



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: Prof. Dr. Ilona Kickbusch (Co-Chair, WHS Council)

Media partner: Foreign Policy

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

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| 17:00-17:15 | Arrival & Welcome |
| 17:15-17:25 | <p>Opening Remarks WHS 2026 – “From Crisis to Resilience: Innovating for Health”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome by Carsten Schicker (CEO, World Health Summit) • Remarks by Antje Leendertse (Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations in Geneva) |
| Keynote Address | |
| 17:25-17:30 | <p>From Shock to Strength: Reimagining Health Resilience in an Age of Converging Crises</p> <p>Speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Hanan Balkhy (WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean) <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> |
| WSH Regional Meeting 2026 in Nairobi | |
| 17:30-17:40 | Special Address: Hon. Aden Duale, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Health, Kenya (tbc) |
| High-Level Discussions | |
| 17:40-19:00 | <p>Innovation & Implementation: Turning Crisis Lessons into Resilient Health Systems</p> <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 innovation alone is not enough: it must be implemented effectively, scaled responsibly, and reach the most vulnerable. Critically, health resilience cannot be built by the health sector</p> |

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



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| 19:10-21:00 | Reception |
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