

World Health Organization report says life expectancy in Africa significantly improved



Geneva, September 4 (RHC)-- The peoples of Africa are experiencing a major improvement in health, according to a new report by the World Health Organization's (WHO) regional office.

The WHO report showed that life expectancy had improved significantly, moved from 50.9 years in 2012 to 53.8 years in 2015 across the region. The data was revealed at the 68th session of the WHO Regional Committee in Dakar.

"I'm proud that Africans are now living longer and healthier lives. Nearly three years of extra health is a gift that makes us all proud. Of course, we hope that these gains will continue and the region will reach global standards," Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, WHO's Regional Director for Africa, said.

Instances of deaths resulting from Africa's 10 major health risks – including lower respiratory infections, HIV and diarrhoeal diseases – decreased by half between 2000 and 2015, as a result of the implementation of specialized health programs.

However, adolescents and the elderly are reportedly being under-served, with multiple surveys revealing a lack of elder care in one-third of African countries.

WHO also warned that chronic diseases, like heart disease and cancer, still required attention, since persons aged from 30 to 70 have a one in five chance of dying from a non-communicable disease.

“Health services must keep up with the evolving health trends in the region. In the past, we focused on specific diseases as these were causing a disproportionately high number of deaths.

“We have been highly successful at stopping these threats, and people’s health is now being challenged by a broad range of conditions. We need to develop a new and more holistic approach to health,” the medical professional stated.

The WHO report stated that Algeria has good coverage of available health service, Kenya has a good range of available essential services and Mauritius has good access to services.

Representatives of the organization met with officials from 47 African countries. Health officials from Kenya, Nigeria and Cape Verde said they were focusing on prevention and healthy lifestyle practices to combat non-communicable diseases.

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