

I. Introduction

The 9th Medical Women's International Association (MWIA), Near East and Africa Region (NEAR) Congress that held between 24th and 27th March 2021 was hosted by the Nigerian MWAN at the Abuja International Conference Centre. The Congress, whose theme was 'Accelerating Universal Health Coverage: Priorities, Opportunities and Challenges', adopted a hybrid format of delivery due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic that necessitated observing the Nigerian Government's laid down COVID-19 safety and preventive protocols. The Congress had over 1000 participating delegates, attendees and representatives drawn from well over 12 countries to give an international platform for deliberating on issues of international concern mainly focussed on the NEAR perspective and experience of implementing universal health coverage (UHC). A total of three plenaries, five

symposia, three oral abstract sessions (comprising 27 presentations) and two poster-driven sessions (of 19 posters) in addition to one breakfast meeting and three corporate-sponsored presentations were held. A pre-Congress webinar session took place on day 1 and before the commencement of the Congress.

In attendance, a total of 451 registered participants were drawn from a total of 13 countries including nine Medical Women's Associations from member countries within the region. Other participants to the Congress included top government functionaries, people from the Academia, donor and development partner agencies and programmes, private sector and corporate bodies, civil society organisations (CSOs) and friends and associates of MWIA from diverse fields of endeavour and different parts of the World.