



Hon'ble Governor & President of Indian Red Cross Society
Dr. Biswa Bhusan Harichandan
for the Video Conference
with IRCS AP State Unit and all district units
headed by District Collectors
at 11 AM on 3rd June 2020

Chairman IRCS AP Chapter Dr Sridhar Reddy, Secretary General Shri A K Parida, President of the District units and Collectors, Chairman and other representatives of the District units. My Greetings to all.

I am very happy to interact with you all today through this video-conference. At the outset, I congratulate each one of you, every volunteer, staff, donor, Govt. official and everyone who took part in this noble Mission to contain Covid-19 pandemic, the biggest health and economic crisis of these times. It gives me immense pride and satisfaction that IRCS through its State Branch and the 13 District Branches was actively involved in providing succour to the needy and as an auxiliary the government, supporting and supplementing the government agencies in the war against COVID-19.

I am happy to note that the members of the Indian Red Cross Society A.P. State Chapter have swiftly responded to the crisis well in advance and started awareness campaigns in schools, colleges and communities by spreading awareness among the target groups, through publication of posters, pamphlets etc.

Soon after the lockdown was imposed, Red Cross volunteers of 13 District Branches under the leadership of the District Chairpersons and the overall guidance of the District Collectors took up massive activities to mitigate the suffering of the most vulnerable and the needy round the clock. the District Branches in the state have focused on relief to the destitute and homeless people by extensive distribution of food, dry rations, vegetables, handmade reusable masks, hand sanitizers, fruits, clothing, soaps and many such items required for the well being of these hapless groups by keeping in view their essential needs and requirements.

I am also impressed to see that many district units of IRCS have organised community kitchens, Relief Centres for the destitute as well as

managing the quarantine centres, supplying medicines, transportation of patients, assisting the hospitals in maintaining hygiene etc.

All these activities have been taken up by the President and Chairperson of District Branches with the support of the District Branch Secretaries, Staff and the Red Cross Volunteers by locally mobilizing resources and support from local voluntary organizations, philanthropists and individual donors and the contribution of each one of them need to be acknowledged and deeply appreciated. The Chairman of the State Branch extended all the support for implementing the various activities successfully. It is for the first time in the history of any public health emergency and disaster that Red Cross has provided a platform to converge all humanitarian services and actions at the district and sub district level to reach out to the most vulnerable and the distressed.

I was particularly pained by the plight of the migrant workers and labourers during the COVID-19 pandemic who have faced multiple hardships. With factories and work places shut down due to the lockdown imposed in the country, millions of migrant workers had to deal with the loss of income, food shortages and uncertainty about their future. Thousands of them then began walking back home, with no means of transport due to the lockdown. All the District Branches under the leadership of the concerned Chairpersons all along the National Highways, Railway Stations, Bus Stands and the Interstate Border Check Posts started relief camps providing food and shelter to the migrant labourers belonging to Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh passing through the state of Andhra Pradesh. I was really touched by those scenes and I was greatly relieved when I saw the Red Cross volunteers swinging into action by focusing on migrant workers walking on Highways, providing them food, water, buttermilk, etc. at the toll gates. Some of the District Branches have even organised temporary relief centres and facilitated them to reach their destinations by arranging buses, in

coordination with Government. The Hon'ble High Court of Andhra Pradesh appreciated the initiative of the Red Cross District Branch of Guntur for their services provided to the migrant labourers at Kaza Toll gate on the National Highway No.16 and urged upon all the District Collectors to involve the Red Cross Volunteers in providing services to the migrant labourers in all the districts of the state.

The extensive lockdown has affected the collection of blood as movement of donors across the country was restricted and this has led to shortage of availability of blood for the needy patients. There are thousands of people who are dependent on transfusion as a life-saving measure and they suffered due to acute shortage of availability of blood. I congratulate the State Unit and the district units for overcoming the constraints and ensuring continuous blood supply by organising blood donation drive and in-house blood donation camps.

I am extremely pleased to note that the Blood Banks operated by the IRCS are maintaining sufficient stocks, without compromising on the quality and safety measures. I am glad to note that the blood is provided to the patients suffering from Thalassemia, without any interruption even during these challenging times. I want you all to now focus on the increase of blood donation camps and maintain sufficient stocks as elective surgeries will take place soon after relaxation of lockdown.

The Centre issued orders extending lockdown No.5 up to 30th June, along with guidelines on certain relaxations from 8th June in First phase and further more relaxations to be announced in second and third phases. Therefore, I request all the members to focus on measures to be taken post-lockdown, by organizing sustainable activities such as capacity building of communities, programmes for protection of children, women and elders etc.

I am happy to inform you all that the IRCS, A.P. State Branch has joined hands with the UNICEF for capacity building programme on COVID-19, focusing on the key changes in behavior and practice, using available online technology and monitoring mechanism. There is a need to prepare our communities, schools and institutions in order to build their capacities to provide the much needed services to children and women.

Under this initiative, a series of capacity enhancement programmes will be organized for the Red Cross volunteers to strengthen the preparedness of schools (child protection and WASH activities), reach-out to children in Anganwadi Centres for covering immunization and other programmes of DWCD, health awareness, communication of IEC/ICT messages to the communities through various media etc. An action plan and timeline has also been prepared to implement the programme and I request the District Collectors to focus on successful implementation of this prestigious programme.

I wish to place on record my appreciation for the services rendered by the Volunteers, specifically the Youth, Women and Young Girls. Thousands of Volunteers served round the clock relentlessly with one motto in their mind – 'SERVING THE HUMANITY!'

I was amazed to see their high level of commitment, dedication and their courage to serve in this difficult situation. As frontline warriors, they served fearlessly in inhospitable conditions such as Red Zones, Containment Areas, Covid Hospitals and Quarantine Centers. They were seen everywhere serving everyone.

I have always stressed upon need for strengthening the volunteer force of Junior and Youth Red Cross. They are the future face of the Red Cross movement. I am happy to note that during the year 2019-20, a record number of 4.8 lakh Junior and Youth Red Cross members have been enrolled,

which is almost double the enrolment of the previous year. During the year 2020-21, enrolment of 10 Lakh Junior / Youth Red Cross members should be aimed. I request the district units to prepare action plans accordingly.

Volunteers are the backbone of the Red Cross movement, hence I urge the district units to make all out efforts to recruit as many volunteers as possible into the Red Cross movement by enlightening the youth on the cardinal values of the Red Cross movement. That would help us to expand our services to all corners of the state. In order to achieve this, I request all the District Collectors & Presidents to focus on the following points:

1. Every District Branch shall have a minimum of 500 trained Emergency First Medical Responders to respond to any emergency in the district.
2. Include a representative from IRCS in the District Disaster Management Committee.
3. Every school and college in the District must have a Junior / Youth Red Cross unit.
4. Every District unit shall enroll a minimum of one lakh Junior / Youth Red Cross Volunteers in a year.
5. Last year we have initiated plantation programme by the Junior / Youth Red Cross wings. This year once the situation becomes normal, every District unit should gear up to plant one lakh samplings.
6. Every Blood Bank should aim to procure minimum of 10,000 blood units in a year. Please ensure that no life is lost in our state due to non-availability of blood.
7. Every District unit shall enroll minimum of 1000 life members in a year.
8. All the District Branches should implement the new IRCS Uniform Rules and establish Mandal Level Sub-branches. I request the District

Collectors of Kadapa and Kurnool to see that the elected bodies are in place at the earliest.

I would like to interact with you all once in a quarter to review the progress and the best performing districts will be given proper recognition.

I urge the State team to continue the efforts of coordination and support throughout the lockdown period and for the timely distribution of financial and material aid to the district branches to supplement their efforts in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic.

Before closing my address I thank each one of you for your sincere and committed efforts in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic. I wish to meet each one of you, sometime in the near future and congratulate each one of you in person.

I wish you success in all your future activities in the service of the people, in the true spirit of the Red Cross movement.

Jai Hind
