



PRIME MINISTER GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND

Opening remarks to the NICER China program
Beijing, 7 November 1995

It is a great privilege for me to be present at the opening of this Hafslund Nycomed seminar for radiologists here in Beijing.

It is a great pleasure for me personally to address colleagues from the medical sector, given my own background as a physician.

Medicine is probably the oldest science of human civilization. Today, "Health for all" is a target for governments all over the world, as it is for the World Health Organization.

Historically, China has made some of the most significant contributions to the advancement of medicine. Long before Europeans addressed medicine in a scientific manner, China had developed advanced techniques of diagnosis and treatment. Many of these traditional techniques are today applied all around the world, also in my country.

Today, cultures and traditions meet in the medical field. This seminar is an expression of an intention to share knowledge. When the Norwegian Government so strongly promotes closer cooperation with China, it is precisely because we believe we too have a lot to learn from increased contact, exchange of experiences and broad cooperation.

Having served both in the health sector and in politics, my experience is that medicine and politics are closely related. Doctors and medical scientists have a lot in common with politicians. We are all concerned with diagnosis, with finding the reasons for a particular problem. We are all concerned with finding the remedies, how to solve present and future problems.

We will need common diagnosis - and political will to act according to facts. Like in medicine - anticipation and prevention is better than reacting and curing afterwards.

This seminar is also about diagnosis. Today, the science of radiology is essential to all schools of medicine. New technology offers new opportunities in diagnosis and therapy. We are proud that the Norwegian company Nycomed Imaging and the Department of Radiology of the University of Lund are here to offer the best there is in the education in radiology.

The Norwegian Government wholeheartedly supports the long term approach of Hafslund Nycomed in China. Last year Nycomed Imaging established a joint venture in Shanghai - the Shanghai Nycomed Pharmaceutical Company in order to produce contrast media in China. Their business is not a quick search for profit. They are here to build relations. This seminar illustrates a readiness to invest in people, transfer knowledge and share experience.

An important experience we have made in Norway in the field of health is that so much depends on an effective primary health service. This is a view I believe we share with China.

Minor health problems should not be treated as major ones, and the more expensive medical facilities should be reserved for more complicated and severe health problems.

Timely use of radiology is essential to establish the correct diagnosis in time for the best treatment to be found. For China, with its great population, effective diagnostic procedures will help in using the resources and equipment available in a more effective manner.

Today, many industrialized countries spend too much of their total economy on health. One main reason seems to be an ineffective mix of private and public health services.

In Norway we believe that everybody has the same right to appropriate treatment regardless of personal background, regardless of whether one is rich or poor. I believe our two countries share this basic value.

On this background I welcome a widening of our cooperation also in the field of health and medicine.