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Manila, 5 June 2015 – In light of the recent outbreak of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV), the World Health Organization and the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Health and Welfare will conduct a joint mission to the Republic of Korea. The mission comes after close consultation between WHO and the Government.

The WHO team will be led by Assistant Director-General for Health Security Dr Keiji Fukuda. The team will be comprised of experts in epidemiology, virology, clinical management, infection prevention and control, as well as public health officers who have previously handled other MERS-CoV outbreaks in the Middle East.

The pressing objective of this joint mission is to gain information and review the situation in the Republic of Korea including the epidemiological pattern, the characteristic of the virus and clinical features. The team will also assess the public health response efforts and provide recommendations for response measures going forward.

Since the outbreak, WHO has been working closely with the Ministry of Health and Welfare and the Korea Centres for Disease Control and Prevention on response measures. WHO appreciates the Government's cooperation in sharing up-to-date information and facilitating the joint mission.

Based on current data and WHO's risk assessment, there is no evidence to suggest sustained human-to-human transmission in communities and no evidence of airborne transmission. However, MERS-CoV is a relatively new disease and information gaps are considerable. The joint mission will bring us a step closer to gaining a better understanding of the nature of this virus.

WHO remains vigilant and is monitoring the situation. Given the lack of evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission in the community, WHO does not advise special procedures at points of entry, or travel or trade restrictions with regard to this event.