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Considerable progress has now been made in exploring interactions between T-cell subsets and cytokines in protection against and susceptibility to infections. The division of CD4+ cells into functionally distinct cytokine-producing TH1 and TH2 subsets has provided major advances in our understanding of immune responses against infectious agents. Although a small subset in peripheral blood, may be important in providing the first line of defense in skin infections and may play an auxiliary role in protection against mycobacterial infections.

The data obtained in recent years provide evidence that the relative balance of the different subsets of T and B cells and the cytokines produced by them and other relevant cells, e.g. macrophages, determines the outcome of the host response to several pathogens. Therefore, it was justifiable to organize this international conference, inviting experts in the field to discuss strategies for the application
of the most recent knowledge to clinical studies, therapeutic approaches and better vaccines against infectious diseases, with specific reference to the target diseases of the United Nations Development Programme/World Bank/World Health Organization (WHO) Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases.

In joint sponsorship with WHO, the Faculty of Medicine at Kuwait University identified these concepts as a major theme for presentation and discussion at the conference. As part of the global strategy to combat the spread of common infectious diseases, WHO offers leadership in collecting and disseminating information at international and regional levels where effective local initiatives are exerted efficiently. We acknowledge with gratitude our association with WHO in Geneva for the success of the meeting and would like to extend our appreciation to their delegates, our invited speakers and the other delegates who made this conference a success.

We also acknowledge the graciousness of the many institutions, companies and individuals who gave generously of their financial support, talents, counsel, goodwill and encouragement for the conduct of this meeting. In particular, we would like to thank the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science and the Vice-Rector of the Research Al-Biruni Programme, Kuwait University, for their invaluable support.

We would like to express our personal gratitude to the members of the Advisory Committee, chairmen and members of the Scientific Committee and Organizing Committee for the time and effort they put in to make this conference a success. Finally, our thanks to the conference administrative and secretarial staff for their cooperation, proficiency and diligence, without which this meeting would not have been possible.

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Rajaa Jawad Al-Attiyah
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