

World Health Organization Traditional Medicine Global Summit 2023

17–18 August 2023 Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India





Global Traditional Medicine Centre

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The World Health Organization (WHO) Global Traditional Medicine Centre (GTMC) is a knowledge centre for Traditional Medicine (TM) in Jamnagar, Gujarat, India, established in 2022. As part of its overall TM strategy, WHO has a strategic focus on evidence and learning, data and analytics, sustainability and equity, and innovation and technology – to optimize the contribution of Traditional Medicine to global health and sustainable development. At the same time, respect for local heritage, resources and rights is a guiding principle.



About the Global Summit



The first WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit took place on 17 and 18 August 2023 in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India. The Global Summit was co-hosted by WHO and the Government of India. It was held alongside the G20 Health Ministers' Meeting, jointly celebrating WHO's 75th anniversary and India's 75th anniversary of independence, as well as India's presidency of the G20.

The Global Summit was held to mobilize political commitment and evidence-based action on TM – the first choice for millions of people worldwide to address their health and well-being needs.¹ The summit explored the vast potential and applications of TM amid important challenges and opportunities to achieve universal health coverage (UHC) and well-being for people and the planet. It served as a platform for stakeholders to share contributions of TM to health and sustainable development around the core themes of evidence and learning, data and regulation, biodiversity, innovation and digital health.

¹The term "Traditional Medicine" refers to traditional, complementary and integrative medicine, health and well-being systems. This term and the terms "traditional, complementary and integrative medicine" and "traditional and complementary medicine" are often used interchangeably. To aid readability, from here on in this report, Traditional Medicine is used to encompass all terms.





Objectives of the 2023 Global Summit

- Exchange experiences on the contribution of planetary and integrative health for well-being, and Indigenous knowledge resources, to the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Showcase game-changing advances in evidence, data and innovation that enable TM's safety, effectiveness and equitable use.
- Share country experiences on health workforce education and regulation, and on policy, legal and regulatory issues in TM.
- Share data on WHO global and regional trends, and best practices on the contribution of TM to the achievement of UHC, the SDGs and health for all.
- Share recent innovations and advances in entrepreneurship and equitable benefit sharing, and highlight the contribution of TM to addressing global health challenges.
- Examine the intersections of biodiversity and TM with Indigenous Peoples' health and well-being.
- Showcase, through an exhibition, WHO and Member State histories of, knowledge about, experience with and insights into TM.

In numbers



days

500

participants on-site in Gandhinagar 115

speakers from 34 **Member States**

plenary sessions 000 000

parallel sessions

session **hours**

United Nations

and multilateral organization heads

Nobel laureates

summit

5600

webpage views

language translations in parallel

Summit inauguration



"Holistic health and wellness can help enhance everyone's resilience. The establishment of the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre in Jamnagar, Gujarat is an important step in this direction."

Narendra Modi Prime Minister of India



"Through this summit, and the GTMC, WHO is working to build the evidence and data to inform policies, standards and regulations for the safe, cost-effective and equitable use of TM."

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus WHO Director-General



"TM is a testament to the deep connection between humans and nature and the profound understanding of the intricate balance that sustains life on this planet ... As we embark on this journey of shared learning and collaboration, let us channel our collective energies towards a world where health care is accessible to all."

Lyonpo Dasho Dechen Wangmo Minister of Health, Bhutan



"This summit is a timely, path-breaking venture, a real step forward for inclusiveness and sustainability for global health."

Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala Director-General, World Trade Organization



"Let us move forward united, translating shared insights into actions that propel us towards a world where every individual enjoys complete health and well-being."

Dr Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha Secretary, Ministry of Ayush, India



























Session speakers (from left to right):

Dr Bruce Aylward, WHO Assistant Director-General, Universal Health Coverage, Life Course Vivian Tatiana Camacho Hinojosa, Traditional Medicine Director, Ministry of Health, Bolivia Emine Erdoğan, First Lady of Türkiye
Dr Hans Klüge, Director, WHO Regional Office for Europe
Dr Shyama Kuruvilla, WHO Lead for WHO GTMC
Bhupendra Rajnikant Patel, Chief Minister, Gujarat, India

Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director, WHO Office for South-East Asia Mansukh Laxmanbhai Mandaviya, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, India

Sarbananda Sonowal, Minister of Ayush, India

Professor Harold Varmus, Chair of WHO Science Council, and Nobel laureate

Professor Tu Youyou, Nobel laureate

Moderator: Rini Simon Khanna

Planetary health and well-being for all: Learning from Indigenous knowledge and traditional, complementary and integrative health systems

The health of the planet and human well-being are intrinsically linked. Embracing TM can reduce pressure on the current resource-intensive approaches to health care. This can have a positive impact on planetary health, which in turn can improve the value, trust and acceptance of TM. This session aimed to mobilize political commitment and evidence-based action to recognize and integrate TM approaches for planetary health and establish the well-being of societies.

- TM offers alternative solutions for lifestyle diseases and mental health conditions without relying solely on pharmaceutical drugs.
- TM has a valuable role to play in helping the world achieve sustainable development.
- We need to bridge the gap between Indigenous knowledge and cutting-edge technology, respecting both systems equally.
- The promotion of research and evidence-based practices in TM will enhance contributions towards well-being.
- We need to create comprehensive programmes that integrate traditional and modern knowledge to empower individuals to make informed health choices.
- We need to develop awareness campaigns that educate the public about the holistic benefits of TM and its connection to human and planetary health.

Parallel sessions

1. Mapping of evidence: What we know, and how do we learn more?

The main barrier to the adoption of TM in biomedicine-based health care systems by Member States is the lack of evidence to support claims of efficacy. This session analysed what is considered evidence, and explored new research methodologies and technology to strengthen evidence-gathering towards the development of a global research agenda in TM.

2. Health workforce development: Education and regulation

TM systems have no universal framework for training, and no global accreditation or regulation body. High-quality research for TM is needed to validate training and generate acceptance from the scientific community. This session looked at lessons learned in several TM training programmes, explored current efforts to benchmark this learning, and considered the importance of accrediting TM education programmes.





"This is a call for cooperation, this is a call for collaboration, and this is a call for co-learning".

Professor Bhushan
Patwardhan
National Research ProfessorAyush, Interdisciplinary
School of Health Science,
Savitribai Phule Pune
University, Pune, India



"[United Nations Resolution 77] will affirm that Indigenous Peoples have the right to their TM, and to the maintenance of their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicine plants".

Ricardo Weibe Nascimento Costa Vice-Minister of Indigenous Health, Brazil



"A big ray of hope comes from Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous Peoples and their leadership and their generosity of mind and heart. Because we are one human family".

Dr Sione Tu'itahi Executive Director, Health Promotion Forum, New Zealand (Moderator)



"It's important to note the clear and obvious advances that have occurred within western sciences, yet these advances have also come at the cost of our planet, nature and ourselves".

Dr Nicole Redvers Western Research Chair & Director, Indigenous Planetary Health, Schulich Interfaculty Program in Public Health, University of Western Ontario, Canada













Session speakers (from left to right):

Professor Gerard Bodeker, Adjunct Professor of Integrative Medicine, Western Sydney University, Australia Tandin Chogyel, Chief Medical Advisor, Traditional Medicine, Bhutan

Dr Tracy Gaudet, Co-Founder of the Cornerstone Collaboration for Societal Change, USA

Dr Rüdiger Krech, WHO Director of Health Promotion

Professor Vikram Harshad Patel, Pershing Square Professor of Global Health and Chair, Department of Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School, USA

Dr Soumya Swaminathan, Chairperson, MS Swaminathan Research Foundation, India

Country data and global evidence

The number of WHO Member States that recognize and regulate TM products, practices and practitioners is steadily increasing. However, the lack of policies, regulations, finance and information on the resources, safety and utility of TM present certain barriers to integration. This session presented an update on the progress of TM through preliminary findings of the third WHO TM global survey, carried out in 2023.

- At the time of the Global Summit, 28% of countries had completed, and 13% of countries were in the process of completing, the TM global survey. The survey would be completed by the end of 2023, and the findings will be reflected in the upcoming WHO Traditional Medicine strategy (2025–2034).
- Health and well-being programmes that include Indigenous medicine for Indigenous Peoples had been established in 15 countries (of 53 responding countries), while five countries were in the process of establishing such programmes.
- Globally, many lifestyle issues are being managed with TM, with noncommunicable diseases being the most common (81%), followed by disease prevention (69%), health promotion (63%), palliative care (56%) and rehabilitative care (54%).
- WHO is committed to working with government and academic institutions to
 prioritize research, education and training in TM, ensuring that the practice is safe,
 regulated and accessible to everyone.

Parallel sessions

Data and routine health information systems

In many countries, integration of TM is hindered by the lack of a unified medical coding system – the process that translates patients' health care information from health professionals' notes into codes for statistical analysis. This means crucial diagnostic information can be missing, hindering a comprehensive understanding of TM's impact. In addition, language and terminology pose barriers to integrating TM into health care systems. There is therefore a need for standardized, nationwide reporting systems, specifically targeting TM diagnosis and treatment.

2. Innovation, entrepreneurship and equitable sharing of benefits

Innovation and collaboration are pivotal for advancing TM – specifically research and development. Embracing digital technologies, like online collaborative research platforms, can bridge the gap between traditional and conventional medicine. For example, the integration of digital tools that can optimize data collection, analysis and dissemination can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of TM research.





"When we talk about integrative health care, what we are talking about is a transdisciplinary holistic approach where we combine the benefits of modern medicine and TM to improve the quality of care and quality of life of patients."

Dr Rajiv Bahl

Director-General, Indian Council of Medical Research



"[The 2024 global survey results] will be beneficial to learn about the best practices of others. We may apply the approach to improve the TM service in our own country and it might also promote interregional cooperation."

Dr Anchalee Chuthaputti

Advisor (International Cooperation), Department of Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine, Thailand



"The local wisdom of TM is available in every culture and every region around the world. These TM practices have been used for thousands of years and are increasingly globalized."

J. A. Sisira Kumara Jayakodi State Minister of Indigenous Medicine, Sri Lanka



"The way forward is to get into a much more systematic collection and management of data, to integrate that data in routine health information systems ... and then to measure the contribution of TM in achieving UHC."

Dr Rudi Eggers

Director of Integrated Health Services, WHO



"[For TM integration], we noted the lack of regulatory frameworks and enforcement ... a lack of standardized practice and evidence-based research ... insufficient funding and limited intersectoral collaborations and communications."

Dr Goh Cheng Soon

Director of Traditional and Complementary Medicine Division, Ministry of Health, Malaysia













Session speakers (from left to right):

Dr Adi Al-Nuseirat, Technical Officer, Access to Medicines and Health Technologies, WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office Dr Binti Khalib Asmayani, Deputy Director-General of Health (Medical), Ministry of Health, Malaysia Felchism Apolnary, Manager, Medicines Registration, Medicine and Medical Devices Authority, Tanzania Dr Jonás Gonseth García, Advisor, Quality in Health Systems and Services, Pan American Health Organization Dr Elio Giovanni Rossi, Public Regional Healthcare Service, Tuscany, Italy Dr Kim Sungchol, Unit Head, WHO Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine

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Plenary Session 3

Digital health frontiers and safeguards

Digital technologies, including machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI), are revolutionizing the fields of medicine, research and public health. This session explored how harnessing these advances in technology as digital public goods might improve the uptake of TM, and promote advances in TM knowledge and science.

- Using digital tools can improve the efficiency of the health care system. Examples include maintaining medical records, helping with the exchange of information, generating reports or information in a patient's own language using Al large language models, improving patient education and empowerment, providing more training to medical practitioners, improving patient monitoring through chatbots, and identifying medicinal plants.
- Advantages of AI include bridging the evidence gap in TM, benchmarking AI in TM, optimizing resources for AI in TM, and curtailing fake TM practices to enhance credibility.
- We need to leverage AI, while taking into consideration patient and data safety and ethical and legal concerns. For example, AI can amplify bias, reinforce discrimination and enable new levels of surveillance.
- Collaboration among stakeholders, adherence to evidence-based practices and adoption of responsible AI are key principles for future health care development.
 It is also important to ensure a safe and inclusive digital transformation of TM and the overall health care sector.

Parallel sessions

Policy, legal and regulatory landscapes

Regulatory frameworks for TM are extremely diverse across United Nations Member States. Collaboration among countries and international organizations is crucial for establishing harmonized regulations and facilitating the exchange of information to ensure access unity while safeguarding public health. However, there might not be a one-size-fits-all approach as countries are at different points in their TM implementation journey.

2. Biodiversity, One Health and Traditional Medicine

Healthy and socially diverse communities rely on well-functioning healthy ecosystems and biodiversity. But biodiversity loss is happening at unprecedented rates and impacts human health globally. Conservation of biodiversity is therefore a key issue in the sustainable use of TM. This session identified action points for Member States to establish sustainable TM models, recognizing the importance of traditional knowledge and Indigenous perspectives.





"Policy investment is very important ... to promote free or low-cost standard AI tools that can be easily accessible for disadvantaged groups."

Dr Roshanak Ghods Associate Professor, Department of Persian Medicine, Iran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran



"The world needs innovative, almost disruptive, responses to its most pressing development challenges. Emerging technologies, including AI, have a role to play in helping us achieve the SDGs and deliver a better life and well-being for all."

Dr Amandeep Singh Gill United Nations Envoy on Technology



"The potential of digital technology and innovation to benefit public health remains largely unexplored. It is a huge opportunity to extend the usage with a coordinated strategy to health product and system innovation, particularly in low- and middle-income nations."

Dr Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha Secretary, Ministry of Ayush, India



"AI tools will help to break communication barriers ... especially between the communities and the traditional healer."

Dr Devina Lobine Next Einstein Forum Ambassador, L'Oréal-UNESCO Young Talent Award Winner, Mauritius













Session speakers (from left to right):

Dr Karma Gaylek, Medical Superintendent, National Traditional Medicine Hospital, Department of Clinical Services, National Medical Services, Thimphu, Bhutan

Dr Hans Klüge, Director, WHO Regional Office for Europe

Dr Bhavana Prasher, Senior Principal Scientist, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, and Associate Professor, Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research, India

Sameer Pujari, WHO Digital Health Unit Lead

Dr Saket Ram Thrigulla, Officer of Special Duty (Ayush Grid), Ministry of Ayush, India Ursula Yu Zhao, Technical Officer, WHO Digital Health and Innovation Department



Integrative health and well-being at all ages

The WHO TM programme was established in 1976 to integrate TM into health care systems. This session aimed to understand its possibilities and learn from the experiences of integration by Member States.

- The way forward is to learn from best practices and expand them globally, and monitor core health system building blocks while maintaining the integration of TM at different levels.
- We need to regard TM as equally important as other systems of medicine for its integration to be beneficial.
- While it is clear that TM can be beneficial for all ages with available medical care, we need to evaluate the real benefits of integrating TM into society; for example, the extent to which TM can contribute to achieving UHC.
- We need international consensus on key terms such as traditional, complementary and integrative medicine.
- The term "medicine" is problematic in some regions as health workers cannot
 prescribe medicine if they are not a medical doctor; one suggestion is to replace
 the term TM with traditional health care or traditional, complementary and
 integrative health care.







"It is high time that we all start considering the integration of TM into the health care system of our countries. This will definitely help us in achieving our shared goal of UHC. I urge everyone present in this forum to start working in this direction."

Hon. Mohan Bahadur Basnet Minister of Health and Population, Nepal



"The amalgam of modern medicine, with its strengths in scientific rigour, experimentation, continued innovation and evidence base, blended with basic practices of life drawn from Ayurveda, yoga and traditional medical systems, must evolve into an integrated medicine of tomorrow."

Dr Gururaj Mutalik Former Director, WHO



"Successful integration of TM in the health care system requires national policy and long-term commitment. Sharing evidence and related information on herbal medicine is imperative to promote better understanding and trust among both the prescriber and user."

Dr Thongchai Lertwilairatanapong Director-General of the Department of Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand



"We believe an integrative approach reduces cost and increases coverage. It strengthens primary health care and takes us closer to UHC."

Dr Vinod Paul Member, National Institution for Transforming India















Session speakers (from left to right):

Dr Heather Boon, Professor, Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Toronto, Canada

Dr Nessma El-Nabawy, General Manager, General Administration for Registration of Herbal Products, Egypt

Dr Ricardo Ghelman, Chair, Brazilian Academic Consortium for Integrative Health, and Professor of the Department of Medicine on Primary Care, Faculty of Medicine of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Professor Stefano Masiero, Professor and Chair of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, School of Medicine, University of Padua, Italy

Dr Vinod Paul, Member, National Institution for Transforming India

Dr Tido von Schoen-Angerer, Vice-President of the International Federation of Anthroposophic Medical Associations, and co-founder of the Centre for Integrative Paediatrics at the Fribourg Cantonal Hospital, Switzerland

Dr Maria Endang Sumiwi, Director General of Public Health, Ministry of Health, Indonesia



Summit declaration and valedictory session

The Global Summit garnered a strong commitment from participants to harness the potential of evidence-based TM to improve progress towards UHC and the SDGs by 2030, for the health and well-being of people and the planet.



"The right translation of 'Vasudeiva Kutumbakam' is now: 'One World, One Family, One Planetary Health, One Future, One Summit, One Health System'."

Professor Bhushan Patwardhan

National Research Professor-Ayush, Interdisciplinary School of Health Science, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, India

Session speakers (from left to right):











Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India

Dr Abdullah Obaid Alanazi, Consultant, Counsellor General and CEO, National Centre for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Dr Hiba Boujnah, Head of International Cooperation and Partnerships for Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Germany

Dr Hans Klüge, Director, WHO Regional Office for Europe

Nguyen Thi Huong Lien, Permanent member of the Vietnam Oriental Traditional Medicine Association, and Vice-President of the Vietnam Science and Technology Business Association, Viet Nam









Dr Tido von Schoen-Angerer, President of the International Federation of Anthroposophic Medical Associations, and co-founder of the Centre for Integrative Paediatrics, Fribourg Cantonal Hospital, Switzerland Francisco Cali Tzay, Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, United Nations, Human Rights Council

Dr Susan Wieland, Co-Chairperson of the first WHO TM Global Summit External Advisory Group, and Director of the Cochrane Complementary Medicine Field

Moderator: Rini Simon Khanna

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The Gujarat Declaration

The Gujarat Declaration summarizes the evidence-informed outcomes of the Global Summit on Traditional Medicine and was unanimously adopted by meeting participants. It sets out an action agenda towards the implementation of evidence-based TM interventions and approaches. The Declaration supports the goal of UHC and health related SDGs, and the application of science, technology, innovation and knowledge exchange to validate and unlock the contribution of TM and Indigenous knowledge to advance planetary health and people's health and well-being across the life course.

Read the full Declaration here





Key aims of the Declaration are as follows:

- Recognition of Indigenous knowledge and TM: Emphasizes the value of Indigenous knowledge and TM systems for global health, acknowledging their historical use and contribution.
- Integration into health systems: Calls for evidence-based integration of TM into national health policies and systems, promoting safety, accessibility and efficacy through rigorous scientific validation and inclusion in health guidelines.
- Support for SDGs: Commits to scaling up TM interventions to achieve UHC and support healthrelated SDGs, emphasizing holistic, culturally appropriate approaches to health care.
- Formulation of ethical and human rights
 frameworks: Advocates for the protection of
 Indigenous rights, including self-determination and
 control over lands and resources, and promotes
 ethical practices in TM research and practice,
 ensuring respect for diversity and gender equality.

Closing ceremony and vote of thanks

On behalf of WHO, Dr Bruce Aylward, Assistant Director-General, thanked the Government of India led by Prime Minister Modi for its visionary leadership in hosting the Global Summit. He also appreciated the active participation in the summit of WHO regional directors from Europe and South-East Asia, and all six WHO regional offices, and the efforts of the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre in coordinating the summit.

Dr Rajesh Kotecha of the Ministry of Ayush appreciated the excellent contribution of summit participants and commended the Gujarat Declaration in setting the future agenda of the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre and the upcoming WHO Traditional Medicine strategy (2025–2034), and meeting the expectations of the global scientific community.

Finally, Dr Shyama Kuruvilla of the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre closed the Global Summit with a vote of thanks and expressed her gratitude to the hosts and all participants.







Session speakers (from left to right):

Dr Bruce Aylward, WHO

Dr Rajesh Kotecha, Ministry of Ayush

Dr Shyama Kuruvilla, WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre

Exhibition at the Global Summit

The exhibition at the Global Summit was a regional and global showcase of TM, taking inspiration from the Greek Earth goddess "Gaia". TM is intrinsically linked to the Earth through medicinal plants, water, air and the natural environment. The exhibition therefore included a central installation of a "wishing tree", drawn from the Indian "kalpavrikha" – a mythological wish-fulfilling divine tree – to represent TM's connection to the Earth and its deep cultural roots. The installation provided a space for people to share their experiences. There was also a stage where yoga sessions were held.

In the exhibition spaces, each WHO region presented TM, Indigenous knowledge and natural resources through case studies and posters; the WHO Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine Unit showcased the history of WHO's work on TM; and the Artificial Intelligence Dome created by the WHO Digital Health and Innovation Department showed the future of TM using state-of-the-art technologies. Participants were encouraged to engage with these interactive exhibits, learn and draw inspiration from their content, and share with WHO their wishes for TM and its contribution to planetary health and well-being for all.













G20 Health Ministers' Meeting

The first WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit was held alongside the G20 Health Ministers' Meeting in Gandhinagar, from 18 to 19 August 2023, under India's G20 presidency. Health ministers deliberated on major global health priorities and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen global health. During its session on 18 August, G20 ministers shared insights on the potential of integrating TM into global health care systems.



Dr Nísia Trindade Lima, Minister of Health, Brazil:

Discussed the interaction of Indigenous Peoples' rights to health in Brazil with regulatory milestones, emphasizing primary health care as a means to enhance access and reduce health inequalities.

Carla Moretti, National Director of International Affairs, Ministry of Health, Argentina:

Encouraged registration of Indigenous groups and communities with government bodies that have the objective of providing access to health care services.

Dr Matume Joseph Phaahla, Minister of Health, South Africa:

Highlighted South Africa's commitment to primary health care, echoing the Alma Ata Declaration.

Budi Gunadi Sadikin, Minister of Health, Indonesia:

Highlighted the historical link between botany and medicine, underscoring how ancient medicinal recipes have laid the foundation for modern remedies.

Dr Goh Cheng Soon, Director of Traditional and Complementary Medicine Division, Ministry of Health, Malaysia:

Highlighted the positioning of traditional and complementary medicine in Malaysia as a vital component within the health care framework, acting in harmony alongside modern medical practices to enhance overall well-being.

Session speakers:

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India
Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General
Dr M D J Abeygunawardena, Commissioner, Department of Ayurveda, Sri Lanka
Dr Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of Ayush, India
Dr Mansukhbhai Mandaviya, Minister for Health and Family Welfare, India
Dr Nicole Redvers, Western Research Chair and Director, Indigenous Planetary Health,
Schulich Interfaculty Programme in Public Health, University of Western Ontario, Canada
Sarbananda Sonowal, Minister of Ayush, India





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