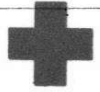




THROUGH HUMANITY TO PEACE



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(CONSTITUTED UNDER ACT XV OF 1920)

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World Health Day Message

"Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature"



Health is one of our most basic human rights & one of the most important indicators of sustainable development. Well functioning ecosystems provide goods & services essential for human health. These include nutrition & food security, clean air & fresh water, medicines, cultural & spiritual values, and contributions to local livelihoods and economic development.

World Health Day is celebrated every year on 7 April to commemorate the anniversary of the founding of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1948. It is celebrated with a unique theme and varied activities are organised across the globe around the same theme. The day aims at drawing everyone's attention towards global health.

The theme for this year is **"Our Planet, Our Health"**. The WHO, and partners, present a unique opportunity for a green & healthy recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. WHO estimates that more than 13 million deaths around the world each year are due to avoidable environmental causes.

India's environmental philosophy stems from the basic belief that man is an extension of the planet. Man is a micro cosmos, being a small part of the macro-cosmos (planet). Man & planet enjoy mutually inseparable & interdependent relationships where existence of man is dependent on the well-being of the planet. Earth is like a mother. We evolve from the earth, take food & other elements from it, and finally decay and merge also with it.

The ancient Hindu dictum summarises : "The Earth is our mother and we are all her children." The roots of India's environmental values can be traced back to the Vedic & Upanishadic periods along with the eras of Puranas, Ramayana & Mahabharata. Many of the Rig Vedic hymns vividly describe the "Dyava Prithivi" that is they describe heaven & earth together. The Indian civilisation, which is the oldest surviving civilisation, has a comprehensive, well assimilative & inclusive outlook towards nature.

Human caused climate change has created an existential threat to life on this planet and has dramatically altered our health & wellbeing as well as our conception of ourselves & our place in the world. The whole universe, be it living or non-living, is made of five basic elements (Pancha-Tattvas) — space, air, water, fire & earth. Every living & non-living being is composed of these Pancha-Tattvas and it's our duty to maintain a balance of these five elements in nature for the sake of mankind.

Health depends on our ability to understand and manage the interaction between human activities and the physical and biological environment. We have the knowledge for this but have failed to act on it. Sustainability is important because the earth only has a finite number of resources. The resources of mother earth are not products which can be mindlessly exploited, rather, they are to be worshipped & consumed only based on need. If we humans want to extend our stay, we will have to learn how to live in a sustainable manner.

Our health, our environment, our world: it's all connected. As a part of world's largest humanitarian network, I urge all Red Crossers in the country to extend its helping hand in promoting awareness on; Reduce, Reuse & Recycle to conserve natural resources & landfill space, conserve water, choose to be sustainable, save electricity, buy less plastic & bring a reusable shopping bag, volunteer for cleanups in your community, plant a tree, peddle more drive less etc. I am sure these small contributions will play a major role in protecting our planet & our health and together, we can slow the dual crises of climate & biodiversity loss.

I Wish all Red Cross staff members and volunteers a very happy World Health Day. Stay healthy and stay blessed.

R.K. Jain, I.A.S (Retd)
Secretary General