

The **second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine**, held in New Delhi, India, on 17–19 December 2025, has the theme of “Restoring balance: The science and practice of health and well-being”. The Summit aligns with the [Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034](#), which recognizes Traditional Medicine as a living science that contributes to universal health coverage, health equity and sustainability. The Summit serves as a global platform to accelerate implementation of the new strategy, foster partnerships, and translate pledges and commitments into concrete action.



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Parallel session 1.D

Traditional Medicine – bringing balance to governance, equity and resources

Plenary 1 and associated parallel sessions will serve to anchor the Summit’s vision of balance across body, mind, community and the planet, as aligned with the Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034 and global declarations.

This parallel session seeks to analyse governance models, equity-focused policies and resource allocation strategies for Traditional Medicine integration, as well as showcase innovative mechanisms and equity-driven reforms to scale the sustainability of Traditional Medicine.

Rationale

Governance is the backbone of health systems. It determines whose voices are included in decision-making, how resources are distributed, and whether equity and justice are safeguarded in health policy and practice. Centuries of colonization, marginalization and selective valuation of knowledge have created systems that privilege certain forms of medicine and systematically disadvantage others (1,2). Governance mechanisms and associated resources are critical for sustainable integration of evidence-based Traditional Medicine into health systems (3,4). However, major challenges exist in terms of objectivity, accountability and fairness in governance instruments, particularly for Traditional Medicine (5,6). While acceptance, availability and utilization of Traditional Medicine approaches can advance the right to health and well-being, each system of Traditional Medicine also has its unique strengths and limitations. The enormous diversity in Traditional Medicine also requires tailored governance instruments to maximize its utilization to advance health system goals and minimize risks of patient harm (5,7,8). Striking the right balance between increasing equitable access to health services and ensuring quality standards while minimizing costs is crucial (5,8). It is equally important to understand and promote good practices that advance population health through social determinants and strengthen planetary health (7–9). While communities worldwide continue to rely on traditional and complementary practices for well-being, their voices are often absent from policymaking. At the same time, there are promising evidence-based innovations that countries are using to balance Traditional Medicine’s benefits and risks: inclusive governance models, equity-driven reforms and country-level examples where resources and decision-making power have been redistributed to reflect people’s needs, cultural choices and local realities (3). Understanding the outcomes of these models – as well as how these models address accountability concerns – can inform health system reforms and decision-making around resource allocation and advance broader health system objectives and the SDGs.

Objectives

- Examine how governance systems – including the role of resource allocation – for Traditional Medicine at global, national and local levels affect population health outcomes.
- Highlight historical processes (e.g. colonization) that shaped current inequities in Traditional Medicine systems.
- Present country-level case studies showcasing inclusive governance models, equity-driven reforms and associated outcomes.
- Identify mechanisms that amplify people’s voices and community choices in the governance of Traditional Medicine.

- Propose actionable strategies for rebalancing governance, equity and resources in the integration of Traditional Medicine.

Guiding questions

1. What are the persisting imbalances within governance models that have affected health equity?
2. How have these imbalances within the governance of Traditional Medicine influenced access, quality and cost of health services, and population well-being?
3. What inclusive models for Traditional Medicine governance can help improve health equity?
4. How should people's voices, representation and lived experiences shape governance decisions for Traditional Medicine?

Session format

The proposed session format is a five-minute setting of the purpose and objectives of the session by a moderator or keynote speaker. Speakers from each region will give short presentations of country success stories on how integrating Traditional Medicine into governance models, service delivery mechanisms or financing models are meant to/do achieve equity of access by health seekers to Traditional Medicine products or services. Following the presentations, the session will move into a panel discussion with audience input that prioritizes contributions from community representatives in the online or in-person audience, creating space for those often marginalized in health discourse. Panel members will conclude the session by proposing one or two actionable strategies for rebalancing governance, equity and resources in the integration of Traditional Medicine.

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