

**VALEDICTORY SPEECH**  
**DR. XAVIER DEAU**  
**WMA GENERAL ASSEMBLY, MOSCOW 2015**

Dear Presidents and Chairpersons,

Dear Colleagues,

Dear Friends,

I am particularly honored and pleased to welcome here in Moscow the 116 members of our world medical association or their representatives.

As it happens we are holding here in Moscow not only our 2015 General Assembly but also the 201st WMA Council Session and the Annual meeting of junior doctors.

I wish to thank the Russian Medical Society for their friendly welcome and efficient organisation.

Thanks are also due to the Russian Government and the Moscow city council for their support.

As I open this General Assembly, I believe it is appropriate to recall the goals of the World Medical Association.

Our aim is to serve mankind by striving to achieve the highest international standards in terms of medical education, medical science, medical art, medical ethics and medical care for all the peoples of the world.

The world is currently undergoing major upheavals. More than ever the medical profession and our associations must be present and play an active role on the global scene.

Climate change.

A very last chance of reaching a consensus on global warming will come up at the COP21 meeting in December in Paris. Physicians are called upon to deal with the consequences of climate change on human health worldwide.

Geopolitical upheavals.

Migrant populations requiring immediate health care, irrespective of their language, culture, religion or skin colour.

Upheavals due to armed conflicts.

Here again doctors should guarantee high standards of medical care in safe conditions, for both patients and medical staff, consistent with the ethical standards of our World Medical Association and our Health care in Danger programme.

Scientific upheavals.

With a very rapid evolution of medical science and new technologies requiring an urgent updating of medical training.

Throughout our discussions at this General Assembly, we must therefore insist on the absolute necessity of enforcing strong ethical values, particularly as regards the autonomy of physicians.

Medical autonomy is without doubt an overarching ethical value inasmuch as it guarantees patient trust, professional confidentiality and the protection of personal data.

It also means a respect for human beings, for their enlightened consent or acceptance, their vulnerability and their rights as human beings.

I am, we are all, concerned by these upheavals, which result in social and political situations that impact negatively on human health, mainly on the poorest.

The WMA, our National Associations, each and every one of us individually, all must work together, in a spirit of brotherhood, equity and solidarity, with full respect for the basic values of medical ethics.

We should avoid all forms of fundamentalism, be it social, political, professional or religious, whilst preserving our own personal professional freedom - such are the stakes if we are to safeguard the physician's autonomy.

Medical autonomy impacts directly on all our patients as well as on our ability to care for foreign or migrant patients.

A flood of migrants is fleeing violence and the fundamentalism of certain ideologies, bringing us back to the historical and ethical origins of our World Medical Association.

Let us accept these people and give them the medical care they require.

For such is our simple duty, our contribution to the survival of peace in the world.

Amidst these upheavals the physician is at the forefront of the quest for peace and equity, for he is expected to provide an immediate medico-social response to the social determinants of health.

Let us help our medical associations, our physicians to provide quality medical care for all human beings. In full independence, full confidence, whilst such are the values I strove to promote through my one-year mandate as your President.

Before I conclude, I would like to express my personal gratitude to WMA Council members, Chaired by Dr Mukesh Haikerwal and subsequently by Dr Ardis Hoven, as well as the secretariat as a whole under Dr Kloiber's leadership. My thanks also go to our Past President Margaret Mungherera for her brave involvement in the African project. I also extend my best wishes to Sir Michael, who will take over the Presidency with his well-known dynamism, enthusiasm, and *joie de vivre*.

My warmest thanks also go to our devoted office staff, Sunny, Clarisse, Anne-Marie, Julia, Roderic and Lamine.

Thank you all for the high standard of your contributions. Let us continue to bear witness to and actively enforce the ethical values of the World Medical Association.

In view of the serious problems we face, we should continue to provide leadership for all our medical associations.

It is our duty to combat violence relentlessly by providing quality medical care for all.

Let us be proud of being physicians,

Let us be proud of our World Medical Association,

Let us be proud of serving peace for the welfare of mankind.

Xavier Deau