

15<sup>th</sup> Annual Summit on

# Vaccines and Immunization

February 20-21, 2017 Berlin, Germany

## Vaccines for key unmet medical (infectious disease) needs in the developing world: Learning and reflections from the India polio eradication success story

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Over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, vaccination has been the most effective medical intervention to reduce morbidity and mortality caused by infectious diseases. It is estimated that vaccines save around 2–3 million lives per year worldwide. However, even today, we do not have vaccines to prevent many noteworthy infectious diseases, and access issues preclude available vaccines from being utilized to their fullest potential. Key unmet medical (infectious disease) needs, more so for the developing world, include HIV, malaria, TB, dengue, and others. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is responding to these unmet needs through the efforts of the ASEAN-Network for Drugs, Diagnostics, Vaccines, and Traditional Medicines Innovation (ASEAN-NDI). This is important considering that infectious tropical diseases remain prevalent, emerging, and reemerging in the region. India has invested significant health resources towards its ambitious Polio Eradication Program, and is now enjoying the fruits of success. Effectively using the Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV), the key pillars of the Polio Eradication strategy, have visibly demonstrated effective results, and have provided us with useful learning. Moreover, the innovative creation and use of Social Mobilization Network (SMNet) has also provided us with important conceptual and practical lessons for health communication, social mobilization, and for partnerships in global health. Over 2017, and beyond, India will have to grapple with significant challenges - these will need to be addressed with a sense of vigilance and perseverance. There is reason to hope that the challenges of infectious diseases in the 21st century will be adequately addressed by the research, development, access and use of vaccines. Beyond the science, success will largely depend on the “human connect”, and will be facilitated through shared vision, common purpose, effective partnerships, and sound leadership.

### Biography

Aamir Shaikh is a “Pharmaceutical Physician” who began his health care industry career in 1998 as a Medical Advisor, with Pfizer India. His early experience with vaccines was related to educational and promotional endeavors with a Hepatitis B vaccine in India. Over the next decade, he successfully delivered in positions of increasing responsibility and leadership, culminating in his role as Director, Medical Affairs & Research for Pfizer India. In 2007, he moved on from Pfizer to start his own small Health Care Consultancy, Assansa. Throughout his health care career, and now through Assansa, his key endeavor is “Helping Health Care Professionals Grow.” He believes this can be achieved through an identified personal philosophy and mindset - one which embraces knowledge, science, business, and ethics.

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