

Ambassador's Speech on the occasion of "3rd India - Japan Medical Products Regulatory Symposium"

- Hon'ble Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare,

- Dr. S. Eswara Reddy, Drugs Controller General (India),

- Dr. Takao Yamori, Executive Director, Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency,

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I am honored to be present here at this auspicious occasion of the "3rd India - Japan Medical Products Regulatory Symposium".

At the first symposium held in May 2016, I had expressed my hope that the governments and industries of Japan and India would cultivate mutual understanding and further cooperation. I am pleased to see that happening, and would like to express my sincere appreciation towards the efforts made by everyone here to build a firmer relationship in the health sector between our two countries.

Indeed, our Prime Ministers, in their joint statement last year, "noted with satisfaction the progress in the health sector and the joint efforts by their medical experts on medical device development." The two leaders pledged to reinforce their efforts to ensure partnership for prosperity in such areas as bio-technology, pharmaceuticals and health.

I am confident our cooperation will bear rich and meaningful fruit, particularly in light of the recent efforts by the Government of India, as exemplified by the "Ayushman Bharat campaign". But then, the question is, how can Japan contribute to India's efforts to improve its health sector?

One way is by sharing Japan's experiences with India. In 1962, Japan

established the national health insurance system, under which all citizens can equally receive advanced medical care. This system of universal health coverage demands for better skills of doctors and nurses, as well as efficient distribution of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment.

Through these experiences Japan can support capacity-building in trauma care and clinical examination areas, as well as in the development of medical equipment through cooperation between our academic institutions.

Furthermore, the Government of Japan is planning to launch the "Asia Health and Wellbeing Initiative", incorporating concrete projects contributing to India's health sector. Currently, we are working with the Hon'ble Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Shri Jagat Prakash Nadda to finalize the details.

Another possible way is to provide medicines and medical equipment with advanced Japanese technologies to the people of India at an affordable cost.

I would like to stress here that, regulation of medical products is the cornerstone for distributing safe and effective medical products. Effective regulation can ensure healthy competition in the market, while excluding low-quality products. It is critical that the government sets reasonable rules in line with international standards, and that companies faithfully comply with these rules.

I cannot emphasize more on how this symposium can play an essential role for achieving such an end. Its objective is to raise the level of regulatory policies in both countries and to facilitate their compliance by the industry, through sharing of best practices among regulators and the industry. I am convinced these efforts will further revitalize the pharmaceutical and medical equipment market in both countries.

I am pleased to report to you that regulatory authorities of our two countries have steadily deepened their cooperation through concrete actions. PMDA (Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency) of Japan has established the

“Asian Training Center” and conducted joint inspection initiatives to enhance the skills of Indian regulators. CDSCO (Central Drugs Standard Control Organization) of India has carefully listened to the opinions of PMDA and Japanese companies in formulating and enforcing the new Medical Device Law of India. Furthermore, CDSCO has offered sound advice to the Japanese companies facing Indian regulatory issues. I would like to pay my high respects to the regulatory authorities of both countries for all such efforts, and also hope that such collaborative efforts will be expanded further.

At the same time, I would like to specially appeal to the Japanese companies that, as a result of the aforementioned efforts, the investment environment in India has improved dramatically, and this is an opportune time to consider entry into the Indian market. The Government of India is particularly looking for Japanese medical device manufacturers to produce high-quality medical devices in India. I would appreciate it if the Japanese companies present here today could take a good look at the actual market situation of India and positively consider making investments here. The Embassy of Japan is willing to extend its full support to all such initiatives of the Japanese companies.

Let me conclude my remarks by wishing for the great success of this symposium. I am sure there will be further concrete results coming out from this symposium, and would like all the participants to foster deeper relationships with their counterparts, by seizing this good opportunity.

Thank you.