



## From Crisis to Resilience: Innovating for Health

World Health Assembly 79 in Geneva – Side Event by the World Health Summit,  
May 20, 2026

**Location:** InterContinental Hotel, Chemin Du Petit Saconnex 7-9, 1209 Geneva

**Time:** 17:00 – 21:00

**Moderation:** Ilona Kickbusch (Co-Chair, WHS Council)

**Media partner:** Foreign Policy

**Agenda (as of May 6, 2026), Content is subject to changes**

17:00-17:15	<b>Arrival &amp; Welcome</b>
17:15-17:25	<b>Opening Remarks</b> <b>WHS 2026 – “From Crisis to Resilience: Innovating for Health”</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Welcome by Carsten Schicker (CEO, World Health Summit)</li><li>• Remarks by Antje Leendertse (Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations in Geneva)</li></ul>
<b>Keynote Address</b>	
17:25-17:30	<b>From Shock to Strength: Reimagining Health Resilience in an Age of Converging Crises</b> <b>Speaker:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. Hanan Balkhy (WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean)</li></ul> <p>The WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region sits at the intersection of the humanitarian, development, and peace agendas, one of the most demanding contexts for health resilience.</p>
<b>WSH Regional Meeting 2026 in Nairobi</b>	
17:30-17:40	<b>Special Address:</b> Hon. Aden Duale, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Health, Kenya (tbc)
<b>High-Level Discussions</b>	
17:40-19:00	<b>Innovation &amp; Implementation: Turning Crisis Lessons into Resilient Health Systems</b> <p>Health systems are under pressure like never before. Crises are converging — from pandemics and conflict to climate shocks and economic strain. Traditional responses are insufficient. Innovation — technological, social, operational, and policy — is critical, but <b>innovation alone is not enough:</b> it must be implemented effectively, scaled responsibly, and reach the most vulnerable. Critically, health resilience cannot be built by the health sector</p>

	<p>alone, it requires sustained awareness and coordinated responses across sectors, including finance, education, environment, and security.</p> <p>These discussions should explore <b>how different sectors, actors, and systems can contribute to building resilient health systems</b>, looking at both success stories and lessons learned.</p> <p><b>1. <u>Dialogue: Defining Resilience Beyond Crisis Response - Building Equity and Trust (30 min)</u></b></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Ximena Aguilera (Director, Health Observatory, Universidad Diego Portales, Santiago de Chile)</li> <li>• Prof. Jane Halton (Chair of the Board, CEPI)</li> <li>• James Nardella (President and Chief Program Officer, Last Mile Health)</li> <li>• <b>Moderator:</b> Allison Carlson (Executive Vice President, Foreign Policy)</li> </ul> <p>Followed by questions from the audience</p> <p><b>2. <u>Dialogue: Innovation in Implementation – Financing for Equity (20 min)</u></b></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Akihito Watabe (Health Specialist, Human and Social Development, Asian Development Bank)</li> <li>• Priya Basu (Executive Head, The Pandemic Fund)</li> <li>• <b>Moderator:</b> Andrew Sollinger (CEO &amp; Publisher, Foreign Policy)</li> </ul> <p>Followed by questions from the audience</p> <p><b>3. <u>Fireside Chat: AI for Health Systems Resilience – Ensuring AI Benefits for Vulnerable Populations (20 min)</u></b></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Jay Rajda (Physician Executive for Global Healthcare, AWS)</li> <li>• <b>Moderator:</b> Jocalyn Clark (International Editor, The BMJ)</li> </ul> <p>Followed by questions from the audience</p>
<b>Closing &amp; Outlook</b>	
19:00-19:10	<p><b>Closing – Outlook on WHS 2026 and Regional Meeting 2027</b></p> <p><b>Short Video by Hong Kong University on the WHS Regional Meeting 2027</b></p> <p>Closing remarks by Prof. Dr. Axel Pries (President, World Health Summit)</p>
<b>Reception</b>	



19:10-21:00	Reception
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