



With breaking stories and
newswire products from

UN NEWS CENTRE



Lauding India's progress on health, UN chief highlights need to do more



Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon (left) meets with Satya Paul Agarwal, Secretary-General of the Indian Red Cross Society, in New Delhi. UN Photo/Mark Garten

26 April 2012 –

[Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon kicked off his visit to India today by commending the country's progress on health, while highlighting the need to do more to promote the well-being of women and children.

In his meeting with the Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Ghulam Nazi Azad, in New Delhi, Mr. Ban took note of India's continued efforts towards achieving universal health coverage.

He also noted that more than a year has passed since the country has seen a case of polio. In January, the UN World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) reported that, with no registered polio cases over the past year, India – once regarded as the world's epicentre for polio – is on course to becoming free of the disease.

In addition, Mr. Ban noted the importance of doing more to improve women's and children's health, and commended India's commitment to the Global Strategy on Women's and Children's Health and its innovative programmes in this area.

Launched by the Secretary-General in 2010, the Global Strategy is a \$40 billion programme that is expected to prevent, between 2011 and 2015, the deaths of more than 15 million children under five, as well as 33 million unwanted pregnancies and the deaths of 740,000 women from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth.

While in the capital, Mr. Ban also met with the Secretary-General of the Indian Red Cross Society, Satya Paul Agarwal, and commended the agency's important role in promoting humanitarian principles and in undertaking life-saving action.

The pair also discussed the organization's cooperation with the international community, with Mr. Ban encouraging the Red Cross Society to share its best practices in disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response.

Tomorrow, the UN chief is expected to meet with several senior Indian Government officials, as well as receive an honorary doctorate degree from Jamia Islamia University. He will then visit the commercial hub of Mumbai, where he will meet with government officials and key business leaders committed to utilizing their expertise to promote the health of women and children.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[India on track to become polio-free, says UN health agency](#)