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STATEMENT BY CONSUMERS INTERNATIONAL

**Ms Jennifer Narcisa del Rosario Malonzo**

Chairperson,

Honourable delegates,

We appreciate the opportunity to speak on this important issue on behalf of Consumers International, the global federation of consumer organizations, representing over 220 consumer organizations in 115 countries from all regions of the World. Today we are speaking on behalf of 28 members in 13 countries in the Western Pacific region.

We urge members of the WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific Region to indicate their support for the development of an International Code on marketing of Foods to children and to signal their intent on this issue by developing a regional action plan on the marketing of food to children.

We commend the Sixty-first World Health Assembly for strengthening the mandate of the WHO's Director-General in resolution WHA 61.14 take action against the rise of non-communicable diseases and in particular the childhood obesity pandemic. Further to the earlier resolution WHA 60.23, the WHO will now consult on the development of a set of recommendations on the marketing of food to children. We ask Member States to support this resolution by playing an active part in the consultation; supporting the development of an International Code and developing a regional action plan to combat marketing of food to children.

The incidence of obesity and the ensuing health problems such as heart disease and diabetes are fast increasing in the Western Pacific Region. In some parts of the region up to 20% of children are overweight or obese. As the 2005 WHO report on noncommunicable diseases and poverty showed, obesity affects all ages and social classes and in poorer populations, it co-exists with under-nutrition. The projected cost to the health services in member states caused by noncommunicable diseases now and in the future could put other services at risk.

We welcome the acknowledgement in the WHO's 2006 Technical Meeting on Marketing of Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages to Children that the exposure to the commercial promotion of foods high in saturated fat, trans-fatty acids, sugars or salt has a direct effect on children desiring and consuming these unhealthy foods.

My organization IBON which is based here in the Philippines and other CI members in the Western Pacific region have recently completed a piece of research entitled "The Junk Food Trap" which demonstrate the range of sophisticated marketing techniques being used in this region to encourage the consumption of foods high in fat, sugar and salt by children. The report also highlights the difficulty that national governments face in trying to tackle this problem, coupled with the failure of self-regulation by industry.

Consumers International, working with the International Obesity Taskforce, has developed a set of recommendations for an international code on marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children. These recommendations set out what is needed to tackle this issue including coverage of children up to the age of 16, coverage of all types of promotion including packaging and new forms of media and recommends that the WHO develop appropriate nutritional profiling to assist countries in identifying foods high in fat, sugar and salt.

We commend the recommendations developed by Consumers International and IOTF to delegates as a model for a future international framework.

We urge members in the Western Pacific region to play an active part in the WHO consultation on this issue; to give their support to the development of robust WHO recommendations in line with those put forward by Consumers International and the International Obesity Task Force and to support the adoption of an international code on the marketing of food to children by the World Health Assembly in 2010.

Thank you.