

# 18<sup>th</sup> MASEAN MID-TERM MEETING

Text by Denise Tan, Assistant Manager, International Relations

The 18th Medical Association of South East Asian Nations (MASEAN) Mid-Term Meeting was held from 14 to 16 March 2019 at Shangri-La's Mactan Resort and Spa in Cebu, Philippines. This year's meeting was hosted by the Philippine Medical Association (PMA) and attended by delegates from the national medical associations (NMAs) of Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The SMA delegation comprised Dr Tammy Chan (Treasurer, MASEAN), A/Prof Mahesh Choolani (Vice-Chairman, MASEAN Group of Journals), Dr Tan Tze Lee, Dr Lim Kheng Choon and the secretariat team.

## Scientific symposium

The theme for this year's Scientific Symposium was "Crisis in Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in the Workplace". According to the World Health Organization, the four major risk factors are tobacco use, physical inactivity, harmful use of alcohol and unhealthy diets.

SMA representatives shared about the initiatives that Singapore has launched

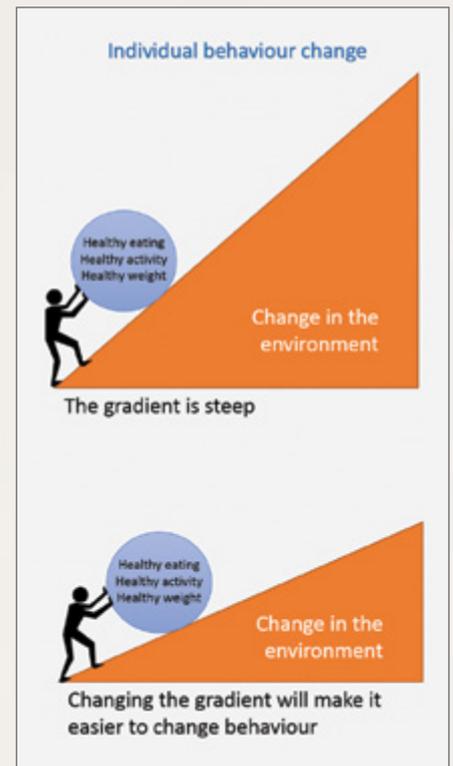
in this aspect: Community Health Assist Schemes, tobacco control measures, War on Diabetes and HealthySG Taskforce.

Following the presentation and discussion by the respective NMAs, it was concluded that NCDs are associated with human behaviour, the environment, and economic and social factors, and that many initiatives have been put in place to create awareness of the threat of NCDs. The best prevention is a change in lifestyle. However, for people to make healthy choices, the healthy choices must be made available, accessible and affordable. What then is the role for doctors here? – Opportunistic smoking cessation, prescribing exercise and/or giving suggestions on diet?

With these thoughts in mind, the delegates bade farewell as the Mid-Term Meeting concluded.

## Next meeting

We thank the PMA for their hospitality and look forward to the 19th MASEAN Conference, to be held in Indonesia in 2020. ◆



## Legend

1. Delegates of the 18th MASEAN Mid-Term Meeting

