



Media Release

World One Health Congress commences in Singapore

Focusing on the imperative of integrating science, policy and clinical practice to advance global One Health movement especially in the aftermath of COVID-19, the Congress will feature sharing by leading global scientists and policymakers on ways to address complex global health challenges.

07 November 2022, SINGAPORE - The 7th World One Health Congress (WOHC), the world's premier event to advance the One Health agenda, began today at the Sands Expo & Convention Centre in Singapore with more than 1400 in-person and 1000 virtual attendees from academic institutions, civil society, government bodies, private sector and multilateral organisations around the world. Mdm Halimah Yacob, President of the Republic of Singapore, graced the Opening Ceremony as its Guest-of-Honour and delivered a speech.

The five-day Congress hosted by Singapore's SingHealth Duke-NUS Global Health Institute (SDGHI) under the auspices of the SingHealth Duke-NUS Academic Medical Centre is themed 'Integrating Science, Policy and Clinical Practice: A One Health Imperative Post-COVID-19'. It seeks to advance the global One Health movement to improve health and well-being by preventing and mitigating crises that originate at the animal-human-environment interface.

With Temasek Foundation as the Pinnacle Sponsor, this is the first WOHC to take place in person after the COVID-19 outbreak, and will provide a pivotal platform for promoting multi-sectoral efforts and collaboration.

"We have journeyed long and hard, learning many lessons from COVID-19 together. Perhaps the greatest lesson on our interconnectivity is that we must leverage it well and early, to the best of our advantage," said Mdm President, highlighting collaboration as a key facet of the One Health approach, and an important factor in global health preparedness efforts. "We must work together not only when a crisis unfolds, but strive to be ahead of the curve through strong collaborations and preparations even during peace time."

At the Opening Ceremony, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Director-General of the World Health Organization, also delivered opening remarks virtually, followed by Dr Monique Eloit, the Director-General of the World Organisation for Animal Health, who, with her final set of opening remarks, marked the commencement of a curated programme of keynote speeches, plenary lectures, scientific sessions with abstract presentations and panel discussions on urgent and emerging One Health topics.

"About 70% of all emerging pathogens have a zoonotic source. Irresponsible land use, deforestation and climate change all increase the risk of new pathogens spilling over from

wildlife and domestic animals to humans. We can only truly make the world safer if we address these underlying drivers of epidemics and pandemics” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization. “Last month, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, the UN Environment Programme, the World Health Organization and World Organisation for Animal Health launched the One Health Joint Plan of Action to integrate and coordinate our work across the human, animal, agricultural and environmental sectors. WHO remains committed to supporting all countries to learn from COVID-19 and work towards a healthier, safer and fairer world.”

“We need to transform our relationship with the environment and how we confront pathogens emergence and spread. The most efficient way is by promoting prevention aiming to implement pre-emptive measures to stop spillovers of zoonotic diseases from animals to humans,” said Dr Monique Eloit, Director-General of the World Organisation for Animal Health. “The Quadripartite OH Joint Plan of Action could guide the implementation of the OH approach across the animal, human, and environment sectors and at all levels. It also should guide the provisions on OH in the new pandemic instrument currently under negotiation among member countries.”

The Congress will see more than 120 speakers from over 60 countries share their learnings and insights across diverse disciplines. Key highlights include a panel discussion on ‘Operationalisation, Systems Coordination and Science-Policy Linkage’, and as well as a keynote address on ‘Catalytic Philanthropy and its Role in Pandemic Preparedness’ by Dr Chris Elias, President of the Global Development Division, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

“As the world emerges from COVID-19, it is vital for scientific communities, policymakers and clinical professionals to build our collective resilience against future global health challenges,” said Associate Professor Tan Hiang Khoo, Co-Chairman of the WOHC 2022 Steering Committee and Director of SDGHI. “The 7th World One Health Congress will host important conversations and promote integrated regional and global efforts that are essential to prevent, predict, prepare and respond to crises and safeguard our planet's healthy and sustainable future. The SingHealth Duke-NUS Global Health Institute is pleased to represent Singapore in organising this Congress, and play a part in advancing global efforts to improve health outcomes and achieve health equity for all.”

Representatives from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Health Organization, and the World Organisation for Animal Health will speak on the Quadripartite One Health Joint Plan of Action, which is a joint effort to collectively reduce the risk of pandemics and improve the health of humans, animals, plants, and the environment while contributing to sustainable development. Dr Manuela Ferro, Regional Vice President for East Asia and Pacific, World Bank, will also give a keynote speech on ‘International Financing for One Health and Pandemic Preparedness’, and Professor Wang Linfa, Duke-NUS Medical School, will present a keynote on ‘The Science and Importance of Tracing SARS-CoV-2 Origins.

Other notable panel discussions will cover topics such as ‘Global Financing and the One Health Agenda’, chaired by Dr Franck Berthe of the World Bank, and ‘National Sovereignty and Global Solidarity for Health Security’, chaired by Professor David Heymann from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom.

“The crux of the One Health paradigm is about recognising our global interconnectivity across not just the human experience, but animal and environmental determinants as well. This has never been more apparent than throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, during which we have seen first-hand just how much advancing health equity relies on our collective understanding and response to global health threats,” said Professor Wang Linfa, Co-Chairman of the WOHC 2022 Steering Committee and Professor at Duke-NUS Medical School. “This Congress is a well-timed testament to that and provides a platform to help move the needle in fostering broad collaboration and impact to advance One Health.”

Temasek Foundation is hosting a Pinnacle Series focusing on readiness to combat public health threats in Asia, particularly Southeast Asia, which will run alongside the main Congress from 8 to 10 November. The programme provides a platform for strategic discussions and opportunities for close networking among invited policy makers, healthcare leaders and scientists in the region involved in different disciplines including zoonotic diseases, bio-surveillance studies and antimicrobial resistance, to enhance the preparedness and response to emerging global health threats.

“Asia urgently needs to build capabilities to be ready to respond to any outbreaks that can potentially pose a major threat to the lives and livelihoods of its populations,” said Mr Lim Hock Chuan, Head, Programmes, Temasek Foundation. “One of the most critical lessons learnt from the pandemic is that we must collaborate and share knowledge to tackle the most pressing healthcare challenges. We hope that the Temasek Foundation Pinnacle Series provides healthcare leaders an opportunity to continue this spirit of learning and exchange to better prepare the region for future pandemics.”

With genomic sequencing and surveillance as a key theme, sessions to look forward to include Opening Addresses by Mr David Blazes, Deputy Director, Global Health, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation on ‘Genomic Sequencing for Public Health Surveillance’, and Dr Paul Pronyk, Director, Duke-NUS Centre for Outbreak Preparedness on ‘Findings from a Landscape Assessment of the Current Status and Bottlenecks in Genomic Surveillance in Asia.’

The 7th World One Health Congress will run from 7 to 11 November 2022 in Singapore.

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About SingHealth Duke-NUS Academic Medical Centre

The SingHealth Duke-NUS Academic Medical Centre (AMC) draws on the collective strengths of SingHealth and Duke-NUS Medical School to provide our patients and community with the best outcomes and experience.

By leveraging the synergies in clinical care, research and education created through our Academic Clinical Programmes, Disease Centres and Joint Institutes, the SingHealth Duke-NUS AMC fosters the exchange of scientific knowledge and clinical perspectives to accelerate innovation and new discoveries, advance the practice of medicine as well as nurture the next generation of healthcare professionals.

SingHealth delivers comprehensive, multi-disciplinary and integrated care across a network of acute hospitals, national specialty centres, polyclinics and community hospitals. Offering over 40 clinical specialties, SingHealth is Singapore's largest public healthcare cluster.

Duke-NUS, Singapore's flagship graduate-entry medical school, nurtures 'Clinician Plus' graduates to become leaders in the global healthcare and biomedical ecosystem, while scientists from its five Signature Research Programmes and 10 Centres transform medicine and improve lives in Asia and beyond.

For more information, please visit:

www.singhealthdukenus.com.sg

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About SingHealth Duke-NUS Global Health Institute

The SingHealth Duke-NUS Global Health Institute (SDGHI) aims to advance health and well-being in Asia and beyond. Working in collaboration with partners, the Institute seeks to strengthen health systems, improve health outcomes and increase health security. Launched in 2018, SDGHI harnesses the capacity of SingHealth, the largest group of health care institutions in Singapore, and the Duke-NUS Medical School, to advance interdisciplinary global health research and capacity development across the region.

About Temasek Foundation

Temasek Foundation supports programmes that uplift lives and communities in Singapore and beyond. We aim to strengthen social resilience, foster international exchange and enhance regional capabilities, advance science and protect the planet for a sustainable world. Temasek Foundation's programmes, made possible through philanthropic endowments gifted by Temasek, strive towards achieving positive outcomes for individuals and communities now, and for generations to come. For more information, visit www.temasekfoundation.org.sg

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