

# WELCOME MESSAGE 2019

## HIGH PATRONS OF THE WORLD HEALTH SUMMIT



Health and well-being is a key goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to which the international community has pledged its support. At the UN Sustainable Development Summit in late September, the Heads of State and Government spelt out that the Agenda is not being implemented fast enough. In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by around 2030, we must significantly strengthen our endeavours worldwide. Above all, this requires developing a common understanding on how to proceed and pooling our strengths, including on global health issues.

To this end, Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg, Ghanaian President Nana Addo Akufo-Addo and I asked WHO in April

2018 to guide the elaboration of a Global Action Plan to implement the 2030 Agenda's health goals. Twelve international organisations were involved in drafting this Action Plan, which WHO presented during UN Week. The outcome is very gratifying. The plan provides us with a solid basis for improving support services in specific countries and making achievements more measurable through intermediate goals, thus enabling rapid adjustments where necessary. I am confident that with the help of this Action Plan, it will be possible to further improve the coordination of the countless activities in the health sector and thus use funds more efficiently.

The current outbreak of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo once again highlights the importance and urgency of coordinated action. However, we are in a better position than during the epidemic of 2014-2015 in West Africa. Experimental vaccines and treatments are being used successfully. Despite great concern about the current outbreak, there are thus good

reasons to hope that Ebola can be curbed effectively. In order to achieve this in the case of other dangerous infections, too, such as lassa fever, Germany is supporting the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), which will invest up to a billion dollars in developing new vaccines.

In view of the possible dangers that pandemics pose to human life, but also to entire regions' economies, security and development, it is and will remain important that we support the countries of the Global South in developing resilient education, research and health systems. The Research Network for Health Innovations in sub-Saharan Africa, which is funded by the Federal Government, is one example of how this can be achieved in the field of health research. Our German-African partnerships aim to identify solutions to current health problems that can be put into practice on the ground.

Diseases and epidemics do not stop at national borders. Responsibility for healthcare thus

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does not end there either. The World Health Summit plays a key role in living up to this responsibility. As patron of the Summit, I am profoundly grateful to all those who play a part in its success, as the event focuses on new and better prospects for the lives of people all over the world. On that note, I hope your exchange of thoughts and experiences at the Summit will prove both interesting and productive.



**Angela Merkel**  
Chancellor of the  
Federal Republic of Germany



I am very pleased to offer my patronage to the World Health Summit, as I did on two previous occasions along with the German Chancellor and the President of the European Commission. This 2019 Summit provides once more a stimulating opportunity for dialogue, exchange, and learning. It comes at a challenging and inspiring time for global health, calling for reinforced multilateral action, an approach strongly supported by both Germany and France.

During the last months, France played an active part in this respect as Chair of the G7 focusing on the fight against inequalities. The fourth G7 Health ministerial meeting which took place in Paris in May brought forward access to primary health care as a shared priority. At the G7

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Summit in Biarritz on August 26, we reiterated that universal access to social protection and affordable quality health services with primary health care are crucial. We called for further investments to strengthen health systems and eliminate the three most lethal infectious diseases— aids, tuberculosis and malaria. We adopted a Sahel Partnership Action Plan to enhance development in the Sahel region. This plan has a specific focus on gender equality and women's empowerment and aims at reaching the most affected communities.

This year, the United Nations General Assembly bolstered the achievement of the Universal Health Coverage. France has always been a strong advocate of universal health coverage as a fundamental right: access to health and well-being must be guaranteed, regardless of one's wealth. France implemented universal health coverage decades ago and, ever since, this has proven to be a fundamental basis for our national cohesion and prosperity. We

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must remain committed to this global challenge. We have to make health systems more resilient in order to provide equal access to care and to make high quality medicines available at a fair price. We have to ensure that we take on board vulnerable populations, and achieve gender equality.

A few weeks ago, France hosted the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria's Sixth Replenishment Conference in Lyon. The international community gathered to step up the fight against these three pandemics, putting us back on track to achieving the Sustainable Development Goal on health and well-being for all. Working closely with partners, at international and local level, the Fund has achieved great results, opening up access to new prevention, protection and screening methods, as well as medication and healthcare, and saving 32 million lives. Hundreds of millions of people are now living better lives. With joined forces, we helped the Global Fund to continue its mission to eradicate

malaria, AIDS and new drug-resistant forms of tuberculosis.

This has been a truly collective effort, with civil society, private sector stakeholders, foundations, activists and communities, pushing for more commitments, offering solutions and taking action, alongside donor and recipient countries. SDGs for health are not concerns for States alone. They are common goals and the World Health Summit is an opportunity to share this energy for action. Let us be actively optimistic for a healthier future.

I would like to thank the organizers for the wise choice of topics for the Summit and especially the focus on Africa. I wish all participants constructive discussions.



**Emmanuel Macron**  
President of the Republic of France



Europeans share a number of common goods with the rest of the world. We have the desire to be safeguarded, to feel secure and protected. We have similar political aspirations, like democracy and freedom. But one good is the premise of all: health. It is one we protected and cherished, so that today we live and age healthily, and more people have access to healthcare than ever before.

But we cannot afford to lapse into complacency, as the mere topic of vaccination reminds us. Each year, vaccination saves up to three million human lives around the world. Some diseases like smallpox, once considered a death sentence, belong to the past. Yet, the recent surge in measles and other diseases close to eradication is a worry-

ing sign that we are losing ground. Without adequate immunisation coverage, we are putting people's lives at risk.

Our response should be global, and Europe has already taken a step forward. At the World Vaccination Summit it hosted less than a month ago, the Commission presented priority measures to address increasing disinformation about vaccination, and tackle the lack of access, vaccine shortages and disinvestment, which are all causing vaccination to stagnate across the world.

As we strive to hold on to the progress we have already made, it is paramount that we continue investing in the vital research that will lead to medical breakthroughs and better health. From EU-funded research on breast cancer treatment to EU-funded researchers making X-rays safer for patients, it is when we pool national and European resources that we can deliver results. This is no zero-sum trade-off.

At the recent meeting of the G7 in Biarritz, the EU announced a record €550 million contribution to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. For many African countries, the Global Fund is the single most important external financier of the health sector and the EU and its Member States have been the main contributors since its creation. When our common good is at risk, we invest in building quality health care systems in more than 80 countries around the world; we deploy our European Medical Corps with on-call medical assistance and public health expertise when disaster strikes; and we broaden and deepen our work with the World Health Organization.

There are few clearer examples today of a truly global threat than antimicrobial resistance. The World Bank estimates severe economic damage as a result, the likes of which we have not seen since the 2008 financial crisis. Worse, by 2050 it could cause 10 million deaths worldwide. The European Union has long been engaged on this

issue, including most recently with legislation addressing the public and animal health risks caused by resistance to antibiotics in the EU.

We, as institutions and politicians, call for growth, jobs and opportunities. But we shall be judged by how we treat our people. Because it is the health of all our citizens that is the true mark of our progress as a society.

It has been an honour during my mandate as President of the European Commission to offer my patronage to the World Health Summit, a distinguished forum that acts for the greater good. I wish you all the best for another inspiring summit this year.



**Jean-Claude Juncker**  
President of the  
European Commission

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At the United Nations General Assembly this year, world leaders endorsed the political declaration on universal health coverage (UHC), the most comprehensive international health commitment in history.

Building on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Declaration of Astana on primary health care, the political declaration on UHC represents unprecedented commitment from all 193 UN Member States to a world in which no one misses out on essential health services simply because they cannot access or afford them.

Realising this vision, of course, will be no easy task. The latest edition of the Global Monitoring Report on UHC shows that on current trends, up to 5 billion

people will lack access to essential health services by 2030. And every year, about 930 million people are exposed to catastrophic health spending.

Reversing these trends will require a relentless focus on people-centred primary health care, with an emphasis on promoting health and preventing disease. It will also require robust partnership. There are now many more international actors in global health than there were when the World Health Organization was founded in 1948. This creates complexities and challenges, but it also represents a unique opportunity to leverage our collective strength to accelerate progress towards the health-related SDG targets.

At the invitation of Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, Prime Minister Erna Solberg of Germany and President Nana Akufo-Addo of Ghana, 12 multi-lateral health agencies have come together to launch the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-Being for All, to

enhance our collaboration and turbocharge our impact. The initial commitment towards the Global Action Plan was launched at the World Health Summit in 2018 and the plan itself at the UN General Assembly in September 2019.

Together, we have committed to engage with countries to identify priorities, to accelerate progress through joint action in seven programmatic areas, to align our operational and financial strategies and policies, and to account for the results we deliver.

The 12 organizations that are signatories to the Action Plan are deeply aware that we cannot achieve its ambitions by ourselves. We need countries, communities and civil society, the private sector, academia, and other stakeholders and development partners to accelerate progress and increase the impact of our joint work through the next “decade of delivery” on the SDGs.

Now our focus must be on working together to implement the

plan in countries. Accordingly, the 12 agencies are focusing on identifying what countries want and how the agencies can work even more closely together to support countries, leading to accelerated impact on the health-related SDGs.

WHO also recognizes that we need to change to ensure we deliver the results the world expects of us. As part of our current transformation project, we have developed a new strategy, new operating model, new business processes, new culture and a new approach to partnership.

WHO is delighted to strengthen its collaboration with the World Health Summit, which is now one of the foremost gatherings in global health. It brings together heads of state, ministers from different sectors, Nobel prize winners, leading CEOs, academics, foundations and civil society. It recognizes the voices of youth and women and aims to increase the diversity that successful global health action requires.

I am proud to be a founding member of the World Health Summit steering committee, and am delighted to see the way it has grown in size and stature since 2009. I am equally proud, together with Chancellor Merkel, President Macron and President Juncker, to be its patron.



**Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**

Director-General of the  
World Health Organization (WHO)