

## Key stakeholders convene ahead of the G20 second health working group to strengthen global collaboration in research and accelerate regional manufacturing for diagnostics

- G20 co-branded event was conducted by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, GoI, FIND and Unitaid to discuss efforts for the sustainable development and manufacturing of effective, quality and affordable diagnostic countermeasures
- The objectives of the meeting inform the Health Working Group of the G20 Presidency, hosted by India
- The meeting provides recommendations to the G20 and its Member States and international partners on the establishment of a R&D and manufacturing network for diagnostics



**GOA, INDIA – 16 April 2023.** The Department of Pharmaceuticals, Government of India, FIND and Unitaid co-hosted a high-level meeting to strengthen cooperation and enable sustainable development and manufacturing of effective, quality and affordable diagnostic countermeasures prior to the G20 second health working group meeting, which will take place on 17–19 April 2023 in Goa, India. Stakeholders in attendance included representatives of the Government of India, G20 Member States (Australia, France, United Kingdom, Indonesia, Russia, Brazil and observers Mauritius, Netherlands, Oman), international organizations and over 20 diagnostics manufacturers from around the world.

While inaugurating the event, **S Aparna, Secretary of the Department of Pharmaceuticals**, said: “The centrality of diagnostics extends far beyond testing for a pandemic. Diagnostics are key to preventing and treating diseases optimally, and by extension achieving universal health coverage (UHC). The Government of India is committed to ensuring quality, affordability and access to diagnostics. We hope that the deliberations from today will be taken forward at the second Health Working Group meeting tomorrow.”

Regional development of diagnostics products through region-appropriate research and decentralized production of diagnostics can help reduce disparities, enhance health security, including pandemic prevention, preparedness and response capabilities, support UHC and contribute to regional economic growth.

**Sanjay Sarin, Vice President of Access at FIND**, said: “The pandemic has bolstered the role of a more decentralized model for manufacturing diagnostics, one that combines global and regional manufacturing alike, in support of equitable and sustainable access to diagnostics worldwide. In line with the priorities of the G20, we believe that decentralized manufacturing supports the broader mission of expanding access to diagnostics and achieving UHC.”

The meeting built on a successful 2-day technical workshop on 13–14 April in Goa, India, organized by FIND and Unitaid and attended by over 20 diagnostics manufacturers from 13 countries. The workshop focused on the development, manufacturing, and commercialization of tests for low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), and the need to accelerate regional production of diagnostics in LMICs. It provided an opportunity for diagnostic manufacturers to deliberate on the enabling factors required for the sustainability of decentralized diagnostic R&D and manufacturing.

As a result of the workshop, manufacturers clearly stated their interest in establishing partnerships to facilitate the transfer of technology, know-how, and capacity building. Manufacturers also highlighted the need for countries to develop national diagnostic strategies with concrete budget allocations and procurement frameworks prioritizing sourcing of regionally manufactured tests. They stressed the need for governments and development partners to continue strengthening regulatory mechanisms and to make clear commitments to facilitate harmonization and fast-track regulatory processes for regionally manufactured products.

Finally, in line with the India G20 Presidency goals, there was agreement that funding needs to be made available to create and maintain capacity for coordinated global manufacturing, R&D and technology transfer.

**Robert Matiru, Director of Programmes of Unitaid**, said: “The problems are clear. It is now critical that we take bold action and prioritize innovations that drive the availability and equitable access of essential health technologies, including diagnostics. At Unitaid, we are committed to adopting a market-based approach to accelerate, expand and sustain regional production, and will work with our partners to explore all solutions towards building more resilient health access globally.”

The meeting today provided an opportunity for diagnostics industry partners to put forward their recommendations to G20 Member States so that they can be taken into consideration during the G20 second health working group meeting which has outlined “Strengthening cooperation in pharmaceutical sector with focus on availability & access to safe, effective, quality, and affordable medical countermeasures — diagnostics, vaccines and therapeutics” as a key priority.

Summarizing the discussions, **Dr. Rajiv Bahl, Secretary of Department of Health Research and Director-General of Indian Council of Medical Research** said: “The need for diagnostics is immense. As we move forward into the second health working group meeting, it will be important for G20 countries to consider measures for greater investment in diagnostics, collaborative R&D and manufacturing networks that complement existing efforts and strengthen local capacities and address policy, infrastructure and human resource related challenges.”

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### **About the Department of Pharmaceuticals**

The Department of Pharmaceuticals under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Government of India focuses on the development of pharmaceutical sector in India and regulates various complex issues related to pricing and availability of medicines at affordable prices, research & development, protection of intellectual property rights and international commitments related to pharmaceutical sector which required integration of work with other Ministries. The Department's vision is to make India the largest global provider of quality medicines at reasonable price. For more information, please visit <https://pharmaceuticals.gov.in/>

### **About FIND**

FIND seeks to ensure equitable access to reliable diagnosis around the world. We connect countries and communities, funders, decision-makers, healthcare providers and developers to spur diagnostic innovation and make testing an integral part of sustainable, resilient health systems. We are working to save 1 million lives through accessible, quality diagnosis, and save US\$1 billion in healthcare costs to patients and health systems. We are co-convenor of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator diagnostics pillar, and a WHO Collaborating Centre for Laboratory Strengthening and Diagnostic Technology Evaluation. For more information, please visit [www.finddx.org](http://www.finddx.org)

### **About Unitaid**

Unitaid is a global health organization engaged in finding innovative solutions to prevent, diagnose, and treat diseases more quickly, affordably, and effectively, in low- and middle-income countries. Its work includes developing and funding initiatives to address major diseases such as HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis, as well as advanced HIV disease, cervical cancer, hepatitis C, and cross-cutting areas, such as fever management. Unitaid also recently deployed its expertise and capabilities to develop and deliver therapeutics (including oxygen) and diagnostics for the COVID-19 pandemic, serving as a lead agency of the Access to COVID Tools Accelerator. Unitaid's new Strategy, 2023-2027 includes developing and investing in interventions to respond to global health emergencies and to transform women's and children's health. Unitaid is hosted by the World Health Organization. For more information, please visit [www.unitaid.org](http://www.unitaid.org)

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