FOREWORD

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Laser Tokyo 2009, which ran from November 29th to December 3rd, marked the joint meeting of the 18th Congress of the International Society for Laser Surgery and Medicine (ISLSM), the 30th Congress of the Japan Society for Laser Surgery and Medicine (JSLSM), and the 2nd Congress of the World Federation of Societies for Laser Medicine and Surgery (WFSLMS). I was honoured to have been tasked with organizing this meeting. A major project of Laser Tokyo 2009 was the establishment of the International Medical Laser Specialist (IMeLaS) certification initiative, as a joint programme to be administered by the ISLSM and WFSLMS.

The ISLSM is the oldest international medical laser society, founded in 1975 by Prof Isaac Kaplan, and the JSLSM was founded under the ISLSM umbrella in Japan by Prof Kazuhiko Atsumi in 1980. There are now over 90 major medical laser societies worldwide. To unify the aims and goals of all of these societies and associations, it would be ideal to bring them all together under the WFSLMS as an umbrella society, thereby giving them all the same directionality and thus coalescing and solidifying the contributions of laser surgery and medicine to human health and welfare. Thus the WFSLMS was founded, through whose activities this unification of laser societies could be achieved worldwide. As the oldest medical laser societies, the ISLSM is open to all qualified clinicians researchers and paramedical professionals as individual members practicing some aspect of laser surgery or medicine. On the other hand the membership of the WFSLMS is open to representatives of all laser societies throughout the world who can then bring into the Federation the aims, aspirations and accomplishments of their society or organization. Through this approach, it should be possible to standardize clinical and research skills, strategies and techniques, thereby achieving the highest quality of medical laser care and safety.

Professors Atsumi and Kaplan envisaged an internationally-accepted form of certification, the International Medical Laser Specialist (IMeLaS) certificate, as an excellent means to achieving a uniform standard of excellence in medical laser treatment, and the IMeLaS initiative was born as a joint programme to be administered by the ISLSM and WFSLMS. In Laser Tokyo 2009, we therefore launched the initiative with the first group of IMeLaS candidates being inducted after a teaching and examination programme held just prior to the Laser Tokyo 2009 meeting. This Handbook was put together as the core learning material for the course, to be used as a platform for the didactic sessions and as a valuable reference book thereafter.

The ISLSM and WFSLMS will welcome any and all comments, suggestions and criticisms of both the Handbook and the contents of the didactic programme. We therefore invite the members of other major societies to add their constructive suggestion to improve the IMeLaS initiative, so that it can become a truly internationally accepted certification for those working in the field of laser surgery and medicine.