**BRICS Health Ministers Meeting 2015**

**Address by Shri Jagat Prakash Nadda**

**Hon’ble Minister of Health & Family Welfare**

**Government of India**

**(19th May 2015: 13:30 hrs)**

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies & Gentlemen,**

Let me extend my warm greetings to you on this BRICS luncheon meeting today. We are extremely thankful to the Government of Russia for organizing this meeting.

**Excellencies,**

The coming together of 5 major countries of the world in the form of BRICS has been a significant development which can be a game changer in providing a better quality of life and health for our citizens. Although great attention is being given to our economic performance, the fact that we have tremendous synergies on the health front and the potential thereof is not sufficiently recognized.

In this context, the annual BRICS Health Ministers’ Meeting can prove to be a catalyst for intra-BRICS health cooperation to address key and common public health issues. Our individual and collective capacities, strengths and advantages have the potential to make positive contribution within our countries as well as in the rest of the World. This can be realized through our ability to strengthen policy coherence at all levels.

BRICS countries have gained a wealth of experience in universal health coverage and low-cost medicines and vaccines. Within BRICS, many millions of people have been extricated from the claws of poverty. This has resulted in marked improvements in health and in substantial progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We need, however, to maintain the momentum.

The BRICS Framework for Collaboration on Strategic Projects in Health is a useful tool for cooperation. This needs to be taken forward through collaborative arrangements and activities between institutions, academia, research and biotechnology firms and public health institutions.

To effectively address the issue of promoting access to affordable and quality medicines and diagnostics, we must encourage initiatives to foster innovative and sustainable models for R&D and transfers of technology. In this context, a consistent stand of the BRICS countries to promote access to affordable, safe, quality and efficacious medical products using provisions of TRIPS flexibilities need to be further pursued in all regional and multilateral fora.

We need to work together to address many other priority issues and challenges such as non-communicable diseases, antimicrobial resistance, Neglected Tropical Diseases, HIV-AIDS, and TB, to name a few. We must accelerate the process of learning and cross learning for this purpose.

Before I conclude, let me reiterate the importance of diplomacy of diversity as a viable tool to favourably influence the global health landscape. We should engage more with WHO as a group and take common agreed positions and speak in one voice in WHO, UN and other high level policy forums.

To conclude, I reiterate India’s strong commitment and willingness to work in synergy with other BRICS countries towards the shared agenda achieving health for all.

Excellencies,

As you are aware, Hon’ble Prime Minister of India His Excellency Narendra Modi ji, gave a call in the United Nations General Assembly in September last year to recognize Yoga as a provider of holistic approach to health and well-being. We are happy to note that the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution, with co-sponsorship from 177 countries including all BRICS countries, to observe 21st June as the International day of Yoga. I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to join a photo exhibition titled ‘Yoga for all and Yoga for Health’, at 1830hrs this evening, immediately before my Reception.

Thank you.

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