

# Shri J P Nadda addresses WHO Regional Health Ministers' Meeting on TB; highlights the achievements of India in containing TB

## We are committed to the high-impact actions required for eliminating TB by 2025: J P Nadda

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"My government has committed itself to the high-impact actions required for eliminating TB by 2025 and will be reinforcing the implementation of our national efforts so that we succeed." This was stated by Shri J P Nadda, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare at the WHO Regional Health Ministers' Meeting on TB, here today. The Health Minister reaffirmed India's commitment in the global collective efforts towards combating TB and stated that India will be remembered for suggesting new breakthroughs aimed at ending TB in the eleven countries of WHO South-East Asia Region (SEAR) through renewed political and financial commitment and enhanced regional cooperation.

Also present were Health Ministers from WHO South East Asia Region and Western Pacific Region countries of Bangladesh, Bhutan, South Korea, Indonesia, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and TimorLeste.

Shri J P Nadda pointed out that the WHO South-East Asia Region is disproportionately affected by the problem of Tuberculosis. The Drug Resistant TB is a larger problem affecting our populations and significantly contributing to the morbidity and mortality. "Each country in the region is having unique and diverse challenges. We, in the region can share our experiences, success stories and strategies to effectively counter the menace of Tuberculosis," ShriNadda added.

Highlighting the gains made by India, ShriNadda said that the Government has called for meeting End TB target by 2025 and has accelerated action in this regard. The Health Minister informed that India has made case notification mandatory. A high proportion, almost 92%, of TB patients with HIV has been put on antiretroviral therapy. He also added that more than 500 CBNAAT machines have been rolled out in one year, offering rapid quality diagnostics, linking at least one such machine for each district. "These steps have led to 35% rise in the Drug Resistant TB case notification in 2016. New anti-TB drug Bedaquiline has been introduced under Conditional Access Programme (CAP) to improve outcomes of drug resistant TB treatment. I am happy to state that progress in TB has been significant in recent times," ShriNadda said.

Appreciating WHO's role in regional learning and innovation and promoting south to south collaboration in fighting the disease together, the Union Health Minister urged WHO to include Tuberculosis in its Global priority list of antibiotic-resistant bacteria to guide research, discovery, and development of new antibiotics.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr PoonamKhetrapal Singh, Regional Director of WHO South-East Asia, stated that TB is the leading cause of death in the region and 15-49 years age group is most affected. She further said that TB and HIV affect people in their most productive years causing severe economic loss and enduring suffering. She further stated that there is an urgent need to position TB as a key national health and development issue. This will also require tackling poverty and deprivation and corresponding investment in next ten years.

Also present on this occasion were distinguished delegates from WHO South-East Asia Region (SEAR) countries, representatives of NGOs and development partners and other senior officers of the Health Ministry.

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