

Recent news from WHO

- On 17 May, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr Margaret Chan, opened the **World Health Assembly** by celebrating the eradication of smallpox 30 years ago as proof of the power of collective action. "As we enter the second decade of the 21st century, and the homestretch for reaching the Millennium Development Goals, we need to draw on every lesson, every approach, instrument and innovative way of raising funds or collaborating together, from heads of state to civil society," she told the annual meeting of WHO's Member States. "We need to move forward fast," she said.
- On 14 May WHO welcomed a United Nations General Assembly resolution to halt the increasing trends in **premature deaths from noncommunicable diseases**. Cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes kill nearly 35 million people each year, including almost 9 million before the age of 60. If trends continue unabated, deaths will rise to an estimated 41.2 million a year by 2015.
- On 10 May WHO released the **World health statistics 2010** in Geneva, which features a global update on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). For the first time, this report provides the major causes of deaths among newborns. Globally, about 40% of deaths in children aged less than five years are estimated to occur in the first month of life, and most deaths occur in the first week. These child deaths have dropped by 30% from 12.5 million in 1990 to 8.8 million in 2008. The *World health statistics*, which is published annually, is based on more than 100 health indicators.

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