

An Address by Her Imperial Highness Crown Princess Akishino at the Opening Ceremony of the 22nd Congress of the Federation of Asia and Oceania Perinatal Societies

October 7,2023

Distinguished guests and participants,

It is my great pleasure to be with you today, at the opening ceremony of the 22nd Congress of the Federation of Asia and Oceania Perinatal Societies.

The Federation of Asia and Oceania Perinatal Societies (FAOPS) was founded in 1978 and has become an important forum for obstetricians, neonatologists, pediatric surgeons, anesthesiologists, psychiatrists, midwives, nurses and healthcare professionals engaged in perinatal care in Asia and Oceania to come together to share your efforts and research outcomes, and to discuss the challenges of perinatal care. I would like to express my sincere respect to everyone involved in this important field for your great efforts to protect the lives and health of mothers and their babies even in the difficult situation of the COVID-19 outbreak. And I would also like to deeply appreciate all those who have worked hard on the preparation and operation of this congress, which is being held face to face for the first time in five years.

The main theme of this congress is “the SDGs for maternal and neonatal health across the Asia-Oceanian region”. In order to achieve the SDGs' goal of "leaving no one behind" in perinatal health care, countries in Asia and Oceania have to cooperate to solve many challenges. And Japan, as the host country, will have a significant role to play.

Social and economic stability, as well as physical and mental health, are important factors for women to have and raise children without any concerns. Some countries in Asia and Oceania, however, have high perinatal and maternal mortality rates, while others have lower mortality rates but have more children and mothers requiring medical care. Depending on the needs of women in these various social circumstances, the demands on perinatal care have become more diverse than ever. In recent years, many issues are gaining importance, including pre-conception care for women and their partners, psychological support for parents and families of children who have lost their lives, psychological care for expectant and nursing mothers under stress, and continuous support for mothers and children.

Collaboration among all of us involved in perinatal care is important to respond to these diverse challenges. I expect that the lectures, research presentations and workshops at this congress will stimulate lively exchanges of views among the participants and encourage further interactions between you. I would like to express my sincere wishes that this conference in Tokyo will be fruitful for all of you and create good momentum for the field of perinatal care.

I do hope that babies will be born in a better environment, mothers will have healthy pregnancies, give birth safely, and nurture their children with peace of mind everywhere in the world.

Thank you very much.