

# **SNAKEBITE ENVENOMING**

**A strategy for prevention  
and control**



**World Health  
Organization**

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## **A strategy for prevention and control**

Snakebite envenoming: a strategy for prevention and control

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# FOREWORD



## **Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**

Director-General  
World Health Organization

Snakebites are a significant risk to health and well-being for 5.8 billion people around the world, and for those affected carry a high financial burden that often cannot be met.

In the homes of families exposed to this threat snakebites are a cause of considerable fear and anxiety. The consequences of being bitten by a snake extend beyond the impact on health and drive families further into poverty, undermining their futures and trapping them in debt.

Last year, the 71st World Health Assembly adopted a comprehensive resolution calling for a coordinated response to address the global burden of snakebite envenoming. WHO has developed a comprehensive strategy to fulfil our mandate to direct and coordinate global action on snakebite, as requested by Member States in the resolution.

The strategy places countries at the centre, sets priorities, focusses on outcomes and impact, and is aligned with targets set in WHO's 13th General Programme of Work and the Sustainable Development Goals. It is a clear plan of action across all aspects of snakebite envenoming, and many of the elements in this approach will not only help to reduce snakebites, but to improve and strengthen health systems.

The people most affected by snakebite are often those with the least access to services and medicines. The most powerful force for reducing the impact of snakebite envenoming is therefore for countries to commit to universal health coverage, based on strong health systems and people-centred primary health care. Engaging communities and national and international partners is also essential.

I urge all policy-makers and managers in countries, as well as our international partners, to work with WHO to implement this strategy and achieve sustained prevention and control of this disease that affects many of the world's most vulnerable people.



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