people aren't stranded when the monsoon season arrives — you can see it all on Rotary Showcase. My only word of warning to you is that you should make sure that you have plenty of time and don't need to be anywhere else, because the first time you visit Showcase, once you get started, it can be very, very hard to stop.

We've been asking Rotarians what they want in a website, and we've listened to the answers. And I'm proud to announce that in August you'll find a new, entirely exciting experience at rotary.org, with a fully redesigned site, based on what you've told us you need and use. The new rotary.org will be divided into two separate sites: one for Rotarians, and one for the general public. On the member site, you'll find a much more personalized experience, connecting you quickly and easily to your fellow Rotarians, and to the service that interests *you*. We've made the site easier to navigate, so that you spend less time searching, and more time serving. There will be opportunities for members-only social business, and new ways for you to plan and carry out innovative international projects. I hope you will stop by and visit, and let us know what you think.

As general secretary, one of my goals has been ensuring that Rotary's work is recognized — especially our role in the eradication of polio. Today, I'm happy to report that Rotary *is* receiving the international recognition we deserve. In the past year, Rotary has been the subject of feature stories on the BBC and in *The Economist* magazine, and in many other media outlets. A few months ago, *Time* magazine's international edition ran a cover story on polio eradication, with Rotary prominently featured as a leader in the eradication effort. Now that we truly are "this close" to eradicating polio, our public image is more important than ever — because the more our good work is known, the more prepared we'll be, when polio is eradicated, for whatever lies ahead.

And each of you — the Rotarians of the world — can help raise Rotary's visibility even more by lending your own voice to the polio eradication effort. Rotary has created a new website, endpolionow.org, which tells the story of our 25-plus-year effort to end this disease and gives people the opportunity to support the effort. I encourage everyone here to visit endpolionow.org, and share it over your social media networks. Tell your social media friends and followers to do the same. Right now, Rotary's social media platforms have about 200,000 friends, fans, and followers altogether — which is good, which is not bad — however, we should have *at least* 1.2 million followers and fans, don't you agree? So please, log on — endpolionow.org — and show your support for this effort.

We are winning the war against polio because Rotarians are both idealistic *and* realistic.

And because we are realists, we also are aware that Rotary does face significant challenges, and we are committed to addressing those challenges in ways that ensure that Rotary will continue to meet the needs of its communities, while also meeting the needs of individual Rotarians.

One of the main issues we intend to tackle head-on is, of course, membership. Your Rotary International Board has made membership a priority, formally endorsing a membership goal of

1.3 million Rotarians by 30 June 2015. It is absolutely achievable, but not if we continue to approach the issue of membership in the same ways we always have. We won't reach our goal just by bringing in as many new members as we can. We'll only get there by looking hard at the reasons why we haven't been growing — why so many members join and then leave, why young members so often leave Rotary once they have families, and how we can make Rotary a place where the entire family of Rotary is welcome, and has a role to play.

No one could ever attend a Rotary convention and fail to be moved by the scope of what Rotary does. But as much as Rotary achieves, we all know that we could be doing even more. It is our job at Rotary headquarters to enable every Rotarian, everywhere in the world, to serve as effectively, and as ambitiously, as possible — so that your service will only be limited by how high you are willing to aim.

I thank you all for the privilege of serving as your general secretary for another Rotary year, and wish you all the best for a fantastic convention, and a wonderful new year, of inspired Rotary service.

Muito obrigado. Thank you very much.