

**Remarks by
Ambassador K. Nagaraj Naidu
Deputy Permanent Representative**

at an

**Event on the sidelines of
ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development (FfD Forum)**

“Sustainable Financing for Universal Health Coverage”

17 April 2019

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

1. Let me begin by thanking WHO for organizing this event. We consider this as a valuable opportunity to discuss the important issue of sustainable financing in the lead up to the first UN High Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage. India is pleased to join as a co-sponsor.
2. Before I provide an overview of India’s flagship National Health Protection Programme also known as Ayushman Bharat, let me give you a snapshot of the healthcare sector in India and what prompted India to launch a nation-wide initiative of this unprecedented scale.
3. The total health expenditure as a percentage of GDP in India is estimated at 3.9%. Out of the total expenditure, about one-third (30%) is contributed by the public sector. This proportion is relatively low compared to other countries.
4. Approximately 70% is borne by patients of the total health expenditures are borne by the patients themselves. Household health expenditures typically constitute 95% out of pocket expenditures at the point of care and 5% is spent on insurance.
5. More than 80 per cent of the population is not covered under any scheme of health expenditure support or insurance.

6. Due to high out of pocket healthcare expenditure, about 7% population is pushed below the poverty threshold every year.
7. It is worth noting that more than half-a-million international patients seek treatment in Indian hospitals every year. Most of these patients visit our secondary and tertiary care hospitals which provide quality care.
8. Therefore, the problem is not so much of availability but that is affordability and access to healthcare that deprive poor and vulnerable section from achieving their highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, which is their basic right.
9. Ayushman Bharat seeks to ameliorate this disparity in affordability and access to healthcare.
10. The programme is based on twin pillars – expanding access to primary healthcare through Health and Wellness Centres and providing insurance coverage for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization to poor and poor and vulnerable families.
11. The strengthened Health and Wellness centres are to be equipped to provide preventive, promotive, rehabilitative and curative care for an expanded range of services, encompassing reproductive and child health, wide range of communicable and non-communicable diseases, palliative and elderly care. There are more than 8000 such centres already functional under different parts of the country.
12. Through Ayushman Bharat – Prime Minister Jan Arogya Yojana or PMJAY as we call it – health coverage upto\$7,200 per family per year for secondary and tertiary hospitalization is provided to more than 100 million poor families which cover more than 500 million beneficiaries.
13. PMJAY provides cashless and paperless access to services for every beneficiary at the point of service at designated hospitals across the country. The schemes offers complete portability as treatment can be availed in any part of India.

14. There is no restriction on the family size making it inclusive to ensure that women and girls as well as citizens are not excluded.

15. The programme was launched in September 2018. In little over six months more than 30 million beneficiaries have been identified and their e-cards have been issued. More than 2 million patients have been hospitalized and treatment worth over US\$213 million has been administered.

16. A robust IT system has been created for connecting the service providers, beneficiaries and the administrators at federal and state levels.

17. A 24x7 toll free telephone line has been started to answer a range queries regarding the programme.

18. A dedicated monitoring unit has been setup to identify fake entities spreading misinformation about PMJAY. A mobile app for citizens has been launched to help people get access to information on AB PMJAY, check eligibility, find hospitals nearby and get assisted help.

19. Private sector service providers are crucial partners in this project. Of the 15,394 hospitals empaneled in the programme more than half of these are in private sector. As per initial data available, majority of the cases treatments are sought are from private hospitals.

20. Private hospitals have been empaneled as per set guidelines. More than 1350 treatment packages with fixed rates have also been negotiated which private providers have accepted. These treatments cover specialties like cardiology, cancer care, neurosurgery and neo-natal care. The effort of the give a fair deal to the private providers to keep them engaged in the process and to provide payments on time.

21. In order to increase the coverage of hospitals in non-metropolitan cities and small towns, the government has come up with a guideline to incentivize private players to set up hospitals, if they were willing to treat patients under Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana.

22. The incentives include easing up land allotment on lease or through bidding, facilitating clearances within specified timelines and providing viability gap funding of up to 40% of the total project cost.

23. Ayushman Bharat is an ambitious project representative of the political will to provide affordable healthcare to most vulnerable people in the society. Its intent is to bridge the access gap in healthcare services to ensure that 'no one is left behind'.

I thank you.