

Address by Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, Honourable Vice President of India at the 64th Annual General Body Meeting of Indian Institute of Public Administration, in New Delhi on October 26, 2018.

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"I am happy to be with all of you at the 64th Annual meeting of the General Body of this Institute that has been striving to extend the frontiers of knowledge to improve governance in the country. As the President of this historic Institute, I am happy to note that IIPA has been extending support to Government especially to the Ministries of Urban Affairs and Housing, Science and Technology, Electronics and IT, Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, Environment and Forests, Consumer Affairs, Public Enterprises and Health.

It is also heartening that IIPA is collaborating with Governments and institutes abroad in Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Japan, Germany, Netherlands, France and China. I congratulate IIPA for its efforts to build a culture of excellence and to blend academic rigour with practical policy orientation.

Our country has many strengths and competencies that can easily propel us into higher development trajectory. Our rich human resource is one of them. We have a strong steel frame in the shape of a competent civil service created by our constitution makers led by Sri Sardar Patel. The civil service has the mandate to translate the policy intent of the legislature into implementable programmes. It has the duty to monitor and evaluate, suggest mid course corrections and ensure that the programmes yield the desired results. It has done so in quite a remarkable way over the last seventy years.

Yet, there is so much more to be done. There are so many gaps to be bridged, so many dots to be connected. The rural-urban divide, the gender divide, discrimination against women and social groups like Scheduled castes, pockets of poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, ill health persist. Basic issues like sanitation, clean drinking water, clean environment and dependable power remain key challenges in many parts of our country. While we have moved up the league table in making our business environment more investor- friendly, there is considerable room for improvement.

India is at cusp of a major transformation. The economy is growing at rate much faster than many major economies of the world. The World Bank in its 2018 Report has noted that India's GDP growth is projected to reach 6.7 percent in 2017-18 and accelerate to 7.3 percent and 7.5 percent in 2018-19 and 2019-20 respectively. At the same time, there are challenges of translating economic growth into inclusive development. We need a fresh look at the way we govern. The Swarajya for our country was a hard

earned outcome of a persistent struggle waged by countless patriotic women and men. It was led by men and women of rare vision, dedication and national pride. Su-Rajya for our people is an equally challenging task that requires enlightened leadership at various levels, aware citizenry, a vibrant civil society, a robust institutional framework and a learning, forward looking governance structures. Unlike Swarajya, where the goal post was clear and unmoving, Surajya has constantly moving goal posts. Good governance is a process that has no finality. We have to keep improving upon the past

The world is changing at an unprecedented pace and there is no option for us except to move with the times and, if possible, stay ahead of times by proactive action. Clearly, this poses innumerable, complex challenges to those who are responsible for the governance of the country. We cannot continue with the 'business as usual' approach. Our systems have to be reformed, our mindsets have to be altered and the focus of our actions has to be clearer. The governance ethos has to be radically different from what exists today.

I would suggest five important directions in which we should move forward to reform our governance system. They are: Ambition, Ability, Agility, Accountability and Achievement.

At the outset, we must set realistic but ambitious goals. This is especially necessary when we have an aspirational India driven by the dreams of 600 million young people. We should aim high and not be complacent with our current achievements.

Second, we must imbibe the skills required to increase our efficiency and effectiveness. We must be competent practitioners with the state of the art knowledge drawn from good practices around the world.

Third, we must have the ability to adapt, improvise, innovate to create programmes and strategies to make them effectively address the challenges. We must be agile and proactive.

Fourth, we must constantly evaluate the successes and failures. We must enhance the accountability through a culture of measurement and evaluation and improvement – oriented monitoring.

Fifth, we must focus on the 'outcomes' or actual results on ground. Very often, we lose sight of this important aspect. We do not carry our initiatives forward till results are achieved.

The journey from Swarajya to Surajya is an arduous one. But it is the duty of each one of us who share the fruits of a free India to make this mission possible. I am glad that IIPA has planned, on my suggestion, a number of national Consultations with Central

Ministries, State Governments, Universities, Civil Society and professional institutes besides industry associations and local peoples' representatives to discuss the current status of some key governance issues and come up with solutions for the consideration of Central and State governments. We started with a national consultation on problems of implementing the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments in Hyderabad in March this year. We had the second National Consultation in June at Pune on 'Making agriculture more profitable and sustainable'. Both these consultations were very well attended and generated a number of interesting ideas.

I request the IIPA to complete the process of obtaining further inputs from the state governments and take forward this series of National Consultations in the coming months. As I have said, there has to be a review of our governance structures. The change that Sardar Patel desired and Pandit Nehru, the first President of the IIPA Society dreamt of, is today a multi-dimensional challenge. There has to be a change in the way we set goals, benchmarks and objectives. There has to be a change in the way we enhance our competence. There has to be change in the way we learn from the best practices around the world and adapt them to our changing socio-economic contexts. But beyond these changes, the big change that we should attempt is to focus on 'results'. We should not merely look at the activities or the money being allocated and feel contented. The development agenda is incomplete if we don't achieve our goals, our mission objectives. The bottom line of a development programme is the impact on human lives, the transformation it brings in the dignity, capability and prosperity of each citizen.

In order to make this leap forward in the way we govern ourselves, we need resource institutions like IIPA. IIPA has a six decade long history of being a think tank but I suggest we look at the way we reposition it in the light of current and emerging challenges. The Chairman and Director can constitute a small task force to prepare an approach paper and then have wide ranging discussions with different stakeholders. We have to come up with a sound strategy for institutional reform and make IIPA a fit organization to catalyze the new wave of governance reform.

I am glad IIPA has a strong network of institutes at state and local levels as well as a growing number of distinguished alumni. I suggest that we should strengthen these networks and collaborations. The state governments must be brought on board and be active partners. So also the local bodies in cities and rural areas. Good governance must percolate down to the lowest level. It must become a way of life for 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 am glad to honour 9 eminent administrative and managerial leaders who have distinguished themselves in their careers with the Paul H. Appleby Award. I do hope each one of you will be able to contribute to the new wave of governance reforms underway in our country and to the re-structuring of IIPA into a centre of excellence. Infact, the Director IIPA could get useful suggestions from eminent practitioners and academicians who have been given this award and complete the process of preparing a set of recommendations in about three months time.

I am happy to be amidst this galaxy of prominent figures in the field of public administration. I congratulate the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Director, IIPA on steering this institution so well. I wish you a very exciting productive year ahead as you navigate through a complex but fascinating sea of reform and innovation.

Thank you.

Jai Hind!"