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CONCERNING SARS AND THE IUGG GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN SAPPORO

The General Assembly Local Organizing Committee is pleased to confirm that Japan is free of the SARS virus. As of this date (May 8, 2003), there has never been a case of SARS in Japan. Visitors should not be concerned.

In order to maintain this healthy state, certain precautions are being taken to insure that the SARS virus is not imported into Japan. The World Health Organization designates the areas that are at risk from SARS. As of today, those areas include the Beijing, Hong Kong, Guangdong, Inner Mongolia, Shanxi, Taipei and Tianjin Provinces of China. This warning does not apply to passengers simply transiting through international airports in these areas. The WHO website <http://www.who.int/csr/sars/en/> lists the affected regions; this information is being continually reassessed and updated.

To enter Japan, persons should not show the symptoms of SARS (high fever, dry cough, shortness of breath or breathing difficulties) or have been in one of the WHO designated SARS-infected areas within the past 10 days.

If any person in Japan is diagnosed with SARS, the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare will pay the expenses to hospitalize that person.

We hope that this information allays all concerns about travel to Sapporo, Hokkaido.

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