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India, Asian Development Bank to set up climate change and health hub in Delhi

Hub to facilitate knowledge sharing, partnerships, innovations, help developing countries; infectious diseases and natural disasters driven by climate change to challenge health systems, says India's G-20 document

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BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN

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India is now all set to open a climate change and health hub in the national capital in partnership with the Asian Development Bank | representative image of climate change | Photo Credit: AFP

Having bagged the first WHO Centre for Global Traditional Medicine, to be set up in Gujarat, India is now all set to open a climate change and health hub in the national capital in partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The World Health Organisation (WHO) outpost in Jamnagar will aim to provide leadership on global health matters pertaining to traditional medicine; ensure the quality, safety, efficacy, accessibility, and rational use of traditional medicine; develop norms, standards, and guidelines in relevant technical areas; and develop tools and methodologies for data collection and analytics. The new hub for climate change and health will facilitate knowledge sharing, promote partnerships and innovations, and also help countries beyond the G-20, especially developing countries.

‘Need to pool resources’

“Climate change affects all of us and this centre will give us the opportunity to have different partners discussing this important issue and learning from each other,” a senior Health Ministry official said. “The world is facing new challenges, and we must pool in our resources, learning and innovations to tackle the fall-out of this change in a timely manner.”

In its recently released G-20 outcome document, India also noted that climate change will continue to drive health emergencies, including the emergence and re-emergence of infectious diseases, and by increasing the severity and frequency of natural disasters, thereby threatening to overwhelm health systems’ ability to deliver essential services.

“As such, we recognize the need to enhance the resilience of health systems against the impact of climate change. We commit to prioritizing climate-resilient health systems development, building sustainable and low-carbon/low greenhouse gas (GHG) emission health systems and healthcare supply chains that deliver high-quality healthcare, mobilize resources for resilient, low-carbon sustainable health systems, and facilitate collaboration, including initiatives such as the WHO-led Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH),” the document noted.

Emerging infectious diseases

At the G-20 Health Ministers' meet that concluded recently, senior officials had also expressed their concern about the rising cases of zoonotic spill overs, and consequently emerging and re-emerging diseases.

India and other countries have acknowledged the need to identify new drivers and address the existing drivers using a science and risk-based approach, and to strengthen existing infectious disease surveillance systems.

G-20 countries have also welcomed the work of the International Pathogen Surveillance Network, and the opportunity to work closely with the WHO Hub for Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence and its endeavour to globally expand communities of practice and establish knowledge exchange programmes that disseminate and share good practices.



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