

## **The pandemic is a great opportunity for R&D: Experts at digital conference on Rebooting the Economy through S&T**

The session on Medicines & Medical Technologies for better preparedness to face Pandemics at the digital conference on Rebooting the Economy through Science, Technology and Research Translations' organised on the occasion of Technology Day on May 11 highlighted that the pandemic is a great opportunity for R&D and needs to be used for strengthening it.

Kalavathi GV Vice President and Head Philips Innovation Campus said that devices were needed for easy screening processes, daily monitoring of patients, remote patient monitoring, diagnosis, pre-set protocol for lung screening, hand-held ultrasound device, electronic ICU, 24\*7 clinical capabilities without physical touch, ventilators and other digital technologies and that Philips innovation was getting ready with many of these.

The day-long digital conference which brought together scientists, government officials, academia, and representatives of industry was organized by Technology Development Board, an autonomous organization of the Department of Science and Technology along with Confederation of Indian Industry.

The COVID crisis has unfolded some of the best medical advancements and innovations in history like drug discovery, vaccines, and diagnostic tools, and other medical devices, as well as ways to preserve electronic health records. Experts pointed out how these medical innovations can be harnessed for better preparedness to face future pandemics.

Madhukar Bose, India, and Digital Healthcare Lead Healthcare UK explained that this pandemic has forced people to adopt new ways of primary care in the United Kingdom and said that now 90 percent interaction in the UK happen through digital channels, including phones.

Dr. Suresh Jadhav, Executive Director, Serum Institute of India, said that it might take months or years to come back to pre-COVID-19 days and technologies needed to be reworked in order to live in the present situation. He added that technologies such as appropriate face masks and best practices like social distancing need to be made a part of life.

The other speakers in this session were Jaume Palou, Chief Executive Officer, TBIOM-Tecnologías Biomédicas para la Salud, Spain, Dr. Michael Joseph, Health and Medtech Lead Brunel University, London, and Cecilia Prego, Technical Director CZ Vaccines, Spain.

The inaugural session of the conference was graced by the dignitaries like Minister of Science and Technology, Health and Family Welfare and Earth Sciences, Dr. Harsh Vardhan; Member, NITI Aayog Dr. V K Saraswat; Principal Scientific Adviser Government of India, Prof. K VijayRaghavan; Secretary, Department of Science & Technology Prof Ashutosh Sharma, Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, Deputy Director-General, World Health Organization, and officials from DST and Technology Development Board (TDB).