

Incredible India – 28th CMAAO Congress and 49th Council Meeting

By Dr Bertha Woon and Lee Sze Yong

The Confederation of Medical Associations in Asia and Oceania (CMAAO) held their 28th Congress and 49th Council Meeting, at Shangri-La Hotel in New Delhi, India from 12 to 14 September 2013. SMA's CMAAO Councillor Dr Bertha Woon and SMA Secretariat staff Mr Lee Sze Yong attended the event.

"Be Human – Stop Child Abuse" was the theme of this general assembly (GA). Renowned paediatrician Dr Rajeev Seth, a councillor of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, delivered the pithy keynote lecture. Presentations from each country then followed, which included Korea's vivid case reports of child abuse and Thailand's discussion of their national One Stop Crisis Centre initiative. During SMA's presentation, Dr Woon highlighted Singapore's international obligations,¹ local legislation,² our Ministry of Social and Family Development's child abuse statistics, our reporting process for suspected child abuse, and the role of our doctors in child abuse cases. A lively round-table discussion culminated with a draft resolution on child abuse, which was scheduled to be presented at the World Medical Association (WMA) meeting at Fortaleza the following month.

The new CMAAO constitution also took effect at this GA. As Chairperson of the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, Dr Woon spent the last four years obtaining consensus from all the CMAAO representatives to amend the previous CMAAO constitution. We highlight three significant changes below:

1. GAs are now held annually, instead of biennially. As a result, resolutions can be tabled, discussed and voted upon yearly. Resolutions can thus be announced at the press conference held at the end of each GA, to maximise CMAAO's advocacy impact at WMA meetings.

2. CMAAO meetings now occur before, and not after, WMA meetings so as to reflect Asian-Oceanian concerns to WMA in a timely manner.
3. There were technical words and phrases in the old constitution that prevented CMAAO members from inter alia tabling and voting on resolutions at CMAAO meetings other than GAs; they were removed. This facilitates swift and proper regional responses to issues and crises in the region.

Additionally, each medical association delivered country reports to update the other nations on the state of their country's healthcare. Networking between representatives during and outside the meetings also strengthened ties and promoted mutual cooperation.

Our deepest thanks go to the Indian Medical Association, especially Dr Narendra Saini and Dr and Mrs RN Tandon, for their warm hospitality during our stay in India. The next CMAAO meeting will be held in the Philippines in 2014. **SMA**

References

1. Ministry of Social and Family Development. *Obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Available at: <http://goo.gl/b3jxf2>. Accessed 29 October 2013.
2. Attorney-General's Chambers. *Children and Young Persons Act (Chapter 38)*. Available at <http://goo.gl/6MZwYn>. Accessed 29 October 2013.



Dr Bertha Woon is a specialist in General Surgery in Singapore. She is Director of her own private practice, Bertha Woon General and Breast Surgery, at Gleneagles Medical Centre. She is also an advocate and solicitor of the Supreme Court of Singapore. She obtained her Juris Doctor from the School of Law at Singapore Management University, and was called to the Singapore Bar in July this year. She is also an MPS associate.