

World leaders pledge to fight antimicrobial resistance at UN General Assembly



World leaders gather at UN General Assembly and pledge action on Antimicrobial Resistance

Global leaders met at the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September 2016 and pledged their commitment to fighting antimicrobial resistance (AMR) together. The rising trend of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) threatens the effectiveness of antibiotics, leaving the world vulnerable to diseases that were once easily cured.

In a landmark declaration, Heads of State committed to taking coordinated action to address the root causes of AMR across relevant sectors, in particular human health, animal health and agriculture. The pledge called for stronger surveillance systems to monitor drug-resistant infections, tougher regulation of antimicrobials, improved national awareness and knowledge of AMR, and the promotion of innovative alternatives to antibiotics.

For further information please visit:

www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2016/commitment-antimicrobial-resistance/en/

Sri Lanka shines during WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia



WHO Regional Director addresses the delegation at the WHO Regional Committee

The WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia was held in Sri Lanka from 5 – 9 September 2016. Health Ministers from 11 Member Countries of the WHO South-East Asia Region gathered in Colombo for this high level meeting to set health policies and priorities. WHO Director-General, Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Regional Director, Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, senior health officials and WHO experts were among the 200 delegates who participated in this meeting. Key resolutions were passed to strengthen non-communicable diseases service delivery at primary health care level, end preventable maternal, newborn and child mortality, establish a fund for health emergencies preparedness and increase focus on migrant health.

Sri Lanka showcased its many public health successes during the meeting, including its world class immunization and maternal and child health programmes and the elimination of lymphatic filariasis, malaria, maternal and neonatal tetanus.

For further information please visit:

www.searo.who.int/mediacentre/events/governance/rc/69/en/

Sri Lanka makes public health history and conquers malaria



Minister of Health, Dr Rajitha Senaratne receives WHO certification of Elimination of Malaria from Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, WHO Regional Director and Dr Margaret Chan WHO Director-General

In September 2016, Sri Lanka achieved a major public health milestone, receiving WHO Certification for having successfully eliminated malaria, a life-threatening disease which long affected the island country. WHO Director-General, Dr Margaret Chan and WHO Regional Director, Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh presented the certificate to the Minister of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine, Dr Rajitha Senaratne during a special ceremony in Colombo.

"Sri Lanka's achievement is truly remarkable. In the mid-20th century it was among the most malaria-affected countries, but now it is malaria-free. This is testament to the courage and vision of its leaders, and signifies the great leaps that can be made when targeted action is taken. It also demonstrates the importance of grass-roots community engagement and a whole-of-society approach when it comes to making dramatic public health gains," highlighted WHO Regional Director, Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh.

For further information please visit:

www.searo.who.int/mediacentre/releases/2016/1631/en/

WHO Delivers Critical Support to Strengthen Emergency Response in Sri Lanka



Infection, prevention and control demonstration during handover ceremony at Water's Edge, Colombo

On 26 August 2016, WHO donated medical equipment and supplies worth USD 530 000 to the Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka to bolster emergency response capacity. The ceremony took place at Water's Edge, Colombo. Mobile hospitals, interagency emergency health kits, deployment kits and personal protective equipment were officially handed over by WHO to the Minister of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine, Dr Rajitha Senaratne to ensure the rapid provision of health services in disaster affected areas in future.

"In May 2016, Sri Lanka experienced one of the worst floods in our history, which affected over 400 000 people. Today WHO is handing over medical supplies including 4 mobile hospitals to strengthen our emergency medical response capacity. I wish to thank our WHO Country Office for working closely with my Ministry during our recent disaster and continuing to support our rehabilitation efforts," said Dr Rajitha Senaratne.

For further information please visit:

www.searo.who.int/srilanka/areas/who-delivers-critical-support-to-strengthen-emergency-response/en/

President of Sri Lanka receives WHO Public Health Excellence Award



Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director presents H. E. President of Sri Lanka, Maithripala Sirisena with the Excellence in Public Health Award

On 5 September 2016, the President of Sri Lanka, Maithripala Sirisena was conferred with the Excellence in Public Health Award by WHO South-East Asia Region for his remarkable and sustained role in the public health gains of their countries.

"Mr Sirisena receives this award for his outstanding visionary contributions and tireless pursuit of good health for the people of his country. He has been instrumental in strengthening health system and services and has made commendable contributions to tobacco control, drugs regulation, health of migrants and control of chronic kidney disease," Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia Region, said here after honoring the President with the WHO award.

For further information please visit:

www.searo.who.int/mediacentre/releases/2016/1633/en/

Sri Lanka launches First Ever National Health Accounts



National Health Accounts launched to improve health policies and health sector financing

On 1 August 2016, the Ministry of Health, Nutrition & Indigenous Medicine launched its first ever National Health Accounts (NHA) 2013 in Colombo. The NHA gives a complete picture of the health care financing of the country, measuring the financial flows related to health care goods and services used by 20.5 million people in Sri Lanka. The NHA provides critical information to policy makers in identifying existing gaps and priorities for health sector financing.

"I would like to congratulate Sri Lanka on becoming the first country in the WHO South-East Asia Region to complete the National Health Accounts based on the WHO guidelines for the System of Health Accounting (2011). This is a very important step towards the creation of improved health policies, a stronger health system and the achievement of Universal Health Coverage in Sri Lanka. WHO is firmly committed to support the Ministry of Health to continue to produce the NHA annually," highlighted Dr Jacob Kumaresan, WHO Representative to Sri Lanka.

For further information please visit:

www.searo.who.int/srilanka/areas/health_economics_planning/sri-lanka-launches-first-ever-national-health-accounts/en/