

WHO appoints Saima Hossain its Goodwill Ambassador for Autism in South-East Asia region

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Autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders are life-long disabilities that affect brain functioning, and when left without proper support can cause significant impairment.



Saima Wazed Hossain, a globally renowned champion for the cause of autism spectrum disorder, has been appointed as WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Autism in South-East Asia Region.

“Hossain’s passionate and persistent efforts for addressing autism are commendable. She has been making significant contributions towards creating awareness and generating action to address and elevate sufferings of people affected by autism,” Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director for WHO South-East Asia, said, announcing extension of Hossain’s association with WHO, now as a Goodwill Ambassador for a two-year period.

In the last one year, championing for the cause of autism for WHO, Hossain facilitated the ‘Thimphu Declaration’ on autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders at an international conference in Bhutan in April 2017. The declaration calls for a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach, with a focus on strengthening national capacities in health, education and social care sectors to provide effective services and support to people with autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders.

Dr Khetrapal Singh further informed that as WHO Goodwill Ambassador, Saima Hossain will be promoting the Thimphu declaration which also emphasizes on integrating the needs of autism affected people, into national health and socioeconomic development plans.

Autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders are life-long disabilities that affect brain functioning, and when left without proper support can cause significant impairment in exercising of an individual’s human rights and fundamental freedoms.

“With Hossain’s efforts and support, WHO aims to put autism high on the health agenda of countries in the Region, to address this public health challenge,” Dr Khetrapal Singh said.