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Measles and Rubella in South-East Asia

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The member countries of the **World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Committee for South-East Asia** have resolved to eliminate highly infectious **diseases Measles and Rubella by 2023**.

- The data shows that Bhutan, DPR Korea, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste from the South East Asia region have eliminated Measles.
- On the other hand, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste have controlled Rubella.
- To achieve the Elimination of Measles and Rubella by 2023, the member-countries resolved to strengthen the immunisation systems for increasing and sustaining the high level of population immunity.
- The resolution also calls for ensuring a highly sensitive laboratory supported case-based surveillance system.
- Eliminating measles will prevent 500,000 deaths a year in the region while eliminating rubella would avert about 55,000 cases of rubella and promote the health and wellbeing of pregnant women and infants.

Measles

- It is a **highly contagious viral disease** and is a **cause of death among young children** globally.
- It is particularly dangerous for children from the economically weaker background, as it attacks **malnourished children** and those with reduced immunity.
- It can **cause** serious complications, including **blindness, encephalitis, severe diarrhoea, ear infection and pneumonia**.

Rubella

- It is also called **German Measles**.
- Rubella is a contagious, generally **mild viral infection** that occurs most often in **children and young adults**.

- Rubella infection in pregnant women may cause fetal death or congenital defects known as **Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS)**.
- Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS) causes **irreversible birth defects**.

Apart from the above initiatives, **India has also pledged to contribute \$2,00,000** towards the implementation of the **preparedness stream** under the **South-East Asia Health Emergency Response Fund (SEARHEF)**

- Under this initiative, **Special surveillance** is to be mounted for **early detection and control of vector-borne and waterborne diseases** which helped to contain the outbreak of epidemic-prone disease following **cyclone Fani**.
- The Health Ministers of the South-East Asia Region of WHO also signed the **Delhi Declaration on Emergency Preparedness**.

WHO's Regional Committee for South-East Asia

- The Regional Committee for South-East Asia is the **World Health Organization's governing body in the South-East Asia Region**, with representatives from all **11 Member States of the Region**.
- It **meets every year** to review progress in health development in the Region.
- It formulates resolutions on health issues for the Member States, as well as considers the regional implications of World Health Assembly resolutions.
- The **Member Countries** are:
 - Bangladesh
 - Bhutan
 - Democratic People's Republic of Korea
 - India
 - Indonesia
 - Maldives
 - Myanmar
 - Nepal
 - Sri Lanka
 - Thailand
 - Timor-Leste

Source:TH