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The US coaxing India to relax patent laws: MSF

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Singapore: Medical Charity, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) has condemned the US for mounting pressure on India's new government to relax the strict patent conditions, governing the country's pharmaceutical products.

The charity said that India's generic drugs provided relief to millions of patients who cannot afford expensive branded versions. Ms Leena Menghaney, South Asia regional head of MSF's Access Campaign told a news report, "India has been the world's affordable drug safe-haven, the biggest source of affordable medicines." She added that the vast generic industry of the country has made it the world's pharmacy.

MSF also accused the US authorities of seeking to get Indian Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi's government to lower India's patent eligibility bar. India's patent criteria are among the toughest in the world and the Indian law stipulates that drugs must "satisfy the test of novelty or inventiveness" to win patent protection.

Ms Menghaney said that charities like MSF were hugely dependent on India's affordable drugs to meet the needs of its patients. Adding that India's patent laws are seen as models for Australia and Brazil, she said that the new government in India must stand firm and should not allow the patent regime to be dismantled.