

## High Commission of India

### Lusaka

### Press Release

## Webinar on "Exploring Cooperation in the field of Science & Technology between India and Zambia" to celebrate National Science Day of India (28th February 2022)



As a part of the ongoing celebrations of "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav", High Commission of India Lusaka in collaboration with the Ministry of Technology & Science, Republic of Zambia organized a Webinar to celebrate the National Science Day of India on 28th February 2022 on the theme "Exploring Cooperation in the field of Science & Technology between India and Zambia".



2. H.E. Mr. Felix Mutati, Minister of Technology and Science was the Guest of Honor. In his Keynote address he highlighted Zambia's policy initiatives to promote technology and scientific research and incentives offered as support to investors for development of pharmaceutical and bio-technology industry in Zambia. He recalled the longstanding warm and historic bilateral relationship based on mutual respect. He described India as a 'reliable partner and all weather & time tested friend'. Hon'ble Minister Mr. Felix Mutati expressed hope that Zambia should be able to reduce healthcare expenditure with the help of India. He also highlighted that initiative taken by 'New Dawn Government' to create a new Ministry of Technology & Science, which would be a major catalyst for economic growth, development and transformation of the country through Science & Technology. The new Ministry is focussing on four core areas, namely Science & Research; Technology; Innovation and Skill Development. He also stressed the need to strengthen regulatory framework. He sought increased investment from India for development of science, research and technology. He mentioned that India is not only the pharmacy for the world but also a research lab for the world. He sought India's support in the development of Zambia's Science & Technology sector. Recalling Mahatma Gandhi and his vision of decentralization to empower the rural economy, Minister mentioned that the New Dawn Government is focussing on decentralization through increased Constituency Development Fund. He also praised India's growth in Biotech sector which is projected to reach \$150 billion by 2025. He hoped that Zambia could benefit from Indian biotech sector to achieve growth.



*(H. E. Mr. Felix Mutati, Hon'ble Minister of Technology & Science during his Keynote address)*

3. High Commissioner Mr. Ashok Kumar in his opening remarks highlighted significance of Science Day while presenting a brief overview of India-Zambia bilateral relations with a special focus on exploring cooperation in the field of Science & Technology. He appreciated the initiative of the New Dawn Government led by President H.E. Mr. Hakainde Hichilema in establishing the new Ministry of Technology and Science which is making efforts towards development of science and technology to promote innovation and research in the scientific fields. The High Commissioner reiterated the support of Government of India for scientific and technological initiatives of the Government of Zambia. Considering India an ideal partner, High Commissioner assured the Zambian side that India will continue to work closely with Zambia for the benefit of people of both countries. He noted that Pharmaceutical products continue to be the dominant sector in



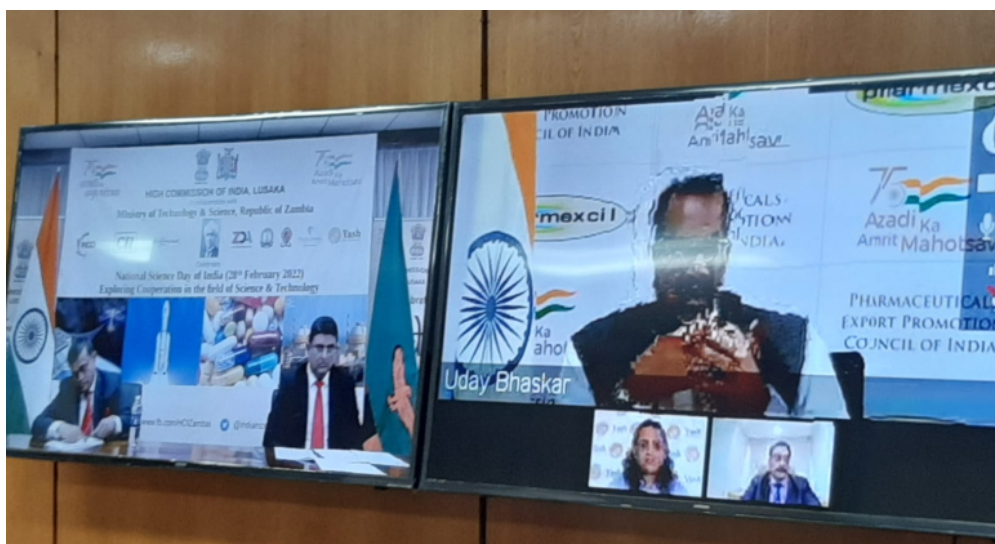
India's bilateral trade with Zambia with India being the highest exporter of pharmaceutical products to Zambia with a market share of over 40%. India-Zambia cooperation in the Health Sector is also reflected in the establishment of 650 prefabricated Health Posts in Zambia and other related developments. He reaffirmed India's commitment to partner with Zambia in development of biotechnology sector.



High Commissioner recalled that India had assisted Zambia with various life saving medicines worth US\$ 2 million. He expressed happiness that India has developed high efficacy indigenous COVID vaccine Covaxin by Bharat Biotech Ltd. and Covishield Vaccine (Astrazeneca) manufactured by Serum Institute of India which is the largest vaccine manufacturing facility in the world. India has extended vaccine support under its Vaccine 'Maitry' (friendship) programme to many countries of the world as India firmly believes in ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam- the whole world is one family. He expressed the view that now India is in a position to extend support to Zambia in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology areas, which would strengthen cooperation between the companies and institutions of both countries. He highlighted the aim of the Webinar to bring the industry and related institutions to share their views and experiences on the important topic of cooperation in research, innovation and diversification of pharmaceutical and bio-technology products. He hoped that deliberations during the Webinar will open prospects for joint research and manufacturing of pharmaceutical and biotechnology products by Indian and Zambian companies taking advantage of Zambia's strategic location in Southern Africa which offers in big market in SADC and COMESA regions.



4. Dr. Sanjeev K. Varshney, Adviser & Head- International Cooperation, Department of Science & Technology, Govt. of India spoke about "Opportunities for India-Zambia Scientific Cooperation". He informed about Government of India's policies on strengthening international cooperation in the field of Science & Technology and various policy initiatives taken by the Government of India for Africa under the scope of S & T Framework of India-Africa Forum Summit- III . He mentioned that India currently ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> globally in terms of number of science publications, number of PhDs awarded in Science & Engineering and number of startups. He stated that India has intergovernmental agreements with about 80 countries and active cooperation with 44 countries in the field of Science & Technology. He informed that Zambia is one of the beneficiaries of the C. V. Raman fellowship for Africa. He stressed that India can help Zambia in strengthening of R&D institutes by training their researchers in India. India is also open to transfer of technology in certain identified areas provided Zambia comes up with a suitable proposal. He highlighted that India is one of the few countries to collaborate with the African Centre of Excellences (ACEs) as a knowledge provider in collaboration with World Bank.

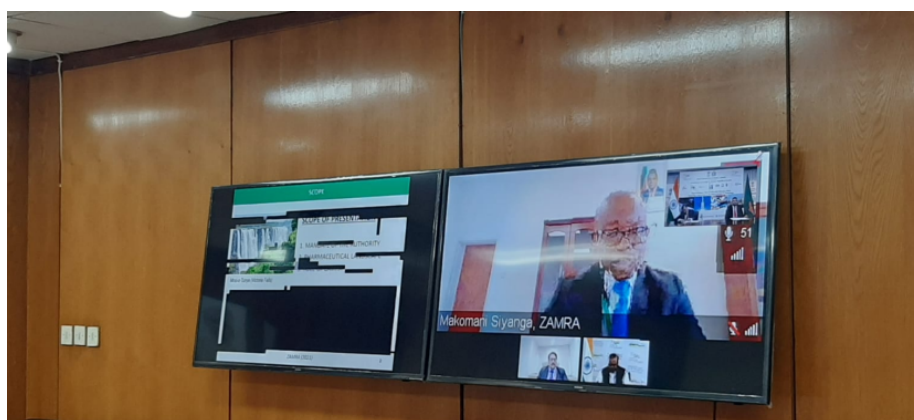


5. Mr. Ravi Udaya Bhaskar, Director General, Pharmexcil shared information on advancements in the field of pharmaceuticals and bio-technology in India. He also dwelled upon the prospects of collaboration for research and promotion of trade of related products in Zambia. He recalled that Indian companies like Cipla and Dr. Reddy's Laboratories have been helping Zambia in the past through supply of generic medicines for treatment of cancer, tuberculosis as well as antiretroviral drugs and there is a huge scope for expanding this cooperation further. As the third largest manufacturer of generic drugs, India can help Zambia in reducing the overall expenditure on healthcare by shifting to generic drugs. He also highlighted the assistance extended by India to various countries in the African continent during the COVID-19 pandemic.



6. Mr. Albert Halwampa, Acting Director General, Zambia Development Authority shared information about the policies of Government of Zambia with particular stress on the incentives to promote joint collaborative research between the institutions of the two countries. He also discussed the prospects of Indian investment in the pharmaceutical and bio-technology sectors of Zambia. He mentioned that Zambia is a net importer of pharma and biotech products and ZDA has noted an enhanced interest for investment from India in the this sector. He highlighted the incentives offered by the Zambian Government for investment in the pharmaceutical sector such as zero customs duty for equipment and machinery, depreciation in tax for a minimum investment of \$500,000 . He invited Indian pharmaceutical companies to consider establishing manufacturing facilities in Zambia to take advantage of its strategic location in SADC and COMESA region.

7. Mr. Karun Gaur, Vice President, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Limited representing CII, exchanged information on cooperation in pharmaceutical and bio-technology sector between India and Zambia. Describing India as the pharmacy of the world, he mentioned that Zambia can be a gateway to Africa for Indian pharmaceutical products. India can also help Zambia in acquiring technical expertise and scale required to produce medicines for various diseases, viz tuberculosis, malaria and other infectious disease at an affordable cost. India can provide R&D capabilities for manufacturing medicines in Zambia. He also expressed the readiness of India pharma industry to support Zambian pharma industry. He discussed the idea of setting up of a pharma unit in Zambia which he considered as an ideal location in Africa.





8. Mr. Makomani Siyanga, Acting Director General, ZAMRA focussed on the role of ZAMRA in development of pharmaceutical sector in Zambia. He dwelled upon the regulatory mechanisms related to pharmaceutical and bio-technology sectors in Zambia, including for the products developed through joint research between institutions of higher learning and companies of both the countries. He mentioned that 90% of medicines are imported by Zambia and less than 10% are locally manufactured and Zambia was interested in collaboration and engagement with various stakeholders of India to enhance drug manufacturing. He also sought India's help in establishing an electronic database for various health services.



9. Dr. Amrut Naik, President & Head-Emerging Markets Business, Zydus Healthsciences Ltd. representing FICCI. He largely spoke about Zydus Lifesciences Ltd. and its contribution in India's pharmaceutical & biotech sector. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Pharmaceutical sector has come under special focus and Zydus has been able to maintain significant presence in USA, Latin America and Africa. Zydus has also development a DNA based COVID vaccine which can be supplied to Zambia also. Cooperation with Zydus can be helpful in enhancing manufacturing of pharmaceutical and biotech products in Zambia.

10. Mrs. Nalukena Mutti-Vantra, Vice President (Services), Lusaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry shared her thoughts on exploring the prospects of enhanced bilateral trade between India and Zambia in pharmaceutical and bio-technology sectors. She emphasised on collaboration in the field of Science & Technology including joint ventures and partnerships to strengthen bilateral cooperation in this field. Considering that Zambia has a young computer-literate English speaking population, she felt that Zambia can be an ideal destination in Africa for setting up of ICT Call Centers with India's support. She also mentioned that India could help Zambia in the agriculture sector by supporting development of insecticides & pesticides for eradicating pests like armyworm in maize and Foot and Mouth disease in bovines etc. Zambia can import test kits for pregnancy, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections from India at a much more economical prices compared to Europe from where they are currently being imported.



11. Mr. Himanshu Patel, Director, Yash Life Science, Zambia shared his experience of establishing a successful business in the healthcare sector of Zambia . He also shared his views about the challenges and prospects of doing business in Zambia and the opportunity for expanding business operations in the African market in pharmaceutical and bio-technology products.

12. The Webinar to celebrate the National Science Day of India provided an excellent platform to the High Commission to focus on pharmaceutical and biotechnology sector. It emerged that there is a vast scope for expansion of pharmaceutical and biotech sector of Zambia and India can play an important role in this.

13. Overall, the Webinar was a successful initiative to utilize the celebration of National Science Day of India to focus on pharmaceutical and biotechnology sector. This important sector contributes the largest export share of India to Zambia and there are good opportunity to expand our market as well as to explore the possibility of joint manufacturing to cater to the regional African market. The presence of Zambian Minister of Technology and Science as Guest of Honour has added value to the Webinar. The Mission was able to bring all the important stakeholders from Industry as well as Government from both sides. The Mission will continuously make endeavors to utilize the opportunity created by this Webinar to increase India's market share in pharma and biotech products as well as to explore new avenues of cooperation in S&T with Zambia.

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**1st March 2022  
Lusaka**