

2021-Imperial Springs International Forum

Speech on Public Health and Global
Cooperation, Building a Global Community of
Health for All

Monday, 6 December 2021, 0930 hrs

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a great honour for me to participate in Imperial Springs International Forum in the beautiful city of Guangzhou. I wish to congratulate the People's Government of Guangdong and Chinese People's Association for Friendship with the Foreign Countries for organising this important event.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our world is shaped by powerful forces with direct consequences for public health. The social, economic and environmental factors that influence health of our people are increasingly determined at a supranational level. Consequently, national level efforts for public health have only a limited impact and global health cooperation assumes a paramount significance.

Distinguished Guests,

A healthy and developed society is a prerequisite for world peace and stability. It makes an instinctive choice to the advancement of peace to perpetuate its growth and happiness. War is unproductive and costly affair as it affects human health; disrupts societies and diverts resources from productive needs to military ends.

Health, development and peace therefore complement each other.

Excellencies,

Seen from this perspective, COVID-19 should be a clarion call for us to revisit and review our previous concepts about transnational health and reform them in the light of emergent realities. This pandemic has dawned upon us the reality that prosperity and security of our future generations would not be bolstered by arms and ammunition, but determined by our robust health infrastructure and development in medical science.

It is a stark reminder of the fact that future health crises would hardly remain localised and could spread far and wide in the world. If unprepared for similar future crises, they could

obliterate major foundations of durable peace by impeding economic growth, regional integration and onward march of globalisation.

Distinguished Guests,

Pakistan is fully committed to improving the health of all Pakistanis through universal access to affordable health services delivered through a responsive health system. Despite many challenges, we have made major strides for the health of our people.

The Government has introduced the '*Sehat Sahulat Program*' with the aim to improve access of the vulnerable/ poorest segments of the population to good quality medical services, through a health insurance scheme. The scheme provides health facilities to the million families who are unable to bear expensive health coverage.

This programme is not just a short-term relief, but will be an important component of the redesign of social protection, post COVID-19.

After the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, Pakistan took very prudent and smart measures to control the spread of the virus while also ensuring economic stability. We have been able to control the virus and the situation is stable now. With Chinese help, Pakistan has kicked-off an ambitious plan to inoculate our people and secure a decisive victory against the pandemic.

Dear Friends,

China has always actively participated in global health governance and promoted international health cooperation. After the outbreak of the pandemic, it

displayed openness and transparency to cooperate with all parties to confront the coronavirus outbreak.

China immediately shared the genome structure of virus with WHO and kept the avenues of international cooperation and consultations open. It is now spearheading international vaccine cooperation and has been a major provider of vaccine to many countries.

Pakistan wholeheartedly appreciates Chinese measures and would extend to her complete support and assistance in this regard.

My dear Friend,

In context of global pandemic, perhaps graver than the health and economic challenges is the widening

political chasm that might intensify in the unfolding saga.

We should stay watchful of these divisive tendencies which can jeopardize global unity against our combined efforts and further complicate the existing vitiated situation.

Faced with global health challenge like the current pandemic, we should act not as competing political entities but as a member of humankind struggling for a common purpose.

My dear Friends,

The enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without discrimination.

Let us re-affirm our commitment to ensure a safer, equitable and effective

international health system that is fully equipped to prevent future pandemics and achieve the goal of universal health coverage by the end of this decade.

Let's invest in health and development for a bright future of posterity!

Thank You!