



GENERAL INFORMATION

**FORTY-SIXTH SESSION
OF THE
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC**

**11-15 September 1995
Manila, Philippines**

May 1995

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**I. WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEE
FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC**

1. Date and place of the session

The forty-sixth session of the World Health Organization Regional Committee for the Western Pacific will be held in Manila, Philippines, from 11 to 15 September 1995.

The session will open at 9 a.m. on 11 September 1995 at the Conference Hall of the WHO Regional Office building, situated on United Nations Avenue, corner Taft Avenue, Ermita, Manila. The plenary meetings will also be held at the same venue.

Working hours for the session are tentatively set from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., with a fifteen-minute coffee/tea break in each period.

2. Languages of the Regional Committee

The official languages of the Regional Committee are Chinese, English and French; English and French are the working languages. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided between the three official languages.

II. WHO REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC AND ITS SERVICES

1. The Regional Office

The WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific (WPRO) is situated on United Nations Avenue, corner Taft Avenue, Ermita, Manila.

Telephone, facsimile, telegraph and telex facilities are available in the Regional Office during office hours. Postage stamps and phone cards can also be bought in the Office.

The postal address of the Regional Office is:

WHO/WPRO
P.O. Box 2932
1099 Manila
Philippines

Telephone: (632) 521-84-21 to 49

Facsimile: (632) 521 1036
(632) 526 0279
(632) 526 0362

Telegraphic address: UNISANTE MANILA

Telex: 63260 WHO PN (EASTERN)
40365 WHO PM (GLOBE-TELECOM)

Please note that smoking is not allowed on WHO premises.

2. Travel and transport arrangements

Representatives will be provided with transportation by WHO to and from Manila International Airport (Ninoy Aquino International Airport).

The staff of the WHO travel agency, American Express/PCI Travel Corporation on the WHO premises will supply information on travel and make travel arrangements. Visitors are requested to reconfirm their return journey as soon as possible after their arrival, and not later than 72 hours before the scheduled departure.

3. Hotel accommodation

In response to requests, the WHO Travel Office will reserve rooms for visitors at good hotels close to the Regional Office.

From the Regional Office, the Holiday Inn Manila Pavilion (formerly Manila Pavilion) is a three-minute walk, the Manila Hotel is about 20 minutes' walk or 5-10 minutes by taxi depending on the traffic situation, and the Bayview Park Hotel is 10 minutes' walk or 5 minutes by taxi. The Manila Hotel and Bayview Park will provide complimentary transport. WHO staff and visitors are normally given

special rates at these hotels, reflected in the request for accommodation form supplied (Form B).

Please note that as some hotels use a different exchange rate if payment is made in local currency (to the disadvantage of the traveller), it is recommended that payments be made in US\$ travellers cheques or another hard currency.

4. Banks

An office of American Express/PCI Travel Corporation is located in the WHO Travel Office in the WHO building, which will assist in encashment of travellers' cheques at preferential rates. Branches of the Far East Bank and Trust Company, Metro Bank, and American Express/PCI Travel Corporation are a short walking distance from the WHO premises.

The monetary unit of the Philippines is the peso. The currency consists of paper notes in denominations of P1000, P500, P100, P50, P20, P10, and P5. The coins consist of P5, P2, P1 and 50, 25, 10, 5 and 1 centavo pieces.

The exchange rate fluctuates; as at April 1995, it was approximately P25.70 to US\$1.

5. Medical service

A nurse is on duty to give first aid, prescribed injections and simple treatment in the infirmary of the Regional Office, Room 1219, Telephone 4233 or 4234, from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. In addition, a WHO doctor is on duty in the afternoon from 1:30 p.m.

Hospitals very close to the Regional Office are the following:

Manila Doctors Hospital

667 United Nations Avenue, Manila
Telephone 50-30-11

Manila Medical Centre, Manila

General Luna Street
Manila
Telephone 59-16-61

6. Cafeteria

The WHO Cafeteria serves breakfast and lunch, as well as coffee, tea and soft drinks, sandwiches, cakes, snacks and hot meals at reasonable prices. It is open from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

7. Library

The WHO Library is situated on the second floor of Building 2 of the Regional Office and is open during office hours, Mondays to Fridays.

III. INFORMATION ON THE PHILIPPINES AND MANILA

1. Entry requirements

Visitors should possess a valid passport. Except for nationals of countries having a reciprocal arrangement with the Republic of the Philippines (for waiver of the requirement for a visa), visitors must possess a valid entry visa. Visas may be obtained from the Philippine diplomatic or consular offices abroad.

However, there is a visa exemption for those entering the Philippines as tourists or for a business visit, as follows:

(1) Nationals of Brazil, Iceland, Israel, Mexico, Pakistan, Romania, Spain and Sri Lanka may stay for 59 days.

(2) Visitors of Chinese origin holding a British passport issued in Hong Kong may stay for 7 days. Extension for another 7 days is possible.

(3) Nationals of any other country may stay for 21 days provided that they hold tickets and other documents for the onward or return journey and they are not:

(a) stateless passengers;

(b) nationals of Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Russian Federation, Viet Nam;

(c) holders of a Portuguese passport issued in Macao.

Travellers under the above categories should write as early as possible to the Administrative Services Officer, WHO/WPRO Regional Office, giving information regarding the traveller's name, date of birth, passport number, date and place of issue and validity date, so that prior arrangements for visa issuance can be made with the Philippine authorities.

(4) Nationals of the following countries provided they hold diplomatic, official or service passports:

(a) Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Tunisia and Republic of Korea (they may stay for the duration of missions);

(b) all other ASEAN nationals and nationals of Japan may stay for a maximum of 21 days.

2. Health regulations

Yellow fever vaccination is needed for visitors arriving from infected areas, except children under one year of age, who may be subject to isolation if this is determined to be necessary.

3. Customs

Visitors may bring in the following items free of duty: 2 bottles of alcoholic beverages and a small quantity of perfume for personal use.

4. Climate and clothing

The climate is tropical with temperatures ranging from 21°C to 38°C (70°F - 100°F). Light clothing is worn all year round. The rainy season extends from mid-May to mid-November, when it is advisable to have a light raincoat or umbrella. Even during the rainy season, however, there are dry spells. The humidity is high (65% - 90%) all year round. Offices, hotels and shops are fully air-conditioned and visitors may sometimes feel the need for a light jacket or equivalent.

5. Electricity

The power supply in Manila is 220V, and in most hotels 110V is available as well. The frequency of electrical current is 60 Hz.

6. Public transportation

Manila's public transportation system consists of buses, taxis, the picturesque "jeepneys" and the overhead railway system (LRT).

All taxis have meters and rates are reasonable. Most taxi drivers understand and speak English.

There are several car hire companies operating in the city.

For security reasons, when possible, request the hotel guards to arrange for your transport by taxi.

7. Shopping and entertainment

In the vicinity of the Regional Office is the Ermita "tourist belt" (Mabini and Del Pilar Streets), with many local handicraft and antique shops, night clubs, a department store and some supermarkets.

Roxas Boulevard is well known for its large number of restaurants and night clubs. Many large hotels are located on Roxas Boulevard, as well as the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the Folk Arts Theatre and the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC).

Many parts of Manila contain large department stores and small shops and a large number of cinemas. These can be easily reached by taxi and LRT from the Regional Office.

There are modern shopping centres in Makati and Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, which are located about 30 to 45 minutes by car or taxi from the Regional Office. These commercial centres have a large number of restaurants, food and department stores and assorted outlets for electrical equipment and appliances, furniture, clothing, pharmaceuticals, jewellery, books, etc. The stores are generally open from 10 a.m. to 6 or 7 p.m. Makati also has many modern, air-conditioned cinemas.

8. Credit cards

International credit cards are accepted by the majority of tourist establishments.

9. Tipping

A 10% service charge and prevailing government tax (approximately 14.95%) are added to most hotel bills. Accommodation rates quoted by the hotels used by WHO are net; restaurant bills generally include approximately 5.7% sales tax on food and 12.2% sales tax on beverages plus 10% service charge. Additional tipping is optional. Bellboys or porters should be tipped anything from P5 to P20 depending on how much luggage one has.

10. Sightseeing

Points of interest in Manila are:

- (1) Intramuros, the site of the ancient city of Manila, with the ruins of Fort Santiago, historic San Agustin Church and Manila Cathedral.
- (2) Rizal Park, Manila's colourful garden and memorial to Dr Jose Rizal, the Philippine national hero.
- (3) Historic Malacañang Palace by the Pasig River, former official residence of Spanish and American Governors-General, which is now used as the Office of the President of the

Philippines. Malacañang Park in the Palace grounds, is open to the public.

(4) The Cultural Center of the Philippines, the Philippine International Convention Center, the Coconut Palace and the Folk Arts Theatre on Roxas Boulevard.

(5) The Ayala Museum in Makati and the Metropolitan Museum in Roxas Boulevard, depicting Philippine history, art and culture.

There are many interesting places outside the city:

(1) About 90 minutes drive south of Manila by car, the growing resort of Tagaytay City, perched on a ridge overlooking Lake Taal and Taal Volcano.

(2) On the way to Tagaytay, Las Piñas and the famous bamboo organ in St. Joseph's Church.

(3) Corregidor, an island at the entrance to Manila Bay, a famous battlefield of the Second World War, now preserved as a monument.

The American Express/PCI Travel Corporation office (Room 1101 of the Regional Office) may be consulted for information on tour schedules and services. Most hotels also provide such information.

11. Security

As in all large cities, it is essential to observe reasonable security precautions and guard against the danger of falling victim to any of the fraudulent practices to which tourists may be exposed - through, for example, spurious requests for financial assistance, offers of goods and services, exchange of foreign currency, etc.

Thus, prudence and sound judgement should be exercised at all times, whether in the hotel, on the street, in a taxi or simply telephoning.

It is also recommended that you obtain a security update from the travel section prior to undertaking any travel outside Metro Manila.