

## **WHO FOUNDATION APPOINTS ANIL SONI AS CEO**

*Expands Independent Board with Diverse Experts*

*Launches Global Fundraising Campaign #Invested*

*Targets \$1 Billion in Donations for Global Health by 2023*

**GENEVA – 7 December 2020** – The WHO Foundation has appointed Anil Soni as its inaugural Chief Executive Officer, effective January 1, 2021. The Foundation, an independent grant-making agency headquartered in Geneva, was launched in May 2020 to work alongside the World Health Organization (WHO) and the global health community to address the world’s most pressing global health challenges. Soni joins the Foundation from Viatriis, a global healthcare company, where he has served as Head of Global Infectious Diseases. As CEO, Soni will accelerate the Foundation’s work to invest in innovative, evidence-based initiatives that support WHO in delivering on its mission to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all.

Professor Thomas Zeltner, Founder and Chairman of the Board of the WHO Foundation, said, “Anil is a dynamic leader with deep experience across all aspects of global public health. From his work at Viatriis where he has led the development and introduction of medicines to treat HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, to his leadership of the Clinton Health Access Initiative, and his time at the Global Fund, he has demonstrated his ability to work across public, private, and nonprofit sectors and build successful new organizations from the ground up. On behalf of the Board, we are delighted to have Anil lead the Foundation at this critical moment for the future of global health.”

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, said, “Anil is a proven innovator in global health who has spent two decades in service of communities affected by HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. He earned my trust when he and his team at the Clinton Health Access Initiative worked side by side with the Ministry of Health in Ethiopia to expand access to treatment and strengthen the management of our health centers. Anil has a unique set of skills that spans the public and private sectors, and his leadership of the Foundation will provide invaluable support to the mission of the WHO and the billions of people who depend on it.”

Anil Soni, incoming CEO of the WHO Foundation, said, “We are at a critical juncture for global public health. After months of combatting the COVID-19 pandemic, there is hope for several successful vaccine candidates. Beyond this crucial step, the path to recovery necessitates expanded investment in the many health priorities that have been compromised in recent months -- from drops in vaccine coverage and HIV treatment to delays in cancer treatment. The WHO Foundation represents a unique new opportunity for everyone in the world to play their part in tackling these challenges and in promoting global health, through a strong and vibrant WHO. I’m thrilled to be joining the Foundation at such a critical moment and look forward to working with the Board to realize the Foundation’s mission.”

A seasoned global health expert, Soni brings 20 years of experience working across public, private, and nonprofit sectors to expand healthcare access in low and middle-income countries. While at Viatrix, he has been instrumental in shortening the amount of time needed to make low-cost medicines available in high-burden settings. This was most recently reflected by the approval of an HIV medicine recommended by the WHO for infants born with HIV, at a 75% reduction in cost to the current treatment. Such success reflects Soni's experience building some of the most innovative and impactful organizations in global health over the last decade, notably the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the Clinton Health Access Initiative. In addition to advisory roles with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the MDG Health Alliance, Soni joins the WHO Foundation with a strong track record of mobilizing resources and advocating for global health priorities, as demonstrated through his leadership of the Friends of the Global Fight in the United States.

### **WHO Foundation's Path Forward**

As a separate legal entity, the WHO Foundation seeks to complement and strengthen WHO's efforts to address global health. To do so, it acts as a platform for new types of public-private engagement, while protecting the WHO's neutrality and independence as the world's leading international health authority. The Foundation can then invest in innovative and research-based initiatives that can advance WHO's mission, playing a pivotal role in helping WHO deliver on its ambitions amidst an increasingly uncertain economic climate.

A defining aspect of the Foundation is its ability to create new opportunities for major donors, corporate partners and members of the general public to engage with WHO. The **COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for WHO**, which WHO and the [UN Foundation](#) launched earlier in 2020, together with the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation, helped test the potential for broader support to WHO by raising \$238 million in corporate and individual pledges for its and partners' COVID-19 response efforts.

"The success of the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund is an important illustration of the willingness that exists across sectors to support the WHO and what is possible when communities around the world come together to invest in health," Soni said.

To help deliver on its ambitions, the Foundation has expanded its board to include a globally representative group of experts reflecting diverse perspectives from public, private and civil society sectors. Chaired by Dr. Thomas Zeltner, the [board](#) includes Clare Akamanzi; Bob Carter; Senait Fisseha, MD, JD; Dr. Silvia Gold; Arun Jain; Nahed Mohammed Taher, PhD; and Rebecca Enonchong.

According to Zeltner, "Over the next three years, the WHO Foundation aims to raise \$1 billion to directly impact the health of people around the world. That will change the face of what the WHO can do for the world. The Foundation has been built on a vision of the world where

everyone invests in every life. We believe global health is our collective responsibility, and we want to give everyone the opportunity to contribute.”

To advance its efforts, the WHO Foundation recently launched the **#invested campaign**, with the call to action: 1. Invest a donation (<https://donate-healthmyworld.who.foundation/>), 2. Invest energy in a healthy lifestyle, and 3. Invest influence to inspire others. The campaign aims to raise awareness about the unique opportunity the WHO Foundation offers for everyone to play a role in global health and to engage the general public, corporate partners, and major donors in investing in the health of their world. For more information see the WHO Foundation’s [social media](#) channels.

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## About the WHO Foundation

The WHO Foundation is an independent grant-making foundation, based in Geneva, that sets out to protect the health and well-being of everyone in every part of the world, working alongside the World Health Organization and the global health community. It aims to support donors, scientists, experts, implementing partners, and advocates around the world in rapidly finding new and better solutions to the most pressing global health challenges of today and tomorrow.

The Foundation will target evidence-based initiatives that support WHO in delivering Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 (To ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all). It is focused on reducing health risks, averting pandemics, better managing diseases, and creating stronger health systems. It tackles these areas by building awareness and supporting its partners, including WHO, so that every life is invested in and the world is ready for any health emergency that may arise.

WHO Foundation. Together we have so much to achieve.  
[www.who.foundation](http://www.who.foundation)

## About Anil Soni

Anil Soni is a leader in global health who has worked for 20 years in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to expand healthcare access in low and middle-income countries. Effective January 1, 2021, he will become CEO of the WHO Foundation. Soni will join the Foundation from Viatrix where he has served as Head of Global Infectious Diseases, working across the pharmaceutical company to accelerate the availability of new and innovative treatments.

Anil was closely involved in the early years of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, serving as the Advisor to the Executive Director from 2002-2004 and then as the Founding Executive Director of Friends of the Global Fight from 2004-2005. He served as the CEO of the Clinton Health Access Initiative, where he worked from 2005-2010, and oversaw the rapid expansion of the organization.

Anil has been a senior advisor to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the MDG Health Alliance. He is an alumnus of McKinsey and Harvard College and serves on the board of





The Marshall Project.

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