



Address by the Hon'ble President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind on the occasion of call on by General Duty Medical Officers [GDMOS] of the second foundation course conducted by the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, Rashtrapati Bhavan, November 27, 2017

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I warmly welcome you to Rashtrapati Bhawan. I am delighted to meet you.

As Doctors and Health practitioners you have a seminal role to play in nation building. You represent the life-line of this nation. You are responsible for keeping us healthy and fit.

We as a country have made rapid progress in many fields. These have led to several options for doctors and health administrators. But you have chosen to join the Government, which means you have chosen to serve the country, to make a difference to people's lives.

I deeply respect your decision. Our society places high faith in you and your noble profession. I am sure you will reciprocate their faith with committed service, always being compassionate and sensitive to the poor and the needy.

The task ahead for you is challenging. Our disease burden remains high. Coupled with it we have issues of delivery, access to services and affordability. But with dedication, drive and determination, we can achieve our goals.

During your long career ahead, you will be performing many roles in the health field. You will be involved in health care delivery, in administering and leading projects, and at times providing policy inputs.

I am happy that the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has started the Foundation Training Programme for the General Duty Medical Officers of the Central Health Service to equip them deal with multiple roles. And I congratulate the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare for successfully conducting this Programme.

The goal of universal health coverage is a priority for our government. The implementation of the National Health Mission critically depends on your commitment. This needs effective governance at the community, village and district levels.

The disease burden in our country is undergoing change. We have to tackle Communicable diseases such as TB, Malaria and Dengue, and at the same time deal with the rising incidence of Non-Communicable diseases.

To address these shifting health priorities, the Government has after more than a decade come up with a revised National Health Policy. It outlines new and innovative ways to provide affordable healthcare for all. I expect that all of you will give your best to make it a success.

Over the years, our health initiatives have led to significant improvements in the health status of the country. To name a few, we have eradicated Polio, made marked improvement in Immunization coverage, and brought down the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR), Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Total Fertility Rate (TFR).

Young Officers,

Our country is making rapid economic progress. Health and socio-economic indicators must gallop along with it.

While health may be a core concern for you, you have an equally important role to play in the socio-economic progress of the country. Several key Government initiatives such as *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* and *Swachh Bharat* need your support and service.

The adverse Male to Female sex ratio is a major cause of concern. Undernutrition and Malnutrition remains an area where we have a lot more to do.

I would also suggest that you should take a preventive approach to health rather than solely a curative one. In this context, integrating our traditional systems of medicine – AYUSH – into our healthcare system must be a priority.

As young and bright minds, you must engage in research and innovation and see how best we can use our scientific and human resources for the benefit of all.

Digital Technology combined with Aadhar and Mobile telephony can work wonders for health care. Our E-Aushadhi programme is on course. Tele-medicine is another effective technology intervention which we must put to greater use.

The Global community at the United Nations in 2015 adopted a menu of Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs]. Health challenges form an important part of it. The SDGs have been dove-tailed in our national development programmes. And for India to achieve them, we have to do exceedingly well on the health front.

Young Officers, there is high expectation from you. I am sure you will serve the country with a deep sense of commitment. I wish you all success in your career ahead.

Jai Hind.

