



THE  
GLOBAL  
SURGERY  
FOUNDATION



#WHA76  
@surgfoundation



76th World Health Assembly

# Summary Report

## Strengthening Health Systems through upscaling Surgical Care

Moving Dialogue to Implementation: Sustainable Financing



PROGRAM IN GLOBAL SURGERY  
AND SOCIAL CHANGE  
Harvard Medical School

In association with

*Johnson & Johnson*

## Event summary

**Date:** 23 May 2023 | **Time:** 18:00 to 21:00 | **Place:** College Sismondi, Geneva, Switzerland & virtually

## Attendance

### Participants



**293**  
participants  
(in-person)



**602**  
participants  
total



**309**  
participants  
(online)

### Gender split (in-person)

Female **51%**

Male **49%**

### Global reach



**52**  
countries  
represented  
(in-person)



**94**  
countries  
represented  
(in-person  
& virtual)



**404K**  
people reached on  
Twitter with event  
messaging

## Opening Addresses



**Dr. Geoff Ibbotson**  
Executive Director,  
The Global Surgery Foundation



**Mr. Jonas Pasquier**  
Acting Deputy Permanent Representative,  
Permanent Mission of Switzerland



**Dr. Anshu Banerjee**  
Director for the Department of Maternal,  
Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and Ageing,  
WHO



**Dr. Sabrina Asturias**  
Chief of Emergency Surgery,  
Roosevelt Hospital and Professor of Surgery  
at Francisco Marroquin University

## Panel discussion synopsis

The GSF side event brought together Global Health leaders from all sectors including UN member states, United Nations, academia, civil society, and industry in a discussion. Similar to the [event in 2022](#), this year's event was ranked as one of the best attended of the entire WHA week.

The **key messages** discussed included:

- **The investment case for safe and affordable surgery is fully established.** It is now time to focus on concrete actions and results – particularly with regard to commitment to funding to move towards meaningful implementation with patient impact.
- To achieve impact, the GSF officially announced the creation of its catalytic fund – **SURGfund** – to support frontline implementation of surgical care programming.
- **Panelists reported on their achievements** over the past 12 months.
  - Creation of SURGfund by GSF ([learn more](#))
  - Implementation of four projects with patient impact (GSF) ([learn more](#))
  - Prioritization and the creation of the specialized GSF program in Women's Health ([learn more](#))
  - The creation of the UN Global Surgery Learning Hub (GSF, UNITAR and J&J) ([learn more](#))
  - USAID delivered “safe blood systems” to 3 countries, “oxygen facilities” to 50 countries, and c-section capabilities were expanded in 9 countries.
- To move the dialogue to implementation with impact for patients, substantial funding will be necessary. **SURGfund is now well positioned to be the channel for pooled resource mobilization for surgical care.**
- It is important to **demonstrate tangible results** for the investments made – lives-saved, economic benefits.
- To be successful, **programming cannot function in isolation** but integrate in all levels of health care.
- A comprehensive Surgery Care System is **the golden thread** going through health-system strengthening approaches needed for Universal Health Coverage (UHC).





## Key commitments by the panellists

Panellists were asked to share commitments to strengthen surgical systems that can be delivered in the course of a year, and for which they will be accountable.



**Prof. Rifat Atun**  
President of the GSF Board,  
Professor of Global Health Systems  
at Harvard University

- To broaden and deepen GSF's partnerships and ensure that they were inclusive, focusing on synergies and yielding results.
- To increase funding 2-3 fold into SURGFund.
- To use these funds beyond countries GSF is currently working in, directed to frontliners in surgical, obstetric and anaesthetic care.



**Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka**  
Former Deputy-President of South Africa and  
UN Under- Secretary-General/Executive Director of  
UN Women, Member of the GSF Board

- To simplify and disseminate the message of the critical importance of Women's Health to reach the entire population.
- To expand GSF's Women's Health programmes and partnerships, focusing on accessibility to c-section as part of maternal health services, and prevention and management of cervical cancer and breast cancer.



**Dr. Atul Gawande**  
Assistant Administrator for Global Health,  
USAID

- To measure and deliver data on how USAID-funded programmes are being impactful in Global Surgery.
- To extend the MOMENTUM programme beyond the 9 existing countries delivering safe caesarean section (contingent on decisions around the US debt ceiling which may impact on USAID budget).



**Dr. Alfredo Borrero Vega**  
Vice-President of  
the Republic of Ecuador

- Ecuador committed to strengthen their health system through the upscaling of surgical care.
- The Vice President welcomed the creation of the SURGFund - an important mechanism to fill the gap for financing implementation.
- A call to action to the G7 and G20 countries, along with Private Industry and financial institutions to contribute to SURGFund.



**Ms. Nácia Pupo Taylor**  
**Senior Director, Global Public Health**  
**and Health Care Systems at Johnson & Johnson**

- To continue to invest in surgical training and capacity building in Global Surgery through the support of the SURGhub in 2024.
- To continue the call to action for the private sector community to join efforts for Global Surgery and participate in fora such as this to advocate for sustainable financing in Global Health.
- To achieve proof of concept for J&J's pilot project in Malawi, and scale it into a sustainable model for managing long bone fractures.

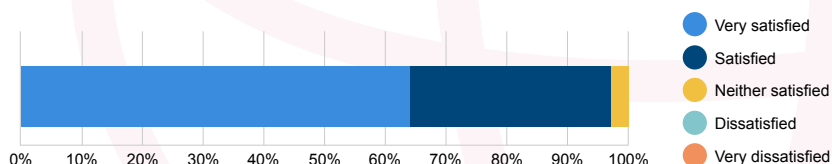
## Event outcomes and key next steps

- 1) The GSF announced **SURGFund** as the new financial mechanism for pooled resource mobilization for surgical care systems.
- 2) The panelists and participants committed to **concrete steps** to help build strong and resilient health systems through upscaling surgical care.
- 3) The GSF announced its **Women's Health Programme**, with the goal to address women's surgical needs and to catalyse meaningful and sustained impact in Maternal Health, Cervical Cancer, and Breast Cancer.

<https://www.globalsurgeryfoundation.org/news/2023/surgfund-announcement>

## Participant feedback

**97.4% participants indicated positive feedback on the event**



Here you can watch the recording of the event



We would like to recognize and share our sincere gratitude to all our UN Member State Co-Sponsors. This show of solidarity and support for the event demonstrates the importance of the topic of surgical care system strengthening.

Co-sponsoring Member States



We also want to thank our Co-Founding Organizational Members and Co-Sponsoring Partners for the support and participation in this joint effort.

Co-sponsoring Organisations



In association with



## Event Impressions









For related videos, please see:

<https://vimeo.com/827934876>

<https://vimeo.com/824020257>



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[www.globalsurgeryfoundation.org](http://www.globalsurgeryfoundation.org)