

## HIGHLIGHTS: CLOSING SESSION: HIGH-LEVEL ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON WAYS FORWARD

Moderated by VP Scott Morris, Asian Development Bank

The closing high-level panel of the Symposium on Multilateral Financing for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, moderated by ADB Vice-President Scott Morris, convened senior policymakers from Asia and the Pacific to discuss urgent reforms needed for global health security financing. The panel featured leaders from Maldives, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, and ADB.

### Key Themes and Insights

1. **Speed and Predictability of Financing** – Maldives Minister of State for Health H.E. Aminath Shirna emphasized that small island developing states face acute vulnerabilities due to geographic isolation, import reliance, and dispersed populations. She called for fast, automatic financing mechanisms triggered by pre-agreed risk indicators, reflecting countries' structural vulnerabilities rather than income classification alone, and ensuring financing translates into timely access to essential medicines, diagnostics, and logistics support.
2. **Equitable Access and Governance** – Uzbekistan Deputy Minister of Health Farkhodjon Tashpulatov highlighted the inequities faced by smaller economies during COVID-19, including delayed vaccine access despite global initiatives like COVAX. He stressed the need for improved global governance and fairer allocation systems to guarantee timely funding and access to countermeasures for lower-middle-income countries.
3. **Closing the Financing Gap** – Indonesia Deputy Minister and Acting Director General at the Ministry of Health drg. Murti Utami reflected on lessons from Indonesia's leadership during the G20 in creating the Pandemic Fund. She noted that while the Fund catalyzed over \$2 billion in co-financing, demand exceeded supply by more than \$7 billion. She urged multilateral development banks (MDBs) to adopt "wartime" financing models—fast, flexible, and blended approaches incorporating grants, loans, philanthropic contributions, and innovative instruments such as pandemic bonds—to mobilize resources at scale.

4. ADB's Role and Next Steps – Ms. Ayako Inagaki, ADB Senior Sector Director for Health and Social Development, outlined ADB's strategic role in strengthening national health systems, facilitating regional cooperation on manufacturing, regulatory harmonization, and data sharing, and designing flexible, rapid-response financial instruments for health emergencies. She underscored the need for peacetime investments in surveillance, laboratories, supply chains, and community engagement to enable faster and more effective crisis responses.

### **Consensus and Call to Action**

Panelists agreed on the urgent need for:

- Dedicated, replenishable global and regional financing mechanisms tailored for vulnerable countries
- Blended and innovative financing solutions to close funding gaps
- Stronger regional cooperation for joint procurement, stockpiling, and coordinated response
- Sustained political leadership and cross-sector dialogue, especially involving finance ministries alongside health actors

### **Conclusion**

VP Morris closed the session by emphasizing that pandemic preparedness financing must match the urgency and scale of financial responses to economic crises. He noted that the insights gathered will inform ADB's evolving agenda and contribute to the broader global dialogue on building resilient, inclusive health security systems.