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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Reflections and Milestones for 2024

My dear friends and colleagues, as 2024 draws to a close, I am sure all of us will reflect on what we have done, what we have achieved, and what we need to do going forward.

For MMA, it is the same. There are both longstanding and new issues which crop up from time to time, requiring the attention, views, and at times, action from MMA. Like everyone else, MMA will review these issues as 2025 dawns, before determining its actions going forward.

This year, the national budget was presented on 18 October by our Prime Minister. MMA had submitted to the government a list of many issues in healthcare which we felt required their attention.

While we are thankful that the budget for healthcare was increased, the government expenditure on healthcare still has a long way to go before it reaches the target of being at least 5% of the national GDP. MMA has called for this target to have a timeline that is sooner rather than later. Though not mentioned in the budget, we hope this target will remain part of the government's deliberations and planning.

One matter that MMA called for, which was addressed partially in the budget, was an increase in the doctors' active on-call allowance. MMA had asked for a significant increase to reflect the services and sacrifices of doctors who are on-call serving the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week. An increment was announced, but with the caveat that only certain categories would receive it. We are still awaiting further details on this matter.

In addition to the above, there are other issues concerning both government and private doctors, as well as policies affecting the healthcare landscape, which we hope to engage with the government on in the near future. The World Medical Association



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At the WMA Congress in Helsinki

(WMA) is an international body of which MMA is a member. This year, its annual congress was held in Helsinki, Finland, in late October. The MMA delegation, consisting of the president and president-elect, had the opportunity to participate in the congress deliberations and meet representatives from medical associations worldwide. It was also a memorable occasion as one of MMA's past presidents, Dr Ashok Philip, was installed as the President of the WMA.



Attending the WMA Congress

In the last month, as the President of MMA, I had the privilege of attending functions organised by two of our branches. On 26 October, I had the honour of being invited to



With Guest of Honour at the MMA Wilayah Dinner (Aloft Hotel)

the MMA Melaka Branch's 42nd Annual Dinner and Installation Night. It was a fun-filled evening with great entertainment. Congratulations to the MMA Melaka Exco, led by Dr Gayathri Kumarasuriar, and the organising committee for a wonderful function.

On 16 November, I attended the MMA Wilayah Branch Annual Dinner, which saw a large number of doctors, their families, and friends gather for a night of entertainment and camaraderie. Everyone present had a wonderful time. I congratulate Dr Selvarajah Sathaya, his exco, and the organising committee for a job well done. I am confident the leadership of these two branches will elevate the state branches to even greater heights.



MMA Melaka Annual Dinner and installation at Swiss Garden Hotel Melaka

The press, both print and online, plays a vital role in disseminating information and highlighting issues. MMA has always had a very good relationship with the media, and our views and opinions are often sought after. To foster this relationship further, MMA hosted a press dinner on 25 October, where we had the opportunity to meet many journalists. It was encouraging to see a big turnout at the function, and we hope this will become an annual event.

Lastly, I wish everyone a happy December. Until next month, take care.