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WHO SE Asia countries to discuss priority health issues in Delhi

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Health ministers and senior officials from the 11 Member countries are expected to participate in the Seventy-first Session of the Regional Committee of WHO South-East Asia Region.

World Health Organization

Intensifying action to eliminate malaria, addressing the increasing threat of dengue, to improving access to essential medicines, Member countries of WHO South-East Asia Region are meeting here from 3 to 7 September to discuss priority health issues in the Region, home to one-fourth of the world's population.

Health ministers and senior officials from the 11 Member countries are expected to participate in the Seventy-first Session of the Regional Committee of WHO South-East Asia Region, the highest policy making body of WHO in the Region.

WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO South-East Asia Regional Director Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, and WHO Deputy Director General Ms Jane Elizabeth Ellison will be participating in the meeting, along with representatives of a number of partner organizations and civil society.

The meeting will deliberate on the existing and new opportunities for improving access to essential medicines, vaccines and medical products both within WHO South-East Asia Region and beyond, as one of the key initiatives towards universal health coverage.

With the Region prone to disasters and public health emergencies, WHO and Member countries will discuss strengthening of emergency medical teams, an important initiative to fortify response capacities.

To address the significant increase in dengue cases in recent years, health experts will discuss measures against all vector-borne diseases including chikungunya and zika.

Building on the momentum created in the Region in recent years to eliminate malaria, the Member countries will review key action points for further intensifying efforts to reduce its disease burden.

The progress being made by countries to reduce newborn, under-5 and maternal mortalities and the efforts to strengthen health workforce in the Region are among the other key issues to be discussed in the five-day meeting.

In addition, progress reports on promoting physical activity, intensifying routine immunization, improving civil registration and vital statistics and expanding the scope of the South-East Asia Regional Emergency Fund, would be made at the meeting.

The Regional Committee session is held annually and is hosted by one of the 11 Member countries in the Region or the WHO South-East Asia Regional Office. The session this year is being hosted by the WHO South-East Asia Regional Office.