

Beyond Silos: Bridging Health and Security in an Era of Shifting Threats and Investments

Global Health Security Conference 2026

Wednesday, June 10, 2026 | 1:00 – 2:00 | Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, Malaysia

Biological events—whether naturally occurring, accidentally introduced, or deliberately caused—threaten humans, animals, plants, and ecosystems. Preventing, preparing for, and responding to biological incidents is inherently multi-sectoral, demanding coordinated action across health, security, defense, and law enforcement. Yet historically, biosecurity planning has been siloed, with sectors working in parallel rather than together.

The global landscape is shifting. Governments are increasingly investing in defense and security sectors while decreasing international investments in pandemic preparedness, even amid calls for stronger financing. Emerging technologies hold immense promise for global health but, at the same time, are lowering the bar to potential misuse of bioscience by bad actors. In this environment, neither the health community nor the security community can afford to optimize only for its own objectives.

The Global Health Security Conference (GHSC) brings participants, in large part, who are practitioners from public health, laboratory science, epidemiology, and academic fields. This sponsored lunch aims to utilize the preeminent venue of the GHSC to highlight the importance of viewing security as an inseparable pillar of health security. The discussion will offer a security-minded framing of familiar challenges, explore the different motivators and modes of operation that drive health and security actors, and surface practical approaches for communicating and collaborating across this divide.

The Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) has long convened diverse experts across regions and sectors to find common ground on challenges that fall between traditional institutional mandates. This session brings these insights to GHSC to advance holistic policy and practice among security, defense, law enforcement, and health communities in an era when health outcomes increasingly depend on defense-sector engagement and funding, while security outcomes increasingly depend on health system resilience.

Objectives:

- Highlight security as a core component of health security, reinforcing why deterrence and biological threat preparedness demand multi-sectoral efforts
- Strengthen attendees' understanding of the health security interface, including how health stakeholders can adapt their framing and language to resonate with security-focused audiences
- Explore how GHSC attendees can facilitate collaboration to address national and global health and security priorities

AGENDA

13:00 – 13:05 Welcome and Framing

David Stiefel, Director, NTI | bio

13:05 – 13:15 Key Remarks

Trevor Smith, Deputy Director & Senior Program Manager, Weapons Threat Reduction Program Division, Global Affairs, Canada

13:15 – 13:55 Moderated Panel Discussion and Q&A: Bridging Health and Security in an Era of Shifting Threats and Investments

Moderator: David Stiefel, Director, NTI | bio

Summary: This moderated panel discussion will center around identifying and promoting ways to integrate traditional health practices into a security mindset, breaking down stovepipes, and coordinating efforts.

Discussants:

- **Dr. Claire Standley**, Senior Biosecurity Initiatives Lead, Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI)
- **Zibusiso Masuku**, Senior Biosafety and Biosecurity Technical Officer, Africa CDC
- **TBC**

Discussion Questions:

1. *What challenges have you faced, or do you anticipate to face, by keeping health and security communities separated?*
2. *What value do you see in closer collaboration between health and security communities?*
3. *What are the barriers we need to overcome to facilitate productive collaboration among health and security communities?*
4. *What opportunities do you see in the next 6 months to link the health and security communities in your field of work?*

13:55 – 14:00 Closing Remarks

David Stiefel, Director, NTI | bio