

Indo-Swiss cooperation in healthcare

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"Considerable progress has been made in this regard and an MoU in the field of health is being signed to promote bilateral cooperation between the two countries," mentioned the Union Minister of Health Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad at the meeting with his Swiss counterpart, Mr Alain Berset. The meeting held on the sidelines of World Health Assembly at Geneva discussed the major areas of cooperation that include the non-communicable diseases including controlling the associated risk factors of tobacco use, harmful alcohol use, unhealthy diet among other key social issues.

The other areas where the need for joint efforts included communicable diseases and anti- microbial resistance, universal health coverage maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health, health and medical research therapeutic products, electronic medical records and global health governance.

Mr Azad noted that these areas are of immense significance for India, considering the enormous public health challenges that we are faced with. Highlighting the role of Indian generic drug industry to make available affordable medicines across the world, the Minister exuded confidence that Switzerland will extend full support to India on global platforms in order to carry forward our pursuits of providing high quality generic medicines at affordable prices.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Azad said that friendship between India and Switzerland goes as back as Independence of India, strongly rooted as it is in shared values of multi-culturalism, democracy and rule of law. Recalling the historic ties between the two countries, Azad said that a treaty of friendship between India and Switzerland was signed at New Delhi as early as 1948, soon after India's independence.

Emphasizing the special nature of relationship between the two countries, Mr Azad said that many high level visits have been exchanged in the recent past and that many bilateral institutional arrangements like Indo-Swiss Joint Commission, Swiss-India Chamber of Commerce, Indo-Swiss Joint Committee on Science and technology, exist to further cement our strong relations. Mr Azad noted that in the continuum of strong Indo-Swiss bilateral cooperation, an MoU between the two countries will be inked soon to further broaden the scope of bilateral ties.