

WHO calls for stronger collective efforts to curtail COVID-19

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With the increase in COVID-19 cases in most countries of WHO South-East Asia Region, World Health Organization has called for stronger collective efforts by one and all to curtail the virus transmission; while also urging countries to plan for the efficient roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines as soon as they are available.

“Like the rest of the world, the Region continues to be at risk. To stop the spread of COVID-19 virus, we need to do it all – continued strong leadership; robust public health measures; clear communication and an engaged, empowered and enabled population - to turn the tide,” said Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia Region.

In a communication to the Member countries, the Regional Director said, the global race for COVID-19 vaccine has gathered momentum. In anticipation of the development of a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine, countries should be prepared with an efficient and coordinated strategy and plan for roll-out of vaccination.

Vaccine availability is likely to be limited initially, hence will be important to clearly identify goals of national vaccination strategy, she added.

In the spirit of promoting fair and equitable access to the vaccines across all countries, WHO is proposing that countries prioritize at-risk population as they develop in-country vaccination strategies. Available vaccines should first be provided to priority populations and then expanded to others.