

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS

Ladies and Gentleman,

It was on 21st October, 2016 that with all humility I had the profound privilege of taking over the reins of the prestigious World Medical Association as its President. In my presidential address delivered thereat, I had flagged of important and vital issues in various domains, which needed effective, prompt and timely tackling in the larger interest of medical profession, professionals and legitimate rights and interests of men and mankind beyond considerations of discrimination and differentiation.

My mission as WMA President brought out very clearly from the word go was to bring to the centre stage the core issue of '**professional autonomy**', which is paramount and under any circumstances is not open to any concession, condonation, compromise or marginalization in any form, mode and manner.

In addition the other important issues that I had flagged pertained to augmentation of the membership of World Medical Association, emphasis on mental health, meaningful incorporation of the core concepts of equality, justice and equity.

Further, bringing to fore the inevitable necessity of zero tolerance against sexual violence, gender selection, cuts commission and kick-backs being resorted to by the medical professionals bringing shame to the profession as a whole was of equal priority and importance. Sex selective abortion was yet another important aspect brought out for the purposes of desired advocacy so as to generate impact of consequence.

Another arena which was emphasized upon was the concept of '**World Health Keeping Force**' to be invoked by the desired initiative on part of all the National Medical Associations across the world on the lines of '**World Peace Keeping Force**', which have proven to be of relevance for its targeted objectives and purposes.

At the second conference organized by World Veterinary Association and World Medical Association held in Japan on 10th and 11th November, 2016 on the thematic concept of '**One health**' it was emphasized unequivocally that concept that integrates the meaningful rendering of health to men and animals alike along with environmental and plant health alone would genuinely cater to the cause of life and living in the world.

The mandate of Zero Tolerance in terms of the needs for invocation of a binding policy against sexual violence, gender selection has been emphasized in the keynote address delivered at the **NATCON-2016** organized by Indian Medical Association at Amritsar, Punjab on 27th and 28th December, 2016.

On 14th January, 2017 the Annual Scientific Meeting of the Chinese Medical Association organized at Nanjing, China was inaugurated whereat the issue of membership of China and that of Taiwan in World Medical Association also came to be discussed at length with the counterparts.

In this very vein the issue of sex selective abortions was raised in the Annual Conference of FOGSI held at Ahmedabad in State of Gujarat in India on 26th January, 2017, which was attended by well over 12,000 Gynecologists drawn from different parts of the India and many other countries. Equal emphasis was laid pertaining to the issues of sex selection and also that of maternal mortality.

An International Summit on the vital theme of '**Air Pollution**' organized by Indian Medical Association was inaugurated on 10th March, 2017, in the august presence of Dr. Yokokura the President of JMA and President Elect of WMA, whereat the significance of environmental health linked with Air Pollution was brought out in all its dimensions and manifestations and various advisories on the said count came to be generated for their necessary incorporation in the policy making frame by the various countries.

The emphasis on focused inculcation of the core concept of equality, justice and equity has been emphasized during the 12th World Conference on Bio-Ethics, Medical Ethics, and health laws held on March, 21-23, 2017 at Cyprus, so also it was brought into focus that the medical students anywhere in the world should not be subjected to any discrimination of any type resulting in any inequality issues. They need to be dealt by the appropriate authorities with firm hand in such a manner which should invoke the required deterrence on such issues.

At the Council meeting at Zambia on 20th April, 2017 addressing the media at a press conference it was made known that it is imperative that the budgetary allocations for health on a priority basis is substantially increased so as to alter the health scenario in a positive and pragmatic way in the larger interest of the citizens of Zambia to give them meaningful life commensurate with legitimate expectations.

It was at the International congress on Heart Hypertension and Diabetes" organised by Heart Foundation of India held at Dubai on 5th May, 2017 that the need of affordable tertiary healthcare was emphasized so that it is within the reach of even marginalized section of the impoverished society. In terms of this very initiative and venture of ensuring 'affordable healthcare', through

appropriate policy interventions by the Government of India and the initiative of Indian Medical Association has resulted in the required 'cost reduction' by the Government of India, vide an appropriate 'capping' with reference to 'knee replacement operations' and 'coronary stents', which has brought the same into an 'affordable zone', to be within the reach of the common man which was illusive hitherto.

The initiatives successfully ventured into by the Indian Medical Association having paid significant meaningful dividends need to be replicated by the various National Medical Associations of the Member countries to reap similar dividends for the similarly placed, which in my opinion turns out to be a real service to the cause of humanity.

On 8th May at the 10th Geneva Conference on '**Person Centric Medicine**' it was categorically emphasised that scientific evidence based medicine should be person centric in the best interest of the patient and precisely the same would be the face of the future medicine for the men and mankind in offing.

On 21st May, 2017 had the privilege of interacting with the office bearers of Common Wealth Medical Association, WONCA and Junior Doctors Network in United Nation Office during the World Health Professionals Alliance meeting whereat important issues pertaining to professional autonomy and ethical professional practice came to be discussed in their various manifestations and required initiatives to be initiated by the various countries in terms of required policies in consultation with their respective National Medical Associations.

The practice amongst the profession to resort to '**kick-backs - cuts and commission**' in grossest possible breach of ethicality, morality and value based considerations has been condemned at all forums in no uncertain terms and

accordingly the Indian Medical Association has come out with an explicit policy made known to all concerned to the effect that those members found to be indulging in the same, by invocation of disciplinary jurisdiction their membership of the Association would be summarily terminated. The same has resulted in appropriate signals reaching the professional community and the deterrent impact thereto is decipherable.

Under this very initiative Maharashtra a progressive State in India has ventured in to propose a legislation on imposing prohibition on the said unethical practices amongst the medical professionals, where under stringent penalties stand incorporated, which would be causing the required deterrent. The group constituted for the said purpose by the Govt. of the State of Maharashtra includes the President of the State Indian Medical Association as an Ex-officio Member and the contribution thereto in shaping the same is substantially significant.

On the front of uncompromised '**professional autonomy**' the IMA invoked a public movement against the invocation of policy intervention, whereby an attempt is in vogue to repeal the present Indian Medical Council Act governing the regulatory Medical Council of India by National Medical Commission Bill, which is primarily aims at taking away the representative character of the regulatory body and replace it with a nominated body, which will also include non-professionals in a substantial number and would be reduced down to a sub-department under the government negating the much required professional autonomy in all its forms and manifestations. The movement has gathered a significant momentum under the aegis of Indian Medical Association.

The positive indulgence on part of the medical professionals in the larger human interest necessitates rendering them required '**security and safety**'. The infliction of the violence at the drop of the hat merits to be done away with. It was on this

very count that the Indian Medical Association gave a clarion call in response to which well over 10,000 medical professionals all over the country on 6th June, 2017 gathered at a historic rally in New Delhi, which aired its concern for extension of merited safety and security to the medical professionals in India by suitable policy interventions at all levels.

During the Annual meeting of the American Medical Association held between 10-14th June, 2017 undertook the privilege of having meaningful interaction with Dr Madera CEO AMA, Ms Liyah Secretary General Israel Medical Association, Dr. Yokokura President JMA, and President Thailand Medical Association Prof Dr Saranatra Waikakul on vital areas of cause and concern alike.

In the address made at the meeting of Confederation of Medical Association of Asia and Oceanic countries on 29.09.17 in Tokyo, Japan, the Indian position in regard to legality, social ethos, medical norms and practices pertaining to 'End of Life' was brought to fore, wherein it was emphasized that the constitutional position bringing out right to dignified life as a fundamental right vested with the citizen ought to include right to decent and dignified death.

Addressing the Central Working Committee meeting of the Indian Medical Association held between 23rd to 24th Sept. 2017 at New Delhi and also the celebration of Centenary of Medical Conference in India, the paramount need for ethics based medical practice was emphasized. The Centenary Indian Medical Association Award was also ceremonially conferred.

All over initiatives and efforts need to be viewed in the backdrop of the material reality that in all fairness we need to accept that the '**Global tranquility**' has substantial reason to feel potently threatened. This is primarily due to broadening of the '**disparities and inequities**' resulting in security and safety

being put to stress and generating palpable discontent, which otherwise was simmering in character.

In the context of my yearlong occupancy as the President of the premier World Medical Association I need to state with all conviction at my disposal that it is imperative for all across the **'geographical borders'** to be alert and conscious to the dictum that **'poverty anywhere is an inevitable threat to prosperity everywhere'**. On this very count the **'Global Developmental Profile'** cannot turn a blind eye to this material reality. Independent of the cause and causation the fact remains that **'inequity'** would inevitably entail **'discontent'** resulting in **'discomfort'** and manifesting in an **'uncontrolled rebellion'**. Whether world would be able to sustain the same in the context of its bitter experiences of the two worst fought **'World Wars'** in the 20th Century, the **'scars'** of which haunt us incessantly till date. The material question therefore is has the world taken right and desired lessons out of the same? The palpable answer, with its ugly raised head turns out to be **'no'** and that operationally is the root cause of plaguing **'inequities and inequality'**.

As such, the human emancipation and development across the geographical boundaries carved out on the Globe, mandates true and real essence of **'equity'** and **'equality'** in the domain of **'legitimacy of fulfillment of human expectations'** and **'desire of decent and dignified human life'** in the lap of **'human culture and humanized civilization'**.

It is amongst such **'distorted deviations'** that the medical profession has to rise to the occasion in the larger interest of **'men, mankind, culture and civilization'** in unison to bridge the vital gaps that have been stonewalled for various reasons of **'narrow mindedness, hate, bigotry and insensitivity'** plagued by utter and gross **'selfishness'** paramount in nature and unending in character.

The challenge is huge in magnitude and gigantic in its existence. The efforts and the initiatives that have been undertaken have not been sufficient to even cause a dent to it much-less being sufficient for its eraser. The real test is not extension of **'lip sympathy'** to the needy and helpless but the core requirement is extension of a **'helping hand harboring a healing touch'**. The divine angel woman Mother Teresa very candidly observed to deal such inclinations through her candid words to the effect that **'a hand extended in help is far more superior to the two folded in prayer'**. It is here that the real trajectory of doing good in a meaningful sense and a bonafide purpose lies.

We have been able to do reasonably well, but yet much is required to be done. This is possible only by a genuine hand holding and availing the prestigious and all important forum of World Medical Association to move with devoted commitment to impact various policy frames which would go a long way to make the mother planet earth a better place for human habitation and co-existence.

Under a notable initiative by the Indian Medical Association through series of **'Public Advertisements'** in leading dailies, mass awareness on matters of health including public health and professional issues in a thematic manner were prominently focused in public and professional interest. The major thematic depictions prominently included **"Avoidance of treatment from fake doctors, fair compensation for better accountability amongst medical professionals, 'Beti Bachao' (Save daughters), Zero tolerance for cuts and commissions and vital aspects of public health"**, which evoked a very huge and powerful response from all the stakeholders. On 2nd October the World Non-violence Day which is the birth day of legendary Late Mahatma Gandhi an apostle of non-violence and who gave the world the modality of assertion through "fasting" the Indian Medical

Association gave a call for “Dawn to Dusk” fast by all the members of IMA across the country to press for the acceptance of demand in the interest of profession and professionals by the Government of India. In response to the clarion call well over 3,00,000 medical professionals, who are the members of IMA wholeheartedly participated at the said fast on the very lines of the global concept given by Mahatma Gandhi to the world.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not record my sense of thankfulness and gratitude to all the members of the Council, officials of the World Medical Association and representatives of all the National Medical Associations of Member countries for their valuable support in my endeavor, which I revere and would love to cherish all my life. I am sure that coming times would see a new ‘**twilight**’ for a better ‘**dawn**’ for the entire humanity.

Thank you,