

I Simposio Iberoamericano de Criminalística y Criminología de la AICEF-GITAD

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Attendees at the February 2000 Iberian-American Symposium held in Uruguay.

Delegates from 19 Latin American countries attended the First Iberian-American Symposium on Forensic Science in Montevideo, Uruguay this past February. The meeting was co-sponsored by the Academia Iberoamericana de Criminología y Estudios Forenses (AICEF) and Grupo Iberoamericana de Trabajo en Análisis de DNA (GITAD). This was the first such conference to be held in Uruguay and was hosted by the Policía Nacional de Uruguay and the Dirección Nacional de Policía Técnica.

The opening session was attended by over 400 representatives from various countries including members of Uruguay's police, representatives from forensic analysis laboratories and senior government officials. The conference opened with an address given by the current President of Uruguay, Dr. Julio María Sanguinetti, who emphasized the importance of developing the country's expertise in this field.

The conference provided an excellent overview of both the requirements for developing a national forensic DNA typing effort and the benefits of implementing such a system. Dr. Bruce Budowle, Director of Biology at the FBI, started the main part of the conference by providing an overview of the United States Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). He was followed by Dr. Miguel Lorente Acosta who provided an overview of all the potential uses for DNA typing in paternity, medical and forensic applications. Later in the conference, Gabriela de Medeiros Saldanha and Dr. Thomas J. Mozer, from Promega Corporation, provided summaries of the available silver and fluorescent STR systems used throughout the world. Dr. Guillermo Maciel, Director General del Ministerio del Interior of Uruguay, described his country's plans for DNA databases. To complete the international review, Werner Schuller presented an overview of the efforts of Interpol to coordinate the development of international efforts in DNA typing.

Uruguay was well represented by Principal Inspector Roberto Cáceres and Q.F. Sinthia Pagano Siepierski, Chief of the Biology Laboratory, who are jointly responsible for establishing the DNA typing laboratory system in Uruguay. They outlined the organization and present status of the development of the country's DNA typing efforts. Similar reviews of the status of DNA typing and development of national databases in other countries were presented by Dr. Erna L. Meléndez Bolaños of the Organismo de Investigación Judicial, Costa Rica and by Dr. Hugo Jorquera Gonzales of the Ministerio de Justicia, Chile.



The door of the Ciudadela is the entrance to the colonial city.

Reviews of the changes needed in the laws of various countries were presented by Dr. Enrique Villanueva Cañada of the University of Granada, Spain, Dr. Jose Bolivar of the Policía Técnica Judicial, Venezuela and Drs. Jorge Marabotto Lugaro and Eduardo Fernández Dovat of the judicial system of Uruguay. These speakers reflected on the social and legal ramifications and impact of DNA typing in their countries. Finally, the subject of DNA typing in criminal cases was presented by Dr. Rockne P. Harmon, District Attorney from Oakland, CA, USA and Dr. Manuel Paredes of the Laboratorio de Genética Forense del Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal, Bogotá, Colombia.

All participants spent the meeting breaks and evenings discussing the various aspects of DNA typing that most impacted their professions. The commitment of the Uruguay government to implement a DNA typing system in their country was evident. This was an informative and memorable meeting, where all international guests were treated as members of our host's family.