

## Strengthening health sector is govt's top priority, assures JP Nadda

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"The government places the highest priority to strengthening the health sector in the country. There is the highest level of political commitment for this" stated Mr JP Nadda, minister for health and family welfare stated this while delivering the keynote address at the Health and Immunisation Conference organised by the CII, at New Delhi on June 30, 2015.

Mr Nadda stated that the National Health Mission (NHM), comprising of National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and the National Urban Health Mission (NUHM), aims towards providing accessible, affordable, accountable, and effective primary healthcare facilities, especially to the rural population of the country with a particular emphasis on poor and vulnerable sections of the population. It encompasses programmes to cater to requirements of pregnant women, children and communicable as well as non-communicable diseases. He added that reducing maternal and child mortality are the foremost goals of National Health Mission, which has significantly fostered plans for child health in decentralised manner up-to district level. Steady progress in curbing child deaths has been achieved. India's Under 5 Mortality Rate declined from 126 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 49 per 1,000 live births in 2013, the minister informed.

The health minister said that Mission Indradhanush has been able to fill in the gap in fully immunising children who have been left unvaccinated or are partially vaccinated under the routine immunization program. Three rounds have been completed and the fourth round will start from 7th July, the health minister stated.

The Minister added that of all the methods of preventing the under-5 mortality, immunization is one of the most cost-effective public health interventions for protecting children from life threatening conditions, which are preventable. He stated that during these immunization rounds, 56.6 lakh children have been vaccinated and a total of 14.4 lakh children were fully vaccinated. Also, a total of 15.7 lakh pregnant women were vaccinated with tetanus toxoid vaccine during these three rounds. Mr Nadda also stated that cold chain network in the country has been the backbone of the Immunization Programme to ensure that right quantity/ quality of vaccines reach the target population.

The health minister sought the participation and partnership of the private sector in providing accessible, affordable and cost

effective health care services in the country to complement the efforts of the government. He stated that with the support of the private sector, we will be able to further strengthen the Cold Chain and Supply Management system in the country.

Also present at the function were Dr Naresh Trehan, chairman, CII Committee on Healthcare; Mr Jamshyd Godrej, MD and chairman, Godrej and Boyce; and Prof. Ricjard Feachem of University of California, Berkely.