

***2023 Candidate Statement
Candidate for President***

Stacy de Gale, PT, DPT

We are a profession of service, co-operation and ingenuity. And as such, World Physiotherapy must always be on a path of growth and development. A path building upon the governance, advocacy and supportive work already being done. An organization where embracing our diversity and inclusivity directly leads to meaningful dialogue and partnerships. We must become a household name to every health organization and community; a name that will reverberate from a metropolis in Japan to a village in St. Lucia. We must play harmonious chords of policy, practice and participation across each member organization, region, subgroup and network.

It is with pleasure that I introduce myself to you, Stacy de Gale, a physiotherapist from the beautiful twin isle of Trinidad and Tobago, humbly offering myself for the position of president of World Physiotherapy. For those who are familiar with me, you will recognise my laughter from across a room, but I am much more than a smile.

My relationship with physiotherapy has traversed 33 years! Wanting to become a teacher, archaeologist and finally an astronomer, my parents were relieved when I decided on becoming a physiotherapist. Having broken both my arms as a teen, and having my function restored by a physio, my love affair with physiotherapy began.

This morphed into 22 years of being a clinician, practicing in the public, private, and industrial sectors. I once thought that I would heal the world one patient at a time, and then I was introduced to the World Confederation for Physical therapy in 1999, while studying in Jamaica. Here I was offered a glimpse of the wheels of governance, advocacy, policy and finance at work. I saw then, that not only could the world be healed one patient at a time, but physiotherapy could be that vehicle of healing the world through continual re-energising and re-imagining of the profession.

Here is a snapshot of my physiotherapy journey. I sought to begin learning and experiencing the dynamic, non-clinical sides of this profession from the ground up. I successfully stood as public relations officer, secretary and president of the Physiotherapy Association of Trinidad and Tobago, then as Chair of the North America Caribbean Region for eight years, and most

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recently, as executive board member of World Physiotherapy for three terms; all elected positions; definitive signals of the value that I give to this vocation and evidence of the support of my peers.

I have continued to champion our profession and all its facets in my country, region and the world. I have engaged with the many faces of our profession by actively participating in conferences and uplifting our vocation spanning countries such as Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Barbados, Guyana, the United States of America, India, Nigeria, Malaysia to name a few. My cultural sensitivity and awareness have therefore become finely tuned, an absolute requirement for a president of this organization.

These professional transitions were not by chance. My intimate organizational memory, knowledge and vital relationships have been developed over two decades. Leadership of World Physiotherapy calls for these and some other specific traits which I possess.

I am:

- Uniquely qualified due to my vast world view spanning communities in low, medium and high resource settings
- An active and empathetic listener and natural unifier of thoughts and ideals
- A natural people first oriented person who is always open to communicating with involved stakeholders
- A visionary for a unified profession

Some say my ‘familiarity’ may breed contempt, but look at the work done in and through World Physiotherapy over the past years. Look at the inroads made with global entities such as the World Health Organization, the immense work done during the pandemic of COVID-19, the various service projects to our member organizations! I am proud to have been an active part of an era of this organization that though not perfect, has been transformative. So this familiarity transcends any form of complacency. Rather it energizes me to be that bridge between all stakeholders so that we can have greater harmonization of our profession globally.

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Building on this work, and having discussions and informal think tanks with colleagues over time, I wish to share my **“5 Point Action Plan”**:

1. Direct accessibility to the president by every stakeholder periodically thereby allowing for honest ‘fireside’ and ‘grassroots’ conversation
2. Championing the cause of every member organization, region, subgroup and network through value creation that will be developed through shared expertise, knowledge and collaboration portals
3. Development of cross-cultural mentorship and leadership programmes amongst stakeholders allowing for nurturing, growth and sustainability of associations
4. Creation of platforms for strategic alliances to fuel needs based programs and theme/regional campaigns which will serve the health of our communities.
5. Development of channels for ‘work migration’ for physiotherapists who have been displaced due to war or disaster and creation of a space for physiotherapists who do not belong to an organization so as to have a space and a voice

I humbly recognise that I stand on the shoulders of giants. Physiotherapy giants such as Mildred Elson, David Teager, Emma Stokes, Jacqueline King, Marilyn Moffat, Esther D’Arcy, Marco Pang, Esther Nkandu Munalula, Gabriella Mallma and so many others; these are some of the beacons of our profession of whom I am proud and who have given us a foundation to work even more assiduously for our organization and profession.

And so the magnitude of this position is not lost on me. My innate ability to unify the masses of all backgrounds, to facilitate the need for a team approach in discussion and decision making, to recognize the value of all stakeholders, to proffer respect to every strata of staff and

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stakeholder; and to create an atmosphere of honest discussion and collaboration will only benefit this noble profession and organization.

World Physiotherapy will continue to exist, but to thrive, it requires a leader who is able to connect, listen, mentor, initiate, facilitate and collaborate. I am prepared for this, and with your support I look forward to serving as your *President*.