BRICS wants WHO to push universal health coverage

Press Trust of India / New Delhi May 22, 2012 23:05 IST

India today joined other BRICS nations in hammering on the need to promote innovation and universal access to health technologies especially medicines in the context of increasing costs and a growing burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases.

Member nations also endorsed the importance of Universal Health Coverage and demanded that the World Health Organization played a leadership role in advocating it.

Supporting universal health coverage at 65th World Health Assembly in Geneva, India's Health Secretary P K Pradhan said "every citizen is entitled to essential healthcare services and these should be guaranteed by the State."

The BRICS also agreed to develop a mechanism designed to prevent and control substandard, spurious, falsely-labeled, falsified, and counterfeit (SSFFC) medical products.

In a joint communiqué adopted by BRICS today on the sidelines of the 65th session of the ongoing World Health Assembly in Geneva, member nations agreed that cooperation in health and medicines was a must.

Expressing concern over lack of research on drug discovery, BRICS decided to cooperate to develop drugs especially for TB, malaria, neglected diseases and NCDs to facilitate the availability of new drugs for more effective treatment.

India will host the next conference of BRICS health ministers in November this year, as resolved by BRICS.

The BRICS decided to back the reelection of Margaret Chan as Director General of WHO reposing trust in her leadership. Chan is a Hong Kong born former Chinese civil servant.

The countries further decided to urge upon WHO to play a proactive role in ensuring drug regulatory regimes. (MORE)