

For the Future

Towards the Healthiest and Safest Region

A vision for WHO work with Member States
and partners in the Western Pacific



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January 2020



WPR/2020/RDO/001

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Foreword

In the 12 months I have been privileged to serve as Regional Director for the Western Pacific, I have been fortunate to travel widely across the Region. I have been honoured to meet with presidents, prime ministers, health ministers, partners, health workers, patients, village chiefs, people in communities and WHO staff – from the plains of Mongolia, to the bustling urban communities of Singapore and Beijing, rural villages in Viet Nam and Cambodia, to some of the remotest islands in the Pacific.

During each visit, I have listened carefully about how WHO can best serve the people of the Region. This document is the result of these conversations.

For the Future articulates a shared vision for WHO's work with Member States and partners in the coming years. It is also an implementation plan for the WHO 13th General Programme of Work. While aligned with the global plan, *For the Future* reflects the shared challenges arising from the unique demographic, economic, social and geographic characteristics of the Western Pacific Region.

The vision builds on this Region's proud history of health achievements and strong tradition of solidarity, and it is a story about building the future, together.



Three key themes are at the heart of this story.

First, we work for the future. The future is already here, and we should embrace it. Our Region is extremely dynamic and rapidly changing. To stay relevant and valuable in a fast-changing world, WHO must also keep changing. We must stay ahead of the curve.

Second, people and countries will always be the driving force for what we do. Every country is different and unique. We are absolutely committed to continuing to provide support to every country for addressing its specific concerns.

Third, when we look to the future, there are concerns that unite all Member States, where we will make the greatest progress by working together. These shared concerns include: health security, including antimicrobial resistance; noncommunicable diseases and ageing; the health impacts of climate and environmental change; and reaching the unreached – those individuals and communities still afflicted by unfinished epidemics of infectious disease and unacceptably high rates of child and maternal mortality.

Over the past few months, I have been pleased to hear from Member States that this document accurately captures your priorities and concerns. I was delighted that *For the Future* was unanimously endorsed by the Regional Committee in October 2019.

Now we face the formidable task of implementing this vision. In doing so, I will work hard every day to serve you and the people of our Region, as together we write the next chapter in the Western Pacific Region's story: to become the healthiest and safest Region in the world.

Takeshi Kasai

Takeshi Kasai, MD, Ph. D.

Regional Director
January 2020

Executive summary

Acting today to address the challenges of tomorrow

This White Paper sets out thematic priorities for WHO work in the Western Pacific Region for the coming five years, as well as a series of ideas for collectively responding to current and future health challenges. It was developed following extensive consultations with Member States, partners and World Health Organization (WHO) staff in the Western Pacific Region.

The document articulates a shared vision: acting today to address the challenges of tomorrow, with the goal of making the WHO Western Pacific Region the healthiest and safest region.

An agenda for our changing Region

The Western Pacific Region is rapidly – and constantly – changing. Unprecedented economic growth, migration and urbanization in the Region have created opportunities for better lives that many people could not have imagined a generation ago.

Yet progress has also created new health challenges: the ever-present risk of health emergencies and the emergence of new health security threats; changing consumption patterns and rapid urbanization that have led to an increase in noncommunicable diseases (NCDs); and air pollution, climate change and other environmental changes that put

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