

WELCOME MESSAGES 2020

HIGH PATRONS OF THE WORLD HEALTH SUMMIT



Coronavirus has confronted us with a huge challenge on a global scale. The unprecedented magnitude of the health, humanitarian and economic effects requires an unprecedented measure of cooperation to deal with the pandemic. Numerous experts, engaged in an in-depth exchange of views on this extraordinary challenge at this year's World Health Summit, are making an enormous contribution towards this. For that I am deeply grateful and I would like to warmly welcome you to Berlin.

The German Government is doing everything in its power to ensure that a safe and effective vaccine can be made available as quickly as possible in Germany, in Europe and around the world. We have provided a substantial level of funding for this. This is not only enabling us to expand the re-

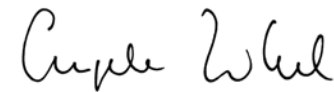
search, development and production capacities in Germany but also to support the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations—an international coalition made up of public and private partners.

Together we must, above all, turn our attention to those countries which have been hit particularly severely by the pandemic—countries with a high population density, extreme poverty and overburdened health systems. People suffering from underlying health problems, hunger or malnutrition as well as those with no access to safe drinking water have a higher risk of becoming infected and seriously ill. Wherever they are in the world—we must not leave them to cope alone.

Germany would like to live up to its international responsibility by adopting a comprehensive and coherent approach. That is why we are cooperating with the WHO, the European Commission and other international partners, among other things to further the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator. The aim of this multilateral platform is not only to develop vaccines but

also to ensure their fair distribution as well as that of suitable drugs and diagnostic tests. I will continue to call for the largest possible number of international partners to support this helpful initiative.

Coronavirus knows no borders. The necessary global response must therefore not fail due to national borders. The key to containing and overcoming the pandemic can only be found in international cooperation and coordination. That is why I am deeply grateful to you for contributing your expertise to the World Health Summit, exchanging findings and drawing up recommendations. I wish you all the best, and above all of course, that you stay healthy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Angela Merkel'.

Angela Merkel

Chancellor of the
Federal Republic of Germany

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The year 2020 will go down in the history of all nations as a memorable year due to the shock of the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic that we have collectively faced. As the World Health Summit begins in Berlin and around the world via our screens, more than one million people have died, and the pandemic is still active.

In this new context, international forces have divided, concerted, and cooperated. The world-renowned World Health Summit gives us a great opportunity to bring together capable people of good will, in order to find solutions to this crisis.

I would like to thank my friend and outstanding leader Chancellor Angela Merkel, to offer once again her High Patronage, as well as Professor Ganten's dynamic organisation for allowing specialists

and the world's best experts to present their analyses, their knowledge and to discuss their opinions. I am delighted that this session gives us a particular opportunity to bring to light our European vision, at a time when Europe is strengthening its health agenda, under the German presidency of the European Union.

The World Health Summit has made us understand that the scientific world can help us make better decisions on global health. I call here for a global health policy that are based on the latest scientific knowledge, that can be shared and proved accurate by peer review.

We have been working—we nations, international organizations, foundations, and experts—to learn more about the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Health Organisation (WHO), as the leading organization in health, has played a key role, consolidating and providing epidemiological analysis for the world.

France has supported the WHO and is contributing, along with Germany, to multilateral reflections on strengthening and improving its

capacities to anticipate and react to crises. The WHO is the only world organization capable of carrying out this mission; it is crucial that we reinforce it for the future, as a new emerging virus might affect the human population. France has stepped up its support to WHO, and to the WHO Academy, which is essential to provide training resources worldwide, particularly in times of crisis.

The multilateral response to the Covid-19 crisis was unprecedented. In March, world leaders gave a mandate to WHO to coordinate the response, and within weeks the Access to Covid-19 tools accelerator (ACT-A) was launched. France, Germany, the European Union, as well as many other States and donors were at the heart of this initiative and endowed it with significant resources. ACT-A is a novel approach, led by a consortium of international health actors, WHO, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the GAVI Vaccine Alliance, Unitaïd and the World Bank have pooled their resources to find practical solutions to provide the world with diagnostics, treatments and vac-

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cines and to increase the capacity to distribute products worldwide. Much has been done and more is to come.

Once the vaccine is found, it will be a global public good. That means that it will have to be proved safe and efficient according to scientific and regulating authorities, accessible to all who need it, in all countries. It must be equitably distributed around the world on ethical principles, prioritising vulnerable populations and health workers.

France is also very keen to highlight the interaction between human, animal and planetary health. Science will provide us with clear ways. The Covid-19 crisis has been a revealing event and harbinger of a new world, as we have witnessed the direct effects of bio-

diversity on human health. Our generation needs to protect those who are ahead of us and those who follow us.

Together with our closest partners, such as Germany, France is keen to bring the “One Health” agenda to the fore, promoting further integration of sustainable development goals cross sectorial scientific knowledge.

This year, in which global health has been at the forefront of our priorities, has confirmed the analyses we have been making for a long time: the social determinants of disease are of great importance and women and vulnerable populations are the first and hardest hit.

As the global public health community, we must safeguard the

health of all people without leaving anyone behind. Women’s health will be an area for action supported by France in view the Generation Equality Forum in 2021.

I hope this 12th session of the World Health Summit year will be as thought provoking as the previous session and even more, considering the extraordinary challenges of the time.



Emmanuel Macron

President of the Republic of France

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This twelfth edition of the World Health Summit is anything but business as usual. With all continents hit by COVID-19 in 2020, this World Health Summit is the first one since the World Health Organization has characterized this virus as a pandemic.

From all over the world, health experts and leaders are gathering this year again in Berlin to draw the lessons and consequences of this pandemic. There is so much to be learnt and shared.

First, this pandemic has reminded us that health truly is multidimensional: a new virus, which no one had heard of this time last year, created a butterfly effect of vast outreaching health challenges spanning the globe. It required the coming together of many scientists, researchers, and medical profes-

sionals amongst many others to work around the clock to understand the virus, its progression to cause disease, and to develop vaccines and therapeutics. But also to inform health policies and guidance for our citizens, economies and societies.

The EU invested €459 million in grants for 103 new research projects, and by the end of 2020, the EU will invest €1 billion into research and innovation to tackle COVID-19. We are investing heavily in research and innovation but also in our Vaccines Strategy to boost production capacity of companies who will supply vaccines for both EU and non-EU countries.

Second, we need to be collectively much better prepared for future health challenges. We do not want to experience again shortages of personal protective equipment, intensive care units overflowing, and healthcare professionals struggling to cope with the excessive demands. Global challenges associated with the climate, trade and health will continue to bring new and emerging global health challenges. The EU is ready to step up

and take more responsibility in the health sector.

The third lesson is that when viruses go global, we need immediate global action to bring global solutions. Some very positive strides are being made: we raised nearly €16 billion under the Coronavirus Global Response through a global call for action. No country in the world, no Union is large and strong enough to address these challenges on their own. This is why the position of the European Commission is clear: we want to promote multilateral cooperation and improve and reform the World Health Organization to make it ready to face the health challenges of the twenty-first century, for the benefit of everyone on every continent.

We have all felt the impact of this pandemic in some form, and we can and we are coming together to overcome this terrible disease. I wish each of you a healthy summit as well as an inspiring learning experience.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Ursula von der Leyen'.

Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

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The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted our world. The manner in which we conduct ourselves during this crisis, whether we learn lessons from it, and how we chose to build back better, is up to us.

Since the novel coronavirus took hold more than nine months ago, lives and livelihoods have been lost and economies and societies have been upended. The pandemic has exposed and exploited our political fault lines and inequalities, and the gaps in our health systems. The impacts go far beyond the suffering caused by the virus itself, with major disruptions to services for global hunger, immunization, noncommunicable diseases, family planning and more.

It has never been clearer that health is a political and economic choice. In the past 20 years, countries have invested heavily in preparing for terrorist attacks, but relatively little in preparing for the attack of a virus—which, as the pandemic has proven, can be far more deadly, disruptive, and costly.

Thanks to advances in biology, science and technology, we have been able to greatly accelerate the research and development for vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics for COVID-19. No disease in history has benefited from such rapid research.

But the greatest challenge we face now is not scientific or technical. We face a test of our character. Can countries come together in solidarity to share the fruits of research? Or will misguided nationalism hobble our response?

In April, WHO, the European Commission and multiple other partners launched The Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator, to

catalyse the development and equitable distribution of vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics.

Yet, even as we marshal our forces to bring this pandemic to an end, we must also work with equal urgency to strengthen our health systems and public health infrastructure so that the world is never again blindsided by a health emergency. A strong health system is a resilient health system.

The lessons so far are clear.

The first is that health is not a luxury item for those who can afford it; it is a necessity, a human right and the foundation of social, economic and political stability. The second is that there has never been a greater need for global cooperation and to confront a global threat. A coherent international response is key.

And the third is that the time to prepare for emergencies is before they occur. COVID-19 has demonstrated that the world was not

prepared. Even some of the most advanced societies and economies have been overwhelmed. While many countries put enormous resources into sophisticated medical care, too many also neglect their basic public health systems. We are paying the price for that now.

Investments in disease surveillance and monitoring, health promotion, water, sanitation and hygiene, educating and empowering communities and building a strong health workforce are essential for building resilient public health systems.

The absence of any one of these leaves communities vulnerable and undermines the timely response necessary to contain outbreaks.

Some countries are already showing the way. The German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, has announced that Germany will invest €4 billion by 2026 to strengthen its public health system.

Ultimately, the best defence against the impact of outbreaks

and other health emergencies is a strong health system, built on primary health care with an emphasis on promoting health and preventing disease.

That's why WHO's top three priorities are healthier populations, universal health coverage and health security.

This will not be the last pandemic or global health emergency we will face. When the next one comes, the world must be ready. Part of every country's commitment to build back better must therefore be to public health, as an investment in a healthier and safer future.

My best wishes for a productive and inspiring Summit.



Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director-General of the
World Health Organization (WHO)