

**Opening plenary:****Biographies of keynote speakers**

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**Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus was elected WHO Director-General for a five-year term by WHO Member States at the Seventieth World Health Assembly in May 2017.

Born in the Eritrean city of Asmara, Dr Tedros graduated from the University of Asmara with a Bachelor of Biology, before earning a Master of Science (MSc) in Immunology of Infectious Diseases from the University of London, a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) in Community Health from the University of Nottingham and an Honorary Fellowship from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Following his studies, Dr Tedros returned to Ethiopia to support the delivery of health services, first working as a field-level malariologist, before heading a regional health service and later serving in Ethiopia's federal government for over a decade as Minister of Health and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Prior to his election as Director-General of WHO, Dr Tedros held many leadership positions in global health, including as Chair of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, Chair of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, and Co-chair of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Board. After taking office as WHO DG on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017, Dr Tedros initiated the most significant transformation in the Organization's history, which has generated a wide range of achievements.

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**Dr. Sylvie Briand**

Dr Sylvie Briand (MD, MPH, PhD) is the director of the Global Infectious Hazard Preparedness (GIH), WHO Emergency Preparedness (WPE) at the World Health Organization (WHO/WHE), HQ Geneva.

The Department of Global Infectious Hazard Preparedness (GIH) advances global efforts to prevent and control existing and emerging infectious diseases by increasing access to evidence-based interventions; fostering impactful innovation; and leveraging technical, operational and strategic partnerships. The scope of GIH includes COVID-19 but also other dangerous pathogens such as pandemic influenza, plague, Nipa, smallpox and other pox viruses, haemorrhagic fevers (Ebola, Lassa), and several arboviruses (Chikungunya, Dengue, Yellow fever and Zika virus).

Since 2001, Dr Briand has been actively involved in the detection, preparedness and response to global threats, leading the scientific and strategic component of the WHO response (avian and pandemic influenza, Ebola, Zika, plague, Yellow fever, cholera, MERS). Before joining WHO, Dr Briand worked as public health project director for different global health agencies in various geographic regions.

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**Dr. Alexandra Freeman**

Dr Alexandra Freeman spent 18 years making science documentaries, mostly for the BBC. Now she is Executive Director of the Winton Centre for Risk & Evidence Communication in Cambridge, which specialises in trying to produce informative - but not persuasive - information to help decision-makers.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the multidisciplinary team have been studying the effects of different kinds of public health messages and helping to communicate numbers such as the potential harms and benefits from vaccination.

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**Dr. Atila Iamarino**

Dr Atila Iamarino has a PhD in Microbiology from Universidade de São Paulo USP, Brazil and a postdoctoral fellow at USP and at Yale University.

He was the co-creator of ScienceBlogs Brasil, the Portuguese branch of the largest scientific blogs network. Today he is a science communicator on YouTube with millions of subscribers and viewers.

He gained notoriety in Brazil for communicating about the COVID-19 pandemic on social media.

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**Dr. Shamila Nair-Bedouelle**

Dr. Shamila Nair-Bedouelle, Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, UNESCO since April 2019. She has a long-standing career as a researcher (University of Cape Town, Institute Pasteur, MIT University Park in Boston, and the French National Institute for Medical Research), and in implementing international programmes for science for development (UN, UNESCO and European Commission).

As Director of the OzonAction at the United Nations Environment Programme, she was responsible for developing and implementing programmes for the Montreal Protocol, providing 148 developing countries with scientific and technical advice and implementing capacity building programmes for the phase out of ozone depleting chemicals. She launched the first global program for capacity building for women technicians.

Prior, Dr. Shamila Nair-Bedouelle was Programme Manager and responsible for the research for development and international cooperation with developing countries, specifically health research, in the European Commission. Thereafter, she coordinated science programmes in Africa for UNESCO in close collaboration with the African Union Ministerial Council for Science and managed the United Nations Cluster for Science and Technology in Africa.

Dr. Shamila Nair-Bedouelle holds a PhD in Life Sciences from the University of Cape-Town in South Africa, HDR (University of Paris V) and is a Member of the Academy of Sciences of South Africa.

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**Prof. Dr. K. “Vish” Viswanath**

Dr K. “Vish” Viswanath is Lee Kum Kee Professor of Health Communication in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health (HSPH) and in the McGraw-Patterson Center for Population Sciences at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute (DFCI). He is also the Faculty Director of the Health Communication Core of the Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center (DF/HCC). Other additional administrative and scientific leadership positions held by Dr. Viswanath include: Director of the Center for Translational Communication Science, DFCI/Harvard Chan; Director, Harvard Chan, India Research Center and Co-Director, Lee Kum Sheung Center for Health and Happiness, Harvard Chan. He is the founding Director of DF/HCC’s Enhancing Communications for Health Outcomes (ECHO) Laboratory.

Dr Viswanath’s work, drawing from literatures in communication science, social epidemiology, and social and health behaviour sciences, focuses on translational communication science to influence public health policy and practice. His primary research is in documenting the relationship between communication inequalities, poverty and health disparities, and knowledge translation to address health disparities. He has written more than 250 journal articles and book chapters concerning communication inequalities and health disparities, knowledge translation, public health communication campaigns, e-health and digital divide, public health preparedness and the delivery of health communication interventions to underserved populations. He has served and continuing to serve on several national committees including for the US Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Medicine.

In recognition of his academic and professional achievements, Dr. Viswanath received several awards.

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**Dr. Siouxsie Wiles**

Dr Siouxsie Wiles is an Associate Professor at the University of Auckland in New Zealand. She studied medical microbiology at the University of Edinburgh, followed by a PhD in microbiology at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology in Oxford and Edinburgh Napier University.

Dr Wiles has won numerous awards for both her science and her science communication. In 2019 she was appointed a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to microbiology and science communication. When the pandemic started, Dr Wiles joined forces with Spinoff cartoonist Toby Morris to make the science of COVID-19 clear and understandable.