



My Health, My Right!

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<https://www.jornaldeangola.ao/ao/noticias/hoje-e-dia-mundial-da-saude/>

Looking at the need to build a safer and healthier future for all, 1948 world leaders created the World Health Organization (WHO). The same year, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights also enshrined the right to health. That's why, every year on April 7, the world celebrates World Health Day to raise awareness of the need for concrete action to guarantee equitable access to health services. Ensuring the right to health is fundamental for creating vibrant and productive communities, stronger economies, safer nations, and a better world. This year, the theme chosen to celebrate World Health Day is **My Health, My Right**, highlighting the need for joint action to tackle health challenges, defend the right of everyone everywhere to have access to quality health services, protect access to education and information; clean water; clean air; good nutrition; quality housing; decent working and environmental conditions, as well as non-discrimination.

Since its foundation in 1948, the WHO and its Member States have achieved significant results in the field of health that we should all be proud of, including the substantial increase in life expectancy in the world, progress in reducing maternal and infant mortality in the fight against infectious diseases, such as the eradication of smallpox, the remarkable advances in the process of eradicating Poliomyelitis and Dracunculiasis, in the fight against communicable diseases and the reduction of some of the main risk factors for non-communicable diseases, such as tobacco. More mothers and children are surviving in the WHO African Region than ever. From 2000 to 2020, the life expectancy of African women increased from 54 to 67 years; the maternal mortality ratio decreased by 33% (from 788 to 531 maternal deaths per 100,000 lives), and the number of children dying before the age of 5 was reduced by 50% from 2000 to 2017. Between 2011 and 2021, the number of new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths fell by 44% and 55%, respectively, across Africa, and the number of deaths from tuberculosis fell by 26%. In addition, several diseases are on the verge of eradication and elimination, including polio, Guinea worm disease and maternal and neonatal tetanus. However, it is essential to mention that challenges remain to ensure health for all. Sadly, around the world, multiple crises such as natural disasters, conflicts, climate change, disease and air pollution have devastated lives and taken away the right to health of millions of people. At least 4.5 billion people, or more than half of the world's population, do not have access to essential health services. That's why we must work together to guarantee a good quality of life, health, and well-being, which are fundamental human rights for everyone, regardless of who they are, where they live or what they do.

In Angola in particular, since the signing of the Basic Agreement between the World Health Organization and the Government of Angola in 1976, the country has always been side by side with the WHO, actively participating in the definition of policies, guidelines, strategies, and actions that are crucial to improving health. As a result of this partnership, various initiatives have been developed that have led to exciting progress in reducing maternal and infant mortality and mortality due to certain diseases and strengthening the capacity to respond to public health emergencies, namely the success achieved in eradicating polio and controlling various epidemics such as Marburg hemorrhagic fever, yellow fever and, more recently, in combating COVID-19, including vaccination. The WHO takes this opportunity to express its satisfaction and congratulate the government, especially MINSA, health professionals and partners for their hard work and positive results over the last few years in the health sector. However, we must continue to redouble our efforts to strengthen the health system, guarantee access to quality healthcare and leave no one behind. There are still challenges facing Angola in guaranteeing Health For All and achieving Universal Health Coverage, including access to quality health services, which is still limited, especially in the most remote areas; levels of routine vaccination coverage have fallen in recent years, resulting in a considerable increase in the number of unvaccinated children susceptible to common childhood diseases; the still high levels of malaria, tuberculosis, diarrheal diseases, pneumonia, acute and chronic malnutrition, the increase in chronic non-communicable diseases, the still insufficient quality of information system data, among others. April 7, World Health Day, is a particular date to renew our commitment to continue working hard with the government and its partners to address the main challenges that still affect the national health system, including strengthening primary health care and community health to promote a more holistic and integrated approach to the persistent health challenges. Approaches such as strengthening primary health care will make it possible to accelerate progress in health and significantly improve the health of the Angolan population, guaranteeing the best level of health and well-being for all and leaving no one behind. My Health, My Right! - let's continue to work together for health, reinforce healthy habits, prevent diseases, define the best policies and approaches to health, and move forward together to guarantee health for all.

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