



Regional Office for South-East Asia

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WHO calls for effective partnership to save lives in South-East Asia

9 March 2011, New Delhi: The World Health Organization (WHO) is organizing a three-day conference on “Partners for Health in South-East Asia” to strengthen regional collaboration for health and encourage effective and sustainable partnerships. The conference will engage WHO and partners on priority health issues for WHO’s South-East Asia Region.

WHO’s South-East Asia Region accounts for 26% of the world’s population and continues to struggle with a huge disease burden. Fifty children under-five die every hour in South-East Asia due to diarrhoea which is a leading cause of child mortality in the Region, second only to pneumonia. The Region accounts for 70% of the world’s malnourished children. The incidence of low birth weight is still high at 30%, and the prevalence of underweight and stunting in children is also high.

A third of global maternal deaths occur in this Region. In many resource-constrained countries, health systems are weak and shortages of human resources for health are a major obstacle. Delay in deciding to seek care, delay in accessing care, and delay in receiving care at a health facility result in deaths that could have been prevented. Universal access to care is crucial for improving health in the Region. Adequate numbers of skilled health workers and midwifery services are urgently needed.

Noncommunicable diseases are now the leading cause of death globally and in the SEA Region. Each year 8 million deaths or 22% of deaths worldwide due to noncommunicable diseases occur in the 11 countries in the Region. They are also a major economic and development challenge. This epidemic of noncommunicable diseases can be largely prevented through cost-effective public health measures.

“These diseases of poverty cannot be prevented and controlled by the health sector alone. Partnerships are therefore needed from every sector of society to successfully fight these diseases” said Dr. Samlee Plianbangchang, WHO’s Regional Director for South-East Asia.

Partners from 11 Member States (Bangladesh, Bhutan, DPR Korea, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Timor-Leste) along with high-level representatives from donor countries, multilateral and intergovernmental organizations, civil society, foundations, corporations and research/academic institutions are expected at this conference.

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What: Partners for Health in South- East Asia Conference

When: 16-18 March 2011

Where: Le Meridien, New Delhi

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For more information please visit our website:

<http://www.searo.who.int/EN/Section1257/Section1259/Section2613.htm>

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