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**STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL PHARMACEUTICAL  
FEDERATION (IFP)**

**By Dr Reynaldo Umali**

Mr Chairman, Regional Director, Dr Shin, distinguished representatives of countries in the Western Pacific Region.

The Western Pacific Pharmaceutical Forum, following its establishment in 2001 is the regional arm of the International Pharmaceutical Federation, an NGO in official relations with WHO. The Forum created a clear vision by focusing on pharmacist's education as a foundation for the establishment of good pharmacy practice and good manufacturing practice principles in all the countries of our region.

In relation to practice, we have encouraged support of the division of prescribing and dispensing of medicines in our region. This program should ensure better economic and health outcomes for all patients.

Following an international consultation on hospital pharmacy standards we have worked very strongly to encourage the acceptance and spread of the agreed international standards for hospital practice.

The Forum is also extremely concerned at the increasing trend in relation to counterfeit medicines and to spread of antibiotic resistance.

The Forum recognises very clearly these three issues as important to the Western Pacific Region and they will be used as a guide for our future direction and actions –

- there is an increasing globalisation of healthcare
- healthcare is becoming more and more patient focused
- the gap in healthcare services between developing and developed countries needs to be urgently addressed.

In the immediate future, the Forum will –

- Continue our support for promotion of good pharmaceutical practices legislation in Vietnam. At a recent meeting in Hanoi with Vice-Minister of Health, Dr Cao Minh Quang,

our continuing support was requested and the Forum was delighted to learn that some 90% of the hospitals in Vietnam have now reached the necessary good pharmacy practice standards.

The community sector, particularly in the major cities of Vietnam are showing great promise and discussions enabled us to identify some solutions that may be of help in overcoming immediate difficulties.

The Western Pacific Regional office of WHO generously supported our work in Vietnam in 2008/2009 and in order to complete this work, we may seek some further support.

- In April 2010 the Forum conducted a program, together with the National University of Singapore and Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, relating to curriculum development for pharmacy schools in the region. The Forum sees this as extremely important as if good pharmacy practices are to be developed and nurtured within the region, a strong ability to teach these practices within the educational structure, is absolutely essential.

Many schools within the region have been predominantly science-focused. In the modern world, it is absolutely essential that a strong combination of practice and science is followed in all pharmacy undergraduate degree programs.

- The Forum is endeavouring to find some ways to establish some education programs for pharmacist technicians in the Oceania region. The University of Papua New Guinea and the University of Fiji are the only two universities teaching pharmacy undergraduates in the Oceania region. It is hoped that the formalised teaching of technicians will enable much more support to be provided to the hospitals on many of the small Pacific Islands.
- The Forum continues its interaction with all the pharmaceutical associations in the Western Pacific region, continually draws the associations' attention to the problems relating to counterfeit medicines in our region. There is barely a country in our region that remains untouched by the problem relating to counterfeit medicines. Currently there is a proposal to hold a regional seminar conducted by the World Health Professions Alliance, an organisation created in Geneva, with the encouragement of WHO, originally bringing the World Medical Association, the International Pharmaceutical Federation and the International Nursing Council together, but now wanting also the dental profession and physiotherapy.
- It has been proposed that the seminar relating to counterfeit medicines should be held by the member bodies of the World Health Professions Alliance in each of the six WHO regions.
- Irrational use of antibiotics and more particularly, by counterfeit sub-standard antibiotics, rapidly increasing the rate of resistance in our region. The Forum strongly supports the work of the Western Pacific Regional office and the international body, REACT, in this regard.
- International consultation on standards for hospital pharmacy practice conducted in 2008, the Forum has been active in promoting the statements, all translated into the traditional languages of our region.

The Forum is supporting the work of the Regional Supervisor, Dr Rebekah Moles, University of Sydney and her PhD student, Jonathan Penm in promoting and developing these standards within our region. Some problems exist in contacting and listing hospitals in the following countries and I would be very grateful if the Department of Health personnel from these countries, could contact me during this meeting. The countries are Cambodia, Lao PDR, Nauru, Mongolia, Solomon Islands, Tokelau and Vanuatu

The Forum is always available for its advice and information regarding the pharmaceutical sciences or pharmacy practice within our region and it can always be contacted through the offices of Dr Budiono Santoso, WHO Western Pacific Regional Office.

I would like to take this opportunity of expressing our appreciation to Dr Santoso and his staff for the help and encouragement as we pursue our work and goals in the Western Pacific Region.

Earlier this year, the Forum's Executive had a successful and encouraging meeting with Regional Director, Dr Shin, and senior members of his staff and we look forward to working with the Western Pacific Regional office in the future.

Thank you.