Report of the Chairman of the Host Organizing Committee of the Hong Kong 2010 Asia Pacific League of Associations for Rheumatology (APLAR) Congress

(Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, 9th to 15th July 2010)

Introduction

The Hong Kong Society of Rheumatology (HKSR) was incorporated in 1987, when there were only six rheumatologists serving a population of six million. In the ensuing twenty years, it grew to become a respectable medical society in the territory, providing post-graduate education and travel subsidy not only to specialists, but also to internal medicine trainees, family physicians, and allied health professionals with special interest in the care of arthritis patients. As the Society strode proudly and confidently into its twentieth year of service in 2006, the Society Council decided to take the bold attempt of submitting a bid to host the 14th APLAR Congress in Hong Kong.

Although the Society had been up and running for almost twenty years when we presented our bidding proposal at the APLAR General Assembly in Kuala Lumpur in 2006, it had very little experience in organizing large regional meetings. We knew that hosting an APLAR meeting would stretch our resources to the limit, but we considered that an opportunity of a lifetime to promote the achievements of our specialty in Hong Kong and beyond.

We were fortunate enough to have the staunch support of almost all the rheumatologists in Hong Kong, as well as the academic staff of the divisions of rheumatology of the two medical schools, who gave themselves tirelessly to help the Society to accomplish this complex and difficult task. As soon as we were granted the privilege to host the 14th APLAR Congress in September 2006, we were able to put together a group of intelligent and devoted young rheumatologists to form the Host Organizing Committee (OC). International Conference Consultant (ICC) was appointed the Congress Secretariat in the following year. The seamless cooperation between the Host OC and the Conference Secretariat culminated in the Hong Kong APLAR Congress in July 2010, which was acclaimed as a considerable success by many of those who attended the Congress.

For that and for so much, I hereby present the following report on Hong Kong 2010 APLAR Congress.

Report

The main congress of the 14th APLAR Congress was held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre from 11th to 15th July 2010 (Sunday to Thursday). Three pre-congress review courses preceded the main congress, which were also held at the same venue.

APLAR Musculoskeletal Ultrasound Course (newly introduced in APLAR Congress)

For some years, the HKSR has been organising musculoskeletal ultrasound courses for local doctors, which are usually very well received. The Host OC was aware of the growing application of ultrasound in diagnosis and management of patients with various forms of arthritis. Therefore, we decided to introduce the first musculoskeletal ultrasound course as part of the pre-congress review course.

Date: 9th (Friday) to 11th (Sunday) July 2010
Venue: Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre
Faculty: 6 (overseas), 1 (Hong Kong)
Tutors: 6
Attendance: 64
The course worked out to be so successful and welcomed that the original attendance quota of 50 was very soon oversubscribed. It was heartening to hear the many positive feedback from both the faculty members and the delegates after the conclusion of the course.

**American College of Rheumatology (ACR) Clinical Review Course**
The ACR has been supporting the APLAR Congress by hosting a Clinical Review Course before the main congress since the Kuala Lumpur APLAR Congress in 2006. This Review course proves to be very helpful for many doctors from the Asia Pacific region, who may not have the opportunity to attend the Review Course during the ACR Annual Meeting in the USA.

- **Date:** 11th July 2010 (Sunday)
- **Venue:** Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre
- **Attendance:** 200

**APLAR Basic Science Review Course**
In the last decade, we have witnessed rapid expansion of basic science research among many Asian Pacific countries. Therefore, the Host OC decided to invite the leading scientists and researchers to enlighten the delegates on recent advances in basic science research in the region.

- **Date:** 11th July 2010 (Sunday)
- **Venue:** Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre
- **Attendance:** 85
Opening Ceremony
Prof. Ho-Youn Kim, Prof. Rohini Handa, and Prof. Gariel Leung, Under-Secretary for Food and Health of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, officiated at the Ceremony, which was attended by 800 delegates. Prof. C S Lau, Professor of Rheumatology and Clinical Immunology of the Department of Medicine and Research Centre for Infection and Immunology of the Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, the University of Hong Kong and Past-President of APLAR, delivered an enjoyable keynote lecture on the history of medicine and rheumatology in Hong Kong entitled "Excellence in Medicine and Rheumatology-Enter the Dragon".
Performance: Hong Kong Hospital Authority Chinese Orchestra
Keynote Lecture: Prof. CS Lau (Hong Kong)

Main Congress
A total of 1,951 delegates from 68 countries registered for the main congress, which was held from 11th (Sunday) to 15th (Thursday) July 2010.
Faculty: 186 (116 speakers, 70 chairpersons)
Sessions: 78 (including 3 pre-congress courses, 4 plenary sessions, and 9 free paper presentations)
No. of abstracts received: 920

Gala Dinner
More than 320 guests participated in the Harbour Cruise Bauhinia on 12th July 2010, which was a unique sightseeing and dining cruise in the beautiful Victoria Harbour of Hong Kong. The guests enjoyed the breathtaking skyline of the Hong Kong Island and the spectacular laser show "A Symphony of Lights".
Awards and Travel Grants
We offered 36 travel grants of USD 500 each to subsidize doctors from less developed countries to attend the APLAR Congress in Hong Kong. Ten abstracts were selected for the Young Investigators Awards, which were presented by Prof. Ho Youn Kim and Prof. Rohini Handa on 12th July 2010. The panel of adjudicators included members of the local Scientific Committee and APLAR Executive Committee.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank members of the Host Organizing Committee: Drs. TC Cheung, Tommy Cheung, Amy Fu, Claudia Lai, Virginia Lao, Gavin Lee, TL Lee, Edward Liu, KY Lee, CC Mok, Temy Mok, LS Tam, Sandy Tang, Catherine Yuen, and Shirley Ying. Additional thanks to the Council of HKSR – Drs. Helen Chan, Katy Leung, Man-Lung Yip, and Issac Yim. It is never easy to gather such a group of able and enthusiastic young doctors who are willing to offer their wholehearted support for the good of rheumatology in Hong Kong.

Thanks to the hard work of the speakers and tutors of the musculoskeletal ultrasound course (Drs. Carmen Ho, John Hui, Catherine Kwok, Gavin Lee, KY Lee, Angela Li, KY Ma, Lisa Wong, Alice Wu, Issac Yim, Catherine Yuen, Ms. Amy Hui, and Ms. Christina Lam), the course was touted as one of the most successful and enjoyable sessions of the Congress.

My deep thanks also goes to our incomparable past presidents (Dr. KH Chan, Dr. Emily Kun, Prof. CS Lau, Prof. Edmund K Li, Dr. Raymond Wong) and Full Members of the HKSR, who had guided us so judiciously and with such wide affection. Thanks also to those trainees who have contributed their time and effort to the Congress.

Others who helped make this Congress possible included members of the APLAR Executive Committee: Prof. Ho Youn Kim, Prof. Rohini Handa, Prof. Zhan Guo Li, Prof. Kazuhiko Yamamoto, Dr. Swan Sim Yeap, Prof. Kevin Pile, Prof. Kusuki Nishioka, Prof. Dae Hyun Yoo, and Prof. Sandra V. Navarra. Additional thanks to Prof. Ikuo Nagaya, who had made a special donation to support young researchers in the Asia Pacific countries.

I offer very many thanks to Prof. Stanley Cohen, President of ACR, and Prof. Paul Emery, President of EULAR, who provided us with invaluable advice and guidance in the organisation of the ACR Review Course and the EULAR Symposium, respectively. This congress could not have been possible without the contribution of all faculty members who shared their knowledge and experience.

And as always, the wonderful team at the International Conference Consultants (ICC) – Maybo Fok, Zitta Bai, Maggie Wong, and Judy Yiu. They dispatched all the tasks assigned to them efficiently and cheerfully. Needless to say, I wish to thank sincerely the pharmaceutical industry and the Hong Kong Tourism Board for their generous sponsorship. The Congress would not be possible without their continued support and contribution.

Finally, a salute to the rheumatology circle of Hong Kong. It is a remarkable specialty, and so are the people who practice it, and I am proud to be part of it.

Dr. TH Chan
Hong Kong
17th November 2010