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**STATEMENT BY PROFESSOR JUN-ICHI SUZUKI
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OTORHINOLARYNGOLOGICAL SOCIETIES (IFOS)**

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

1. Start of the Project of Prevention and Management of Hearing Impairment and Deafness in the World.

Our Project for Prevention and Management of Hearing Impairment and Deafness started in 1985 by the International Federation of Otorhinolaryngological Societies (IFOS) in close cooperation with International Society of Audiology (ISA). Jean Market of Belgium, SG of IFOS and Tore Lundborg of Sweden, EB of both IFOS and ISA, were great promoters of the Project. PW Alberti, last SG and JJ Grote, present SG of IFOS are continuing the efforts.

The first Otological Center was built in Bangkok in 1985 and now more than 25 Otological Centers are functioning in the world. In July, 1992, IFOS EB gathered in Sorrento, Italy and decided to establish Hearing International (HI) as an international organization exclusively to work for the hearing impaired in the world. YP Kapur was elected as President of Hearing International, myself as Vice President and Editor and S Prasansuk as Secretary General and Treasurer. Hearing International Newsletter has been published by HI Japan (HIJ) four issues a year since then. HI Newsletter is now ten years old, and the No. 43 issue was published last June.

2. The Project for the Hearing Impaired in Indonesia

The Project in Indonesia started in 1995. This is successfully lasting up to now for 8 years. The Project is continuing still for three more years starting in August, 2003 by the support of JICA,

Japan International Cooperation Agency. The Project will be expanded to the whole country of Indonesia in close cooperation of the neighbor countries.

3. Project on HighQualityLowCostHearingAID is now Starting

In Singapore in April 2001, during the 9th ASEAN Congress of ORL, HI Committee on Management and Rehabilitation held a meeting. One of the important conclusions was to develop the HighQualityLowCostHearingAID. We see the hearing aids very much improved and advanced in many aspects. Because they are advanced and sophisticated, however, they have to be very carefully fit to the ears with various degrees and different kinds of hearing impairments. I see many hearing impaired not satisfied with such advance hearing aids.

Attentions are raised to ENT doctors, to Hearing-aid Dispensers, and to Hearing-Aid Manufacturers. Those three are among many to consider:

(a) 'Indications, fitting and repeated follow-ups' are responsible for both ENT Doctors and Hearing-Aid Dispensers.

(b) 'Explanations and/or Informed Consent' are important. Too much inappropriate expectations to hearing aids by the hearing impaired should be minimized.

(c) Hearing Aids, especially those very small digitalized are very expensive! We have to appeal this to Hearing-Aid-Manufacturers. Many hearing impaired could not be wealthy to purchase such expensive hearing-aids.

4. What can be done now?

The supports of the societies and of the governments to the hearing impaired are usually not enough in most countries in the world. Big foundations are missing for the hearing impaired. Since 1985, IFOS, ISA, and since 1992, Hearing International are working for prevention and management of hearing impairment and deafness. The major difficulties for them are, 'to start with', i.e., in the invisible disability of hearing impairment. Hearing people know very little about the difficulties of the hearing impaired. Even the hearing impaired themselves don't really recognize their own difficulties!

The difficulties of the hearing impaired are actually very serious. We should know the fact that the education of the deaf is mostly possible only up to the lower high school level, while much higher education is possible for the blind. They can be professors in the university.

5. Let the Hearing People understand the Hearing Impaired and the Deaf

In 2001, we wrote a book, "Otology – Challenges for the Hearing Impairment" in Japanese for the hearing lay people more to understand the hearing impaired. This book was published by one of popular publishers in Japan. We received many letters from the hearing impaired, but very few from the hearing people! Our objective was not accomplished!

We are now planning to publish a book in English by the Springer-Verlag Tokyo. The book is thus for lay people all over the world for promoting their understanding of the hearing impaired. We are going to ask many colleagues in the world to write on their experiences for the hearing impaired.

We emphasize about the production of HighQualityLowCostHearingAid, which is useful for the hearing impaired in the world, especially in the developing countries.

Close cooperation of WHO or even the initiatives by WHO on these issues, i.e., Publication of a Book for lay people for understanding of the Hearing Impaired and the Deaf, and the Production of the HighQualityLowCostHearingAid, should be very much appreciated.