

SPEAKER'S BIO

Professor Ala Alwan, MD, FRCP, FFPH



Ala Alwan is a Regional Director Emeritus, World Health Organization (WHO) and visiting professor of Global Health, University of Washington. He was the WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean from 2012 to 2017, Assistant Director-General for Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health at WHO headquarters from 2008 to 2012 and Assistant Director General and Representative of the WHO Director General for Health Action in Crises from 2005 to 2008.

Dr Alwan graduated in Medicine from the University of Alexandria. He practiced medicine and obtained his postgraduate training and qualifications in the United Kingdom. Following his return to Iraq, his home country, he held several positions in clinical and academic medicine and public health. He was Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Mustansiriyah University, Baghdad.

In 1992, he joined WHO as Regional Adviser for Noncommunicable diseases. He then served as WHO Representative in Oman and Jordan, Director, Division of Health Systems Development in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. In 1998, Dr Alwan was reassigned to WHO headquarters in Geneva as Director for Noncommunicable Diseases Prevention. During this position he coordinated the development of the global strategy for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases which was endorsed by the World Health Assembly in May 2000. He also coordinated the global preparations and events leading to the United Nations General Assembly high-level meeting on noncommunicable diseases in 2011.

His WHO career was interrupted from 2003 to 2005 when he served as Minister of Education and Minister of Health in the Government of Iraq.

Ala Alwan is honorary professor of public health, Imperial College, London and honorary professor of global health, University of Oxford, associate fellow, Chatham House - Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, and senior fellow, Global Health Centre, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Switzerland.