

“Solar will lead to innovations in resilient healthcare”

- *The Roundtable engaged ministers and senior government officials steering health, energy & power portfolios in their respective countries.*
- *Discussions showcased scalable business models in solar for healthcare across different ISA member countries and how these can be leveraged to build resilient health infrastructure and achieve the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG3).*

Geneva, Switzerland | 25 May 2023: On the sidelines of the World Health Assembly 2023, International Solar Alliance (ISA) with Health Innovation & Investment Exchange (HIEx), with support of the European Union, as knowledge partner, held a high-level roundtable discussion on building resilient healthcare systems through solar. **Mr Michel Sidibe, Chair, HIEX Board & Special Envoy - African Medicines Agency, Former Minister of Health & Social Affairs, Mali,** and **Dr Ajay Mathur, Director General, ISA** inaugurated the session on ‘Role of Solar in Building Resilient Health and SDGs’. Health, energy, and power ministers from Egypt, Guinea, Maldives, Côte d'Ivoire, Comoros, Ethiopia, and Benin were in attendance at the programme.

The event highlighted scalable business models and lessons, underlined best practices in adopting solar for health and discussed nuances of implementation and opportunities. In his inaugural address, **Mr Michel Sidibe, Chair, HIEX Board & Special Envoy - African Medicines Agency, Former Minister of Health & Social Affairs, Mali,** noted, "Today, we stand at a critical juncture, where immediate action is required to address the dire state of electricity in Africa. With over one billion people lacking reliable power or having zero access, a large population is deprived of necessities. In this pressing situation, prioritising the deployment of solar PV systems emerges as a sustainable and cost-effective option. We can empower healthcare in underserved regions by harnessing the sun's boundless power. The solarisation of healthcare bridges the gaps in electricity supply and availability and builds climate resilience in a continent prone to climate change. Solar energy is the ultimate solution, enabling us to bridge these gaps, combat air pollution, reduce carbon emissions, and pave the way for a brighter, healthier future for all."

The Roundtable deliberations spotlighted ISA CARES, an exclusive initiative dedicated to solarising primary healthcare centres. "ISA CARES, noted **Dr Ajay Mathur, Director General, ISA,** is driven by the vision of establishing a resilient energy infrastructure to provide essential healthcare services, enhance health outcomes, strengthen healthcare capacity, and bolster preparedness. This initiative is paramount to dealing with exigencies, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. By adopting a blended financing model, we are implementing several demonstration projects in LDCs and SIDS Member Countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Guyana, Niger, Comoros, Mauritius, Uganda, and Fiji. These projects support the electrification of public healthcare services, significantly benefiting rural and marginalised communities. Moreover, these facilities also create new employment opportunities locally and contribute to the growth of allied industries, including agriculture and education."

Mr Khaled Abdel Ghaffar, Minister of Higher Education & Scientific Research, Egypt, in his intervention, said, "Solar energy, abundantly available and free of cost, is a remarkable resource that transcends ownership and remains immune to the perils of importation and price fluctuations. Egypt's ambitious construction of a 1.6-gigawatt solar facility at Aswan is a shining example of harnessing this potential. This ground-breaking initiative is a beacon of progress, demonstrating how solar power can provide clean and sustainable energy to Africa, Europe, and the Mediterranean regions. When I visit Geneva next, I eagerly look forward to sharing the inspiring story of how this remarkable facility is illuminating lives, connecting regions, and fostering a brighter future for us all."

Representatives from African countries also highlighted the need of a diverse and balanced energy mix. The discussions highlighted the need of building capacity, tapping into local resources through sustainable financial models, and storage solutions that can ensure a reliable and consistent supply. **Mr Ahmed Adil**, representing the Maldivian Health Ministry, spoke of the abundance of sunlight for the country throughout the year and, thus, the manifold opportunities it offers.

On a mission to establish 25,000 solar-powered health centres by 2026, Magsaysay Award winner **Mr Harish Hande, Co-founder of SELCO**, said, "Basis a transformative collaboration with the IKEA Foundation, Selco's ambitious initiative aims to create a template of success stories across diverse Indian topographies, ultimately enabling global replication. With its vast potential, India can serve as the research and development lab for the world in this endeavour. The necessary financial resources are available; we need the unwavering will to make it happen."

Mr Joshua Wycliffe, COO, ISA, remarked, "The magnitude of the opportunity before us requires a unified effort, synergy, cooperation, and enhanced coordination among countries. In this endeavour, the International Solar Alliance (ISA) has emerged as a driving force, introducing innovative interventions such as the SolarX Startup Challenge and the Solar Finance Facility. These initiatives serve as catalysts for change, fostering entrepreneurship, innovation, and access to finance in the solar energy sector. By encouraging collaboration and providing platforms for global participation, the ISA is propelling us towards a brighter and more sustainable future. Together, we can seize the immense potential of solar energy and create a world where clean and affordable power is accessible to all."

"We are excited about the prospect of strengthening political leadership on innovation and investments in the solarisation of health centres and achieving SDG 3," said **Mr Pradeep Kakkattil, CEO, HIEEx**. "Through high-level discussions, we emphasised the importance of the Solar for Health initiative and its potential to transform healthcare systems. Our event showcased over 25 cutting-edge innovations that have been carefully selected to address the specific health needs of various countries, thereby making significant contributions towards SDG 3. The special segment on women innovators recognised their immense potential to fast-track progress in this direction. Additionally, we are hopeful this endeavour will serve as a platform for facilitating partnerships between countries, innovators, and investors."

On the sidelines, a Health Innovation Marketplace was set up that showcased 25+ cutting-edge innovations with the potential for scaling and creating impact for SDG3, particularly in resource-limited settings. The innovations were selected through a wide sourcing approach utilising an open call for solutions and the HIEEx partnerships networks. All the innovations were selected based on a solid rights base, potential for impact, readiness for scaling, and sustainability, with exclusive exhibits showcasing 'Solar for Health' and select innovators from WINFund, a non-profit fund investing in African women entrepreneurs improving access to healthcare. Miniature models of successful demonstration projects from individual countries were placed.

The event deliberations helped match needs, solutions, and investments while facilitating partnerships between countries, innovators, and investors. The event is a stepping stone for partnerships and collaborations to help drive progress towards a sustainable and equitable future for all, especially in building universal resilient healthcare.

About International Solar Alliance

The International Solar Alliance is an international organisation with 115 Member and Signatory countries. It works with governments to improve energy access and security worldwide and promote solar power as a sustainable transition to a carbon-neutral future. ISA's mission is to unlock US\$ 1 trillion of investments in solar by 2030 while reducing the cost of the technology and its financing. It promotes the use of solar energy in the agriculture, health, transport, and power generation sectors. ISA Member Countries are driving change by enacting policies and regulations, sharing best practices, agreeing on common standards, and mobilising investments. Through this work, ISA has identified and designed and tested new business models for solar projects; supported governments to make their energy legislation and policies solar-friendly through Ease of Doing Solar analytics and advisory; pooled demand for solar technology from different countries; and drove down costs; improved access to finance by reducing the risks and making the sector more attractive to private investment; increased access to solar training, data and insights for solar engineers and energy policymakers. With the signing and ratification of the ISA Framework Agreement by 15 countries on 6 December 2017, ISA became the first international intergovernmental organisation to be headquartered in India. ISA is partnering with multilateral development banks (MDBs), development financial institutions (DFIs), private and public sector organisations, civil society, and other international institutions to deploy cost-effective and transformational solutions through solar energy, especially in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS). More information at <https://isolaralliance.org/>

About Health Innovation and Investment Exchange (HIEx)

Health Innovation and Investment Exchange (HIEx) platform was launched during the World Health Assembly (WHA) in 2019. Visited by over 50 Ministers of Health and more than 2000 visitors, this unique exchange platform was enthusiastically embraced by participating innovators, investors, and visitors alike.

Since its launch, the HIEx has matured into a multi-layered platform that acts as a neutral facilitator and broker of innovative solutions for health, particularly in the global South. HIEx has been working with countries on the analysis of health priorities and needs, curating tailored health innovations solutions to match the needs, and brokering investments to ensure scale and sustainability of their implementation.

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