

Dr. Margaret Chan

Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO)

“Noncommunicable Diseases (NCD)”

Friday, 21st September, 2012

Dr Margaret Chan has served as the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) since January 2007, after serving in the organization as Director of the Department of Protection of the Human Environment from 2003, and as Assistant Director-General of Communicable Diseases and Representative of the Director-General for Pandemic Influenza for 3 years from 2005. Prior to that, 25 years in Hong Kong's Department of Health moving from a Medical Officer for the maternal and child health services to the position of Director of the Department for 9 years.

Her first professional degree was from Northcote College of Education, Hong Kong, followed by B.A. and M.D. degrees from the University of Western Ontario, Canada and a MSc (Public Health) degree from the National University of Singapore. As management training, she completed a program for management development at Harvard Business School in Boston.

Dr Chan has frequently appeared in the Forbes list of the world's most powerful women and, in March 2011, was described in a Guardian profile as “said to be the most powerful international public health official in history”.

As Director-General of WHO, Dr Chan has shown her own personal style of leadership, foresight, and managerial skills by putting the weight of her authority and influence behind neglected problems as well as internationally agreed goals for public health. She undertook 135 visits to 63 countries, obtaining first-hand health needs. To witness the magnitude of health needs in dire situations, she visited 46 developing countries, ranging from the Democratic Republic of Congo, to flood-stricken Pakistan, to small island nations already experiencing the effects of climate change.

Dr Chan was nominated for the second term as the Director General of the WHO, at the 130 Session of the Executive Council of the WHO in January this year. This nomination has been endorsed by the World Health Assembly held from 21-26 May in Geneva. Her second term started on July 1, 2012, lasting for another 5 years.