

Valedictory Speech by the WMA President, Dr. Miguel Jorge, to the GA

Dear Colleagues and Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our tradition requests that the World Medical Association (WMA) outgoing President, deliver a so-called Valedictory Speech at this Ceremonial Session of our General Assembly. Accordingly to different dictionaries, valedictory

am very much prone to always try to be in contact with feelings and emotions, mine and from those people to whom I am in relationship.

Therefore, I hope to not just shortly report what I have done during my Presidential year but also how I felt others and myself during the period ending today. I can guarantee to you all, that it was quite different from any other Presidential term.

I started my Presidential term just after our General Assembly in Tbilisi, Georgia, going from there directly to Tokyo, Japan, for the Commemorative Ceremony of the 72nd Anniversary of the Japan Medical Association (JMA) on the 1st of November 2019. JMA has carried out during its existence not

just many important activities on behalf of the Japanese people but was and continue to be an outstanding member of the WMA.

In the beginning of December 2019, Taiwan Medical Association, one

University, and Director of the Brazilian Medical Association, left me not much time to relax.

You can have an idea of my doings just reading my Presidential report to the WMA Council, encompassing at least 24 activities during the pandemic: live, recorded or written interviews, and presentations. I spoke about many topics related to the pandemic such as the role of the WMA and other

discrediting science and spreading fake news, with a major contribution even from people in position of command

COVID19 has directly affected physical and mental health of millions, and indirectly affected socially and economically billions of people. Poverty and inequality are growing and people will continue, for many years, to suffer from fears, grief, anxiety, depression, loneliness, uncertainties, economic loss, and social disruption. Now, more than ever, universal health coverage including mental health care would be the best way to provide health for all.

It is time to start thinking about the future, at short, medium and long-term. It was clear that the WHO and governments were not well prepared to deal with emergencies such as those related to pandemics caused by infectious diseases or natural disasters. Health does not have enough priority for many of those who lead our countries and usually is insufficiently funded. In many countries, corruption also contributes to divert part of the budget allocated to health. It was possible to see politicians trying to save their mandates and not human lives, and even the WHO was accused to not act as required in the beginning of the pandemic because of political influences. It was also possible to observe in some regions, a lack of health services, hospital infrastructure and health personnel. The supply chain of medical equipment relies very much in few or sometimes just one source. All these factors will

need to be realistic faced and fixed, and they will not be unless the health stakeholders take initiatives to raise awareness and mobilize our communities to push their governments in the desired and needed way.

The diagnosis exists. It needs to be completed and then to adopt a treatment plan to what were harmed and preventive measures to not have further damages.

I am deeply grateful for your continuous support and hope to see you all soon again. Thank you!