

66TH WMA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The World Medical Association (WMA) is an international organisation representing physicians, and their mission is to serve humanity by endeavouring to achieve the highest international standards in medical education, medical science, medical art and medical ethics, and healthcare for all people in the world. There is a total of 112 members in the WMA comprising national medical associations (NMAs) and constituent bodies, including the SMA.

The 66th WMA General Assembly and the 201st/202nd Council Sessions of the WMA were held from 14 to 17 October 2015 at the World Trade Centre, Moscow, Russia. Delegates from close to 60 NMAs attended the meeting. One of the issues discussed was medical education, where Prof David Gordon, President of the World Federation for Medical Education, presented observations on the global trends of medical education. He explained that the number of medical schools has been increasing, according to records by the World Directory of Medical Schools, but there has been a mix of both well-planned and chaotic growths in different regions. He opined that the use of standards to accredit medical schools is of high importance, thereby

sparking discussions on the role of national governments and agencies in accrediting medical schools in their respective countries.

Prof Sir Michael Marmot, Director of the Institute of Health Equity at University College London and former President of the British Medical Association, presented the social determinants of health and championed the notion that every sector is a health sector; he gave an example where level of education is associated with higher life expectancies, lower obesity levels, less smoking and less early childhood developmental disorders.

At the General Assembly, Prof Sir Michael Marmot was installed as president of the WMA for 2015/2016. In addition, the WMA's policy on the Social Determinants of Health was retitled the Declaration of Oslo on Social Determinants of Health. The 66th General Assembly also adopted the WMA Resolution on the Bombing of the Hospital of Medecins Sans Frontieres in Kunduz, Afghanistan, the WMA Resolution on Global Refugee Crisis, and the WMA Resolution to Stop Attacks Against Healthcare Workers and Facilities in Turkey. In addition, the WMA called

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for a series of measures to improve physicians' well-being. The medical profession often attracts highly driven individuals with a strong sense of duty and who are subject to high expectations from patients and the public. These expectations can contribute to physicians prioritising the care of others over that of self, and inadvertently developing feelings of guilt and selfishness for managing their own well-being. The WMA urged for better wellness promotion and prevention strategies, and earlier intervention to help lessen the severity of mental and physical illnesses among practising physicians and physicians in postgraduate education. ◆

