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Nilekanis donate half of wealth to philanthropy

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Nandan Nilekani (Photo: Facebook)

Infosys co-founder and Non-Executive Chairman Nandan Nilekani and his wife Rohini Nilekani have pledged to donate half of their wealth to philanthropy.

The Nilekanis had announced their decision to donate their wealth through a letter on November 8 that was put up on the website of 'The Giving Pledge'.

Nandan Nilekani, who was also the Chairman of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), the world's largest digital identity project launched by India in 2009, has his net worth pegged at about \$1.7 billion as of 2017.

The Giving Pledge is a campaign founded in 2010 by Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist Bill Gates, his wife Melinda Gates, along with American business magnate and investor Warren Buffett that invites the billionaires to donate a majority of their wealth to philanthropy.

"Wealth comes with huge responsibility and is best deployed for the larger public interest," Nilekanis had written in the letter.

Inequality was increasing "sharply" in most countries and the politics of polarisation was "growing", they wrote.

"We thank Bill and Melinda for creating this unique opportunity for so many people to realise a moral aspiration inspired by the Bhagavad Gita – "Karmanye va dhikaraste ma phaleshu kadachana, ma karma phalaheturbhurma the sangostvakarmani (You have the right to work but never to its fruits. Let not the fruits of action be your motive, nor let your attachment be to inaction)," they wrote.

Gates responded to the Nilekanis' pledge saying he was "amazed" by their passion to philanthropy.

"I'm amazed by how Nandan Nilekani has lent his entrepreneurial passion to philanthropy. I'm delighted to welcome him and his wife Rohini to The Giving Pledge," Gates had tweeted.

Rohini, the founder and chairperson of Arghyam, a city-based charitable foundation that works for sustainable water management, has been working on several social development-related projects.

Nilekanis had together also founded EkStep Foundation to make education accessible to every child in India.

With Nilekanis, the campaign currently has a total of 171 pledgers from 21 countries, including Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Facebook Mark Zuckerberg and his wife Priscilla Chan, Saudi Arabian billionaire investor Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Alsaud.

The campaign also has other Indian billionaires like Wipro Chairman Azim Premji, Biocon Limited Chairman and Managing Director Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw pledging to donate part of their wealth towards philanthropic causes.

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