

Catalysing Action for Impact



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About the Philanthropy Asia Alliance and the Philanthropy Asia Summit

At a time of escalating global challenges — from climate change and rising inequality to gaps in education, health, and sustainable development — the need for urgent, coordinated action has never been more apparent.

The Philanthropy Asia Alliance (PAA) was launched in September 2023, with over 80 global members and partners, on the belief that no single organisation can tackle these interconnected issues alone. Powered by the ideas and resources of a community of like-minded members and partners, PAA has funded 19 catalytic projects and mobilised more than US\$37.5 million to drive collective action for People and Planet in its first year¹. By fostering public-private-philanthropic partnerships, PAA is helping to catalyse scalable solutions across Asia and beyond.



The Philanthropy Asia Summit (PAS) provides a platform to drive this collaborative action. Organised by PAA, and supported by Temasek Trust (TT) and Temasek Foundation (TF), PAS 2025 was the fifth and largest edition to date. Held from 5-7 May 2025, and co-located with Ecosperity Week by Temasek in Singapore, PAS 2025 convened over 1,100 participants from 27 countries under the theme **“Priming Asia for Good”**.

Featuring 102 global speakers across 28 sessions, the Summit offered a rich and wide-ranging programme that underscored the catalytic potential of collaborative philanthropy and spotlighted Asia’s unique position to drive global progress across the interconnected areas of climate, education, and health.

From inspiring insights by eminent leaders including Tharman Shanmugaratnam, President of the Republic of Singapore, and Bill Gates, Chair and Trustee, Gates Foundation, to showcases of scalable, high-impact innovations, PAS 2025 highlighted both the complexity of the issues we face — and the real momentum building to solve them.

This report captures key takeaways from the Summit, reflecting the power of collaboration, the importance of trust and shared purpose, and our firm belief that together, we can prime Asia for good.



Key Takeaways

PAS 2025 was convened to bring together partners from across sectors and borders to scale collective impact on some of the world’s most urgent challenges. At a time of fragmented efforts and rising complexity, PAS aims to serve as a platform to align resources, surface scalable solutions, and foster purposeful collaboration. The following key takeaways reflect this ambition – highlighting how collective action, informed by the insights and momentum from PAS 2025, can drive meaningful and lasting change.

1

Philanthropy Must Be Bolder

Philanthropy has the unique ability to deploy fast, risk-tolerant capital, especially where commercial incentives are weak and public spending is constrained. At PAS 2025, this catalytic role was spotlighted across discussions on seeding innovation, blended finance, and impact investing. When guided by clear theories of change and focused on deliberate outcomes, philanthropic capital can unlock broader investment and accelerate development at scale.

2

Scalability Is the Real Test

Without a clear path to scale, promising initiatives across climate, health, and education risk becoming resource-intensive efforts with limited long-term value. PAS participants called for a shift from fragmented pilots to coordinated implementation, with philanthropy helping to de-risk early-stage solutions and strengthen models that can be adapted across geographies. In Asia, where many viable approaches already exist, the opportunity lies in aligning funding, delivery partners, and policy to scale what works.

3

Champion Collaboration, Not Uniformity

The Summit highlighted that collaboration works best when it draws on the distinct strengths of funders, implementers, policymakers, and local communities. But effective collaboration doesn’t happen on its own. Every partnership benefits from facilitative leadership – whether by a funder, implementer, or local anchor – to align stakeholders and sustain momentum over time. As echoed across multiple sessions, solutions are most powerful when built with, not for, the communities they aim to serve.

4

Shared Purpose Alone Is Not Enough

PAS 2025 underscored the need to move from intention to action, where shared goals are underpinned by common frameworks and robust impact measurement. Adopting a systems thinking approach helps stakeholders to recognise cross-sector interdependencies and shape more coherent, integrated responses. The launch of the new *Health for Human Potential* and *Just Energy Transition* Communities demonstrates how structured platforms for collaboration can align vision, capital, and expertise to advance lasting solutions.

5

Development Must Leave No One Behind

Equity was a recurring theme throughout PAS 2025, especially in discussions around climate resilience and inclusive education. Whether through investing in women-led solutions, supporting underserved communities, or advancing tech and AI as enablers for inclusion, participants called for philanthropy to actively address systemic disparities. Progress must be inclusive, equitable and sustainable, and not achieved at the expense of people or the planet.

Philanthropy as a Force for Systems Change

Philanthropy has a vital role to play in tackling the pressing, interconnected challenges we face today. By **complementing government action, bridging funding gaps, and enabling cross-sector collaboration**, philanthropic capital can accelerate innovation, strengthen systems, and build more resilient communities.

This call to action came into sharp focus during a compelling fireside chat at the Summit between Tharman Shanmugaratnam, President of the Republic of Singapore, and Bill Gates, Chair and Trustee, Gates Foundation, moderated by Jennifer Lewis, Co-Head, Collaboration & Partnership, Temasek Trust. Their conversation highlighted how philanthropy, when strategically directed, can spark large-scale transformation through innovation, capacity-building, and partnerships.

Against a backdrop of shrinking global aid, President Tharman called for developing capacity within countries to be a renewed priority.



Bill Gates, Chair and Trustee, Gates Foundation; Tharman Shanmugaratnam, President of the Republic of Singapore and Distinguished Patron of PAA

“We need a step up in resources – public sector resources within countries, philanthropic money, and private finance – but it’s not just about volumes, but effectiveness. So if you think of how we can best deploy even a billion dollars, I think we first have to refocus on building up the domestic capacity within countries for them to be more self-sufficient.”

Tharman Shanmugaratnam, President of the Republic of Singapore, Distinguished Patron of PAA

Bill Gates reflected on the impact of targeted philanthropic investment in global health, noting that the under-five child mortality rate had halved in the past two decades due to coordinated efforts. He pointed to Asia's growing influence in health innovation:

“Asian innovation is a part of why I’m so excited about the progress we can make in health. More and more, the innovation is about cutting-edge genomics data that, when combined with AI, will help us understand the disease prevalence... across all the different populations here.”

Bill Gates, Chair and Trustee, Gates Foundation

Their insights were echoed by leaders from PAA and Temasek Trust. Lim Boon Heng, Chairman of PAA and Temasek Holdings, affirmed philanthropy's shift towards more integrated, long-term giving, and expressed optimism at seeing stronger regional collaboration in Asia.

Shaun Seow, CEO of PAA, stressed that philanthropic capital must be deployed boldly to enable research and unlock follow-on investment, while Desmond Kuek, CEO of Temasek Trust, reiterated Asia's growing leadership and the increasingly global relevance of regional solutions.



Shaun Seow, CEO, PAA

Throughout the Summit, the unique power of philanthropy — to challenge systems, take risks, and act where others hesitate — was a recurring theme. This spirit of bold, catalytic action captured the essence of PAS 2025's theme: “Priming Asia for Good”.

It reflected a collective belief that **Asia is not just ready to lead, but uniquely positioned to shape globally-relevant solutions** by drawing on its diverse communities, scaling efforts through collaboration, and investing in innovation.

“We must have the appetite to think of philanthropic capital as risk capital. If we don’t support the pilot, or research or offtake demand, the bigger pools of capital, public and private, won’t come in to scale.”

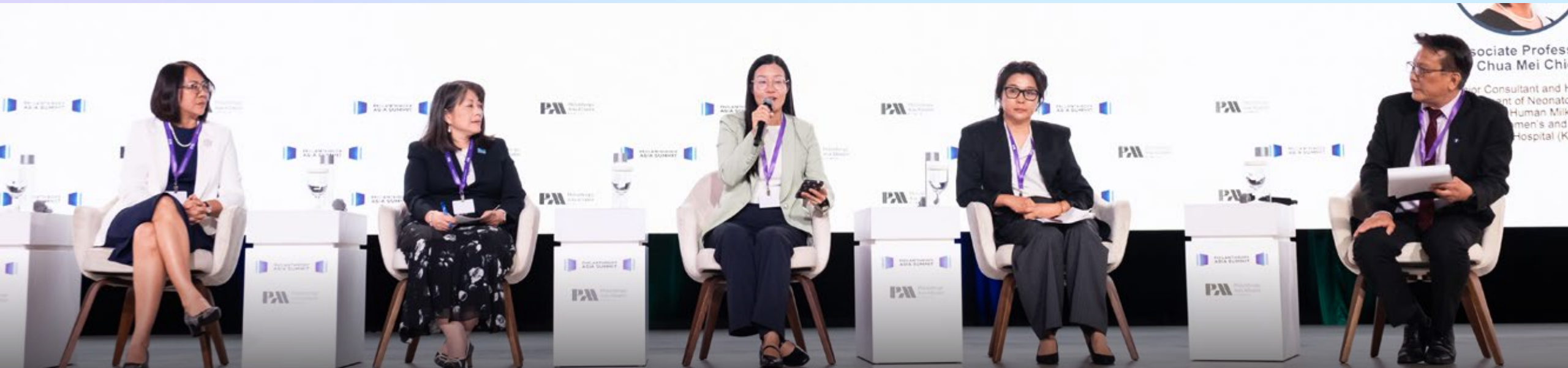
Shaun Seow, CEO, PAA

DEVELOPMENT & HUMAN CAPITAL



Health and Nutrition Challenges in Asia: A Triple Burden Amid Climate Uncertainty

Asia faces a **triple burden of malnutrition** — **undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and rising obesity** — affecting millions across the region. While the world's food systems produce enough calories to feed everyone, many still lack access to the nutrients essential for health and overall well-being.



From left: A/Prof Dr Chua Mei Chien, KK Women's and Children's Hospital; June Kunugi, UNICEF; Asst Prof Wisuwat Songnuan, Mahidol University; Prof Zhang Cullin, National University of Singapore; Benedict Cheong, Temasek Trust

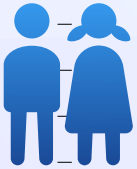
Climate change is compounding the crisis by threatening both the quantity and nutritional value of food, potentially undermining decades of progress in health and development.

By 2030, an estimated 21 million children aged 5-19 in Asia will be living with obesity², highlighting the interlinked crises of under- and over-nutrition.

Despite the sobering statistics, all forms of malnutrition are preventable. Reducing its prevalence requires providing children and their families access to nutritious diets, essential services, and practices that support healthy growth and lifelong well-being.

During the opening plenary of PAS 2025, speakers stressed that nutrition is **not just a health issue — it underpins human capital, educational outcomes, economic productivity, and intergenerational equity.**

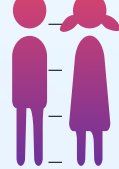
Asia's malnutrition challenge³



76.6 million
children under five are stunted

STUNTING

Refers to a child who is too short for his or her age. Children affected by stunting can suffer severe irreversible physical and cognitive damage that accompanies stunted growth. The devastating consequences of stunting can last a lifetime and even affect the next generation.



31.6 million
are wasted

WASTING

Refers to a child who is too thin for his or her height. Wasting is the result of recent rapid weight loss or the failure to gain weight. A child who is moderately or severely wasted has an increased risk of death, but treatment is possible.



17.7 million
are overweight

OVERWEIGHT

Refers to a child who is too heavy for his or her height. This form of malnutrition results when energy intakes from food and beverages exceed children's energy requirements. Overweight increases the risk of diet-related noncommunicable diseases later in life.

Source: UNICEF / WHO / World Bank Group Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates: Key findings of the 2023 edition. Available at <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240073791>

The Case for Cross-Sector Collaboration

Throughout the discussions, one message stood out: **solving the nutrition challenge requires bold, coordinated action across government, business, and philanthropy.** Speakers called for collective investment in local innovations and scalable, proven interventions.

Examples of effective cross-sector collaborations include:

- **Indonesia** has reduced childhood stunting by over 10 percentage points in a decade through strong government and philanthropic partnerships⁴
- The **Child Nutrition Fund**, led by UNICEF and supported by partners including the Gates Foundation, aims to reach 270 million women and children, with a recent US\$500 million pledge from the Bezos family
- The **KK Human Milk Bank** in Singapore, launched with support from Temasek Foundation, provides vital donor milk for vulnerable preterm infants
- UNDP's **Solar for Health initiative**, supported by donors such as The Global Fund, has brought solar power to 1,200 health centres across Asia and Africa, ensuring uninterrupted health services




These initiatives highlight the power of partnerships to deliver impact at scale — protecting vulnerable populations and building more resilient health systems in the face of global shocks.



The First 1,000 Days: A Critical Window for Lifelong Impact

Maternal and child health sits at the heart of sustainable development, shaping not only individual well-being but also the long-term social and economic trajectory of communities and nations. At PAS 2025, experts repeatedly stressed the importance of the first 1,000 days of life, from conception to a child's second birthday, as a critical window for shaping lifelong outcomes.

The nutrition a child receives during this period profoundly influences their ability to grow, learn, and thrive, with lasting consequences for themselves and their families^{5,6}. Science shows that children who receive poor nutrition in these early years are more likely to:

-  Develop cognitive and learning delays
-  Face lifelong health issues
-  Struggle to find stable employment

In this way, poor nutrition early in life can deepen social inequities and diminish future opportunities, particularly for children from already disadvantaged backgrounds.

Speakers also underscored the pivotal role of maternal nutrition. A mother's diet before and during pregnancy can have lasting effects on her child's health, increasing the risk of:

- Poor fetal development
- Non-communicable diseases like obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease
- Disruptions to the gut microbiome, which can affect neurodevelopment and social behaviour

Some studies suggest that poor maternal nutrition may even have transgenerational effects, potentially influencing the health of future generations.

US\$2.4 trillion

in economic gains could be unlocked by global nutrition investments in the next decade

Building Nutritional Security through Agricultural Innovation

Investing in agriculture and food innovation is key to securing Asia's nutritional future. Speakers on the nutrition panel called for a “new green revolution” that emphasises food diversity, soil health, and the integration of agritech and data science to create more resilient, sustainable food systems.

Crucially, this transformation must also ensure more equitable access to the food we already produce, while incentivising the cultivation of nutrient-rich foods that are often in short supply. Achieving these goals will require supporting smallholder farmers, nurturing local entrepreneurs, and fostering cross-sector collaboration.

An Investment with Lasting Returns

The economic cost of malnutrition is significant. It reduces GDP, increases healthcare spending, and widens inequality. But the returns on investing in maternal and child nutrition are unmatched. Panelists noted that global nutrition investments over the next decade could unlock US\$2.4 trillion in economic gains.

The call to action was clear: philanthropy, governments, and business must align efforts and co-invest in nutrition and maternal and child health, especially during the first 1,000 days. These investments strengthen food systems, ease pressure on health systems, and help build healthier, more resilient populations.



Advancing Equity through Education

Across Asia and the world, deep-rooted disparities persist, disproportionately affecting girls, marginalised youth, and rural communities. However, promising models are emerging that demonstrate how **systemic reforms and community-led solutions can bridge the gap**.

Speakers at the *Horizons: Women in Education* session highlighted how gender-focused reforms under India's National Education Policy — including the creation of a dedicated gender fund and improved infrastructure — helped increase girls' enrolment in schools. Building 425,000 school toilets between 2014 and 2015 was cited as a key intervention to reduce dropout rates among girls, particularly those affected by inadequate facilities during menstruation.

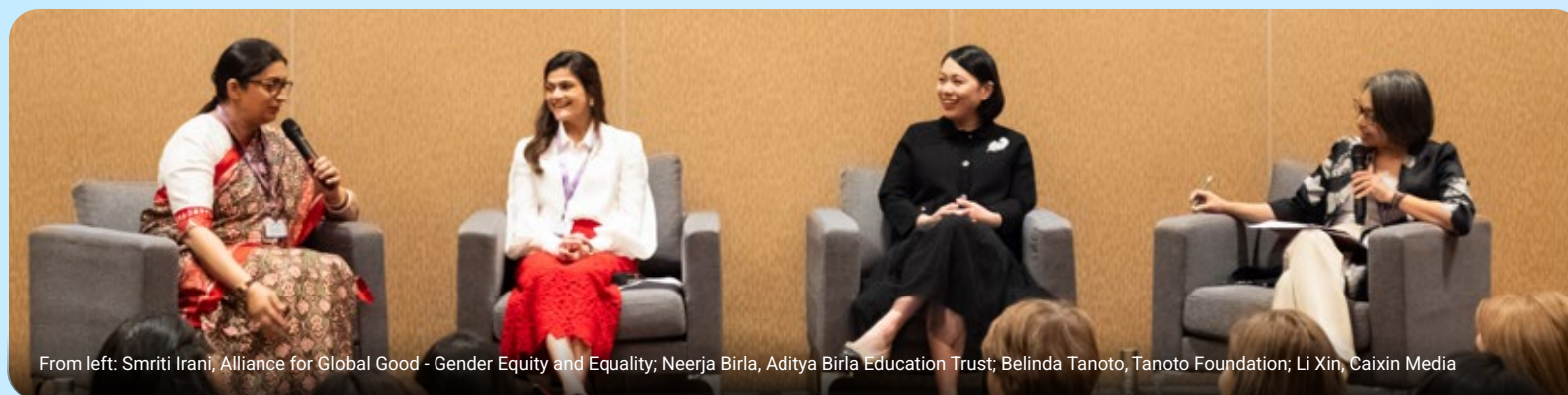
Mental health was underscored as a critical yet often overlooked driver of educational outcomes. Speakers noted that conditions like anxiety or depression can significantly impact engagement, attention span, and resilience in school. Despite this, mental health remains one of the most underfunded areas in education, due to persistent stigma and challenges in measuring its long-term impact.

Speakers at the session also emphasised the **importance of grounding interventions in local contexts**. Drawing on lessons from Indonesia, they noted that success in reducing stunting — achieved through partnerships between government, communities, and philanthropies — relied on empowering frontline workers and local communities to tailor solutions to the unique needs and diverse realities of each district.

Nourishing Minds with Regenerative School Meals

School meals are increasingly recognised as a powerful lever for equity in education. Yet, global coverage rates for school meals remain low — just 18% in low-income countries and 39% in lower-middle-income countries⁷, despite clear links to improved nutrition, school attendance, and economic development.

A session on regenerative school meal programmes, anchored by Novo Nordisk Foundation and The Rockefeller Foundation, highlighted how such initiatives can drive systemic change across Southeast Asia. These programmes go **beyond nutrition, promoting gender equity, community resilience, and climate adaptation**.



From left: Smriti Irani, Alliance for Global Good - Gender Equity and Equality; Neerja Birla, Aditya Birla Education Trust; Belinda Tanoto, Tanoto Foundation; Li Xin, Caixin Media



Deepali Khanna, Head of Asia, The Rockefeller Foundation

Indonesia's Free Nutritious Meal Programme exemplifies this approach. Aiming to reach 83 million children, pregnant women, and nursing mothers by 2029, the programme connects school kitchens with local farmers, supports climate-resilient agriculture, and strengthens livelihoods — while addressing malnutrition and stunting.

However, scaling similar models across Asia remains challenging. Countries often struggle with fragmented governance, underinvestment, and limited coordination across ministries. Infrastructure and logistics can be limited in rural regions. Financing is another major hurdle: while most countries fund school meals domestically, significant gaps remain in quality, consistency, and reach.

While philanthropy alone cannot shoulder the cost of feeding millions of children, it can play a catalytic role. It can help governments see the long-term value of investing in school meal programmes, unlock innovative financing mechanisms such as sin taxes and concessional loans, and collaborate with local partners to strengthen delivery systems.

Speakers underscored the importance of cross-border knowledge exchange, enabling policymakers to adapt and replicate successful models across diverse contexts. Plans for a global school meals accelerator, designed to build institutional capacity and support countries in sustainably owning and scaling these programmes, were shared during the panel.

Ultimately, school meals must be seen as a strategic, multi-sectoral investment — one that pays for itself by improving children's health, learning outcomes, and future productivity, while boosting local economies and reducing long-term healthcare costs.

Harnessing AI to Accelerate Learning and Inclusion

Artificial intelligence (AI) offers transformative potential for education — but only if deployed equitably and with local context in mind. Sessions anchored by Equinix Foundation and Google.org explored how AI can bridge digital divides, highlighting real-world examples from Southeast Asia and beyond.



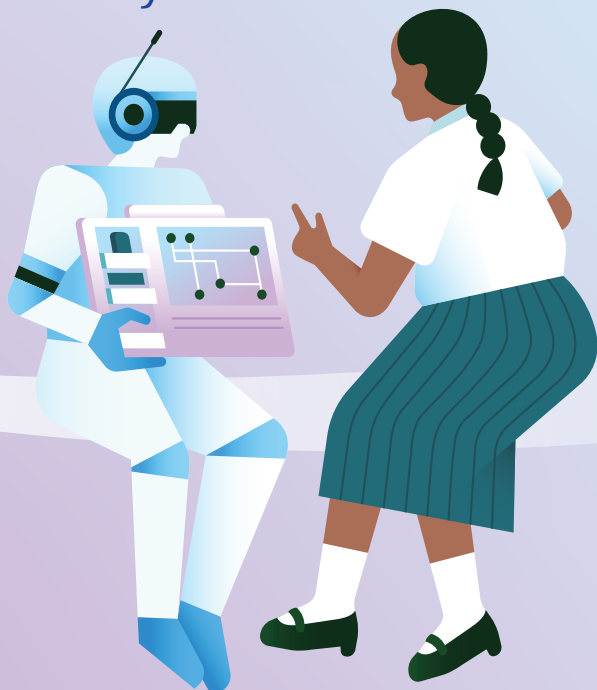
From left: Dr. Monika Sharma, Novo Nordisk Foundation; Ferro Ferizka, Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Cultural Affairs, Indonesia; Mehrdad Ehsani, The Rockefeller Foundation; Dr. Shariqna Yunus Khan, World Food Programme



Sattiya Langkaphin, Chief of Party, Education Development Center (EDC)

700,000+ workers

to be upskilled through
Google.org and AVPN's AI
Opportunity Fund



AI must be paired with teacher support to be effective, especially in low-resource settings. Programmes like Education Development Center's (EDC) *High Touch High Tech* in Cambodia and the Philippines combine AI-enabled personalised learning with teacher training, equipping educators to interpret and act on adaptive data. Early results point to increased student engagement, greater teacher confidence, and more inclusive classroom participation.

AI is also creating opportunities for underserved communities. In Asia, Google.org and AVPN's US\$15 million AI Opportunity Fund aims to train more than 700,000 workers — including MSME employees, women, migrant workers, and persons with disabilities. An additional US\$10 million grant from Google.org will extend this support to more micro and small businesses across the region.

However, without deliberate safeguards, AI risks reinforcing existing biases. To ensure inclusive adoption, **solutions must reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of the communities they serve.**

Speakers noted that many large language models still perform poorly in languages like Khmer, Lao, and Burmese. This underscores the need for initiatives like SEA-LION, which develops AI models using native-language datasets.

Unlocking AI's full potential in education and development demands an ecosystem that combines enabling policies, targeted investments, technical expertise, and local leadership. When communities are empowered to shape how AI is used, it becomes not just a tool for learning, but a force for equity.

WELL-BEING & RESILIENCE



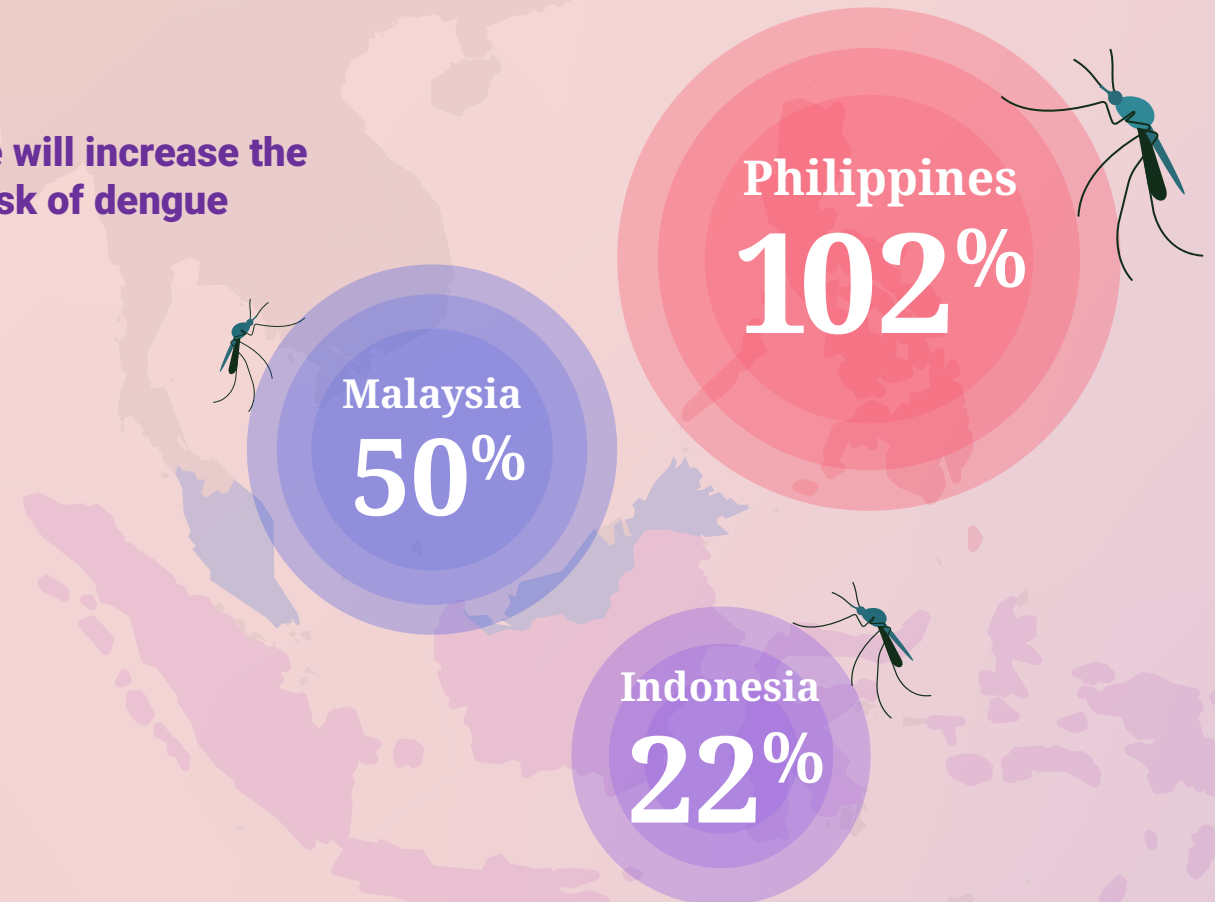
Tackling Infectious Disease through Innovation

Asia stands at a critical inflection point for managing infectious diseases. Climate change, urbanisation, and global connectivity are fuelling both the resurgence of familiar diseases and the emergence of new threats. Two pressing areas were discussed at the Summit: **the rise of mosquito-borne diseases and the need to prepare for future pandemics**. The insights from thought leaders across science, government, and philanthropy reveal a shared conviction — that coordinated action is crucial in strengthening resilience and protecting lives.

Addressing the Surge in Mosquito-Borne Diseases

Once largely tropical, mosquito-borne diseases like dengue, Zika, and chikungunya are expanding into new geographies due to global warming and urbanisation. Over the past 20 years, dengue incidence has surged tenfold globally, with Asia now shouldering 70% of the burden⁸. By 2080, populations at risk are projected to rise by 22% in Indonesia, 50% in Malaysia, and double in the Philippines⁹.

Climate change will increase the population at risk of dengue



Source: Kraemer, M.U.G et al. Past and future spread of the arbovirus vectors *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*. *Nat Microbiol* 4, 854–863 (2019). Available at <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41564-019-0376-y>



From left: Dr Alan Dangour, Wellcome Trust; Sir Peter Horby, University of Oxford; Dr Rose Nani Mudin, Management and Science University, Malaysia; Prof Teo Yik Ying, National University of Singapore; Dr Lee Fook Kay, Temasek Foundation

The panel “The Mozzie Challenge” highlighted promising science-led interventions. Among them is the **Wolbachia method**, where mosquitoes are infected with a naturally occurring bacteria that suppresses disease transmission. This approach is already being implemented in Malaysia and Singapore and has shown significant reductions in dengue transmission. Another complementary strategy is the use of long-lasting microbial larvicides, which aim to control mosquito populations.

However, panelists noted that such interventions require decades of sustained scientific investment, and vaccine or therapeutic development is particularly challenging.

The dengue virus exists in four distinct serotypes, meaning an individual can be infected up to four times — with subsequent infections potentially more severe than the last. As a result, any effective vaccine must provide protection across all four serotypes, a hurdle that has stymied scientific progress for decades.

The first dengue vaccine took nearly a century to develop and approve, and even then, its use remains restricted due to safety concerns in individuals without prior infection. Adding to the challenge, there are currently no approved antiviral treatments for dengue, and recent cuts to antiviral discovery programmes have further hindered progress.

Multi-Sector Collaboration is Key

Experts stressed the need for integrated vector management, combining environmental design, community engagement, and cross-ministerial leadership.

Philanthropy, too, has a catalytic role to play. Speakers emphasised the need to fund both discovery and solutions-driven science and support public-private-philanthropic partnerships. They called on philanthropy to embrace its unique mandate to take risks and innovate where governments and markets cannot, particularly in addressing challenges at the intersection of climate and health.

Strengthening Pandemic Preparedness in Asia

Asia is the region of the world most at risk of infectious disease outbreaks. Its dense urban centres, high levels of human-animal-environment interaction, and uneven access to healthcare create a perfect storm for the emergence and rapid spread of novel pathogens. The region's bustling wet markets and intensive agricultural practices heighten the risk of zoonotic spillovers, while limited diagnostics delay outbreak detection and response.

The WHO's landmark pandemic agreement, reached after more than three years of negotiation and adopted at the recent World Health Assembly in May 2025, offers a global framework to close these gaps. Speaking at PAS, WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus described the agreement as "history in the making" and stated it will strengthen international cooperation to prevent, prepare for, and respond to pandemics. Building on lessons learnt from the COVID crisis, the agreement outlines plans to diversify R&D, ensure equitable access to vaccines and therapeutics, and mobilise a global emergency workforce, while upholding national sovereignty.

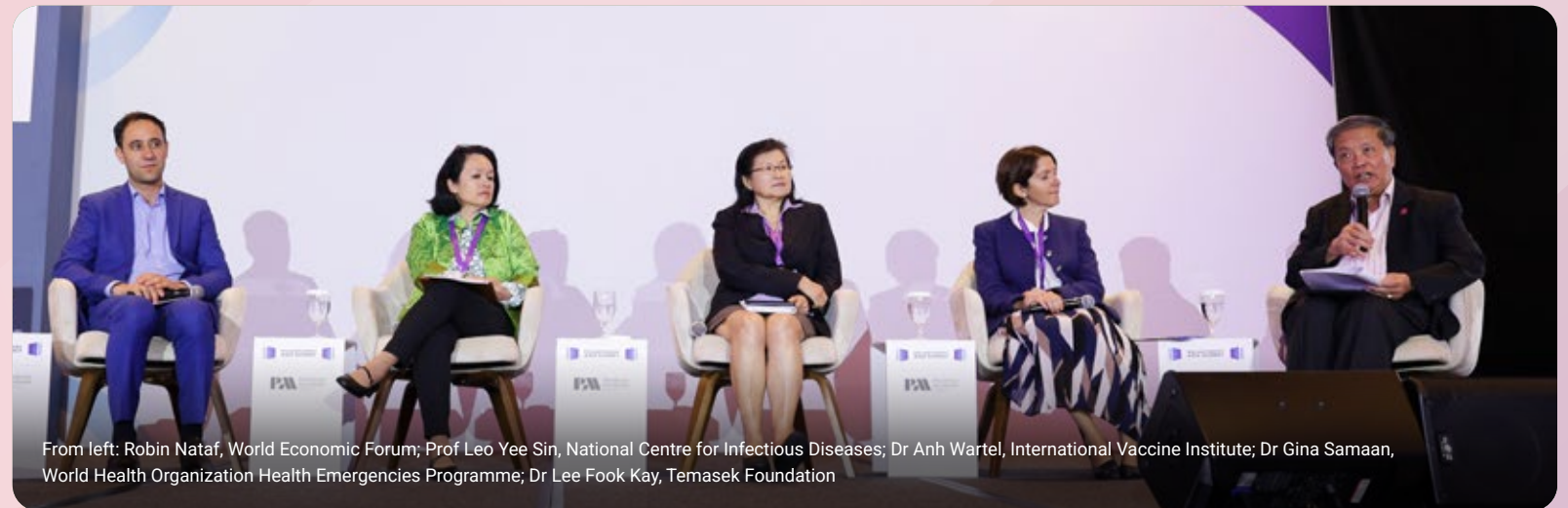
This integrated vision was echoed at a panel led by Temasek Foundation. Experts from WHO, Duke-NUS Medical School, Singapore's National Centre for Infectious Diseases (NCID), International Vaccine Institute, and the World Economic Forum stressed that Asia's healthcare challenges demand a regionally-coordinated response grounded in innovation and data-sharing.

Speakers cautioned that the region is still struggling to tackle existing health crises such as dengue and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) — let alone prepare for the next pandemic.

Strengthening pandemic preparedness requires not only advancing research tools but also ensuring their effective implementation on the ground. This means bringing together policymakers, communities, and catalytic funding to build the national capabilities and cross-sector expertise needed to respond swiftly to future health crises.



Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization



From left: Robin Nataf, World Economic Forum; Prof Leo Yee Sin, National Centre for Infectious Diseases; Dr Anh Wartel, International Vaccine Institute; Dr Gina Samaan, World Health Organization Health Emergencies Programme; Dr Lee Fook Kay, Temasek Foundation

Spotlight on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR): The Slow-Burn Pandemic

AMR occurs when bacteria and viruses evolve to resist the drugs used to treat them, making common infections harder — or impossible — to treat. It is driven by the overuse of antibiotics in healthcare and agriculture, poor diagnostic capacity, substandard medicines, and inadequate sanitation.

In Asia, climate change accelerates the threat: warmer temperatures speed up bacterial mutation, floods contaminate water sources, and droughts reduce access to clean water, worsening infection control.

- 4.7 million deaths linked to AMR in 2021¹⁰ – over half in Asia¹¹
- Could become the leading global cause of death by 2050¹², surpassing cancer¹³
- Projected cost to Asia Pacific: up to US\$700 billion by 2050¹⁴ (or up to 1% of the region's GDP)

Launched at PAS 2025, the report *Targeted Action and Financing the Fight Against Antimicrobial Resistance in Asia*, produced by the Centre for Impact Investing & Practices (CIIP) and the World Economic Forum's GAEA initiative and supported by PAA, calls for action across four pillars:



Education
and behaviour change



Monitoring
via genomic surveillance and wastewater testing



Prevention
through hygiene, vaccines, and regulation



Catalytic capital
to crowd in public and private investment in public and private investment

Mobilising Solutions for a Healthier Future

PAS speakers spotlighted key initiatives aimed at strengthening Asia's resilience:

- **Asia Collaborative for Disease Research and Control (CDRC)** — proposed by Temasek Foundation, this regional platform will pool surveillance, data, and rapid response resources across borders.
- **The Pandemic Fund** — backed by WHO and the World Bank, it aims to bolster preparedness in low- and middle-income countries through targeted investments in surveillance, laboratory systems, emergency workforce training, and community engagement.
- **Asia Pathogen Genomics Initiative** — led by Duke-NUS, this effort has enabled every country in the region to develop homegrown genomic sequencing capabilities — a major leap forward since COVID-19.

Philanthropy's Role: Bridging the Gaps

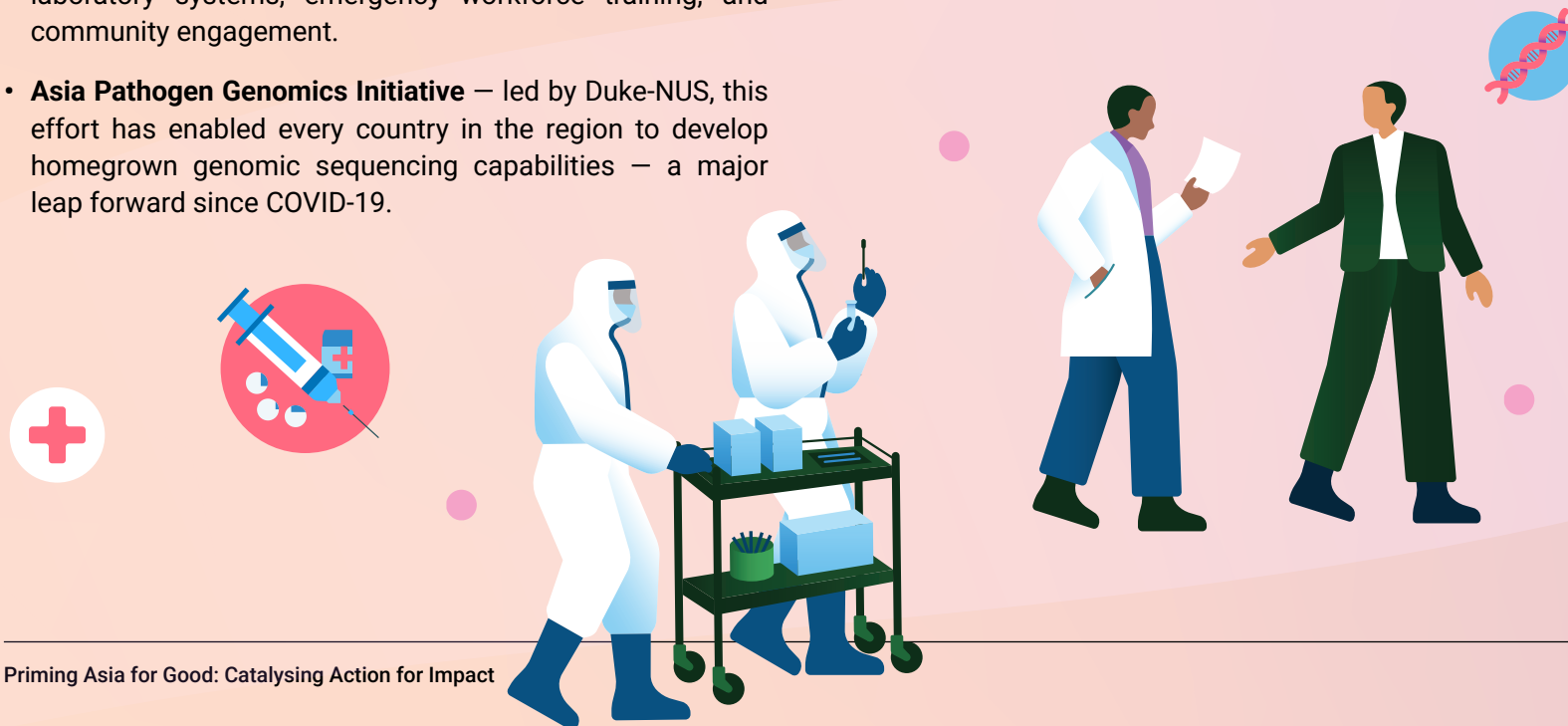
Despite major advances, critical gaps remain in Asia's pandemic preparedness, especially in lower- and middle income countries. At PAS, several speakers highlighted the essential role of philanthropy in helping countries move from dependency to self-reliance.

Philanthropic capital has driven progress on polio eradication, leprosy control, maternal health, and more. In Asia, it has helped control dengue in Singapore and Indonesia, combat AMR in Cambodia, Malaysia, and Vietnam, and expand genomic surveillance and clinical care for rare diseases.

Philanthropists were urged to go a step further:

- work with countries to build long-term capacity,
- partner with multilateral organisations like the WHO to strengthen on-the-ground expertise, and
- coordinate efforts to avoid fragmentation

In a region facing rising health threats, **philanthropy's unique ability to take risks, scale innovation, and catalyse collaboration will be crucial to building a safer, healthier future for all.**



Prof Paul Pronyk, Director, Duke-NUS Medical School

SUSTAINABILITY & LIVEABILITY



Innovative Funding Models for Nature-based Solutions

Blended finance is emerging as a critical enabler of nature-based solutions (NBS), aligning diverse sources of capital to unlock benefits for climate, biodiversity, and livelihoods. At PAS 2025, partner sessions anchored by Temasek Foundation and Conservation International showcased how philanthropic, public, and private capital are being structured to scale impactful interventions – from forests and tropical agriculture to freshwater and coastal ecosystems.

Sustainable Oil Palm Replanting: Financing Rainforest-Friendly Agriculture

Smallholder farmers manage over 40% of Indonesia's oil palm plantations, yet often lack affordable financing to replant aging trees – prompting them to clear forests to maintain productivity as yields fall. The *Sustainable Oil Palm Replanting in Indonesia* (SOPRI) project, led by Abler Nordic's Climate Smart Fund with support from Temasek Foundation, Musim Mas and Livelihoods Funds, uses blended finance to help farmers boost productivity on existing land.

In its pilot phase, SOPRI targets 400 hectares across Sumatra, with goals to scale. Farmers receive long-term loans, training on village planning and land titling, and technical assistance to achieve sustainability certifications. Farmers commit to avoiding forest encroachment, with Temasek Foundation providing a credit guarantee to lower borrowing costs and de-risk private investment.

Financing Forest Management: Creating Market Incentives for Conservation

ADM Capital's work with Arimba, a plywood manufacturer in East Kalimantan, demonstrates how forest conservation can be driven through investable, market-aligned models. Through the Asia Climate Smart Landscape Fund (ACLF), and supported by catalytic capital from Temasek Foundation, Arimba accessed a working capital loan and launched a procurement policy and Sustainable Forest Partnership Programme to improve the transparency and sustainability of its mill and supply chain. The blended finance transaction involves multiple cross-sector partners, including technical partners to drive supply chain sustainability and community safeguards.





From left: Nguyen Dang Khoa, NeoRice; Khanh Tran, Touchstone Partners

Decarbonising Rice: Linking Grants, Risk Capital, and Policy Incentives

Vietnamese startup NeoRice is piloting “negative emission rice” using organic fertiliser that could cut GHG emissions by up to 50% and boost farmer income by 10%. A US\$200,000 grant from Temasek Foundation supports a 500-hectare trial, with further investment from Vietnam-based venture capital firm Touchstone Partners’ contingent on meeting impact targets.

If successful, farmers adopting NeoRice’s fertiliser may qualify for up to 50% government subsidies, unlocking public funding. The model illustrates how catalytic grants can de-risk innovation and bridge into private capital and policy support.



From left: Prashant Mahajan, Mandai Nature; Corinna Chan, SEAPAW; Saurav Malhotra, Mountains to Mangroves; Dr Siti Maryam Yaakub, Conservation International; Dr Kashif Shaad, Conservation International

Freshwater and Coastal Finance: A Systems Approach to Resilience

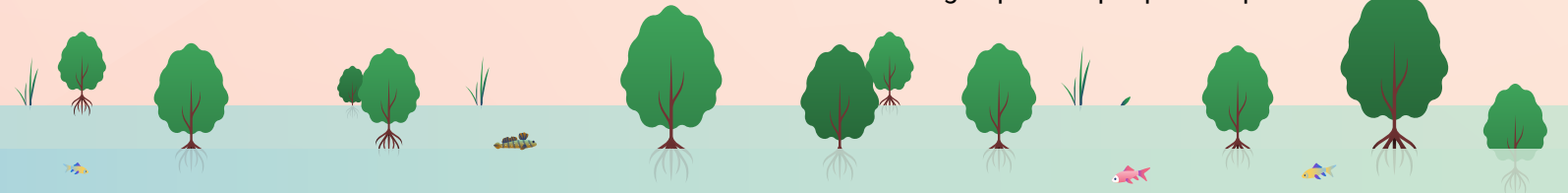
Conservation International’s *Mountains to Mangroves* programme offers a complementary model of large-scale, systems-based finance. Spanning India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh, the initiative aims to restore one million hectares of critical ecosystems — from headwaters to coastlines — through joint planning, co-executed delivery, and multi-layered finance.

A three-phase model is used: (1) pilot and evidence building; (2) a “bridge phase” to test financial instruments; and (3) long-term structures such as repayable investment vehicles backed by verified ecological outcomes (e.g. carbon sequestration, freshwater flows, biodiversity metrics). These outcomes are being layered to attract both philanthropic and impact investors.

Catalytic Capital as a Connector

The Temasek Foundation session underscored that blended finance is most effective when philanthropic capital absorbs early-stage risk to crowd in private investment, while speakers from Conservation International stressed the need to move beyond isolated projects towards integrated strategies that deliver measurable benefits across water, carbon, biodiversity, and livelihoods.

Across all case studies, catalytic capital — whether through grants, credit guarantees, or concessional equity — played a vital role in making these projects investable. Clear impact targets, strong local partnerships, and systems thinking were recurring themes. Whether reducing deforestation, improving land use, or enhancing carbon sinks, these innovative models offer replicable pathways for scaling nature-based solutions with lasting impact on people and planet.



Philanthropy's Role in Driving Climate Resilience

Asia accounts for half of global emissions and faces some of the most severe climate threats. Yet, it receives a disproportionately small share of climate philanthropy.

The numbers are stark:

- Asia faces an annual US\$800 billion¹⁵ shortfall in climate finance
- Globally, less than 2%¹⁶ of philanthropic giving goes toward climate action — and of that, only 12%¹⁷ reaches Asia

Still, speakers at the PAS 2025 argued that this is where philanthropy can lead. With public capital insufficient and private capital hesitant to take on risk, experts made the case for philanthropy to act as a catalyst — **de-risking investment, enabling climate data and research, and supporting a just transition for vulnerable communities.**

US\$800 billion shortfall in climate finance in Asia



Ravi Menon, Ambassador for Climate Action & Senior Adviser,
National Climate Change Secretariat (NCCS)



Jamie Choi, CEO, Tara Climate Foundation

Partner sessions also underscored how philanthropy — both Asian and global — is increasingly aligning around systems-level interventions that sit at the nexus of climate, health, agriculture, and livelihoods. There is a real opportunity not just to fund projects, but to shape resilient, inclusive transitions across the region.

Powering a Just Energy Transition in Asia

A partner session anchored by the Tara Climate Foundation spotlighted the importance of equity, local agency, and practical solutions in Asia's green shift. Funders and experts at the session underscored that a just energy transition is not only about clean energy — it is also about embedding justice and inclusion at the core of decarbonisation efforts.

Asian philanthropists were urged to move beyond traditional giving areas like education, health, and economic empowerment — not by pivoting away, but by integrating a climate lens into these priorities. For instance, philanthropy can fund vocational programmes for green jobs, expand access to clean air to reduce health burdens, and support women-led energy enterprises in rural areas. Speakers also made the case for catalytic investment in early-stage climate tech and education to build a robust workforce for the low-carbon economy.

A key milestone of the session was the launch of the *Just Energy Transition* Community — a collaborative platform designed to galvanise philanthropic leadership and accelerate Asia’s shift toward clean and people-focused energy solutions.

Advancing Ocean Sustainability through Cross-Sector Collaboration

Philanthropy is playing a catalytic role in driving marine conservation in Southeast Asia by bridging science, policy, and community action. At a session led by Dalio Philanthropies, speakers from across the philanthropic and conservation sectors highlighted how flexible capital can de-risk innovation, validate emerging technologies, and help translate scientific insights into policy and practice.



From left: A/Prof Huang Danwei, National University of Singapore; Melissa Wright, Bloomberg Philanthropies; Emily Landis, The Nature Conservancy; Carol Liew, ECCA Family Foundation; Uma Sachidhanandam, WWF Singapore

Cross-sector and cross-border collaboration emerged as essential to scale impact. Speakers shared examples where funders helped communities co-develop locally rooted solutions, enabled governments to act on new research, and created platforms for traditionally excluded voices to shape conservation goals. A recurring theme was the need for patience and humility — recognising that lasting change requires long-term commitment, mutual trust, and deep listening.

Breaking Silos: Tackling the Interconnected Crises of Climate, Health, and Agriculture

The complexity of the climate crisis demands more than siloed interventions. Climate threats are entangled with health, food systems, livelihoods, and governance — and exacerbate one another.



From left: Dr Alan Dangour, Wellcome Trust; Benedict Cheong, Temasek Trust; George Richards, Community Jameel; Smriti Irani, Alliance for Global Good – Gender Equity and Equality; Sonali Patel, The Bridgespan Group

To illustrate this, we can think of Asia's challenges across climate, health, and agriculture as a set of interlocking "vicious loops". As climate change puts agricultural systems under stress, youth migrate from rural areas to cities, which then face greater risks of urban heat crises and infectious disease outbreaks.

Sessions at PAS 2025 explored the implications of this interconnectedness. A session by the Climate & Health Funders' Coalition highlighted how extreme heat not only kills half a million people annually but also accelerates chronic illnesses, exacerbates gender inequalities, and diminishes worker productivity – with Asia bearing the brunt.

At a breakfast session led by the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, speakers highlighted sustainable food systems as a key lever for both climate mitigation and adaptation. With 100 million smallholder farmers in Asia, participants called for "nexus solutions" that integrate biodiversity, nutrition, and climate resilience.

To break Asia's vicious loops, philanthropy must **adopt a systems lens and target high-impact leverage points** that drive resilience across both rural and urban communities.

100 million
smallholder farmers in Asia stand to gain from nexus solutions integrating biodiversity, nutrition, and climate resilience

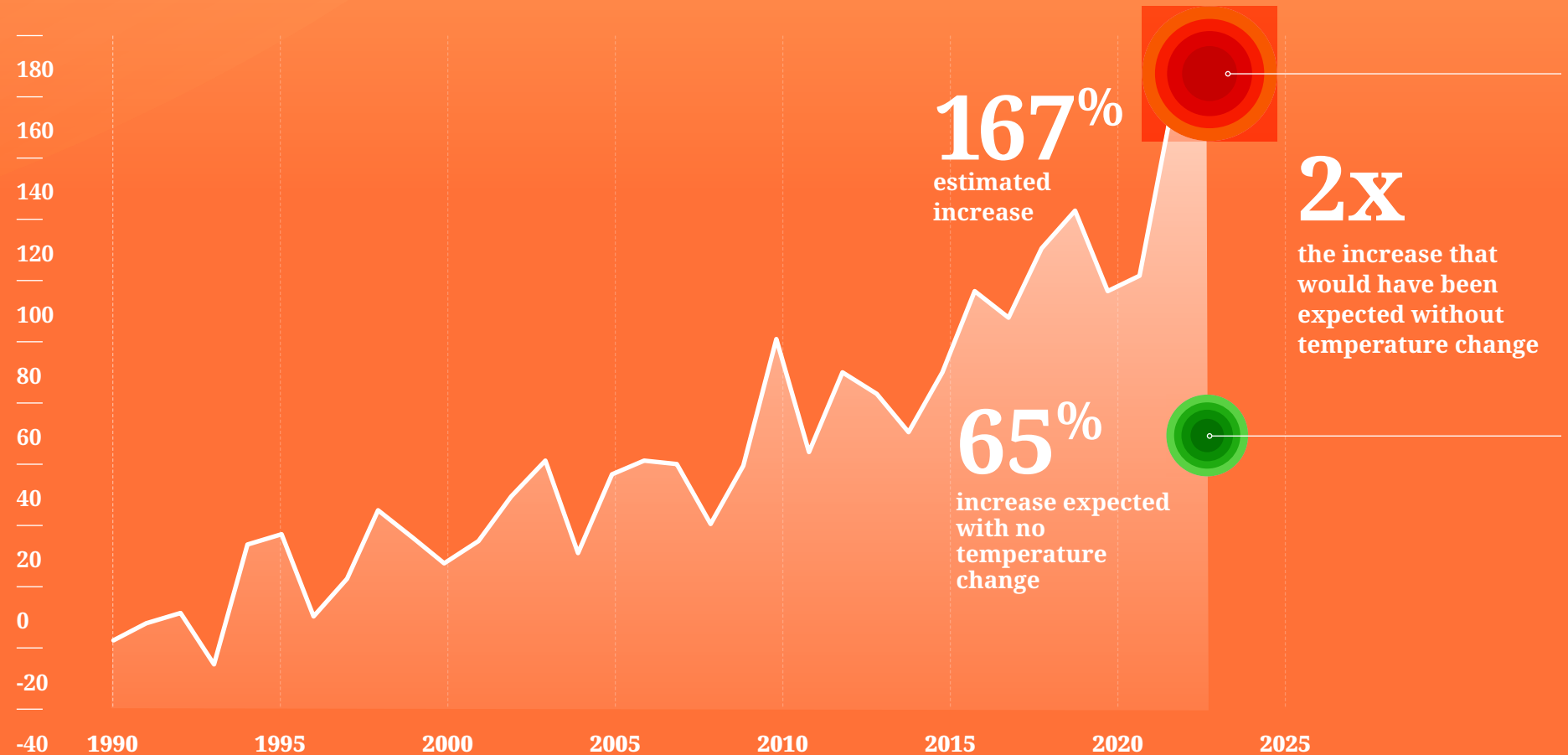


From left: Dr Danny Hunter, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT; Bernard Tan, Golden Philanthropies; Dr Dharani Dhar Burra, CGIAR Hub for Sustainable Finance (ImpactSF); Dr Naweed Isaak Naqvi, Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory; Robyn Mijares, Youth Uprising and Grow School Philippines



Health-Threatening High Temperatures

% change in heat-related mortality of adults over 65 since the 1990s



Source: The 2024 report of the Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: facing record-breaking threats from delayed action

Potential Hours of Labour Lost Due to Exposure to Heat

Potential labour hours lost annually due to heat exposure, by sector and by country, Human Development (HDI) group, or World Health Organization (WHO) region, from 1990 to 2023

■ Agriculture ■ Construction ■ Manufacturing ■ Service

Potential Hours Lost (millions)



Source: The 2024 report of the Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: facing record-breaking threats from delayed action

ECOSYSTEM BUILDING



Collaborative Philanthropy for Lasting Change

As Asia faces increasingly complex development and climate challenges, speakers and delegates at PAS 2025 called for philanthropy to adopt a systems lens.

Rather than addressing issues in isolation, this approach connects diverse perspectives and expertise – from academic researchers and grassroots practitioners to funders and policymakers – to tackle root causes and enable long-term solutions. While funding remains essential, participants highlighted the importance of building trust, aligning goals, and creating platforms that support meaningful, sustained collaboration.

Across multiple sessions, philanthropy was framed not just as a source of grants, but as a **form of risk-tolerant capital that is uniquely positioned to bring together government, business, and communities** to co-create long-term solutions.

At the *Catalysts for Change: Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration* session hosted by Tanoto Foundation, panellists urged funders to resist the instinct to pull back in today's landscape of global economic uncertainty and shrinking resources. Instead, they called for doubling down on collaboration – not in spite of the risk, but because of it.



From left: June Kunugi, UNICEF; Ashwin Iyer, Gates Foundation; Fook Yen Chong, Asian Development Bank; Xueling Lee, The Bridgespan Group



From left: Luis Alvarado, GAEA; Faye Ong, J.P. Morgan Private Bank; Chavalit Frederick Tsao, TPC; Ng Boon Heong, Temasek Foundation; Arther Sletteberg, Abler Nordic



Laurence Lien, Co-Founder and CEO, Asia Philanthropy Circle and Chairman, Lien Foundation



Naina Subberwal Batra, CEO, AVPN

Laying the Groundwork for Effective Collaboration

At a breakfast dialogue convened by Asia Philanthropy Circle, AVPN, and PAA, foundation and ecosystem leaders acknowledged a clear shift from siloed action and project duplication to shared vision.

Yet, today's philanthropic ecosystem still **lacks the regulatory frameworks and connective infrastructure needed to mobilise capital effectively and at scale**. Speakers emphasised the urgent need to strengthen the sector's "plumbing" — the systems that enable knowledge, capital, and talent to flow seamlessly across institutions.

This call was echoed at a session anchored by TPC (Tsao Pao Chee), where leaders emphasised that Asia now bears a growing responsibility to shape a new model for '4P' collaboration — across the public, private, people, and philanthropic sectors. Noting that philanthropy is now one of the few sources of agile, catalytic capital, speakers urged funders to step up — to **convene the right players, align the right types of capital, and accelerate promising pilots towards market adoption**.



From Quiet Giving to Coordinated Impact

At a roundtable hosted by the Asia Centre for Changemakers and Wealth Management Institute, speakers explored how to better unlock private wealth for public good.

With development aid declining and global systems under strain, panellists called for **improved access to impact opportunities, greater professionalisation of philanthropy advisors, and more inclusive, community-driven approaches.**

They emphasised that philanthropy in Asia has traditionally been quiet and private, but to accelerate momentum, more wealth owners must lead visibly — sharing their journeys, frameworks, and lessons to inspire others.

The evolving role of philanthropy was also highlighted at the GAEA Awards Ceremony, a partner event of PAS 2025, where conversations centred on how the next generation of philanthropists is redefining the role of capital.

Tomorrow's wealth holders are not only values-driven; they bring urgency, entrepreneurialism, and a demand for measurable outcomes to both their investments and giving. This shift signals a growing appetite for visible leadership, collaboration, and systemic approaches that match the scale of today's challenges.



From left: Rhett Ayers Butler, Mongabay; Stephen King, Omidyar Group; Pritha Venkatachalam, The Bridgespan Group; Foo Mee Har, WMI



Attendees at the GAEA Awards Ceremony, a PAS 2025 partner event.

Decarbonising Rice: A GAEA Award-Winning Solution

Powered by the World Economic Forum, the GAEA (Giving to Amplify Earth Action) Awards celebrate innovative partnerships tackling global climate and nature challenges.

Among the 2025 awardees is Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory's (TLL) Decarbonising Rice project — a science-based solution integrating climate-resilient crops, smart irrigation, and soil microbiome management to cut emissions, conserve water, and boost yields from rice farming.

Early trials in Singapore and India showed promising results:

 **↓ 30-50%** methane emissions

 **↓ 30-50%** water use

 **↑ 5-10%** rice yields

Recognising its transformative potential, PAA showcased the project at PAS 2023 and helped close the funding gap needed to expand field trials in the region. Contributions from PAA and its members, including the Gates Foundation, are enabling pilots to be scaled in 100-hectare plots across India, Indonesia, and Laos.

Find out more about the Decarbonising Rice project in PAA's inaugural Impact Report.

New Communities for Collective Action

Reinforcing this shift toward structured collaboration, PAS 2025 saw the launch of two new Communities — the *Health for Human Potential* Community and *Just Energy Transition* Community. These Communities aim to convene funders, practitioners, and policymakers to tackle complex shared challenges — from strengthening public health systems to accelerating Asia’s green transition.

They build on the momentum of the first three communities launched at PAS 2024 — *Blue Oceans*, *Sustainable Land Use*, and *Holistic and Inclusive Education* — which have since mobilised cross-sector partners, initiated pilot projects, and fostered knowledge exchange. Together, these communities reflect a growing appetite for collaborative models that drive systemic change at scale.

Empowering Local Ownership

Participants at PAS 2025 warned against underestimating the effort needed to sustain multi-stakeholder collaboration. What keeps people at the table is not just shared ambition, but trusted relationships and local ownership. A consistent theme across sessions was the need to **“design with, not for” communities** — placing them at the heart of solutions rather than treating them as beneficiaries.

Speakers pointed to successful partnerships such as the stunting prevention programme in Indonesia — driven by multi-sector cooperation and community participation — as proof that aligning public, private, and community actors yields scalable, lasting results.

Shaping a Connected Philanthropic Landscape

The tone at PAS 2025 reflected a philanthropic sector in transition, moving beyond fragmented efforts to embrace deeper integration and shared purpose. Leaders highlighted the need to break silos and build new clusters of collaboration, where philanthropy, policy, practice, and research can interact.

This includes expanding shared platforms, strengthening connective infrastructure, and professionalising philanthropy advisory. Across sessions, there was a clear call to approach giving with greater strategic intent — **anchored in systems thinking, focused on long-term outcomes, and designed to enable collective impact at scale.**



Impact in Action

IMPACT SHOWCASES

On the final day of PAS 2025, participants experienced impact in practice through five offsite visits, designed in partnership with Temasek Foundation and members of the Temasek Trust ecosystem.

Institute of Technical Education

ITE shared insights on its innovative education model and its partnerships across ASEAN, China, and India, with hands-on visits to its smart manufacturing and IoT experiential centres.



KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital

KKH shared its pioneering initiatives in early childhood development and maternal care, giving delegates a tour of Singapore’s only donor human milk bank and its innovative care facilities for newborns.



National Environment Agency

Participants learnt about Singapore’s innovative use of Wolbachia-carrying mosquitoes to control dengue, supported by integrated surveillance, mass rearing techniques, and wastewater monitoring.



SunGreenH2

The clean energy startup, which focuses on making green hydrogen production more efficient and affordable, gave delegates a walkthrough of its electrode-to-stack manufacturing process.



Mandai Nature

Mandai Nature hosted a behind-the-scenes visit showing participants how experts are tackling illegal wildlife trade, rescuing endangered species, and protecting Southeast Asia's biodiversity.



INNOVATION SHOWCASES

Alongside the dynamic plenary and partner sessions, PAS 2025 also featured interactive booths that brought the spirit of catalytic innovation to life. Each booth showcased a pioneering organisation advancing solutions that address urgent social and environmental challenges across Asia:



Amplifier Programme

The five ventures from the inaugural cohort of the Amplifier programme, jointly led by PAA and CIIP:

- **Circ** recycles fashion waste into textiles
- **GRST** creates clean, recyclable lithium-ion batteries
- **Mayani** connects Filipino smallholder farmers and fisherfolk with markets and funding
- **MYCL** uses mushroom mycelium to develop a sustainable leather alternative
- **Sampangan** transforms agricultural waste into carbon-negative raw materials



Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory

TLL presented science-led innovations including:

- **Decarbonising Rice project**
- **Aqualita** – a container aquaculture system for sustainable fish farming
- **High Performance Precision Agriculture (HiPPA)** initiative that optimises growing conditions for high-value crops like tomatoes
- **Fortified Rice Vermicelli project** to support better health outcomes in vulnerable communities



Temasek Foundation

TF shared how it pilots and catalyses innovative solutions and programmes across six areas of impact:

- **Active Communities**
- **Active Leaders**
- **Climate and Liveability**
- **Next Generation**
- **Health & Well-Being**
- **Resilient Societies**



Co-Axis

Co-Axis matches changemakers and impact-driven investors through a newly enhanced digital platform. The revamped site now features an intuitive user interface, a centralised knowledge hub, and a smart sourcing engine that curates opportunities aligned with investor mandates.



OceanX

Merging deep-sea exploration with science communication, OceanX aims to inspire ocean stewardship and scientific curiosity through open-source marine data and education initiatives.



MyFarmTrees

Connecting farmers and funders, the digital platform tracks seed planting and growth, supporting reforestation and food resilience in Kenya, Cameroon, Malaysia, Laos, and Cambodia.



Infoxchange

The social enterprise helps organisations integrate AI into their operations via the APAC AI Non-profit Learning Community — a free, Google-backed training programme.

Acknowledgements

This report features insights from the following speakers and partners, who generously shared their expertise and helped shape the thought-provoking discussions at PAS 2025. We are grateful for their time, perspectives, and commitment to building a more collaborative and inclusive future for Asia and beyond.

- **Ailun Yang**, Head of International Climate Initiatives, Bloomberg Philanthropies
- **Dr Alan Dangour**, Director, Climate and Health, Wellcome Trust
- **Andrea Phua**, Senior Director, National AI Group and Senior Director, Digital Economy Office, Ministry of Digital Development and Information, Singapore
- **Andrew Ure**, Managing Director, Government Affairs and Public Policy, Southeast Asia, Google
- **Dr Anh Wartel**, Deputy Director General, International Vaccine Institute
- **Arthur Sletteberg**, Managing Director, Climate Smart Fund, Abler Nordic
- **Ashwin Iyer**, Senior Manager – Philanthropic Partnerships, Gates Foundation
- **Ayesha Al Ateeqi**, Executive Director, the Mohamed bin Zayed Water Initiative, United Arab Emirates
- **H.R.H Princess Beatrice**, St James Palace, United Kingdom
- **Belinda Tanoto**, Managing Director, RGE and Trustee, Tanoto Foundation
- **Benedict Cheong**, Chief Systems Integration Officer, Temasek Trust
- **Ben Rhodes**, Senior Advisor, Obama Foundation
- **Bernard Tan**, Chairman, Golden Philanthropies
- **Bill Gates**, Chair and Trustee, Gates Foundation
- **Carol Liew**, Managing Director, ECCA Family Foundation
- **Chavalit Frederick Tsao**, Chairman, TPC (Tsao Pao Chee)
- **Associate Professor Dr Chua Mei Chien**, Senior Consultant and Head, Department of Neonatology and Director, KK Human Milk Bank, KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH)
- **Corinna Chan**, CEO, Singapore International Foundation and Lead, Southeast Asia Partnership for Adaptation through Water (SEAPAW)
- **Cormekki Whitley**, Chief Operating Officer, data.org
- **Dr Danny Hunter**, Principal Scientist, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT
- **Deepali Khanna**, Head of Asia, The Rockefeller Foundation
- **Desmond Kuek**, Chief Executive Officer, Temasek Trust
- **Dr Dharani Dhar Burra**, Data Products and Solutions Lead, CGIAR Hub for Sustainable Finance (ImpactSF)
- **Emily Landis**, Global Climate and Ocean Director, The Nature Conservancy
- **Faye Ong**, Head of Philanthropy Centre (Singapore and Southeast Asia), J.P. Morgan Private Bank
- **Ferro Ferizka**, Senior Advisor to The Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Cultural Affairs
- **Fook Yen Chong**, Principal Social Sector Specialist, Asian Development Bank
- **Foo Mee Har**, Chief Executive Officer, Wealth Management Institute (WMI)
- **George Richards**, Director, Community Jameel
- **Gim Huay Neo**, Managing Director and Member of the Managing Board, World Economic Forum
- **Dr Gina Samaan**, Regional Emergency Director, World Health Organization Health Emergencies Programme and Director, Division of Health Security and Emergencies
- **Grace Khor**, Board Member, Equinix Foundation and VP, Global Contracts, Equinix
- **Gunilla Hyllander**, General Manager, Hybrit Development AB
- **Heng Li Lang**, Head, Climate and Liveability, Temasek Foundation
- **Associate Professor Huang Danwei**, Deputy Head, Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum, National University of Singapore
- **Dr Ina Agustina Isturini**, MKM, Director of Infectious Diseases of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia
- **Irene Kim**, VP, Philanthropic Partnerships, ClimateWorks Foundation
- **Jamie Choi**, CEO, Tara Climate Foundation
- **Jennifer Lewis**, Lead, Strategic Partnerships and Co-Head, Collaboration & Partnership, Temasek Trust
- **Sir Jeremy Farrar**, Chief Scientist, World Health Organization
- **June Kunugi**, Regional Director for East Asia and the Pacific, UNICEF
- **Dr Kashif Shaad**, Director, Freshwater Science & Sustainability, Conservation International
- **Katherine Nelson**, Climate Change Specialist, International Rice Research Institute
- **Kathlyn Tan**, Principal, Rumah Group and Director, Rumah Foundation
- **Khanh Trần**, Managing Partner, Touchstone Partners

- **Laurence Lien**, Co-Founder and CEO, Asia Philanthropy Circle and Chairman, Lien Foundation
- **Dr Lee Fook Kay**, Head, Pandemic Preparedness, Temasek Foundation
- **Professor Leo Yee Sin**, Senior Advisor, National Centre for Infectious Diseases (NCID), National Healthcare Professor (Faculty) Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, National University of Singapore and Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, Nanyang Technological University
- **Li Xin**, Vice President, Caixin Media, Managing Editor and Managing Director, Caixin Global
- **Lim Boon Heng**, Chairman, Philanthropy Asia Alliance and Chairman, Temasek Holdings
- **Lisa Genasci**, Managing Director, Sustainable Finance, ADM Capital
- **Ludolf von Schöning**, Founder and Chair, Paloneo
- **Luis Alvarado**, Head of GAEA / Strategic Public-Private-Philanthropic Partnerships, World Economic Forum
- **Marija Ralic**, Head, Google.org APAC
- **Mark Dalio**, Founder & Co-Chief Executive Officer, OceanX
- **Dr Maximilian Martin**, Global Head of Philanthropy, Lombard Odier Group
- **Mehrdad Ehsani**, Vice President, Food Initiative, The Rockefeller Foundation
- **Melissa Wright**, Bloomberg Ocean Initiative Lead, Bloomberg Philanthropies
- **Mildred Tan**, Co-Chair, Global Future Council on Innovative Financing for Nature and Climate, World Economic Forum and Board Member, Philanthropy Asia Alliance
- **Dr Ming Tan**, Founding Executive Director, Tech for Good Institute Singapore
- **Dr Monika Sharma**, Head of India Office, Novo Nordisk Foundation
- **Naina Subberwal Batra**, CEO, AVPN
- **Nanette Medved-Po**, Founder, PCX Solutions and Founder, PCX Markets
- **Nathan Méténier**, Co-Director, Youth Climate Justice Fund
- **Dr Naweed Isaak Naqvi**, Temasek Senior Investigator, Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory

- **Neerja Birla**, Founder and Chairperson, Aditya Birla Education Trust
- **Ng Boon Heong**, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer, Temasek Foundation
- **Nguyen Dang Khoa**, CEO, NeoRice
- **Paul King**, Chief Executive Officer, Built by Nature
- **Professor Paul Pronyk**, Director, Duke-NUS Center for Outbreak Preparedness and Co-Director, SingHealth Duke-NUS Global Health Institute
- **Peter Chia**, Chief Executive Officer, Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory Limited
- **Sir Peter Horby**, FMedSci FRS Director, Pandemic Sciences Institute and Moh Family Foundation Professor of Emerging Infectious Diseases and Global Health, University of Oxford
- **Prashant Mahajan**, Head, Ecosystems & Climate Change, Mandai Nature
- **His Excellency Professor Pratikno**, Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Cultural Affairs of Indonesia
- **Pritha Venkatachalam**, Partner and Co-Head, Asia and Africa, The Bridgespan Group
- **Ravi Menon**, Ambassador for Climate Action & Senior Adviser, National Climate Change Secretariat (NCCS)
- **Rhett Ayers Butler**, Founder and CEO, Mongabay
- **Robin Nataf**, Community Lead, Climate and Health, World Economic Forum
- **Robyn Mijares**, Founder & Chief Executive Director of Youth Uprising & Grow School Philippines
- **Roland Kupka**, Regional Nutrition Adviser for East Asia and Pacific, UNICEF
- **Dr Rose Nani Mudin**, Malaysia Dengue Programme; Former Sabah Health Department Director, Malaysia; Associate Professor in International Medical School, Management and Science University, Malaysia
- **Sattiya Langkhapin**, Chief of Party, Education Development Center (EDC)
- **Saurav Malhotra**, Founding Managing Director, Mountains to Mangroves
- **Dr Shariqua Yunus Khan**, Head of Nutrition and School Meals Unit, World Food Programme

- **Sharon Koh**, Centre for Impact Investing & Practices
- **Shaun Seow**, CEO, Philanthropy Asia Alliance
- **Sheryl Fofaria**, Head of Social Impact & Philanthropy, Southeast Asia, UBS AG
- **Dr Siti Maryam Yaakub**, Senior Director, International Blue Carbon Institute, Conservation International
- **Smriti Irani**, Founder & Chairperson, Alliance for Global Good - Gender Equity and Equality and Former Union Cabinet Minister, Government of India
- **Sonali Patel**, Partner, The Bridgespan Group
- **Dr Stephan Weise**, Managing Director for Asia, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT
- **Stephen King**, Senior Advisor, Omidyar Group
- **Susan Brown**, Assistant Secretary General, UNDP
- **Susanna Eduini**, Breathwork Trainer, OCTAVE Institute
- **Sze Ping Lo**, Program Director, Sequoia Climate Foundation
- **Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**, Director-General, World Health Organization
- **Professor Teo Yik Ying**, Vice President (Global Health), National University of Singapore and Dean, Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health
- **Tharman Shanmugaratnam**, President of the Republic of Singapore and Distinguished Patron of PAA
- **Uma Sachidhanandam**, Director of Conservation and Science, WWF Singapore
- **Dr William Tjhi**, Head of Applied Research for Foundation Models (ARF), AI Singapore
- **Assistant Professor Wisuwat Songnuan**, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Science, Mahidol University
- **Woochong Um**, CEO, Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP)
- **Xueling Lee**, Partner, The Bridgespan Group
- **Professor Zhang Cuilin**, Director, Global Centre for Asian Women's Health, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, NUS

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