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STATEMENT BY DR JANE O'MALLEY

REPRESENTATIVE, INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES (ICN)

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates:

On behalf of the International Council of Nurses (ICN), thank you for the opportunity to speak on this important subject. As you know, ICN is a federation of national nurses associations (NNAs) in 129 countries. Its mandate is to improve standards of nursing practice, education, management and research and to strengthen the contribution of nurses to health systems at all levels. Above all our goal is healthy people in a healthy world.

The International Council of Nurses applauds the WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific for its continued commitment to strengthening nursing. The funding of nursing leadership programmes in is an example of the commitment of the Region to advance nursing and health care. Thanks to this project there is a growing cadre of nurses prepared for effective roles in improving health care systems.

ICN supports the Regional Strategy on Human Resources for Health 2006-2015 and the three key result areas and strategic responses. The importance of nurses and other health workers to health system performance, quality of health care, the health-related Millennium Development Goals and for scaling up health interventions is widely recognized.

We are committed to working with the Western Pacific and other WHO regions to address the health human resource challenges, such as: the shortage of nurses; skill mix imbalances; uneven distribution of health workers made worse by migration from rural to urban areas and abroad; poor salaries and equipment; and a limited health workforce knowledge base, which hampers planning, policy development and programme operations.

ICN, having studied the nursing shortage, has produced a series of reports and identified our intended actions. This information is available on our website (www.icn.ch). To assist in this, we have partnered with the CGFNS to establish the International Centre on Nurse Migration. The Centre is currently preparing a paper on self sufficiency. As well ICN will shortly launch a new centre on nursing human resources which will undertake to work with a broad range of partners in addressing data, information, standards and competencies, policy, continuing education, research and advocacy.

We look forward to working with you in training, sustaining and retaining a motivated workforce, understanding this will require long-term commitment, structural and financial reforms, and partnerships with health profession associations and others at country, regional and global levels.

Thank you for your attention.