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## National Symposium on Lymphatic Filariasis

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A day long National Symposium on the theme '**United to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis**' was inaugurated by Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare.

The Union Minister also signed the '**Call to Action to eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis by 2021**'.

### Lymphatic Filariasis

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- Lymphatic filariasis, commonly known as **elephantiasis** and is considered as a **neglected tropical disease**.
- It impairs the lymphatic system and can lead to the abnormal enlargement of body parts, causing pain, severe disability and social stigma.
- Lymphatic filariasis is a **vector-borne disease**, caused by infection with **parasites** classified as **nematodes (roundworms)** of the family **Filariodidea**. There are 3 types of thread-like filarial worms which causes lymphatic filariasis:
  - **Wuchereria Bancrofti** is responsible for 90% of the cases.
  - **Brugia Malayi** causes most of the remainder of the cases.
  - **Brugia Timori** also causes the disease.

### India's Initiative

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- The Government launched the **Accelerated Plan for Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis (APELF) in 2018**, as part of intensifying efforts towards its elimination.
- It has adopted a twin pillar strategy - **prevention through Mass Drug Administration (MDA) using a combination of 2 anti-filarial drugs (DEC and Albendazole)** and providing **Morbidity Management and Disability Prevention (MMDP)** services to those affected by the disease.
- The government is ready to scale-up the use of **Triple Drug Therapy (IDA)** in a phased manner starting from December 2019.

### Global Programme to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (GPELF)

- The **World Health Organisation (WHO)** launched its Global Programme to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (GPELF) in 2000.  
In 2012, the WHO neglected tropical diseases roadmap reconfirmed the target date for achieving elimination by 2020.
- The GPELF aims to provide access to a minimum package of care for every person with associated chronic manifestations of lymphatic filariasis in all areas where the disease is present, thus alleviating suffering and promoting improvement in their quality of life.

**Source: PIB**