Every child has the right to immunization

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New Delhi, April 29, 2017: According to statistics, about 19.4 million children over the world are unvaccinated or under-vaccinated. Of these, about 11.5 million live in 10 countries: Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Ukraine. It is estimated that about 3 million deaths can be prevented annually through Immunization, which is one of the world's most successful and cost-effective health interventions. The theme for this year’s World Immunization Week focuses on the adage "Vaccines Work". The theme has been taken up to promote the use of vaccines in order to protect people of all ages from various diseases.

As per the United Nations health agency, vaccinations helps in staving off 26 potentially deadly diseases. This year, the World Immunization Week also marks the halfway point of the UN's goal to stop millions of deaths from vaccine-preventable diseases. Speaking on this, Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and Dr R N Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA in a joint statement, said "Immunization is the building block of a strong and sustainable primary health care system and universal health coverage. With the development of new vaccines today, more and more number of people, children in particular, can be protected against many debilitating diseases. However, the mere availability of vaccines does not mean that they are reaching every child in every part of the world. On this World Immunization Week, it is time to align ourselves to the larger goal of reaffirming our global commitment to children’s health and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030."

According to WHO, the fact that the target of 194 countries which signed the global action plan to eliminate vaccine-preventable diseases by 2020, is running behind schedule, should serve as a wake-up call for immediate action. Among the preventable diseases are measles, rubella, and maternal and neonatal tetanus. A more concentrated effort is needed towards achieving the target.

Adding further, Dr Aggarwal, said, "It is unfair to deny any child the right to immunization because of social or economic reasons. If the countries come together and act in unison towards achieving this goal, all barriers can be overcome."
Thousands of events and activities are also being organized around the world as part of the World Immunization Week. WHO has also created a network of validated vaccine safety websites called Vaccine Safety Net, which provides accurate and reliable information about vaccines.

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**About IMA:** Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarter in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2, 60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

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