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Health Minister reiterates commitment to end AIDS by 2030

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Dr Harsh Vardhan addresses Global Prevention Coalition for HIV Prevention



Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare digitally addressed the Ministerial meeting of the Global Prevention Coalition (GPC) for HIV Prevention on 18 November.

Hosted by UNAIDS and UNFPA on behalf of the Global HIV Prevention Coalition (GPC),the conference this year holds significance in achieving the 2016 UNGA commitment to end AIDS by 2030. Member States of GPC had agreed to reduce new adult HIV infections by 75 per cent at the end of 2020 from 2010 levels.

Speaking on India's unique HIV prevention model which is centred around the concept of 'Social Contracting' through which the Targeted Interventions (TI) programme is implemented, the Union Health Minister remarked.

Dr Harsh Vardhan elaborated how India protected the gains made in HIV prevention during the COVID-19 pandemic. "The Government linked key populations and PLHIV to various social welfare schemes. Advisories and guidance notes were issued by NACO from time to time aligned with global guidelines in the context", he stated.

The Union Health Minister apprised the audience how India had revamped its Targeted Intervention (TI) programme to focus on hard-to-reach populations to keep its commitments- People living in prisons and other closed settings were considered as priority populations and interventions launched were gradually scaled up since 2016; the HIV Counselling & Testing Services (HCTS), Community based Screening of HIV for improving early diagnosis were also ramped up; the coverage of testing for HIV across the country was increased to achieve the Elimination of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV.

In this regard, he also mentioned the enactment of The Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017 which has provided a legal and enabling framework for safeguarding the human rights of the infected and affected populations.

He ended his speech by reiterating India's commitment to achieve the 90-90-90 targets across the country by the end of the current year and also end the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030.