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Delhi to host conference on traditional medicine

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The International Conference on Traditional Medicine, which is to be attended by health ministers of the SEARO (South East Asia Region), WPR (Western Pacific Region), experts from WHO, and other countries, is expected to broaden and update the knowledge on integration, regulation and research priorities in traditional and complementary medicine. The conference is being held at New Delhi from February 12-14, 2013. It will also enhance cooperation among SEARO countries in the field of traditional medicine. The event is in accordance with the 62nd World Health Assembly Resolution in 2009 that urged the member states to undertake various activities in the field of traditional medicine.

In recent years there has been global upsurge in the use of traditional medicine because of its availability, accessibility and affordability as against the modern healthcare services which are beyond the reach of people. It may be mentioned that traditional medicines are used around the world including South-East Asian countries for healthcare by the people. The countries have a rich heritage of several systems of traditional medicine and have vast resources of medicinal plants and huge repositories of knowledge.

The objective is to promote the role of traditional and complementary medicine in healthcare provision, their use in primary healthcare, share research methodologies for studies on safety, efficacy and quality in order to identify best practices to ensure the safety, share national policies, programs and experiences to promote and propagate in SEARO Region. It also aims to exchange views and share evidence-based information and country experiences on traditional medicine and complementary medicine, identify priority issues and challenges in strengthening the development and appropriate integration of traditional medicine as part of the national health system.

India has long history and culture running over 5000 years of using traditional medicines for healthcare. Indian traditional systems of medicines viz. ayurveda, yoga, naturopathy, siddha, and sowa-rigpa are comprehensive scientific systems of medicine evolved in India. Over a period of time, India has developed vast network of infrastructure for its traditional system of medicine and homoeopathy including five research councils (one for each system), National Institute for each system, National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB), two statutory regulatory bodies [Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM) and Central Council of Homoeopathy (CCH)], and two apex laboratories [Pharmacopoeial Laboratory for Indian Medicine (PLIM) and Homoeopathic Pharmacopoeial Laboratory (HPL].