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**Press Information Bureau
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Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**

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**Dr Harsh Vardhan to hold meetings with new US Secretary of Health
Health Minister leaves for US for talks with key international health officials**

Union Health Minister, Dr Harsh Vardhan, left for the United States this morning on a five-day visit to the United States to confer with important health officials on cooperation and collaboration in vital sectors.

This will be his first official tour abroad since assuming office on May 27, 2014. The Minister called on the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, on Monday to brief him on the interlocutors and the agenda of his meetings with them.

Dr Harsh Vardhan will meet Ms Sylvia Mathews Burwell, the newly appointed US Secretary of Health and Human Services, on the morning of June 24 (local time, Washington DC). The purpose of the meeting would be to evaluate the progress of the US-India Health Initiative which was launched in 2010.

“We are on the threshold of exciting possibilities. I am looking forward to talks seeking collaboration on global health security, telehealth and preventive healthcare,” Dr Harsh Vardhan said.

Later in the day, the Minister would 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 the Indian government, USAID, UNICEF and other lead partners in creating an AIDS-free generation. It also aims to achieve a TB-free India and reaching Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

It may be pointed out here that USAID has recently launched the “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 of the new government, this meeting would explore the potential to expand existing technical collaboration.”

Health Ministers’ Summit

On the second anniversary of the India-US-Ethiopia initiative to launch the 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 as many countries will be attending the meeting. Dr Harsh Vardhan will be delivering the keynote address highlighting the global vision for preventable child and maternal deaths.

The Minister reiterated that the summit's outcome would have a bearing on the new government's actionable strategies for saving the lives of mothers and children in the country. "I have already given a call to professionals in public health to strive to beat the target dates. I hope to gain insight into the good work done by other countries through my interaction with their health ministers," he said.

Atlanta conference

At the conclusion of his Washington meetings, Dr Harsh Vardhan will go to Atlanta, Georgia where he will visit the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Already an agreement of cooperation exists between CDC and the 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 programme and quality assurance. In addition, there exists 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 Thomas R.Frieden, Director of CDC on the progress of the collaboration and new areas of cooperation in the future.

AAPI Convention

On June 28, Dr Harsh Vardhan will deliver the keynote address at the 32nd Annual Convention of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) to be held in San Antonio, Texas.

AAPI is the largest forum of ethnic medical professionals in the United States with 138 local chapters, speciality societies and alumni associations. It assists Indian doctors in the country to achieve excellence in treatment methods, training and research. In January 2013, Mr Modi, in his capacity as Chief Minister of Gujarat, addressed the Indo-US Health Summit organized by AAPI held in the state.

At the inauguration of the AAPI meet, a message from Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be played before the audience. Dr Harsh Vardhan will be delivering a keynote address titled "2020 Vision for Healthcare in India". A new web portal, "Swastha India", a joint-initiative of AAPI and Government of India, will be launched at the event.

"Our government is exploring more avenues for engaging AAPI in areas like research, skill development and strengthening healthcare in India. The Prime Minister is already engaged with AAPI and this high level association will be pursued to achieve health outcomes on the ground", Dr Harsh Vardhan added.

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