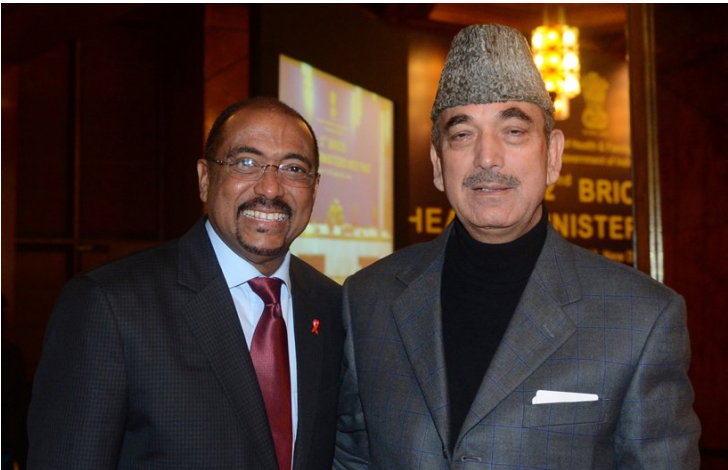


Azad offers Indian support to BRICS nations on health surveillance system

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The union health and family welfare minister, Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad, in his speech at the third BRICS health ministers meet, assured the other nations that are part of the association, of full support and urged them to ensure enhanced cooperation. Azad mentioned that BRICS has emerged as a valuable forum for consultation, coordination and cooperation on contemporary global issues of mutual interest. BRICS represents about 43% of the world's population and is acting as a new growth and governance pole in a multi-polar world.

The health minister stated that India can contribute towards five critical areas- health financing; health services administration including hospital administration; institutional reforms and appropriate use of available medical technology; human resource development; and access to essential drugs including a robust supply chain management and community participation.

India being the lead country for thematic area health surveillance system, Azad offered to hold a workshop in India of nodal points and other key stakeholders in March/April, 2014 to map the best possible way forward. He also offered arranging visits to some of Indian states to show the surveillance system for disease control programmes. The Minister suggested that Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) should be included in the health surveillance systems and he welcomed the proposed formal meetings during 11-15 November, 2013 with WHO Member States to complete the work on a draft terms-of-reference for a global coordination mechanism for NCDs on NCD action plan indicators and terms of reference for the UN Inter-agency Task force on NCDs.

The minister proposed enhanced cooperation among BRICS countries in medical education and training, capacity building, quality healthcare at an affordable cost, biotechnology, drug discovery and development as well as in the development of diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines and traditional Indian medicines.

The first formal BRICS health ministers meeting was held in Beijing, China in July, 2011 where the Beijing Declaration was adopted whereas the second BRICS health ministers meeting was organized in New Delhi in January 2013, where joint action plans were agreed upon for the thematic areas and a joint Delhi Communiqué was released.

Present at the occasion were Dr Pakishe Aaron Motsoaledi, minister of health, South Africa, Mr Alexandre Padilha, minister

of health, Brazil, Ms Veronika Skvortsova, minister of healthcare , Russia, Ms Li Bin, minister of health, China, Dr Luis Sambo, regional director, World Health Organisation, Mr Michel Sidibe, executive director, UNAIDS and various other dignitaries.