



**World Health
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR **Africa**

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REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

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Seventy-first session

Virtual session, 24–26 August 2021

**WORD OF WELCOME BY PROFESSOR (MR) MIJIYAWA MOUSTAFA,
MINISTER OF HEALTH AND PUBLIC HYGIENE AND UNIVERSAL ACCESS
TO HEALTH CARE OF TOGO**

Right Honourable Prime Minister, representing His Excellency the President of the Republic,
Director-General of WHO,
WHO Regional Director for Africa,
Director, Health and Humanitarian Affairs of the African Union Commission,
Honourable Minister of Health of the Republic of Benin, First Vice-Chairperson of the Seventieth
session of the Regional Committee, and Acting Chairperson,
Fellow Ministers of Health,
Distinguished Guests,

I sincerely thank you for attending this opening ceremony of the Seventy-first session of the WHO Regional Committee, which Togo is pleased to host. Words are not enough to express the full extent of the joy I feel in wishing you a warm welcome to this land of Togo, a link in the great chain of the continent we all share.

The ongoing pandemic justifies the choice of the virtual format for this session, which Togo hopes to host in a face-to-face setting once this turbulent period is behind us, in accordance with the decision taken in Brazzaville two years ago designating Togo as the host of this session.

Right Honourable Prime Minister,

Your presence at this ceremony and the arrangements made for the hosting of this session by the Government that you head with foresight and tact, on the instructions of the Head of State, reflect his political vision which gives pride of place to the social sectors, in particular the health sector. His constant concern to ensure the well-being of all, particularly the most vulnerable segments of our population, has led, among other things, to the creation of a separate ministry responsible for universal access to health care. The ultimate goal is to build a robust and resilient health system that addresses both common and potentially epidemic diseases. Likewise, efforts have been made to mount a response that is commensurate with the scale of the current pandemic, both in terms of prevention and treatment of the sick, and to relieve the pressure on the population by cushioning its socioeconomic impact.

Director-General of WHO CEO,
WHO Regional Director for Africa,

Togo sincerely thanks your institution for its multifaceted technical support, both in the daily management by the Ministry of Health of communicable and noncommunicable diseases, and the

management of crisis situations caused by outbreaks. Togo is also pleased to host the public health training school for middle-level managers set up under the aegis of your prestigious institution and whose training programme, on the instructions of the Head of State, has been raised to the undergraduate level by a joint order of the Ministries of Health and Higher Education, thereby integrating it within the Faculty of Health Sciences, in line with the higher education reform.

Director-General of WHO,
WHO Regional Director for Africa,
Director, Health and Humanitarian Affairs of the African Union Commission,
Distinguished Guests,

I would be remiss to conclude my remarks without expressing my warm congratulations and sincere thanks to my sister Jacqueline Mikolo of Congo, and my brother Benjamin Hounkpatin of Benin, on successfully steering our regional institution over the last two years. We will learn all the lessons from your memorable term of office and we count on your availability for the daily transmission of the related lessons.

Thank you for your kind attention.