

## GYA working group on Global Health

### **Global Health Policy and Practices Conference Report**

The Global Health Policy and Practices Conference was organized by the Global Health Group of the Global Young Academy (GYA) on 30 November 2024. It brought together distinguished experts across the world to discuss critical issues in health systems, disease control, and emerging global health challenges. The event was hosted at SZABIST, Islamabad, and featured a rich series of presentations from leading academics and professionals. The event kicked off with a warm welcome address by **Dr. Khansa Zaman** (Manager of External Relations SZABIST, Islamabad). She expressed gratitude to the attendees, speakers, and organizers, emphasizing the importance of global collaboration in addressing emerging health threats. Dr. Zaman highlighted SZABIST's commitment to fostering international partnerships in the field of health and research.

**Prof. Dr. Muhammad Qasim** (Co-Lead of the Global Health Group, GYA) in his opening remarks provided a comprehensive overview of the conference's themes and objectives. He discussed the growing need for innovative approaches to health challenges such as tuberculosis (TB), antimicrobial resistance (AMR), and the impact of climate change on health.

**Prof. Dr. Samer Abuzerr** (Member of the GYA Global Health group), from the University College of Science and Technology in Gaza, delivered the talk titled “Impact of Israel War on Gaza Health Situation”. He shared his insights into the devastating impact of the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict on public health in Gaza. He highlighted the strain on medical resources, the spread of infectious diseases, and the psychological toll on the population. His presentation emphasized the urgent need for international support and humanitarian assistance to address the health crisis in Gaza.

**Dr. Wasim Sajjad**, Assistant Professor at the National University of Medical Sciences Pakistan, and a member of the GYA Executive Committee, talked about “Antimicrobial Resistance: A Growing Global Health Challenge”. He focused on the escalating problem of antimicrobial resistance (AMR). His presentation addressed the contributing factors to AMR, such as the overuse of antibiotics, lack of regulation, and global inequalities in healthcare access. Dr. Sajjad called for urgent policy reforms, enhanced global surveillance, and increased public awareness to combat this looming public health threat.

**Prof. Dr. Mujtaba Qadri**, Diplomate American Board of Internal Medicine 1990-2031, Diplomate American Board of Nephrology 1992-2031, Consultant and Head of Nephrology, Maroof International Hospital, Pakistan delivered an informative session on “Disease Control and Management of Chronic Kidney Disease”. He shared the stats of chronic kidney disease (CKD) in Pakistan and its growing prevalence worldwide. He discussed early detection, preventative measures, and management strategies, emphasizing the importance of lifestyle modifications and regular screening to reduce the burden of CKD.

**Dr. Amar Jargal** (Member of the GYA Global Health group), is a medical doctor and public health expert committed to pandemic preparedness, global health, and science policy. She delivered a talk on “Accelerating Pandemic Preparedness for Climate Change”. She highlighted the intersection of climate change and pandemic preparedness. She illustrated how climate change is exacerbating the emergence of new infectious diseases and increasing the frequency of natural disasters, which in turn strains health systems. Dr. Jargal proposed strategies for enhancing global pandemic preparedness, including better surveillance, healthcare infrastructure, and international cooperation.

**Dr. Antonia Morita Iswari Saktiawati** (Co-Lead of the GYA Global Health working group), based at the Faculty of Medicine, Public Health, and Nursing Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia, delivered a talk on “TB Elimination - Dream or Reality”. She presented a compelling discussion on the challenges of achieving global tuberculosis elimination. She highlighted the disparities in TB burden across countries, limitations in healthcare systems, and the social determinants of health that hinder TB control efforts. Dr. Saktiawati called for a more integrated and equitable approach to achieving the goal of TB elimination.

**Prof. Dr. Muhammad Qasim**, a policy consultant and government science advisor highlighted the “Health Equity as a Tool for Control and Management of Disease Burden”. He discussed the critical role of health equity in controlling and managing global disease burdens. He argued that addressing health disparities is key to improving overall health outcomes and ensuring that disease control strategies are effective across different socio-economic groups. He emphasized policies that target vulnerable populations and promote access to essential health services.

**Dr. Hussain Mustatab Wahedi** (Member of the GYA Global Health group), Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Biomedicine at NUST (Pakistan), delivered an exciting talk on

Innovative Global Partnerships for Disease Control and Management. He discussed the importance of innovative global partnerships in tackling global health challenges. He highlighted examples of successful collaborations, including public-private partnerships, international health organizations, and cross-border cooperation in research and resource sharing. Dr. Wahedi stressed the need for collective action to address complex global health problems. He also put forward the recommendations to attain the SDG-3, SDG-17, and SDG-9 of the United Nations.

**Dr. Ayesha Ishtiaq** from Quaid-i-Azam University, Pakistan, delivered a talk on “Transcending Borders: Health Diplomacy and Global Response to Emerging Health Threats”. She delved into the role of health diplomacy in addressing emerging health threats such as pandemics and climate-related diseases. She discussed how countries can work together through diplomatic channels to strengthen health systems, improve information sharing, and coordinate responses to global health crises.

**Prof. Dr. Hussam Muhammad** from Colorado State University, USA, delivered a talk on “The State of Healthcare System and Public Health in Gaza Amid the War”. He provided a detailed analysis of the state of healthcare and public health in Gaza amid ongoing conflict. He described the immense challenges faced by health workers, the destruction of infrastructure, and the shortage of essential medical supplies. Prof. Muhammad called for a sustained humanitarian response and international intervention to support Gaza’s healthcare system.

**Dr. Andi Masyitha Irwan**, from Hasanuddin University, Indonesia, delivered a talk on “Health Challenges Among Older People in South East Asian Countries”. She concluded the event with a session focused on the health challenges faced by the elderly population in Southeast Asia. She discussed the rising prevalence of age-related diseases, access to healthcare, and the need for tailored public health policies to address the unique needs of older adults in the region.

The event concluded with a session of questions and answers, fostering meaningful discussions among the participants. The rich diversity of topics and expert insights highlighted the importance of global cooperation in tackling emerging health challenges and improving disease management worldwide.

**Recommendations by the experts:**

- Build flexibility into administrative and regulatory processes to accommodate changing circumstances, emergencies, or unique situations that may arise during UN operations.
- Establish a platform or system for sharing best practices and lessons learned in administrative and regulatory processes among UN agencies and departments.
- Strengthen academia-industry linkages through collaboration, research, internships, advisory boards, and supportive policies.

**Highlights:**

- **Capacity Building:** The process of developing skills, knowledge, and resources to effectively address challenges and achieve goals, often through training and knowledge transfer.
- **Collaboration:** Working together with others to achieve a common goal, which can involve partnerships, alliances, or joint initiatives, and often includes sharing information and resources.
- **Science Diplomacy:** Using scientific and technical collaborations to foster international relations and address global problems, recognizing the power of science to transcend political boundaries and promote cooperation among nations.

