

APEC Business Ethics for SMEs*¹ Forum

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The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Business Ethics Forum is held every year, and I have been invited to participate in the satellite Forum of Promoting Ethical Business Environments in the Medical Devices and Biopharmaceutical Sectors, as a delegate from the Japan Medical Association (JMA) and executive officer of the World Medical Association (WMA) for the past three years. I have attended three APEC Business Ethics Forums: in Bali, Indonesia, on September 3, 2013; at Nanjing, China on September 1-3, 2014; and at Manila, The Philippines, on August 19-20, 2015.

In 2014, the Nanjing Declaration was adopted with the purpose of promoting an ethical environment through 2020. It has become very important to affirm such guidelines because of the rapidly expanding economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region, which is where the world's population is centered in today. This means that there is great potential for the health industry, with demand increasing for medical devices and pharmaceutical drugs to promote people's health and health systems. There is an urgent need for government and private sectors to establish common ethical guidelines for ensuring adequate growth of these fields in each country.

The 2015 Forum was attended by three hundreds participants from fifteen countries and one region: Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, The Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, The US, and Vietnam. I took part in the biomedical product sector session as a presenter from the medical profession. There was discussion of establishing cooperation amongst governments, health professionals, and other

stakeholders in the industrial world in order to sustain high ethical standards by enterprises in the biopharmaceutical sector. I also joined the panel session regarding healthcare professionals' dialogue on embracing ethical interactions with industry within the context of Patient-First approaches. I presented basic introductions of the WMA Declarations of Geneva and Helsinki; the former emphasizes the priority of the health of patients, and the latter states the importance of establishing research ethics committees. We were able to establish ethical guidelines through the discussion process in Manila.

In Nanjing, I visited the mausoleum of Dr. Sun Yat-sen between discussion. The founder of modern China was also a medical doctor who also treated his country. Dr. Sun's chief political philosophy is known as the Three Principles of the People: Nationalism (non-ethnic nationalism; independence from imperialist domination), Democracy (Western constitutional government), and the People's Livelihood (free trade capitalism and Georgist tax reform). At the entrance to the mausoleum I found umbrella-shaped pine trees that had been gifts from Japan at the time of our visit in 2014.

I traveled to Leyte Island after the 2015 Forum in Manila to visit the newly built House of the Leyte Medical Society (LMS), which was donated by the members of the JMA after Leyte Island suffered a direct hit by huge typhoon Yolanda in November 2013, with heavy winds and high waves. Houses were still under reconstruction, especially along the seashore areas. The new House was on a hill and had already begun to play a role as a new center for members of the LMS, even though interior construc-

*1 SMEs: small and medium enterprises.

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tion had not yet been completed because of the increased cost of construction in the region in the wake of the terrible disaster. I was welcomed by President Dr. Maria Elvira Casal, Past-president Dr. Mina Sirikit Claridad-Tagra, and other members of LMS, and I came home with very positive impressions, confident that our donation efforts had achieved effective results.

I also visited the memorial park for war victims and the historical landing site for the return

of General Douglas MacArthur after one of the most severe battles between the US and Japan involving local inhabitants in the bay during WWII. The sea in Leyte Bay was calm and colored deep blue when I visited.

Thus, our countries are intertwined and involved in many aspects of the history of our region, and I believe that our obligation as health professionals will continue to exist within the humanitarian contribution in the future.



The Author in Panel Session regarding Healthcare Professionals Dialogue (second from left)