

**Opening remarks  
Member State briefing on COVID-19  
WHO HQ, Geneva, Switzerland  
28 May 2020**

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, dear colleagues and friends,

Thank you for joining us for today's briefing. I'd like to especially welcome Dr Harsh Vardhan, the Chair of the Executive Board, who has also joined us.

Today we'll be hearing about the experiences and lessons learned fighting COVID-19 from ministers and senior experts from Member States: Mongolia, Nepal, Bahrain, Hungary and Barbados, and I would like to thank all these countries presenting today, the Ministers for agreeing to present and sharing their experience.

WHO is continuing to support Member States with the evidence-based technical guidance you need to protect your people.

Just in the past week, we have published the following documents:

Updated guidance on clinical management of patients with COVID-19;

Operational planning guidelines to support country preparedness and response;

A monitoring and evaluation framework;

A scientific brief on smoking and COVID-19;

A protocol for conducting age-stratified seroepidemiological investigations;

And a protocol for the assessment of risk factors for COVID-19 in health workers.

We urge all Member States to read and implement this guidance, and we are committed to working with you through our Regional and Country Offices to adapt it to your unique circumstances.

Yesterday, we had the pleasure of launching the WHO Foundation.

This is a historic moment for WHO, as part of our ongoing transformation.

The WHO Foundation is the fourth piece of our resource mobilization, complementing our new resource mobilization strategy, the first WHO investment case and the first WHO Partners Forum.

The WHO Foundation has been created as a way to generate funding from sources we have not tapped before, including the private sector, major donors and the general public.

Until now, WHO has been one of the few international organizations that has not received donations from the general public.

By broadening our donor base, we can generate funding that is both more predictable and more flexible, which is critical for WHO to fulfil its mission and mandate.

The establishment of the WHO Foundation comes after two years of hard work, when we started the formal consultation with you and other stakeholders in February 2018.

And it builds on the success of the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund, which has provided powerful proof of concept for the WHO Foundation.

In just two-and-a-half months, the Solidarity Response Fund has raised more than US\$214 million from more than 400,000 individuals and companies.

These funds have been used to buy lab diagnostics, personal protective equipment, and to fund research and development, including for vaccines.

The Solidarity Response Fund will continue to receive donations to support WHO's work on COVID-19, while the WHO Foundation will help to fund all elements of WHO's work and be fully aligned with our priorities.

And I would like to use this opportunity to thank all Member States for your inputs and guidance that led to the establishment of the WHO Foundation.

Finally, I would like to end by again thanking the Ministers who are joining us today to present their experience, and we really appreciate that they have taken their time, and we hope we will get lessons from their experience that can be applied in other countries.

So thank you so much, Tim, and back to you.