

**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

**BUSINESS SESSION**

OF THE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OF

INDIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY AND ST JOHN  
AMBULANCE (INDIA)

DRDO BHAVAN, NEW DELHI

18<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2014



Hon'ble Governors,

Shri Deepender 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),

Dear Awardees, Observers, Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I would like to start by again joining all my fellow Indian Red Cross and St John Ambulance (India) members and volunteers in extending grateful thanks to the Hon'ble President for taking time out from his busy schedule and

agreeing to host the Ceremonial session of the Annual General Meeting of both these organisations again in the Rashtrapati Bhavan auditorium as well, which shows his keen interest in our humanitarian activities.

2. Today a number of the volunteers and members as well as the branches of the two organisations have received awards from the Hon'ble President, as recognition for having excelled in various individual and combined efforts. These awardees will, I am sure guide and encourage others to also embark on the sometimes difficult but rewarding path of humanitarian service for which Indians have been known since times immemorial. Volunteers are the most important component of the two organisations. The majority of them are young people and as they follow the path of humanitarian service on the principles enshrined in the constitution of both Indian Red Cross and St John Ambulance (India), I feel confident that the future of the country is in safe hands.
3. In the ceremonial session, I had presented in brief some of the most important achievements of both organizations since the last general body meeting held in May 2013. In these two years, India, which is one of the most disaster prone countries in the world, has seen several large and medium scale disasters that have affected the lives of millions of vulnerable people. Indian Red Cross Society, through its more than 700 branches across the states and union territories is engaged in multiple activities, ranging from disaster management, blood services, services for disabled, vocational training, and maternity and child welfare schemes.

4. The IRCS headquarters has been able to take forward the First Medical Responders programme to many more states and UTs. In fact now 18 state and UT branches are implementing this programme. Through this programme, IRCS aims to develop a cadre of FMRs in the most vulnerable districts of these state and UTs. FMRs are multi skilled volunteers of the IRCS who belong to the vulnerable communities. Through regular trainings by state and national level trainers these volunteers are able to respond immediately to disasters and support their communities to which they belong. I feel pride in reporting that these FMRs were at the forefront of relief and response activities in Uttarakhand, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, J&K, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Assam etc. following disasters which struck these states in 2013 and this year. Recently these FMRs displayed great initiative following the Flash floods in J&K. Indian Red Cross FMRs and volunteers were at the forefront in distributing this relief as well as establishing tent colonies, search and rescue, providing navigation, psycho social support as well as distributing clean drinking water to the suffering population.

Their efforts have been appreciated by the local government and also the media. Efforts are on to now integrate them with the programmes like Water, Sanitation and Hygiene promotion in inter disaster periods. More than 6500 number of FMRs are present in these states and UT branches, in addition to the 180 instructors and master trainers who provide training to these volunteers.

5. IRCS has also added to the fleet of Water Purification machines. Eight of these have been currently deployed in various locations in J&K and are

providing more than 150,000 litres of clean drinking water daily to the needy population.



6. The IRCS has been able to provide non food relief items like tents, tarpaulins, kitchen sets etc after raising it's own resources during the recent disasters that struck the various other parts of the country.
7. IRCS trains volunteers for **National Disaster Response and National Disaster Water & Sanitation Response Teams** that are deployed to provide specialised service during disasters. Last year we inducted 31 new NDRT members from trainings that were conducted in the Bahadurgarh, Arakonnam and Kolkata warehouses. The trainings laid special emphasis on logistics. In addition, the society's one-year post graduate diploma course on disaster preparedness and rehabilitation in New Delhi affiliated to the Indraprastha University, New

Delhi and has trained approximately 300 qualified disaster managers from 8 batches. The 9<sup>th</sup> batch of the course has been enrolled and has started classes. The society also runs a popular Certificate course in Health Promotion through Ayurveda and Yoga in collaboration with the Deptt. of AYUSH that has completed 15 batches.

8. I congratulate Dr. S.P. Agarwal, Secretary General who due to his background, interest and expertise has triggered many initiatives in the field of health. The Indian Red Cross Society is contributing 10% of the total blood collections in the country through its 166 blood banks across the country and the model blood bank in New Delhi. More than 90% of these donations are made on a voluntary basis. The blood bank at the NHQ collected 29000 units of whole blood of which approximately 90% was through voluntary donation. More than 85% of the collected blood is given free of charges to patients in government hospitals and to more than 900 thalasemics who form approx 50 % of all thalasemics in Delhi.
9. The Indian Red Cross Society is also complementing the efforts of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare through it's tuberculosis control programme in 5 States. Since last AGM, 1635 patients have been enrolled in the programme. Through this programme, since 2009, Indian Red Cross has been able to bring 3000 patients who are defaulters from the DOTS Therapy back to treatment and ensure that they complete the course. In doing so, at least 500 numbers of patients would have been prevented from conversion to the deadlier MDR TB whose treatment can cost up to Rs. 2 lac per patient, besides there being more morbidity and mortality from it. About 12000 family

members and 3 lac community members have also been benefitted from this programme.

10. The junior and youth wings of the Indian Red Cross Society are present in hundreds of schools and colleges in the country. Junior and Youth Camps have been held across the country, where young people are trained on subjects such as principles of Red Cross, first aid, road safety, climate change, HIV/AIDS education, humanitarian values etc. The members of these wings have participated in diverse community activities like Polio campaign, hygiene promotion campaigns like hand washing, Restoring Family Links in Puri festival and Gangasagar mela etc.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. Indian Red Cross Society, the largest statutory, humanitarian organization in India and St. John Ambulance (India) have a wide reach throughout India including hundreds of state/UT, regional, district and local centres. Both are involved in providing statutory First aid and allied training to professionals. Trainings are also provided to lay people including students in first aid and allied subjects. In addition the St. John Association also provides first aid and ambulance services through its brigade wing.

Since the last AGM, I am informed, the Indian Red Cross and the St John Ambulance has certified about 6 lac professionals and lay persons including students in First Aid so far. I am happy that the Indian Red Cross in collaboration with the Belgian Red Cross has developed the Evidence based Indian First Aid Guidelines which will form the basis for the newer version of the First Aid manual in the near future.

12. The activities of St. John Ambulance (India), with its large number of brigade divisions consisting of thousands of trained volunteers are progressing well. St. John Ambulances' timely intervention in times of accident, religious congregations and rallies are fine examples of selfless service in saving precious human life. They have been providing service by establishing First aid posts and ambulance services during Independence day and Republic day celebrations across the country.
13. I call upon all of you and other members of both organisations who are not present here today, to get involved in the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan as a part of voluntary service. You should also participate in promoting voluntary blood donation, so that we are able to achieve enough blood through 100% voluntary blood donation in our country. Further, preparedness at the community level to increase the resilience of the people in the face of any disaster needs to be strengthened.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

14. As I conclude I would like to congratulate the Secretary General and his team for the outstanding work performed in the different core areas of Indian Red Cross and St John Ambulance (India). I would also like to thank our movement partners for the support that they extend to these organisations in implementing the programmes. I once again congratulate all the awardees as well as whole heartedly thank all the branches and volunteers for the tremendous work being done each and every day to assist those who are in need.

Jai Hind.