

**REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA****ORIGINAL: ENGLISH**Seventy-fourth sessionBrazzaville, Republic of Congo, 26–30 August 2024**CONGRATULATORY REMARKS BY THE WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL****Election of the Regional Director for the Africa**

Excellencies, dear colleagues and friends,

I offer my warm congratulations to Dr Faustine Engelbert Ndugulile on your election as Regional Director for Africa, and to Tanzania.

I also congratulate Dr Ibrahima Socé Fall, Dr Boureima Hama Sambo and Dr Richard Mihigo on your campaigns, and I thank you for putting yourselves forward for this very demanding but very important position.

Dr Ndugulile, you have earned the confidence and trust of the Member States of the region. This is a great privilege, and a very great responsibility.

The health of millions of people is in your hands. No pressure!

As you know, the Region is a rich tapestry of cultures, religions, languages, landscapes, and income levels.

From arid deserts to tropical rainforests;

From the Atlantic to the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean;

From some of the world's largest cities to some of its most remote villages.

I do not need to remind you of the scale of challenges you face, from conflict, climate change, inequality, outbreaks of infectious disease, the rising burden of NCDs, antimicrobial resistance, and so much more.

This role will demand every bit of the technical, managerial and diplomatic skill you have, and more.

But you are not alone. You are supported by a very dedicated and talented team at the Regional Office.

And I assure you of my support and that of my colleagues in Geneva.

You will assume this position at a critical time, as we implement the Fourteenth General Programme of Work, and seek to jump-start progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. You will lead the Region to the end of the SDG era, and the beginning of the next era.

And halfway through your first term, you will be working with a new Director-General.

But in the meantime, you are stuck with me.

I look forward to working with you. The success of this Organization depends on close cooperation, coordination and trust between headquarters, the regional offices and country offices.

I am committed to working closely with you, our regional and country office colleagues, and our Member States, to promote, provide, protect health on our continent.

As I said yesterday, you have big shoes to fill, and a hard act to follow.

My sister Tshidi, thank you once again for your outstanding leadership over the past 10 years.

I wish you every happiness in the next chapter of life.

Once again, Dr Ndugulile, congratulations. I very much look forward to welcoming you to the Global Policy Group, and to working with you for a healthier, safer, fairer Africa.

I thank you. Merci beaucoup.