

Maldives, Sri Lanka eliminate measles & rubella ahead of 2023 target

written by iaseexam.com | 09/07/2020



Maldives and Sri Lanka have become the first two countries in the South-East Asia region to eliminate both measles and rubella ahead of the 2023 target. The announcement was made by WHO South-East Asia's Regional Director, Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh after the fifth meeting of the regional verification commission for measles and rubella elimination, held virtually.

Dr. Singh said protecting all children against these killer and debilitating diseases is an important step in endeavor to achieve healthier population and health for all. The Regional Director commended Member countries' efforts to deliver life-saving vaccines to children even while battling the COVID pandemic.

Key Highlights

- A country is verified as having eliminated measles and rubella when there is no evidence of endemic transmission for over three years by a well-performing surveillance system.
- Maldives reported its last endemic case of measles in 2009 and of rubella in October 2015, while Sri Lanka reported last endemic case of measles in May 2016 and of rubella in March 2017.
- Member countries of WHO South-East Asia region had set 2023 as the target for elimination of measles and rubella. Bhutan, DPR Korea and Timor-Leste are other countries in the region who have eliminated measles.
- First-dose coverage of measles vaccine is now 88% and second-dose coverage 76% in the region, WHO said. Since 2017, nearly 500 million more children in the region have been

vaccinated for measles and rubella, it said.

About Rubella and Measles

Measles is a highly contagious infectious disease caused by measles virus. Symptoms usually develop 10–12 days after exposure to an infected person and last 7–10 days. Initial symptoms typically include fever, often greater than 40 °C (104 °F), cough, runny nose, and inflamed eyes. Small white spots known as Koplik's spots may form inside the mouth two or three days after the start of symptoms.

Rubella, also known as German measles or three-day measles, is an infection caused by the rubella virus. This disease is often mild with half of people not realizing that they are infected. A rash may start around two weeks after exposure and last for three days. It usually starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body. The rash is sometimes itchy and is not as bright as that of measles.

SOURCE: The Hindu, Medical Express