

India pledges \$2 B to strengthen all levels of care in response to COVID-19

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In a huge effort to restore crumbling services for women, newborns, children and adolescents, a group of high income, low- and middle-income countries and foundations are making pledges of \$20.6 billion to protect this group. \$6.6 billion (32%) of the total pledge is from money committed by low and middle-income countries themselves, including Afghanistan, India, Kenya, Liberia, and Nigeria.

An additional \$14 billion (68%) is from official development assistance and grants given by Germany, Canada, Sweden, UK, the USA, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. India Commitment – \$2 billion during 2020-2021 to strengthen all levels of care in response to the pandemic and to ensure essential public health functions with an enhanced focus on women, children and adolescents and the most vulnerable.

The COVID-19 pandemic is threatening three decades of improvement in health and social services for women, newborns, children, and adolescents. The well-being of this vulnerable group is being more affected than others due to disruptions to essential health, nutrition and social services since the pandemic, according to senior health experts at The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH), a global alliance of more than 1,000 organizations, hosted by the World Health Organization (WHO).

PMNCH has issued a 7-point call to action in response to the devastating effects of COVID-19 on the health and well-being of women, children, and adolescents. It calls on leaders to protect and prioritize their rights and health during the COVID-19 response and recovery by strengthening political commitment, policies and financing for vital health services and social protections, particularly for the most vulnerable. Countries have responded to this call with financial and policy commitments to prevent the COVID-19 pandemic from becoming a lasting crisis.

The commitments will be launched on December 11 at “Lives in the Balance”, a global online summit to take stock of how COVID-19 is impacting the progress towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC). The event, co-hosted with PMNCH with UHC 2030 and the CORE Group, is held on the eve of UHC Day on December 12.

Recent WHO data from 105 countries show that 90 percent of countries have experienced disruptions to health services, with low- and middle-income countries reporting the greatest difficulties.

Some of the most frequently disrupted services include those related to: immunization services (facility-based services: 61 percent and outreach facilities: 70 percent,) and family planning and contraception services: 68 percent.