



**REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC  
BUREAU RÉGIONAL DU PACIFIQUE OCCIDENTAL**

**REGIONAL COMMITTEE**

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**STATEMENT BY DR KAREN S.L. LAM, REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL DIABETES FEDERATION (IDF)**

Diabetes mellitus is a major health problem in the world. Over 100 million people in the world suffers from diabetes and the number is growing. In Hong Kong, it affects over three percent of the population. The World Health Assembly recently gave formal recognition to the problem of diabetes, and recommended the allocation of resources for its solution. Plans for the prevention, identification and treatment of diabetes and its complications have to be drawn up at local, national and regional levels. Such action will result in great reduction of human suffering and in massive savings of human and material resources.

The International Diabetes Federation is the only official nongovernmental organization representing people with diabetes before the WHO and its legislative body, the World Health Assembly. Its membership includes 105 diabetes organizations from 86 different countries including Hong Kong. The total of 1 089 008 members include both health care professionals and lay people.

The WHO represents the Health Ministries of the World. In view of the importance of Health Ministries to the quality of health care, it is crucial that the IDF continues its close contact with the WHO.

***IDF ACTION PLAN 1992-1994 - ROLE OF THE WHO***

The WHO will collaborate with the IDF in three major areas of the IDF Action Plan for 1992-1994.

***I. INSULIN AVAILABILITY***

IDF will send a questionnaire to health ministers of all WHO member countries with the following objectives:

- 1) To establish the availability of insulin supplies through national health services, and
- 2) To identify constraints such as taxes or distribution problems which may restrict availability.

## ***II. NIDDM (NON-INSULIN DEPENDENT DIABETES MELLITUS) TASK FORCE***

The WHO will assist the IDF in carrying out the following objectives:

1. To document the increase in NIDDM world-wide
2. To develop appropriate strategies for primary prevention
3. To develop education and treatment strategies for health care professionals and people with diabetes
4. To ensure that educational materials already available are put into a suitable form for use in other IDF regions

## ***III. PROMOTION OF PUBLIC AWARENESS***

The first "World Diabetes Day" on June 27, 1991 marked the beginning of a series of activities to promote public awareness of diabetes in the member countries of the IDF. In Hong Kong, the Diabetic Division of the Endocrine Society, with the help of the Department of Health, has also organized various public seminars, television and radio programs to promote public interest in diabetes among lay people as well as health professionals. The overall success has been so impressive that the WHO has been invited to join the IDF in the official recognition of a day each year, preferably in November, as "World Diabetes Day".

## ***IDF - WPR AND THE WHO***

The Western Pacific Region (WPR) is the largest region of the IDF, in terms of population. It is also most diverse politically, economically and culturally. To address the specific problems faced by the people with diabetes in this region and to improve their health care, a strategic plan has been set up in 1991. This includes 6 major objectives.

- I. To develop diabetes awareness in the WPR among the general community, including the governments and their agencies, as well as among the medical professionals and health providers.
- II. To establish and enhance education programs to meet with specific needs of the WPR and individual member countries.  
  
This includes the education of people with diabetes and their families, as well as the health professionals.
- III. To develop effective National Diabetes Associations which should be broad-based, involving lay as well as medical and scientific members.
- IV. To develop links with the WHO, private industry and nongovernmental organizations.
- V. To develop the potential of the WPR council in developing policies, initiating and funding programs, and addressing problems specific to the WPR.
- VI. To harness the resources currently existing within the WPR to assist in achieving the above objectives.

In carrying out this strategic plan, the assistance of the WHO will be required especially with regard to objectives 1,3 and 4.

Finally, on behalf of our Chairman, Professor Hun Ki Min, I'd like to invite you all, especially those with an interest in diabetes, to attend the IDF-WPR Congress which will be held in Seoul, Republic of Korea on April 12, 1993. Those who are interested please write to the Secretariat at:

**Secretariat**  
**IDF-WPR 1993**

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