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# Health Ministry inks MoC with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

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**The Foundation will support the Ministryâ??s work towards strengthening the primary health aspects**



Bill Gates, Co-Chair, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) called on Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, in New Delhi. They presided over the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between the Health Ministry and the Gates Foundation. The MoC was signed by Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary (International Health) from MoHFW and M. Hari Menon, Director, India Country Office, BMGF.

At the meeting, Dr Harsh Vardhan highlighted the strides being taken in providing UHC to its citizens and the contribution of Ayushman Bharat with its pillars of HWCs and PMJAY; noteworthy gains in reduction of maternal and child mortality; expanding the coverage of full immunisation; and achievements in sectors such as TB; ambitious steps in digital health through the National Digital Blueprint framework. “Our visionary Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has a vision of creating a New India by 2022, where everyone is assured of universal health coverage. Our efforts and initiatives are focussed in this direction”, he stated.

Commenting on the MoC, Dr. Harsh Vardhan said, “Our association with Gates Foundation has been a long and fruitful one, be it for Polio eradication or increasing immunization coverage. However, now is the time to work together for providing Universal Health Coverage (UHC) to all our countrymen with an effective and quality-driven primary healthcare system. We recognize the importance of adopting innovative approaches that will not only address the gaps in the system but also build on all that we have achieved so far.” He emphasized that the MoC with the Gates Foundation will be mutually beneficial, and we look forward to working with the Gates Foundation and leveraging their expertise in supporting MoHFW’s efforts towards strengthening its health systems.

Supporting the initiatives undertaken by the Health Ministry, Bill Gates said, “The Ministry of Health has put forward an ambitious vision to improve the primary healthcare system in this country – especially for women and children. Our Foundation supports that goal, and we want to partner with India to achieve it. That’s why we are very happy to sign this Memorandum of Cooperation today.”

Under the MoC, Gates Foundation will provide technical, management and program design support through its grantees and other partners, with a special focus on innovation, best practices and enhancing performance management, while working closely with the government. The Foundation will support the Ministry’s work towards strengthening the primary health aspects such as reducing maternal and child mortality, improving nutrition services and increasing the immunization reach. Efforts will be made to increase access to family planning measures amongst younger women and reduce the burden of select infectious diseases (Tuberculosis, Visceral Leishmaniasis, Lymphatic Filariasis). The work will also include strengthening of supply chains and monitoring systems while focusing on budget utilization, management and skills of human resources for health, ultimately bolstering the entire health system.