

The WHO has a new chief. Will India now find its voice at the global health organisation?

<https://scroll.in/pulse/838722/the-who-has-a-new-chief-will-india-now-find-its-voice-at-the-global-health-organisation>

India has so far been reticent at the World Health Organisation but is seen as a natural leader for the cause of the global South.



Newly elected Director-General of the WHO Tedros attends a news conference at the United Nations in Geneva | Denis Balibouse/Reuters

May 26, 2017 · 02:30 pm

Amit Sengupta

The former Ethiopian Minister of Health Tedros Ghebreyesus was elected as the new Director General of the World Health Organisation, defeating David Nabarro of the United Kingdom by a massive margin. Tedros is the first person from Africa to be elected to the post in the organisation's 70-year history. India has never bid for the post, possibly reflecting a lukewarm engagement by India with the premier intergovernmental health organisation. But India now has an opportunity to be one of the leaders in pushing forward the health agenda of developing countries.

The election this year was the first occasion when the entire Assembly voted through a secret ballot, as opposed to previous elections when only the executive board would select the new director general. The massive margin for Tedros indicates that, in all probability, the entire South voted for him – a virtual tri-continental alliance of developing nations. The margin of victory had not been anticipated and possibly marks a silent vote against big power machinations in the WHO.