



Ministry of Commerce & Industry

**India calls upon the G-20 nations to ensure access to essential medicines, treatments and vaccines at affordable prices;**

**Shri Piyush Goyal, in G-20 Trade Ministers meeting, says staying true to our tradition of “Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam, India has unconditionally provided medical supplies to over 120 countries to combat this disease**

**India will emerge stronger after the implementation of the special economic package announced by the Prime Minister, says the minister**

**World has to come together to build partnerships among like-minded nations with shared values of democracy, rules-based and transparent business models and concern for humanity as a whole**

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India has called upon the G-20 nations to ensure access to essential medicines, treatments and vaccines at affordable prices. In his Interventions during the 2nd G20 Virtual Trade & Investment Ministers Meeting, held through Video-conferencing, the Commerce and Industry Minister Shri Piyush Goyal asked the G20 members to first focus on immediate and concrete actions that can ease the distress being faced by people all over the world due to Corona pandemic. He said that the unprecedented situation calls for solidarity and a balanced, inclusive and calibrated response. An overriding priority for all countries at this time, is to save precious lives. He strongly called for agreement to enable the use of TRIPs flexibilities to ensure access to essential medicines, treatments and vaccines at affordable prices. He also called upon the G-20 nations to also agree to provide diagnostic and protective equipment, and healthcare professionals across borders where they are most needed.

Shri Goyal said that doing away with the policy instrument of export restrictions is not a panacea that will guarantee access to medical products and food for all. In fact, such a step is likely to lead to a flight of these critical products to the highest bidder, making them inaccessible to the resource-poor. He said that more effective and lasting way to ensure food security of the most vulnerable, would be by agreeing to eliminate the historic asymmetries in the Agreement on Agriculture, and delivering on the long-standing Ministerial mandate to establish permanent, adequate and accessible disciplines on Public Stockholding for food security purposes by the 12th Ministerial Conference of the WTO.





Shri Goyal said that learning from this extremely distressing experience, the world has to come together to build partnerships among like-minded nations with shared values of democracy, rules-based and transparent business models and concern for humanity as a whole. India wishes to contribute to this global effort. He said “In the last few months, we have embarked upon an ambitious reform agenda under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to transform our country. Our future will be crafted on five pillars – a strong and vibrant economy, massive infrastructure development, building modern systems with stable and predictable regulatory practices, leveraging the huge demographic dividend our democracy offers and the growing demand for goods and services of 1.3 billion Indians. We are confident we will emerge stronger after the implementation of the announcement of Prime Minister Modi of a special economic package amounting to around 10% of our GDP.”

Sharing a small example of India’s capabilities and commitment, Shri Goyal said “When the pandemic broke out, India barely produced a few thousand pieces of Personal Protective Equipment. We had never needed PPEs in large numbers ever before. When we realised that countries were not able to supply enough for our needs, our domestic manufacturers created and ramped up capacities. So much so, that we now produce nearly 300,000 PPEs every day.”

The Minister said that widely regarded as the ‘Pharmacy of the World’, India is also proactively partnering in global efforts to develop vaccines and effective treatment for this disease. He said “We offer full support to any global engagements to further this cause. Staying true to our tradition of “Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam”, i.e. the world is one big family, India has unconditionally provided medical supplies to over 120 countries to combat this disease, of which 43 countries received it as a grant. In addition, a USD 10 million COVID-19 Emergency Fund has been created and is being utilised to deliver urgent medical supplies, equipment and humanitarian assistance to our neighbours. We are also sharing our medical and public health expertise and capacity with them, using digital technologies.”

Underscoring the wide digital divide between developed and developing countries, the Minister stressed on the urgent need to build the digital skills and capacities of developing countries and LDCs, rather than rushing to make binding rules on digital trade and e-commerce, which will freeze the extremely non-level playing field against their interests, and deprive them of the opportunity to benefit from the immense potential in these areas. He said that as a result of the pandemic, a large number of professionals, workers and students located overseas are facing difficulty in maintaining their visa status. Describing India as the shining example to have extended benefits to them, he said that We must allow suitable accommodation in their visa status and take other necessary steps to address their distress.

Shri Goyal thanked the Saudi Presidency for organising the 2nd G20 Trade & Investment Ministers Virtual Meeting.

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