

### The 46th CMAAO Mid-term Council Meeting in Kuala Lumpur/Malaysia

There was the Mid-term Council Meeting of the Confederation of Medical Associations in Asia and Oceania (CMAAO) in Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia, on September 16–18, 2010. I am surely not the only attendee to have felt pleasure at the sight of the city's development. The kind host of the CMAAO Mid-term Council Meeting, the Malaysian Medical Association, is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

The Asia and Oceania region is undergoing tremendous development, and the Mid-term Council Meeting discussed many issues that reflect the region's current situation both from the economic and medical perspectives. For example, we are currently heading towards a conflicting situation in which society has achieved tremendous economic growth but has insufficient resources to maintain its healthcare system. Moreover, as we well know, contemporary economics is inherently fluctuant and this instability cannot be avoided, but countries' healthcare systems should not waver in response. Since the general public's requirements of healthcare are only increasing, society needs some sort of firm mechanism that can withstand this instability. It can also be said that the tasks of national medical associations are growing extremely complicated.

Amongst these, the prescription right is a particularly critical issue, one that the World Medical Association has also been debating heatedly for years. This is because this issue touches the core of the medical profession as it concerns a physicians' professional autonomy, which enables appropriate medical decision-making and processes, from diagnosis to treatment tailored to the patient's needs. We cannot overlook a trend that ignores the basic role of physicians under the name of task shifting, using the maldistribution of medical manpower as an excuse.

Regardless of the social situation, assurance of sufficient quality and urgent responses are necessary in the healthcare field, and countries need to implement policy planning based on these needs. The CMAAO Mid-term Council Meeting



Dance performance at the dinner hosted by the Malaysian Medical Association

saw lively discussions on the issue and agreed to this point.

September 16th was a public holiday for Malaysia Day, and throughout the streets of Kuala Lumpur were signs bearing the slogan "One Malaysia." Malaysia is a typical multiethnic country with a population comprising mainly people of Malay, Chinese, Indian, and indigenous descent, where ethnic groups live together while preserving their own unique cultures and traditions in their language, lifestyle customs, and cuisine. This slogan seems to contain the desire for even greater development as one, united, Malaysia while respecting the country's ethnic diversity. This spirit was expressed in the music and dance presented at the dinner hosted by the Malaysian Medical Association. There was truly a wide variety of traditional folk costumes and music patterns in what appeared to be Indian, Indonesian, and Thai styles, played by the same dancing team. These performances gave me a sense of the exotic atmosphere and richly brilliant colors of tropical countries. I am confident that such rich colors in the region of Asia and Oceania is the real treasure for us, if we can harmonize while sustaining each individual character.

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