

India, Netherlands sign MOUs on Measles-Rubella vaccine development

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A Memorandum of Understanding was arrived at between India and Netherlands for the development of vaccines. The MoU signed under the 'Make in India' initiative of Government of India will enable Bharat Immunologicals and Biologicals Corporation Ltd (BIBCOL), a Central PSU under the Department of Biotechnology, to develop Measles - Rubella vaccine at its plant at Chola, Bulandshahr, UP. Translational Vaccinology (INTRAVACC) a government-based institute of the Netherlands will extend technical support for the development of vaccine. The MoU was signed in the presence of the Prime Minister of The Netherlands, Mr Mark Rutte during his visit to New Delhi.

Under the MoU cooperation in development of other vaccines and biologicals with DBT Research Institutes shall be explored.

INTRAVACC, an institute which is part of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport of the Netherlands, is internationally renowned for vaccine development and has a long history in technology transfer.

Bharat Immunologicals and Biological Corporation Limited (BIBCOL), Bulandshahr, UP is a Central Public Sector Unit, under the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India. BIBCOL was established as a PSU in 1989, with the aim to achieve self-sufficiency for the nation with respect to production and supply of high quality polio vaccine and other biologicals. It has supplied billions of doses of oral polio vaccine to India's immunisation programme and has played a major role in making India 'polio free'. Under the 'Make in India' initiative of the Government, BIBCOL has embarked on journey to acquire technology and production capabilities for production of Measles-Rubella vaccine with the support of Department of Biotechnology.

Dr Harshvardhan, minister for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences explained that the cooperation will result in large scale production Measles-Rubella and other needed vaccine of high quality in Bulandshahr, U.P. and save hundreds of thousands of children from the dreaded disease in the country. In the post polio eradication era, the focus shall be on elimination / control of other vaccine preventable diseases such as measles and rubella, he added.

Mr Y S Chowdhary, Minister of State for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences lauded this as an example of how international collaboration and quality science can lead to entrepreneurship for public good.

Prof K VijayRaghavan, secretary, Department of Biotechnology said that getting science and entrepreneurship to bear on the speediest production and deployment of vaccines is an important agenda of the Department.

Mr Oudendijk, Director General of Intravacc, welcomed the broader collaboration as agreed upon in the MoU, since it is expected to provide innovative vaccine technology for the benefit of the people of India.

Dr M K Bhan, chairman, BIBCOL commented that this important collaboration between BIBCOL and INTRAVACC will pave the way for manufacture of high quality affordable vaccines, beginning with Measles and Rubella vaccine, and then take on the production of the other needed vaccines for the Immunization Programmes of India and other developing countries in the world. The 'Make in India' is a critical initiative for promoting access to health technology beyond the borders of India.