**India’s inputs for the High Commissioner for Human Rights’ report pursuant to HRC Resolution 46/14 on the human rights implications of the lack of affordable, timely, equitable and universal access and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines and the deepening inequalities between States**

Since its outbreak, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused over 5.3 million deaths around the world. While the global human rights’ agenda has suffered setbacks, its unprecedented socio-economic impact has been disproportionately felt by the most vulnerable segments of our societies, especially in developing countries.

2. From the very beginning, India has believed that the pandemic poses threats to the entire humanity and that the international community should respond collectively to it. India, committed to the welfare of entire humanity, has so far supplied COVID-19 related medical and other assistance to over 150 countries. Since January 2021, over 94 million doses of COVID vaccines have been supplied to 94 countries and 2 UN entities in the form of grant, through commercial export and under the COVAX facility.

3. India has been strongly advocating the principle of **equity** at the WHO, including at the recently concluded Special Session of the World Health Assembly, and has also proposed, along with South Africa, a TRIPS waiver at the WTO for COVID vaccines, diagnostics and medicines. We have also been working with our Quad partners to supply vaccines to the countries in the Indo-Pacific region. India is gearing up to produce 5 billion vaccine doses for the world next year which will address the gap in demand and supply of vaccines.

4. Co-WIN is the end-to-end digital platform to facilitate India’s COVID-19 vaccination drive. It is a scalable, inclusive and open platform for universal vaccination. This unique digital platform allows the citizens to have the luxury of choice for registration (online and offline), vaccination slot booking, tracking vaccination schedule and issue of instantly verifiable digital certificate at the place of vaccination. It allows the program managers to have the liberty to create new vaccination centers, edit existing facilities, verify vaccine stocks, publish schedules and real time dashboards. In an unprecedented step, India has made Co-WIN platform open source for all countries to access, adapt and use. This is the first time that any country has made a software platform developed by its public sector open for the world.

5. India’s National COVID-19 Vaccination Program is the largest vaccination program of its kind in the world. It is built on scientific and epidemiological evidence, WHO guidelines and global best practices. It is anchored in systematic end-to-end planning, being implemented through effective and efficient participation of States/ Union Territories and is under constant and systematic review to take into account emerging scientific evidence, vaccine availability, experience on the ground and global best practices.

6. Under the National Covid-19 Vaccination Program, all adult citizens and foreign nationals, residing in India are being provided free of cost COVID-19 vaccination in all Government Covid Vaccination Centres (CVCs). A large number of Government CVCs across the country, which are spread in urban and rural areas, have been established. They provide free of cost vaccination to all eligible citizens and foreign nationals. Private CVCs have also been established, where COVID-19 vaccination is available for all citizens aged 18 years and above who choose to avail it on payment basis.

7. Like most of the countries, globally, India has followed a system of prioritization of beneficiaries for COVID-19 vaccination, which is in consonance with WHO guidelines and international practice. Since the inception of National COVID-19 Vaccination Program, Government of India has taken all possible steps to ensure that the program is equitable and accessible to all sections of society, especially focusing on weakest and marginalized sections of the society. Government of India has regularly provided direction and advisories to all States/ Union Territories requesting them to ensure that various vulnerable sections of the society have unhindered access to vaccination services:

* **Elderly and Disabled:** 
  + **Near to Home COVID Vaccination Centres (NHCVC)**

Government of India has started ‘Near to Home COVID Vaccination Centres (NHCVC) to cater to special needs of elderly & differently abled persons. This strategy is flexible, people-centric and follows a community-based approach, where sessions are conducted in non-health facility based settings and are nearer to home, e.g. in a Community Center, RWA Center/Office, Village Council Centres, school buildings, old age homes, Sub-Health Centres and Health & Wellness Centres with availability of adequate space etc.

* **Door to door vaccination for bedridden persons & those with restricted mobility**

Further, considering those elderly and disabled individuals who have restricted mobility of such nature which limits their accessibility even to NHCVCs, Government of India has issued advisory to all States/Union Territories for facilitating COVID-19 vaccination of all such beneficiaries at their place of residence using Mobile vaccination teams.

* **Persons without ID Card:**

Nine different kinds of Photo ID cards have been allowed by Government of India for availing COVID-19 vaccination at all Covid Vaccination Centers. This has been done to ensure that anyone, who has one of nine photo identity proofs available, is able to avail the vaccination. Moreover, Government of India has made necessary provisions in CoWIN and, accordingly, advised all States/Union Territories for providing COVID-19 vaccination to various groups of people who do not have a valid ID card and/or do not have access to a mobile phone including groups like roadside beggars, people residing in rehabilitation camps etc.

* **Vagabonds and Destitutes:**

Government of India has issued an advisory for all States/Union Territories to make sure that all destitutes, beggars and vagabonds are provided COVID-19 vaccination on priority basis. They have also been requested to prepare a plan for vaccination of all destitutes and vagabonds in close collaboration with district administration, urban and rural local bodies, Non-Government Organizations and civil society groups.

* **Inmates of Mental Health Institutions:**

Government of India has issued advisory for all States/UTs to ensure vaccination of inmates of different Mental Health Institutions on priority basis. States/UTs were advised that NHCVCs can also be established in the premises of Mental Health Establishments for vaccinating their inmates. To further ensure the vaccination of those mentally ill people who are homeless and are found to be wandering in the community, an additional advisory was sent to all States/UTs.

* **Pregnant women and Lactating mothers:**

Government of India has shared an advisory with all States/Union Territories that all lactating mothers can avail the services of Covid vaccination. After due deliberations over different aspects like safety and efficacy, the risk associated with COVID-19 in pregnancy and the benefits & risks of vaccination of pregnant women, Government of India released the advisory for allowing COVID-19 vaccination for pregnant women as well.

* **Transgender:**

An advisory was issued by Government of India for all States/Union Territories to facilitate the COVID-19 vaccination of all transgender persons without any discrimination or causing any inconvenience and social stigma.

* **Workplace CVC:**

Government of India has shared guidelines for establishing workplace CVCs, where all the employees and their dependents aged 18 years and above, of both Public or Private units (workplace), can be vaccinated at their workplace after the unit has been tagged with an already existing Public/Private CVC.

8. The National COVID-19 Vaccination Program has been progressing at a steady pace and vaccination coverage has improved significantly from an average of 0.235 million doses per day in the month of January 2021 to an average of 7.869 million doses per day in the month of September 2021.

9. The number of COVID-19 vaccine doses administered across the country crossed the landmark of 1000 million vaccination on 21st October, 2021, which is a significant achievement for any country across the world. It signifies that our vaccination coverage is among the fastest in the world to cross 1 billion vaccine doses milestone in a short span of 9 months. As of 15 December 2021, over 1.3 billion vaccines doses have been administered.

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