Policy Dialogue: Smart Governance in Healthcare

"*Mitigating Risks, Enhancing Compliance, and Boosting Stakeholder Trust*"

Venue: Office of the Secretary, Health, Delhi Secretariat, New Delhi
Organized by: UN Global Compact Network India (UN GCNI)

INTRODUCTION

In response to the evolving needs of India's healthcare system, the UN Global Compact Network India (UN GCNI) organized a high-level Policy Dialogue on Smart Governance in Healthcare on 11th June 2025 at the Office of the Secretary, Health, Delhi Secretariat, New Delhi. The dialogue was held under the theme "Mitigating Risks, Enhancing Compliance, and Boosting Stakeholder Trust" and aimed to convene key stakeholders from across sectors to deliberate on governance reforms, public-private collaboration, and patient-centric policymaking. The event successfully brought together 43 participants, including senior officials from the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), the Office of the Secretary Health, leading hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, healthcare providers, civil society organizations/ patient organizations, business associations and corporates.

RATIONALE

India's healthcare system is currently undergoing rapid transformation driven by policy reforms, technology integration, and increasing demands for accountability and transparency. However, the sector continues to face significant challenges related to fragmented service delivery, weak regulatory mechanisms, inconsistent compliance, and gaps in trust among stakeholders. Against this backdrop, the policy dialogue was conceived as a platform for multi-stakeholder engagement aimed at advancing smart governance practices across the healthcare ecosystem. The initiative builds on UN GCNI's ongoing commitment to support the UN Sustainable Development Goals (particularly SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being and SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) through collaborative, evidence-based policy frameworks.

OBJECTIVES OF THE DIALOGUE

The primary objectives of the policy dialogue were as follows:

- To highlight and promote evidence-based policy recommendations that can be integrated into national and sub-national health governance structures.

- To foster dialogue between public and private healthcare stakeholders to enhance compliance, accountability, and transparency.

- To identify and showcase scalable innovations and digital tools that support smart governance.

- To strengthen public-private partnerships and inclusive decision-making models.

- To develop actionable frameworks that facilitate regulatory reform while avoiding overburdening institutions.

- To promote voluntary adoption of integrity-led practices within the healthcare sector.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE DIALOGUE

The dialogue commenced with an opening session that included welcome remarks by senior representatives of UN GCNI and the Delhi Health Secretariat. The speakers emphasized the urgent need to reimagine healthcare governance in India by embracing transparency, data-driven decision-making, and stakeholder inclusion. The role of effective governance in enhancing patient outcomes, mitigating risks, and restoring trust in public institutions was highlighted as central to the discussion.

The next session involved a structured presentation of key recommendations drawn from extensive stakeholder consultations conducted by UN GCNI in the preceding months. These recommendations centered on actionable reforms in healthcare governance—ranging from institutional ethics, digital compliance monitoring, and grievance redressal systems, to improved interoperability between private and public health information systems.

Following the presentation, a high-level panel discussion took place involving senior officials from MoHFW, healthcare industry leaders, and representatives from regulatory bodies. The discussion revolved around the need for convergence of regulatory goals with operational realities, promoting flexible governance frameworks that are adaptable to local contexts. The panelists explored solutions to reduce administrative burdens while enhancing regulatory oversight, emphasizing the importance of co-creating governance tools with end-users—healthcare providers, patients, and community organizations.

A critical highlight of the event was the Sectoral Perspectives Panel, which included diverse stakeholders from pharmaceutical companies, hospitals, civil society organizations, and patient advocacy groups. Each speaker provided an in-depth sectoral analysis of governance-related challenges and opportunities. Discussions spanned the need for ethical marketing practices in pharmaceuticals, the importance of internal compliance systems within hospitals, the role of community monitoring mechanisms led by NGOs, and ways to amplify patient voices in the design and monitoring of healthcare policies.

The concluding session consolidated the insights from the day's deliberations. UN GCNI reaffirmed its commitment to developing a Policy Recommendations Document based on the dialogue's outcomes, to be shared with relevant ministries and industry associations. Participant expressed strong interest in continuing the dialogue through follow-up workshops and policy briefings, including the possibility of pilot interventions to test the proposed governance frameworks.

In a significant step toward strengthening transparency, accountability, and value-based healthcare in India, Dr. Somnath Singh formally presented key knowledge products developed by the UN Global Compact Network India. These included the Best Practice Compendium on Anti-Corruption for Healthcare, the report titled Evaluation of Health Systems in India: Decoding the Impact on Health Governance, Transparency, and Infrastructure, and the Consensus Framework for Pharma: A Consensus Approach to Ethical Collaboration. These publications were handed over to Dr. S.B. Deepak Kumar, Principal Secretary/Secretary (Health and Family Welfare), Government of NCT of Delhi, Dr. Tapasya Raghav, Special Secretary – Health, Government of NCT of Delhi. Dr. K. Madan Gopal, Advisor and Head, Public Health Administration, National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, Rajib Sen, Senior Adviser, Health & WCD, Niti Aayog, Government of India, Dr. Heman Meena, Director, Health & WCD, Niti Aayog, Government of India, Dr. Karan Thakur, Vice President of Apollo Hospitals Group and Mr. Mukesh Kumar Sharma, Executive Director at Population Services International (India).

The documents were also disseminated among all participants to promote collective learning and action for integrity-driven healthcare governance.

Speaker:
Dr. Jatinder Singh, Deputy Secretary General, PHDCCI

Dr. Singh introduced the national challenges in healthcare governance and laid the foundation for an informed, inclusive discussion. He emphasized the alignment of this initiative with the national health priorities and SDG commitments.

Dr. Somnath Singh, Deputy Director, the UN Global Compact Network India (UN GCNI)

delivered a compelling presentation rooted in research, field engagement, and cross-sectoral collaboration. Drawing from UN GCNI's extensive work, Dr. Singh presented key insights from three cornerstone publications:

1. Anti-Corruption Best Practices Compendium
2. Health Systems Evaluation Study
3. Consensus Framework for Ethical Collaboration

He emphasized that these frameworks are not merely academic models but practical instruments that can be embedded into state and national policy, institutional governance, and sectoral operations.

In his remarks, Dr. Singh explained how the Anti-Corruption Compendium offers actionable strategies to promote transparency, reduce leakages, and strengthen ethical behavior in both public and private health institutions.

Dr. S.B. Deepak Kumar, Principal Secretary — Health and Family Welfare, Government of NCT of Delhi

Dr. Kumar highlighted the Government of Delhi's focus on primary healthcare strengthening, digital innovation, and equity in service delivery, especially for underserved communities. He stressed that smart governance must be guided by evidence, inclusivity, and public trust, and called for stronger collaborations across government departments, private providers, and civil society.

He commended the role of platforms like this policy dialogue in shaping forward-looking health policies, and reaffirmed Delhi's commitment to delivering efficient, transparent, and people-centric healthcare aligned with national priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Dr. Tapasya Raghav, Special Secretary — Health, Government of NCT of Delhi.

Dr. Raghav spoke passionately about Delhi's ongoing efforts to integrate digital health platforms, improve real-time monitoring, and enhance last-mile service delivery, especially through mohalla clinics and decentralized health centers. She emphasized that smart governance must be inclusive, with a focus on vulnerable populations, particularly women, children, and the urban poor.

She also noted the critical role of transparency and participatory planning in improving public trust and service outcomes. Dr. Raghav applauded the initiative led by UN GCNI and partners for fostering such policy platforms that encourage collaboration across sectors and governance levels.

Mr. K Modan Gopal, Advisor and Head, Public HealthAdministarion, National Health System Resource Center , Ministry of Health and family welfare, Government of India.

Mr. K. Modan Gopal, Advisor and Head of Public Health Administration at the National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, brought an insightful administrative and policy lens to the dialogue. With decades of experience in strengthening public health systems, he emphasized the critical role of governance reforms in enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency, and equity of healthcare delivery in India.

In his address, Mr. Gopal highlighted the urgent need for capacity building at the grassroots level, along with robust systems for monitoring, evaluation, and accountability. He stressed that smart governance must prioritize last-mile service delivery, especially in underserved and remote regions, while remaining adaptable to India's diverse healthcare needs.

Mr. Rajib Kumar Sen, Senior Advisor — Health and WCD, NITI Aayog, Government of India

Mr. Rajib Kumar Sen, Senior Advisor — Health and Women & Child Development at NITI Aayog, brought deep insight to the policy dialogue, reflecting on the urgent need to reform and future-proof India's healthcare governance. He emphasized that achieving resilient and inclusive health systems requires a strategic shift from fragmented service delivery to integrated, technology-enabled, and community-centered approaches. Drawing on his extensive policy experience,

H Mr. Sen highlighted the role of NITI Aayog in fostering cross-sectoral synergies that align healthcare with nutrition, gender, and child development goals.

Dr. Heman Kumar Meena, Director Health and WCD, Niti Ayog, Gov of India.

Mr. Hemant Kumar Meena, Director – Health and Women & Child Development at NITI Aayog, addressed the gathering with a visionary perspective on India's evolving healthcare governance landscape. He emphasized the importance of integrated, data-driven, and citizen-centric policies to achieve sustainable health outcomes.

Highlighting the pivotal role of NITI Aayog in shaping national policy, Mr. Meena spoke about the government's continued commitment to strengthening institutional frameworks, promoting evidence-based decision-making, and driving cross-sectoral convergence—particularly in the domains of health and social development.

Dr. Karan Thakur, Vice President of Apollo Hospitals Group

In his remarks, Dr. Thakur emphasized that the private sector plays a pivotal role not only in service delivery but also in policy advocacy, system strengthening, and public health preparedness. He highlighted Apollo Hospitals' commitment to quality, patient safety, and ethical healthcare delivery, rooted in both operational excellence and social responsibility.

Dr. Thakur pointed out that true smart governance must include data-driven decision-making, seamless digital health integration, and a regulatory environment that fosters transparency without creating compliance fatigue. He advocated for enabling policies that empower hospitals to innovate while ensuring alignment with national health goals.

Mr. Mukesh Kumar Sharma, Executive Director at Population Services International (India)

He spoke about PSI's experience in advancing behavioral change communication, health system strengthening, and last-mile service delivery, especially among underserved and vulnerable populations. Mr. Sharma stressed that smart healthcare governance must not only be data- and technology-driven, but also deeply rooted in human-centered design, equity, and social accountability.

Highlighting the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration, Mr. Sharma called for the co-creation of solutions involving communities, local governments, civil society, and the private sector. He noted that scaling successful models of care — particularly in areas like family planning, adolescent health, and primary care — requires flexible policies, adaptive governance, and strong grassroots engagement.

KEY OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

Policy Influence

The dialogue led to the formation of an informal working group under UN GCNI to further refine and advance a national framework on Smart Governance in Healthcare. The framework will incorporate recommendations from the dialogue and align with national health missions, particularly focusing on strengthening governance at the state level.

Enhanced Stakeholder Synergy

The event catalyzed new collaborative opportunities between regulators and pharmaceutical companies to promote voluntary codes of ethics and compliance. Hospitals and civil society groups discussed possibilities of co-developing patient feedback mechanisms and grievance redressal protocols.

Advancing Transparency and Innovation

The dialogue highlighted the value of digital health innovations—such as real-time compliance dashboards, AI-enabled risk detection tools, and open data platforms—as enablers of governance reform. Several participants committed to exploring these technologies within their operational models.

Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing

UN GCNI committed to organizing follow-up capacity-building programs, including roundtables with hospital administrators, pharmaceutical compliance officers, and health IT innovators. These sessions will aim to operationalize the recommendations made during the policy dialogue.

CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

The Policy Dialogue on Smart Governance in Healthcare successfully established a high-impact, multi-stakeholder platform to discuss systemic reforms in healthcare governance. By convening stakeholders from across the public sector, industry, and civil society, the event reflected the growing consensus on the need for participatory, transparent, and ethical healthcare governance. The constructive discussions, diverse perspectives, and strategic alignment achieved during the dialogue have laid the foundation for concrete policy interventions and collaborative models.

Going forward, UN GCNI will:

- Finalize and circulate a comprehensive **Policy Recommendations Document**.
- Engage with the Ministry of Health, Delhi Secretariat, and national institutions for pilot implementation.
- Facilitate state-level dialogues and cross-learning workshops to build momentum.
- Promote voluntary adoption of recommended practices through its network of 300+ corporate members and institutional partners.

The participants appreciated the initiative as timely, relevant, and highly actionable in addressing current and emerging governance challenges in India's healthcare sector.