

# FOREWORD

Every day, millions of people in humanitarian and emergency situations face serious threats to their health and livelihoods. WHO's unique global reach, technical expertise, and broad range of partnerships give us the ability to respond rapidly and at scale, moving people, resources and supplies to where they are needed the most.

In health emergencies, WHO often serves as both a first responder and a provider of last resort for the world's most vulnerable people, from Ebola outbreaks in Africa to maintaining essential health services in Afghanistan and Syria. In 2021, WHO responded to 76 health emergencies, including eight Grade 3, protracted emergencies, all compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.

2022 is shaping up to be our most challenging year yet. COVID-19 cases continue to surge, fueled by newly emerging variants and persistent vaccine inequity, in addition to ongoing and new conflicts. This severely impacts health systems worldwide, particularly in countries or regions dealing with humanitarian crises.

These increasingly multidimensional crises demand more complex responses and greater resources. For the first time in WHO's history, we are now launching a single consolidated appeal, which includes an overview of emergency and humanitarian health needs and financial requirements for every WHO region in 2022.

Two years of COVID-19 have stretched health systems, societies and supply chains, leaving vulnerable communities with less capacity to cope. The world is witnessing a significant increase in the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance – up from 235 million in 2021 to 274 million in 2022.

Over 80% of WHO's emergency response funding in 2021 was allocated at country level, to focus our efforts on high-impact work at low cost. But even with emergency assistance, the populations affected by health crises continue to grow. It is already increasingly likely that WHO will respond to more health emergencies this year than in 2021. WHO's role as a leader and partner in response to acute and protracted health emergencies will be more important than ever.

WHO remains fully focused on delivering the health-related Sustainable Development Goals and committed to collaborating with all partners to advance measures for protection against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in all operations.

Even in these very challenging times, WHO has demonstrated the capacity and expertise to save lives and serve those in vulnerable situations. My colleagues and I remain completely committed to working for a healthier and safer future for all people.

**Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**

*WHO Director-General*



On 20 September 2021, WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus speaks to hospital staff at the Wazir Mohammad Akbar Khan National Hospital in Kabul, Afghanistan.  
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