



WORLD HEALTH INNOVATION FORUM

14-16 NOVEMBER 2023

On 14-16 November 2023 as India illuminated lamps for Diwali, the WHO Innovation Hub, in collaboration with the WHO Collaborating Centre — Kalam Institute of Health Technology and the Indian Council of Medical Research, ignited the flame of innovation among stakeholders from 80+ WHO member states. Key players in the innovation value chain right from academia, to startup accelerators to innovation funders and champions gathered on the shores of Vishakhapatnam in the Andhra Pradesh Medical Technology Zone (AMTZ) — one of the world's largest MedTech clusters.

The three-day global forum was one of a kind which convened public sector leaders to promote a more balanced and equity-driven innovation ecosystem and raise awareness about the opportunity for governments to integrate innovation at the core of their mission to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Notable among the 250+ attendees was the participation from H.E. Minister of Health of Ethiopia, H.E. Minister of Health of Malawi.



(Images 1 and 2: The Forum Stage and the WHO Flower Rangoli with earthen lamps at AMTZ as an ode to the Diwali tradition of the host country)

As well as participation from the Ministry of Health representatives, and government leaders including from UAE, Netherlands, India, Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, Finland, Israel, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, and Tanzania. They engaged in a government-to-government open conversation facilitated by Alain Labrique, WHO Director, Department of Digital Health & Innovation, on challenges to scaling proven innovations, & how to overcome them, learning from concrete country experiences.



(Image 3: Government Peer-to-Peer Exchange on moderated by Alain Labrique, Director, Department of Digital Health & Innovation at WHO)

The forum saw participation from innovation leaders from OECD, World Bank, International Finance Corporation (IFC), USAID and other notable organisations like Results for Development, Insight Health Advisors, Grand Challenges Canada, VillageReach, ExpandNet, as well as budding young women innovators from educational institutes and other start-ups that shared their innovation projects.

Other key participants included the WHO Representative in Uganda, WHO Offices in India and Kuwait, and the WHO HQ innovation leads from the PHC Special Programme and the NCD Lab, respectively.



(Image 4: Louise Agersnap, Head of the WHO Innovation Hub, and Alain Labrique, Director, Department of Digital Health & Innovation at WHO with H.E. Minister of Health of Malawi, Hon. Khumbize Chiponda lighting the earthen lamps)

The program was structured around the six stages of the Mountain Model, an evidence-based stepwise pathway for public sector scaling of innovation, developed by the International Development Innovation Alliance (IDIA), from identifying public sector demand to institutionalizing the innovation to address that demand.

In the margins of the rich programme, there were bilateral meetings conducted with Ministers of Health and other governments representatives to share the strategy and goals of the WHO Innovation Hub, and explore areas of collaboration.



(Image 5: WHO Team with H.E Dr AyeleTeshome Gonche, State Minister of Health, Ethiopia)

The Forum featured keynote speeches by prominent thought leaders in innovation, such as Mariana Mazzucato, (Chair of the WHO Council on the Economics of Health For All), Sandrine Dixson-Decleve (President of the Club of Rome), as well speeches from Christian Bason (Former leader of the Mind Lab of the Danish Government and CEO of the Danish Design Center), and Ben Kumpf (OECD, Public Sector Innovation).



(Image 6: Keynote Address by Mariana Mazzucato, Chair of the WHO Council on the Economics of Health for All)

On the first day of the Forum, Louise Agersnap, Head of the WHO Innovation Hub, launched a Global Call to Action for advancing public sector scale up of innovation, a normative publication with its concrete ‘asks’ aimed to inspire governments and their ecosystem partners globally to tackle health-related challenges and accelerate the achievement of the SDGs through health innovation.

Throughout the rich program, the WHO Innovation Hub organized and managed the physical ‘pop-up’ of its Eurêka Innovation space at the Forum. It provided a space for showcasing public sector-led innovation and engaging participants from all sectors. A notable innovation, among several others, that was showcased at Eurêka, was the Selfcare Wheel developed by the Sexual and Reproductive Health Department, and WHO

India Country Office and other WHO colleagues which also became a finalist in the WHO LEAD Innovation Challenge in 2023.



(Image 7: WHO Innovation Hub Eurêka pop-up featuring the Self Care Wheel)

Several important learnings emerged from the forum, including the potential for the public sector to drive a demand-driven innovation ecosystem that serves ‘Health for All’. There are many evidence-based health interventions, documented in WHO guidelines, that fail to achieve critical coverage. Many proven innovations exist to help translate these interventions into implementation. The public sector dimension of the innovation ecosystem is maturing, with many governments establishing innovation labs within ministries, collaborating horizontally with other ministries and stakeholders to adopt innovation to enhance health outcomes at scale. Such collaborations are critical for successful scaling of innovation and require an enabling environment, a mission-driven innovation process, capacities, and culture — aspects that are still challenging for most governments.

As noted by Dr Tedros Adhanom-Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General in his opening keynote...

“Innovation has always been the driving force of improvements in health. And yet many powerful innovations fail to reach the people who need them most. Courage and collaboration are needed to scale these solutions, breaking down barriers, to boost equity in health outcomes.”

Click [here](#) to access the closing ceremony video, which highlights key takeaways, impressions, and Dr Tedros’ keynote.

Click [here](#) to access the program agenda.

(Image 8: Dr Tedros Adhanom-Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization offering his greetings with a Namaste in the opening keynote.)

