

**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 the AIPI Indonesia, and my colleague representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Canada and the USA.

Let me begin by congratulating the participants in the S-20 Indonesia 22 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 objectives.

The Indian Council of Social Science Research could not be involved in the process of finalizing 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, and considerable enhanced 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 the knowledge enshrined in classical texts, in centuries of practice, vast pharmacopeia and armies of health personnel available within the Indigenous Health Systems of different nations.

I notice that 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 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.

I once again congratulate the S-20 participants and the hosts for this successful summit and hope that our 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.

Thank you. Namaste.