Dr. Madhava Ram Balakrishnan

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Throughout my career, I have been driven by a simple but powerful mission: to make vaccines safer, health systems stronger, and public trust deeper.

With over thirty years of experience in global public health, I have worked alongside ministries, communities, and frontline workers across the world — from the villages in India to thinktanks in Geneva — to build systems that protect millions from vaccine-preventable diseases by ensuring its safety.

As a Medical Officer at the World Health Organization Headquarters in Geneva, I lead global initiatives in vaccine pharmacovigilance and safety surveillance. I have had the privilege to design and implement some of WHO's cornerstone

tools, including the Global Vaccine Safety Blueprint, causality assessment methods and multiple AEFI surveillance frameworks that today guide countries across every region.

The journey has been both strategic and hands-on: developing cutting-edge surveillance platforms like VAEIMS and VigiMobile, managing vaccine safety crises from Sri Lanka to Brazil, and coordinating the global safety response during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each experience has reinforced my belief that data, transparency, and clear communication are as crucial as medical science itself.

Before WHO Geneva, I served with WHO's South-East Asia Regional Office, supporting countries in measles elimination and polio surveillance, and earlier with WHO India, helping establish one of the world's largest AFP surveillance networks during the critical years of polio eradication. My foundation was laid during my time in academic public health, where teaching and fieldwork first ignited my passion for epidemiology and service.

My academic background includes an M.D. in Community Health from Christian Medical College, Vellore, a DNB in Social and Preventive Medicine, and training in Biostatistics and Disaster Preparedness.

Over the years, I have contributed to the scientific literature with publications in Vaccine, The Lancet, BMJ Global Health, and WHO technical reports — with a special focus on vaccine safety, immunization stress-related responses, and innovative pharmacovigilance methods.

I speak English fluently, along with Tamil and Malayalam, and have working knowledge of Hindi.

Today, as the landscape of public health grows more complex, I remain committed to bridging scientific innovation with real- world solutions, mentoring young professionals, and supporting countries to strengthen the trust that communities place in vaccines — a trust that ultimately saves lives.

I am honored to join the 4th PGIVAC, to exchange ideas, and to continue learning from colleagues around the world.			