

**India and Norway sign Letter of Intent to extend health cooperation****India and Norway sign Letter of Intent to extend health cooperation**

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India signed a Letter of Intent with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Norway to extend the cooperation within health sector through the Norway India Partnership Initiative (NIPI) for a period of three years starting from 2018, here today. Shri C K Mishra, Secretary (HFW) and His Excellency, Mr. Nils Ragnar Kamsvag, Ambassador of Norway signed this Letter of Intent. Shri Manoj Jhalani, Additional Secretary & Mission Director (AS&MD), Ms. Vandana Gurnani, JS (RCH), Dr. Tore Godal, Special Adviser to Prime Minister of Norway, Dr Maha-noor Khan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway were also present during the signing ceremony.

Through this letter, the cooperation between India and Norway will continue to be aligned with the development goals of the Indian Government as outlined in its National Health Policy 2017 for achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The cooperation shall focus on global health issues of common interest.

The partnership shall also include areas related to reproductive, maternal, new-born, child, adolescent health and health system strengthening, and shall build on experiences from NIPI phase I and II. The cooperation will continue to focus on innovative, catalytic and strategic support, taking the Indian Government's Intensification Plan for Accelerated Maternal and Child Survival in India as the starting point.

The Governments of Norway and India had agreed in 2006 to collaborate towards achieving MDG 4 to reduce child mortality based on commitments made by the two Prime Ministers. The partnership was based on India's health initiative, the National Health Mission (NHM), and aimed at facilitating rapid scale-up of quality child and maternal health services in four high focus states - Bihar, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. The main activities in Phase I (2006-2012) were home-based new born care (HBNC), Yashoda through State health system, establishing Sick Newborn Care Units (SNCU), techno managerial support, and providing strategic support for immunization and Public Private Partnership (PPP) initiatives.

The Governments of India and Norway decided to extend the partnership to coincide with the second phase of National Health Mission plan (NHM) for a period of five years (2013-

17). Besides the four states already supported by NIPI, Jammu & Kashmir was added as a fifth state with NIPI being the lead partner for RMNCH+A activities.

Norway India Partnership Initiative (NIPI) through its work in the last ten years (2007-2017) has resulted in newer initiatives. In addition to trying out innovations, NIPI has also supported NHM by providing credible technical support in the five states and at national level. This has resulted in development and release of multiple policies and guidelines for the NHM.

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