

Dr. Sania Nishtar

Dr. Sania Nishtar is Special Assistant to the [Prime Minister of Pakistan on Social Protection](#) and Chair of the [Benazir Income Support Program](#), Pakistan, Pakistan's largest safety net institution which reaches out to 6 million households with cash grants. She is also current chair of the Poverty Alleviation Coordination Council in Pakistan reporting to the Prime Minister, as such she is responsible for leading the largest multisectoral plan for social welfare in Pakistan—[Ehsaas](#). In addition to programmatic dimensions, this also involves a deep-rooted reform of social welfare organizations in the country.

Dr. Sania Nishtar currently co-chairs the [WHO High Level Global Commission on NCDs](#) along with President Tabaré Vázquez of Uruguay; President Maithripala Sirisena of Sri Lanka; President Sauli Niinistö of Finland; and Veronika Skvortsova, Minister of Healthcare of the Russian Federation.

Dr. Sania Nishtar is also the Co-chair of **the** [U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Committee on Improving Global Quality of Healthcare](#). This important global initiative is running in parallel to the global Universal Health Coverage drive and is building the case for greater attention to quality of healthcare, as UHC is stepped up, globally.

In addition, Dr. Nishtar also **Co-chairs the** [World Economic Forum's Global Council on the Future of Health and Healthcare](#), a thinktank which invests in forward looking thinking to ascertain how the world can deliver affordable and quality healthcare for nearly 9.7 billion people by 2050.

Dr. Sania Nishtar is also the Chair of the Advisory Board of the [United Nations University International Institute of Global Health](#)

In 2017, Sania Nishtar was amongst the three shortlisted nominees for WHO Director general [view details here](#)

[Details about former international roles can be accessed here](#)

In her country Pakistan, Dr. Sania Nishtar has founded many institution, including [Heartfile](#), a respected health policy voice and the award winning [Heartfile Health Financing](#), an access-to-treatment initiative to support Universal Health Coverage. She has formerly served as a [Federal Minister of the Government of Pakistan](#) in 2013 and continues to play several other roles in her home country.

Dr. Sania Nishtar, is best known for her bold and transformational leadership in health. She has a unique combination of high-level experience in government, civil society and in multilateral institutions, as well as has a background as a physician scientist and thought leader on public health and health systems. In every role she has taken on, her defining feature has been her ability to deliver results with high integrity.

Founder of Institutions

Dr. Nishtar has built organizations from scratch—the globally recognized NGO Heartfile, a powerful and respected health policy voice in Pakistan, and Heartfile Health Financing, an access-to-treatment initiative to support Universal Health Coverage. She is a proven effective leader who delivers quality results. Dr. Nishtar is the recipient of the Global Innovation Award for her ability to think laterally, incubate and take to scale fresh ideas, build partnerships, exploit synergies for systems building and create impact.

Minister, Government of Pakistan

Dr. Nishtar served as Federal Minister in the 2013 caretaker government of Pakistan with responsibility for Health, Science and Technology, Information Technology, and Higher Education. As minister, she espoused the widely acclaimed accountability and transparency approach to working with the government evident, amongst other things, in the publication of her [Handover Papers](#). During her term, she was instrumental in re-establishing Pakistan's Ministry of Health. She has extensive public-sector experience as member/chair of national commissions, public sector boards, restructuring committees, and reform task forces.

Civil Society Trailblazer

Dr. Nishtar has strong civil society credentials as founder of civil society institutions, as a health policy voice demanding improved governance, and as a member of boards of many INGOs. She has received Pakistan's Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Presidential award) for her contributions.

Leader in the Multilateral System

Dr. Nishtar has wide experience in global health in the multilateral system. She currently co-chairs the WHO High Level Commission on NCDs with President of Uruguay, Finland and Sri Lanka. She is also the co-chair of the US National Academies Global Study on the Quality of Healthcare in Low- and Middle-Income Countries. Previously, she was the founding Chair of the UN Secretary General's Independent Accountability Panel for the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health and served as co-Chair of the WHO Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity. She has served on many international expert panels and is well-known for her leadership and consensus-building in global health. In 2017 [Dr. Nishtar was in the running for Director-General of the World Health Organization, and was in the shortlisted three.](#)

Physician Scientist

As a physician cardiologist, Dr. Nishtar has experience working in difficult health systems settings. She has strong research credentials and was the principal investigator of the first case control study in Pakistan. She became an advocate for disease prevention and health promotion earlier on in her career, when she used her study findings to develop public awareness campaigns.

Author

Dr. Nishtar is widely published in peer reviewed journals and is the author of six books. Her latest book, Choked Pipes is used as a post-graduate text book and a reference guide. It is the subject of a documentary by an award-winning filmmaker. She has led the Pakistan Lancet Series on health reform and is the author of Pakistan's first compendium of health statistics and the country's first national public health plan for Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases and Health Promotion.

Thought leader

Dr. Nishtar has deeply engaged in the international discourse on health and development as a thought leader and has attended over 200 major international conferences, consultations, and policy fora over the last 15 years as invited expert, chair, resource person, and keynote speaker.

In 2000, she left a lucrative career as cardiologist and set course on a journey to reach the underserved, challenging business-as-usual models, and developing innovative solutions that are saving people's lives. She has demonstrated her commitment to people's well-being through leadership, innovation, and a systems based approach to change.

She has worked with people from every region of the world, and is able to relate all levels of seniority. She masterfully convenes widely diverse constituencies, builds bridges across different cultural, social, economic and political perspectives and is able to lead people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives.