

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 4

### Measuring progress and charting the way forward: Standards, data and responsible AI – from ancestral knowledge to action

Plenary 4 and associated parallel sessions will focus on how data, technology and ancestral knowledge can work in balance to establish the standards, ethical frameworks and mechanisms needed to track progress, ensure accountability and operationalize the future of Traditional Medicine.

This plenary session explores the concept of accountability within Traditional Medicine, recognizing its foundations in ancestral knowledge, cultural practice and community trust. Accountability provides the framework for ensuring that Traditional Medicine contributes to evidence-based, transparent and equitable health systems. It requires standardized and comparable reporting of data on Traditional Medicine and measurable information to support evidence-based decision-making, responsible, human-centred use of technology, and strong governance and active participation by state and non-state actors. It also demands respect for diverse knowledge systems, ensuring that accountability frameworks recognize plural ways of knowing and uphold cultural integrity. Additionally, accountability calls for respectful investment that values cultural heritage and ensures fair distribution of resources. By examining these interconnected dimensions, this plenary session aims to chart a collective pathway for how accountability can be institutionalized and practised across Traditional Medicine systems worldwide. It sets the stage for the parallel sessions that follow, each deepening the conversation on data, knowledge, technology and action for accountability in Traditional Medicine.

### Rationale

This plenary session concludes the Summit’s arc – moving from what knowledge exists (Plenary 1), to how we understand it (Plenary 2), to how Traditional Medicine integrates into health systems (Plenary 3) and, finally, to how we track progress, ensure accountability and plan next steps. Accountability is at the core of Traditional Medicine’s sustainability and integrity, defining how commitments are translated into measurable progress and equitable outcomes (1).

Accountability requires a clear understanding of:

1. who is accountable;
2. to whom they are accountable;
3. the processes through which accountability is ensured;
4. the objectives against which accountability is measured; and
5. the tools and mechanisms used to measure, review and adjust accountability over time (2).

Building accountability for Traditional Medicine then requires robust governance and clear regulatory frameworks, ensuring that systems are transparent, evidence-informed and responsive to people’s needs (3,4). It also requires solid evidence produced through harmonized data standards such as the International Classification of Diseases 11th Revision (ICD-11) and the International Classification of Health interventions (ICHI), alongside standard datasets and robust data systems. Together these enable progress-tracking, strengthen trust and support the responsible use of technology that informs decision-making and protects privacy (5). Equally, accountability depends on community

participation, civil society oversight and mechanisms that can distinguish legitimate practice from harmful or fraudulent claims, safeguarding both public trust and traditional knowledge (6). Finally, respectful and equitable investment is necessary to ensure that progress is grounded in fairness, cultural respect and shared benefit (7,8). This session supports the translation of accountability for Traditional Medicine from principle to practice by offering pathways for implementation, coordination and collective action, including the potential for global mechanisms that align governance, evidence and benefit-sharing across countries.

## Objectives

- To understand accountability in the context of how governance frameworks embed transparency, participation and ethical standards in Traditional Medicine systems.
- To identify how evidence-based approaches and monitoring mechanisms can institutionalize accountability in Traditional Medicine policy and practice.
- To examine how WHO-designed data standards and the data systems that underpin them enable reliable, timely and comparable Traditional Medicine reporting for accountability and how these can be embedded in digital tools to support decision-making, protect privacy and build trust.
- To highlight the role of civil society and community organizations in ensuring accountability, transparency, inclusion and shared responsibility.
- To promote respectful, equitable investment that aligns with principles of fairness, cultural preservation and sustainability.

## Guiding questions

1. What governance frameworks and policy mechanisms can ensure transparency, ethical practice and public trust in Traditional Medicine systems?
2. How can we establish and strengthen the coverage, quality and standardization of Traditional Medicine data systems and reporting mechanisms – leveraging modern technology to support evidence-based decision-making and accountability?
3. What roles do civil society, communities and traditional knowledge holders play in ensuring accountability and inclusive decision-making?
4. How can investment strategies be designed to promote equity, protect heritage and deliver sustainable outcomes for all?
5. What global or multi-stakeholder mechanisms are needed to coordinate shared responsibility, protect traditional knowledge and ensure fair distribution of benefits across Traditional Medicine systems?

## Session format

The proposed session format begins with opening remarks on governance and accountability structures relevant to Traditional Medicine. The session then moves to a series of keynote presentations examining the role of systematic data collection and evidence-based approaches; a country perspective on tools and mechanisms used to measure and review accountability, including data standards and digital tools; accountability and localized knowledge systems; legitimacy and community-led accountability; and new architectures for shared responsibility, fair benefit-sharing and equitable investment in Traditional Medicine. At the end of the presentations, the moderator will facilitate commentary across the speakers and will open the floor to the in-person and online audience. As the discussion closes, speakers will reflect on key insights and explore specific action points to chart a collective pathway for how accountability can be institutionalized and practised across Traditional Medicine systems worldwide.

## References

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