



Public Affairs Forum of India

**PAFI's 7th National Forum 2020  
October 22 - 23, 2020  
New Delhi**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Surveillance, Containment & Collaboration Are crucial to create a pandemic resistant world**

**India's leading healthcare experts emphasise on Data; Building of an enabling environment with Biology, Bytes & Bandwidth**

**New Delhi, October 23, 2020:** COVID-19 has posed challenges and created opportunities for healthcare system. India's top healthcare experts discussed the roadmap and strategies on how industry can work with stakeholders - government, health agencies and multilateral institutions- in building a pandemic resistant world at PAFI's 7<sup>th</sup> National Forum 2020.

Speaking at the forum, **Dr Randeep Guleria, Director, AIIMS** said, "Surveillance, Containment & Collaboration are crucial to create a pandemic resistant world. All countries have to come together to create a robust surveillance system with proactive involvement and need to invest considerably to improve the global health infrastructure. Innovation is another area that is important in the upscaling of healthcare infrastructure. There are many opportunities as far as telehealth and technology is concerned but we are slow at adopting them in healthcare sector."

Dr. Guleria further added, "We also need to have big investment in one health. Unless we look at the health in holistic terms, we won't be able to prevent outbreaks. Therefore, we must aggressively work on the concept of one health. If we need to have a pandemic resistant world, we need to have a system which is sustainable and works even when the pandemic is over".

Highlighting the role of data sharing he said, "There has to be a lot of data sharing and planning for prevention of future outbreaks. We should look at the central surveillance team globally which could look at the data coming from all parts of the world. Data sharing within the country is also important to fill the gaps in the policies".

**Dr Naresh Trehan, Chairman & Managing Director, Medanta** said, "The first step towards a pandemic resistant world is the development of a sustainable and affordable healthcare system. COVID-19 has exposed that across countries, the universal health coverage systems are fragile and underfunded. In order to become a healthy nation, it is critical to build infrastructure to decrease the existing disease burden. We, along with the world, need an early warning system to ensure that the next pandemic does not bring us down on our knees. Also, the quality of data and an ability to analyse it has to be cultivated. Collaborative efforts within the government and between the government and the private sector is the need of the hour."

Emphasising on the need for greater transparency from countries like China, Dr. Trehan also spoke about the need for WHO to be more robust and accountable so that this pandemic



experience may be translated into something meaningful. India must also capitalise on its soft power of knowledge, skills and technology to create universally applicable solutions.

**Ms. Sangita Reddy, Managing Director, Apollo Hospital and President, FICCI** said, “No time in the history of the world has healthcare been so central to every theme around us. At the heart of all this is to build a stronger healthcare system which is affordable and accessible to all. There is a global shortage of healthcare workforce. There is potential for India to serve a greying world. First, we need to take care of India, to increase our own healthcare workforce. Second, we need further investment into the overall healthcare system. Using biology, bytes & bandwidth, we can enable a distant rural environment for a second opinion service, to predict & more. This will democratize healthcare significantly. It's important to build solutions for ourselves & share with the world. Disconnect between the centre, state and districts is also evident which needs greater attention and streamlining”.

**Dr Shubhashis Gangopadhyay, Research Director, IDF and Dean, Indian School of Public Policy** said, “Healthcare is not just a sector, but should be viewed as the fundamental backbone of any economy. Investment in healthcare would reduce the demand on healthcare services and also increase productivity of the nation. Additionally, the healthcare sector is potentially the biggest employer in the country and may aid in solving the unemployment issues. Businesses with a high ES rating have been more resilient to this pandemic.”

Dr. Gangopadhyay further suggested that such businesses should be rewarded/incentivised by the government to operate in such a manner. A healthy economy will improve productivity. Health sector is the largest employer in a broader sense. There is need for more research in health economics. It is crucial to move from a data-rich to a data-intelligent country. Use of data in policy making, strategizing and planning is needed.

**Mr Subho Ray, Vice President, PAFI & President, Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)** welcomed the panellists.

**About Public Affairs Forum of India (PAFI):**

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