

India, US to discuss mutual cooperation in health research

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"We are on a threshold of exciting possibilities. I am looking forward to talks seeking collaboration on global health security, telehealth and preventive healthcare," said Dr Harsh Vardhan. He will meet Ms Sylvia Mathews Burwell, newly appointed US secretary of health and human services on June 24. The purpose of the meeting would be to evaluate progress of the US-India Health Initiative, which was launched in 2010.

The minister will also hold meetings with Dr Rajiv Shah, administrator; Dr Ariel Pablos Mendez, assistant administrator and Ms Denise Rollins, assistant administrator of United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This meeting will see discussions on steps to consolidate the collaboration that exists between Indian government, USAID, UNICEF and other lead partners in creating an AIDS-free generation. It also aims to achieve TB-free India and reaching Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

It may be pointed out here that the USAID has recently launched a "Global Development Lab" which brings together a diverse set of partners to discover, test and scale breakthrough solutions to end poverty. Dr Harsh Vardhan stated, "As ending poverty is a priority area for the new government, this meeting will explore the potential to expand existing technical collaboration."

On the second anniversary of India-US-Ethiopia initiative to launch annual "Call to Action-A Promise Renewed", Dr Harsh Vardhan will attend a meeting in the American capital on June 25 to take stock of the progress so far, in the war against child mortality. In all, 25 Health Ministers from different countries will be attending the meeting. Dr Vardhan will be delivering the keynote address highlighting the global vision for preventable child and maternal deaths.

To conclude his Washington meetings, the minister will go to Atlanta, Georgia where he will visit the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). An agreement of cooperation already exists between CDC and Global Disease Detection India Centre, established in 2011 at the National Centre for Disease Control.

The areas of cooperation include strengthening Surveillance, Epidemic Intelligence Service training program and quality

assurance. In addition, there exists a collaboration between CDC and Indian Council of Medical Research in the areas of environmental and occupational health, non-communicable diseases, etc.

During his visit, Dr Harsh Vardhan will have talks with Mr Thomas R Frieden, director of CDC on the progress of the collaboration and new areas of cooperation in the future.