

## **PL 2**

### **DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS AND HEALTH SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION**

## | BACKGROUND

Global demographic transitions—including aging populations and declining fertility rates, youth bulges, and complex migration patterns—pose significant challenges to health systems worldwide[1],2. These will result in structural changes with around 55 per cent of the world’s population living in towns and cities, projected to be 70 per cent by 2050[2]. However, changing demographics will impact health systems if we do not prepare; for example, countries with the most increase in non-communicable diseases, are least prepared to address in terms of their health systems[3]. Investing in health systems will be critical to tackle these challenges[4]. Key issues on demographic transitions relate to changing disease burden, healthcare infrastructure and access, aging population and long-term care, workforce and economic impact, maternal and child health, health policy and financing and technological advancements. In addition, there is a need to think of a life course approach to health and well-being and how health systems can be designed for this purpose[5]. Overall, there is therefore a need for a holistic approach to adapt health systems to respond to the shifts in demographics.

[1] PMAC 2026 overarching concept note: 1. PMAC2026 Concept Note as of 24 Jan (1).pdf

[2] Shifting Demographics | United Nations

[3] The Changing Demographics of Global Health

[4] Global health 2035: a world converging within a generation - The Lancet

[5] The life-course approach: from theory to practice: case stories from two small countries in Europe

## | OBJECTIVES

The objective of this plenary is to highlight the imperative for inclusive and sustainable health systems that are resilient to shifting demographics, recognising the need for multi-sectoral, life-course approaches in the context of current global developments, to improve population health and well-being.



Speaker

## Nicole Spieker

*Chief Executive Officer*

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Nicole Spieker is a healthcare leader with over 20 years of frontline experience in Africa, dedicated to building inclusive, high-quality health systems that serve the most vulnerable. Trained as a scientist, she has devoted her career to designing and scaling innovative models that transform healthcare delivery and financing across the continent.

She is the Chief Executive Officer of PharmAccess, an international not-for-profit organization that strengthens health systems in sub-Saharan Africa by improving quality, expanding access, and leveraging digital innovation. Under her leadership, PharmAccess advances its mission to make affordable, quality healthcare accessible to low-income groups through the introduction of standards, the development of health insurance systems, and affordable financing for clinics. A strong advocate for digital transformation, Nicole is shaping the organization's vision around unlocking the power of data and AI for the public good, ensuring patients are at the centre with agency over their health data and advancing data sovereignty in Africa.

Nicole is the founder of SafeCare, an internationally recognized methodology that supports healthcare providers to improve step by step against globally acknowledged (ISQua) quality standards. SafeCare has been adopted by both public and private partners in more than 15 countries across the globe. She also serves on the board of CarePay, a Kenyan-Dutch health technology company, and sits on the advisory boards of EPHIC, a World Bank/IFC initiative promoting ethical standards in healthcare, and ICHOM, the International Consortium for Health Outcomes Measurement.

Prior to joining PharmAccess, Nicole served as Director of Clinical Support Services at the Aga Khan Health Services in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and as Assistant Professor at the Aga Khan University. She holds a PhD in Molecular Genetics from the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands.