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J P Nadda inaugurates â??1st World Conference on Access to Medical Products & International Laws for Trade and Healthâ??

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The Conference is being organized by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare with the support of WHO Country Office for India and in partnership with Indian Society of International Law



J P Nadda, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare today inaugurated the '1st World Conference on Access to Medical Products and International Laws for Trade and Health in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'

While inaugurating the conference he said, "India is deeply committed nationally and globally to achieving all public health goals and also focusing on developing India as a hub for affordable medical devices. There is a need for promoting industry and academia collaboration for developing affordable medical products such that innovations and advances in medical sector reach a vast population."

The Conference is being organized by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare with the support of WHO Country Office for India and in partnership with Indian Society of International Law.

The objective of the Conference is to exchange knowledge and expand understanding on contemporary issues in international trade laws and research and innovation for access to medical products to achieve SDG 2030 agenda.

Anupriya Patel, Minister of State (HFW), Dr. V.K. Paul, Member, NITI Aayog, Preeti Sudan, Secretary (Health), Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, Secretary, Dept. of Health & Research (DHR) and DG, ICMR; Dr. Jagdish Prasad, Director General Health Services; Dr. R.K. Vats, Addl. Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare; Dr. Henk Bekedam, WHO Representative to India; and Dr. EMS Natchiappan, President, Indian Society of International Law, India along with other senior officers of the Ministry, delegates from various countries and representatives of development organisations were also present.

Health Minister also stated, "The coordination between the National Regulatory Authorities and pharmaceutical sector will enable launch and registration of new health technologies. He further said that the dialogue on role of competition in competitive pricing and discussion on related WTO agreements influencing health should lead to a larger umbrella of suggested policy options for the government."

"2015 National Medical Device Policy will enable local manufacture in the multiproduct, multidisciplinary industry. In India, nearly 150 thousand orthopaedic knee procedures are done every day. More investments and more players in the medical devices sector will lead to lowering down of prices and access to medical products as most of the governments are sensitive to access and pricing of medical products," he added.

Addressing the conference via video link, Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Minister of State (HFW) said, "Research and development in public health should focus on two main aspects. To enable safe, effective and quality medical products for the diseases and rolling out the innovations and inventions along with the learning's from the field to the people."

"The research and development should focus on making the cost of medical devices/products affordable to the people and highlighted the issue of Anti-microbial Resistance (AMR)", he added.

Speaking at the function, Anupriya Patel, Minister of State (HFW), stated, "India is committed to attainment of the highest possible standards of health for its citizens. She further said that at the national level, access to medical products (medicines, vaccines, medical devices & diagnostics) is an important facet in the health system as a whole and at the international level, access to medical products is a critical factor for the success of the 2030 sustainable development goals agenda that aims to ensure healthy lives and to promote well-being of people of all ages."

Dr. V.K. Paul, Member, NITI Aayog stated, "There is a need for investment in medical products for preventive therapy and treatment and highlighted the importance of affordability, quality, domestic production capacity and to create an eco-system of policy and innovation for greater accessibility of affordable medical drugs and devices. Technology is an integral block for strengthening medical systems in any country and must also ensure timely maintenance of medical equipment by suppliers in remote and rural areas such that equipment functions effectively."

Preeti Sudan, Secretary (Health) spoke about the issues of access of medicines and medical products. She said that safe medical products should be available at affordable prices. She further reiterated that the Health Ministry is committed to robust regulatory systems for ensuring safety, quality and efficacy of drugs.

Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, Secretary (DHR) and DG, ICMR highlighted issues such as how to use TRIPs flexibilities; alternative models for affordable medicines and devices such as voluntary licensing; clear predictable regulatory pathways; more investment in R&D and publicly funded R&D; innovative healthcare service delivery models; anti-biotic stewardship; and collaboration between the public and private sectors including academia to reduce cost of production and delivery.