

NOTE FOR THE PRESS

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www.who.int1211 GENEVA 27 SWITZERLAND - TELEPHONE: (41) 22.791.21.11 - FAX: (41) 22.791.31.11 - E-MAIL: inf@who.int**Note for the Media WHO/2
18 January 2005****WHO EXECUTIVE BOARD APPOINTS TWO REGIONAL DIRECTORS**

Geneva - The World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Board, currently holding its 115th session in Geneva, has appointed a new Regional Director for the WHO African Region and re-appointed the Regional Director for the WHO European Region.

African Region

Dr Luis Gomes Sambo has been appointed Regional Director for the WHO African Region (WHO/AFRO), to take office for a period of five years beginning 1 February 2005. Dr Sambo will succeed Dr Ebrahim Malick Samba, who served two terms as AFRO Regional Director and will be retiring on 31 January 2005.

Dr Sambo, a national of Angola, 52, studied medicine and public health at universities in Angola and Portugal. His public health career spans more than 25 years, and includes various health-related positions in Angola, including Vice-Minister of Health, Director of Human Resources for Health, and Director of International Cooperation.

In 1989, Dr Sambo joined WHO as Chief of the Inter-country strategic support team in Harare, Zimbabwe. He also served as WHO Representative in Guinea Bissau from 1990 to 1994 and as Director of the Development of Health Services Division at AFRO. For the past five years, Dr Sambo was responsible for overseeing WHO's programme of technical cooperation with all the AFRO Member States as the Region's Director of Programme Management.

On accepting his new appointment, Dr Sambo outlined the major health issues for the region. "The challenges take the form, first and foremost, of the high prevalence of communicable diseases, and especially of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria; of the growing burden of non-communicable diseases and of the very high level of maternal mortality and the high level of infant mortality, all of which are responsible for the short life expectancy in the African region. Without any doubt, HIV/AIDS infection is the public health problem that causes greatest concern on account of its impact on morbidity and mortality and on the economic performance of the Member States of the Region," he said.

AFRO is one of the six Regional Offices of WHO, with 46 Member States¹.

¹ The Member States of AFRO are: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea (Conakry), Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

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European Region

Dr Marc Danzon has been re-appointed Regional Director for the WHO European Region (WHO/EURO). He will begin his second five-year term on 1 February 2005. A national of France, Dr Danzon, 57, was first appointed as EURO Regional Director on January 2000.

As a medical doctor who has specialized in public health, psychiatry and health management and economics, Dr Danzon has held various public health-related posts at both national and international levels, including France's National Federation of Mutual Insurance Societies and the French Health Education Committee.

His experience working for WHO goes back two decades, when Dr Danzon worked as a public information officer for EURO. Dr Danzon has also served as Director of the EURO Department for Country Health Development and Director of the Department of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention.

"My appointment to this second period of office has taken place against a dramatic global background which is nevertheless full of hope, the hope of renewed global solidarity as has been demonstrated from the very start, by the huge response to the drama in South Asia. Such renewed solidarity is perhaps yet another expression of globalization," said Dr Danzon on accepting the appointment for his second term. "For the European Region, this solidarity spurs us to continue to improve the services we provide to Member States to help them strengthen their health systems and develop their public health programmes, especially those for the benefit of the most vulnerable populations."

The WHO Regional Office for Europe is made up of 52 Member States².

The WHO Executive Board is comprised of representatives from 32 WHO Member States. The individuals are designated by Member States elected to do so by the World Health Assembly (WHA). The main functions of the Executive Board are to give effect to the decisions and policies of the WHA, to advise it and generally facilitate its work. This 115th session is scheduled to conclude on 25 January.

Additional information on the Executive Board, including the annotated agenda and supporting documents, see: <http://www.who.int/governance/eb/en/> or http://www.who.int/gb/e/e_eb115.html.

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Additional information can also be found at: Official website for WHO AFRO: <http://www.afro.who.int/> and on the official website for WHO EURO: <http://www.euro.who.int/>

All WHO Press Releases, Fact Sheets and Features as well as other information on this subject can be obtained on Internet on the WHO home page: <http://www.who.int/>.

² The Member States of EURO are: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Uzbekistan.