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Introduction

In 1986, in Hamburg, 20 years after the foundation of our group, we tried to definitely expand the microsurgical horizon from the anterior segment, and from corneal, cataract, implant and glaucoma surgery, also to the application of a microsurgical technique to the posterior segment. This was overdue looking at the progress in vitrectomy during the last decade. This meeting will not only deal with anterior and posterior segment microsurgery, but for the first time the use of microsurgery in strabismology will also be discussed.

Surgical treatment of young children means high responsibility of the surgeon, and needs most advanced surgical techniques and skill. Therefore, application of a microsurgical technique to our squint cases as well
needs to become a matter of course. Early subspecialisation to some degree has prevented too many pediatric surgeons to take full advantage of microsurgery. We have to be grateful to Suzanne Troutman and Andr Roth having summarized their vast experience. This meeting may help to convey a microsurgical spirit into this important field.

Again refractive corneal surgery is one of our main subjects, though refractive errors are rarely caused by corneal abnormalities. But as other current techniques for correction of refractive errors, like lens implantation, still involve their own problems and hazards, this approach sometimes may be justified. Undoubtedly, it is the great merit of Jos Barraquer, our founder member, to have shown at an early time the principle ways for correction of either myopia or hyperopia. Meanwhile, technology has advanced and new possibilities of corneal refractive surgery will be discussed. The future will show if these approaches are valid for safe clinical application. Referring to our former habit of appointing specific committees for technology, one session is dedicated to Technical Advances in Microsurgery. Jean-Marie Parel, one of the forefathers of vitrectomy, will lead us to new horizons in this fascinating field.

This meeting would not have been possible without the contributions of our guest speakers and the work of the chairmen co-ordinating the different subjects. Again, it is my pleasant duty to welcome a great number of distinguished guests, also partly contributing from their clinical experience and research work. It is a particular honor to welcome our Emeritus members, some of them even having joined the group at its foundation in 1966: Charles Dyson; Malcolm McCamel; Michael Roper-Hall, former Secretary; Claus Schott; Richard Troutman; Alberto Urrets - Zavalia.

Some of our members have been prevented from coming, some even by illness. We hope to have them with us again in 1990. It is a particularly sad task to commemorate one of our founder members, who has passed away since we last met in Hamburg - Eric Palm from Lund, the local organiser of the unforgettable meeting in 1972 in Lund/Sweden. We never shall forget his contribution to the development of microsurgery.

The success of a meeting like this depends on the help of the local organising committee, Prof. Cunha-Vaz from Coimbra, Dr. Nunes da Silva from Funchal and last but not least our friendly and helpful secretaries. The charm and beauty of the island of Madeira and the kind hospitality of its Government and inhabitants also will help make our stay enjoyable.