

## First National Pharma Live Expo underway in Mumbai

02 March 2023 | News | By Bhagwati Prasad

**There will be centres of excellence for both pharma and medical devices going forward: Dr Vinod Kotwal**

The Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) has taken proper cognisance of focus areas in pharma like research, innovation and digital technology through industry-academia linkages, said Dr Vinod Kotwal, member secretary, National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Authority (NPPA) while speaking at the inaugural session of Pharma Live Expo and Summit 2023 organised by the Indian Drug Manufacturers Association (IDMA) and ICEXPO Consults held in Mumbai between March 1 and March 3 which has participation of over 170 companies.

This is the first national Pharma Live Expo and Summit 2023 in Mumbai organised by Indian Drug Manufacturers Association (IDMA) ICEXPO Consults.

Dr Kotwal cited the example of the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER) research portal launched by Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Health Minister, in January 2022 for industry academia linkages. Digital technology will help the pharma industry reach the top notches higher through usage of tools like artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML) and robotics.

Silvia Lutucuta, Minister of Health of Angola who was the Chief Guest of the occasion and led a delegation of African countries emphasised the need to strengthen bilateral relations and further explore Indian traditional medicine.

Daara Patel, Secretary General, IDMA, conducted the proceedings of the inaugural session. Sunanda Rajendran, secretary general, Indo-African Chamber of Commerce and Industry supported the delegation of African countries and urged the delegation to help explore areas of mutual interests and disciplines.

Speaking on the sidelines of the event, Dr Kotwal said, "India today contributes about 22 per cent of the total generic production by volume, third largest exporter of pharma and 11th largest manufacturer by value. There was an inflection point so far in the history of Indian pharma during COVID-19 in 2020 which had positive outcomes for the pharma industry. It was an opportunity to not only cater to the Indians but to the entire world".

She added, 'Indian pharma will contribute to play a similar kind of role going forward'.

Dr Kotwal further explained that Indian pharma is at the forefront of tackling non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and emerging diseases with the understanding of technology and disease patterns as Indian pharma did in the case of developing vaccines for COVID-19 and also repurposed drugs for the same. "Indian pharma has crossed the rubicon of being the generic pharma producer in the world and therefore should look beyond as digitisation will take it much ahead", she asserted.

"The Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) has launched schemes like bulk drug parks and has issued entrepreneurship and innovation policy guidelines. It should, therefore, adopt innovation hubs with all the players' like researchers, hospitals, academia, regulators, manufacturers and technology players at one place as is done in the west. The Centre will also encourage industry to invest in specific priority areas and there will be centres of excellence for both pharma and medical devices going forward," Dr Kotwal concluded.

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