



**PMAC** | PRINCE MAHIDOL  
AWARD CONFERENCE **2022**

**S6**

**PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE: STOPPING THE NEXT  
OUTBREAK BEFORE IT BECOMES A PANDEMIC**

## | BACKGROUND

Despite years of planning and investment since the 2005 International Health Regulations were published by WHO, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed how remarkably unprepared the world was to control the spread and recover from the effects of SARS-CoV-2. Among several analyses of what went wrong with the response, in May 2021, The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness & Response issued a comprehensive main report of its findings and recommendations for action to curb the COVID-19 pandemic and to ensure that any future infectious disease outbreak does not become another catastrophic pandemic.

This PMAC-2022 parallel session will address some elements central to stopping the next outbreak before it becomes a pandemic. Panelists will be asked to identify enabling factors and likely barriers; and to address specific action steps to achieve the goal of preventing another pandemic.

Key themes are:

1. Investing in preparedness and coordination now to prevent or mitigate the next crisis
2. The future of broadly-acting antiviral agents and universal vaccines for coronaviruses, influenza and other high-consequence infectious agents
3. Building global manufacturing capacity for rapid antiviral and vaccine production, including mRNA-based vaccines, towards full global access
4. Establishing a pre-negotiated global platform for access to vaccines, tools and supplies

## | OBJECTIVES

To identify enabling factors and likely barriers; and to illuminate specific action steps to achieve the goal of preventing another pandemic.



Panelist

## Soumya Swaminathan

*Chief Scientist*

World Health Organization  
Switzerland

Dr Soumya Swaminathan was appointed WHO's first Chief Scientist in March 2019. A paediatrician from India and a globally recognized researcher on tuberculosis and HIV, she brings with her 30 years of experience in clinical care and research and has worked throughout her career to translate research into impactful programmes. Dr Swaminathan was Secretary to the Government of India for Health Research and Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research from 2015 to 2017. In that position, she focused on bringing science and evidence into health policymaking, building research capacity in Indian medical schools and forging south-south partnerships in health sciences. From 2009 to 2011, she also served as Coordinator of the UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases in Geneva. She received her academic training in India, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, and has published more than 450 peer-reviewed publications and book chapters. She is an elected Foreign Fellow of the US National Academy of Medicine and a Fellow of all three science academies in India. The Science division's role is to ensure that WHO stays ahead of the curve and leverages advances in science and technology for public health and clinical care, as well as ensuring that the norms, standards and guidelines produced by WHO are scientifically excellent, relevant and timely. Her vision is to ensure that WHO is at the cutting edge of science and is able to translate new knowledge into meaningful impact on population health worldwide.