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Laxminarayan, an economist, engineer and epidemiologist by training, is director and senior fellow at the Center for Disease Dynamics, Economics & Policy (CDDEP) in Washington, D.C., and a senior research scholar and lecturer at the Princeton Environmental Institute at Princeton University.

He is a leading global expert on understanding of antibiotic resistance as a problem of managing a shared global resource. Through his prolific research, active public outreach and sustained policy engagement, Laxminarayan has played a central role in bringing the issue of drug resistance to the attention of policymakers worldwide.

Laxminarayan has served on the U.S. President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology's antimicrobial resistance working group and is a voting member of the U.S. Presidential Advisory Council on Combating Antimicrobial Resistance. He is a series editor of the Disease Control Priorities for Developing Countries, 3rd edition.

In 2012, Laxminarayan created the Immunization Technical Support Unit that supports the immunization program of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of the Government of India and which is credited with helping rapidly improve vaccination coverage and introduction of new vaccines. As Vice President, Research and Policy at the Public Health Foundation of India between 2011 and 2015, he led the growth of a research division from 80 to over 700 technical and research staff.

He is a co-founder of HealthCubed, which works to improve access to healthcare and diagnostics.