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Name of Organization: Alzheimer's Disease International

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Title: The Strategy and Plan of Action on Dementia in Older Persons

Name of Person Presenting: Mr. Marc Wortmann, Executive Director, Alzheimer's Disease International

I am Marc Wortmann of the United Kingdom, Executive Director of Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI), the federation of national Alzheimer's associations around the world in official relations with the WHO.

I congratulate the leadership of PAHO as the first WHO Region to develop a dementia plan and I thank member states who have provided input. On behalf of all the Alzheimer associations in the Region, ADI urges you to unanimously vote in favor of the Strategy and Plan of Action on Dementia.

Globally, it is estimated that 46.8 million people live with dementia today. In the Region of the Americas, these numbers will rise from 9.4 million to an estimated 29.9 million by 2050 – a proportional increase of 216%. Central America will experience the highest increase, around 348%.

Much of the global increase will take place in the lower and middle income countries. Today, more than half of all people with dementia live in low and middle income countries, and this will rise to 68% by 2050. In these countries, stigma, lack of support for people living with dementia and their families and lack of funding for health systems present major challenges. For example, less than 10% of people receive a formal diagnosis of dementia.

The PAHO Plan of Action is unique in its emphasis on the need to prevent dependence and to provide long-term care associated with dementias by developing strategies that enable health systems to adapt to these new demographic and epidemiological realities.

Formal international health bodies alone have the knowledge and networks to work dementia into health systems frameworks and ongoing NCD's and neurological disease activities.

PAHO's leadership, shown in developing this Plan of Action, has set a global benchmark in the public health community. The adoption of this Plan of Action supports the 'call for action' agreed upon by 80 countries at the WHO Ministerial Conference on Global Action Against Dementia. It is vital that we now turn words into action, translating this pledge into operational plans with clear targets and deliverables at international and national level. Your actions will support efforts to bring dementia onto the WHO agenda for the Executive Board meeting in January 2015.

ADI and its members stand ready to assist in the implementation of this Plan of Action on Dementia. We are available to cooperate with individual Member States and PAHO regional and country offices. We have regional and global experience with developing and implementing effective national dementia plans, including finding opportunities to use emerging information on dementia in health promotion and NCD activities.

We thank Madame Director Etienne and the Ministry of Health of Costa Rica for their efforts to establish the PAHO Strategy and Plan of Action on Dementia and the Member States who developed the first governmental plans on dementia in the Region for paving the way to comprehensive national public policies to improve the lives of people with dementia and their carers.