




Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Dr. Harsh Vardhan showcases India's fight against COVID to his BRICS Counterparts



 **“Decentralized but Unified mechanism to provide Universal, Accessible, Equitable and Affordable Health Care to one and all was the driving force behind our Unique Response Strategy for COVID-19”**

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Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare digitally attended the BRICS Health Ministers Conference, here today through Video Conference.

His official statement is as follows;

Excellencies,

Today we meet virtually after having experienced the greatest health related challenge faced by the modern world & having portrayed great resilience against this COVID-19 pandemic.

Before I proceed, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the frontline workers – healthcare workforce, researchers, policy makers, and many others – who made this journey possible, with risk to their own lives.

I believe we continue to become stronger as we gain greater awareness about emergency preparedness strategies in light of a global health crisis. I feel honored to be a part of this integral discourse about increasing global solidarity for ensuring Health Safety of all our citizens.

BRICS, represent some of the world's fastest growing economies & account for nearly 40% of the world's population and thus, have always had a great role to play in influencing the state of global health. These five nations – Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China, and South Africa – have been working towards overcoming several common health challenges: concerns around communicable and non-communicable diseases, inequitable access to health services, rising health-care costs, and now, the COVID-19 Pandemic. I believe that over the past few years, the BRICS nations have embarked upon a journey marked with substantial reforms that have helped us provide improved healthcare services, financial protection, and universal health coverage.

Excellencies,

This pandemic has demonstrated the vulnerability of humankind to exigencies, making us realize the vital need to further strengthen our healthcare systems

At the onset of pandemic and its spread in India, a rapid & robust institutional response was activated under the leadership of our visionary PM Sh Narendra Modi Ji.

While the Central government steered this movement with constant monitoring and evaluation, providing handholding support to the states to tackle this crisis holistically, our respective State governments also undertook various unique strategies to keep their response mechanism agile and vigilant. Our decentralized but unified mechanism to provide universal, accessible, equitable and affordable health care to one and all was the driving force behind our unique response strategy for COVID-19.

India's COVID-19 response approach was preemptive, proactive and graded. Starting with early screening and isolation of passengers, imposing lockdowns and creating containment zones to prevent over-burdening of health facilities and personnel, propagating behavior change as an integral move to contain the spread, and ultimately recognizing the imperative need for reopening of the economy in a phased, cautious and responsible manner.

India has curated its response, keeping in mind the large population size.

Several technological innovations were also leveraged in our pandemic management efforts. While applications such as Arogya Setu and ITIHAS facilitating rapid contact tracing and surveillance, the interactive and dynamic COVID India Portal enabled real time tracking and monitoring. The iGOT portal (Integrated Government Online Training) was also launched as a training module for our frontline health workers.

We worked round the clock to boost domestic production and expand our healthcare workforce, thus bridging major gaps in demand and supply of essentials such as testing kits, PPEs, ventilators etc. Furthermore, an "Aatma Nirbhar Bharat" movement has now been launched to become self-sufficient in all our capacities.

Excellencies,

Our collective nations have had a rich history of successfully tackling various disease outbreaks in the past decades with an all inclusive and equitable approach. As emphasized in the BRICS Ufa Declaration 2015, we have to proactively work towards enhancing our strategic partnerships and systems of knowledge exchange, building successful collaborations on the basis of principles such as openness, solidarity, equality and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Excellencies,

We need an aggressive roadmap and a strong show of solidarity to curtail any present & future risks threatening safety and wellbeing of millions of global citizens. There is also an impending need to share reliable and accurate data and any lessons drawn in the course of managing this Pandemic, to eliminate any threat of emerging disease outbreaks & ensuring equitable and inclusive access to healthcare for one and all.

f We have come quite far in the past few months and I am confident that our respective nations will come out strong and resilient in the management of COVID-19 and any such outbreaks in the future. Looking forward to many fruitful collaborations with you all!



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