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BUREAU REGIONAL DU PACIFIQUE OCCIDENTAL**

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**STATEMENT BY DR EVA GONZALEZ, REPRESENTATIVE,  
WORLD FEDERATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH**

Honourable Minister of Health, the Regional Director of the World Health Organization,  
Western Pacific Regional Office, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I bring warm greetings and good wishes from the President, Secretary-General and Members  
of the Board of the World Federation for Mental Health.

This Federation is an international non-profit organization. It was founded 52 years ago in  
London with the purpose of promoting among all people and nations the highest possible level of  
mental health in its broadest biological, medical, educational and social aspects. Its organizational and  
individual membership include professional mental health workers of all disciplines, consumers  
(users) of mental health services, family members and concerned citizens in more than 100 countries  
on 6 continents. The celebration of World Mental Health Day held each year on 10 October is one  
means of bringing attention of the public and government to mental health issues .

The promotion of positive mental health in the Western Pacific Region has been its major  
focus for half a century now. Within this Region, variation in cultural practices leading to stigma  
towards the mentally unhealthy, language differences causing communication barrier, and low priority  
given to the status of mental health in a given country, are known to impede the implementation of  
mental health projects or programmes. Efforts should be exerted to lessen the difficulties and these  
can possibly be done with funding support, for instance, for local staff training, exchange or sharing  
of experiences in promoting positive mental health. A larger budgetary support for training  
programmes, conferences, seminars and the like within a given country and among neighbouring  
countries is highly recommended. Such support for WHO will make collaborative effort with mental  
health associations far reaching and fruitful.

We are just beginning to get acquainted in the Western Pacific and Southeast Asian Regions. The pace is slow but we are optimistic that in better times the mental health movement will receive the support it deserves.

The Philippine Mental Health Association runs a day centre for the rehabilitation of mental patients who have been treated. Through income generating projects sold commercially here and overseas we have been able to help many mental patients and their families earn a living and not be a burden to family member or society .

Those who are interested in visiting the centre are most welcome.