

Speech of the Hon'ble Governor for the State level launch event of U-Report for Suraksha Campaign organised by UNICEF in collaboration with Assam State Commission for Protection of Child Rights on 18th July 2022 at Hotel Vivanta

Namaskar,

Dr. Sunita Changkakati ji, Chairperson, Assam State Commission for Protection of Child Rights.

Dr. Madhulika Jonathan ji, Chief of UNICEF Assam

Harmeet Singh ji, Commissioner of Police, Guwahati

Shri Deepak Kumar ji, Regional Director, National Service Scheme, everyone gathered here and most importantly my dear friends.

I am really honoured to be with you here today. I am particularly happy to participate in the launch of 'U-Report' for Suraksha Campaign organised by UNICEF in collaboration with Assam State Commission for Protection of Child Rights. I am sure this will give a unified voice to the youth in matters concerning their education, career, skill education, health, governance, mental health and many more. I am moreover feeling happy that after being launched the 'U-Report' which is a free tool for community participation would adequately address issues that our people care about.

Former President of South Africa, the Nobel Peace Laureate Nelson Mandela once said, (I quote): “There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children” (Unquote). The essence of a society rests on how it treats its children and how a favourable environment can be created for all round development of our children.

We all know that violence against children is common. The violence could be physical, emotional or any kind. But in most of the times it remains hidden and many people turn a blind eye. But contrary to this, we need to create a safe space for our children to facilitate their socialization as well as learning.

I firmly believe that our children need a happy environment at home, at the institution they study, the community they live in as well as on digital platforms to give them opportunities to be able to become stable and productive adults in the future. Currently, India has the largest young population. We need to channelize their energies and actions into making the country socially, culturally, academically and economically strong.

The launch of ‘U Report’ for the Suraksha campaign is a good initiative to reach out to young people to increase their awareness on protection issues – so that they can learn to

identify violations and report them. I am told that 'U Report' will also capture experiences from young people that will help the policy makers and other stake holders working for child right protection to take right steps for their development.

I would encourage all young people of Assam to join 'U-Report', take the quiz and the pledge to spread awareness, act and report against any type of violence and abuse perpetrated on them. I on my part will also direct all VCs to inform their students about 'U Report' and ask them to participate in campaign. Similarly, I encourage Bharat Scouts and Guides, and National Cadet Corps to join this endeavour as well.

I am happy that UNICEF, Assam State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Assam Police and NSS have taken cognizance of the issues being faced by our young friends in Assam. Our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji has put his immense faith in the potential of young people of our nation. The great youth icon Swami Vivekananda was a great believer in the potential of youth to change the world. He urged the Indian youth to educate themselves and emphasize as to how their energies can be potentially channelized to make their lives more meaningful. I am happy that under the leadership of our Prime

Minister, our governments both at the Centre as well as in the state have taken several steps for the empowerment of our youth.

I on this occasion, hail the efforts of all stake holders present here towards educating our young people about the importance of protecting them and others. 'U Report' will make the process participatory and capture young people's opinions which will be put in to use for their protection. I am very much interested to see as to how the young people in Assam will respond to this. I would ask UNICEF to provide me with a report on the outcome of 'U Report' in Assam.

We know that child exploitation and violence is a sensitive issue and not many people speak about incidences openly because of the taboos and stereotypes associated with them. In this light, I am glad to hear about the Suraksha campaign has been initiated by Assam State Commission for Protection of Child Rights and supported by UNICEF. This campaign is a reflection of the commitment of our society to the welfare of our children and young people.

On this occasion, I also call upon the media which is an important stakeholder to report to the incidences of child

violence. Media should bear the responsibility to highlight gaps in systems, generate awareness levels on young people and help in taking corrective steps.

'U Report' has provided us a unique opportunity for collaborative efforts at different levels. I urge UNICEF, Assam State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Assam Police and NSS to ensure that that we continue to strengthen our focus on child protection issues with better investment in support services and structures, for all children and young people.

I would like to conclude with an observation of Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi ji who said (I quote) "If we want to create peace in the world, we shall have to begin with the children". Such is the importance of children that without them nothing everlasting can sustain in our society. Together let us all commit to create an environment where our children and young people feel protected and secured. Please keep contributing.

Thank you,

Jai Hind