

African Region

**REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA**

**ORIGINAL: FRENCH**

Seventy-fourth session

Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, 26–30 August 2024

**ADDRESS BY HONOURABLE GILBERT MOKOKI, MINISTER OF HEALTH AND  
POPULATION, CHAIRPERSON OF THE SEVENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE WHO  
REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA, AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE  
SEVENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE**

Your Excellency, President of the Republic, Head of State,  
Honourable President of the Senate,  
Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly,  
Right Honourable Prime Minister, Head of Government;  
Honourable Members of Government,  
Honourable Ministers of Health of Member States of the WHO African Region,  
Dear Colleagues,  
Director-General of WHO,  
WHO Regional Director for Africa,  
Dear Delegates to the Seventy-fourth session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa,  
Dear partners,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the WHO-Government Joint Commission and on my own behalf, I hasten to discharge a pleasant duty, Your Excellency, President of the Republic, Head of State; that of respectfully welcoming you here among us in person, on the occasion of the Seventy-fourth session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa.

Your presence sends a strong message, and attests to your high sense of State responsibility, and particularly your political will to make health a priority for States in Africa and everywhere.

Please accept, in these fast-moving times, and right here and now, our heartfelt gratitude for your steadfast commitment to the health of each and every one of us, which is the universal cause of humanity.

On the strength of that goodwill, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all delegates to this session of the Regional Committee, and to wish you a pleasant and enjoyable stay on the right bank of the majestic Congo River.

You are indeed in Brazzaville the Green City that hosts the magnificent WHO Regional Office for Africa, a beautiful campus that is at one with the universe and is celebrated by the rustling waters of the Djoué River and the soothing foam of the Congo River, a testament to the eternity of life.

It is this place steeped in history that welcomes you with its legendary hospitality at the service of great scientific and medical progress on sleeping sickness, envenoming, rabies, yellow fever, pox and urban malaria. I think of the creation here in Brazzaville in 1908 of the Institut Pasteur, a centre of the history of health in Africa.

On the basis of its progress in public health, Brazzaville can legitimately question the implementation of the main resolutions of the Seventy-third session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa.

It also affords Member States of the African Region the opportunity to reflect on the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly. I believe that every Member State should be concerned with the sustainable financing of programmes in support of the Fourteenth General Programme of Work 2025–2028, to meet the growing demand to improve the well-being of our populations and citizens.

Through me, the Republic of Congo would like to announce that its contribution will increase by 50%. This increase is a sovereign decision taken by His Excellency, the President of the Republic, Head of State. Once again, we would like to thank him heartily for that decision.

Your Excellency, President of the Republic, Head of State,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In addition to the Ebola epidemic and the COVID-19 pandemic that have triggered global health crises with tragic human and socioeconomic consequences, Africa is currently facing a new public health emergency, namely mpox.

With COVID-19, we noticed a weakening of our performance in terms of care for patients.

However, this crisis has also strengthened the resilience of our health systems, as attested by the encouraging gains made by Member States of the WHO African Region, thanks to the decisive involvement of all our Heads of State.

On behalf of the Ministers of Health of Member States of the WHO African Region, I would like to express our heartfelt appreciation for their high level of responsibility towards the future.

We also commend the leadership of the WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, and Dr Matshidiso Moeti, the WHO Regional Director for Africa, whose enlightened direction guides our Member States.

Honourable Ministers of Health of Member States of the WHO African Region,

This session, which is placed under the theme "All for health, health for all", boldly invites us to :

First: Learn from all the outbreaks and disasters we have endured ;

Second: Take account of climate-related health challenges, armed conflicts that still persist in some African subregions and the ongoing demographic explosion, which compounds the vulnerabilities faced by mothers and children, and peri-urban populations in our megacities and rural areas;

Third: reaffirm with greater conviction and determination the challenges of universal health coverage and primary health care.

Your Excellency, President of the Republic, Head of State,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would be remiss to conclude my speech without paying resounding tribute to all those who, at every level, worked to bring this event to fruition, thanks to their availability and proven skills.

So, from the steadfast commitment of our Heads of State to the renewed competence of our health care managers and workers, I personally conclude that the physical and mental health of each and every one of us is our greatest asset, or to put it differently, the main resource that underpins the future of humanity.

I thank you.