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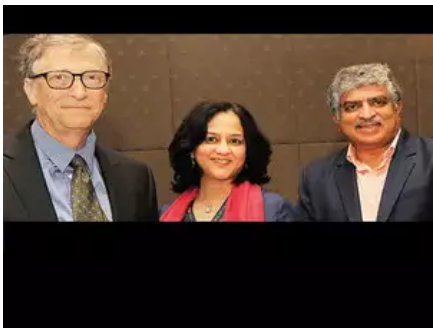
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# Nilekanis join Bill Gates at philanthropy high table

ET Bureau | Updated: Nov 20, 2017, 12.25 AM IST

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Bill Gates with Rohini Nilekani and Nandan Nilekani

By Anand Mahadevan and Archana Rai

BENGALURU: In a reflection of the growing enlightenment about philanthropy among India's rising tribe of billionaires, Infosys BSE -0.79 % chairman Nandan Nilekani and wife Rohini have signed the Giving Pledge pioneered by Bill Gates and Warren Buffett.

Signatories to the initiative commit to give away at least half of their wealth either in their lifetime or through their will.

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The only other Indians to have signed the Giving Pledge are Azim Premji of Wipro BSE 0.49 %, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw of Biocon and PNC Menon of Sobha Developers

BSE 1.64 %

### Creating Sustainable Change

"Wealth comes with a huge responsibility and is best deployed for the larger public interest," Nandan and Rohini wrote in their pledge.

"We have been doing philanthropy for almost 20 years. But signing the Giving Pledge helps us join many people who are coming together and thinking about how to solve the world's large problems," they told ET in an exclusive interaction along with Bill Gates.

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The Nilekani fortune is estimated to be about \$1.7 billion, much of it coming from the family's 2% shareholding in Infosys. Nandan Nilekani co-founded Infosys along with NR Narayana Murthy and others.

"Nandan and Rohini are not only a great example of generosity, they are also putting their time and energy into philanthropy. A lot of stuff they are doing is very catalytic," Bill Gates told ET. "Philanthropy is tough. It forces you to think about your death. It requires a family to get to a certain point where they feel that giving makes sense for them. 171 people have signed the Giving Pledge. This is way beyond what we thought we would ever achieve."

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signed the Giving Pledge. This is way beyond what we thought we would ever achieve, Gates added.

Gates and Buffett announced and signed the pledge with about 40 global billionaires in 2010. Since then, they have also been evangelising philanthropy, encouraging many more to give away a majority of their fortune to fight poverty and promote equitable growth.

The Nilekanis believe that while India's super-wealthy are experiencing a greater desire to donate their wealth to charitable causes, the ability to create sustainable change with the money is given away is still lagging behind. They hope to direct much of their giving to nurture 'societal platforms' or tech-enabled collaborative initiatives involving the government, entrepreneurs, non-profits and individual citizens.

Signatories to the Giving Pledge are free to direct their philanthropy to causes they feel most drawn to. This is not a legally binding agreement, but just a voluntary and moral commitment.

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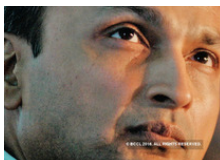
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