

Government of Pakistan
Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination

PRESS RELEASE

Federal Health Minister Saira Afzal Tarar wins appreciation at Davos – makes a strong case for Pakistan

Islamabad January 29 2017 Accompanying the Prime Minister and participating in technical sessions dedicated to global health, Federal Minister Saira Afzal Tarar won appreciation for her passionate speeches and effective advocacy at the World Economic Forum. She called for inculcating the spirit of togetherness for nations and civil societies across the world to achieve a just and equitable distribution of healthcare across the world.

Health is central to achieving Sustainable Development Goals 2030, she said. Both the public and private sector are an integral part of the vision of achieving SDGs. Without their collaboration success in achieving the SDGs may remain an illusion, she added. Community, academics, research institutes, private companies all have a stake and can make important contributions, the Minister said.

She said there are many places in the world where the basic public health needs to be addressed as a matter of priority rather than promoting activities and interventions that are not well grounded within the local context.

The population of the world is ever increasing, at home in Pakistan we have already crossed 210 million mark and have the fifth largest population in the world. Large populations mean greater expenses. It also means that with rapid advancement in health we are looking at ageing populations that will have specific health needs and requirements in the future. All of this translates into a greater need for financial resources.

Estimates indicate that the low and lower middle income countries need to increase their public and private expenditure on health by an accumulated \$1-\$1.5 trillion in the next 15 years, the Minister said.

In Pakistan we are well cognizant of this fact. The government has pledged to increase health care spending from <1% of GDP to at least 3% of GDP by the next decade. Resource constraints however, mean that we have to prioritize our spending by shaping a future agenda that address gaps and needs in health care delivery whether it is through the public or the private sector.

Technological advancement as played a pivotal role in the exponential growth of modern medicine and its ability to tackle complex health conditions. Technology is on the brink of transforming the way health care will be provided to the people and the way policy decision makers will think about solutions for everyday health problems, the Minister said.

Addressing a session dedicated to Antimicrobial Resistance the Minister said the growing problem of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) has emerged as a major health crisis in almost all countries of the world resulting in an alarming increase in the burden of infections due to multi-resistant bacteria. The Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination considers Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) containment as major priority and has included in its national public health agenda, she said. A National AMR strategic framework has been developed in Pakistan with “One Health” approach. Ministry of NHSRC has developed a National Action Plan for AMR through collaborative efforts of relevant sectors, she said.

Alongwith the Prime Minister, the Minister met Mr. Bill Gates Co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and discussed at length Pakistan’s progress in Polio Eradication alongside collaboration with the foundation in other area of healthcare. . The Minister also addressed a Press Conference alongwith the Prime Minister and elaborated progress achieved in the health sector by Pakistan. The Minister also met alongwith Prime Minister the Chief Executive Officer of Medtronic a leading multinational manufacturer of medical devices.

She had detailed parlays with Arnaud Bernaert the head of Global Health at the World Economic Forum and attended a breakfast meet organized by Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization. She also participated in the Women Leaders dinner and informal gathering of World Economic Forum leaders. END

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