

WHO's Chan re-elected for second term

May 23 2012

The World Health Organisation on Wednesday re-appointed Margaret Chan as its chief, who declared universal health care as her top priority.

Chan was re-elected to head the agency for five more years at a meeting of the [World Health Assembly](#), the WHO's decision-making body, in Geneva.

It is the second consecutive term for the former Hong Kong health chief who has headed the United Nations body since November 2006 and was the sole candidate nominated ahead of Wednesday's election.

Chan, who the WHO said received the backing of 88 percent of members who voted, said she would focus on [noncommunicable diseases](#), mental health and improving the WHO's performance through reform.

Emphasis will also be put on the prevention of domestic violence as part of a commitment to improving the health of women, she said.

But universal coverage would be the "overarching priority" for the organisation over the next five years.

"In my view, universal coverage is the single most powerful concept that public health has to offer," said Chan.

"It is our saviour from the crushing weight of chronic non-communicable diseases that now engulf the globe."

Back in 2009 it was Chan who declared [swine flu](#) the world's first [flu pandemic](#) in 40 years.

Chan's next tenure will begin on July 1 and see her remain director general through to June 30, 2017.

She was the only candidate put forward to the WHO's executive board.

Before her next term begins Chan said she will issue a "report card" assessing how well the WHO performed under her past leadership.

The WHO has 194 member states and is responsible for assessing [health trends](#) and shaping the research agenda as well as providing technical support to countries.

Chan is the eighth director-general in the body's 64-year history.

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