

Director of Health attends WHO Western Pacific Regional Committee meeting (with photos)

The Director of Health, Dr Ronald Lam, is leading a delegation from the Department of Health (DH) to attend the meeting of the 75th session of the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Committee for the Western Pacific in Manila, the Philippines.

The Regional Committee meeting (RCM) is set up to formulate policies, provide oversight for regional programmes and their progress; consider and endorse new initiatives and adopt resolutions and make decisions that guide the Regional Office's work for the coming year. This year, the theme of the RCM is "Weaving Health for Families, Communities and Societies in the Western Pacific Region". In recent years, the Western Pacific region has been facing a series of public health challenges, including ageing population, increased burden on non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and communicable diseases, mental health, health security threats, climate change, digital health, and oral health. At the meeting this year, which is being held from October 21 to 25, member states and areas will exchange views, explore collaboration and pass resolutions on the above issues. Five visions of weaving health, namely transformative primary care for universal health coverage, climate-resilient health systems, resilient communities, societies and health systems for health security, healthier people throughout the life course, and technology and innovation for future health equity, have been endorsed by the RCM to address the above challenges.

Speaking at the agenda item of the Address by and Report of the Regional Director, Dr Lam said, "Hong Kong, China noted the Report of the Regional Director, and will fully support the newly defined five visions of weaving health. While we are enjoying one of the best health indices in terms of life expectancies, maternal and infant mortality rates and so forth, we are facing similar challenges as other member states and areas such as ageing population, rise of NCDs, and health security threats. As announced in "The Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address", Hong Kong, China is now embarking on substantial health reforms via two major themes of "Deepen Reform of the Healthcare System" and "International Health and Medical Innovation Hub". The five visions of the WHO Western Pacific Region is in alignment with our health initiatives of the "The Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address". Hong Kong, China will continue to work closely with the WHO in achieving health for all in the Region."

The DH has been actively contributing to global public health by supporting the WHO in tackling various public health challenges. The DH is designated as the WHO Collaborating Centre for Traditional Medicine and the WHO Collaborating Centre for Smoking Cessation and Treatment of Tobacco Dependence. Furthermore, the WHO has designated the Public Health Laboratory

Services Branch of the Centre for Health Protection of the DH as a reference laboratory for various communicable diseases, including tuberculosis, measles/rubella, influenza A (H5), SARS and COVID-19, making significant contributions to fighting epidemics worldwide. The DH will keep on maintaining close contact with member states and areas of the WHO on various issues to safeguard the health of the people.

