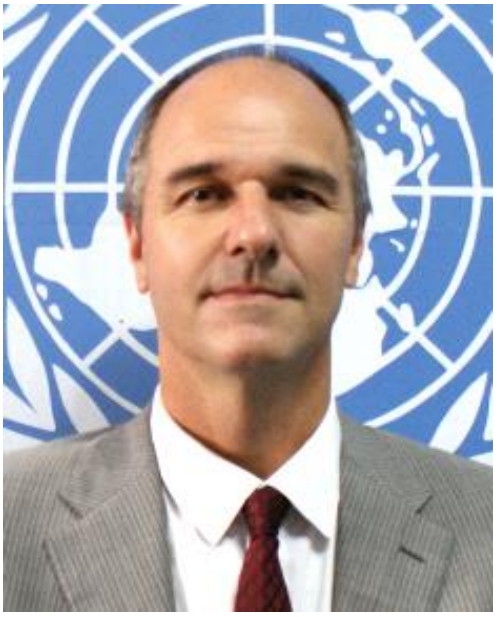
Biography: Rik Peeperkorn Head of Office, World Health Organization, Office for West Bank and Gaza (oPt)



In March 2021, Rik Peeperkorn was appointed as Head of Office-WHO, Office for the West Bank and Gaza (oPt).

Rik Peeperkorn, MD, MPH, has been working for over 30 years in the field of international Public Health in Africa, Asia, and Europe, and has extensive experience with Health Systems strengthening, Sector Reforms, primary and referral Health Care, Communicable and Non-Communicable diseases, HIV-AIDS, and Humanitarian support. Rik held various positions at the different layers of the Health System ranging from hospital, provincial to (inter)national level.

From 2013-2021, Rik Peeperkorn was the WHO Representative to Afghanistan. The large and comprehensive WHO country support focused on COVID19 -leading the ONE UN response-, Health Systems, Communicable and Non-Communicable diseases, Nutrition, Reproductive Maternal Neonatal Child and Adolescent Health, Gender Based Violence, and Humanitarian support. The Humanitarian program consisted of Health Emergencies & Outbreaks and the Polio Eradication Initiative. In a country in conflict such as Afghanistan, this required ongoing, skilful negotiations with all parties at all levels.

Prior to joining WHO, Rik was managing a large Health and HIV-AIDS support-program portfolio in Tanzania (2005-2013) for the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As Health Sector co-lead, he represented and coordinated the many Development Partners vis-à-vis the Government of Tanzania, Civil Society Organisations, Private Sector, and Global Initiatives. Before his assignment in Tanzania, Rik Peeperkorn worked as Associate Director of the Country & Regional Support Department at UNAIDS in Geneva (2002-2005), where he was responsible for the conceptualization and establishment of the UNAIDS Regional Technical Support Facilities, mainstreaming HIV&AIDS in development instruments and sector programs, policy advice and program guidance.

From 1996-2002, Rik Peeperkorn served as Sector Specialist Health & HIV-AIDS for the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Zambia and Malawi. Besides managing a comprehensive support program in Zambia and Malawi, he played a guiding role in the Health Sector reforms processes in the framework of developing Sector Wide Approaches in both countries and co-developed and managed a Regional HIV-AIDS program for Southern Africa.
Previous to that (1986-1996) he held various positions with the UN and governments, in Zambia, Madagascar, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Lesotho and as a clinician with an University Hospital in the Netherlands.

Rik Peeperkorn's specific interests are Health Systems and Humanitarian Support. He researched, directed, and co-produced a documentary film "Health Reforms at Work: Experiences with the Sector Wide Approach in Zambia" (2004). Rik is a passionate soccer fan and, has a keen interest in modern history.

Rik is a Dutch national. He is married and has a son.

Rik Peeperkorn received his MD from the University of Amsterdam (1986), and obtained his MPH from Johns Hopkins University-School of Public Health (1992).