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**श्री चित्रा तिरुनाल आयुर्विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान, त्रिवेंद्रम, तिरुवनन्तपुरम - 695 011, केरल, भारत**

SREE CHITRA TIRUNAL INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY (SCTIMST)

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(An Institute of National Importance under DST; Government of India) (***एक राष्ट्रीय महत्व का संस्थान, विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी विभाग, भारत सरकार)***

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**Press Release**

**Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the World Health Organization on health technology innovations.**

Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST) is one of the leading centres in the country focusing on the research and development of Indigenous health technologies, mainly in diagnostics and medical devices. The technologies developed at SCTIMST to address the COVID-19 pandemic led to an initial MoU with WHO for the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool program. This program has since been expanded into the Health Technology Access Pool (HTAP)from January 31, 2024, by WHO, which aims to facilitate the transfer of health technologies and foster collaboration to build end-to-end product development capacity in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

HTAP emphasizes pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response while also promoting access to health products that address existing public health priorities. It actively targets platform technologies and other health products relevant during and beyond health emergencies.

A delegation from WHO visited the SCTIMST on February 12-13, 2025. The purpose of the visit was to develop a work plan for collaboration with the institute and to identify the health technologies developed by SCTIMST that meet the HTAP selection criteria. They also discussed the potential for forming global and regional health technology consortia.

Attending the meeting from WHO were Mr. Michael Ward, HTAP Senior Technical Specialist; Dr. Cheleka Mpande, Technical Officer; Dr. Dragana Milic, Diagnostics Expert; Mr. Einstein Kesi, Medical Devices Expert; Dr. Manisha Shridhar, Regional Advisor for Intellectual Property Rights, Trade, and Health at the WHO South East Asia Regional Office; and Dr. Madhur Gupta, Technical Officer, Pharmaceuticals, and Medical Products Focal Point, WHO Country Office.

"The two-day meeting at the Biomedical Technology Wing of SCTIMST with WHO delegates was a major step after signing the MoU. The meeting was highly productive, and many technologies developed at SCTIMST align with WHO's vision of affordable and equitable health access," said Dr. Sanjay Behari, Director of SCTIMST. There were extensive discussions on HTAP's objectives and SCTIMST's potential involvement in its initiatives.

"SCTIMST as an institute focus deeply on health technology innovations in both diagnostics and medical devices. The approaches the institute has taken in developing technologies for the unmet needs of the health sector are in parallel to the goals set by WHO," said Dr Harikrishana Varma, Head of the Biomedical Technology Wing at SCTIMST. The efforts of WHO to recognize SCTIMST as a global partner in providing affordable health solutions represent a significant step forward.

“The visit of WHO delegates to SCTIMST has strengthened the long-term collaborative efforts and initiated discussions on the global transfer of heath technologies developed by SCTIMST through the WHO’s HTAP platform. This will foster new collaborations between international partners in health innovations. Additionally, SCTIMST can serve as a prime example of developing innovative health technologies to bridge health inequalities worldwide," said Dr. Anoop Thekkuveettil, Senior Scientist at SCTIMST.