

Message from the Regional Director

This annual report presents an overview of achievements in the WHO Western Pacific Region over the past year. We are progressing well during a time of tremendous change and reform in the Organization, both globally and in the Western Pacific Region.

After eight years of working shoulder-to-shoulder with so many of you, I would like to briefly reflect on our shared accomplishments and challenges. I also want to stress that my remaining time as Regional Director will continue to be guided by consultations with Member States and the findings of an ongoing in-depth review of our work.

Keeping Countries at the Centre is more than a motto in our Region. It is a principle that guides all our work. Eight years ago during initial consultations with Member States, they made clear their desire to see WHO work more efficiently and provide support focused on needs at the country level. Internal assessments and external evaluations confirmed the need for solutions that more directly addressed country priorities.

We listened and observed. Then we took decisive action to institute a new way of working that is yielding measurable results. We established the Country Support Unit in the Regional Office in August 2009 to address the specific priorities of each and every country and area in the Region. A year later, we created the Division of Pacific Technical Support in

Fiji to provide tightly tailored support to the diverse island communities spread across the world's largest ocean. We constantly enhance the process to develop and update country cooperation strategies to ensure a strong country focus and reinforce the partnership between WHO and Member States.

Many ministers of health have told me how such initiatives have made a real difference in delivering better results at the country level. In addition, we are working at the subnational level to better serve those most in need. We are working harder and smarter throughout the Region, providing more efficient support for Member States to achieve better health outcomes.

Working together, we are meeting our commitment to tackle neglected tropical diseases, such as lymphatic filariasis and yaws. We have introduced innovative approaches to treat those suffering with viral hepatitis, a particularly troubling issue in the Western Pacific Region.

Our Region also has been at the forefront of the fight against emerging diseases, emergencies and disasters. This

year the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific considers for endorsement an updated *Asia Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases and Public Health Emergencies*. When the Ebola virus struck West Africa, our Region sent expert teams to join the fight. In addition, our experience with emerging diseases and emergencies helped inform the development of the new global WHO Health Emergencies Programme.

All of this has occurred as we have maintained our focus on sustaining progress and making inroads into our other major areas of work – communicable and noncommunicable diseases, health promotion, health system strengthening and universal health coverage.

On the administrative side, we continue to streamline operations and innovate. New ways of working have allowed us to engage more strategically with partners and donors, recruit more women into our workforce, and use the latest information technology to improve programmes, budgeting and performance. In fact, many innovations from the Western Pacific Region have become models for global initiatives.



Last year, countries adopted the Sustainable Development Goals, which will guide global development over the next 15 years with a strong focus on health. WHO will work ever more closely with Member States to enhance capacity to achieve these ambitious goals. For this reason, the draft *Regional Action Agenda*

on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the Western Pacific – which the Regional Committee considers for endorsement this year – was developed in consultation with Member States, partners and experts.

With continuous input and guidance from Member States, we will spend the

next two years building on our shared successes and tackling new challenges with the goal of ensuring good health and well-being for the nearly 1.9 billion people who live in the Western Pacific Region.

Thank you.

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Regional Director