



Foreword

The South-East Asia Region of the World Health Organization has the distinction of being the first Region to be established in 1948, soon after the inception of the world body. Thus, the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the founding of WHO also marks 60 years of WHO's collaborative activities in South-East Asia. It is certainly an appropriate occasion to celebrate and to reflect on the achievements and lessons of the past six decades as well as to identify the challenges and opportunities for the future.

Beginning with the early years, this publication provides visual highlights of WHO's work in the Region as it has evolved in partnership with its Member States. The areas covered include: Working Together for Global Health; Protecting People from Disease, Living Healthy Lives; Making it Work: Health Systems; and Beyond the Health Paradigm. However, this is not a technical assessment of the work of WHO nor does it provide a comprehensive overview of its collaborative activities.

One can clearly see that, from a focus on prevention and control of communicable diseases and strengthening the human resources for health, there has been a perceptible expansion of WHO's priorities, in keeping with the needs of the Member States. This, in turn, has been influenced by socio-economic, demographic and political factors. Many critical determinants of health fall outside the usual focus of the health sector and this realization led

to the Declaration of Alma-Ata on Primary Health Care, to other initiatives at the regional level and more recently, to the establishment of Commissions on Macroeconomics and Health and the Social Determinants of Health.

The global health scenario within which WHO plays its coordinating and stewardship roles has seen some dramatic changes over the years. Thus, even though WHO continues to have the UN mandate for international health, there are several other stakeholders in the area of health development.

In this context, it is imperative for WHO to play its catalytic role in policy formulation and in promoting and protecting the health of the people and coordinating these diverse global efforts. In order to do this effectively, WHO is adapting to the ever-changing global health scenario and providing the necessary norms and standards to Member States in their quest for better health for the people.

This publication, it is hoped, captures the essence of the remarkable six-decade long association between WHO and its Member States in the South-East Asia Region, which, with over 25% of the world's population, seems to hold the key to global health.



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