

**Remarks by Dr. J. K. Bajaj, Chairman, ICSSR, New Delhi, India
at the S-20 Summit Meeting, September 20, 2022**

Honourable Chair of the Session Professor M. Aman Wirakartakusumah, Co-chair Dr. Chairil Abddini, our hosts from Indonesia, and my colleague representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Canada, the USA and Turkiye.

Let me begin by congratulating the participants in the S-20 Indonesia 2022 exercise, and especially the host nation, Indonesia, for successfully finalizing the S-20 communique that forcefully conveys the commitment of participating nations towards building resilient health systems and enhancing capacities for pandemic preparedness, climate change and economic recovery, while guaranteeing that people are always at the centre of whatever actions the governments take. These are admirable objectives and the final communique outlines the specific actions that the G20 governments are expected to undertake for achieving these.

The Indian Council of Social Science Research could not be involved in the process of evolving this draft from the beginning. Our involvement began at the pre-Final consultation of 27 July 2022, when I had mentioned that the draft had not adequately taken note of the role of indigenous systems of health of different nations, which were widely and effectively deployed in several countries, especially in India, to deal with the Covid 19 pandemic. These systems offered simple and economic therapies both for preventive immunity-building and for treatment of specified categories of cases. The large number of personnel and vast infrastructure of the indigenous systems of health available in India were adapted to considerably enhance the national capacity to deal with the pandemic. Based on this, I had suggested that the final document should effectively take note of the invaluable resources available in the form of knowledge enshrined in classical texts, in centuries of practice, vast pharmacopoeias and armies of health personnel available within the indigenous Health Systems of different nations.

I notice that the suggestion has not been specifically mentioned in the final communique. I assume that the emphasis that the communique places on always keeping the people at the centre and on the development of country-driven adaptations aligned with national priorities and local communities does imply that the indigenous knowledge and practices of the local communities that are often enshrined in the national heritage of different countries must be fully utilized and integrated within the resilient national health systems that we are recommending to the G-20 governments.

The indigenous knowledge and practices of many countries, especially of India, in areas other than health, like agriculture or animal husbandry or water-conservation, also have much to contribute to sustainability and climate consciousness. I hope that such knowledge and

practices shall find an appropriate place in the efforts to enhance pandemic preparedness and controlling climate change that we are so strongly recommending to the G-20 governments.

The ICSSR, as the national apex social science research body of India, shall encourage research on documenting the role that the Indian knowledge and practices have played in India's efforts to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic. We shall also work on documenting how Indian knowledge and practices in diverse fields like agriculture and water-conservation, etc., offer sustainable and climate-sensitive solutions to modern problems. Such knowledge and practices in various fields have to be integrated within the resilient national health and other systems of the future that we have recommended to the G-20 governments. We, in the ICSSR, shall work towards studying the possibilities and ways of such integration.

We hope that similar documentation and studies of the contribution of indigenous systems in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic and the possibilities of integrating these with their mainstream national systems shall also be undertaken by other participating countries, especially of the South American and the Asian continents. We look forward to active cooperation of the participating countries and multinational agencies in this important component of the task that the S-20 communique has laid down for us.

I once again congratulate the S-20 participants for this successful summit and the hosts, Indonesia, for their effective and efficient Presidency. Let us hope that our joint efforts would help in mitigating the effects of the pandemic in the world and contribute to all nations of the world recovering together and recovering stronger.

The responsibility for S-20 2023 has been handed over to the India representative from the Indian National Science Academy (INSA). We in the ICSSR look forward to working in close cooperation with INSA to provide a strong social science content to the S-20 India 2023.

Thank you. Namaste.