

FOREWORD BY THE DIRECTOR

As the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) ushers in its 106th year of serving the peoples of the Region of the Americas, let us reflect on the achievements made and prepare for the challenges that lie ahead. For this purpose, it is with great pleasure that I present to you the second Strategic Plan for PAHO in the 21st Century. This Plan is an instrument to transform these challenges into opportunities and build on the accomplishments of the past, while we work as part of both the United Nations and the Inter-American Systems, to increase our value-added to our Member States.

For the first time in many years, the countries of the Americas have developed a long-term Health Agenda for the Americas, a collective call to action, and an instrument to “guide the collective action of national and international stakeholders who seek to improve the health of the peoples of this Region.” This Strategic Plan is the Bureau’s answer to that call.

The public health challenges faced in the Region are many—from ongoing concerns about existing communicable and non-communicable diseases, environmental hazards, natural and man-made disasters and other public health threats, to new and emerging threats from pathogens known and unknown. The continent is also experiencing an epidemiological transition, where traditional diseases have not completely disappeared, but coexist with emerging diseases and those related to living conditions, representing a new challenge for public health. Thus, while we have achieved many milestones in improving the health status of the people of the Americas, accomplishments of which we can be justly proud, much remains to be done. Among other priorities, we must continue to improve public health leadership, equitable access to health services, and the capacity of Member States to respond in a prompt and effective manner to new challenges. We must also remain vigilant to protect and maintain the gains of the past as we face the challenges of the future.

This document is necessarily complex, as it reflects the broad panorama of our work and lays out in detail how we plan to respond to each public health challenge that the Bureau can address. The document also reflects our efforts to make the Organization more effective and accountable in its operations by institutionalizing results based management methodologies in the planning, implementation and evaluation processes.

While this Plan will guide us for the next several years, the strategic dialogue should not stop here. It is increasingly evident that the issues of public health can only be addressed effectively through multisectoral approaches and with strategic partnerships. Therefore, I encourage and welcome an ongoing dialogue with PAHO’s many stakeholders—from Member State governments to international and national partners, and civil society—about how we can best serve the people of the Americas.

The Strategic Plan 2008-2012 is a statement of our commitment to be accountable to our Governing Bodies and partners, and to work to improve the health of the people of the Americas.

Mirta Roses Periago
Director