



Helping Myanmar Advance towards Universal Health Coverage: Maternal and Child Healthcare to Expand with New World Bank Financing

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The Government of Myanmar today signed a new agreement with the World Bank to bring improved maternal, newborn and child healthcare to millions of mothers and their young children. The Essential Health Services Access Project will provide US\$100 million in funding for increased and improved coverage of critical health services across Myanmar's 330 townships. The project - initially approved by the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors in October 2014 - is expected to benefit more than 4 million pregnant women and young children. "We are pleased to be able to invest in quality health services for all people in Myanmar. Better health services will improve the quality of life for mothers and their young children, and, ultimately, will help bring us closer to achieving the ambitious goal of universal health coverage," said Dr. Thein Thein Htay, Deputy Minister, Myanmar Ministry of Health. Under the project, communities will receive grants for health services at the local level and support for implementing inclusive planning, resource management, improved local oversight and community engagement. For rural health centers, the grants might allow basic health staff, like midwives, to make more frequent visits to the homes of pregnant women, infants, and young children to provide needed care, ensure timely immunizations, and to give families nutrition and hygiene education. "Good maternal, newborn and child healthcare is critical for Myanmar. This project will help bring more and better essential health services to Myanmar mothers and children," said Mr. Ulrich Zachau, World Bank Country Director for Southeast Asia. "The World Bank Group warmly welcomes Myanmar's goal and programs to achieve universal health coverage, and we are pleased to offer our strong support for this project." The project is supported with credit from the International Development Association (IDA), the World Bank Group's fund for the world's poorest countries. This support for Myanmar's move toward universal health coverage is part of the World Bank Group's US\$2 billion multi-year development package announced by World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim during his visit to Myanmar in early 2014. The World Bank Group, in close coordination with development partners, is working with Myanmar on a new Country Partnership Framework, which will help improve agriculture, water, access to education and health, energy, and finance, as well as public financial management, private sector development, and other key development priorities. Media Contacts
In Yangon
Kyaw Soe Lynn
Tel : +95 9 203 1159
klynn@worldbank.org
Meriem Gray
Tel : +959 421128395
mgray@worldbank.org
In Washington
Carl Hanlon
chanlon@worldbank.org

Pressekontakt

The World Bank

DC 20433 Washington

Firmenkontakt

The World Bank

DC 20433 Washington

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