

ILDS Site Visit Report

The International League of Dermatological Societies is **the** global organization promoting ***Skin Health. For*** over a century it has organized World Congresses of Dermatology, the most recent having taken place in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 2007, where over 12.000 dermatologists participated in updating their knowledge about our specialty.

The ILDS currently has 127 member societies from all over the world. Among most recent members are the Chinese Society for Dermatology, the Indian Association of Dermatology, Venereology and Leprology, the Mongolian Dermatological Society and the Dermatological Society of Vietnam – illustrating the reality of global membership of the ILDS. The ILDS is recognised as the world dermatological body in relations with the World Health Organisation where it promotes projects ranging from International Disease Classification to children's medicines

The ILDS' mission is to promote and improve skin health for all citizens of the world. This is not an easy or instant task. The ILDS has established a division called the International Foundation of Dermatology (IFD), which particularly focuses on dermatology in developing countries (current Chairman Roderick Hay). In 1987 a Regional Dermatology Training Centre (RDTC) was established in Moshi, Tanzania, where over 150 trainees from 15 different African countries have been educated during 2-year courses on how to diagnose and treat the most common skin and venereal diseases. These trainees have returned to their home countries and are working in their local settings. A residency training programme for African dermatologists is also run by the RDTC. Further, the ILDS has promoted epidemiological projects on skin health in Mali, Mexico and India and is planning further projects in Burkino Fasso, Cambodia etc. The ILDS has many more ideas, but we have to be realistic and work within our economical possibilities.

Member societies of the ILDS send delegates to the General Assembly held during the world congresses and here they select:

- The next site for the World Congress of Dermatology
- The members of the ILDS board

Recently, under the presidency of Robin Marks, elected "regional board members" were introduced meaning that from the 5 regions of the world, two board members will be selected – securing a truly "global dermatology structure" for the ILDS.

The next and 22nd World Congress of Dermatology (www.wcd2011.org)

Seoul in South Korea is hosting the WCD on May 24 – 29, 2011. So, it is now time to mark your calendars/mobile phones/PDAs. The motto of this Congress is: "Connecting the World through Innovative Dermatology".

The ILDS board was invited by our Korean hosts to visit Seoul on May 26-28, 2009, to see what they will be offering you as a participant in the WCD.

The meeting takes place in the COEX congress center. It is, in principle, a cubic structure, the centre of which contains meeting rooms – the largest being able to accommodate 7.000 persons, an enormous exhibition area – and altogether more than 150 rooms of which 15 will seat 500 persons or more. All traffic will move in spacious areas around the cubic structure which has 4 floors with escalators and elevators for ease of access for everyone. Thus, it is an all "in-house" event with air-conditioning. The facilities for communication are excellent – with power point presentations, wireless communication, information on screens etc.. Korea will impress you with its communication abilities – something which will be directly of help where, as an example, tele-dermatology is now offered to our colleagues working in *Medicine Sans Frontieres*, who can connect to the IFD for questions on diagnostic problems from all over the world.

Go to www.coex.co.kr where you can find detailed information.

Korea and Seoul

Seoul is a huge city with 12 million inhabitants and if you include the surrounding cities, approx. 20 mill inhabitants. It is modern with many tall buildings. It is divided by the Han river, crossed by 26 bridges with bustling traffic. The transportation system is best via subway, and the best option is to reserve your hotel either in or within walking distance to the congress centre.

As modern and efficient as the congress venue is – you can just cross the street to the Bongusunsai Temple – a Buddhist Monastery used daily by monks and visitors. This is a peaceful place to meet Asian culture – amidst its modern surroundings.

Although Seoul is central to Korea, it is not the soul of Korea. Consider a trip outside Seoul to see beautiful landscapes and places. Visit www.visitkorea.or.kr for that purpose. Our Korean colleagues are establishing lots of options for you.

Seoul is safe. You do not need to worry about hazards. The COEX center has its own police station and the streets are safe at night. As is the subway system.

Going to Seoul

Seoul is, as a major city, well connected to the world. For us coming from the Nordic countries, Finnair has a very smooth and very quick connection – likely the quickest from Europe. It takes only 8½ hours from Helsinki directly to Seoul. Incheon Airport is huge and very modern and connections to central Seoul takes about 1 hour as the airport is 60 kms outside the city (www.airport.kr) – you will find all details there.

Why attend the next world congress?

I have four arguments:

- To receive an update on your specialty with experts from all over the world
- To support global dermatology by being an active member of ILDS
- To meet friends – and make new friends
- To visit Korea and Asia - an option which is not an everyday opportunity

What to see in Seoul – or "the soul of Seoul"?

Below are a number of suggestions for things to do besides the congress:

- You should visit the Bongusunsai Temple. It's easy, just cross the street from COEX. And – it is a temple in daily use
- You should go to the National Museum of Korea
- You should visit the Leeum Museum, not only for its exhibits of beautiful ancient Korean pottery, but also for its innovative architecture
- And for shoppers i.e. persons where the transcription factor for the shopping gene is very active – COEX has a basement with hundreds of shops and cafes – and the Hyundai Department store carries everything (www.ehyundai.com). It is within 5 minutes walk from the COEX.

List of websites:

www.ilds.org

www.wcd2011.org

www.visitkorea.or.kr

www.coex.co.kr

www.airport.kr

www.museum.go.kr

So, - go a day or a week before the congress, choose a hotel as close as possible to the COEX area, visit places listed above – and then enjoy participating in a congress very well prepared by our hosts and enjoy Korean hospitality.

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