

Sharing a COMMON GOAL

33RD CMAAO GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND 54TH COUNCIL MEETING

Text by Dr Benny Loo | Photos by CMAAO

SMA participated in the 33rd Confederation of Medical Associations in Asia and Oceania (CMAAO) General Assembly and 54th Council Meeting, held at Shangri-La's Rasa Sayang Resort and Spa in Penang, Malaysia. The meeting was hosted by the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) from 12 to 14 September 2018, with the theme "Path to Universal Health Coverage".

SMA was represented by Dr Lee Yik Voon, and Dr Chong Yeh Woei chaired the CMAAO meeting. It was also the first time a Junior Doctors Network (JDN) meeting was held at CMAAO, and Dr Ng Chew Lip and I represented the SMA Doctors in Training (DIT) Committee to participate in the discussion.

CMAAO was inaugurated in 1959 with 11 national medical associations (NMAs), and has since grown to a membership of 18 NMAs. In recognition of Dr Taro Takemi, the first president of CMAAO, and his contribution to the organisation, an academic lecture named the Taro Takemi Memorial Oration was established since 1991.¹

It was a very enriching experience as leaders of the respective NMAs presented their country reports for the past year. Generally, there are two trends of healthcare issues. Firstly, the lower economic group faces difficulties in providing accessible healthcare in all parts of their countries, especially in the rural regions. On the other hand, the higher economic group faces challenges in managing an ageing population, including the redistribution of resources and bolstering of primary healthcare to cope with patients who have chronic and/or multiple diseases.

Datuk Dr Noor Hisham bin Abdullah, Director-General of Health of Malaysia, shared

his country's path to Universal Health Coverage in the 17th Taro Takemi Memorial Oration. SMA also shared on Singapore's approach, which consists of managing multiple factors including adequate finances; access to medicine; governance of system; a sufficient workforce; monitoring of statistics; and delivering quality service.

It was a very rewarding discussion as I felt that we all share a common goal towards providing good healthcare for our people, despite our different backgrounds and the varied challenges. Although the meeting lasted just three days, the friendships and memories formed would last for a lifetime.

Reference

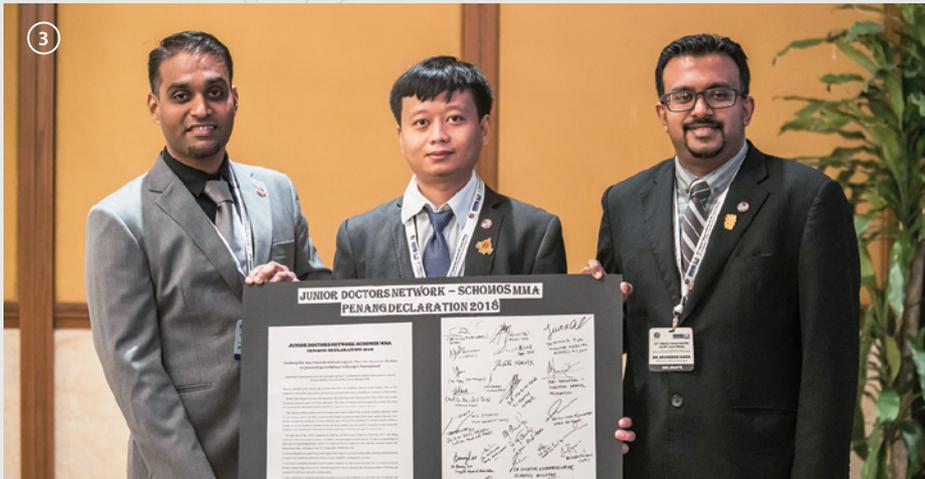
1. CMAAO. History of the CMAAO. Available at: http://cmaao.org/about/history_of_the_cmaao.html.



①



②



THE CMAAO JUNIOR DOCTORS NETWORK

Text by Dr Ng Chew Lip | Photos by CMAAO

A very significant event that took place during the 33rd CMAAO meeting was the inception of the JDN within the CMAAO. The JDN is a platform for medical associations in the region to share experiences on the issues relating to junior doctors, ranging from postgraduate training, welfare and trends in medical education, to the challenges junior doctors face in the region. The JDN concept has been around in national and transnational medical organisations, including the World Medical Association. Within the SMA, we have a committee that represents the interests of junior doctors – the DIT Committee.

We had the first JDN meeting in Penang, with the theme of “Leading the way towards mutual respect – The role of Junior Doctors in preventing workplace bullying and harassment”, hosted by the MMA. Bullying and harassment is real and present in many professions, including medicine, and has significant negative impact on the work environment

and junior doctors. The CMAAO JDN representatives felt strongly that a statement should be made to declare that CMAAO recognises the issue of workplace bullying and harassment, and that measures should be taken to actively tackle the issue. A Penang Declaration against Workplace Bullying and Harassment was drafted and signed by all JDN representatives, with Dr Loo and I signing on behalf of SMA.

The inception of the JDN into CMAAO was a milestone in raising awareness on junior doctors' issues at an international platform. Dr Loo and I were excited and encouraged by the sharing of junior doctor activities by the JDN representatives from across the region. It is amazing how much we have in common, despite the diversity across nations. There is so much to learn and much to share, and the conversations in the JDN group have been continuing over WhatsApp and emails, long after the CMAAO meeting on the beautiful island of Penang ended. ♦

Legend

1. Dr Lee Yik Voon presenting a token of appreciation to Dr Mohamed Namazie Ibrahim, President of Malaysian Medical Association, for his kind hospitality
2. Dr Chong Yeh Woei chairing the CMAAO meeting
3. The Declaration of Penang presented by representatives of the Junior Doctors Network
4. Dr Benny Loo presenting on the "Pathway to Universal Health Coverage"

Dr Loo is an associate consultant in paediatric medicine at KK Women's and Children's Hospital. He looks forward to a morning dose of caffeine and plenty of patients' smiles every day. He is also the chairperson of the SMA DIT Committee.



Dr Ng is an associate consultant with the ENT – Head & Neck Surgery department at Ng Teng Fong General Hospital. He is also the vice chairperson of the SMA DIT Committee.

