

**INAUGURAL SPEECH
OF WMA PRESIDENT 2011-2012
Dr. José Luiz Gomes do Amaral**

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Dear friends and colleagues,

You make medicine your lives, and see doctors as your brothers and sisters. Therefore, there's no one better than you to understand the emotion that seizes me as I am formally given the mission of representing this House.

The President of the WMA is expected to be the face of and voice behind the opinions of the more than nine million doctors of the 97 national medical associations that constitute this institution.

I feel deeply honored for having been chosen. I feel grateful to have been given such a privilege by you, and I am committed to meeting the immense responsibility that this position demands; a formidable challenge under any circumstances, and even more so under those of our present days.

These are days of uncertainty and indecision. Throughout the history of our profession, we have experienced all sorts of difficulties, yet we never permitted them vanquish our hope of alleviating the suffering of those who trusted us with their lives and with the lives of their loved ones. We have experienced great discoveries of science, yet we suffer with the still insuperable obstacles that separate millions of people from the benefits of this progress. Nevertheless, our patients have never had to look far for us. Because we were besides them.

But where are we today?

We find ourselves today surrounded by a complex healthcare network, the primary purpose of which is to broaden access to care, but which often misrepresents us.

Under no circumstances would we contemplate a retreat. There is no question about that.

The fields of health, science and technological development have brought us immense possibilities of diagnosis and treatment, unimaginable a few decades ago. We have done and we shall certainly do more in this field. Specialization and specialists are more than necessary.

We cannot disregard the priceless intervention of the many professionals that integrate the health system to which we, doctors, have made considerable contributions to build. But where are we in this system? Are we in the forefront or are we hidden behind the same technology and organization we should use to strengthen the bond with those that we care for?

It is time to decide if we want to be the key players in the health care process or if we will fill the role of mere spectators. There's no time or space to be vague. We can't be supporting actors in a play where the people expect us to be protagonists. It's time for us to reaffirm our leadership of healthcare process.

This is what we were trained to do. We were given the privilege and responsibility to take care of the lives of our people. This is our duty and society trusts us to live up to their expectations.

It's time for us to decide and stand for medicine.

Count on me to serve you in this endeavor faithfully.