



Collaboration with WHO

WHO was founded as a specialized agency of the United Nations in 1948 to work for the attainment of the highest possible level of health by all peoples. The Constitution of WHO defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

WHO has six leadership priorities. Progressing on these priorities will accelerate progress towards the new Sustainable Development Goals for health, such as: ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all. These priorities are:

1. Advancing universal health coverage through enabling countries to sustain or expand access to health services, providing financial protection, and promoting universal health coverage;
2. Achieving health-related development goals, such as: addressing challenges related to maternal and child health, combating HIV, malaria, TB, Hepatitis and reaching the eradication of polio and a number of neglected tropical diseases;
3. Addressing the challenges of non-communicable diseases, mental health, violence, injuries and disabilities;
4. Ensuring that all countries detect and respond to acute public health threats under the International Health Regulations;
5. Increasing access to quality, safe, efficacious and affordable medical products (medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and other health technologies);
6. Addressing the social, economic and environmental determinants of health as a means to promote health outcomes and reduce health inequalities within and between countries.



Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus was elected as WHO Director-General in May 2017 and took the office on 1st of July 2017. He is the first WHO Director-General who was elected among multiple candidates by the World Health Assembly.

The WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe) covers 53 European countries. WHO/Europe staff (public health professionals, scientific and technical experts) are based in the main office in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 5 technical centers (Barcelona, Bonn, Venice, Almaty, Moscow) and in 29 Member States' country offices.

Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab took up her duties as WHO Regional Director for Europe on 1st of February, 2010. In January 2015, the WHO Executive Board appointed her for a second term.

Governance of the WHO

The World Health Assembly (WHA) is the supreme decision-making body for WHO, supported by the Executive Board. WHA meets in WHO headquarters in Geneva in May each year. World Health Assembly consists of delegates from all member states (194), observers, the other United Nations (UN) agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and nongovernmental organizations having official relations with WHO.

Within the European Region, the WHO Regional Committee for Europe fulfils the similar role. Representatives of each Member State in the European Region meet every year in September. At these meetings, the Member States (53) formulate regional policies, develop recommendations and supervise WHO/Europe's activities, and approve the budget.

The Standing Committee of the Regional Committee (SCRC) acts for and represents the Regional Committee and ensures that effect is given to its decisions and policies. The SCRC advises the Regional Committee on questions referred to it by that body and counsels the Regional Director as and when appropriate between sessions of the Regional Committee. The SCRC reports to the Regional Committee on its work.

Georgia has currently representatives in the Executive Board (Dr. David Sergeenko, 2017-2020) and SCRC (Dr. Amiran Gamkrelidze, 2015-2018). Minister David Sergeenko has served as well as a Member of the European Ministerial Board on Environment and Health (2013-2015).

Second sessions of the 25th Standing Committee of the Regional Committee for Europe takes place in Tbilisi, 28-29 Nov 2017, as Georgia is chairing the SCRC for 2017-2018.

Georgia and WHO

The main strategic directions of WHO in Georgia, as well as in other countries in the world, are:

- reducing excess mortality, morbidity and disability, especially in poor and marginalized populations;
- promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing risk factors to human health that arise from environmental, economic, social and behavioral causes;
- developing health systems that equitably improve health outcomes, respond to people's legitimate demands, and are financially fair;
- framing an enabling policy and creating an institutional environment for the health sector, and promoting an effective health dimension to social, economic, environmental and development policy.

The overall goal of WHO in Georgia is to:

- assist the government in developing its national health policy and strengthening healthcare systems;
- provide needed technical assistance; improve preparedness for emergency situations;
- promote up-dated standards of education and training in the healthcare sector;
- provide evidence based expertise and information in the healthcare sector to take all necessary actions to attain WHO objectives.

Georgia became a member of WHO on 16 May 1992. In 1993 a Liaison office was opened in Tbilisi. The Basic Agreement between Georgia and WHO has been signed in 1994. In 2005 the name of the office was changed to WHO Country Office in Georgia. Georgia acceded the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies on 28 February 2007.



The first Head of WHO Country Office (WHO CO) was Prof. Tamaz Kereselidze, who was one of the active participant of Global Smallpox Eradication campaign from WHO in 1970-ies. In 1999-2016 Dr. Rusudan Klimiashvili was a Head of WHO CO GEO. Since October 2016 WHO Country office is headed by Dr. Marijan Ivanusa. The WHO Country Office in Georgia is subordinated to the Regional Office for Europe. The Country Office plays a crucial role in administration, consolidation, management and enhancement of WHO collaboration in the country. It also contributes to interfacing between the Government and WHO, assists in informing the

Government regarding WHO policies in a timely manner and elaborates strategies and activities while providing advice on healthcare sector development and inter-sectoral issues for health.

The WHO Country Office implements its activities in the country in close collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, UN agencies, governmental and non-governmental organizations and is active in the healthcare sector. The national counterpart for strategic collaboration with WHO in Georgia is Dr. Nino Berdzuli, Deputy Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs.

There is close collaboration between WHO country office, respective technical units in the regional office or headquarters and the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health of Georgia, including Lugar center.



The WHO significantly contributes to capacity-building in the country. Georgian medical professionals regularly participate in WHO meetings, conferences, workshops and trainings. WHO experts and consultants regularly visit



Georgia to provide technical assistance to local professionals in their efforts to meet the country's needs and requirements. In line with WHO policy, the Ministry on a yearly basis actively participates in the work of WHO governing bodies, World Health Assemblies and Regional Committees.

WHO cooperates with Georgia, as with all other countries, in the frame of **Biennial Collaborative Agreements (BCA)**, which defines the priorities for collaboration. BCA documents are elaborated through successive stages of talks between the national health authorities and the regional and country levels of WHO offices. Since early 1990s, the BCA between the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the Government of Georgia was focusing on the

following cooperative priorities:

- Development of National Health Policy, Health Strategies and Action Plans;
- Strengthening of Health Systems and Public Health:
 - Strengthening National Surveillance System and Laboratory Capacities for communicable diseases – 3 laboratories within the Lugar Center (polio, measles/rubella, influenza) are getting WHO accreditation annually and 5 laboratories are included in the WHO laboratory network (Rota and others); Health System Performance Assessment (HSPA); Assessment of Georgian Public Health System; Health Financing/Inequality in health; National System of Health Accounts; Human Resources for Health; Support of Primary Health Care.
- Universal Health Coverage;
- Strengthening national health information systems: capacity building for morbidity and mortality data quality improvement;
- Cooperation in global strategies, such as Millennium Development Goals, Health 2020 Policy and Sustainable Development Goals (Health related goals);
- Maternal and Child Health;
 - selective purchasing of selected services in the area of reproductive health;
- Strengthening National Immunization Systems, such as: Measles / Rubella / Influenza; Introducing new vaccines in National Immunization Programme (Hepatitis B, Rota, Pneumo, Hexa, HPV); Implementation and monitoring of the global vaccine action plan to achieve the goals for the Decade of Vaccines; Assessment of Vaccine Procurement System in Georgia.
- Addressing Communicable Diseases, such as:
 - HIV/AIDS/STI, including the process of obtaining status of “Free from Mother to Child transmission of HIV and Syphilis”;
 - Viral Hepatitis / Hepatitis C Elimination Strategy for Georgia;
 - Tuberculosis/Multidrug resistance Tuberculosis (MDR-TB);
 - Influenza;
 - Malaria elimination /Leishmaniasis;
 - Laboratory based surveillance of Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) and environmental samples to maintain polio-free status;
 - International Health regulations (IHR);
 - Disaster Preparedness and Response;
 - Antimicrobial Resistance: National Strategy, Global action plan;
- Addressing Non-Communicable Diseases such as:
 - Developing integrated NCD prevention and control policies and strategies;
 - STEPs Surveys;
 - Surveys on NCD risk-factors – Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (COSI), Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC), Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), etc.;
 - Strengthening capacity of primary healthcare professionals personnel on NCD prevention and control;
 - Strengthening tobacco control;

- National Environmental Health Action Plan (NEHAP);
- Chemical safety – “Development of legislative and operational framework for collection and sharing of information on hazardous chemicals in Georgia”;
- GLAAS - Global analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water 2016/2017 Survey;
- Implementation of mental health strategy in accordance with Helsinki Declaration;
- Cancer Strategy;
- Epilepsy demonstration Project;
- Road Safety.
- Strengthening Blood Safety System: Assessing blood establishments; Setting recommendations for upgrading of blood transfusion system in Georgia.



BCA 2016-2017

The BCA between the WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/EURO) and the Government of Georgia for 2016-2017 was focused on the following areas:



- National health policies, strategies and plans (tools and consultations in the processes of developing/implementing comprehensive national policies in accordance to the “Health 2020”); Health Financing: assistance in monitoring of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) program;
- Environmental Health: development and implementation of the National Environmental Health Action Plan-NEHAP);
- Health Systems, Information and Evidence (strengthening of the national Health information systems; Technical assistance for the improvement of data quality);
- Development and implementation of national multisectoral policies and plans to prevent and control Noncommunicable Diseases (NCD); Implementation of strategies to reduce modifiable risk factors for NCD, including Tobacco control;
- Promoting health through the life course (improvement quality of pediatric care at primary health care and hospital care levels);
- Communicable diseases (Vaccine-preventable diseases, measles/rubella, Polio, Viral Hepatitis, Tuberculosis);
- Preparedness, Surveillance and Response (Support to maintain International Health Regulations (IHR) capacity; strengthening surveillance systems for Anti-microbial resistance (AMR).

BCA 2018-2019

BCA 2018-2019, which has been signed on 28 November 2017, defines the technical collaboration/assistance in the following programme areas:

- Communicable diseases: hepatitis, tuberculosis, vaccine-preventable infections, antimicrobial resistance;
- Non-communicable diseases: population-based prevention measures and tobacco-control;
- Reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, adolescent health as well as environment and health;
- Health system strengthening, in particular Universal Health Coverage (incl. strategic purchasing, selective contracting, SSA capacity building, Primary Health Care etc.) as well as information and evidence (in support for policy development);
- Emergency preparedness.

The planned value of technical assistance in 2018-2019 will exceed 1,000,000 USD (excluded WHO staff costs).

WHO advocates for stronger support to the area of health at meetings with other national and international partners, including the World Bank, The Global Fund, the European Commission, GAVI and others.

