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BUREAU REGIONAL DU PACIFIQUE OCCIDENTAL**

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Agenda item 7

**STATEMENT BY DR YOSHIAKI NAKAI
REPRESENTATIVE, INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF
OTORHINOLARYNGOLOGICAL SOCIETIES (IFOS)**

Dear Dr Omi and all the Colleagues in the WHO-Western Pacific Region

I would like to inform you that the General Secretary of IFOS, International Federation of Otorhinolaryngological Societies, is now Professor Jan J Grote, Leiden, the Netherlands, who succeeded Professor Peter W Alberti last December.

Initiated by ISA, International Society of Audiology, IFOS, has been working for the Prevention and Management of Hearing Impairment and Deafness in the Developing World since 1985.

The volunteer work of IFOS is in close cooperation with "Hearing International" since it was organized in 1992. I, as the Regional Secretary of IFOS for East Asia, Western Pacific and Oceania, will report on the functions, activities, future plans and some difficulties related to the matter of Hearing Impairment.

The President of Hearing International is Professor Suchitra Prasansuk, Bangkok. There are 20 HI Centers for Ear Care and 10 HI National Groups in the world. They work in their countries and also conduct outreach programs. Hearing International Japan is a National Chapter of HI, which was organized in 1992. Since then HI Japan published a news letter, "Hearing International" four times a year. Copies of the recent issue, No. 39 are available for you in the session. No. 40 is coming shortly.

To work in developing countries, cooperation with WHO is most needed. Here is our important appeal to WHO. Although everybody believes that 'hearing' is important, actually very few people recognize the difficulties to which hearing impaired face. Since hearing impairment is not

'visible' unlike other disabilities, such recognition of their difficulties is far from the reality. We accordingly appeal for WHO to support, in many possible ways, our project and efforts in this issue.

WHO held several meetings for hearing impairment in the past, including one in Manila in March 1994. Representatives from eight countries gathered.

We have a Noise Induced Hearing Loss Standing Committee in IFOS. One of the worldwide actions to prevent hearing loss must target noise induced hearing loss (NIHL), a major cause of hearing impairment through the world. In industrialized countries, exposure to excessive noise is at least partially the causal factor in more than one third of those with hearing impairment. Many developing countries need both effective legislation against noise exposure and programs to prevent NIHL. National programs for prevention of NIHL should be established worldwide. The awareness of the harmful effects of noise exposure on hearing and the importance of prevention and control of NIHL must be increased, because there is widespread ignorance of the hazards involved. Once noise exposure ceases there is no further progression of NIHL. Since prevention of hearing loss and conservation of hearing are the best treatment, the IFOS NIHL Standing Committee is trying to work towards these important aims in a global way.

Hearing International Japan has been working in the Western Pacific and South East Asia since 1992. The activities, which were concentrated in Indonesia for five years since 1995, are expanding to the neighbouring countries. Namely, HI Japan is starting to work again in the Western Pacific and South East Asia. I am attending this Session today especially to appeal to WHO-WPRO for cooperation to work for the good care of ears.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.