



**Permanent Mission of India
to the United Nations Office and
other International Organizations
9, Rue du Valais, 1202 Geneva
Tel. : +41 22 906 8686
Email : india.geneva@mea.gov.in**

NV.GEN/PMI/353/16/2020

18th October, 2021

The Permanent Mission of India to the Office of the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Special Procedures Branch of the Human Rights Council and has the honour to refer to joint communication No. OL/IND/16/2021 dated 14th October, 2021, received from the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises; the Special Rapporteur on the right to development; the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order; the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity and the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights and requests that the attached information (Annex I) may be brought to the attention of all the concerned as an interim response from the Government of India.

2. The Permanent Mission of India to the Office of the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Special Procedures Branch of the Human Rights Council the assurances of its highest consideration.

**The Secretariat of the Human Rights Council,
(Kind Attn: Officer in charge, Special Procedures Branch)
8-14 Avenue de la Paix, Palais des Nations,
CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland**



India's Covid-19 vaccine initiatives

- Our Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, speaking at the 75th United Nations General Assembly in September 2020, announced that India's vaccine production and delivery capacity will be used to help all humanity in fighting the crisis.
- In line with our intrinsic philosophy of 'Vasudhaiv Kutumbkum', the World is One Family, we believe that only global cooperation can help solve a global crisis. Right from the time of the outbreak, India has played a pivotal role in supply of essential medicines, test kits, protection gears to over 150 countries.
- In the same spirit, India launched its "Vaccine Maitri" or "Vaccine Friendship" programme in January 2021. Under this programme, India has shared more than 70 million doses of 'Made in India' vaccines with 95 countries and UN entities till now. Rapid Response Teams from India visited a number of countries in our region to assist with expertise and capacity in dealing with the Covid crisis. Recently, India has resumed exports of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines to other countries, beginning October 2021.
- Keeping in mind the urgent need to enhance production of essential drugs and vaccines globally to support the healthcare systems around the world, India and South Africa jointly proposed TRIPS waiver to address the challenges that developing countries have faced in accessing vaccines as well as other tools to fight COVID-19 pandemic.
- In March 2021, the Quad country leaders (India, US, Australia and Japan) launched the Quad Vaccine Partnership, to help enhance equitable access to safe and effective vaccines in the Indo-Pacific and the world. Since March, the Quad countries have taken bold actions to expand safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing capacity, donated vaccines from their own supplies, and worked together to assist the Indo-Pacific in responding to the pandemic. At the 22nd September COVID-19 Summit in the US, the Quad countries pledged to donate more than 1.2 billion vaccine doses globally, in addition to the doses they have financed through COVAX. To date, the QUAD countries have collectively donated nearly 79 million safe and effective vaccine doses to the Indo-Pacific region. Additional production capacity of COVID-19 vaccines is being created under the Quad framework at Biological E company in India for supply to the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.
- The COVID-19 vaccine was launched in India on 16th January, 2021. The first group of people to get vaccinated included healthcare and frontline workers. The second group to receive COVID-19 vaccine were people over 60 years of age as of January 1st, 2021 and people between 45 and 59 years with comorbid conditions. This group started receiving vaccinations from March 1st, 2021. From April 1st, 2021, people above the age of 45 years (born before 1st Jan, 1977) were eligible to get the COVID-19 vaccine. From May 1st, 2021, all eligible citizens above the age of 18 years can get the COVID-19 vaccine.
- The Serum Institute of India which is manufacturing the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine under the name "Covishield" and Bharat Biotech which is

manufacturing an indigenously developed vaccine named “Covaxin” are the two main vaccine manufacturers in India. Recently, the world’s first DNA vaccine, Zy-CoV-D, developed by Zydus Cadilla has been approved by the Indian regulator. A pharma major Biological E is manufacturing two COVID-19 vaccines, Janssen and CORBEVAX which would be commercially available in a few weeks. Gennova Biopharmaceuticals is developing an indigenous mRNA vaccine which will be commercially available in early 2022.

- On the domestic vaccination front, India will be reaching be a milestone. We would have administered 1 billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines to our citizens in the coming few days. With resumption of exports and the commitment for universal coverage of the vaccine, India has made advance payments to the Indian vaccine manufacturers to ramp up the productions. The Central Government has full control over vaccine procurement and distribution.
- The Covid-19 vaccines are being administered free of costs to all population above the age of 18 in India.
- With the aim of equitable vaccines, the Government has also made a provision wherein those with restricted mobility, who cannot step out of their house to get vaccinated, such as those who are differently-abled, elderly or those with some special needs, are administered vaccine shots at home under the supervision of trained vaccinators, following the requisite standard operating procedures (SOPs).
- The Government of India has also launched i-Drone, a drone-based vaccine delivery model used to transport covid-19 vaccines and other important life-saving medicines, collecting blood samples in critical situations and in tough geographical areas in India.
- India has given a boost to its vaccination programme by approving its first vaccine for those under 18. The three-dose ZyCoV-D vaccine manufactured by another Indian vaccine maker Cadila Healthcare has been approved as safe for under 18 years age group. COVAXIN is likely to soon obtain approval for administration for children from 2 to 18 years of age.
- The Government of India has launched an App called Co-WIN: Covid Vaccine Intelligence Network – a tech-based platform facilitating the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Covid-19 vaccination in India. The application has been a useful instrument in ensuring transparency in the administration of the vaccine. It is based on the guiding principles of equitable and inclusive vaccination across multilingual states, with multiple modes for registration to ensure accessibility for all, and unbiased distribution of vaccines through a single source of data to remove information asymmetry and align stakeholders. India has offered the Co-WIN platform the WHO Covid Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) as well as all interested countries.
- To share our experiences, we have organised a number of online training programmes for COVID-19 testing, clinical practices, case management, vaccine development and delivery etc. in which nearly 1000 participants from Asian, South East Asian and African countries have participated. We have also organised a training programme covering administrative and operational aspects, which was conducted on 19-20 January 2021 for immunization

managers, cold chain officers, communication officers and data managers of the partner countries, both at national and provincial levels. More than 150 experts from the neighbouring countries participated in this training programme.

- A workshop on 'Covid-19 management: Experience, Good practices and way forward' with 10 neighbouring was organized on 18 February 2021, in which Health secretaries and technical experts shared their experiences in tackling covid19 pandemic. While addressing the workshop Hon'ble Prime Minister suggested to create a special visa scheme for our doctors and nurses, coordinate an air ambulance agreement for medical contingencies, create a regional platform for collating, compiling and studying data on vaccines and create a regional network for promoting technology-assisted epidemiology for preventing future pandemics.
- On 5 July, 2021, we organized a Global Conclave for CoWIN platform which has facilitated administration of COVID vaccines in India. Over 400 representatives of 142 countries participated in the Conclave, which was addressed by Hon'ble Prime Minister. A number ministers, including from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Maldives, Guyana, Antigua and Barbados, etc. participated in the Conclave. We are offering the CoWIN platform as an open source software for the interested countries to adapt and adopt. MEA in partnership with the National Health Authority will help the countries adapt and adopt this platform for their vaccination programmes.
- In absence of domestic legislative framework, the Government of India has not provided indemnity to vaccine manufacturing companies. India has a robust system of monitoring of Adverse Effects Following Vaccination, and Indian vaccines have provided their efficacy and safety with administration of nearly a billion doses so far.
