

Seoul Declaration on AI in Healthcare for Responsible Innovation and Global Solidarity

We, the Ministry of Health and Welfare of the Republic of Korea, and the World Health Organization, carry forward the priorities consistently emphasized by the World Bio Summit: global health cooperation, research and development (R&D), workforce development, supply chain strengthening, and regulatory advancement. Building on the World Health Organization's guidance on Ethics and Governance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Health and the WHO guidance document on Regulatory considerations on AI for health, we propose today on 21 October 2026, on the occasion of the World Bio Summit, the Seoul Declaration on AI in Healthcare for Responsible Innovation and Global Solidarity.

We acknowledge that AI has the potential to transform disease prevention, diagnosis, and treatment; the development of new medicines, vaccines, medical devices, and healthcare services; rehabilitation and care; the operation of healthcare institutions; and public health emergency response. At the same time, we recognize that important evidence gaps remain regarding real-world performance, effects on population health outcomes and sustainability, and that readiness for adoption varies across countries and settings. AI has huge potential to complement the capabilities of health professionals and strengthen essential healthcare service delivery. We will promote the responsible scale-up of validated technologies, including robust protection of health data and equitable benefit-sharing. Furthermore, we aim to achieve healthcare innovation that benefits everyone in their daily lives by strengthening each country's capacity for healthcare self-reliance, enhancing access to effective and equitable services, reducing geographical inequalities and disparities in healthcare, and helping to protect human lives.

We affirm the responsibility to recognize risks associated with AI for health, including errors, bias, misrepresentation and privacy breaches, and to lead and support global efforts in mitigating negative effects and potential harms, including the risk of enhancing existing inequalities in healthcare. AI for health must be used within validated scopes of application and under conditions that mandate human oversight, and response procedures and lines of accountability must be clearly defined. Moreover, because AI for health directly affects human life and dignity, meaningful human accountability and oversight must be maintained throughout the lifecycle of AI systems, commensurate with their intended use and level of risk, so that the protection and well-being or interest of people remain paramount.

We recognize that all stakeholders must have opportunities to contribute to the development of AI for health, share in the benefits of innovation and, as appropriate, bear the risks and responsibilities, including governments, international organizations, health institutions and health professionals, patients and citizens, industry, the research community, and public-interest foundations. We pledge to assume responsibilities commensurate with our respective roles and capacities, strengthen global public health security through international cooperation, and advance person-centred care for patients.

Accordingly, we declare the following principles based on global solidarity and the following concrete implementation measures at the 2026 World Bio Summit, co-hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea and the World Health Organization, held in conjunction with the 49th World Hospital Congress of the International Hospital Federation (IHF).

1. Building Foundations for Technology, Industry, Data and Investment

We will support the responsible scale-up of AI for health that is aligned with health-system needs and priorities and has validated clinical effectiveness, safety and cost-effectiveness, and actively promote its equitable use in medically underserved areas and public health settings.

We will promote effective and equitable AI-driven innovation in the healthcare industry and expand collaborative R&D to address global health challenges. We acknowledge the important contribution of industry in translating validated and cost-effective innovations into improved health outcomes for individuals and populations.

We will strengthen the foundations for the governance, stewardship, linkage and responsible use of health data by improving data quality and supporting interoperable and secure digital public infrastructure. We will broaden equitable opportunities to access and use health data and AI for health, while encouraging transparency to prevent undue monopolization and dominance, and uphold the core principle of ensuring that benefits should accrue equitably to patients, healthcare institutions and society.

We will encourage R&D and infrastructure investment in AI for health, prioritizing unmet health needs, public value and long-term sustainability. We will strengthen the shared foundation for adopting future innovations and strengthen country ownership and sustainable local capacity through sustainable investment, including by encouraging and supporting technology transfer and local workforce development.

2. Responsible Use and Risk Management of AI for Health

We affirm that recognizing risks is a precondition for the use of AI for health. We will recommend the adoption of proportionate, risk-based governance throughout the AI lifecycle, from design and development through deployment, monitoring and decommissioning, assess the potential for error, bias and misuse, transparently disclose system limitations and residual risks, and carry out clinical validation proportionate to the level of risk.

We will promote the use of AI for health only within validated scopes of use and under conditions that allow human oversight, and build the capacity needed for assessment and oversight before deployment.

We affirm that final judgment in healthcare rests with humans and their decision-making processes. To this end, changes in performance after deployment must be continuously

monitored. We will make every effort to clarify where responsibility lies and how it is allocated, so that the causes of incidents can be determined and redress can be provided for resulting harm.

We will strengthen education, digital and AI literacy, and institutional capacity to enable health professionals, decision-makers and other relevant stakeholders to understand, assess and use AI safely and effectively. We call on all the relevant stakeholders to protect individual health professionals from bearing responsibility that arises from system defects, and to guarantee patients' right to be informed and make decisions regarding the use of AI.

3. Strengthening Global Cooperation and Health Security

We will advance international standards, regulatory harmonization, interoperability and appropriate approaches to joint assessment, while respecting national contexts in AI for health, and support the equitable participation of all countries, including low- and middle-income countries, in R&D and decision-making.

We call on all stakeholders to use water and energy resources efficiently to minimize the adverse environmental impacts of the development and operation of AI for health and strengthen international cooperation to address climate change and build sustainable healthcare systems.

Guided by evidence, we will promote responsible use of AI to strengthen resilient health systems and health security: detecting infectious diseases and public health emergencies early, forecasting disease spread and demand for healthcare resources, strengthening supply chain resilience and the cybersecurity of healthcare systems, ensuring continuity of essential health services, and developing joint international response mechanisms.

We will contribute to responsible assessment and management of the biosecurity risks that may arise from the convergence of AI and the life sciences, and to establishment of appropriate safeguards, and promote responsible R&D and information sharing based on international standards and practices.

We will convene and strengthen partnerships across the AI ecosystem bringing together governments, health professionals, technology developers, WHO collaborating centers and civil society.

4. Implementation and Follow-Up

We pledge to act on the basis of shared responsibility and solidarity, so that artificial intelligence contributes to upholding the dignity and improving the health of all people, and its benefits are shared equitably across countries, companies, regions, and socioeconomic groups.

We will translate these commitments into country-led, organization-led and context-appropriate action, supported by international cooperation, sustainable financing, capacity

building, knowledge exchange and shared learning, building on existing national digital health strategies and infrastructure wherever possible and in accordance with applicable mandates, laws and regulations.