

WELCOME ADDRESS

DR. S.P. AGARWAL

SECRETARY GENERAL

Indian Red Cross Society and St John Ambulance
(India)

At the

Business session
of

Annual General Meeting
Indian Red Cross Society and St John
Ambulance (India)

Dr. D.S. Kothari Auditorium, DRDO Bhavan,
New Delhi
18 NOVEMBER 2014



Shri J.P. Nadda, Hon'ble Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India
and Chairman of IRCS and St. John Ambulance India,

Hon'ble Shri Deepender Singh Hooda, Member of Parliament & Vice Chairman
IRCS,

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

Members of the Managing Body of the Indian Red Cross Society and that of the St
John National Council,

Delegates, observers, awardees

Ladies and gentlemen.

1. It is with pleasure that I welcome you all here at the Business session of the Annual General Meeting of our two great organizations today. This occasion provides us with a unique opportunity to share our experiences and

participate in the process of strengthening both these organisations so that we can do better in the coming years. I thank again our President for kindly hosting us for the Ceremonial session at the Rashtrapati Bhavan auditorium that adds to the gravity of this august meeting.

2. I am honoured to welcome today Shri J P Nadda, the Chairman of our two organisations. Sir, I on behalf of all the members and volunteers of the Indian Red Cross Society and the St John Ambulance (India) offer a warm welcome to you.
3. I have pleasure in welcoming Shri Deepender Singh Hooda, the Vice Chairman of the IRCS and Dr Kamala Gidwani, the Vice Chairperson of the St John Ambulance (India).
4. A warm welcome to all the awardees who have set a high standard for all of us to work towards.
5. I offer warm welcome to the members of the MB of the IRCS and the National Council of the St John Ambulance.
6. I welcome all the delegates who have taken time out to travel long distances to be at this meeting.



Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. As we look forward to working under the dynamic leadership of our Chairman Shri JP Nadda, I would briefly like to bring to you the wide spectrum of work involving the several spectacular development and process oriented schemes that the Hon'ble chairman initiated while working in different capacities.

Sir,

8. You have, as a true visionary, seen through many welfare schemes and worked towards bringing the latest technologies to attain parity with the most developed of societies. As forest minister, you have emphasized on adoption of clean technology and promoted community led advocacy and action program (CLAP) to monitor environment friendly tech for rural development. Under your leadership the state of Himachal Pradesh has been able to implement the blanket ban on the use of polythene. Further, Himachal Pradesh became the first state in country to demand carbon credits in lieu of

green house gases being absorbed by the state's green cover that was enhanced through ambitious plantation schemes like Sanjha van Sanjeevani Van , Apna van apna dhan and Peepal-Bargad. You have also been instrumental in introducing video conferencing for district courts to ensure speedy disposal of court cases as well as in in district jail.

Sir,

9. While as Cabinet Minister, holding charge of Health and Family Welfare ministry in Himachal Pradesh you have focussed on Promotion of use of Generic Medicines and have brought to the Ayurveda and Homeopathy as mainstream treatment strategy that the world is waking up to now.

Sir,

10. We are also aware that you have been the proponent of the saying "a healthy mind in a healthy body" as you have yourself been a National level swimming champion.



Sir,

11. The reason why I have gone into some details about the work you have done, is only to bring an awareness among our members and volunteers of how close you have been at all times towards the objectives of the Indian Red Cross and the St John Ambulance.

Ladies and gentlemen,

12. You will be happy to learn that both the organisations work extensively on environmental and climate change issues. We understand and have also seen the effects due to these in the various disasters that have struck our nation and continue to do so with increasing frequency. Our organisations have, I am pleased to inform you, been at the fore front and have usually been the first to respond to disasters. We have also been focussing on the community based disaster risk reduction and preparedness through the various programmes that we implement. The National headquarters is

connected to 15 most disaster prone states of the country through Video conferencing and we also are increasingly promoting the use of IT in day to day functioning of the organisations to reduce our carbon footprint.

13. The IRCS runs several programmes to impart continued training to its volunteers in disaster preparedness and rehabilitation. As you are aware, a one year PG diploma on the subject is being conducted in the national Headquarters in collaboration with the GGSIP university that trains disaster managers.
14. I also feel pride in reporting about the 50 hour certificate programme on Health promotion through Ayurveda and Yoga that is being conducted at NHQ in collaboration with the Deptt. of AYUSH. This is a much sought after course that draws at least 300 applications for the 50 seats that are offered.
15. The IRCS has been working closely with the Government as auxiliary in supporting the various health programmes. Since 2009, the IRCS has been implementing the TB programme through which the patients who have dropped out of the DOTS therapy due to different reasons are actively traced and brought back to complete the DOTS treatment. In doing so we not only help these patients to be cured but also prevent a large number from converting to the dreaded Multi drug resistant variant of TB. We also through advocacy among the family members and the community spread awareness about the disease which leads to early pick up as well as reduces stigma and discrimination of the patients. We have in 2012-13 participated in the Measles Catch up Campaign launched by the Ministry in 20 districts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

16. Our volunteers take active part in promotion of immunisation and have been involved intimately with the Polio eradication programme. They also participate in sanitation drives and hygiene promotion and the Red Cross have developed tools for educating communities in these areas.
17. Our organizations promote Non remunerative voluntary blood donation to ensure the availability of the safest blood. Towards this end we are partially supported by the government through NACO. The details of the achievement of the voluntary blood programme would be available in Hon'ble Chairman's Annual Report.

Ladies and gentlemen,

18. We have coordination, cooperation and mutual support with departments under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare which is our nodal ministry. The Society has also developed close links with other ministries and departments. Here, I would like to mention that as we are a leading organisation in the field of disaster management, our relationship with National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) has evolved over the years. We work closely with the Red Cross movement partners and are making special efforts to develop partnership with the different corporate and philanthropic organisations. In recent past, we have developed partnerships with FICCI, Vodafone Foundation, Standard Chartered Bank among others. I want to share with you that while the society raises its own resources for its functions, it has also received donations from corporate bodies and individuals for victims of floods, cyclones and other calamities. On behalf of the Society I thank the donors for their support.

Ladies and gentlemen,

19. The reports of the IRCS and St. John Ambulance (India) for the years 2012-13 and 2013-14 will be presented in this session. These reports have already been approved by the Managing Body of the IRCS and National Council of St. John's Ambulance India. Similarly the accounts, budget and appointment of auditors of the two organisations shall also follow. I complement the respective departments for preparation and printing of reports and accounts.
20. The Hon'ble President of India and the President of the IRCS and St. John Ambulance (India) presented different awards, which include shields, medals and certificates, to our best performing branches, distinguished office bearers and volunteers. The Hon'ble Chairman will be giving away Certificates of Merit to Red Cross members and volunteers for their service to humanity. I congratulate all our awardees. This is a great occasion for all our associates as their humanitarian endeavours get recognised in this meeting.
21. To conclude, I would like to quote the very kind words of His Holiness Shri Dalai Lama :-

"Only the development of compassion and understanding for others can bring us the tranquillity and happiness we all seek".
22. The spirit of Red Cross and St. John testify that giving gives eternal happiness. We are definitely blessed as almighty has given us the prerogative to be helpful to the community.
23. With your kind permission, may I now request Hon'ble Chairman IRCS and St. John Ambulance India, to kindly present the report of the two organizations.