

My colleague Shri J. P. Nadda, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India, Shri. Kesetebirhan Admasu, Minister of Health, Govt. of Ethiopia, Hon'ble Ministers from participating countries, representatives of Development Partners, friends from the civil society, the private sector, media, academia, national and international speakers and esteemed delegates. On behalf of my Government and all the co-hosts for this international summit, I warmly welcome you to the Global Call to Action Summit 2015. This is a landmark occasion, as for the first time, the Global Call to Action Summit is being held outside USA. My Government is honoured to host this Summit. All those delegates who have travelled a long distance to attend this Summit – I heartily welcome you to India and to New Delhi. I am delighted to be with you this morning.

This two-day Summit, celebrating the achievements of the participating countries in the area of Maternal and Child Health, was conceptualized to accelerate joint leadership for ending preventable deaths among mothers and children. It will showcase the power of new partnerships, innovations and systems to bring about improvements in life-saving interventions. I firmly believe that this Summit will provide a highly effective platform to address common challenges that will help us achieve the desired goals.

How we shape the world in the next 15 years will make the difference between prosperous, optimistic nations, and insecurity and unrest. I am glad to see 24 nations present here to join together in their commitment to end preventable maternal and child death. This is a “Call to Action” to all of us to seize this opportunity and think big.

Today, as we gather here to discuss strategies and as we transit from the Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals, let us acknowledge the sad reality that the world continues to lose about 289 thousand mothers and 6.3 million under-5 children every year. The 24 priority countries participating in the Summit contribute nearly 70% of the preventable maternal and child deaths. For India, with its birth cohort of 26 million, the challenges are formidable but the commitment to succeed is also as strong. What, however, does offer hope is that most of these deaths can be prevented through simple yet effective and proven interventions. This forms the key peg for this Summit. This also formed a crucial part of the joint statement issued subsequent to the visit of the US President in January this year, where we agreed to further accelerate

the joint leadership to end all preventable maternal and child deaths.

Keeping aside the work that still needs to be done, there have been significant achievements on the global front in the area of maternal and child health. Looking at the big picture, we find that in 1990, India's under-five mortality rate stood at 126 while the global average was 90. In 2013, this figure dropped to 49 against a global average of 46. Therefore, the gap to the global average reduced from 36 points in 1990, to just 3 points in 2013 reflecting that India has achieved under-five mortality rate decline at an accelerated pace compared to global rate of decline. What this translates into is this: India is likely to reach close to achieving the MDG target if the current trend of annual decline is sustained. In addition to this remarkable achievement, another truly historic accomplishment has been the victory over Polio. India was declared as "Polio-Free" on 27 March 2014. From being a country which accounted for more than half of the global polio cases in 2009, to being declared free of the wild polio virus: the journey reflects India's deep commitment to child health.

I am also happy to share with you today another major milestone achieved by India. India has eliminated maternal and neonatal tetanus. The validation for this has happened much before the global target date of December 2015. This gives us the confidence to achieve other targets well before the target date.

To sustain the efforts of being a Polio-free and maternal and neonatal tetanus free nation, and to accelerate the full immunization coverage in the country, my Government has added to the world's largest immunization drive another mission known as "*Mission Indradhanush*". It focusses on vaccinating the left-outs. It also targets to accelerate the current increase in annual rate of immunization from existing 1% to more than 5% per year. This will help us achieve more than 90% coverage by 2020, which otherwise would take more than 25 years at the current pace. The first phase has been successfully implemented. We want to ensure that no child in India dies of a vaccine-preventable disease.

India has always partnered with the global efforts on issues of child and maternal health. India is the first country to respond to the global commitment to reduce newborn mortality, subsequent to the launch of Global Every Newborn Action Plan (ENAP) at the World Health Assembly in June 2014. India launched the India Newborn Action Plan (INAP) in September 2014, targeting reduction in Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR) and still births to single digit by 2030.

India also responded by acting on the first “Call to Action” through its commitment and launch of RMNCH+A.

These remarkable successes in the field of maternal and child health have been possible through our National Health Mission (NHM). The Mission, with its urban and rural health components – perhaps one of the largest public health programmes in the world – has resulted in improved health outcomes. 52% of India’s under-5 mortality is contributed to by deaths of newborns in the first month of life. Under the NHM, our approach emphasises a continuum of newborn care both at the community and facility level.

Our focus has been to get pregnant women to have safe delivery in our institutions. We launched an ambitious program – *Janani Suraksha Yojana* (JSY) – wherein incentives were given for delivering in public institutions to the beneficiaries directly. As a result, today, more than 75% of the deliveries take place in our institutions. This has directly contributed to reduction in maternal mortality. We are fully aware that out-of-pocket expenses remain a key barrier for women to access timely health care and services. To overcome this, we have launched a programme called *Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram* (JSSK) under which every woman delivering in a public health institution as well as the newborn is entitled to free and cashless health services, with an assured provision of free drugs, diagnostics and diet besides free to and fro transport. This has helped to further improve our institutional deliveries.

Not only are the mothers provided focused health services, but individual beneficiary tracking is being done through the countrywide Maternal and Child Health Tracking System, which ensures close tracking of inputs and outputs at the level of service provision. More than 92 million mothers and 78 million children have already been registered so far in the system.

One of our major concerns is equity. As a step towards ensuring equitable health services across regions that suffer from intra-state disparities, and to bring about sharper improvements in health outcomes, a total of 184 poorest performing districts all over the country have been identified. Special efforts are being made to put in more resources and focussed programmes in these areas.

One of the flagship programmes of my Government is the ‘*Swacch Bharat Abhiyaan*’ (The Clean India Campaign) . As a part of this large campaign, the Health Ministry has launched the *Kayakalp* scheme to encourage public health facilities to maintain high standards of

hygiene and sanitation, as I firmly believe that clean and hygienic environment is the stepping stone to a healthy nation. To save and educate the girl child we have launched an ambitious program – *Beti bachao Beti padhao*. We need to ensure that the girl child survives, thrives and plays a very crucial role in society.

I have witnessed people getting poorer because of unfortunate health episodes. We need to institutionalise a system where marginalised communities receive universal health care and financial protection. We must experiment and learn from each other. India stands ready to boost its commitment and partner with other countries and move forward on our promise to end maternal and child deaths and provide a better life to the adolescent. I invite you, to commit to bold measures and hold each other accountable to these promises.

As we assemble here, we need to send a very very strong message not only to ourselves, not only to the 24 countries present here, but to the entire world. The message is of our commitment, that we will ensure that every woman, every child who can be saved will be saved. We also need to make a clarion call to the world to join hands in taking such steps that would ensure this. India stands committed to not only allocate resources towards this in our country, but also to help the world and all those countries which needed any support. It is my personal vision and my Government's firm commitment.

While every country present here has something to offer, India also has a wealth of experience. India has done well in many ways and would be extremely happy to share its experience with other countries. Last year, I had made a commitment of assisting the SAARC countries in keeping it Polio free. We have also made a commitment to provide Pentavalent vaccines to such SAARC countries as would need it. We will offer whatever experience we have to the world community.

India would be happy to assist any country with technology, system strengthening and programme implementation capsules. We could train personnel and skill them for better management of child sickness in our Special Newborn Care Units (SNCUs) as well as share our experience at home based new born care. India's rich experience in Universal immunization and particularly its experience this year with the *Mission Indradhanush* could be shared with all the countries. We had offered this to SAARC countries earlier. Today I repeat this offer to all countries present here. This will be apart from our offer of support for Polio eradication.

I again warmly welcome you all to this important international Summit. I hope the next two days would provide a new direction to the global community in its journey towards ending maternal and child deaths.

I wish you a pleasant stay in New Delhi.

Thank you very much. Jai Hind!