



**Welcome address**

*by*

**Dr. SP Agarwal  
Secretary General, IRCS & SJA(I)**

**at**

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

**3 May 2013 at 12:15 pm at Rashtrapati Bhavan Auditorium  
New Delhi**



Respected Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Hon'ble President of India and President of both, Indian Red Cross Society and St. John Ambulance (India), Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad, Hon'ble Chairman of Indian Red Cross Society and St. John Ambulance (India) and Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, Hon'ble Governors, Vice Chairman of Indian Red Cross Society and Vice Chairperson of St. John Ambulance (India), Members of the Managing Body & National Council of the two organizations, Heads of the regional delegations of the IFRC and ICRC, invited representatives of the partner organizations, World Health Organization and National Societies, awardees, delegates, guests, observers, ladies and gentlemen...



At the outset, I welcome all of you present here today and thank the Hon'ble President for agreeing to preside over the ceremonial session of our Annual General Meeting. Sir, your generous offer to host this event at Rashtrapati Bhavan, indeed highlights your keen interest in the humanitarian work of both of our organizations.

Indian Red Cross Society is the largest statutory, humanitarian organization in India, with over 700 branches throughout the country. St. John Ambulance (India) also having a broad reach throughout India including hundreds of state/UT, regional, district and local centres, is involved in training people in first aid through St. John Association, and provides first aid and ambulance services through its brigade wing.

Red Cross Movement consists of three components; the Indian Red Cross Society, which provides humanitarian services to vulnerable people, the International Federation, consisting of 187 National Societies, including India, and the ICRC having a focus on assistance during conflicts besides being a guardian of Geneva Conventions.

Sir, the granting of tax exemptions for the Indian Red Cross Society, both for its income, as well as for our donors on perpetual basis, while you were as the Finance Minister earlier, has helped our Red Cross Movement in a big way to raise additional resources. Thanks to your farsightedness and support, we are now able to help more vulnerable people across the country.



We welcome Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad, Hon'ble Chairman and Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, amongst us. Sir, your unstinted support and continuous guidance has helped to raise the profile of Indian Red Cross Society and St. John Ambulance (India), not only in India, but

across the world. Remarkable achievements in the health sector under your leadership in recent years has also helped IRCS to chair of the Sustainable Development and Health Advisory Body of the International Federation, which is guiding the work of 187 National Societies across the world.



In addition to your vast contribution in the health sector, we are especially grateful for your keen interest in voluntary blood donations. Indian Red Cross Society, through 166 Red Cross blood banks in India, including the model blood bank at national headquarters, is catering to nearly 10 per cent of the total blood requirement in India, mainly through voluntary, non-remunerated repeated blood donations from healthy donors – thanks to your support and encouragement !.

We also welcome the Hon'ble Governors, who head their respective state and union territory branches of these two organizations. Your guidance and support is crucial and is immensely appreciated for enhancing our humanitarian activities.

A special welcome to those who are going to receive awards today. This recognition to you will enthuse many more volunteers to undertake similar activities.

All those who have travelled here from these branches and centres, especially the large number of volunteers, are warmly welcomed for this **historic** event.



With these words, while welcoming you all once again, Indian Red Cross Society and St. John Ambulance (India) commit themselves to do more, do better and reach further, for the benefit of vulnerable people, both at home and abroad, under the visionary guidance and leadership of our Hon'ble President.

Thank you.