



# WHS News

NEWSLETTER 08/2025:

## Final Preparations for WHS 2025

Dear Global Health Community, dear World Health Summit Community, In just six weeks, we will open the doors to the WHS 2025. This year's leitmotif "Taking Responsibility for Health in a Fragmenting World" highlights the need to continue international cooperation and discussion across borders and sectors to make the world a healthier place and sustain progress of the past decades. Behind the scenes, our team is working intensively with partners around the world. We will welcome over 4,000 participants and 400 speakers on-site. In more than 70 sessions, we will zoom in on the most pressing issues in global health today. Topics will range from transforming global health architecture, artificial intelligence and noncommunicable diseases to peace, climate change, and women's health. Now, much of our work is focused on final preparations for the WHS 2025 in Berlin: coordinating with speakers, fine-tuning the schedule, and ensuring that the setting at the new venue fosters the exchange of ideas and solutions. I am especially looking forward to reconnect with valued friends, to get to know inspiring new talents, and to exchange ideas with the members of the WHS Academic Alliance. Their continued engagement reinforces our commitment to the translation of scientific insights into policy. The energy and commitment I see in these preparations remind me why the World Health Summit has become the leading global platform for health, catalyzing cross-sectoral solutions to improve health worldwide. We look forward to welcoming many of you in Berlin and online. Stay safe, stay healthy

Axel R. Pries  
President, World Health Summit



## In this Newsletter:

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### Meet the speakers of two keynote sessions

As #WHS2025 draws closer, so does the anticipation for this year's keynote sessions. The World Health Summit is the leading global platform bringing together science, politics, civil society, and the private sector to catalyze collaborative and innovative solutions for key health priorities.

This year's program highlights how peace, global health evidence, and policy are deeply interconnected. Two keynote sessions will place these issues at the forefront: exploring how health can serve as a bridge for peace in times of crisis, offering a comprehensive assessment to guide decisions and strengthen health systems, and presenting the Global Burden of Disease Study 2023.



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#### Peace and Health

Building Bridges for Global Stability and Well-being



**Ilona Kickbusch**  
Graduate Institute of  
International and  
Development Studies  
Founding Director  
Moderation



**Inger Ashing**  
Save the Children  
International  
CEO



**Viktor Lashko**  
Minister of Health  
Ukraine



**Helen Clark**  
Alliance for Health  
Policy and Systems  
Research  
Chair of the Board



**Tedros Adhanom  
Ghebreyesus**  
WHO  
Director-General

#WHS2025

Peace and health are linked but in many parts of the world, health systems remain targets in times of conflict. This keynote session, *Peace and Health: Building Bridges for Global Stability and Well-being*, co-hosted by the World Health Organization will examine how violence disrupts access to care, weakens infrastructure, and fuels long-term instability. Speakers will explore how strong, equitable health systems can foster resilience, justice, and lasting peace.



## Launch of the Global Burden of Disease Study 2023



**Jane Halton**  
CEPI  
Chair  
Moderation



**Richard Horton**  
The Lancet  
Editor-in-Chief



**Christopher Murray**  
IHME  
Director



**Alarcos Cleza**  
WHO  
Department of Vision,  
Hearing, Rehabilitation,  
and Disability  
Unit Head



**Ibrahim Abubakar**  
UCL  
Faculty of Population  
Health Sciences  
Dean



**Ximena Aguilera**  
Minister of Health  
Chile



**Zulfiqar A. Bhutta**  
Aga Khan University  
Centre of Excellence in  
Women and Child Health  
Founding Director



**Damian Santomauro**  
QCMHR  
Stream Lead



**Michael Brauer**  
UBC  
School of Population  
and Public Health  
Professor



**Emmanuela Gakidou**  
IHME  
Co-Founder

The Global Burden of Disease Study 2023 presents a post-pandemic overview of global health, showing both recovery and remaining vulnerabilities. While life expectancy is rebounding, inequalities persist and the growing weight of non-communicable diseases poses new challenges. This session co-hosted by *the Lancet* and *the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME)*, will launch the *Global Burden of Disease Study 2023*, creating a basis for evidence-driven dialogue on strengthening health systems and advancing sustainable progress toward 2030 and beyond.

[Explore the full program](#)

## A Commentary by Ilona Kickbusch

Three key issues to be tackled in global health:  
Institutional fragility, weakened solidarity and lack of  
systemic action

Hardly anything is more difficult than setting global health priorities and deciding which are the most important issues to focus on. In global health we often end up thinking in terms of disease or population groups that need attention but that leads to a neglect of the systemic and structural issues which need to be tackled. So let me take a stab at 3 issues that need to be addressed urgently – but with an understanding that they cannot be solved overnight. The first is the **institutional fragility of international health organizations**, starting with the budget crisis at the World Health Organisation, which is confronting a 20% cut in funding for 2026–2027. The restructuring of the work of the organization raises concerns about the WHO's capacity to lead effectively in times when multilateralism is out of favor and new challenges loom.



## Community News

### Strategic Pathways for Health Cooperation in the Global South

A new commentary, shaped by discussions at the WHS Regional Meeting 2025 in New Delhi, has just been published. This publication reflects the impact of the WHS Regional Meetings, where regional voices drive global dialogue and shape the future of multilateralism.



It outlines five strategic pathways for reimagining health cooperation in the Global South:

- Prioritizing health in non-health multilateral forums such as the G20, ASEAN, and BRICS
- Strengthening South-South cooperation by sharing innovations and building collective capacity
- Moving beyond traditional donor-recipient models with innovative co-investment financing
- Leveraging the demographic dividend to expand markets
- Reinforcing domestic health systems

The conversation will continue at the WHS 2025 in Berlin on October 12–14.



## Save the Dates

### Scientists Responsibility Summit

Arriving in Berlin ahead of the WHS 2025? Start your stay with the Scientists Responsibility Summit on Oct. 11, 2025 at the Centre Marc Bloch in Berlin. Under the theme "The Duty to Act: The Scientist's Role in a Collapsing World", the summit brings together an international, multidisciplinary audience to discuss the responsibilities of academics in times of ecological crisis, geopolitical instability, and rising authoritarian tendencies.

[More information](#)



World Health Summit  
Oct. 12-14, 2025  
Berlin, Germany

[Read more](#)



WHS Regional Meeting  
Apr. 25-27, 2026  
Nairobi, Kenya

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