GENEVA / 28 June 2016 - The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced the appointment of Dr Peter Salama as the Executive Director of its new Health Emergencies Programme, at the level of Deputy Director-General. He takes up his new post on 27 July 2016.

Dr Salama is from Australia and is currently UNICEF Regional Director for Middle East and North Africa and Global Emergency Coordinator for the Crises in Syria, Iraq and Yemen. He has previously served with UNICEF as Country Representative in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe, as Global Coordinator for Ebola, and as Chief of Global Health.

Prior to joining UNICEF in 2002, he worked with the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US CDC), Concern Worldwide and MSF.

Dr Salama is a medical epidemiologist who brings a wealth of experience in management of humanitarian crises and disease outbreaks. He has worked in public health for more than 20 years and published widely in the fields of maternal and child survival, refugee and forced migration and complex emergencies.

WHO's new Health Emergencies Programme is designed to deliver rapid, predictable and comprehensive support to countries and communities as they prepare for, face or recover from emergencies caused by any type of hazard to human health, whether disease outbreaks, natural or man-made disasters or conflicts.

The development of the new Programme is the result of a reform effort, based on recommendations from a range of independent and expert external reports, involving all levels of WHO – country offices, regional offices and headquarters.

The new Programme unifies WHO's standards and processes to strengthen the Organization's response to health emergencies across the full risk management cycle of prevention, preparedness, response and early recovery.