

THIRTEENTH GENERAL PROGRAMME OF WORK 2019–2023

**PROMOTE**

**HEALTH**

**KEEP THE WORLD**

**SAFE**

**SERVE THE**

**VULNERABLE**





THIRTEENTH  
GENERAL PROGRAMME OF WORK  
2019–2023

WHO/PRP/18.1

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# WHAT DOES THE WORLD NEED?

WHO has the potential to dramatically improve the health of our world over the coming five years. The purpose of this thirteenth general programme of work 2019–2023 (GPW 13) is to seize this opportunity. WHO will only succeed, however, if it bases its work on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development views health as vital for the future of our world. With a commitment to achieve Goal 3, which calls on all stakeholders to “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages,” WHO will lead a transformative agenda that supports countries in reaching all health-related SDG targets.

In recent years, significant global health gains have been achieved: life expectancy has increased in many parts of the world, six million fewer children under the age of five years died in 2016 than in 1990, polio is on the verge of being eradicated, and 21 million people living with HIV are now receiving treatment. Economic and social development has enabled millions of people to escape from extreme poverty and many more countries to contribute to the global agenda.

Despite these achievements, people everywhere continue to face a complex mix of interconnected threats to their health and well-being – from poverty and inequality to conflict and climate change. People continue to suffer from communicable diseases, while the burden of noncommunicable diseases is increasing. Complications during pregnancy and childbirth, mental health disorders and substance use, and injuries, all require determined action. More than half the world’s population is still unable to access health services without incurring financial hardship. The world faces threats from high-impact health emergencies (epidemics, pandemics, conflicts, natural and technological disasters) and the emergence of antimicrobial resistance. More than 244 million people (or more than 3% of the world’s population) have migrated from their country of origin; 65 million of these were forcibly displaced. More than 21 million people are refugees, 3 million are asylum seekers, and over 40 million are estimated to be internally displaced. Many of these threats to health are rooted in social, political, economic and gender inequalities and other determinants of health.

WHO was created as the directing and coordinating authority on international health, enabling the nations of the world to act together for the health of all people. The Organization has a proud 70-year history that includes catalysing monumental accomplishments – such



“Health is a human right. No one should get sick or die just because they are poor, or because they cannot access the services they need.”

**Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,  
Director-General**

as the eradication of smallpox or the rapid scale-up of treatment against HIV infection – that serve as the foundation of the world we live in today. However, WHO has also experienced periods of crisis and neglect. Through GPW 13, WHO will build on past achievements and respond to new challenges, while continuously learning and improving. The Organization will embark on an ambitious journey that involves not only the transformation of the Secretariat but also the transformation of global health and ultimately the health of more than seven billion people.

GPW 13 sets out WHO's strategic direction, outlines how the Organization will proceed with its implementation and provides a framework to measure progress in this effort. GPW 13 will guide for each biennium stepwise progress in strategic priorities, the development of implementation plans, the programme budget, results frameworks and operational plans. It has taken account of the strategic plans of WHO regional offices and has been developed in collaboration with the Regional Directors (see Box 1). GPW 13 will cover the period 2019–2023 and will serve as the basis for resource mobilization and for the programme budgets for the bienniums 2020–2021 and 2022–2023. It will also influence the Programme budget 2018–2019 through resource reallocation within the Director-General's existing authority for 2019.

### **Box 1. GPW 13: process of development**

In August 2017 a draft concept note for GPW 13 was developed with input from Member States and the Secretariat, including Regional Directors and WHO Country Representatives, and based on external evaluations of WHO's work.<sup>1</sup> The concept note was then submitted to the regional committees for their consideration; it was also provided to the public through an open online consultation. The regional committees agreed with a proposal that the Executive Board at its 142nd session recommend that the draft GPW 13 be included on the provisional agenda of the Health Assembly in May 2018.<sup>2</sup> The draft GPW 13 was considered at a special session of the Executive Board in November 2017.<sup>3</sup> Member States, other United Nations bodies and non-State actors all provided their input.<sup>4</sup> The text was further revised in the light of comments received and following further engagement with the WHO Secretariat's senior leadership team and their staff, the regional offices, and an Expert Reference Group.<sup>5</sup>

1 Evaluation of WHO reform (2011–2017), third stage. April 2017, (<http://who.int/about/evaluation/stage3evaluationofwhoreform25apr17.pdf?ua=1>, accessed 5 March 2018).

2 Article 28(g) of the Constitution of WHO requires the Executive Board “to submit to the Health Assembly for consideration and approval a general programme of work covering a specific period”.

3 Document EBSS/4/2.

4 See the summary records of the special session of the Executive Board on the draft thirteenth general programme of work (available at <http://apps.who.int/gb/or/>, accessed 5 March 2018).

5 WHO Expert Reference Group on the Draft GPW 13 Impact Framework 2019–2023 (<http://www.who.int/about/what-we-do/gpw13-expert-group/en/>, accessed 5 March 2018).

# WHO'S VISION AND MISSION

GPW 13 is based on the SDGs and is relevant to all countries – low, middle and high income. Health is fundamental to the SDGs and, in an interconnected world, WHO's role in providing global public goods that help to ensure health for all people within and across national boundaries has never been more relevant. WHO's unique status as a science- and evidence-based organization that sets globally applicable norms and standards makes it vital in a rapidly changing world. The Organization's powerful voice for health and human rights is indispensable to ensure that no-one is left behind. Broad and sustained efforts are needed to build a community to work for the shared future of humankind, empowering all people to improve their health, address health determinants and respond to health challenges.

## Box 2. Constitution of the World Health Organization: selected principles

The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the *fundamental rights* of every human being *without distinction* of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.

The health of all peoples is fundamental to

In the context of the SDGs, therefore, GPW 13 provides a vision, rooted in Article 1 of WHO's Constitution, of: **A world in which all people attain the highest possible standard of health and well-being.**

GPW 13 summarizes WHO's mission, which is to: **Promote health • Keep the world safe • Serve the vulnerable.**

WHO's values include a commitment to

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