

32nd Meeting of Ministers of Health of Countries of the WHO South-East Asia Region

And 67th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia

9-12 September 2014, Dhaka, Bangladesh



Ministry of Health & Family Welfare Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh



Message

It gives me immense pleasure to learn that Bangladesh is hosting 32nd Meeting of Ministers of Health of Member States of WHO South East Asia (SEA) Region and the 67th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for SEA in September 2014 in Dhaka. On the eve of the occasion, I extend my sincere thanks and felicitations to the Ministers of Health of Member States of WHO South East Asia (SEA) Region for their collective endeavour.

The 11 member states of WHO South East Asia Region namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste have a number of common issues in the context of health.

Climate change has been a great threat for global health. We must ensure our health system more resilient to future climate shocks. The challenge for the SEA health leaders this year will be to make concrete decision and take real steps that will protect their peoples from the negative impact of climate change on health. With this end in view, I believe the leaders would be able to build up partnership among government, private enterprises and the communities for launching concerted effort in this issue. It is an important event for the health leaders of the region. They will definitely celebrate the win over polio as the SEA region has been declared polio free on 27 March 2014. It bears the testimony that the region's governments can do better for their citizens when they work together.

Over the past four decades, Bangladesh has made remarkable achievements in health and population, and the country is currently on right track to meet most of the millennium development goals (MDGs). Pro-poor and women-focused investment in health and social development such as Expanded Program on Immunization, family planning, female education subsidies, and social safety net for marginalized people have contributed to these achievement. I sincerely hope that the regional health leaders will put all-out efforts to present our population a healthier and happier future.

I wish the 32nd Meeting of Ministers of Health of Member States of WHO South East Asia (SEA) Region and the 67th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for SEA a grand success.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Md. Abdul Hamid

Health : Bangladesh Marching Ahead

শেখ হাসিনা

Message

I am happy to learn that Bangladesh is hosting the 32nd Meeting of Ministers of Health of member States of WHO South East Asia (SEA) region and the 67th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for SEA.

The 11 member states of WHO SEA Region are home of about 25 percent of the world's population, with almost 30 percent of the global disease burden. For almost 70 years, the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia has been working with its member states and this collaboration resulted in some remarkable achievements in improving people's health.

Regionally we are doing well if not excellent in most of the health indicators. Very recently we have eradicated polio from the region. A number of countries of the region, including Bangladesh, have the latest case of polio 7-8 years back.

Bangladesh is firmly committed to protecting the constitutional rights to health of its people. We have made enormous health advances and now have the longest life expectancy, the lowest total fertility rate, and the lowest infant and under-5 mortality rate in South Asia.

Our Community Clinics have become a model across the globe with regard to reach health services at the doorsteps of rural people. We have been implementing Vision 2012 under which we would like to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of our independence with much more health achievements.

I warmly welcome the Director General of WHO Dr. Margaret Chan, health ministers, their advisors & other delegates to Bangladesh. I also like to take the opportunity to congratulate Dr. Poonam Khetrapal Singh as it would be her 1st Regional Committee Meeting since she has taken the charge as the Regional Director.

I look forward to significant outcomes of the congregation.

Sheikh Hasina

Message

It is a matter of both pride and pleasure that 32nd Meeting of Ministers of Health of Member States of WHO SEA Region and 67th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for SEA will be held from 09-12 September, 2014 at Dhaka.

WHO SEA Region has many success stories in health since its inception. This year on 27 April the region has been declared polio free. Health leaders of the region executed all-out attack & pull all the triggers to kill the deadly disease. However our success is attributable to the people of the region who had been equally supportive to the mission. Hope we can keep the momentum and launch many more pro-people, particularly pro-poor, healthy businesses. The summit is a great way to connect with colleagues and partners from around the region. It will provide enough scope for the regional health leaders to interact with each other & find out suitable solutions to our health problems.

Bangladesh has been recognized by the international community as an exceptional health performer. In 2010, the UN recognized Bangladesh by awarding the country for its exemplary progress towards Millennium Development Goal (MDG) - 4 in child mortality. The country is also very much on-track to achieve the maternal mortality reduction goals of MDG-5. In 2011, Bangladesh received UN Digital Health for Digital Development Award. More recently, the country was praised as an example of 'Good health at low cost'. Public health is credited with adding around 25 years to the life expectancy of people in Bangladesh in last four decades.

Our Community Clinics have been lauded by the UN Secretary General, the WHO Director General & many other global leaders. The Community Clinic is the brain child of our honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Especially noteworthy is the country's approach to equity, and its widespread deployment of community health workers, who are mostly females to bring high-priority services to every household.

We are grateful to you all for taking the trouble to come from quite a distance. Hope you will enjoy every moment during your stay in Dhaka city. Wishing you all the best and vowing to work together for fulfillment of our lofty ideals for better and healthy tomorrow. I look forward to hosting regional health leaders in Dhaka. The event will contain the most important meetings of regional health leaders the city has ever hosted. I wish it would make a lasting difference.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
Long live Bangladesh.

Mohammed Nasim, MP

Message

It is a great pleasure and pride that 32nd Meeting of Ministers of Health of Member States of WHO SEA Region and 67th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for SEA are going to be held in Dhaka in September 2014.

The event comes at a time when SEA regional health leaders are still basking on the warm success of polio eradication. It becomes once again evident that by acting together we can win all the challenges of our people in respect to their well being. WHO headquarters, SEAR office and the leaders of 11 member states played their respective role properly to bring the success. But I firmly believe that it is the people of the region who are the drivers of this development. However, we can't be complacent as we have many other health challenges in our hand to overcome.

Bangladesh has witnessed substantial success with respect to health, as described in the Lancet Bangladesh series, and elsewhere. Maternal mortality has decreased by 75% since 1980, infant mortality has more than halved since 1990, and life expectancy has risen to 69 years, higher now than in neighboring India and Pakistan. Bangladesh's exceptional health outcomes are partly due to both the structure of the public sector and pluralistic health system, which is characterized by equitable and extensive outreach to the households. Community Clinic is a perfect example of this phenomenon which has been recognized as a role model across the world.

I sincerely hope that interaction among the delegates will give them the opportunity to share & exchange the good practices in health. I urge upon each one of the delegates to lend a hand, an active hand, moved by a warm heart, to one another to fight against people's health problems.

I would like to assure that the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare of Bangladesh has taken all necessary measures to make delegates' stay in Dhaka comfortable and safe.

I wish the meetings would be most successful.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
Long live Bangladesh

Zahid Maleque

Message

I am pleased that the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh is hosting the Health Ministers Meeting and the Regional Committee Meeting of the WHO's South East Asia. I take the opportunity of this occasion to send my warm greetings to Her Excellency, Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of the Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh, and to the friendly people of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has been a champion of health, not only for its own people, but also for the global community. The latest example is the country's leadership in bringing the issue of autism spectrum disorder to the forefront of global attention through the World Health Assembly. I am pleased to learn that further discussions on autism will take place during this Regional Committee as a follow-up to the resolution passed by the Health Assembly last May.

Bangladesh has a strong tradition of focusing on reaching the community at the grassroots level through its widespread network of community health workers. These workers help staff more than 12,500 community clinics, truly bringing health services to the people on a most impressive scale.

This meeting is an occasion for countries in the Region to share experiences and learn lessons from each other. I wish you every success during the Health Ministers meeting and the Regional Committee meeting. You will benefit greatly from the rich experiences and inspiring leadership of your host country.

WHO Headquarters, Geneva, 13 August 2014

Dr Margaret Chan
Director-General

Message

On the occasion of the Health Minister's Meeting hosted by the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, I would like to acknowledge and appreciate the strong collaborative partnership that exists between WHO and the Government of Bangladesh. On this happy occasion I offer my warm greetings to Her Excellency, Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of the Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh, and to the committed people of Bangladesh.

Despite the challenges of poverty, high population, and natural disasters Bangladesh is a shining example of many notable achievements in health. This is largely due to the high commitment of the government to its people's health and welfare, a well-coordinated multi-stakeholder engagement to provide health care and services, and with a focus on equity and women in a health care system that reaches the community through its widespread network of community health workers who bring essential health care services to those in greatest need. For this the Government of Bangladesh and the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare are to be highly commended.

While we celebrate the remarkable achievements, let us also not forget the formidable challenges that still lie ahead. There are still high levels of maternal and neonatal mortality. Communicable diseases continue to be important health concerns while the burden of non-communicable disease is rising. Socio-economic and environmental issues need to be addressed effectively. And more investment in health is called for to build a health system that is responsive and capable of providing equitable access to quality health care for the entire population.

We look forward to hear some of the success stories and to learn lessons from the experience of Bangladesh during this meeting of the Health Ministers of WHO's South-East Asia Region Countries.

Dr. Poonam Khetrapal Singh
Regional Director
30 July 2014

Message

It is indeed my great pleasure to see that Dhaka is hosting the 32nd Health Ministers' Meeting (HMM) and the 67th Session of the Regional Committee (RC) of the Member States of the WHO's South East Asia Region (SEAR). The WHO, in the past seven decades since its birth in 1948, significantly contributed to improve the global health through developing knowledge, best practices and tools in correctly understanding and intervening health across the globe, as well as, in guiding and helping Member States to undertake right health programs. Eradication of small pox, last milestone of global polio eradication and current push on elimination of measles and all vaccine preventable diseases are some of the many health interventions, the WHO provided leadership to.

The WHO's magnificent roles for helping countries in achievement of health related MDGs, in adoption of International Health Regulations 2005, Global Action Plans for NCDs and Mental Health including Autism Resolution and untiring effort to rightly place health in the forthcoming Post-2015 Development Goals are noteworthy.

The South East Asia Regional Office (SEARO) of WHO, undeniably, shares all those credits in translating and transferring the roles and successes of WHO across the SEAR Member States. This joy also fully touches all of our 11 Regional Member States, as we actively participate, as State Parties, in all the major WHO policy decisions and implementations. The HMMs are instrumental in expressing readiness of the national governments to align respective country positions to WHO's goodwill with a view to address regional health issues. The HMMs also act as inspirations for the RC Meetings towards taking bold positive decisions for good health of our regional citizens.

Given this context of WHO, HMM and RC Meeting, our Ministry of Health and Family Welfare feels proud of hosting the 32nd HMM and 67th RC Meeting of the WHO-SEAR in Dhaka this September 2014. I warmly welcome the Excellency Health Ministers, Director General and Regional Director of WHO, senior officials and delegation members from the health ministries of the Regional Member States as well as from WHO-HQ, SEARO and its country offices to Bangladesh and promise to do our best to show our heartiest hospitality to our valued and distinguished guests.

In the end, I deeply appreciate WHO, governments of member states and all other partners both in home and abroad for their generous support in organizing this very important event and make it a success.

M M Neazuddin

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