



On behalf of the University of the Philippines Manila, I extend my congratulations to the UP College of Public Health and the Asia Pacific Academic Consortium for Public Health (APACPH) for organizing and hosting the 53<sup>rd</sup> APACPH Conference held from September 20-23, 2022. With its theme, “The Role of Higher Education Institutions in Attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),” the event highlighted the transformative role of academia in advancing public health and sustainability.

The UP College of Public Health, as a founding member of APACPH, continues to uphold the consortium’s mission of enhancing public health networks and advancing academic development across the Asia-Pacific region. The Philippine Academic Consortium for Public Health (PACPH), established during the deanship of Dr. Vicente Belizario, Jr., serves as APACPH’s counterpart in the Philippines, fostering collaboration and innovation to improve public health outcomes.

This special issue of the 53<sup>rd</sup> APACPH Conference in *Acta Medica Philippina*, the National Health Science Journal, condenses the ideas presented during our conference where we, through education, research, and public service, emphasized the crucial role of higher education institutions (HEIs) as we integrate SDGs into curricula. It also showcased successful community engagement initiatives, policy advocacy efforts, and strategic partnerships between HEIs and stakeholders.

I extend my sincerest gratitude to *Acta Medica Philippina* for providing a platform to share these contributions, and to the UP College of Public Health, APACPH, and partner institutions for their efforts in conducting translational research to improve health outcomes. I trust that these studies will serve as instruments for advancing public health and addressing critical concerns in the Philippines and the region. Together, let us continue to work towards a healthier, more sustainable future.

**Michael L. Tee, MD, MHPED, MBA**

*Professor and Chancellor  
University of the Philippines Manila*