

Press Release

Pak-US collaboration critical in fighting pandemics, health security challenges: Abdul Qadir Patel

Washington, 25 July 2022: Pakistan and United States will advance and deepen their health cooperation in areas of immunization, nutrition, mother's health, child survival and health security across borders.

The two countries have also started collaborative effort to develop Centre for Disease Control in Pakistan.

These remarks were made by Pakistan's Federal Health Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Mr. Abdul Qadir Patel while addressing US-Pakistan Health Dialogue here hosted by US State Department, United States Agency for International Development and Department of Health and Human Services.

Health Minister thanked the US administration for provision of 61.5 million COVID vaccines, 16 million pediatric vaccines and other equipment including protective kits and ventilators in country's fight against the pandemic.

He said that "Pak-US cooperation during COVID pandemic clearly demonstrated that a robust Pak-US partnership in health sector could prove a bulwark against pandemic and diseases thus saving millions of precious human lives."

"Disease knows no boundaries. A pandemic will not only be a challenge for a particular country but the region and beyond", said the Health Minister.

Highlighting Pakistan's efforts towards polio eradication, the Minister emphasized that a holistic approach comprising of immunization, mother and child nutrition was critical to the success of polio eradication efforts. He said that Pakistan was strengthening its Border Health Agency, as part of its pursuits of Global Health Security Agenda, to effectively monitor and counter cross-border movement of disease.

The two sides pledged greater exchange of information, expertise and best practices in fighting diseases.

The US side appreciated Pakistan's successful handling of COVID pandemic with a commitment to continue its close collaboration with the country. In this regard, the United States which has already provided 61.5 million COVID vaccines will further donate 16 million doses of pediatric Pfizer vaccines to Pakistan. An additional \$20 million was also pledged by USAID to support Pakistan's vaccination efforts.

The Dialogue also highlighted donation of four mobile testing labs by the United States that would augment Pakistan's capacity in diagnosing COVID-19 and other communicable diseases, especially in the remote areas. The USAID will also undertake new programs in Pakistan under Global Health Security Agenda.

It was also decided to strengthen cooperation between US' Food & Drug Administration (FDA) and Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP).

The US Centre for Disease Control will also help NIH in strengthening disease data centre in Pakistan.

The US side also appreciated Pakistan's campaign for polio eradication and reiterated its commitment to continue its support against the crippling disease.

Ambassador Masood Khan in his concluding remarks thanked the US Government for its support and welcomed the positive outcome of the US-Pakistan Health Dialogue. He said that "the dialogue is part of multiple engagement processes in critical areas i.e. Trade, Science & Technology, Agriculture and Climate Change, to further strengthen Pak-US ties."

Highlighting the importance of high level US-Pakistan Health Dialogue, Ambassador Masood Khan said that "this engagement process will help Pakistan and the US to develop an arc of cooperation in the non-security areas and will further cement our robust partnership."

The day-long session of US-Pakistan Health Dialogue deliberated upon establishing Pakistani Center for Disease Control (CDC), Global Health Security, childhood immunizations, COVID-19 engagement, regulatory engagements, maternal and child health and non-communicable diseases.

The two sides reiterated their commitment to continue close collaboration in the aforementioned areas and to regularly monitor progress into agreed areas of cooperation.

The next session of the US-Pakistan Health Dialogue is planned to be held in Pakistan.

