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"WHO would soon launch second protocol for the Solidarity Trial"- Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh

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Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia shares her views on the current COVID-19 situation



"A more comprehensive approach is needed with communities at the center of our response. Most importantly, communities need to be engaged and empowered to take appropriate decisions and measures. The onus must be on each one. At this stage, everyone needs to contribute to minimize health as well as socio-economic impact of the pandemic. Every case, cluster and evidence of community transmission would need to be aggressively responded to. Basic public health measures such as active case detection, isolation, testing, treatment and contact tracing are among our most powerful tools. A strong surveillance is needed to assess and guide evidence-based measures.

WHO will continue to work with the Pandemic Supply Chain Network to ensure all at-risk and critically affected countries are supported.

These shortages are a global problem, and one that will have a significant impact on the response. If we cannot protect health workers, and are unable to adequately test, we will be fighting with one arm tied.

I commend the countries in the South East Asia Region for participating in the WHO Solidarity Trial. India, Indonesia and Thailand have signed up for the multi-country trial, which will compare the safety and effectiveness of four different drugs or drug combinations against COVID-19.

It is a historic undertaking that will dramatically reduce the time needed to generate robust evidence about what drugs are effective in treating COVID-19. The more countries that join, the faster we will have the results. I urge all countries to sign up.

WHO would soon be launching a second protocol for the Solidarity Trial that will help establish incidence and prevalence of infection and the future behavior of the virus."

- Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia