



## INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

### HUMANITARIAN SURGERY

As Editor-in-Chief, *International Surgery*, I dedicate this editorial letter to the International College of Surgeons (ICS) humanitarian surgery program. The Founder of the International College of Surgeons, Dr. Max Thorek in 1935, developed a philosophy focused on humanitarian considerations, including that the ICS was to be a College whose prime function would be to teach younger men, and older men, and all who thirsted for knowledge – a College through which surgical knowledge could flow quickly and easily to all parts of the world and be a force for making International understanding and good will and peace. This philosophy is as appropriate today as in 1935.

Halfdan T. Mahler, 1923-2016, former Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), had the inspiring vision to provide “health for all” and addressed this vision in a meeting of the International College of Surgeons in Mexico City years ago. Since that time, the WHO has continued to advocate for health for all and has published statistics outlining the need for surgery in lesser parts of the world. Clinical conditions requiring surgical, obstetric, and anesthesia services amount to approximately one-third of the global disease burden, yet more than two-thirds of the world’s population does not have access to safe, timely, and affordable surgical and anesthesia care (*Re: Surgical*

*Care Systems Strengthening, WHO and Harvard Program in Global Surgery and Social Change*). The International College of Surgeons, in official relations with the WHO as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) fully supports the WHO programs and endeavors.

The International College of Surgeons has conducted humanitarian surgical missions in Indonesia, Peru, Nigeria, Paraguay, Mongolia, and other countries. This effort will continue to be expanded in an effort to assist in addressing the global disease burden requiring surgical and anesthesia services. The founding philosophy of Dr. Max Thorek continues with the ICS vision of improving the lives of patients around the world with the training and development of our members and their colleagues. This is the mission of the International College of Surgeons.

*International Surgery*, the official journal of the ICS, has and will continue to have an ever larger role in communicating to the world the immense need for surgery and anesthesia services and how the ICS will continue to boldly move forward in humanitarian surgery.

Sincerely,

Christopher Chen  
Editor-in-Chief  
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