

COMMEMORATIVE ARTICLE

A review of constitutional changes in APLAR



During 1988–1992 many important constitutional changes of SEAPAL (South-east Asia Pacific Area League Against Rheumatism) were considered overdue. The name of this international rheumatology organization geographically excluded South Asia, the Middle East, and the Far East. The changes were made possible with the tacit agreement of David Caughey, President SEAPAL 1988–1992. The Constitution and Bylaws of SEAPAL were modified by John Darmawan, then Secretary General of SEAPAL, were unanimously adopted by postal voting by the Delegates of the General Assembly.

The following constitutional changes were enacted: the name South-east Asia Pacific Area League Against Rheumatism with the acronym SEAPAL changed into Asia Pacific League of Association for Rheumatology with the acronym APLAR; and the first APLAR Symposium was introduced and organized by Myung Chul-Yo in 1990 in Seoul, Korea. This was a milestone to the establishment of the Biennial APLAR Congresses.

During the first APLAR Congress in 1992, in Bali, Indonesia, organized by John Darmawan, it was considered to induce more scientific activities by the institution of the Subcommittee or Special Interest Group (SIG) on the various entities of the rheumatic diseases. These SIGs participated actively in the 1994 Second APLAR Symposium in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, which was organized by Kiran Veerapen.

At the 1996 APLAR Congress in Melbourne, Australia, organized by K. D. Muirden, the SEAPAL Bulletin (1983–1996), was liquidated. The Editors R. G. Robinson (1982–1992) and K. D. Muirden (1992–1996) deserved our appreciation for sustaining the bulletin for 20 years. Publication of the *APLAR Journal of Rheumatology* was institutionalized with Feng Pauw Hsie, as the Editor-

in-Chief. At this meeting 15 SIGs were established for the common rheumatic disease entities.

During 1992–1996, the APLAR COPCORD (Community Oriented Program for Control of Rheumatic Disease) flourished and expanded to many developing countries in Asia. COPCORD was institutionalized in the Constitution and Bylaws of APLAR in 1996. COPCORD provided the Member National Organizations from the developing countries with invaluable epidemiological data on rheumatic diseases.

The coordinating role of the APLAR President is pivotal in the progressive development and success of these official APLAR institutions. Non-political and scientific policies are required to develop these individual bodies. After 40 years it is gratifying to look back and cherish the success achieved by APLAR. The present will decide what opportunity will be given to APLAR for further development. After 40 years the future looks promising for the regional league of the Asia-Pacific. My presidency of APLAR was no more than as a coordinator who serves the interest of the member national organizations, various standing and subcommittees.

Notwithstanding, the term of the presidency of APLAR has been shortened from 4 to 2 years, it is anticipated that the president of APLAR still has the time and opportunity to develop our beloved organization. Keeping to the rules and regulations of the Constitution and Bylaws, the ILAR-APLAR relation has room for improvements. After all, our sole purpose is to improve the life of patients with rheumatic disease by education and research coordinated regionally by APLAR and globally by ILAR.

John DARMAWAN

Indonesia, President of APLAR 1992–1996