

A photograph of Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Director-General of the World Health Organization. He is wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a patterned tie. He has glasses and is smiling while holding a microphone in his right hand and a pen in his left hand. The background is a blue wall with a white grid pattern.

## Biography

### Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

***Dr Tedros: “Our vision is not health for some. It’s not health for most. It’s health for all: rich and poor, able and disabled, old and young, urban and rural, citizen and refugee. Everyone, everywhere.”***

#### Profile

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus was elected WHO Director-General for a five-year term by WHO Member States at the Seventieth World Health Assembly in May 2017. In doing so, he was the first WHO Director-General elected from among multiple candidates by the World Health Assembly, and was the first person from the WHO African Region to head the world’s leading public health agency.

Born in the Eritrean city of Asmara, Dr Tedros graduated from the University of Asmara with a Bachelor of Biology, before earning a Master of Science (MSc) in Immunology of Infectious Diseases from the University of London, a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) in Community Health from the University of Nottingham and an Honorary Fellowship from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Following his studies, Dr Tedros returned to Ethiopia to support the delivery of health services, first working as a field-level malariologist, before heading a regional health service and later serving in Ethiopia’s federal government for over a decade as Minister of Health and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

As Minister of Health from 2005 to 2012, he led a comprehensive reform of the country’s health system, built on the foundation of universal health coverage and provision of services to all people, even in the most remote areas.

Under his leadership, Ethiopia expanded its health infrastructure, developed innovative health financing mechanisms, and expanded its health workforce. A major component of reforms he drove was the creation of a primary health care extension programme that deployed 40 000 female health workers throughout the country. A significant result was an approximate 60% reduction in child and maternal mortality compared to 2000 levels.

As Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2012 to 2016, he elevated health as a political issue nationally, regionally and globally. In this role, he led efforts to negotiate the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, in which 193 countries committed to the financing necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Prior to his election as Director-General of WHO, Dr Tedros held many leadership positions in global health, including as Chair of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, Chair of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, and Co-chair of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Board.

After taking office as WHO Director-General on 1 July 2017, Dr Tedros initiated the most significant **transformation** in the Organization’s history, which has generated a wide range of achievements.





## New strategy

One year after Dr Tedros's election, at the World Health Assembly in 2018, WHO Member States adopted the [13<sup>th</sup> General Programme of Work \(GPW13\)](#), a 5-year strategic plan with an emphasis on delivering a measurable impact in countries, to support countries in attaining the health-related targets in the Sustainable Development Goals.

WHO's work was built on a new mission statement, to "Promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable", and the ambitious "triple billion" targets: 1 billion more people benefiting from universal health coverage; 1 billion more people better protected from health emergencies; and 1 billion more people enjoying better health and well-being.

## Transformed WHO

To enable WHO to support countries to deliver on these targets, and in close consultation with WHO's Regional Directors, Dr Tedros led the development of a new operating model, aligning the Organization's new structures and ways of working, and across the three levels of the Organization (Headquarters, Regional Offices and Country Offices).

To support the new operating model, several new divisions were established, including the Division of Science, the Division of Data and Delivery for Impact and the Division of Emergency Preparedness.

## New processes

To make WHO more effective and efficient, 13 core processes were overhauled or initiated, in three areas:

Processes relating to technical work like data, norms and standards and policy dialogue;

External relations processes such as resource mobilization and communications;

And processes relating to management and administration, including planning and budgeting, supply chain, recruitment and performance management.

## New culture

Strategies, operating models and processes will be ineffective without a talented and motivated workforce to implement them.

These values drive everything WHO does, from recruiting new talent to evaluating performance, to training leaders and managers, and considering staff for promotion.

Under Dr Tedros's leadership, WHO achieved gender parity in its senior leadership for the first time, and initiated a new programme to pay interns a stipend.

Training and equipping health workers worldwide has been a priority area of work. Work is ongoing to launch the first [WHO Academy](#), which aims to offer new and more effective methods of training, in multiple languages, across many areas of health to working people.

Under Dr Tedros's leadership, WHO has also engaged staff in defining a new [Values Charter](#), which identifies the five key values that are at the heart of who we are: public service; technical excellence; integrity; collaboration; and compassion.





### New approach to innovative partnerships

To achieve the ambitious targets in GPW13, a new approach to partnerships is essential.

Under Dr Tedros's leadership, WHO has strengthened its relationship with traditional multilateral partners through the [Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-Being for All](#), and expanding its engagement with civil society.

WHO has also sought to complement its technical work with increased political advocacy to high-level political commitment at international and national levels – for example through the G20 and G7.

Recognizing health for all requires partnership at all levels, and between all sectors of society, Dr Tedros has worked to engage stakeholders from a broad range of sectors, from civil society and government, to the private sector and beyond.

This approach to diversifying partnerships has brought up new ways of working, resulting in tangible gains. Processed food manufacturers have committed to eliminate industrial trans-fats from their products to protect people from associated noncommunicable diseases. WHO has worked closely with digital and social media giants to more actively promote evidence-based health advice from the value of vaccines to preventing and controlling infectious diseases. Manufacturers of medical supplies joined with WHO to scale up access to personal protective equipment for health workers on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic. Multilateral and health partners joined with WHO to develop and drive equitable access to vaccines, diagnostics and treatments through the [Access to COVID-19 Tools \(ACT\) Accelerator initiative](#).

To address the constraints facing WHO to generate increased flexible resources for supporting the delivery of critical health services around the world, WHO has launched a series of strategic actions. These include the Organization's first [investment case](#) laying out the impacts on global health and development that WHO could achieve if fully financed; the inaugural [WHO Partners Forum](#) in 2019; and the launch of the independent [WHO Foundation](#) to open opportunities for increased partnership in funding public health activities.

WHO has also branched out into innovative partnerships to reach audiences it hasn't before, for example with [FIFA](#) and [Google Fit](#).



WHO's work is about serving people, about serving humanity. Most importantly, it's about fighting to ensure the health of people as a basic human right. -Dr Tedros

## Recognitions

Dr Tedros is globally recognized as a health scholar, advocate and diplomat with first-hand experience in research, operations, and leadership in emergency responses.

He has published numerous articles in prominent scientific journals and received awards and recognitions from across the globe. These include receiving Honorary Fellowships from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (2012) and the [Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland's Faculty of Nursing and Midwives](#) (2020); and Honorary Doctorates of Medicine from the [Faculty of Medicine at Umeå University](#), Sweden (2018) and the [University of Nottingham](#) and [Newcastle University](#) (both 2019).

Dr Tedros has also received multiple national and institutional recognitions, including becoming the first non-American to be awarded the [Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Humanitarian Award](#) in 2011 in recognition of his contributions to public health; the [Decoration of the Order of Serbian Flag](#) in 2016; the [Danida Alumni Prize](#) of Denmark's Danida Fellowship Centre in 2017; being made a Grande Officier of the National Order of Benin (l'Ordre National de Benin) in 2018; the [L'Ordre national du Lion](#) of Senegal in 2018; the [Oswaldo Cruz Medal of Merit](#), in 2018, in recognition of his services to public health in Brazil; the Grand Cross of the Equestrian Order of Saint Agatha from San Marino in 2019; the Bridge Maker Award of the 14th August Committee of Norway in 2020; [2020 Human Rights Award](#) of the Spanish Law Bar (Consejo General de la Abogacía Español); one of Time magazine's [100 most influential people of 2020](#); the [African of the Year Award](#) for 2020 of the African Leadership Magazine; and Global Health Leader Award presented by Amref Health Africa in 2021.