About the Lecture Series:

"Frontiers in Public Health" is a public lecture series organized jointly by the National Institute of Health and family Welfare (NIHFW) and the National Health Systems Resource Center (NHSRC) on the first Friday of every month, between 3.00 pm to 5.00 pm. Each month, a leading exponent in a particular knowledge domain pertaining to health systems or public health is invited to speak on the advances and challenges in that particular area of knowledge. Begun in August, 2012, six public lectures have been held so far. Topics include: Health Technology Assessment, Community Based Approaches to Mental Health, Epidemiological Basis underlying Design of Disease Control Strategies, Communication Challenges for Nutrition, Experiences from Australia and Indonesia in Quality and Accreditation.

The lectures draw an audience not just of health professionals from NIHFW and NHSRC, but a substantial and increasing number of academicians, implementers and consultants from public health institutions, technical support agencies and departments in Delhi. Every one of these lectures is educative and thought provoking. They provide an opportunity for informal interaction between the audience over tea after the lecture.

The seventh lecture in this series (March 2013) is on “Measuring and Monitoring Progress towards Universal Health Care” and our guest speaker is Dr. Ties Jan Boerma, (Director, Department of Measurement and Health Information System, World Health Organization). This lecture will be chaired by Shri Keshav Desiraju, Secretary MOHFW.

About The Speaker:
Dr Ties Boerma, MD, PhD, has 20 years of experience working in public health and research programmes in developing countries, including 10 years at national and districts levels in Africa. He has worked for different United Nations organizations, national governments and research institutions. He has published extensively on AIDS, maternal and child health in epidemiological, demographic, and public health journals. A national of the Netherlands, Dr Boerma received his degree in medicine from the University of Groningen, and a PhD in bio-demography from the University of Amsterdam.

About the Topic:
The measurement of progress towards UHC is now an important national and international concern. International health institutions are charged with measuring and projecting country progress towards UHC. We need to know the basis of these measurements. In our context, the twelfth plan has proposed UHC as the major strategy and therefore both the Ministry and the Planning Commission would seek to measure where we are and where we hope be at the end of the plan period. It would also be important to come to a consensus on approach to measurement before we launch district level pilots on UHC. A consensus on measurements would also provide considerable operational clarity on what UHC is and what the measures of achievement of a pilot are expected to be, before such pilots are launched. It would allow us to estimate financial needs for scaling up the learning from pilot programmes.

The Department of Measurement and Health Information System of WHO is charged with measuring progress towards UHC at the international level, and it would be important for the audience here to learn what is the current international thinking and the state of the art in such measurement.