



PRINCE MAHIDOL AWARD CONFERENCE 2026



**NAVIGATING GLOBAL DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITIONS
THROUGH INNOVATIVE POLICY: AN EQUITY-CENTERED APPROACH**



Message from the Co-Chairs of the International Organizing Committee



The world stands at a critical demographic crossroads. Unprecedented shifts in global population dynamics – aging societies, declining fertility rates, youth bulges, rapid urbanization, and evolving migration patterns – are fundamentally reshaping our social, economic, and health landscapes. These transitions intersect with widening inequalities, strained health systems, economic vulnerabilities, and escalating climate pressures, creating complex challenges that demand innovative, equity-centered policy responses.



The demographic transformations we are witnessing present both profound challenges and remarkable opportunities. High-income countries grapple with aging populations and shrinking workforces, while low- and middle-income nations manage burgeoning youth populations requiring expanded infrastructure, education, and employment opportunities. Strategic investments in human capital – through education, vocational training, and lifelong learning – alongside infrastructure that supports intergenerational integration, can transform these demographic shifts into catalysts for inclusive economic growth and social progress.



Aging populations in middle- and high-income countries are creating unprecedented pressures on health systems, social protection mechanisms, and economic structures. As the proportion of older adults increases, healthcare systems must adapt to rising non-communicable disease burdens and growing long-term care needs. Simultaneously, comprehensive strategies addressing housing, urban planning, and community well-being become essential for supporting aging individuals while maintaining social cohesion and economic vitality.



These demographic transitions do not occur in isolation. They intersect with geopolitical tensions, technological disruptions, and planetary health crises, amplifying systemic risks and deepening inequalities. The convergence of demographic shifts with climate change, armed conflicts, and economic instability creates complex challenges that disproportionately impact vulnerable populations, including people with disabilities, migrants, indigenous communities, gender minorities, and informal workers.



Moreover, the rapid advancement of technologies, particularly artificial intelligence and digital health systems, presents both opportunities and risks. While these innovations offer potential solutions for addressing demographic challenges – from technology-assisted elder care to improved health service delivery – they also risk creating new divides if not implemented equitably and inclusively.



We must recognize that our response to these demographic transitions will shape the future of humanity. The policies we implement today will determine whether we can harness demographic dividends, build resilient health systems, foster intergenerational solidarity, and create inclusive societies that leave no one behind. This requires moving beyond traditional silos to embrace holistic, life-course approaches that address the needs of all age groups while protecting our planet for future generations.



The Conference this year will provide a unique platform to explore innovative policy responses to global demographic transitions through an equity-centered lens. It provides an exceptional opportunity for all stakeholders, including governments, the United Nations System, academic institutions, civil society



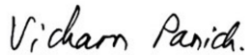
organizations, professional associations, non-governmental and faith-based organizations, philanthropic foundations, youth activists, and the private sector to come together to debate and develop actionable solutions that address the multifaceted nature of demographic change.

Collectively, we have the responsibility and opportunity to chart a course for "Navigating Global Demographic Transitions through Innovative Policy: An Equity-centered Approach." Through evidence-based discussions, cross-sectoral collaboration, and shared learning from diverse contexts, we can identify and implement strategies that transform demographic challenges into opportunities for building more equitable, sustainable, and resilient societies.

As the Co-chairs of this important global Conference, we encourage all participants to take full advantage of the opportunities that PMAC 2026 has to offer. In addition to your participation in the insightful Conference programme that includes plenary discussions and parallel sessions with many renowned speakers exploring three critical sub-themes – Demographic Transitions, Social Equity, and Population Diversity; Demographic Shifts and Health System Transformation; and Governing Health for People and Planet: Geopolitics in Flux – we encourage you to actively engage in the exciting range of pre-conference side meetings where these vital topics will be examined in greater depth.

We would like to acknowledge and extend our appreciation to the many individuals and organizations whose tireless efforts helped bring the Conference to life. We especially thank the Prince Mahidol Award Foundation and the Royal Thai Government for their exceptional support and leadership, as well as the PMAC Secretariat for providing their overall guidance, day-to-day support, and an incredible team spirit.

We look forward to welcoming you to Bangkok!



Dr. Vicharn PANICH
Chair
Prince Mahidol Award
Conference



Ms. Winnie BYANYIMA
Co-Chair
Joint United Nations
Programme on HIV/AIDS



Ms. June KUNUGI
Co-Chair
United Nations Children's Fund



Dr. Jeremy FARRAR
Co-Chair
World Health Organization



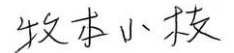
Dr. David WILSON
Co-Chair
The World Bank



Mr. Marcos NETO
Co-Chair
United Nations Development
Programme



Dr. Marijke WIJNROKS
Co-Chair
The Global Fund to Fight
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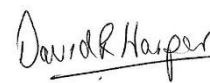
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