

Proceedings of the China-India-US Workshop on Science, Technology and Innovation Policy

Section VI Session IV – Pharmaceuticals

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Remarks by the Chair

Prof. Wen Ke

Good morning, ladies and gentleman, welcome to attend the session of pharmaceuticals. It is my great pleasure to be the chair of this interesting session.

First, I'd like to give a brief background for what we will discuss.

Today, we are facing many challenges, including population growth, health, ageing, poverty, and inequality.

During the past decades, the world's population has increased rapidly, so, how to meet the health demand for all people is the principal challenge for us. China is the largest country with the largest population. India is the second one, and now the population of American also has passed 300 million. These three countries consist of the largest market for medicine. To such a large population, the demand for medicine is characterized by diversity and complexity, and lots of new emerging and re-emerging diseases emerging call for new medicines. Therefore, there is a need for more innovation in the pharmaceutical industry

With the increasing of population, the ageing problem also becomes more and more important. The ageing problem has being obviously notable in developed countries, such as in Japan and France. As I know in China, ageing is also emerging as a serious problem. As you know, in China, the government issued the policy of only one child permitted for each family, then three decades passed, and now as a new generation born under this policy grows up, they are facing the dilemma that a young couple must afford to support four old people. India, with the development of its economy, will also suffer the ageing problem little by little. On the one hand, human beings desire a long life. On the other hand, we are facing the ageing problem. So, we need to find ways to meet the human desire for a long life and their desire to make their lives healthier. We need to cooperate find way to solve this dilemma. As Professor Carl Dahlman mentioned the day before yesterday, preventative medicine will become increasingly important.

International experience tells us that the development of an economy results in an increasing demand increase for medicine. That is, the proportion of health-related expenditures to total consumption will increased with the development of each national economy and the enhancement of peoples' living standard.

China's economy development during last thirty years has been miraculous. Now India's development appears to be another miracle. However, compared with the rapid developments in their economies, these two countries haven't made the necessary expenditures on pharmaceuticals. So, we must pay more attention to the relevant policy making to promote the match between economic development and the demand for medical care.

Of course, we must recognize the dual economic structure of these two countries. A great many people are poor and cannot afford large expenditures on medicine. Even in United States today, the price of medicine is also high, and much of the public can't afford it. Therefore, we are facing the heavy tasks of reducing the cost of medicine and developing innovations to make medicines more relevant for the publics in our countries. The only way to solve both problems is innovation based on science and technology. In the exploration of biomedicine, we also encounter the problems of high research and development (R&D) investments and long periods between research and the delivery of safe and effective medicines. How to carry out medical innovation? We need more communication and more collaboration.

The American government has implemented a comparatively successful policy on Medicare, which has brought a heavy burden for government, but it is playing an important role to meet the poors' health demand and ensuring social stability. I think the governments of China and India should learn from America. There is also a need for more collaboration among all of us.

Therefore, I think, there should be three goals for our discussion today:

1. Highlight the development of these three counties in the pharmaceutical industry;
2. Discuss the responsibilities and problems of these three countries for promoting health development all over the world.
3. Explore possibilities for pharmaceutical R&D collaboration among our three countries.

Let us begin our dialogue today with the goal of building an international community focused on using science and technology to address this global challenge.