

## from the PRESIDENT



**Susie Kong**  
CNF President



The Commonwealth Nurses Federation congratulates the Head of the Commonwealth, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, as she celebrates her Diamond Jubilee. Her Majesty is much loved by the people of the Commonwealth and across the world for her dedication and selfless service for the past 60 years and we wish her many more years of good health. I have always admired Her Majesty from a distance and on Commonwealth Day this year, I had the great privilege of seeing her close-up, not once, but twice in one day. It was like a dream come true!

2012 is set to be a promising and busy year for CNF. Over the past few years, we have been slowly strengthening our organisation by working closely with National Nurses Associations throughout the Commonwealth and reaching out to nurses through in-country workshops, the monthly e-News and the Commonwealth Nurse. We have also helped in developing websites for some of the smaller organisations so they can be more connected with the rest of the world.

In conjunction with Commonwealth Day this year, the CNF held a very successful Inaugural Commonwealth Nurses Conference in London 10-11 March 2012. The Conference theme was: *Our health - our common wealth* and was attended by about 200 participants from 27 countries.



We were very encouraged to have the presence of His Excellency Kamalesh Sharma, Secretary General of the Commonwealth, Mr Vijay Krishnarayan, Director of the Commonwealth Foundation and Dr Danny Sriskandarajah, Director of the Royal Commonwealth Society at the Conference. Most of our Board Members were also there to support the Conference and everyone assisted in chiring sessions. We had a full programme for both days and all participants enjoyed and benefited from the sharing given by a list of distinguished speakers and other presenters. The feedback from participants was very positive, many of them said that apart from an interesting scientific programme, the food and refreshments were great, the atmosphere was very warm and friendly with lots of interactions and the whole Conference felt like a big family reunion.

Many of us who have organized conferences before would understand and appreciate the amount of hard work, and at times frustration that goes with organising a conference. I am deeply thankful to the CNF Executive Secretary, Jill Iliffe, who worked very hard to ensure we had a successful conference. My appreciation also goes to the Royal College of Nursing, United Kingdom, for generously giving us the support of their conference team.

The CNF Board met in London after the Conference and discussed strategies about how to further strengthen the CNF. As a Commonwealth organisation, our membership is limited to Commonwealth countries and some countries are very small and do not have nurses associations. The CNF Board decided that since nurses and midwives work closely together in most countries and often face similar issues and problems, it would be good to invite the midwives to join the CNF. The Board will be putting a recommendation to members to expand our membership categories and, if accepted, the CNF would consider changing our name to the Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation. We look forward to hearing your views.