



Union Health Secretary Punya Salila Srivastava reaffirms India's commitment to strengthening global pandemic preparedness and response at UN High-Level Meeting

Smt. Srivastava calls for fair pathogen access and benefit sharing under the WHO Pandemic Agreement

India supplied 300 million vaccine doses to around 100 countries and provided medical assistance to over 150 countries during COVID-19: Smt. Punya Salila Srivastava

Smt. Srivastava emphasizes that pandemic preparedness is a shared responsibility, with equity and global solidarity at its core

WHO Director-General Tedros Ghebreyesus calls for urgent action to strengthen global pandemic preparedness

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Representing India at the UN High-Level Meeting on 'Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response' in New York on 25th September, Union Health Secretary Punya Salila Srivastava reaffirmed the nation's commitment to strengthening global health security through international cooperation. She stressed the need to translate the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic into sustained investment, institutional capacity and resilient health systems.

Addressing the meeting at the United Nations Headquarters, Smt. Srivastava outlined India's coordinated approach to pandemic prevention and response across government and society, which covers a wide range of potential health emergencies. She spoke of the country's efforts to expand laboratory networks, emergency coordination, health workforce, stockpiles and clinical care capacity to ensure that systems are equipped to respond effectively to health emergencies.



She noted that these efforts need to be rooted in national health systems, development plans and domestic financing, with international assistance complementing national responsibility.

Drawing on India's experience during COVID-19, Smt. Srivastava called for digital public infrastructure to be recognised as a global public good. She noted that digital solutions played an important role in surveillance, vaccination, risk communication, supply chains and continuity of health services during the pandemic.

She also underscored the importance of solidarity and fair access to essential health products. During the COVID-19 pandemic, India supplied 300 million vaccine doses to around 100 countries and two UN entities, while providing medical assistance to over 150 countries. She said this reflected India's commitment to the principle of "One Earth, One Health" and to the Global South.



Referring to the WHO Pandemic Agreement adopted in May 2025, the Union Health Secretary described it as an important milestone and stressed that its credibility would depend on a fair Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing (PABS) system. She stated that countries contributing pathogens and biological resources must receive timely access to vaccines, diagnostics, therapeutics, technologies and other benefits, while respecting national sovereignty.

Smt. Srivastava further stated that the political declaration should not prejudice ongoing negotiations on the PABS annex and should be implemented in accordance with national circumstances and capacities. On the 'One Health' approach, she called for its implementation, as appropriate, in accordance with domestic law, international law and national circumstances.

She also underlined the importance of member states' role in reviewing and consolidating pandemic prevention, preparedness and response tools, assessments and data, noting that such processes should be undertaken in consultation with the member states given their policy implications.

Concluding her speech, Smt. Srivastava said that preparedness is a shared responsibility and that equity must remain central to efforts to address future pandemics and outbreaks. "Global solidarity must be demonstrated through action," she said.

WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus pointed to the progress made in strengthening the global health security architecture since COVID-19, including the WHO Pandemic Agreement and amendments to the International Health Regulations. He stressed the urgency of concluding negotiations on the PABS system, noting that delays could affect the world's ability to respond to future pandemics.



United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed cautioned against complacency following COVID-19 and called for continued political attention to the issue. She also stressed the importance of community-based systems for early detection, surveillance and communication so that emerging outbreaks can be identified and contained at an early stage.

The high-level meeting provided an opportunity for Member States and stakeholders to track progress, identify challenges and renew efforts to strengthen resilient, equitable and sustainable systems for future health emergencies.

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