

WORLD HEALTH STATISTICS

2020

MONITORING
HEALTH FOR THE

SDGs

S U S T A I N A B L E
D E V E L O P M E N T G O A L S



World Health
Organization

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World health statistics 2020: monitoring health for the SDGs, sustainable development goals

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FOREWORD



I have often said that to make progress, we must be able to measure progress.

The Sustainable Development Goals offer a compelling vision of a healthier, safer, fairer world, with concrete targets to work towards across all of the most pressing health challenges of our time. Part of realizing that vision knowing where we are, so we can see what we need to do to reach our destination.

As part of WHO's Transformation, we have worked to scale up to reporting country level data for 46 health-related SDG indicators, which are presented in the World Health Statistics 2020.

The 2020 edition finds steady improvements in many key health indicators, while showing that we are still lagging in other areas. We have made remarkable progress in several important indicators, such as reductions in maternal, neonatal and child mortality since 2000, but there is still a long way to go to meet the SDG targets.

There is mixed news about noncommunicable diseases, the world's leading causes of death. While the overall rate of premature deaths related to noncommunicable diseases has declined in the past two decades, progress has slowed since 2010 and key risk factors such as obesity are on the rise.

Monitoring progress depends on strong country data and health information systems. There are large gaps in the availability of SDG data in many parts of the world. Strengthening country capacity for data and information requires collaboration across governmental and non-governmental institutions, including ministries of health and finance, national statistics offices, offices of the registrar general, local and regional government, and think tanks and academia.

One of the key lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic is that we must invest in data and health information systems, as part of our overall public health capacity, before a crisis strikes. To emerge from this crisis stronger, we must be able to monitor progress with real-time, reliable and actionable data.

Strong health data systems are a core requirement for improving population health outcomes and meeting the SDG health targets. WHO is committed to working with the international community to provide support for these critical systems, so that every country can have reliable, timely, accessible data. Strong health information systems are one of the cornerstones of our mission to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

Director-General

World Health Organization

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ART	antiretroviral therapy
CRVS	civil registration and vital statistics
DBP	diastolic blood pressure
DOTS	directly-observed treatment, short-course
DTP3	diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis vaccine (third dose)
GHO	Global Health Observatory
GPW13	13th Global Programme of Work
HALE	healthy life expectancy
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
HPV	human papillomavirus
ICD-10	International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (10th revision)
IHR	International Health Regulations
IPV	intimate partner violence
ITN	insecticide-treated net
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MMR	maternal mortality ratio
NCD	noncommunicable disease
NSO	national statistics office
NTD	neglected tropical disease
RHIS	routine health information systems
SBP	systolic blood pressure
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TB	tuberculosis
UHC	universal health coverage
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAW	violence against women
WHO	World Health Organization
WHS+	World Health Survey Plus

INTRODUCTION

The *World health statistics 2020* report is the latest annual compilation of health statistics for 194 Member States.¹ It summarizes trends in life expectancy and causes of death and reports on progress towards the health and health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and associated targets. Four indicators of emerging public health importance relating to poliomyelitis, hypertension and obesity in adults and school age children have been included. These are part of the WHO's Thirteenth General Programme of Work 2019–2023 (GPW13), which the 71st World Health Assembly approved in May 2018.² The GPW13 is largely based on the SDGs and sets out WHO's strategic direction until 2023.

It also assesses the current availability of data for the indicators, and describes the data gaps and WHO's efforts to support countries to improve health information systems. Regional statistics and highlights are provided in Annex 1, while country-level statistics for selected health-related SDG indicators are presented in Annex 2, along with the lists of countries in the WHO Regions (Annex 3).

Since 2016, the *World health statistics* reports have been the place to consolidate health and health-related SDGs, which WHO is tasked with monitoring together with partner UN agencies, as a tool for Member States and decision makers.³

¹ The *World health statistics* series is produced by WHO's Division for Data, Analytics and Delivery, in collaboration with WHO technical departments and Regional Offices.

² Thirteenth General Programme of Work 2019–2023: promote health, keep the world safe, serve the vulnerable. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019 (<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/324775/WHO-PRP-18.1-eng.pdf>).

³ The information presented in *World health statistics 2020* are based on the data that were available for global monitoring as of March 2020. Those data have been compiled primarily from publications and databases produced and maintained by WHO or by United Nations (UN) groups of which WHO is a member, such as the UN Interagency Group for Child Mortality Estimation. In addition, some statistics have been derived from data produced and maintained by other international organizations, such as the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and its Population Division. The Global Health Observatory database (available at <http://apps.who.int/gho/data/?theme=main>.) contains additional details about the health-related SDG indicators, as well as interactive visualizations.