

2015 Health & Humanitarian Logistics Conference • South Africa

The 7th annual Conference on Health & Humanitarian Logistics (HHL) took place on November 18-20, in Johannesburg at the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). Co-organizers include the Georgia Tech Center for Health & Humanitarian Systems (H&HS), INSEAD Humanitarian Research Group, MIT Humanitarian Response Lab, and Northeastern University, with generous sponsorship from the UPS Foundation, the William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan, Imperial Health Sciences and IMRES Netherlands, Johnson & Johnson, Georgia Tech, and Coca-Cola.

Over 150 participants from 33 different countries around the world engaged in dialogue about challenges facing the global health and humanitarian sectors, as well as successful models of organizational collaboration and supply chain practices. Speakers and participants represented 85 different organizations, including the private sector/foundations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia, and government/military. The conference provided a unique opportunity for sharing practices, identifying potential new strategies, policies, and investments, and building cross-sector partnerships.

Participants and speakers applauded the diversity of backgrounds, such as the representation of public and private sector organizations with academia and government, the unique opportunity for exchange among both the global health and humanitarian response communities, as well as the opportunities for in-depth discussion.

David Sarley, Senior Program Officer in Global Health at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation commented: "In addition to the great quality of the presentations themselves, it is the richness of dialogue taking place in the side sessions that is most valuable... there are many more conversations to be continued from what was started here." Dr. Iain Barton, Managing Director of Imperial Health Sciences, commented that this conference was the first time he had heard representatives from different sectors and organizations really "listen to each other" in order to learn from common challenges. Panel and workshop topics included infrastructure and capacity building in developing countries for improved long-term resilience and preparing for and responding to complex humanitarian emergencies.

Speakers highlighted many successful practices and challenges, such as a last-mile healthcare delivery platform to deliver life-saving medicines to rural areas of Africa, the importance of utilizing the private sector supply chain for "what it does best," focusing public health resources on strategic integration and policy leadership, transparency and coordination among international agencies and first responders during a complex emergency, and government health systems strategies for infectious disease eradication, and empowering local leaders and first responders to ensure lasting change and a cultural shift toward improving healthcare capacity. Keynote speaker and IFRC Head of the Africa region, Alasan Senghore, called for "cultural diplomacy," stating that "if the community is empowered, we will be much better off, and more lives can be saved."

In addition to the panel and workshop sessions, the conference offered a variety of site visits including the Unjani Container "Clinics-in-a-Box" project and the Northstar Alliance mobile clinic, the IMPERIAL Health Sciences warehousing and logistics center and UTi Pharmaceutical distribution center, and a township "rehabilitation" and sustainability project. Participants expressed overwhelming support for the site visits and the opportunity to learn first-hand about new models and practices. The information presented and ideas generated at the conference led to connections and future collaborations within and across organizations and have the potential to improve efficiency and effectiveness for many players in the health and humanitarian

sectors. We look forward to bringing together another diverse group of participants in 2016!

For further information about participants and speakers, panel and workshop presentations, and photos and videos, please visit the conference website: <http://www.scl.gatech.edu/humlog2015>.

To connect with the GA Tech Center for Health & Humanitarian Systems about future collaboration and events, please visit our website hhscenter.gatech.edu or email msmithgall@isye.gatech.edu.

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Countries Represented

