

**SPEECH BY RANDEEP SINGH SURJEWALA, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES, PWD (B&R), PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA AT 8<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL YOUTH PEACE FESTIVAL HELD ON 2<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER, 2013 AT CHANDIGARH ON ‘PROMOTING VOLUNTEERING TO BREAK THE BARRIERS & BRIDGE THE GAPS’.**

**Dear friends,**

As the entire world including us observes ‘**Gandhi Jayanti**’ as the ‘**International Non-Violence Day**’ and as I stand before you today, I want to quote three lines of Mahatma Gandhi.

**12<sup>th</sup> August, 1945**

“Says Nanak again, “Whatever you give away is yours; whatever you keep is not yours.””

**15<sup>th</sup> June, 1946**

“When we give anything, we must give the truest part of ourselves.”

**7<sup>th</sup> August, 1946**

“Give all, gain all.”

This, my friends, summarises the entire spirit of ‘volunteerism’. This spirit stands personified before me in you, the young delegates who seem to have brought the world together on one platform at this 8<sup>th</sup> international peace festival to promote a feeling of camaraderie, love, peace and brotherhood. I believe, in the present-day strife-torn times, it is these strands that bind and hold our world together while it is the spirit of volunteerism that makes it a place worth living.

Young today are the catalysts of change – a change that is touching lives and healing hearts across the globe. I know and we know that this change is slow to come on but it is happening, the change is palpable but is still nascent. Whether or not we take notice, this change is definitely changing the world we live in.

Friends, as you move around this world and as you act, you are setting the great spider web a-tremble. The life you touch for good will touch another and that in turn another until who knows where the trembling stops and in what far place your touch is felt. Because everything is touching everything. Everything is penetrating everything else.

There seem to be only two ways of spreading the light around--be the candle that lights the world or be the mirror that reflects it. Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to be better. So, even though yours maybe a drop in the ocean, the ocean is a little less without that drop.

From individual to collective, volunteerism, in today’s times of social strife –conflict – pessimism, seem to come in all hues and sizes and this is illustrated best in the way the world and its youth force, rising above differences of nationalities and culture and tradition, come together, unite and join hands and stand up as one to whatever is wrong with our world.

That's probably why a massacre in one country will move many to tears in another, an earthquake will bring help pouring from all over and a dastardly attack of gory violence against mankind will invite condemnation in one voice.

Too often, we underestimate the power of a hand on the shoulder, a genuine smile, a kind word, a listening ear—all of which have the potential to turn a life around. The youth of today is more alive to this finding and all of you, world leaders in your own right, as symbols of volunteerism, will vouch for that.

While our grandparents and parents may have been inclined to put their idealism and energy into violent rebellion, today's young men and women are using 'protest' – a new example of non-violent mass mobilization – as a vehicle to change the social order aimed at making the world a better place. In India, we saw this manifestation during recent accumulation of young in 'Nirbhaya Case' leading the way to change in criminal law of India qua rape and sexual assault.

This growing culture of volunteerism is not limited to a city, a state or an anonymous pocket tucked away in some corner of the world. Young adults everywhere are doing more service and volunteerism than in any point in history in their own small ways and contributing their mite to building a sensitive society, a feeling world, a vibrant culture.

In a world where beauty and good abound, there still are problems aplenty. We all agree the world could be made better. Many of us would like to help build a better world, but taking on the whole world as a project can certainly seem overwhelming to an individual, bogged down by the sheer magnitude of shouldering a huge responsibility. So, where does one even begin? And what can one person with simple resources actually do?

Well, good news! There really is an easy answer!

We live in a world which is full of misery and ignorance and the plain duty of each of us should be to try and make the little corner we can influence somewhat less miserable and somewhat less ignorant than it was before we entered it.

Just the way a stone thrown in a pond produces ripples that travel throughout, waves of individual life have a ripple-effect in all the fields. As we walk the earth, we can make it better with a few simple steps.

- 1. OWN YOURSELF.** Become the owner of your life and destiny and take personal responsibility for yourself and those around you. This essential decision will guide your other decisions in life, re-orienting and re-creating your existence around the principle of personal sovereignty. Recognizing the sovereignty of other Individuals provides the foundation for ethical social interactions. Owning yourself and recognizing the sovereignty of others are both ongoing processes.

- 2. BECOME POWERFUL.** Creating a better world requires the efforts of powerful Individuals. You can contribute to the new population of powerful Individuals by starting with yourself. Empower yourself physically for strength, flexibility and endurance, empower yourself mentally by learning critical and creative thinking skills and empower yourself emotionally and financially by learning money skills and how you can create and manage multiple streams of income. Cultivate beneficial personal and professional relationships. As you

become powerful, you will have more opportunities to make a better world and greater capability to effectively act on those opportunities.

**3. CREATE VALUE.** You can immediately begin to improve those parts of the world that you have immediate influence over. Organize, decorate and improve your own home and office or work space to be aesthetically pleasing and stimulating to you. You can also raise the environmental tone in these spaces by improving your own attitudes and interactions with others. Look for ways to create new value in your personal and work relationships. As a practical optimist, look for the good in each situation and expand it or look for the good that you can put into the situation.

**4. BE A MENTOR.** Consider what you have achieved by owning yourself, becoming powerful and creating value and how you can help that process to replicate itself in the lives of others by acting as a mentor. A mentor is formally defined as someone who acts as a trusted counselor or teacher. Informally, a mentor is someone who draws out the potential in others and helps them to develop it. Be an informal mentor to the Individuals in your life, especially the young. Be a mentor in your workplace. In general, always be on the lookout for opportunities to share what you know and have.

**5. PROMOTE SPONTANEOUS ORDER.** Spontaneous Order is the order that emerges spontaneously from the free interaction of elements within a system, allowing for evolution through variation, feedback and adaptation.

**6. CHOOSE A GOAL AND EXECUTE.** While being part of an all encompassing good around you, concentrate on some core areas for goal-oriented execution of your innate goodness.

Do something in one of these areas at least once a day. Do something in each of these areas at least once a week. Be aware of the connections between the six areas and learn to maximize those connections in your actions. By doing all of this, you will greatly improve your own life as well as making significant contributions to a better world on your own scale and from your own unique position.

Friends, volunteering is important for numerous reasons that benefit both the community and the volunteers themselves. When you donate a bit of your time, the difference it makes in shaping a community for the better is tremendous while you can't be untouched by that experience.

Volunteering is what makes a community because it brings people together to work on a goal. Whether it is a fundraiser for the research to cure a disease that affects the whole world, or to help a local family who has fallen in a time of calamity, volunteers make it happen.

Community life is improved by aiding others and lending a helping hand to get a job done more effectively. More people working equals less work for each person and less time for the project.

Not only does it bring much-needed hope and much-longed for happiness to people, it also leads to spiritual and personal growth. Needless to say, this cannot be bought over the shelf with all the money in the world put together.

I take this opportunity also to remind myself and all of you of simple words of wisdom that I have read often. Let me list twenty of these:-

- 1- Wake up – to your environment and surrounding;
- 2- Make a difference in yourself for the better;
- 3- Compassion – for everything and everyone;
- 4- Be kind;
- 5- See the light within yourself and in others;
- 6- Talk to someone that you think might be in distress;
- 7- Smile;
- 8- Simply show up – with the soul of your heart, mind and a desire to heal;
- 9- Be more involved in the world;
- 10- Be gentle and practice sympathetic joy;
- 11- Start really listening to people around you;
- 12- Listen. Give. Do;
- 13- Teach your kids by examples;
- 14- Look into your child's eyes;
- 15- Be a true you – positive energy attracts;
- 16- Find someone that needs a smile and give them that smile;
- 17- Speak without saying a word;
- 18- Be aware of all the wonders we have around us;
- 19- Be the change you wish to see in the world; and
- 20- Love.

So, let no man or woman imagine they have no influence. For, men and women are not limited by the place of their birth, not by the colour of their skin but by the size of the hope they can hold out to the have-nots of the world. Then, whoever he or she may be, whatever he or she may be, the man or woman who thinks – becomes a light. And, a light's intrinsic quality is that it will illuminate even the darkest corners. It follows then that you can make a difference, you can change the world. Because you are the difference, you are the change and you are the world. Now, set the volunteering spirit afire and let the fire catch on.

**JAI HIND !!!**

