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Align national TB strategies with commitment to end TB by 2030: WHO

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World Health Organization has called on countries in South-East Asia Region to build on recent momentum aimed at ending TB by 2030



‘Bending the curve’ and ending TB was a key agenda item at the Seventieth session of the Regional Committee which concluded yesterday in Maldives.

The Regional Committee is the highest decision-making body for public health in the South-East Asia Region, and includes health ministers and senior health ministry officials of the Region’s 11 Member countries – Bangladesh, Bhutan, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

World Health Organization has called on countries in South-East Asia Region to build on recent momentum aimed at ending TB by 2030, commending their resolve to take action and urging all countries to review and align national plans with the Delhi Call to Action.

Dr Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia, said, “The Region-wide momentum established to ‘bend the curve’ and end TB by 2030 is laudable. The Delhi Call for Action, issued by health ministers in March, demonstrates high-level awareness that business as usual is not enough, and that intensified efforts are needed. We have reached a critical consensus; the pressing need now is to translate commitment into action.”

Dr Singh also emphasised that, “As a critical first step in implementing recent commitments, emphasized the need for countries to align national plans with the 2030 target. “By reviewing and amending national TB plans countries will enhance their ability to mobilize and utilize resources efficiently. Good planning is key to establishing the foundations for success.”

The Regional Director likewise highlighted the need for countries to identify the package of interventions best suited to their challenges, whether that means focusing on strengthening TB services, accelerating case detection or investing in research and development. “All countries face unique challenges, meaning they should each adapt the regional and global strategies to their context. We must avoid taking one-size-fits-all approach, and must instead seek-out and embrace tailored solutions that meet specific needs and challenges.

The Regional Director affirmed WHO South-East Asia Region’s ongoing commitment to supporting countries implement the Delhi Call for Action, including by implementing mandatory case notification and working with regulatory authorities to introduce newer drugs for the treatment of drug-resistant TB. The Regional Director also reiterated WHO’s continued support for the provision of universal Drug susceptibility testing (DST)-guided treatment, for addressing MDR-TB and TB in immunocompromised patients, and for increased focus on the social aspects of TB.

"By planning effectively and making smart, high-impact interventions, countries across the South-East Asia Region can lift TB’s significant burden and end the disease as a public health threat once and for all,” Dr Khetrapal Singh said.