

## A Speech by Takenori Yamaguchi at the Opening Ceremony

Thank you, Geoff.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

I am extremely flattered and honored to receive this WSO President's Award for service to stroke. First of all, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the President, Geoff Donnan, Congress Chair, Michael Brainin and other WSO Board members who gave me such a splendid and meaningful award.

As just explained by Professor Donnan, I have served for the international organizations of stroke field for a long time. Actually, it is almost twenty years. My service was started in 1989, when the International Stroke Society (ISS) was born. I had been worked for ISS as a member of an International Board of Directors, Secretary, Vice-President and Acting President from 1989 till 2006, which is from the beginning till the end of ISS. And then, I have been an immediate past President of World Stroke Organization up to now, which was transformed from International Stroke Society in 2006. At this opportunity, I would like to speak on a brief history of International Stroke Society. ISS was born in 1989 at the 1<sup>st</sup> World Congress of Stroke in Kyoto, Japan, by enormous efforts of Japan Stroke Society. The first Congress Chair was late Professor Toyozo Aizawa of Keio University, with cooperation of Professor Teruo Omae of National Cardiovascular Center and Fumio Gotoh of Keio University, both of whom acted as a secretary general and scientific program committee chair, respectively. They sought broader opinions from 20 key opinion leaders in the field of stroke on validity of establishment of international society on stroke. I remember that it was not so easy to get a full agreement to establish a new international society in this field, considering the conflicts with other international societies. However, substantial and frequent communications with those leaders for over 3 years could finally bring an unanimous agreement, and a ship named International Stroke Society launched out into the sea.

Since then, the World Congress of Stroke has been held every 4 years by turns rotating from American continents, European continent to Asian-Oceanian countries: the venue of past congresses after Kyoto were Washington, D.C., USA, Munich, Germany, Melbourne, Australia, Vancouver, Canada, and this year, this beautiful and cultural city of Vienna, Austria. The venue and time of the next congress was decided at the board meeting held at the Joint World Congress of Stroke in Cape Town, South Africa in 2006, to be Seoul, Korea in 2010.

ISS was accepted as an official group of Non-Governmental Organization of WHO in 2005, and has supported epidemiological studies in developing countries, which has been conducted by Dr. Ruth Bonita et al. This study has still been supported by a grant, Global Stroke Initiatives of ISS, for which Dr. Frank Yatsu contributed very much physically and financially. Educational programs for developing countries have been conducted mainly by Drs. Michael Brainin, Congress Chair and Bo Norrving, Secretary of ISS and WSO (New President). On this occasion, I wish to thank Ms. Chie Hatakeyama, who had worked as a secretary since the beginning of ISS until the time we contracted with Kenes as the official secretariat and Ms. Isabelle Bourzeix started to work with us.

The most impressive event for me was that our journal, International Journal of Stroke, was listed in Medline, with an impact factor of 1.97 last August. This extraordinary early accept by Medline is greatly owe to enormous efforts of the chair of the editorial board, Geoff Donnan and other members of editorial board.

Elections for Board members and Executive Committee members have already been completed, and the new members have just been approved at the General Assembly. This time, I did not stand for a candidate of board members, because I thought it is the time to change, time to pass the baton to the young generation. I hope that World Stroke Organization will continue to develop further and further in order to bring stroke under our control.

Thank you very much for your attention.