

APAC to build resilient health system with UHC

17 September 2020 | News

WHO, the Government of Japan and the Asian Development Bank to discuss ways to accelerate UHC



Ministers of Health and Finance from Asia Pacific countries, including from the WHO South-East Asia Region have recently committed to build and finance resilient health systems with Universal Health Coverage at the centre of it.

Health and Finance Ministers from the Asia Pacific Region met at a virtual meeting organized by WHO, the Government of Japan and the Asian Development Bank to discuss ways and means to accelerate universal health coverage (UHC) or health for all and mobilize financing for healthcare amidst and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

The WHO South-East Asia Region has adopted two key ministerial declarations on building resilient health systems, the 2019 Delhi Declaration on Preparedness and last week the Region's Declaration on Collective Response to COVID-19. Both these declarations commit to investing in preparedness and Regional solidarity to make health systems stronger amongst the 11 Member countries.

Bhutan, strongly committed to UHC, has one of the world's highest testing rates and as of September 17, is yet to report a COVID-19 death. Countries in the Region with a strong primary health care infrastructure and human resources have been able to repurpose health workers and respond to the pandemic as well as ensuring continuity of essential health services. Sri Lanka with one of the highest numbers of health workers in Asia has reported only 13 deaths due to COVID to date.