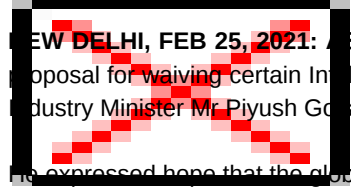


57 WTO members support India's IP waiver for COVID-19 vaccine: Goyal

By TIOL News Service

 NEW DELHI, FEB 25, 2021: As many as 57 members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) are supporting India and South Africa's joint proposal for waiving certain Intellectual Property (IP) provisions during COVID-19 to allow equitable access to medicines, said Commerce and Industry Minister Mr Piyush Goyal on Thursday.

He expressed hope that the global pharmaceutical industry will show a **"big heart"**

and support the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver, as he addressed FICCI's International Conference on Pharmaceutical and Medical Devices Sector.

"We now have 57 WTO members supporting us. I am sure the industry will show a big heart across the world and support the TRIPS waiver that India has proposed at WTO so that the entire world can come out of the COVID-19 pandemic much faster," said Mr Goyal.

He said that the developed world is under pressure as they talk about a multilateral fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The developed world is under pressure as on one hand, they talk about supporting each other and the multilateral fight against COVID, but on other hand, they are looking at protecting the interests of a few companies only in terms of innovation or research and development," he rued.

In October last year, India and South Africa submitted a proposal suggesting a waiver of certain TRIPS Agreement provisions of copyrights, patents and protection of undisclosed information for all WTO members to allow greater access to affordable healthcare, medicines and vaccines during the pandemic.

Calling leaders to ***"rise up to the challenge,"*** Mr Goyal tweeted,

"World cannot continue to engage in endless discussions while millions of lives and livelihoods are lost. Intellectual Property waiver on COVID-19 medicine provides an opportunity to rejuvenate the world."

The ultimate decision on the waiver will be taken by all WTO members at the General Council in March, 2021.