Foreword

The *9th International Symposium on Schistosomiasis* took place in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, from 2 to 5 November, 2003. The Oswaldo Cruz Foundation regional unit in Bahia, represented by the Gonçalo Moniz Research Center, was responsible for the organization of the meeting.

The Oswaldo Cruz Foundation has a tradition of organizing these meetings and this is the 9th time that the researcher teams had the chance to get assembled and discuss the most updated advances in the area of schistosomiasis, an endemic disease that is still a challenge for scientists of this century, in spite of the extensive work already done to control this disease in different endemic countries.

In Brazil, it is estimated that around 4 to 5 million people are still infected, particularly in the Northeastern region of the country, with deleterious effects on general health, productivity and life expectance of those individuals.

The Symposium achieved a great deal of exchange of experiences, gathering a good amount of new ideas and strategies to help to control this important public health problem, firmed in *ad hoc* meetings held during the event. There were around 500 registered participants, among students and experts from several countries, such as the United States, England, Australia, Belgium, New Zeeland, the Netherlands, as well as from many states of Brazil.

The Symposium sponsored the accommodation to all invited speakers and covered the costs of air-fares for those invited speakers coming from countries where schistosomiasis is endemic.

There were 42 registered oral presentations of studies in the area (both on course and finalized) and 105 posters.

We would like to thank the World Health Organization/TDR, represented at the Symposium by the presence of Dr Lester Chitsulo and Dr Ali Mohammadia, for the much appreciated assistance in the organization of this Symposium and the important positive repercussion that such a meeting will bring to findings in public health.

Mitermayer Galvão dos Reis
President of the Symposium