

WELCOME MESSAGE WHS PRESIDENTS



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Dear Friends, Dear Colleagues,

When looking back on the year 2014, many people will remember the wonderful World Cup of Soccer in Brazil, which united people from all over the world for the pure joy of football and shared good times. Media attention was higher than ever for a sports event, for which we should be thankful. Yet more important than world champions are the millions of young people all around the globe who play soccer on the streets, in stadiums and as members of sports clubs. They are learning fair play, tolerance and are thus becoming active members of a civil society which promotes health through physical activity.

Nothing better can happen for health and the prevention of disease than people joyfully transcending national, socioeconomic, and ethnic borders in the name of sports. But the World Cup in Brazil also heightened awareness for the many health-related issues that threaten societies worldwide: climate change, aging societies and rapidly increasing urbanization.

The issue of climate change and health is a top priority at the World Health Summit 2014. Academia and the health community have to address the dire consequences that this will inevitably have on health. Through the demographic changes that accompany climate change and a rising global population, our existing health systems are doomed to collapse within the foreseeable future. We cannot simply continue along the beaten path but have to work to change existing systems as long as this is still possible.

This is especially true for the health of people living in urban areas. The world has seen the development of over 20 megacities, and they continue to spawn very poor urban areas that have engendered the rise of unhealthy lifestyles. How do we guarantee universal access to health and change unhealthy lifestyles in overpopulated areas? How do we cope with demographic change? How do we improve education throughout the world, particularly in professions related to health? These questions stand at the heart of this year's World Health Summit.

In 2014 Brazil hosted not only the World Cup but also the World Health Summit Regional Meeting Latin America, organized by Faculdade de Medicina da USP, held in April in São Paulo. This meeting evoked many of the topics that will now be pursued at the World Health Summit 2014 in Berlin. They stimulate a clear call for timely and global action. The World Health Summit acknowledges this demand, and we are happy to provide a forum and framework through which these challenges can be addressed on a global scale. Plans are already ongoing to get ready for the next World Health Summit Regional Meeting in Kyoto, Japan, April 13 - 14, 2015.

The World Health Summit in Berlin 2014 unites participants from about 90 countries and all health sectors, representing a unique wealth of expertise. Only a global collaboration that unites academia, the private sector, politics and civil society can provide the key to solving the problems of health and health systems today and tomorrow: Together we can develop realistic solutions. Together we can initiate an overdue process of change. Together we can make the world a healthier place.

As Presidents of the World Health Summit, it is our great pleasure to cordially welcome you all to the 6th World Health Summit, October 19-22, 2014 in Berlin. We wish you a pleasant and fruitful time and hope that you will leave with a feeling of having accomplished something meaningful in our efforts to improve health worldwide.



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WHS President 2014



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