

IPU-26th April 2021

“Overcoming the pandemic today and building a better tomorrow: the role of Parliaments”

Poonam Maadam: MP-Jamnagar

Hon’ble Chairperson and Distinguished delegates,

We are all aware that the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the globe in an unprecedented manner. India’s response as the largest democracy has demonstrated power of upholding self-belief under immense uncertainty.

In spite of challenges of pandemic, Indian Parliament successfully held two sessions by adhering to Covid-19 norms. The productivity of these sessions, in both houses was exemplary as 45 Bills were passed after meaningful debates. Some legislations to strengthen our health care infrastructure were also passed. For example- legislations for *The National Commission for Indian System of Medicine, The National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions and The National Commission for Homoeopathy*. We amended our old Epidemic Disease Act to ensure safety and wellbeing of health care providers. We have also invoked the *Disaster Management Act* to ensure decentralised decision making and coordinated efforts. We have increased budget allocation for health by 137% for 2021-22 over the previous year. The *‘Pradhan Mantri Atma Nirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana’* i.e. Prime Minister Self-reliant healthy India scheme was also launched in this Budget to strengthen and create institutions to respond emerging diseases.

In consonance with India's age-old maxim of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' which means "the world is a family", India has been at the forefront of undertaking prompt humanitarian assistance during the pandemic. In a spirit of solidarity, we ensured supply of 'Made-in-India' vaccines- Covishield and Covaxin, to other nations across the globe. We also supplied essential medicines and equipments to over 150 countries.

The second wave is challenging and some decisions have been taken on fast track basis like vaccination to all above 18 years of age. The drive will start soon. India is the fastest country to administer more than 140 million Doses of Vaccine in 100 days. Our government has provided stimulus package of 20 trillion rupees (265 billion USD) to boost our economy and ensured several relief packages for citizens.

In furtherance of our goal 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' i.e. self-reliant India , we focused on developing indigenous technologies and transformed our production capacity of personal protective equipment (PPE), masks, diagnostics, drugs and ventilators to fight the pandemic. We have ramped up oxygen production and soon 551 medical oxygen generation plants will be functional inside public health facilities at district level.

One thing the pandemic has proved, that no Country in the world can remain isolated in times of such crisis. Global health recovery requires collaboration, partnerships and cooperation among fellow nations. We rise by lifting each other or we all go down together.

As members of Inter Parliamentary Union we should look at how we can use this prestigious global platform in combatting this crisis.

Some measures which could be implemented:-

- Creating Global Crisis management teams for coordinating exchange of material resources.
- Concrete steps like bringing out bulletins to share best practices and legislative interventions from each other's experiences.
- Sensitizing institutions and industries involved in pandemic control measures to the requirement of fellow nations.

Under visionary leadership of Hon. Prime minister, Narendra Modiji, India as a nation is committed to build a better tomorrow and willing to defy all odds to overcome this challenge of pandemic. For this we would walk hand in hand with the Global Community in sharing resources, knowledge and data to make this world free from this crisis of the Covid 19.