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Medical technologies form critical pillar of healthcare

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India to host 2020 World Conference on Access to Medical Products from 23rd to 25th September



“The discussions and knowledge sharing from this world conference need to be utilized for larger public welfare. We must optimally develop a robust system of sharing knowledge & other resources to practically translate discussions from this

platform into action" said Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare as he inaugurated the **2019 World Conference on Access to Medical Products Achieving the SDGs 2030**' on 19th November in New Delhi.

Calling the Conference a valuable platform for sharing experiences and advancing increased access to medical products globally as part of Universal Health Coverage (UHC), the Union Health Minister stated "ThisnConference will spur innovative thinking around issues surrounding provisioning of affordable, quality medical products as part of public health care delivery systems." He added that medical technologies underpinned by latest ideas and pooled-in knowledge, form a critical pillar of healthcare.

The inaugural session saw the release of 'Position Paper-2019 World Conference on Access to Medical Products–Achieving the SDGs 2030', 'White Paper on Safety of Rotavirus Vaccine in India: Smart Safety Surveillance Approach' and the 'National Guidelines for Gene Therapy Product Development and Clinical Trials'.

Following the UN High-Level Meeting (UN HLM) on UHC, the 2019 World Conference seeked to take forward the international and national agenda on access to medical products. The Conference was a follow on from the "2017 and 2018 World Conference on Access to Medical Products" organized in November 2017 and October 2018 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

The recommendations made at the two previous World Conferences are being pursued at international and national level by key ministries in India. This 2019 Conference provided a platform for discussions focused on creating an enabling legal and trade environment for public health which are critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 Agenda.

The main objective of the 2019 World Conference was to track the progress on recommendations from the 2018 World Conference for access to medical products for achieving UHC in the context of SDGs. This 3-day Conference had been designed as a forum to take these discussions further for access to medical products on the themes of 'UHC and innovation', 'Regulation of medical products and access' and 'Legal landscape and trade-related aspects in the context of access to medical products'.

On the final day of the conference on 21 November, Dr. Henk Bekedam, WHO Representative to India, called India the pharmacy of the world, not just for vaccines and generic drugs but now also for medical devices. "I appreciate the regulatory framework that is followed in India and I applaud the fact that now India has launched the biggest hepatitis B program in the under-developed world". Dr. Bekedam also highlighted how the Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna (AB-PMJAY) is reducing the out of pocket expenditure of the people and providing cashless tertiary care.