

Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting 2017

70th World Health Assembly

May 21, 2017

Geneva

Rountable 1: Sustainable financing of universal health coverage

Title : Universal Health Coverage in India – Latest Initiatives

**Excellencies the Hon'ble Ministers,
Secretary General of the Commonwealth,
Distinguished Delegates representing Commonwealth
Countries, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am extremely delighted to participate in this ministerial roundtable on “Sustainable Financing of Universal Health Coverage.”

Mahatma Gandhi's idea of development cannot be more relevant than today when we talk about Sustainable Development Goals. He believed in the traditional Indian ethos '***Sarvodaya through Antyodaya***' which means development of all is only sustainable when development results in the upliftment of the weakest sections of society. Going by this guiding Talisman of Mahatma Gandhi, we believe that Equity is the core principle of a successful Universal Health Coverage Matrix.

India is charting its path towards Universal Health Coverage based on assured range of comprehensive

primary care, linked to robust secondary and tertiary care as well as increased public sector investment in healthcare.

India has adopted a new National Health Policy in March 2017. The policy is our roadmap for sustainable health financing and articulates our vision of achieving Universal Health Coverage in its various dimensions. The key policy principles are Equity, Universality, Accountability, Affordability, Patient centred care etc.

The Policy commits itself to increase total public spending on healthcare from current 1.2% of GDP to 2.5% of GDP by 2025. In view of our federal structure, we propose to give incentives to States for increasing health spending. The policy aims at a Comprehensive package of Primary health care, Health Card for each family and Strategic Purchasing of Secondary and tertiary services. There is increased focus on prevention, promotion and on mainstreaming traditional medicinal knowledge. We propose to address Human Resource Gaps and develop Public Health Management Cadre in each state. There would be greater Engagement with private and not-for-profit sectors for public health goals. There will be renewed emphasis on strengthening national capacity in indigenous production of vaccines, drugs and devices.

An important focus area of the health policy is achieving convergence among the wider determinants of health; air pollution, better solid waste management, water quality, occupational safety, road safety, housing and vector control.

India is promoting access to medicines by distributing TB, Malaria and HIV medicines absolutely free through public health facilities. For AIDS, recently "Test and Treat" policy has been started - giving every HIV patient the right to free treatment irrespective of his CD4 count.

Our endeavour is to achieve more than 90% immunization coverage by 2020, alongwith introduction of new vaccines in our universal immunization programme.

We are also working on a comprehensive National Health Protection Scheme.

Excellencies,

Universal Health Coverage to people across all countries is no longer a choice, it has become an imperative need. Mobilization of public finances, international partnerships, getting more health out of the pledged wealth through enhanced efficiency and prioritization of Health needs are some of the strategies we need to focus upon in order to build a sustainable financial model for Universal Health Coverage.

We are hopeful that the commonwealth spirit will provide us a platform to help protect populations from emerging health and environmental threats, both within and beyond commonwealth countries.

Thank you for your attention.