

2014 Health & Humanitarian Logistics Conference • Mexico City

The 6th annual Health & Humanitarian Logistics (HHL) Conference was hosted in June 4-5, 2014 by the Tecnológico de Monterrey in Mexico City and co-organized by the, Georgia Tech Health & Humanitarian Logistics Center (HHL), INSEAD Humanitarian Research Group, and the MIT Humanitarian Response Lab.

Speakers and participants discussed successes and challenges in strengthening supply chains that meet humanitarian needs. Topics focused on operations in global health, food security, emergency response and end-to-end supply chain management, emphasizing priorities and future goals in research, policy, strategy, and investments.

The agenda featured high level keynote speakers from Mexico, representing the Ministry of Health, the Institute for Transportation, and the Red Cross as well the president of the National Academy of Medicine in Mexico. Dr. Jose Jesús Trujillo, Director of the Federal Commission for the Protection against Sanitary Risk for Mexico City (DF), opened the conference by sharing experiences and lessons learned during the 2009 H1N1 outbreak in Mexico. Other speakers included leaders from Aidmatrix, John Snow, Inc., OXFAM Great Britain and OXFAM Latin America/Caribbean, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

Plenary panels focused on the following topics: *Vaccination Supply Chain in Global Public Health; Market Mechanisms for Food Assistance; Infrastructure Needs for Coordination and Collaboration; and End-to-End Supply Chain Strategy for Health & Humanitarian Response*. Discussion topics included where and when to use cash or voucher programs versus in-kind food donations, preparedness and response for infectious diseases such as pandemic flu, the importance of standardization in humanitarian supply chain information systems, and the potential impact of implementing a comprehensive supply chain strategy including programming and effect on beneficiaries.

Several break-out workshops focused on related topics such as: *Strategies to Manage Material Convergence, Advancing the Health & Humanitarian Logistics Profession, Electronic Logistics Management Information Systems - A New Open Source Option, and Decision-support Tools to Assist in Health & Humanitarian Supply Chain Management*. The conference also featured a number of poster presentations highlighting new research in health and humanitarian logistics.

This year's HHL Conference brought together speakers and participants from 17 countries across 5 continents, from local and international NGOs, governmental organizations, private industry (such as logistics companies and consultancies), universities and other research institutions.

Participants expressed enthusiasm for the in-depth discussions in the various workshops commenting: *"the presenters' energy and enthusiasm was really infectious," and there was "so much participation in great insights. The transport session on day two sparked interesting debate."* One participant also highlighted the *"excellent networking opportunities"* and another the *"fantastic dialogue and networking for future initiatives and improvements."* Finally, another participant praised the balanced *"combination of humanitarian needs and development."*

The new information presented and ideas generated at the conference led to connections and future collaborations within and across organizations and have the potential to improve efficiency and effectiveness for many players in the health and humanitarian sectors. The conference organizers look forward to bringing together another diverse group of participants next year!

For further information about participants and speakers, feedback from attendees, and panel and workshop presentations (including videos) from the 2014 Health & Humanitarian Logistics Conference, please visit the website: <http://www.scl.gatech.edu/humlog2014>.

To connect with the GA Tech Health & Humanitarian Logistics Center about future collaboration and events, please visit our website humanitarian.scl.gatech.edu or email msmithgall@isye.gatech.edu.