

Speech by Dr Hema Divakar

(President, FOGSI, at SAFOG Inaugural)

I have the proud privilege of addressing the distinguished guests on the dias and my friends and colleagues at SAFOG from this platform in India—my own home country and the host country of the 9th Annual Congress of SAFOG.

On behalf of Dr Nozer Sheriar, the Secretary General of FOGSI, Dr Dilip Kumar Dutta, the elected Representative for SAFOG from FOGSI, immediate Past President Dr PK Shah and Vice Presidents Drs Alpesh Gandhi, Shantakumari and Maninder Ahuja and other distinguished members from the parent organization FOGSI, I offer congratulations to the entire SAFOG team for leading many initiatives with passion and commitment. We have come together through SAFOG, we pledge to work together and ACT and IMPACT through SAFOG.



Even though the challenges in the South Asian regions are similar, the sheer size of our country with one billion plus population presents a huge additional challenge! We have the option of using the large human resource at FOGSI as our strength and harness their energies. Along with our colleagues in other parts of South Asia, we will be the catalysts for the change we want to see in Women's Health Care in this region.

I am sure you are in complete awareness of the paradoxes in India—the external beauty of Taj Mahal has within it the tragedy of queens death due to postpartum hemorrhage. The five P workshops—PPH/PE/Preterm PROM/Perinatal infections/Postpartum care...addressing the most urgent need for preventing needless deaths is a landmark series of programmes conducted by our colleagues in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Srilanka. The journey through SAFOG over the years have lead to expansion of work beyond MDG 5. SAFOG platforms shared Indian experiences beyond prevention of maternal mortality—the issues of cancer cervix—screening and vaccination being one such example. At the last SAFOG congress at Colombo, we saw the birth of SAFOMS—the society to deal with issues related to menopause. The SAFOG journal and newsletter speak volumes of the work done so far and the vision for raising standards of women's healthcare through the organization—we appreciate and acknowledge the contribution by four strong pillars of strength—Drs Alokendu Chatterjee, Narendra Malhotra, Shyam Desai and Behram Anklesaria.

We have recognized the need to figure out what works for us—to move from innovation to implementation. 'Hurt me with the truth—I do not mind. But do not comfort me with a lie'.

A lot has been done—but there is a lot more to do.

There is no room for complacency and I truly believe that our efforts can make a difference to Women's Health Care in South Asian region...

Ladies and gentlemen we have come a long way with SAFOG but we have miles to go.

Let us step forward with a mission to complete the unfinished agenda on establishing centers of excellence in women's health care—and in keeping with the theme of this congress—let us strive to make our dreams a reality.

Hema Divakar
President, FOGSI