

Health Diplomacy Futures

Capacity Building in the Global South

Tuesday, 30th September 2025 | 9:30 am - 5:00 pm IST

India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

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Concept Note

Background

The increasing complexity of global health governance amplified by pandemics, climate change, geopolitical tensions, and cross-border health threats has elevated the importance of health diplomacy. For the Global South, where the need for equitable access, regional cooperation, and sustainable health financing is urgent, there is a clear imperative to invest in institutional capacities and cultivate a cadre of professionals trained in health diplomacy.

India, with its leadership in global health initiatives (such as Co-WIN, Vaccine Maitri, DAKSHIN, and AYUSH), is uniquely positioned to catalyze this transformation. Building on its robust infrastructure and strategic geopolitical engagement, India can help define a context-specific, scalable framework for capacity-building in health diplomacy tailored to the Global South.

Purpose of the Meeting

The consultative meeting aims to initiate a structured, multi-stakeholder dialogue on building institutional and human capacity for health diplomacy. It seeks to co-develop a practice-oriented and context-sensitive curriculum in health diplomacy, aligned with the priorities of the Global South. It will serve as a foundational step to institutionalize health diplomacy as a core discipline in academic, policy, and governance settings.

Objectives

- Identify current gaps and opportunities in health diplomacy capacity in India
- Define core competencies required for health diplomats across sectors
- Explore institutional, academic, and inter-ministerial mechanisms to support engagement
- Co-design interdisciplinary training programs and scalable learning platforms
- Strategize sustainable financing models for health diplomacy, education, and research
- Foster multi-stakeholder partnerships and South-South collaboration

Expected Outcomes

- Draft roadmap for institutional development and interdisciplinary training
- Recommendations for a national curriculum/module on health diplomacy
- Actionable proposals for coordination mechanisms among key sectors
- Identification of potential funding and partnership models to sustain long-term capacity building

Participants

Representatives from academia, industry, INGOs, universities, donor agencies, philanthropic foundations, multilateral partners, and government ministries



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Agenda

9:30am – 10:00am	Registration
10:00am – 11:15am	Context Setting
10:00am – 10:10am	Welcome Address <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professor Sachin Kumar Sharma, Director General, RIS, India Dr Balvir Singh Tomar, Founder and Chancellor, NIMS University Rajasthan, India
10:10am – 10:55am	Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professor Gulshan Sachdeva, Chief Coordinator, DAKSHIN, RIS, India Dr Rakesh Gupta, Additional Secretary to the President of India Dr R Balasubramaniam, Member - Human Resources, Capacity Building Commission, Govt of India Dr Soumya Swaminathan, Chairperson, M S Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), Chennai, India (<i>Virtual</i>)
10:55am – 11:15am	Keynote Address Charting a Collective Path: Investing in the Future of Health Diplomacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr Angela Lusigi, UNDP Resident Representative, India
11:15am – 11:30am	Tea Break
11:30am – 12:15pm	PANEL – I Health Diplomacy as a Catalyst for Global South-South Solidarity
	Speakers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Aparna Ray Pai, Joint Secretary (Policy Planning & Research Division), Ministry of External Affairs, Govt of India Mr Dadang Hidayat, Minister Counselor, Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, New Delhi, India Ms Vinita Sethi, Independent Director, Former Lead Corporate Affairs, Apollo Hospitals; Past President - Public Affairs Forum of India (PAFI) Ms Archana Vyas, Director, Program Advocacy and Communications, Growth, Opportunity, and Empowerment, Gates Foundation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Lakshmy Ramakrishnan, Associate Fellow, Observer Research Foundation (ORF), New Delhi, India <p>Moderator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Gulshan Sachdeva, Chief Coordinator, DAKSHIN, RIS, India <p>Discussion Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health diplomacy and its importance for the Global South • Diplomatic, legal, and technical skills needed for health negotiators • Role of multisectoral collaboration (health, foreign affairs, trade)
12:15pm – 1:00pm	<p style="text-align: center;">PANEL – II Building Institutional and Human Capacity for Health Diplomacy</p>
	<p>Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Fuad, Education and Cultural Attaché, Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, New Delhi, India • Mr Srinivas Seshadri, Director - Strategy, Aastrika Foundation • Professor Neeta Inamdar, Dean, Faculty of Education, Jean Monnet Chair Professor, Symbiosis Centre for Higher Education Research and Policy Advocacy (SCHERPA), Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Pune, India • Ms Amrita Sadarangani, Senior Director and Head, Global Research Alliances, Ashoka University, Sonapat • Dr Anshul Chauhan, Medical Consultant, ICMR-National Institute for Research in Digital Health and Data Science (ICMR-NIRDHDS), New Delhi, India <p>Moderator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Sanjay Pattanshetty, Director of Public Health, NIMS University Rajasthan, India <p>Discussion Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training programs and curricula for health diplomacy • Developing interdisciplinary courses or modules (Health + IR + Law) • Role of universities, Federations, Development sector, National Associations, Regional cooperation, and learning platforms • Strategies for scaling up local expertise and institutional readiness • Diverse career pathways in health diplomacy
1:00pm – 2:00pm	Lunch
2:00pm – 2:45pm	<p style="text-align: center;">PANEL – III Leveraging Multilateral Platforms for Building Capacity in Health Diplomacy</p>
	<p>Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Catharina Boehme, Officer-in-Charge, World Health Organization South-East Asia Regional Office (WHO SEARO) • Dr Vivek Virendra Singh, Chief Health a.i, UNICEF, New Delhi • Mr Abhimanyu Saxena, Head, Health Systems Strengthening, UNDP India • Mr Oommen C. Kurian, Senior Fellow, Head of the Health Initiative at the Inclusive Growth and SDGs Programme, Observer Research Foundation (ORF), New Delhi, India • Dr Sonalini Khetrapal, Team Lead, Health Sector (India), Human and Social Development Sector Office, Asian Development Bank <p>Moderator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Nimisha Goel, Senior Program Officer, Primary Health Care, Gates Foundation, India <p>Discussion Points</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of existing UN mechanisms supporting diplomacy training • Investments in leadership training, negotiation skills, and regional capacity • Opportunities and mechanisms for Shared Leadership in the Global South • Global South countries positions and influence in multilateral health governance
2:45pm – 3:30pm	<p style="text-align: center;">PANEL – IV Financing the Future: Mobilizing Investments in Health Diplomacy</p>
	<p>Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Hemang Shah, Director (Maternal, Child Health and Nutrition), Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), India • Dr Monika Sharma, Head of India Office, Novo Nordisk Foundation • Dr Karan Thakur, Group Vice President, Corporate Affairs & Sustainability, Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Limited • Mr LM Singh, Managing Director India and Global Head, Partnerships, and Innovative Finance, Vital Strategies • Mr T.S. Vishwanath, Founder, Vek, Principal Adviser, ASL-Legal, Director General, Founding Member and Past President, Public Affairs Forum of India (PAFI) • Dr Ramnath Ballala, Director: Health Systems, Blockchain for Impact (BFI), India <p>Moderator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Grace Achungura, Technical Officer (Health Financing for UHC-HCF), World Health Organization (WHO) Country Office for India, New Delhi <p>Discussion Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of Philanthropy in Strengthening South-South Cooperation • Challenges, and Gaps in mechanisms for financing education and research in health diplomacy • Targeted funding to build capacity in health diplomacy • Coordination platforms: supporting Global South coalitions
3:30pm – 4:00pm	<p>Closing Remarks & Acknowledgements</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Balvir Singh Tomar, Founder and Chancellor, NIMS University Rajasthan, India • Ms Preeti Sudan, Former Union Health Secretary, Govt of India; Former Chairperson, Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), India (<i>Virtual</i>) • Dr Obijiofor Aginam, Director, UNESCO MGIEP (Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Peace and Sustainable Development), New Delhi, India • Dr Monika Kochar, Advisor-Health, DAKSHIN, RIS, India
4:00pm onwards	High Tea