



# WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the Global Youth Summit

23 April 2021



Good morning, good afternoon and good evening to everyone joining us from all over the world for this Global Youth Summit.

I would particularly like to thank the “Big Six” youth movements who have joined WHO to make this possible: the World Organization of the Scout Movement; the YMCA; the YWCA; the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts; the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; and The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award.

And I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the passing of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, with deep appreciation for the legacy he has left, especially for young people.

I would also like to thank the UN Foundation for its support through the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for this exciting global movement to mobilize and empower young people around the world to be a driving force in the COVID-19 recovery.

Young people may be at lower risk of severe disease from COVID-19, but have been affected in many other ways, from disruptions in education, loss of employment opportunities, mental health challenges and increased domestic and gender-based violence.

Over the next three days, young people, leaders, policymakers and changemakers will come together to discuss the challenges facing young people all over the world.

This is the time to share your stories, your experiences, your ideas and aspirations, and to inspire and motivate other young people to take an active part in the COVID-19 pandemic recovery with their communities and beyond.

But we don't just want to hear your ideas. We want to see them come to life.

That's why we have launched the Global Youth Mobilization, through which young people around the world can apply for grants of between 500 and 5000 US dollars, to support innovative local solutions to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is just one way WHO is fostering meaningful and sustained youth engagement.

We also developed the Global Health Workforce Youth Hub and have done youth outreach in areas such as nutrition and non-communicable diseases.

And in December, we created the WHO Youth Council, to provide a platform for young people to give advice directly to our leadership on health and development issues. We will be inviting applications shortly.

Thank you to all of you for participating in this Youth Summit, for engaging with the Global Youth Mobilization to bring your crazy and innovative ideas to life. Often it can feel that we are powerless to change the world. But your projects, your voices and your choices can make a real difference.

I wish you all a very successful Summit.

**Subscribe to the WHO newsletter →**