

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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## Plenary 2

### Investing in science to drive Traditional Medicine progress

Plenary 2 and associated parallel sessions will focus on how advancing research, innovation and investment in Traditional Medicine can bring balance for both people and planet, as aligned with the Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034 and global declarations.

This plenary session will emphasize the critical role of science, sustained investment and innovation in advancing Traditional Medicine as a foundation of people- and planet-centred health. It will highlight how rigorous research, methodological harmonization, strategic financing and innovation ecosystems can elevate Traditional Medicine to an evidence-driven global health movement. By linking resource mobilization, scientific collaboration and resilient health systems, the session aims to rally global commitment to implement the Global Traditional Medicine Research Agenda and accelerate Traditional Medicine’s contribution to sustainable development and universal health coverage.

### Rationale

This plenary session launches the Global Traditional Medicine Research Agenda, setting the tone for how science, innovation and investment can transform Traditional Medicine, from perception to evidence and from marginalization to measurable health impact. Advancing Traditional Medicine requires bridging paradigms, connecting the analytical precision of biomedicine with the holistic insight embedded in traditional systems. The session will examine the scientific foundations that legitimize and advance Traditional Medicine, demonstrating how evidence generation, rigorous methodologies and cross-disciplinary collaboration can elevate its global standing (1–5). Speakers will highlight WHO’s work in categorizing and harmonizing Traditional Medicine research methodologies and developing a global research roadmap for Traditional Medicine, as well as how strategic investment and innovation pipelines can translate traditional knowledge into measurable outcomes, building bridges between ancestral wisdom and science (1,3,6–7). By positioning Traditional Medicine as a strategic investment in health and sustainability, this plenary presents a forward-looking vision for research, innovation and policy coherence, aligned with the Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (4).

### Objectives

- To launch and contextualize the Global Traditional Medicine Research Agenda, aligning it with the Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034 and emerging global health priorities.
- To demonstrate how scientific rigour, methodological innovation and strategic investment can accelerate Traditional Medicine’s contribution to universal health coverage, sustainability and the SDGs.
- To strengthen global commitment to evidence-informed, equitable and sustainable research systems that respect diverse knowledge systems.
- To catalyse collaboration among scientists, funders, policymakers and communities in driving a unified global research and innovation agenda for Traditional Medicine.

## Guiding questions

1. **Science and legitimacy:** How can scientific evidence and methodological innovation strengthen confidence in Traditional Medicine as both evidence-worthy and evidence-generating?
2. **Global research priorities and global architecture:** How can the Global Traditional Medicine Research Agenda be implemented through coordinated scientific and policy action?
3. **Investment and economic value:** How can Traditional Medicine be reframed as a strategic investment that strengthens sustainable and resilient health systems? What policy and financing mechanisms can mobilize resources for Traditional Medicine research and innovation?
4. **Innovation and integration:** How can technology, data and interdisciplinary collaboration advance Traditional Medicine without eroding its epistemic diversity? What partnerships can ensure ethical, inclusive and impactful innovation?
5. **From evidence to action:** How can scientific, financial and policy ecosystems work together to move Traditional Medicine research from priorities to measurable outcomes that advance the SDGs and planetary health?

## Session format

The proposed session format begins with remarks from the moderator, followed by a keynote presentation on “Bridging paradigms in health science”. Expert presentations will then showcase WHO’s work in Traditional Medicine research methodologies and developing a global research roadmap for Traditional Medicine, as well as how strategic investment and innovation pipelines can translate traditional knowledge into measurable outcomes. After the presentations, the moderator will synthesize key themes, points of convergence and distinctive insights emerging from the talks to frame the discussion. The session will conclude with an interactive Q&A, where the moderator will engage both in-person and online participants. As the discussion closes, speakers will reflect on key insights and explore specific action points for strengthening scientific collaboration, strategic investment and innovation ecosystems that can accelerate Traditional Medicine’s contribution to sustainable development, universal health coverage and resilient, people- and planet-centred health systems.

## References

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