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Healthcare innovations to make way for UHC

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The conclave brought together technology innovators, investors, government officials, public and private sector health service providers from India and Africa to share insights and strategies to encourage health innovation and for transforming health care delivery in Asia and Africa.

Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), Amref Africa, the Institute of Development Studies, UK (IDS UK), Indian Institute of Public Health Gandhinagar in partnership with NITI Aayog recently organized a conclave- Innovations for Universal Health Coverage 2018. It was hosted at the GE Healthcare Centre in Bengaluru.

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At the inaugural session, Dr Vinod Paul, Member NITI Aayog, said, "The Government of India's Ayushman Bharat is committed to the wellbeing of our citizens. It is an innovator’s delight. There are 1001 areas of innovation which can bring about a change in the area of healthcare such as diagnostics, telemedicine, tele-consultation, digital health and much more".

Alok Kumar, Advisor, NITI Aayog, pointed out, “We are encouraging health innovations which can improve healthcare in our country. We are looking at providing opportunities for innovations which can improve improve access, delivery and affordability of healthcare services." He also added that currently India has a shortage of healthcare professionals that needs to be addressed.

The experts during the conclave discussed and explored how the creation of new kinds of partnership between public and private sectors can improve access, delivery and affordability of healthcare services, the role of regulations and regulators in encouraging the development and application at scale of innovations for meeting the health care needs of vulnerable populations.

Professor K. Srinath Reddy, President of PHFI, said, "The Sustainable Development Goals have positioned Universal Health Coverage as a target to be delivered by 2030. For India, encouraging and supporting healthcare innovations that enable health services to reduce the burden of diseases at different levels of the health system and prevent disease at the population level are a high priority. These innovations must have relevance, affordability and scalability for impact. Building partnerships in health is also essential so that research explores, science discovers, technology develops, and the health system delivers. India can become the creative crucible of frugal, functional innovations that can transform health care."

Dr. Priya Balu, Director UHC, PHFI said, "The conclave focused on the need to build and scale up health innovative multi-sectoral partnerships. Cross-Learning and Knowledge sharing involving different types of organizations and different sectors will augment the learning process for health innovators in India and the need to build meaningful partnerships across partners to help accelerate universal health coverage."

Health Innovators like Selco Foundation - Solar energy solutions for health facilities, Jana Care - Aina Smartphone - based diagnostic for chronic diseases, I Kure Techsoft, Commcare (Dimagi) - Data collection software, CCDC (Centre for chronic disease control), Neurosynaptic Communications, Aravind Eye Care Systems - Aurolab, Tricog Health, UE Life Sciences, Meduplay Systems, Medtronic India Pvt. Ltd. Call Health showcased their innovations during the conclave.