



International Geneva
Directory of Geneva Global Health Actors

World Health Organization | WHO

www.who.int

Avenue Appia 20 | CH-1202 Geneva

Tel +41 22 791 2111 | Fax +41 22 791 3111

BACKGROUND AND MISSION

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the directing and coordinating authority on international health within the United Nations system. WHO was formally founded when its constitution came into force on 7 April 1948, a date which is now known and celebrated as the World Health Day. WHO supports its 194 Member States in coordinating the efforts of multiple sectors of the government and partners - including bi- and multilaterals, funds and foundations, civil society organisations and private sector - to attain their health objectives and support their national health policies and strategies. The goal of WHO is to build a better, healthier future for people all over the world. Together with its partners WHO strives to combat diseases - including infectious diseases such as influenza and HIV, and non-communicable ones, such as cancer and heart disease. WHO helps mothers and children survive and thrive so they can look forward to a healthy old age. Moreover, WHO ensures the safety of the air people breathe, the food they eat, the water they drink - and the medicines and vaccines they need.

AREAS OF INTEREST

- Prevention, treatment, monitoring and eradication of infectious disease and outbreaks
- Vaccines, diagnostic tools and medicines
- Health systems, services and surveillance
- Non-communicable diseases and mental health
- Family and community health
- Health security and healthy environment
- Collection and distribution of scientific information and evidence

HEALTH-RELATED ACTIVITIES

The main areas of the work of WHO are health systems, promoting health through the life-course, non-communicable and communicable diseases and preparedness, surveillance and emergency response. This work helps Member States in realising the attainment by all people to the highest possible level of health, and ensures the adaptation of health policies striving towards the realisation of health as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, rather than just an absence of disease or infirmity. Moreover, WHO functions as the global guardian of public health. WHO has a very large number of programmes and projects covering the areas listed above and may work in partnership with other UN agencies, member governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). It works to eradicate diseases by sponsoring programmes aimed at treatment and prevention, by coordinating international efforts to increase preparedness and monitor infectious disease

outbreaks, and by supporting the development of vaccines, drugs and diagnostic tools. WHO also works with member states to improve their treatment, care and prevention services and runs health-related campaigns, including recent projects discouraging tobacco use and promoting physical activity and healthy diet. For the list of all programmes, see <http://www.who.int/entity/en/>

GOVERNANCE AND STAFF

Governance takes place through the World Health Assembly, which is the supreme decision-making body; and the Executive Board, which gives effect to the decisions and policies of the World Health Assembly. The Organization is headed by the Director-General, who is appointed by the Health Assembly on the nomination of the Executive Board. Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus is the Director-General of WHO, elected and appointed by the World Health Assembly on 23 May 2017. Dr Tedros' first term began on 1 July 2017 and will continue until 30 June 2022. The staff comprises of more than 7000 people of more than 150 nationalities. Over 50% of the staff works in the 150 country offices, while the rest are stationed in the headquarters in Geneva, the Global Service Centre in Malaysia, or in one of the 6 regional offices.

FUNDING SOURCES AND BUDGET

WHO's funding comes from assessed contributions from its member states, which forms the regular budget, as well as from voluntary contributions from countries, specialised agencies or other partners, which have accounted for more than 75% of the WHO's financing in recent years. The regular budget is smaller than voluntary contributions and also grows at a slower rate. The approved budget for 2018-19 is USD 4421.5 million.

PUBLICATIONS

WHO's website contains a broad range of comprehensive resources, including:

- WHO publications, including annual World Health Reports, WHO bulletin, books, articles and newsletters, see <http://www.who.int/publications/en/index.html>
- WHO constitution <http://www.who.int/about/mission/en/>
- WHO information materials for the media and the general audiences: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/en/>

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