

EngenderHealth steps up support to Karnataka Govt.

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The global women's health and sexual and reproductive health rights organization steps up collaboration with India on issues relating to family planning and sexual, reproductive, and maternal health.



Traci L. Baird, President and CEO of EngenderHealth—a global women's health and sexual and reproductive rights organization—met with H.D. Kumaraswamy, Chief Minister of Karnataka and Sivananda S. Patil, Health Minister of Karnataka, to discuss areas of collaboration and support intended to strengthen the State Government's priorities on family planning.

The meetings were held as part of Baird's 4-day visit to India, one of the first countries in EngenderHealth's global portfolio that she has visited since joining the organization just over three months ago. Prior to visiting Karnataka, Baird met with senior officials in the Central Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in the national capital.

The Chief Minister spoke about his government's commitment to social and economic development, and thanked Baird for the support EngenderHealth was providing to the state in the area of family planning.

The Health Minister acknowledged the technical expertise EngenderHealth brought into the partnership, and greatly appreciated the support provided to enhance the capacity of the government health personnel to scale quality post-partum family planning services.

EngenderHealth supports the Government of Karnataka in the effort to strengthen family planning services in 14 hard-to-reach districts, where performance of family planning services is lower than the state average. The project, supported by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, aims to promote a range of contraceptive methods, in particular postpartum and post-abortion family planning methods. One of the mandates of the project is to roll out the delivery of newly introduced injectable contraceptive method—*Antara*—in public health facilities in Karnataka. In addition, the project is building capacities of the Accredited Social Health Activists—the frontline health workers at the village level—to counsel and provide information to young couples on family planning.

Baird said *“At EngenderHealth, we know that sexual and reproductive health and rights are necessary for all people, particularly women and girls, to achieve gender equality and reach their full potentials. As an organization, we envision a world where all people can exercise their sexual and reproductive health rights and choices as full participants in society.”*

“We are pleased to work with the Governments of India and Karnataka in our shared mission to improve access to reproductive health and family information and services. I am impressed and inspired by the political commitment and leadership shown by the Karnataka Governments in this endeavor and to the empowerment of women and girls.”