

**DR KAMAL K MIDHA, Acceptance Speech
Pharmaceutical Merit Award
CFF Brazil
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Thank you very much. Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, Dr Jaldo, distinguished guests, and my fellow honourees.

I am delighted to be here today on your National Pharmacists Day in Brazil, and I am obliged as well as honoured to have been chosen by the Brazilian Federal Council of Pharmacy to receive your highest award, the Pharmaceutical Merit Award. This gives me great pride on many levels. Firstly, I am now in the company of some of the most influential pharmacists the world over; a status that is at once both gratifying and motivating. Moreover, this award signifies that I have made a recognisable contribution to improving the health of the world. An acknowledgement of this magnitude enhances my own certainty that I have steered my personal and professional life in the right directions and have worked towards worthwhile goals

I feel very strongly however, that to simply *receive* these humbling acknowledgements along my journey is not enough. They are a reminder of the commitment I have made to pharmacy and the pharmaceutical sciences, the vision I have for these disciplines, and how those who serve them may make a marked and distinct contribution to the health of people around the world. As such, I owe it to the work that has brought me here as well as to the reputation of this award to continue my mission; one that insists upon imparting the value of pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences to improve global healthcare. In essence, I stand before you at a time when the past is being recognised, and the future projected.

The time at which we make a difference, however, is in the present. Currently, I am serving as President of the International Pharmaceutical Federation, or FIP. We are a global Federation of 120 organizations, in over 80 countries, representing and serving over 1.5 million pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists. Through our projects and initiatives, FIP actively works towards advancing pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences, improving the long-term effectiveness of patient care based on science put into practice. Our objective is to improve healthcare and how it is delivered. Our close ties to the World Health Organization as an NGO, and FIP's membership in the World Health Professions' Alliance allow FIP and its member organizations, which includes the Federal Council of Pharmacy of Brazil, to contribute to policies guiding healthcare worldwide.

Personally, in addition to longstanding FIP priorities, I make it my mission throughout my tenure to focus on setting standards through education, preparing the pharmacist to be the ultimate healthcare professional and practitioner, assuring and developing adequate human resources for health for the future,

President Jaldo captured the true spirit of FIP in his address at the FIP World Congress in Salvador Bahia when he said "FIP provides the opportunity for (the) improvement in both scientific and pharmaceutical practice, giving all the professionals the chance of contemplating, discussing and studying new thoughts and pharmaceutical achievements (at its congresses), always keeping the goal of improvement in the quality of life of our communities"

As you may know, I was elected as FIP President during the Federation's most recent World Congress of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences right here in Brazil, in Salvador, Bahia this past August. I feel fortunate to have become so thoroughly involved in the Federation during such a remarkable time of growth for the profession, which is also a time that has seen profound changes for pharmacists right here in Brazil. It is commendable in itself that the first FIP Congress to be held in Latin/South America was carried through so successfully by the CFF, with such extensive participation from Brazilian pharmacists, and thereby scoring the winning goal as they say in football (soccer?!). I hope that much pride remains at this accomplishment and at the successful outcomes of the event. We look forward to welcoming all of you back this September to our FIP Congress in Beijing, China, which we expect will be of equal calibre and success.

You, President Jaldo with your team have also made history in CFF, your Brazilian Federal Council of Pharmacy is transforming the profession in Brazil. You have included the pharmacists in the public health care scheme and have brought changes in the way pharmacy is taught in the universities i.e. adoption of curriculum guidelines, You and your Federal Council are questioning the validity of community pharmacy in Brazil, and have been struggling very hard to combat the widespread model of pharmacy that is comparable to a shop for any ordinary commodity that is based on economical and financial interests only. I applaud and support your efforts to change this archaic and perverse Model of selling valuable medicines as regular merchandise to a new Model which provides health services, offering the population not only medicines but all types of pharmaceutical care and disease management guidance, despite all the obstacles – legal and others – that you had to overcome. In particular, I congratulate you on your lobbying efforts that lead to the change in the definition of Medical Acts and therefore allowed pharmacists to provide more healthcare services in pharmacies.

Much may also be said for the late efforts put forth in your country to combat epidemic and raging disease threats such as polio and HIV/AIDS. Through concerted and impeccably implemented strategies and healthcare initiatives, Brazil achieved complete eradication of polio after years of battling this ever-present detriment to public health. Furthermore, your country has garnished high praise for your work in conquering HIV/AIDS utilizing both prevention and treatment strategies. The nation-wide availability of free combinatorial antiviral treatments for nearly all those infected in your country is laudable. These are extremely commendable achievements which I hope serve as examples for all of our contemporaries.

I wish you every success on this Pharmacist's Day so that pharmacy is focused on educational health campaigns and vaccinations, and where the pharmacist works with patients to determine what patients need and what care should be provided in order to best meet those needs.

Aside from global events, Brazil is experiencing many changes with regards to pharmacists' recognised place in healthcare. The recent inclusion of pharmacists in the Unified Health System – the largest public health system in the world - , and the allocation of Federal funds to pharmaceutical services is an extraordinary victory for the profession that you and all Brazilian pharmacists should be very proud of.

This is only possible if pharmacists receive excellent training, both at pre and postgraduate levels, and I know that the CFF has defined this as one of its top priorities, organising courses and seminars all over this continent-sized country, as well as through distance learning approaches.

Your project to certify community pharmacies with an outstanding service through a recognisable symbol as is the Green Cross is also a highly commendable one and I can only wish you the best success in your endeavours.

The active participation of the CFF in several international pharmaceutical organisations, from FIP, to the Forum of the Americas, FEPAFAR and FEFAS, is also highly laudable not only for your eagerness to learn from others, but mostly for your willingness to share your knowledge and experience with fellows from other countries.

You now have a Minister of Health who is also a distinguished pharmacist and a man who is sensible to the challenges our profession is facing. I commend you for working together with Dr. Agenor Álvares to push forward and improve the profession of pharmacy and the health of the population.

It is against this backdrop that FIP aims to be a global partner to all pharmacy organisations fostered under our membership umbrella. We also seek the cooperation of industry, governments, academia and practitioners in setting standards for the required professional education of all pharmaceutical professionals in Brazil, and around the world.

There are countless ways in which CFF and FIP may work together for improved healthcare in Brazil. All begin, however, with properly trained pharmacy professionals. Professional Education to me translates to more highly qualified and capable pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists. Unless the skill and knowledge of the clinical pharmacists are fully developed and utilized, advancements in pharma industry and research will essentially be suboptimised.

It is not enough, however, to establish rules and regulations through governmental policies. Pharmacists themselves must also be prepared to adapt their practices accordingly, effectively assume responsibility, and to impart the knowledge of the pharmacist to the public at hand. These attributes are explicitly encouraged in one of our most respected initiatives, the FIP Good Pharmacy Practice Project, based on the FIP-WHO Joint Statement on GPP. This programme, which has already had significant success, trains pharmacists in developing regions in better patient care, communication, and professional ethics.

Pharmacists must be persons of integrity with an attitude of caring and service. This is especially important in developing areas where patients generally see more of a pharmacist than a physician. The importance of pharmaceutical care, cognitive services as well as a proper role in disease management cannot be emphasized enough. Patients must believe and trust pharmacists, and Pharmacy education must produce professionals worthy of such trust and respect.

We are not alone in this quest for improvement. As an organization of fellow professionals, FIP is present to give you as pharmacists the tools to improve access to medicines and to provide pharmacy services. We want to elevate ourselves as more than just researchers or scientists. Pharmacists must be effective and respected care-givers, secure and accomplished in their own knowledge and skills.

But ultimately our focus must be on those whose interest and well being we serve: patients and their right to access responsible, informed, affordable quality health care. We must ensure people everywhere have such access. Borders cannot be the determinants of who receives quality health care and who does not. This is our obligation not only as healthcare professionals; but as members of the human family worldwide.

My role as President of FIP is to represent pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists worldwide. What we do in one country affects not only that limited space, but the world. We must be leaders in health care at all levels. In this age of SARS, TB, and HIV, we face challenges without borders. Such challenges can only be addressed if we work together – locally, regionally, and globally. The health of all of us, depends on each of us – as students, as professionals, as associations, and as nations.

I would once again like to extend my sincere appreciation for this award. With my colleagues in the Federation, and through the dedication and commitment from those we serve, I hope to continually steer FIP down the avenues proving most successful for the improvement of health care around the world.

To the CFF, my fellow award winners, and you, my fellow pharmacists and scientists, thank you, and may you join me in the quest to pursue the global vision of pharmacy.