



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
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HSA Hosts the 9th Asian Forensic Sciences Network Annual Meeting & Symposium

The 9th Asian Forensic Sciences Network (AFSN) Annual Meeting & Symposium holds its opening ceremony today with the main symposium to be held from 5 - 8 September at Ngee Ann Polytechnic. A total of 647 participants from 83 forensic science institutes from 21 countries are attending the event. Jointly co-hosted by the AFSN and Health Sciences Authority, with local co-organiser, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, this is the second time the symposium will be held in Singapore.

2 Formed in 2008, the AFSN gathers the forensic science community from all around Asia on a common platform, to discuss, share and formulate strategies relating to forensic science matters, and to enhance the quality of the forensic sciences through various collaborative measures.

3 AFSN is a member of the International Forensic Strategic Alliance and has the strong support of the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime and the Drug Enforcement Administration (United States). Besides setting up a Quality Assurance & Standards Committee to benchmark and standardise scientific methods and promote accreditation amongst member institutes, it has also formed five technical workgroups dedicated to the various areas of forensic disciplines such as DNA, Illicit Drugs, Trace Evidence, Toxicology and Crime Scene Investigation for greater synergy, learning and collaborations across the different countries. Notable collaborations between AFSN member institutes include the inter-laboratory DNA comparison exercises that have allowed laboratories to benchmark methodologies and interpretations; the setting up of an explosives database for secure information exchange as well as facilitating knowledge sharing; and special drug analysis courses to enhance the knowledge and competencies of drug testing.

4 With the theme '*Advancing Forensic Science in a Rapidly Changing World*', the symposium provides a forum for Asia's forensic scientists to learn and discuss the latest advancements, synergise and collaborate to push the boundaries of forensic sciences, and improve on the methodologies and technological platforms to detect and analyse criminal evidence. This is especially important in today's society as technology has significantly changed the way criminals operate.

5 The emergence of new psychoactive substances has led to new challenges for forensic labs. This topic will be covered in a series of lectures during the symposium, together with a one-day training on Clandestine Drug Laboratory Investigation. Other notable topics include workshops on soil forensics, crime scene investigation and DNA analysis. A total of 19 invited speakers from renowned institutions and organisations

from USA, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Austria, France and Singapore will be presenting and sharing their expertise.

6 Mr Desmond Lee, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister for Home Affairs and National Development is the Guest of Honour for the symposium. In his opening speech, he said that "This symposium brings together experts in their respective fields to share their knowledge and expertise. To combat transnational crime and cybercrime effectively, such collaboration is important to help law enforcement agencies level up their forensic and investigation expertise. Through this symposium, they can explore ways to develop capabilities, improve quality control and build collaborative networks to advance their practice."

7 Mr Somn Promaros, President of the AFSN said, "We will continue to work together proactively to achieve the objectives of the network. In addition, with the strong support, commitment and cooperation from all member institutes, we will continue to seek and create opportunities for collaborations among the Asian Forensic Science community as well as the global forensic science community."

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About the Health Sciences Authority (HSA)

The **Health Sciences Authority (HSA)** applies medical, pharmaceutical and scientific expertise through its three professional groups, Health Products Regulation, Blood Services and Applied Sciences, to protect and advance national health and safety. HSA is a multidisciplinary authority. It serves as the national regulator for health products, ensuring they are wisely regulated to meet standards of safety, quality and efficacy. As the national blood service, it is responsible for providing a safe and adequate blood supply. It also applies specialised scientific, forensic, investigative and analytical capabilities in serving the administration of justice.

About the Applied Sciences Group, HSA

The **Applied Sciences Group (ASG)** of HSA as the national expertise in forensic medicine and science, analytical testing and chemical metrology, supports regulatory and compliance agencies in the administration of justice and safeguarding of public health. It provides a one-stop forensic and consultancy service for criminal and medico-legal investigations as well as civil disputes. It also runs analytical testing laboratories, providing specialised scientific and investigative services to government agencies, healthcare institutions and private companies.

For more details, visit <http://www.hsa.gov.sg/>.

About the Asian Forensic Sciences Network

The **Asian Forensic Sciences Network (AFSN)** was formed in 2008 with the aim to serve as a collective representation for the forensic science community in Asia through the following objectives:

1. To provide a forum for forensic science institutes in Asia to openly discuss issues relating to forensic services
2. To enhance the quality of forensic services in Asia through expert working groups, training, collaborative studies, proficiency tests and accreditation
3. To establish links with other similar networks for the promotion and advancement of forensic science
4. To formulate strategies relating to forensic science issues in Asia.

The AFSN is also a member of the International Forensic Strategic Alliance (IFSA) – a multilateral partnership between the six regional networks of operational forensic laboratories across the world (American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors [ASCLD], Academia Iberoamericana De Criminalistica Y Estudios Forenses [AICEF], European Network of Forensic Science Institutes [ENFSI], Southern Africa Regional Forensic Science [SARFS], Senior Managers of Australian and New Zealand Forensic Laboratories [SMANZFL] and [AFSN] and two strategic partners [INTERPOL and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime]. The IFSA has produced three minimum requirement documents on Drug analysis, DNA analysis and Crime Scene Investigation to assist emerging laboratories to build up their quality assurance practices.

As of May 2017, AFSN has a total of 47 member institutes from 15 countries in Asia. AFSN holds an annual meeting & symposium every year to promote learning, knowledge exchange, and collaboration amongst its member institutes. The AFSN currently has five technical workgroups and one Quality Assurance and Standards Committee. The AFSN will continue to leverage on its members to expand its workgroups to other forensic areas to bring about an active exchange of knowledge and experience.