

Address by Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, Honourable Vice President of India at the 66th Annual General Body Meeting of Indian Institute of Public Administration, in New Delhi on October 31, 2020.

New Delhi | October 31, 2020

“As the President of IIPA, I take immense pleasure in presiding over this 66th Annual Meeting of the General Body of the Institute. There is a tinge of sadness in today’s General Body Meeting because of the absence of Shri T.N. Chaturvedi ji, the eminent and erudite Chairman who passed away on 5th January 2020. An IAS officer of 1950 batch, he had adorned some very important positions like CAG of India, twice Rajya Sabha MP and Governor of Karnataka and Kerala. He gave a new direction and energy to IIPA by being associated with it since 1959. He was a voracious reader and a keen observer. I offer my humble tribute to Shri Chaturvedi ji and hope that IIPA will cherish and build on his illustrious

legacy.

I welcome the new Chairman, Dr Jitendra Singh, Hon’ble Union Minister who, I am sure, will lead this Institute to a new height and facilitate its journey towards excellence. The year 2020 has witnessed the emergence of a new virus and its deadly effects in the form of Covid-19 pandemic. The entire world is fighting this pandemic even now. However, India, under the leadership of Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is fighting this pandemic with strategic alertness and prompt appropriate action. The international agencies like the United Nations (UN) and the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) etc. have appreciated India's response to the pandemic as 'comprehensive and robust'. The entire country is galvanized and is taking all measures required to contain the virus. India is turning this disruptive moment into a creative opportunity. It is tapping into its inner strengths by stepping up production of masks, ventilators, sanitizers and essential drugs. It has been adding additional facilities for hospitalization and treatment of patients. It has ramped up the process of upgrading public health infrastructure. It has cautiously opened up the economic windows to gradually restore livelihoods. It has made self-reliance an overarching credo to boost local industries. Against this backdrop, the practitioners of public administrators and public policy analysts have a great role to play in sharing insights on what has worked well and what has not so that the implementation can be made more effective on ground. Ultimately, it is the implementation and delivery system that needs to be refined and streamlined to make the policy change a reality. This is the change India is looking for today. Change in the delivery of services. Change in the delivery of justice. Change in the way governance structures respond to the felt needs of common people.

The government led by the Prime Minister has been making policies and designing programmes that are intended to improve the quality of life of people and fast track India's development. However, the effective implementation of these policies and programmes by administrative leaders and professionals is critical. The country is grateful to innumerable civil servants who are making this transformation possible, to the medical professionals combating the current pandemic, to the defence forces securing our borders, to the security personnel who are ensuring our safety and to the teaching faculty shaping young minds. They are all translating the progressive legislations enacted by the government and parliament into visible outcomes touching the lives of people. IIPA as the premier institution dedicated to the theory and practice of public administration must, in my view, play a pivotal role in bringing about this change. I am happy to note that even in this COVID 19 pandemic and lockdown, IIPA has continued its activities by transforming itself into a digital institute by creating digital infrastructure such as seven VC and Digital Classrooms for the conduct of online training programmes. I am happy that since May 2020, IIPA has conducted 14 online training programmes for various Departments and conducted over 30 webinars. It is heartening that IIPA has now launched its new website which is more comprehensive, dynamic and having interactive features. I also compliment the Director and IIPA employees who have conducted 62 research projects sponsored by various ministries in the last 12 months. Sisters and brothers, India is celebrating the 145th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel this year and we are fortunate that this online AGM is being held on the birth anniversary of this legendary leader, the unifier of India, celebrated as Ekta Divas. Just now, I have inaugurated the beautiful statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel at IIPA Library before the start of the AGM. I want to congratulate the Director and the staff who have made this possible. The statue should serve as a perennial fountain of inspiration to all of us working for improving India's governance. Sardar Patel was a real karmayogi, a quintessential visionary administrator, one who had dreamt of a united India and worked tirelessly to achieve this dream. His life is a timeless lesson for all of us in public service. It is an example of selfless dedication to national unity and integrity, to good governance and public welfare, to an effective implementation of a sound policy. I am glad that the government has launched a new programme for Civil Services Capacity Building called – "Mission Karmayogi". I understand that this will be the largest Civil Services Reform in the world in terms of depth and spread aiming at professional delivery of services at all levels of Government of India. I am happy that IIPA will be utilising this initiative to offer various digitally-enabled capacity building programmes to the civil servants. I note with satisfaction that the financial condition of IIPA has improved in the last five years. IIPA has conducted 145 Training Programmes in 2019-20 and earned a fee of Rs.20.79 Crores. However, quite prudently, it is reducing its expenditure without making any compromises on the

quality and delivery of the services. IIPA has over six-decade long history of being a think-tank. I suggest that we should look at the way we reposition it in the light of current and emerging challenges. I notice that some steps have already been initiated by the Executive Council in its last meeting. But we must do more. We have to come up with sound strategy for institutional reforms and make IIPA a fit organization to catalyse the new wave of governance reforms in the country. I am glad that IIPA has a strong network of institutions at the State and local level as well as a growing number of distinguished alumni. I suggest that we should strengthen this network and collaboration. The State Governments must be brought on board and be active participants, as also the local bodies in cities and rural areas. Good governance must percolate down to the lowest level. It should become a way of life for the institutions we have established for our country's governance. I wish to see IIPA set new ambitious goals in the next few months, benchmarking itself against the best institutions with similar mandate around the globe. I welcome Dr Jitendra Singh, Hon'ble Union Minister of State (I/C) of PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, DoNER, Space and Atomic Energy who took over as the Chairman of the Executive Council of IIPA recently. He has all the experience and capability to further enhance the stature of IIPA. I am happy to note that IIPA has made changes to its Rules, making its Executive Council more effective, leaner and cost-efficient. I am sure that these changes will do a world of good to the functioning, standing and image of IIPA.

I also congratulate Dr. Singh for taking the important decision of opening up of Life-Membership of IIPA w.e.f. 1st January 2021. As experienced Civil Servants and Academicians will now be able to join IIPA as members, the strength and capability of IIPA will increase substantially. The Regional and Local branches of IIPA will also be able to prosper and develop now with this new initiative. I extend my warm greetings and all the cooperation to Dr. Jitendra Singh ji.

In his last Independence Day message in 1950, the Sardar had said: "Certain tendencies and developments in our administrative and public affairs fill me with some disquiet and sadness of heart. The country can realize the feelings of one who has spent the major part of his public life witnessing epics of sacrifice and selfless endeavor and feats of discipline and unity and who now finds enacted before him scenes which mock at the past. Our public life seems to be degenerating into a fen of stagnant waters; our conscience is troubled with doubts and despair about the possibilities of improvement. We do not seem to be profiting either from history or experience. We appear helplessly to be watching the sickle of time taking away the rich corn, leaving behind the bare and withered stalks. Yet, the tasks that confront us are as complex and taxing as ever. They demand the best in us while we face them with indifferent resources. We seem to devote too much time to things that hardly matter and too little to those that count. We talk, while the paramount need is that of

action. We are critical of other people's exertions but lack the will to contribute our own. We are trying to overtake others by giant strides while we have hardly learnt to walk". These lines written by Sardar Patel, just three years after India attained Independence underline the importance of remaining grateful to the sacrifices made by our leaders, maintaining unity, discipline and learning from past experience, among others. I again wish to thank all of you present here and hope to periodically hear of the confident, progressive steps being taken to make a tangible impact on the governance of the country. Jai Hind!"