

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
ON THE OCCASION OF CALL ON BY THE GENERAL DUTY
MEDICAL OFFICERS [GDMOs] OF 3RD FOUNDATION TRAINING
PROGRAMME**

Rashtrapati Bhavan, September 19, 2018

1. I warmly welcome you to Rashtrapati Bhavan. As doctors and health practitioners you have a seminal role to play in nation building. You represent the lifeline of this nation. You are responsible for keeping us healthy and fit.

2. स्वतंत्रता के बाद से और खास तौर से हमारी अर्थव्यवस्था को उदार बनाने के बाद भारत ने अनेक क्षेत्रों में तेज प्रगति की है। इससे हमारे प्रतिभावान नौजवानों और विशेषकर डॉक्टरों और Health Administrators के लिए अनेक अवसर पैदा हुए हैं। फिर भी, आपने सरकारी सेवा में शामिल होने का फैसला किया है। इसका अर्थ है कि आपने देश की सेवा करने और हमारे उन देशवासियों के लिए काम करने का रास्ता चुना है जिनके पास संसाधन कम होते हैं और स्वास्थ्य सुविधाओं तक जिनकी पहुंच बहुत कम होती है। संक्षेप में, कहा जाए तो आपने लोगों के जीवन को बेहतर बनाने का रास्ता चुना है। मैं आपके इस निर्णय का सम्मान करता हूँ। आप पर और आपके कार्य पर लोग बहुत भरोसा करते हैं। हमारे देश का गरीब आदमी तो डॉक्टर को भगवान मानता है। मुझे विश्वास है कि आप पूरी निष्ठा से काम करते हुए इस भरोसे को कायम रखेंगे। आपके मन में लोगों के लिए विशेषकर कमजोर वर्गों के लिए करुणा और संवेदना होनी चाहिए। आपको यह भी याद रखना चाहिए कि सेवा के लिए निष्ठा और ईमानदारी बहुत जरूरी हैं। [Since Independence and especially since the opening up of our economy, India has made rapid progress in many fields. These have led to several options for our talented young people – and especially for doctors and health administrators. Nevertheless you have chosen to join the government. This means you have chosen to serve the country, and to serve our fellow citizens who may have limited resources and access to health facilities. In short, you have chosen to improve the lives of people. I deeply respect your

decision. Our society places high faith in you and your calling. I am sure you will reciprocate their faith with committed service. Always be compassionate and sensitive, especially to the less fortunate among us. And always remember that integrity and honesty are non-negotiable.]

3. 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 to deal with multiple roles. Universal health coverage is a priority for our government. The rollout of the Ayushman Bharat Yojana is a critical step not just for the management of public health but for safeguarding our most precious asset – our human capital. You will be part of this exciting, once-in-a-generation initiative. It has the potential to change India forever.
4. There is reason for hope, because in the course of our development as a nation we have achieved significant milestones in the health sector. We have eradicated small-pox and polio. We have made marked improvements in immunisation coverage, with Mission Indradhanush targeting hitherto hard-to-reach areas and communities. We have also reduced the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR), Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Total Fertility Rate (TFR). The progress made under the Swacch Bharat programme will also have many positive implications for public health.
5. Despite such good news, a combination of old and new challenges lies before us. The disease burden in our country is undergoing an evolution. We have to tackle widespread diseases such as TB, malaria and dengue, and at the same time deal with the rising incidence of other lifestyle diseases. Along with challenges of our disease burden, we have issues of delivery, access to services and affordability.
6. The road before all of you – all of us, I should say – is tough but not impossible to navigate. With dedication, drive and

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

7. I would also suggest that where possible you 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 framework must be a priority.
8. In a time of newly-emerging diseases and global pandemics, public health is as much a domestic problem as an international one. At the United Nations in 2015, the global community adopted a menu of Sustainable Development Goals. Meeting health challenges forms an important part of these Goals. And for India to meet its benchmarks is an important part of the achievement of these Goals. As public health specialists, you are field commanders of our SDG campaign. Our safety and wellbeing – literally – is in your hands.
9. With those words, I wish you all success as you step into what will no doubt be a long and meaningful career. India has great expectations from you. May you fulfil all of them and more.

Thank you,
Jai Hind!