

FOREWORD

Over the years, the Myanmar Health Research Congresses (MHRCs) organized by the Ministry of Health and Sports have provided a platform for exchanging scientific knowledge, sharing experiences on public health issues, clinical management and the latest research findings in basic and applied research. These evidenced-based research findings have been essential not only for clinical and public health management but serve as information for policy makers to lay down policies and strategies to strengthen our nation's health system.

This year, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the organizers have not yielded to this challenging situation, but true to tradition have organized the Myanmar Health Research Congress in January this year as a virtual event. The theme for this year's MHRC is "Fighting Together against COVID-19". The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that only by acting in solidarity can communities save lives and overcome the devastating health and socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. Even among these hectic times, researchers have persevered and will present 28 Basic Research papers, 32 Applied Research papers and 29 Health Systems Research papers making a total of 89 research paper presentations, 75 poster presentations and 4 scientific symposia by local as well as international scientists and researchers from diverse academic backgrounds and wide areas of scientific expertise.

The symposia include "Lessons Learnt from COVID-19 Pandemic" in which there will be discussions from experts on their multi-faceted experiences of COVID-19 encompassing the epidemiological, diagnostic, clinical, management and genomic aspects of COVID-19. Although COVID-19 is the focus of most of our attention at this time, the huge importance of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), nutrition, pharmacovigilance were not overlooked and how evidenced based data translated to policy is essential for our health system will be discussed in the symposium "Make it happen, make it matter: Improving health outcomes through data-driven policies". Another symposium "Inclusive WASH & IPC improvement in Healthcare facilities in Myanmar" will deal with the highly important and essential aspect of clean water, sanitation and hygiene in infection prevention and control improvement in health facilities. The final symposium, "Myanmar-Korea Joint Symposium 2021 - Fighting Against Emerging and Re-emerging Infectious Diseases" will mainly highlight the updates on diagnosis, vaccine in COVID-19 and new drugs in MDR-TB, two of the largest challenges among emerging and re-emerging infections the world is currently facing.

It is our sincere hope that the efforts of all scientists and researchers participating in this year's event will provide updated and applicable research findings which give answers to the challenges posed on our health system, provide essential data supporting strategies aimed at providing the highest quality of health care and health coverage for the whole Nation.

The Organizing Committee
49th Myanmar Health Research Congress