

## Speech: Keeping Health on the Global Agenda

My friend Dr Tedros,

Distinguished colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the 9th Annual Health 20 Summit, and thank you to the Director General and his staff for hosting us again at the WHO.

Dear Friends, We know that health is not always guaranteed a place at the top of the G7 or the G20 agenda. Indeed, global health only made its first appearance at the G20 in 2017 - thanks to Angela Merkel.

However, When Public Health slips down the list of priorities, the health community must respond—strategically, decisively, and collectively—to ensure it regains the attention it deserves.

First, we must always avoid framing health as a standalone issue, it is a force multiplier.

Our mantra is that health underpins economic resilience, social stability, and national security. It is integral to our response to climate change, to the functioning of our economies, and to the protection of our most vulnerable.

We must never tire of reminding the powerful, that if we do not invest in health, we pay for it elsewhere—in lost productivity, in social unrest, and in preventable deaths.

Second, advocacy matters. In this partnership, we engage in high level quiet diplomacy behind the scenes, working with Sherpas, ministers, and task forces.

But we also have to take to the global stage—through research, media, and high-level champions—to remind leaders that health Investments are not a cost, but a catalyst.

When health is overlooked, we respond with the voices of those on the frontlines, supported with data and with economic arguments.

The two reports, for example, we launch at this Summit today and tomorrow are specifically designed to help in that response - and I want to thank all of you who have contributed to the Global Legislators Report on NCDs and on the health taxonomy - this is excellent and compelling evidence-based work.

Third, we build coalitions. The health community cannot act alone. We must work harder to deepen our partnerships with economists, climate scientists, development banks, and civil society to form a unified front.

We convene shadow forums, release alternative communiqués, and create parallel platforms—such as the G7 and G20 Health and Development Partnership—to keep the pressure on and the conversation going.

And we Constantly stay alert to political windows—using crises not to generate fear - but to generate momentum.

The pandemic taught us that when health systems fail, everything else falters. We must carry that lesson forward, not just in emergencies, but in how we design annual budgets, policies, and of course global cooperation.

In short: when health slips off the agenda, we don't accept it—we adapt. We reframe, we advocate, we build alliances, and we keep going. Because the cost of silence is too high, and the return on investing in health is too great to ignore.

Finally, I look forward to two days of concrete productive discussion, concluding with a compelling call to action that will strengthen the work of this coalition in speaking to heads of government in the weeks and months ahead.

Thank you so much for being part of this initiative.

I would now like to ask our Executive Director Hatice Beton to make her introductory remarks and to introduce Dr Tedros