

# ICYMI -- Department of Homeland Security Secretary, FEMA Administrator and U.S. Fire Administrator Address the World Fire Congress

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WASHINGTON -- Last week, FEMA and the U.S Fire Administration hosted delegates from more than 50 nations at the inaugural World Fire Congress in Washington, D.C. In accordance with the Biden-Harris Administration's efforts to reduce fire risk, address growing problem of wildfires, firefighter health and safety, the world's premier firefighting organizations and government officials came together to share best practices and work to enhance all nations' response capabilities. With climate change spurring bigger and stronger wildfires and other disasters across the globe, it is more important than ever to strategize ways to mitigate these threats.

"What you did here these past few days and the many advances to the work of firefighting and fire prevention that will grow from it in the years ahead, will save lives -- of first responders and of all those who depend on them," Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas said in his address to delegates. "[It] is a recognition of the obligation that we have to the world's firefighters: to be there for all of them, as they have been there for all of us. We are eager and very proud, to help facilitate collaboration among all of our countries and with our multilateral and non-governmental partners, through this new World Fire Congress."

"The world has watched as our ecosystem -- our shared home -- has been challenged at every turn," said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell as she opened the World Fire Congress. "And the reality is, we've never been more closely connected. A disaster in one nation can cause ripple effects across the globe. That's why this World Fire Congress is so important -- it's an opportunity to build upon these relationships and continue to share knowledge and best practices with one another."



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U.S. Fire Administrator Dr. Lori Moore-Merrell also addressed the participants. “We know that when emergencies or disasters strike, firefighters respond. Your responders are first on scene in often unexpected circumstances and unfamiliar surroundings. They are exposed to toxic chemicals or conditions that threaten their physical wellbeing and even their lives.” Dr. Moore-Merrell continued, “Although each of our nations have unique risk environments, our main challenges and immediate priorities are very similar.”

This historic event established a global fire service leadership network dedicated to supporting and strengthening fire services around the world and developing solutions to the shared problems we all face. This plan for international collaboration among fire services will be perpetuated through the [Statement of Founding Principles and Objectives](#). The Congress will take place every two years and the next one will be hosted by the United Kingdom Home Office and National Fire Chiefs Council in 2026.



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