

Clinical evidence needed in vaccine safety and efficacy: Mr Raj Shankar Ghosh

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The session was addressed by Mr Raj Shankar Ghosh, Interim Deputy Director, Vaccines Delivery, India, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

In his presentation, Mr Ghosh expressed that in the past five years, India's vaccine development industry has made proud contributions. He said, "There has been concerns around the introduction of new vaccines and their access and delivery. About 15 years ago we promised to make India a Polio-free nation and today it is a reality. We still have other promises to keep in scaling up on vaccine programs."

Mr Ghosh expressed that the government of India has set the tone for scaling up of vaccines. "In this regard, it shows 3 aspects. Firstly, scaling up in terms of number of children immunized i.e., the reach of vaccines in the remote corners of India like places in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, where there are big challenges." He further said, "Secondly, it is in terms of quality of vaccination and thirdly, scaling up in terms of introduction of vaccines."

Commenting about the strategies involved in the introduction of new vaccines, Mr Ghosh opined, "There is a lot of disease burden. There need to be strong evidence for new vaccines. Secondly, there needs to be clinical evidence around the safety and efficacy of the product, followed by opportunities, where we have to leverage the right time and opportunity for the introduction of new vaccines."

He concluded by saying, "Many vaccines come at high price with no mass production taking place. There has to be feasibility of inclusion of the product within India or other countries. Also, the preparedness of the country to accept the new vaccine is also important, which are all policy level decisions that need to be addressed."