**Kailash Satyarthi’s Bharat Yatra will become the defining moment for Children’s safety in India: President of India**

*Walk for children’s safety and India will walk with you, says President to Nobel Peace Laureate*

**16th October 2017, Monday**: “I humbly propose 3 things- legal deterrence, resources for children and preventive measures to be taken for the safety and security for children across the country’: Kailash Satyarthi. In his meeting with the President Ram Nath Kovind Mr. Satyarthi urged the Government to set up a National Children’s Tribunal. “This body would be like the NGT, and would oversee effective and expeditious disposal of cases related to child abuse and assault, rehabilitation in cases of abuse and other safety matters including enforcement of laws and relief and compensation for damage and trauma,” he said.

Second, he said, to reap the benefits of India’s democratic dividend, India should have a higher budgetary allocation for children. Currently it is about 4%. Mr. Satyarthi said that every ministry should have a special allocation for children as child protection budget. This will help prioritise children in every realm of India’s administrative functioning.

Third, to prevent children across India, survivors of the most grievous forms of trafficking, are demanding that a strong Anti-Human Trafficking law be passed with a renewed sense of urgency. Let us promise them today, that a strong anti-human trafficking law be passed in the upcoming session of parliament. I look to the leadership of this country to listen, and act.”

The Hon’ble President of India joined the Nobel Peace Laureate to light the Bal Suraksha Jyoti, a Diya and symbolically call out to children who are shrouded in the darkness of abuse to walk towards the light of freedom. Mr. Satyarthi said, “the Bal Suraksha Jyoti that Hon’ble President lit today in the name of children will reach the last child in darkest corner of this country. Every household should light a lamp for Bachpan (childhood).”

President of India, Mr Ram Nath Kovind, said, “Kailash Satyarthi’s Bharat Yatra will be remembered as the one of the historic movements of social change, world over.”

“On one hand, man has created many scientific miracles, while on the other side, demons in the guise of humans, even today, are playing with our children's lives. If a child is insecure today, the whole society is guilty for this situation. What Kailash ji is trying to do is to break the silence that we have grown up in, when our society asked us to keep quiet, reinforced when our parents told us not to talk. It is a commendable step. I am told that through this Bharat Yatra he has addressed several stakeholders thereby awakening the social conscience of the country,” he said.

He further added that, “Prime Minister Modi talks about a progressive ‘New India’ by 2022. The year is also historic as India celebrates its 75th year of Independence. I urge Mr. Satyarthi to draw a five-year road map to help build an India that is safe for children, free of all abuse because without that, we cannot progress towards building the New India we have visualized.”

October 16th, marked the culmination of the Bharat Yatra. The Yatra was a movement to dispel the ignorance that pervades the society and replace it with the light of fearlessness, and today, the President of India himself lit the diya to declare his support for this noble cause.

Mr. Satyarthi also told the President, “India has recently prohibited all forms of child labour and ratified the crucial ILO Conventions No.138 and 182. I congratulate the Government of India for the historic step, and India is now well on its way to achieving the complete elimination of child labour by the year 2025, as per the SDGs,” added the Nobel Peace Laureate

Mr Kailash Satyarthi’s Bharat Yatra or the ‘war against rape’ as he has termed successfully concluded its 35-day journey across the country, demanding for the safety and security of children across the country.

The Bharat Yatra looked to achieve amongst its key missions, strong laws to be passed against traffickers and child rapists, strengthened institutional response in the medical, political, policing and judicial spheres of the country and the growth of compassion and awareness Between 11th September and 16th October, the Bharat Yatra has touched the lives of more than 6 crore children and marchers across India by spreading the awareness that was hitherto lacking in our country.

Starting from Kanniyakumari in Tamil Nadu, the Yatra received support from various ministers and political leaders in each of the 22 states it travelled through. Andhra Chief Minister, N Chandrababu Naidu announced the creation of a global policy institute under the direction of the Nobel Peace Laureate, while in Mr. Satyarthi’s home state of Madhya Pradesh Shivraj Singh Chouhan promised to push for the death penalty as a punishment for child sexual assault. He also invited the Nobel Laureate to discuss policies to make MP a child friendly state. Recently, Mr. Bhagwant Khumba, Member of Parliament, Bidar in Karnataka assured Mr. Satyarthi that he would propose a day of discussion in parliament focussed on children and their safety, security and well-being, while Punjab Chief Minister, Captain Amarinder Singh promised to structure and implement child friendly police stations in the state of Punjab.

Judicial response to the Bharat Yatra has also been extremely positive, with Justice Subhro Kamal Mukherjee personally assuring Mr. Satyarthi that he would see to the disposal of pending POCSO cases in the state of Karnataka.

The Yatra was the beginning of a long-term plan to ensure that the country is fully equipped to prevent the occurrence of trafficking and sexual assault of children and to provide the compensation necessary in the event of an unfortunate incident.

*Highlights of the Bharat Yatra*

* *Home Minister Mr Rajnath Singh assures passing the anti-trafficking bill*
* *Chief Ministers and ministers across the 22 states have assured taking specific steps to curb child abuse and trafficking*
* *Judiciary across States have assured fast tracking POCSO cases and setting up child-friendly courts*
* *Over 6 crore citizens mobilized, over 22 states covering 11,000 kms.*
* *Film celebrities Amitabh Bachchan, Anupam Kher, Dhanush, Latha Rajnikath, Vivek Oberoi, provide whole hearted support for the Yatra. Indian Ocean render music to the song ‘Nikal Pade Hein’ written by Mr. Satyarthi*
* *Google India partnered with the Bharat Yatra and chalked out the route to show their solidarity for the cause.*
* *President of India lights the diya with Kailash Satyarthi to dispel the darkness of child abuse*