

Report on the Asian Federation of Dietetics : Congress & Meetings, 2006

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I was nominated by the Executive Council PNDS and sponsored by the Malaysian Nutrition Society to attend the **4th Asian Congress of Dietetics (ACD) and General Assembly meetings of Asian Federation of Dietetics (AFDA)** from 23-26th April 2006 in Manila, Philippines. The 2006 congress theme was “**Nutrition and Dietetics in a Borderless Society**” which focused on dietetic and nutrition issues, towards a realistic convergence in the practice of Nutrition and Dietetics in Asia. The congress addressed a range of topics like: harmonization of growth and nutrition standards; the nutrition and dietetics curriculum; healthy life styles and food choices in the light of the increasing borderless ness of meals, and the integration of cultures; food and nutritional security in Asia; updates on the dietary management of non-communicable diseases; development of nutrigenomics and health; and other recent trends which has affected the professionals who are working as Dietitians and Nutritionist. At the congress, I also had an opportunity to chair the sessions on “**Emerging Issues in Public Health Nutrition**” and “**Assessing Nutrition Status and Wellness**”.

The meeting was an important event in the Asian region, where exchange of ideas and discussion on recent issues and developments in Nutrition & Science and dietetic practice was raised so as to bring the Asian Nutritionist /Dietitians to a higher social, ethical, intellectual and professional standard. A host of international speakers, including Asian dietitians, nutritionist and researchers shared their recent work and best practices in the advancement of food and nutritional sciences during the plenary sessions, symposiums, workshops and free communication sessions.

There were approximately 1500 participants from Asia, Middle East, Africa and Australia. Some renowned nutrition scientist and experts were invited from developed world to share their experiences with the developing countries participants.. These forums therefore provided an excellent opportunity to network and discuss relevant health issues faced by people in the region.

One of the Convention’s highlight was the AFDA council members meetings.

Pakistan Nutrition & Dietetic Society became an AFDA member in 2005 and was welcomed officially at the Congress. Beside Pakistan there are 10 other Regular members of AFDA .The ceremonial signing of the Manila declaration stating that Pakistan as an AFDA member will nurture the spirit of camaraderie and cooperation among members and work towards the professionalization and harmonization of the dietetic education and profession within its country and region was the Congress land mark event for the Pakistan Nutrition & Dietetic Society.

We are now in the new millennium where organization and associations such as AFDA, PNDS and other related groups can provide a platform to witness growth and maturity of this profession. It can allow us to exchange mutually, our achievements and ideas and together chart new routes in the practice of Nutrition & Dietetics within the region.

We need to come to a consensus on education and training as to what basic requirements are necessary to become a practicing dietitian/nutritionist. Meanwhile professional improvements, training and capacity building opportunities have to be considered in both community nutrition and specialized clinical areas of nutrition and dietetics. It is also important for us to equip our selves with some research skills and conduct research with science and professionalism. Therefore attending and representing similar kind of regional meetings, conferences and congress by members of PNDS can go a long way to improve and create an impact on individuals and collectively on the government to take positive steps to improve the nation..

My earnest request to all members of PNDS and colleagues would be to avail such opportunities for their own professional growth and the impact it would have in future growth of this profession. Please make a note of the *5th Asian Congress of Dietetics* which will take place in *November 2010 at Bangkok, Thailand* and the theme of the congress is “**The Art of Being Well through Asian Dietetic Practice**”. Inshallah many of us will be able to attend this Congress.



