WHO appoints its first African director general

Ethiopia's Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has become the first African to take up the role of director general of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Prior to his appointment, he served as Ethiopia's minister of foreign affairs from 2012-2016 andminister of health from 2005-2012. He has also served as chair of the board of the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria; as chair of the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) partnership board, and as co-chair of the board of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO's new DG. Photo: *Nazret*

During his tenure as minister of health, Ghebreyesus led a comprehensive reform effort of the country's health system, including the expansion of the country's health infrastructure, creating 3,500 health centres and 16,000 health posts; expanded the health workforce by 38,000 health extension workers; and initiated financing mechanisms to expand health insurance coverage. As minister of foreign affairs, he led the effort to negotiate the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, in which 193 countries committed to the financing necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

As chair of the Global Fund and of RBM, he secured record funding for the two organisations and created the Global Malaria Action Plan, which expanded RBM's reach beyond Africa to Asia and Latin America.

Ghebreyesus was nominated by the government of Ethiopia, and will begin his five-year term on 1 July 2017. He succeeds

Dr Margaret Chan, who has been WHO's director general since 1 January 2007.