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STATEMENT BY THE ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE INTERNATIONAL

By Dr Robert Yeoh, Board Member

Madam Chairman, Honourable Ministers, distinguished delegates,

My name is Robert Yeoh, a general practitioner from Australia, representing Alzheimer's Disease International, ADI, the global federation of Alzheimer's associations who support people living with dementia, their families and caregivers.

I am pleased to inform the meeting that the 2012 WHO-ADI publication on dementia: a public health priority is now available in Chinese and Spanish with Arabic and Russian to follow. This report calls for countries to develop national dementia action plans or strategies which have now been done by more than ten countries. Feedback on the usefulness of this publication have been very positive.

A further step may be taken by WHO to include dementia on the A-Z health topic web site of WHO and its regional offices. This will provide accurate and reliable information on basic needs and guidelines on quality dementia care to community and health care providers and professionals and individuals and families.

Let us do this now on the web site of Regional Office for the Western Pacific.

In past years, I have mentioned,

- the importance of public awareness of dementia,
- that dementia is not, I repeat not, a natural process of ageing,
- the importance of timely and accurate diagnosis,
- to be followed immediately by full and complete assessments of functions,
- and provision of information, education and training to people living with dementia, their carers and families on coping strategies in order to improve quality of life, to reduce caregivers care load and stress, so that the need for structured and institutional or residential care is delayed or even avoided.

However, ultimately, long-term institutional care is required for some people.

This year, during the dementia awareness month ADI launched the World Alzheimer's Report 2013, in Beijing at a roundtable event. This report is about long term care needs and long term care.

The event was very well attended by government officials, WHO, mental health and aged care professionals and providers as well as private investors making presentations and actively engaging in discussions. It was great to see that dementia issues are generating huge interests and receiving increasing attention in China.

I am very excited to report further global good news.

The United Kingdom is looking to spark a world-wide effort by inviting health ministers from G8 countries to a high level summit in London on 11 December to discuss how they can coordinate efforts and shape an effective international solution to dementia.

G8 have a unique chance to come together to help people manage dementia better, lead healthier lives and with dignity, and deliver real improvements in care and substantial economic savings.

No doubt WHO will also be attending.

We urge WHO to take great opportunity to convey, in no uncertain terms, to the Summit that:

1. Dementia is global, growing and costly not only to those affected but also to society as a whole.
2. Every country needs an action plan to tackle dementia as a public health issue embracing timely diagnosis, support for people living with dementia, family caregivers, community and residential care services and also dementia risk reduction.
3. Research is a critical part of the plan to be able to better understand the causes of dementia, to identify those at risk and develop interventions that modify the disease process.
4. The commitment to develop dementia-friendly communities and organizations that we see in the United Kingdom, Belgium and Australia are important if we are to succeed in reducing the social isolation and stigma that results from a diagnosis of dementia.

Please allow me to reiterate that ADI stands ready to collaborate with WHO and the Regional Office for the Western Pacific and Member States and countries on dementia issues.

There is no time to lose.

Thank you.