# Questions from the pharma journal

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**What would be your core priorities for global public health as WHO Director-General?**

In terms of priorities for global public health, my [Vision](http://www.sanianishtar.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Manifesto-Final.pdf) outlines four programmatic areas—operational readiness in outbreaks and emergencies; strengthened action on global public goods; focus on supporting countries to reduce the health risks of climate change; and country-relevant support to achieve the SDGs. I regard infectious outbreaks, antibiotic resistance and the silent pandemic of Non-Communicable diseases, as the biggest immediate threats to the collective health of people, worldwide. These, together with the longer-term threat of climate change, threaten to wipe out the development gains of the last century. In addition to the challenge of collective health security, it is also critical to address other more ‘individual-centric’ threats to health, such as widening health inequities, poor coverage, lack of financial risk protection and poor quality of care. This creates a strong imperative for countries to adopt Universal Health Coverage (UHC) as a policy goal, given its cross-cutting potential to address both sets of challenges.

My New Vision for WHO is centered on 10 Pledges for action, six of which are focused on reclaiming WHO’s primacy. I have therefore pledged to institutionalize accountability and transparency, ensure value for money, and drive a culture based on results and concrete delivery. I pledge to focus WHO on its core and exclusive mandates and to exercising WHO’s leadership through effective coordination, building on comparative advantage and by establishing a partnership-fostering culture.

**How would you enhance access to medicines and vaccines for communicable diseases and NCDs? What are the biggest shortfalls in this area at present in low, middle income and rich countries like?**

As director general, I will approach this in a multi-pronged fashion. First and foremost, I will ensure WHO advocates for and helps countries increase access through right policies and practices and by strengthening their regulatory systems. Strong and effective health systems play a major role in ensuring access to medicines. Secondly, as DG, I will ensure that WHO plays its global roles effectively in relation to access to medicines—norms and standard setting, safety and vigilance, international regulatory oversight and surveillance in relation to SSFFC medical products, catalyzing increased R&D for neglected diseases of poverty, particularly those with complete market failures, price surveillance, combating anti-microbial resistance and innovations to ensure availability of new and effective essential medicines at affordable prices. I will focus on strengthening WHO’s role in these areas, as a matter of priority. The biggest shortfalls in this area at present, which are relevant to in low, middle and rich countries alike include the affordability issue and fiscal constraints in relation to R&D.