



## SKÅL! – GOING THE EXTRA MILE, FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT....

I have just returned from the 47<sup>th</sup> Skål Asia Area Congress 2018, which was held in Macau. The moment the host country venue was announced, it took absolutely no persuasion whatsoever to sign up as a Participant.

I attended one previous Asian Area Congress hosted by the Skål Club of Macau before. Upon recalling the uncompromising level of professionalism, and grandeur to which the Delegates were hosted then, this time around the Organizers under the leadership of Skål Macau President João Antunes and his team hosted another near-perfect Congress!

One aspect of the organization which jumped off the page, so to speak, and had the greatest impact on me personally as a disabled wheelchair-bound Delegate, was the immaculate attention to detail deployed to ensure that absolutely every courtesy and facility was availed to ensure a smooth and seamless transition between the various venues, starting from the Arrival at the Ferry Terminal, until my departure at the Ferry Terminal after the 5-day Event. As a considerable majority of our Membership fall into the over 55 age group, this invariably entails there would be a corresponding significant number of members who are afflicted with physical mobility ailments, whereupon walking long distances, climbing stairs or even standing for long periods of time at cocktail parties and social get-together functions become increasingly, a challenge.

This is something which every potential Skål Club undertaking to host an Area or World Congress, every PCO appointed to organise our Congresses, absolutely **must** take on board as a serious consideration to avail facilities and assistance to our mobility-challenged participants and Skålleagues. The numbers are growing!

I was completely bowled over by the level of attention and detail taken to aiding and assisting me in my disabled condition. At the Ferry Terminal, a special vehicle equipped with a hydraulic wheelchair lift installed, was present to receive me in my wheelchair, thereby eliminating any need for me to alight from my wheelchair and struggle up the steep steps of a Coach. This same vehicle was utilised in all the logistics requiring transfers between the Ferry Terminal, the Hotels, the Function Venues, even the Tours.

Moreover, the Legend Palace Congress Hotel in which we opted to stay, apart from being a magnificent hospitality property in itself, was well equipped with wheelchair lifts in places where steps were present, and wherever necessary. The Hotel staff had been also well briefed to be readily available to meet and assist any disabled Guest, whereupon moving around the hotel from one point to another was delightfully easy and seamless.

Owing to this keen insight of the Macau PCO, this made all the difference between the 47<sup>th</sup> Asia Area Congress being a great Congress, to being an Outstanding Congress.

Kudos and sincere thanks to Skål Macau President João and his team. I only wish I could re-live those past 5 Congress days; to savour and go through each and every moment one more time!

Skål!

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