

Indo-US Joint Program on Environmental and Occupational Health.

The Indo-US Joint Statement on Environmental and Occupational Health between the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare of the Republic of India and the Department of Health and Human Services of United States of America was renewed in June 2015 after its initial signing in 2002 and 2007. Further renewal has been signed by the Secy, DHR and the Ambassador, USA for another 5 years w.e.f. from June 2015. This program aims to facilitate collaboration between Indian and US scientists on environmental and occupational health programs, including identification, monitoring and prevention of diseases caused by environmental and occupational factors. For implementation of activities, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has been identified as the nodal agency on behalf of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, India and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) as the US nodal agencies on behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services, USA. The first meeting of Joint Working Group was held in February 2016 along with the associated science session on Air Pollution and Health. The Joint Working Group recommended initiating training and capacity building needs of relevant personnel.; develop research plan with initial focus on Indoor and Outdoor Air Pollution. Other identified areas are: water/ground water contamination/sanitation; metals and other toxic substances; climate change, environment health research, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseases and respiratory diseases. The 2nd Joint Working Group Meeting was held on 13th April 2017 at Centre for Disease Control, Atlanta along with scientific meeting with specific themes on (i) Air Pollution and (ii) Bio-monitoring. The deliberations followed by discussions resulted in proposed collaborative projects. The possibility of training in environmental and biomonitoring was also discussed. The team visited the laboratory facilities at CDC, Atlanta viz: analysis of samples for heavy metals, tobacco testing laboratories, along with bio-monitoring and environmental monitoring and was apprised of emergency response preparedness facility at CDC.