

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5247

ANSWERED ON:24.04.2015

MEETING OF HEALTH MINISTERS OF SAARC COUNTRIES

Pradhan Shri Nagendra Kumar;Raut Shri Vinayak Bhaurao;Shewale Shri Rahul Ramesh;Shinde Dr. Shrikant Eknath;Singh Deo Shri Kalikesh Narayan

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Health Ministers of SAARC countries met at New Delhi in the recent past;
- (b) if so, the details of the issues discussed and the outcome of the said meeting; and
- (c) the extent to which the outcome of the meeting is likely to boost medical services in the country?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA)

(a) to (c): The Health Ministers of the Member States of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) met on 8 April 2015 at New Delhi for their 5th Meeting.

Prior to the meeting of the Health Ministers, the meetings of the SAARC Technical Committee on Health and Population Activities, the SAARC Expert Group on HIV/AIDS and of the Senior Officials (Health Secretaries) were held during 6-7 April, 2015.

The Health Ministers resolved to strengthen health cooperation, with particular emphasis on following areas:

- (i) Aim to make SAARC region polio-free. India offered support for technical missions from other SAARC countries for this purpose.
- (ii) Commitment to set up SAARC Supra National Reference Laboratory for TB and HIV/AIDS.
- (iii) To come together to negotiate better prices for TB drugs and diagnostics to make these more affordable and accessible.
- (iv) Set up Expert Groups on vector-borne diseases and holding annual meetings on Noncommunicable diseases.
- (v) Inclusion of mental health care into universal health care.
- (vi) To promote access to medicines including through the use of flexibilities under TRIPS Agreement (World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights) and to promote these in the bilateral and regional trade agreements in order to protect public health interest.
- (vii) Pursue mutual cooperation among the professional bodies regulating medicine/ nursing/ allied health, on training needs of Human Resources.
- (viii) Promotion of Traditional systems of medicine.

The Health Ministers also adopted 'Delhi Declaration on public health challenges' at the close of the meeting, reflecting the commitments expressed and decisions taken collectively by the Health Ministers. A copy of the Delhi Declaration is at Annex.

The decisions adopted in the SAARC Health Ministers' Meeting will promote regional cooperation to address the common health challenges in the SAARC countries, including in India.