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Dear friend,

I take this opportunity to thank your organization for joining the Government of India in this combat against COVID-19 with commitment and dedication. At this critical juncture, it is necessary for us to take a whole-of-India approach. Stakeholders with immense expertise like you need to come together and channelize efforts to fight this threat together. Your tremendous experience and expertise in understanding the pulse at the grassroots will be of great help to our country now. There is nobody better placed than you to work closely with communities, spread awareness in the areas of prevention, protection, and fighting stigma. Your networks can do our nation a great service by preparing our communities, especially the rural population, in putting together the most efficient response mechanism against this pandemic. I am positive that the capabilities, expertise and resources of your organization will be a game changer at this moment by complementing the State and Central Government systems. In these emergent times the fight against this pandemic cannot be fought without the active support and collaboration of your organization.

The Government of India has constituted a Committee comprising of myself, Dr. Vijayaraghavan, PSA; Mr. Kamal Kishore, Member, NDMA; Mr. Sandeep Mohan Bhatnagar, Member, CBIC; Mr. Anil Malik, AS, MHA; Mr. Gopal Baglay, JS, PMO; Ms. Tina Soni, DS, Cabinet Secretariat; Ms. Aishvarya Singh, DS, PMO.

We have greatly benefitted from our preliminary discussions with some partners from Civil Society Organisations. Based on today's interactions, we strongly believe that CSOs have a pivotal role in joining forces with the local district and state administration in several critical areas. Also, CSO's working in a district must collaborate with each other so that there is no duplication of work and could themselves appoint one CSO as the nodal to coordinate with the District Administration.

A primary area where you may like to focus is the movement of migrant labourers. The Government has taken several measures so that their livelihoods are protected. At this juncture, I request you to coordinate your efforts and work closely with the district administrations and state governments so that measures of care, shelter, food and social distancing go hand in hand and they are fully taken care of in their present location. It is our responsibility that no one goes without shelter and food.

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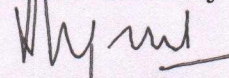
Some of the most important areas where the CSOs can aid and supplement the efforts of the State and local administration are :

1. To assist and support the local administration in setting up community kitchens particularly for migrants and homeless population working in urban areas.
2. To supplement the government efforts to provide shelter to homeless, daily wage workers, and urban poor families.
3. To create awareness about prevention, hygiene, social distancing, isolation, and combating stigma.
4. To extend support for distribution of PPE and protective provisions – sanitizers, soaps, masks, gloves etc. for community workers and volunteers.
5. To support the State governments and local administration in filling gaps in routine delivery of public health care, and promoting hygiene measures.
6. To assist the local administration in identifying hotspots and deputing volunteers and care givers to deliver services to the elderly, persons with disabilities, children, transgender persons, and other vulnerable groups.
7. Partner with State and local governments in enlisting volunteers from among individuals and communities.
8. To develop communications strategy in different vernaculars whereby they become active partners in creating awareness at the community level so that COVID-19 spread is tightly controlled and false information fully countered.
9. To partner with State and local governments in promoting social and behaviour change.
10. By ensuring that there is no stigma and discrimination against COVID-19 patients. This would require extension and mass communication.

Our team in NITI Aayog is committed to working in close collaboration with CSOs working at the grassroots and with the vulnerable communities. I am optimistic that with your zeal and commitment, we will emerge victorious in the fight against COVID-19. I thank once again, your whole hearted participation in this critical nation building exercise, which has direct bearing on the social and economic fabric of our great country.

With warm regards, *2 All Good Wishes,*

Yours sincerely


(Amitabh Kant)

All Civil Society Organisations