

A close-up photograph of a woman with a white headscarf holding a young child. The woman has a serious expression and is looking directly at the camera. The child is also looking at the camera and pointing with their right index finger. The background is a soft, out-of-focus pinkish-brown.

# TEN YEARS IN PUBLIC HEALTH 2007-2017

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REPORT BY DR MARGARET CHAN,  
DIRECTOR-GENERAL,  
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

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World Health  
Organization







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Ten years in public health, 2007–2017: report by Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General, World Health Organization  
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A portrait of a woman with short, dark, curly hair, wearing round glasses, a green sweater, and a colorful floral scarf. She is speaking into a microphone. The background is dark and out of focus. A teal vertical bar is on the right side of the image.

**Ten years  
in public  
health 2007-2017**

Director-General

## By Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General, WHO

*Ten years in public health 2007-2017* chronicles the evolution of global public health over the decade that I have served as Director-General at the World Health Organization.

This series of chapters evaluates successes, setbacks, and enduring challenges during my administration. They show what needs to be done when progress stalls or new threats emerge. The chapters show how WHO technical leadership can get multiple partners working together in tandem under coherent strategies. The importance of country leadership and community engagement is stressed repeatedly throughout the chapters.

Together we have made tremendous progress. Health and life expectancy have improved nearly everywhere. Millions of lives have been saved. The number of people dying from malaria and HIV has been cut in half. WHO efforts to stop TB saved 49 million lives since the start of this century. In 2015, the number of child deaths dropped below 6 million for the first time, a 50% decrease in annual deaths since 1990. Every day 19000 fewer children die. We are able to count these numbers because of the culture of measurement and accountability instilled in WHO.

The challenges facing health in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are unprecedented in their complexity and universal in their impact. Under the pressures of demographic ageing, rapid urbanization, and the globalized marketing of unhealthy products, chronic noncommunicable diseases have overtaken infectious diseases as the leading killers worldwide. Increased political attention to combat heart attacks and stroke, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases is welcome as a powerful way to improve longevity and healthy life expectancy. However, no country in the world has managed to turn its obesity epidemic around in all age groups. I personally welcome the political attention being given to women, their health needs, and their contributions to society. Investment in women and girls has a ripple effect. All of society wins in the end.

Lessons learned from the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa catalysed the establishment of WHO's new Health Emergencies Programme, enabling a faster, more effective response to outbreaks and emergencies.

The R&D Blueprint, developed following the Ebola response, cuts the time needed to develop and manufacture new vaccines and other products from years to months, accelerating the

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