



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

REGIONAL COMMITTEE

WPR/RC42/DIV/4

**Forty-second session
Omiya, Japan
10-16 September 1991**

10 September 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**OPENING REMARKS BY DR HIROSHI NAKAJIMA, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF
THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION AT THE OPENING CEREMONY
OF THE FORTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR
THE WESTERN PACIFIC
OMIYA, JAPAN, 10 SEPTEMBER 1991**

Honourable Vice-Minister of Health and Welfare, Mr Tatsuhiko Sakamoto,
Distinguished Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome the opportunity to take part in the inaugural ceremony for this forty-second session of the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific, and especially to thank the Government of Japan for inviting us to Omiya. Already, in 1953 and 1977, Japan has extended its renowned and overwhelming hospitality to WHO by acting as host to the Regional Committee. It is fitting that yet a further stage in development of the Organization's work in the Region should be marked by the Committee's third sojourn here, in the thoroughly modern Sonic City of Omiya.

This session comes at a critical time in the history of human health and development. The unprecedented changes which have taken place, and indeed are still taking place, in many parts of the world are moving and exhilarating, and cannot fail to have global repercussions. While change can bring about as many new problems as the old ones it seeks to solve, I see these new problems as real opportunities to be seized and acted upon, if the goal of health for all is to be achieved. Never before has there been such scope for countries to show solidarity with one another and to enter into new fruitful and rewarding partnerships.

Your presence here reflects the shared concerns and unity of purpose that lead towards our common goal. "Health for all" is as much a search for social justice and equity as it is for health. To me this is the basis of true and lasting global peace.

It is not new for me to refer to the heterogeneous nature of the Western Pacific Region, with its Member States ranging from the most to the least developed. This makes them unique, in that their closeness as Members of one Region enables them to share, particularly in forums such as this Regional Committee, the knowledge and experience which each one possesses in its own way, and to extend that knowledge and experience to a larger global audience. To this closely-knit fraternity I welcome two new Members - Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia - and an Associate Member, Tokelau. They all have much to contribute to the work of WHO.

Unfortunately, this Region's potential for rapid progress in health development often encounters setbacks in the form of natural disasters. This year's devastating floods in China and the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines are but two examples. I know I speak for everyone present when I offer my deep sympathy to the governments and peoples of these two countries. I assure you that your Regional Director, Dr Sang Tae Han, and I shall do all in our power to help you to recover from, or avoid, the adverse health consequences of such disasters.

Mr Sakamoto, ladies and gentlemen, let me reiterate my thanks to the Government of Japan for once again inviting the Regional Committee to Tokyo and its environs; and let me wish you, distinguished representatives, an agreeable and fruitful session.