



GE Healthcare Life Sciences

Renewed Global Interest in Vaccines Excites GE Healthcare Life Sciences

Dr, Nigel Darby, Vice President of BioTechnologies, and Chief Technology Officer, GE Healthcare Life Sciences, reflects on the 2011 Pacific Health Summit.

Last month I had the honour of participating in the 7th Annual Pacific Health Summit in Seattle. As the founder sponsor of the [Pacific Health Summit](#) in 2005, GE Healthcare has helped to shape its development into a recognised global forum where leaders in healthcare science and technology meet policy makers to discuss new approaches to solving some of the most pressing problems in world healthcare. The theme of this year's summit was "**Vaccines, harnessing opportunity in the 21st century**" and leaders from major vaccine manufacturers joined with Governments, NGOs, researchers and healthcare professionals to examine the re-emergence of vaccines as a major component of public health strategies throughout the world, particularly in developing nations.

Coming a week after the [Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation's](#) funding conference in London had secured an additional \$4.3b to help develop and administer vaccines in some of the world's poorest countries, the timing was opportune. Delegates examined how partnerships could be formed to tackle worldwide shortages in vaccine manufacture, to find better ways to distribute and administer vaccines and to help overcome the many practical difficulties health workers face on the ground on a daily basis.

Closing Panel echoed WHO Director General

I was delighted to participate on a closing plenary panel with Chris Elias, Head of the respected global NGO [PATH](#), and the CTO of Microsoft, Craig Munday. Our panel came at the end of two days of great discussion and dialogue. We looked forward to how vaccines and other technologies, such as new ways of manufacturing vaccines, could help strengthen healthcare delivery systems. This was a theme that Margaret Chan, the Director General of the WHO had stressed earlier. It was clear to me that the many different stakeholders that work in countries in specific disease and treatment areas need to converge to pool their resources and use existing infrastructure and supply chains to deliver better health care all round.



Dr Michael Birt, Executive Director of the Pacific Health Summit and closing panel moderator with Dr. Nigel Darby.

New approaches to vaccine production are needed

In the specific area of vaccine production, there was a clear undercurrent amongst the discussions that the *status quo* cannot continue – and by that I mean that right now, the bulk of vaccines are supplied from manufacturing plants in developed markets into the developing world. The change being requested is for localised manufacturing, so that vaccines are produced in the areas where they are needed – something we are very familiar with in GE Healthcare’s “*in country for country*” approach to product design and manufacture. Because our Life Sciences business is pioneering the use of modular and disposable production technologies that vaccine companies and/or Governments could use to develop smaller and more flexible manufacturing units in countries. I was delighted to have time with senior representatives of most of the world’s biggest manufacturers to explain where we might be able to assist them.

“There was a clear undercurrent that the *status quo* cannot continue”

Nigel Darby, GE Healthcare

Nigel Darby

Uppsala, July 2011

Further reading

Read an interview with Nigel Darby by Claire Topal and Karuna Luthra of the National Bureau of Asian Research: [“Expanding Vaccine Manufacturing Capacity and Potential: Broad Evolutions in Technology”](#).

Related Links

[GE Healthcare Life Sciences Disposable Technologies for Vaccine Production](#)

[Pacific Health Summit](#)

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