

Dearest Members,

This last year and a half has been one of turmoil across the globe from both an economic and healthcare point of view, and while we are currently in a period of pandemic stability, I sincerely hope it isn't the calm before the storm of what may very well be the 4th wave. This period has shaken the confidence in our healthcare leaders and research institutions with unprecedented polarity amongst our patients but also to a certain extent the medical fraternity. The mandate of MAN continues to be to uphold the integrity of the profession and to support it as such with continued education from evidence based and peer reviewed resources.

The Medical Association has likewise experienced challenges unaccustomed to in recent times where economic restraints have threatened our operations. A combination of factors has resulted in what was once a healthy financial reserve, to become unsustainable.

These factors are as follows:

1. A diminishing membership base, with a 5-10% decrease in numbers over the last 3 years. Some have left the association and unfortunately some have passed away.
2. This is coupled with continued bad debt from existing members.
3. The membership fees remained the same for the last couple years.
4. MAN had to register for VAT during 2021, which has a significant impact on the revenue.
5. The annual MAN congress, which is a considerable revenue generator, has not been able to be held in 2020 and 2021. This is probably the largest contributing factor.

We have proactively sought to reduce expenditure by renegotiating our office rental lease, no annual salary increments were granted and administrative fees were frozen. With every crisis there is an opportunity for introspection and improvement coupled by innovation. We have thus embarked upon the following strategies to ensure sustainability of our Association and to further our representation mandate:

- Reviewing the mandate of MAN to be more inclusive of other interested healthcare professions
- Collaborating closer with the UNAM School of Medicine, including complimentary membership
- Supporting Specialist and Special Interest Forums through our administrative infrastructure
- Reviewing membership categories and fees

I am confident that these actions will help to improve the fiscal situation but would like to appeal to our members to likewise consider the role that MAN has to play in navigating the vital engagements ahead as the various healthcare stakeholders deliberate on challenges pertaining to the COVID-19 fallout, initiatives furthering Universal Healthcare Coverage, the frosty relationship with NAMAf and the medical aid funds, and the MoHSS as the national custodian of health. Please reach out to assist in guiding us to serve the membership better, with your innovative ideas, observations and support.

Yours sincerely,

*Dr Armid Azadeh*