

ADDRESS OF

SH. J.P. NADDA

HON'BLE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

AND

HON'BLE CHAIRMAN OF INDIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY

AND

ST. JOHN AMBULANCE (INDIA)

AT

CEREMONIAL SESSION

OF THE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OF

INDIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY AND ST JOHN
AMBULANCE (INDIA)

RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN AUDITORIUM
New Delhi: 18-11-2014 AT 12 NOON.



Honourable President,

Hon'ble Governors,

Shri Dipender Singh Hooda, Vice Chairman of Indian Red Cross Society,

Dr. (Mrs.) Kamla Gidwani, Vice Chairperson of St. John Ambulance (India),

Dr. SP Agarwal, Secretary General, Indian Red Cross Society and St. John Ambulance (India),

Mr. Simon Missiri, Head of the regional delegation of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies,

Ms. Mary Werntz, Head of the regional delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross,

Members of the Managing Body & National Council of the two organizations,

Awardees,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am very pleased to join you here today for the ceremonial session of the annual general meeting of the Indian Red Cross Society and St. John Ambulance (India). First of all, on behalf of the Indian Red Cross Society and St. John Ambulance, I would like to thank the Hon'ble President for agreeing to preside over this ceremonial session of our Annual General Meeting. We are highly honoured by your presence which shows the importance of the work of the Indian Red Cross and St John Association (India) towards building healthier and stronger communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

2. I congratulate all the branches and individuals who are being awarded for their outstanding service today. At the same time, we should also remember the thousands of volunteers who are not here with us, for their selfless and continuous service to their communities and society in general. It is those volunteers who are upholding the name and the values of the Indian Red Cross and the St. John Ambulance (India).



3. At the outset, please allow me to summarise the key achievements of the Indian Red Cross society, particularly since the last annual general meeting.

The Indian Red Cross Society works through 700 branches across the country, and offers a variety of services, ranging from disaster management, health, blood services, vocational training, and maternity and child welfare schemes. Earlier this year, the National Society finalized its Strategic Development Plan for the period 2014 – 2017. This document sets the framework and main priorities with a view to addressing major humanitarian challenges in India, including natural disasters as well as general vulnerability and poverty. The main focus areas for the Indian Red Cross will be:

- Saving lives and building resilient communities;
- Promoting safe and healthy living;
- Promoting social inclusion and a culture of non-violence;

To achieve these goals, the Indian Red Cross Society will continue to rely on its strong volunteer base, and its junior and youth wings, by empowering and enabling the communities, and particularly the young people, to take initiatives in addressing the risks they face and thus improving their lives.

4. Among its health activities, I am proud to report that the Indian Red Cross Society contributes 10% of the total blood collections through its 166 blood banks across the country; more than 90% of these donations are made on a voluntary basis. Its model blood bank at the national headquarters in New Delhi alone collects more than 30000 units of blood annually and serves as many as 900 thalassemia patients as well as government hospitals with blood free of charge.

Besides blood services, the Society is also contributing to the efforts of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare through a number of other health programmes, such as tuberculosis control in 5 States, and a number of health and hygiene promotion activities across the country.



5. The Indian Red Cross and St. John Ambulance are the leading providers of community-based first aid. This year, in cooperation with the Belgian Red Cross, the National Society launched the “Evidence based Indian First Aid Guidelines”, which will further be used to update the First aid manuals used for training first aiders across the country. These guidelines will strengthen the quality of its first aid services. We are proud of this cooperation which is set to continue over the coming years.
6. The frequency and scale of natural disasters affecting our country and the world is growing, and both governmental institutions and civil society need to improve their preparedness in order to protect our people and our economic investments. Our country has demonstrated immense progress in predicting disasters, saving lives and protecting our economy and infrastructure. Complementary to this, the Indian Red Cross Society has been building its

disaster preparedness and response capacity, by training its volunteers, building its relief stocks, and implementing awareness and mitigation activities.

The response to the recent disasters in Jammu and Kashmir and Andhra Pradesh confirmed the positive outcomes of our National Society's efforts, with Red Cross volunteers trained as first medical responders actively engaging in evacuations and immediate assistance in their communities. The First Medical Responders project is the flagship project of the National Society, and is currently implemented in 14 state branches. Volunteers are trained in a variety of disaster response skills, including first aid, search and rescue, disposal of dead bodies, etc.



Six Red Cross regional warehouses are stocked with essential relief supplies, which are dispatched in times of disasters. In response to Jammu and Kashmir floods, over 5 crore rupees worth of relief supplies were sent from warehouses in Delhi and Arakonnam, thanks to the effective management of disaster preparedness stocks by the Indian Red Cross.

7. To strengthen its organizational capacity in the field of disaster management, the Indian Red Cross Society works in close cooperation with a number of Red Cross/Red Crescent partners, namely the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross, and a number of others. The Society's leadership is also actively engaged with key external institutions, both nationally and internationally, in order to influence the wider agenda and share knowledge and experiences.
8. The St. John Ambulance (India) has been active in the country since 1904. It provides first aid training to approximately 6 lakh people every year. Its brigade wing runs ambulance services with help of thousands of volunteers and they participate in all major events like the Kumbh mela, Puri Rath yatra, Ganga sagar mela and Republic day and Independence day celebrations across the country and in the capital to provide first aid to masses congregating there.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

9. In conclusion, I would like to use this opportunity to thank once again our Hon'ble President for his support to both organizations. His presence in this important event and his inspiring words will encourage us to further build our

organizational capacity, and refine our auxiliary role to the government, for better services to the vulnerable people of this country. I once again congratulate and thank all the branches and volunteers for their commitment and energy in serving their communities.

Thank you and Jai Hind.

Bullet Points:

1. Introducing Remarks
2. Congratulations to Awardees
3. About Indian Red Cross Society and its achievements
4. Health Activities of Indian Red Cross Society since last Annual General Meeting
5. First Aid Trainings (St. John and Red Cross)
6. Disasters and Indian Red Cross Society preparedness & response capacities
7. Indian Red Cross Society cooperation with movement partners
8. About St. John Ambulance (India)
9. Conclusion