



## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **FIFTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC**

**18 - 22 September 2000  
Manila, Philippines**

**May 2000**

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

### **1. Date and place of the session**

The fifty-first session of the World Health Organization Regional Committee for the Western Pacific will be held in Manila, Philippines, from 18 to 22 September 2000.

The session will open at 9 a.m. on 18 September 2000 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 and e-mail 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  
1000 Manila  
Philippines

Telephone: (63 2) 528 8001 to 49  
(63 2) 303 1000  
(63 2) 528 9608

Facsimile : (63 2) 521 1036  
(63 2) 526 0279  
(63 2) 526 0362  
(63 2) 761 0639

E-mail : **rcm51@wpro.who.int**

Please note that smoking is not allowed on the WHO premises nor at any official Regional Committee function.

## **2. Travel and transport arrangements**

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

The staff of the WHO official travel agent, Rajah 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, WHO will reserve rooms for visitors at good hotels close to the Regional Office.

From the Regional Office, the Holiday Inn Manila Pavilion is 3 minutes' walk, the Manila Hotel is about 20 minutes' walk or 5-10 minutes by car depending on the traffic situation, Bayview Park Hotel is 10 minutes' walk or 5 minutes by car, The Westin Philippine Plaza and Manila

Diamond Hotel are about 20 minutes by car from the Regional Office.

Transfers will be provided by the hotels, except for the Holiday Inn which is within walking distance of the Regional Office.

WHO staff and visitors are normally given special rates at these hotels, reflected in the form supplied.

Please note that as some hotels use an exchange rate that is disadvantageous to the traveller if payment is made in local currency, it is recommended that payments be made in US\$ traveller's cheques or another hard currency.


#### **4. Banks**

The Rajah Travel Corporation in the WHO building will assist in encashment of traveller's cheques at preferential rates. The Far East Bank and Trust Company is a short walking distance from the WHO premises.

The monetary unit of the Philippines is the peso. The currency consists of paper notes in denomination of P1000,

P 500, P100, P50, P20 and P10. The coins consist of P5, P1 and 50, 25, 10 and 5 centavo pieces.

The exchange rate fluctuates; as at May 2000, it was approximately PHP 41.15 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 89620 or 89621, from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In addition, a WHO doctor is on duty every Monday, Tuesday and Friday from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Hospitals in very close proximity to the Regional Office are the following:

### **Manila Doctors Hospital**



667 United Nations Avenue  
Manila  
Telephone (63 2) 524-3011

### **Medical Center Manila**

General Luna Street  
Manila  
Telephone (63 2) 523-8131

## **6. Cafeteria**

The WHO Cafeteria serves breakfast and lunch, as well as coffee, tea and softdrinks, 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, Monday to Friday.

### **III. INFORMATION ON THE PHILIPPINES AND MANILA**

#### **1. Entry requirements**

Representatives and other participants are required to have a passport valid for at least six (6) months and an entry visa (if required) for the Philippines.

Nationals of countries represented in the Regional Committee, with the exception of those listed below, are allowed to enter the Philippines without visas for a stay not exceeding twenty-one (21) days, provided they hold valid tickets for their return journey to port of origin or next port of destination.

Nationals of the following countries in the Region are required to secure entry visas to the Philippines:

Cambodia

China, People's Republic of

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Regular passport  
holders only;  
diplomatic and  
official passport

	holders do not need entry visas
Tonga	
Viet Nam	Regular and official passport holders only; diplomatic passport holders do not need entry visas

The following nationals are allowed to enter the Philippines without a visa for a stay not exceeding seven (7) days:

- (1) Travellers of Chinese origin holding a British passport endorsed "British National (Overseas)" issued in Hong Kong.
- (2) Nationals of China (PROC) holding passports issued by Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China (PROC).

- (3) Macao residents of Chinese origin holding a Portuguese alien passport or a Portuguese Travel Certificate.

For a stay more than seven days, a visa is required.

Representatives and other participants requiring entry visas should write as early as possible to the Administrative Services Officer, WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific, 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 Government authorities. This can be sent by e-mail, [rcm51@wpro.who.int](mailto:rcm51@wpro.who.int).

## **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). 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.

Light clothing is recommended. Offices, hotels and shops are fully air-conditioned and visitors may sometimes feel the need for a light jacket or equivalent. **However, for representatives attending the session, a business suit or equivalent attire is recommended.**

#### **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, "jeepneys", light railway transit (LRT) and the metro railway transit (MRT) along Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA).

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 concierge to arrange for your transport by taxi.

## **7. Shopping and entertainment**

Times Plaza, a small shopping centre, is located along U.N. Avenue corner Taft Avenue and within walking distance of the Regional Office. It has restaurants and specialty stores.

In the vicinity of the Regional Office is the Ermita "tourist belt" (Mabini and Del Pilar Streets), with many local handicraft and antique shops. Robinson's Place, a shopping mall within walking distance of the Regional Office, has a large variety of shops, boutiques, gift shops, restaurants and specialty stores.

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

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, modern air-conditioned cinemas, 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 7 or 8 p.m.

#### **8. Credit cards**

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

#### **9. Tipping**

A 10% service charge and 10.75% prevailing government tax are added to most hotel bills. Accommodation rates quoted by the hotels used by WHO are net; restaurant bills generally

include approximately 11% sales tax on food and 13% sales tax on beverages. Additional tipping is optional. Bellboys or porters may be tipped anything from P10 to P30 depending on how much luggage you have.

## **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 on Roxas Boulevard, contain dioramas depicting Philippine history, art and culture.

(6) The National Museum of the Philippines, Old Senate Building, P. Burgos St. has recently been renovated and contains many exhibits on Philippine history.

There are many interesting places outside the city:

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

(2) The famous bamboo organ in St Joseph's Church in Las Piñas. A trip to Las Piñas can be combined with a visit to Tagaytay.

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

The Rajah 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.

For information on cultural activities in Manila, consult:  
**[www.localvibe.com](http://www.localvibe.com)**.

## **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.

**In case of any emergency, the Regional Office's  
24-hour telephone numbers are (63 2) 528-8001 and  
(63 2) 303 1000.**