



REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC  
BUREAU REGIONAL DU PACIFIQUE OCCIDENTAL

REGIONAL COMMITTEE

WPR/RC59/NGO/5

**Fifty-ninth session**  
**Manila, Philippines**  
**22-26 September 2008**

23 September 2008

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Agenda item 8

STATEMENT BY THE ASIAN MEDICAL STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION  
(AMSA)

**Dr Omar Mansour, Vice Overall Chairperson**

It is an honour for a medical student to stand before you today and report to you on the activities of AMSA which is the peak representative body of medical students in the Asia Pacific Region.

With over 22 member nations across the Asia-Pacific, and four observer countries, AMSA represents not only the large number of medical students in our region, but future leaders and stakeholders in health care - individuals committed to making a difference in health and helping achieve the WHO vision for equitable health care provision.

AMSA is a student led organization with the principal aim of representing our members, increasing interaction and cooperation across our member countries, promoting health and medical issues that are unique to our region, sharing experiences and knowledge on combating the emerging health problems, exploring ways in which to engage in the health sector although we are just medical students and bridging the cultural division between our region's future medical workforce.

We are a conference-based organization hosting two conferences annually. These meetings aim to bring together delegations from all over the region to explore in detail a selected health theme. Each country presents on their unique health issues: and discussions, workshops, seminars and keynote lectures bridge the knowledge gap between our members. Our academic emphasis is strong, with a secretary of academics taking on the role of running an International Research Project with the view of publication annually.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank WHO for its inspiration and leadership as we look to WHO for ideas on themes to discuss and engage with. Moreover, thank Dr Omi for attending the 29<sup>th</sup> Asian Medical Student Conference in Tokyo last month, where more than 500 delegates eagerly listened to his talk; and took away more than he could imagine.

With the self-directed learning paradigm of medical education of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is little doubt among medical educators that meetings such as those we host form an integral component of medical school in today's world.

Let me take a moment to tell you about some of the achievements AMSA has made over the past 12 months. We have successfully established and implemented leadership development seminars where

attendees can gain valuable insight and experience to leadership in health delivered by experts in the field. Important topics such as public speaking, sponsorship seeking, project management skills and health advocacy were some of the topics covered. We have also established a travel assistance grant to assist those from countries with financial disadvantage to make our meetings accessible to all in our region. In Tokyo last month we assisted students from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Mongolia, Nepal and Papua New Guinea. To the value of USD 22,000.

Our themes over the past couple of years have centred on Noncommunicable diseases and health promotion. This is a theme shared commonly across all our member nations – be it developed or developing. This theme is unique in the sense that we as medical students can take action now and immerse ourselves in public health initiatives and contribute to abating this problem.

One of our main directions over the next year is engaging country's that have been somewhat resistant, or unable to join us. This includes the Philippines, Singapore and Viet Nam. It is our aim to have all the future stakeholders in medicine to engage cooperatively together to work from grassroots in improving the health of our region, primary health care and importantly equitable and accessible delivery of health care. Our goal of initiating life-long partnerships and networking for the keenest of the keen in our regions health should not in our view exclude any medical student in this region.

Finally, I wish to thank each and everyone of you for your support and inspiration that you provide to all medical students. It is your hard work now, your vision, which we hope to be a partner of now and in the future.