

Video message
**“Active citizens and multisectoral collaboration: key success factors
in the fight against health crisis”**

By Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

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Excellencies, dear colleagues and friends,

Thank you for the opportunity of addressing you today.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted our health systems, societies and economies.

It has thrived amid the gaps in our health systems and the inequities in our societies.

In any emergency, trust between communities and public institutions is critical.

Testing, contact tracing, quarantine, physical distancing and hygiene measures are only effective if communities are engaged and empowered to protect themselves and others.

But trust must be earned, through an open, participatory governance process and a record of delivering consistent, reliable public health services.

Thailand’s National Health Assembly is a powerful example of the importance of participatory governance mechanisms and whole-of-society approaches to public health, as WHO has advocated for and glad that we have the same position.

Engaging communities in co-creating health systems is essential for advancing towards universal health coverage and strengthening health security that Thailand’s strongly committed too.

Thailand’s approach is an example of how using a whole-of-government, whole-of-society, comprehensive approach, can contain the spread of COVID-19.

The Thai National Health Assembly is showcased in WHO’s upcoming Handbook on Social Participation for Universal Health Coverage, which was developed with input from many of the experts at the National Health Commission Office. We do this because you do the right thing. And we are proud of Thailand for that.

WHO is supporting Member States on the inclusion of civil society and communities in national-level health planning and in fostering dialogue around the COVID-19 response.

We are also providing catalytic funding to civil society and youth initiatives, supported by governments, so that the most vulnerable can be reached with health messages and services.

Meaningful engagement of civil society is paramount to achieving our shared goal of making sure that people everywhere have access to affordable health care and are protected from health crises.

Once again, I would like to tell you that I, WHO are proud of the Word that Thailand has managed COVID-19 pandemic. You are a good model. Of course, I know that you are modest and you are not bragging about it.

I wish you a productive conference.

I thank you.