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WHO and Korea sign landmark agreement to boost biomanufacturing capacity

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To strengthen biomanufacturing capacities of low- and middle-income countries



The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Republic of Korea have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a global training hub in biomanufacturing. This global training centre will serve all low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) to produce biologicals, such as vaccines, insulin, monoclonal antibodies, and cancer medicines.

To provide countries with the know-how to rapidly produce mRNA vaccines, WHO, in collaboration with partners, established the mRNA Technology Transfer programme, with the formal inauguration of the Hub facility in South Africa in April 2023.

This multilateral effort and other recent local production initiatives call for ambitious workforce development strategies to recruit, upskill and retain the staff working at these facilities, with unique competencies required in bioproduction.

To address this gap, WHO and the Republic of Korea have engaged in closed collaboration for over a year and are now formalising their commitment towards the establishment of a global training hub in biomanufacturing.

The Government of the Republic of Korea is offering a large range of national training facilities and programmes covering the full spectrum of biological manufacturing and is expanding its operations to accommodate more trainees from other countries with the construction of a Global Bio Education Campus to be launched in 2025.

In parallel, WHO is intensifying regulatory system strengthening to ensure the quality and safety of health products. Stronger regulatory agencies will also enhance confidence in locally produced products and counter misinformation and the availability of unsafe substandard or falsified medicines.

Image caption- Dr Yukiko Nakatani, WHO ADG, Access to Medicines and Health Products (left) and Hwang Seunghyun Director General, Global Vaccine Hub Office at the MoH and Welfare from Republic of Korea (right) at the biomanufacturing training signing ceremony