

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR ON THE OCCASION OF INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY, 2019 ON 16TH MAY, 2019 AT RIMS, IMPHAL

Shri Vumlunmang Vualnam, Principal Secretary (Health & Family Welfare),

Dr. K. Rajo Singh, Director (Health & Family Welfare),

Dr. A. Santa, Director, RIMS,

All the participating Doctors and Nurses,

Friends from Media,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to be here to participate in the International Nurses Day Celebration organised by the Trained Nurses Association of India, Manipur Branch. The Day is celebrated in memory of the pioneer and founder of Modern Nursing, Florence Nightingale and reminds us of the importance of the role of nurses who form the backbone of any healthcare system.

It is really remarkable that the Trained Nurses Association of India which is a national organisation of nursing professionals, was established as long back as 1908 and recognised by the Government of India as a service organisation since 1950. In more ways than one, it is indicative of the importance of this profession to the development of the country. In order to progress, it is imperative for a society to remain healthy and in this context, the nurses play an indispensable role in the healthcare system. Nurses are amongst the most respected of all of our professions and it is indeed a very noble profession. There would only be a few people whose lives have not been touched by the care and reassurance of nurses at some point of time or the other.

The theme of this year's International Nurses Day is 'Nurses: A voice to lead – Health for All'. It truly reflects the intrinsic character of the service rendered by the nurses. Serving the sick and the old calls for a good measure

of commitment and sacrifice. Florence Nightingale was the embodiment of selfless service and sacrifice. Her picture with a lamp was the hope for the sick and wounded and she was fondly known as ‘the lady with the lamp’.

It is the future of nursing as a profession – not its past – that makes me confident about the young women and men of our country pursuing their nursing education today. They constitute a treasure of human resource, appropriately skilled for the health challenges which may confront them. They are destined to play an even greater role in delivering a better, faster and more convenient healthcare service for the country. There are thousands of nurses currently practising in this country and you are a massive resource which the Government intends to safeguard and strengthen. Nurses are also reaching new levels of competency as the demand for more complex nursing care increases. There is now an impressive quantum of highly skilled nurse practitioners in the country. I feel proud of the fact that nurses of Manipur are very popular for their mild mannered behaviour and skill. They are very much in demand in other states and even abroad and the demand is growing.

As you are well aware, the service delivery role of nurse practitioners in primary healthcare has not improved as much as many originally envisaged. There are a number of reasons for this and the Government is making serious efforts to address them. Modern nursing and healthcare need another level of nursing expertise than is currently allowed for Nurse Assistants who primarily work in aged care and rehabilitation facilities. Many Nurse Assistants have argued that their scope of work and training can be broadened, which would allow them to play a stronger role in nursing care, with supervision from registered nurses. On the other hand, improving the health service with greater numbers of more widely qualified nurses is not the whole answer. Nurses need time to be nurses. To focus properly on safe, quality care and spend the maximum time caring for patients, rather than massaging keyboards and endless paperwork. Nurses need more time to do

what they were educated to do. We can provide better service to the patients with a stronger emphasis on quality and improving patient contact time. A better, responsive and more convenient public health service will need more people who are prepared to go above and beyond the call of duty, who will find more innovative ways to work within financial constraints, help each other with heavy workloads and look for ways to perform the job more effectively. And they will do that if they feel engaged and empowered. We should try to create such a working environment for the nurses.

With these few words, I thank the organisers for inviting me to join you all on this auspicious occasion. May God bless you all and I, once again, wish you all success in your future endeavours.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.