Artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs): drugs used for the treatment of malaria, one of the active ingredients of which is extracted from the plant *Artemisia annua* (also known as sweet wormwood or Qinghao).

**Bacille Calmette–Guérin vaccination:** a suspension of a weakened strain of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, which is inoculated into the skin to prevent tuberculosis.

**Blinding trachoma:** the leading cause of infectious blindness in the world. It is caused by an obligate intracellular microorganism, *Chlamydia trachomatis*. The disease is transmitted through contact with eye and nose discharge of infected people, particularly young children who form the reservoir of infection. It is also spread by flies that have been in contact with the eyes and nose of infected people.

**Buruli ulcer:** one of 17 NTDs listed by WHO worldwide. It is caused by infection with *Mycobacterium ulcerans*, an organism that belongs to the family of bacteria that causes tuberculosis and leprosy. Named after the Buruli district in Uganda where it was first described.

**Cancer:** a general term for any of various types of malignant growths, most of which invade surrounding tissues, metastasize to distant sites in the body, recur after attempted removal, and cause death of the patient unless adequately treated.

**Cardiovascular diseases:** diseases of the heart and blood vessels that include strokes, hypertension, heart attacks, etc.

**Cervical cancer:** a malignant disease of the neck of the uterus.

**Compacts:** negotiated and signed time-bound agreements in which partners commit to implement and uphold the defined priorities outlined in a country’s health strategy.

**Disability-adjusted life-years (DALYs):** a measure of overall disease burden expressed as the number of years lost due to premature mortality and disability.

**Delivering as One:** the name of a United Nations report issued in 2006 and an initiative launched in 2007 to improve the coordination of development assistance within the United Nations family of organizations.

**DOTS:** the tuberculosis control strategy recommended by WHO as the most cost-effective to stop the spread of tuberculosis in communities with a high incidence.
Dracunculiasis: dracunculiasis (more commonly known as guinea-worm disease) is a crippling parasitic disease caused by Dracunculus medinensis, a long thread-like worm. It is transmitted exclusively when people drink water contaminated with parasite-infected water fleas. Dracunculiasis is rarely fatal but infected people become nonfunctional for months. It affects people in rural, deprived and isolated communities who depend mainly on open surface water sources such as ponds for drinking water. Human infection can be prevented by filtering drinking water, preventing infected people from wading in the water, or vector control by using insecticides to kill the water fleas.

Essential medicines: drugs that are determined by the WHO Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines to be required for the basic health needs of a population.

Gross domestic product: the market value of all officially recognized final goods and services produced within a country in a year, or over a given period of time.

Governance: the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country’s affairs at all levels. The complex mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations and mediate their differences.

Guinea-worm disease: see Dracunculiasis.

Haemophilus influenzae type b: a type of Haemophilus influenzae bacteria, responsible for a wide range of infections. In infants and young children, H. influenzae type b (Hib) causes bacteraemia, pneumonia, epiglottitis and acute bacterial meningitis.

Health systems: the people, institutions and resources that serve to improve the health of the population, by helping people to avoid ill health and treating disease.

Health workers: people with specific training and a recognized role in the provision of health care.

Heart disease: commonly used term that encompasses diseases of the muscle, blood vessels, or envelopes of the heart, including ischaemia, myocardial infarction, angina pectoris, arrhythmias, hypertension and heart failure.

Hepatitis: inflammation of the liver, usually caused by a viral infection, or toxic agents, including alcohol and drugs. There are five known hepatitis viruses: A, B, C, D and E. The most common forms of the disease are hepatitis A, hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

Hepatitis A virus is spread by contact with faeces or blood, most often through the ingestion of contaminated food. Hepatitis A infection is estimated to be high in all Member States of the Region. A safe effective hepatitis A vaccine has been available for nearly two decades.

Hepatitis B virus is spread through blood, semen, vaginal secretions and saliva. Symptoms can develop after an incubation period that may be as long as 6 months. People may remain asymptomatic carriers. A leading cause of chronic liver disease, cirrhosis and liver cancer. Hepatitis B is highly endemic in western Africa with a prevalence of 8%, the highest in the world. Hepatitis B is preventable with a safe and effective vaccine, but there are 240 million people living with hepatitis B virus infection worldwide.
Hepatitis C virus is spread mainly through blood transfusion and can cause cirrhosis, liver failure and liver cancer. It is estimated that 2% of the population in the Region are chronically infected with hepatitis C. While hepatitis C is not preventable by vaccination, current treatment regimens offer high cure rates that are expected to further improve with upcoming new treatments.

Effective and safe antiviral agents against hepatitis B and hepatitis C exist. However, the high price of these medicines remains a major challenge.

Although not well documented, hepatitis D is endemic in the Region, especially in central and western Africa.

The hepatitis E virus exists worldwide. Recent outbreaks were reported in Chad, the Sudan and Uganda. Hepatitis E vaccine candidates have been developed but are not yet certified by WHO.

HIV/AIDS: a disease that includes a constellation of relatively specific infections and cancers that result from the selective destruction of part of the human immune system by HIV.

Hookworm: common name for bloodsucking round worms of the family Ancylostomatidae, and the infection that it causes in humans, with anaemia as its main consequence.

Human African trypanosomiasis: African trypanosomiasis or sleeping sickness is a parasitic disease of humans and other animals. It is caused by protozoa of the species Trypanosoma brucei. There are two types that infect humans: Trypanosoma brucei gambiense (T.b.g) and Trypanosoma brucei rhodesiense (T.b.r). T.b.g causes over 98% of reported cases. Both are usually transmitted by the bite of an infected tsetse fly and are most common in rural areas.

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV): HIV causes the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Infection with HIV occurs by the transfer of bodily fluids.

Human papillomavirus (HPV): a DNA virus from the papillomavirus family. Certain types of this virus cause cutaneous and genital warts in humans, including verruca vulgaris and condyloma acuminatum. Other types cause cervical intraepithelial neoplasia, accounting for about 80% of cervical cancer and anogenital and laryngeal carcinomas.

HPV vaccine: HPV vaccine prevents infection with certain species of HPV associated with the development of cervical cancer, genital warts and other cancers. WHO recommends vaccination of young women against HPV to prevent cervical cancer and to reduce the number of treatments for cervical cancer precursors.

Hypertension: blood pressure consistently exceeding 160 mmHg (systolic) and 95 mmHg (diastolic).

Insecticide-treated nets (ITNs): a mesh fabric soaked in a solution of chemicals designed to kill the insects that land on them. Usually intended to protect from night-biting mosquitoes that carry malaria.

Integrated community case management (iCCM): iCCM is used for pneumonia, diarrhoea and malaria. This approach centres around the idea that the most common childhood killers can be readily diagnosed and treated by people within the community, including those with limited education and medical training.
Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR): IDSR was adopted in 1998 by Member States of the Region to improve the availability and use of data for more timely detection, confirmation, and response to the leading causes of illness, death, and disability. In 2006, Member States recommended that the International Health Regulations (2005) be implemented using the IDSR framework, especially for strengthening core capacities for surveillance and response.

Integrated management of childhood illness (IMCI): a systematic approach to children’s health that focuses not only on curative care, but also on prevention of disease. Developed in 1992 by UNICEF and WHO.

Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (IGME): IGME was formed in 2004 to share data on child mortality and harmonize estimates within the United Nations system. Led by UNICEF and WHO, IGME also includes the World Bank and the United Nations Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

International Health Regulations (2005): legally binding regulations to prevent, protect against, control and provide a public health response to the international spread of disease.

Ivermectin: ivermectin is a broad-spectrum antiparasitic agent, traditionally used against parasitic worms. Mainly used in the treatment of onchocerciasis, but also effective against other worm infestations and some epidermal parasitic skin diseases, including scabies. Ivermectin is on WHO’s list of essential medicines.

Kangaroo mother care (KMC): a technique where infants are held skin-to-skin with an adult. Initially developed to care for preterm infants in areas where incubators are either unavailable or unreliable, and named for the similarity to how certain marsupials carry their young.

Leishmaniasis: caused by a protozoa parasite from over 20 _Leishmania_ species and transmitted to humans by the bite of infected female phlebotomine sandflies. There are three main forms of the disease: visceral (often known as kala-azar and the most serious form of the disease), cutaneous (the most common) and mucocutaneous.

Leprosy: a chronic infectious disease caused by _Mycobacterium leprae_, an acid-fast, rod-shaped bacillus. Mainly affects the skin, the peripheral nerves, mucosa of the upper respiratory tract and the eyes. Leprosy is curable and treatment provided in the early stages averts disability.

Lymphatic filariasis: an NTD commonly known as elephantiasis. Infection occurs when filarial parasites are transmitted to humans through mosquitoes. Infection is usually acquired in childhood causing hidden damage to the lymphatic system. The painful and profoundly disfiguring visible manifestations of the disease, lymphoedema, elephantiasis and scrotal swelling, occur later in life and lead to permanent disability. These patients are not only physically disabled, but suffer mental, social and financial losses contributing to stigma and poverty.

Malaria: a parasitic disease caused by _Plasmodium_ species, transmitted to humans by the bite of the female _Anopheles_ mosquito. Fever and anaemia are its main signs.
Measles: a contagious eruptive fever with coryza and catarrhal symptoms. Caused by a virus, with about a 2-week incubation period. An effective vaccine exists.

Meningitis Vaccine Project: the Meningitis Vaccine Project, which began in 2001, is an effort to eliminate the meningitis epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa by developing a meningococcal vaccine. It led to the release in 2010 of MenAfriVac®, an inexpensive, safe and highly effective vaccine against meningitis A. The project marked the first time that medical research had developed a vaccine to combat a disease that is endemic to, and only a problem for, Africa.

Meningococcal meningitis/meningitis A/ meningococcus group A/ Neisseria meningitidis group A: bacterial form of meningitis. A serious infection of the thin lining that surrounds the brain and spinal cord. Group A meningococcus is the main cause of meningitis epidemics in the African meningitis belt, and accounts for an estimated 80–85% of all cases.

Morbidity: the condition of being diseased or sick. Also the amount of sickness and disease caused by a particular agent or condition.

Mortality rate: ratio of the number of people dying in a year to the total mid-year population in which the deaths occurred.

Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs): NTDs in the Region include lymphatic filariasis, schistosomiasis, soil-transmitted helminthiasis, leprosy, buruli ulcer, yaws and other treponematoses, onchocerciasis, dracunculiasis, blinding trachoma and human African trypanosomiasis. Although medically diverse, NTDs share features that allow them to persist in conditions of poverty, overlapping and thriving in the heat and humidity of tropical climates. Of the 14 NTDs occurring in the Region, most are parasitic, spread by insects while others multiply through contaminated water and soil infested with the eggs of worms. Poor sanitation and limited access to basic health care play a role in the heavy burden of these diseases in poor communities.

Noma (cancrum oris): a severe infection causing gangrene of the oral and facial tissues, usually occurring in debilitated patients or malnourished children.

Noncommunicable disease (NCD): a disease that is not transmitted to or between people, and does not have an infectious cause.

Obesity: the condition of being overweight to an unhealthy extent. For adults, a body mass index equal to, or greater than, 30.

Onchocerciasis: infection with filarial worms that live and breed in the nodules under the patient’s skin and can cause blindness. Also known as river blindness, it is transmitted by biting blackflies that breed on rocks in turbulent river water.

Oral rehydration therapy: a water, salt and sugar mixture used for treating dehydration.

Overweight: a body mass index equal to, or greater than, 25 in adults.

Pandemic: a widespread epidemic disease.

Parasite: a plant or animal that lives upon or within another living organism at whose expense it obtains some advantage without compensation.

Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine: a pneumococcal vaccine used to protect infants and young children against disease caused...
by the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (pneumococcus).

**Poliomyelitis (polio):** an acute viral disease characterized clinically by fever, sore throat, headache and vomiting, often with stiffness of the head and back, that may lead to involvement of the central nervous system with meningitis, destruction of the anterior horn cells of the spinal cord, and paralysis. An effective vaccine exists.

**Prevalence:** the number of cases of a disease in existence at a certain time in a designated area.

**Roundworm:** members of the phylum Nematoda. *Ascaris* is the species that causes the most infections in humans and is acquired by ingesting eggs of the parasite in contaminated soil. The infection causes damage to the lungs when the larvae migrate through the body and intestinal colic due to large masses of adult worms in the intestines. These masses can also cause complications such as volvulus, intestinal obstruction or intussusception.

**Schistosomiasis:** a variety of infections caused by blood flukes (schistosomes), which are transmitted to humans by exposure to infested water. The three main forms of infection – urinary, intestinal or hepatosplenic – vary with the species of schistosome but result mostly from reactions to the eggs deposited in tissues.

**Sector-wide approach:** an approach to international development that brings together governments, donors and other stakeholders within any sector. It is characterized by a set of operating principles rather than a specific package of policies or activities.

**Sickle cell disease:** a hereditary blood disorder characterized by red blood cells that assume an abnormal, rigid, sickle shape.

**Skilled birth attendance:** the practice of having a specifically trained health worker (doctor, nurse or midwife) to assist during labour and delivery, irrespective of where the birth actually occurs.

**Soil-transmitted helminthiasis:** refers to a group of parasitic diseases in humans caused by intestinal roundworms such as hookworms, ascaris and whipworm transmitted through contaminated soil. It has become the most common parasitic infection of humans worldwide and is regarded as one of the world’s most important causes of intellectual and physical retardation.

**Streptococcus pneumonia:** *Streptococcus pneumonia* (*Streptococcus pneumoniae* or pneumococcus) is one of the most common causes of bacterial meningitis in adults and young adults, along with *Neisseria meningitides*.

**Stroke:** a sudden and severe attack caused by acute vascular lesions of the brain, such as haemorrhage, thrombosis or embolism, with functional consequences depending on the location and the extent of the lesion.

**Stunted:** not having gained full growth or development. Used to describe a child that is less than two standard deviations from the mean height for his or her age, due to chronic malnutrition.

**Sub-Saharan Africa:** geographically, the area of the continent of Africa that lies south of the Sahara Desert.

**Tapeworm:** a parasitic intestinal cestode worm. Most human infections are caused by eating undercooked pork or beef. Only the former can cause cysticercosis in humans, which may result in cysts in the brain.
**Tetanus:** caused by the bacterium *Clostridium tetani*, the spores of which are widespread in the environment. The disease is caused by the action of a neurotoxin, produced by the bacteria when they grow in the absence of oxygen (e.g. in dirty wounds or in the umbilical cord if it is cut with a non-sterile instrument). Tetanus is characterized by muscle spasms, initially in the jaw muscles. As the disease progresses, mild stimuli may trigger generalized tetanic seizure-like activity, which contributes to serious complications and eventually death unless supportive treatment is given.

**Trypanosomiasis:** a fatal infection caused by *Trypanosoma brucei gambiense* (or *T. brucei rhodesiense*) that is transmitted by the bite of tsetse flies. Also called sleeping sickness.

**Tuberculosis:** a widespread, and in many cases fatal, infectious disease caused by various strains of mycobacteria. Tuberculosis typically attacks the lungs but can also affect other parts of the body. It is spread when people with an active infection cough, sneeze, or otherwise transmit respiratory fluids through the air.

**Vaccine:** any preparation whose administration is intended for the prevention, improvement or treatment of infectious diseases by stimulating the formation of antibodies to specific pathogens or toxins.

**Vector-borne disease:** a disease that is transmitted by an animal, such as an insect, that transfers the pathogen from one organism to another (e.g. from animal to humans), usually without itself contracting the disease.

**Vector control:** control of the carrier, especially an animal (usually an arthropod: mosquito, flea, fly, tick), which transfers an infective agent from one host to another.

**Virus:** a minute infectious agent that can only replicate within living host cells.

**Wasted:** having lost flesh or strength, emaciated; abnormally thin from extreme loss of flesh; particularly a child who is less than two standard deviations from the mean weight for height.