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Respected Teachers, Fellow Academicians, my seniors and team members:

I remember the year very clearly. It was 1990 and I had passed my MD from Gwalior. A momentous decision to come to Mumbai, then Bombay, changed my thinking, my perspective, and my horizons. I arrived with a hope in my heart and a prayer on my lips. Today as I stand before you, I have all of you to thank for giving me the opportunity to serve this great organization.

Let me start with a solemn pledge before you that I will strive to do my very best through my tenure to add value, prestige and stature to our organization. By the time I am done, I sincerely hope that the pages we will write together in the history of Indian Academy of Pediatrics will serve as a model for my successors, just as I sought inspirations from those who walked the road before me.

All of us in the gathering today and the other members of our Academy who are not here for various reasons are united by one common goal, one common bond, one common aim, and that is the health and well-being of the children of our country. Whether it is the rural pediatrician who selflessly sacrifices the city life, the full time teacher who foregoes the financial lures of private practice, the advisor to the pharmaceutical industry, the manager of an NGO, or the consumer activist fighting for the rights of a child, our objective ultimately is to improve the lot of our kids either directly or indirectly. It is these collective endeavors that have seen Infant Mortality Rates plummet from 84 in

1990 to 53 in 2009. The target for 2015 is 28, but, expected to be 47.

Promotion of breastfeeding, near eradication of diseases such as polio, climbing literacy rate, decreasing deaths from measles and tuberculosis etc. etc.. I could go on. The list is endless. However friends, we all know that we still have a long road ahead. Let me therefore unveil my plans for the year ahead. There are five principle goals I propose to address. Admittedly there is some overlap between some of these objectives but for the sake of clarity I will break them up.

First, the IAP in working or liaising with Govt. of India, UNICEF, WHO and organizations such as Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and American Academy of Pediatrics can mutually enhance credibility and visibility. The *Navjat Shishu Suraksha Karyakram* with the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India and the First Golden Minute in conjunction with AAP, LDSC and Johnson & Johnson are examples. I intend to further strengthen these ties and expand the ambit of our dealings with these organizations. The IAP-AAP CME and IAP-RCPCH CMEs which preceded this conference were a big draw; and I hope that this is only the beginning of a fruitful partnership.

It is important at this juncture to mention that yet another offshoot of the IAP-RCPCH partnership is going to be the MRCPC examinations which will now be conducted in five metros of India. Aspirants will no longer have to fly to the UK for their Part I, Part II or Clinical. All these will now be so to speak

in our backyard. The partnership with RCPCH will also result in the widening of the doors of sub-specialty training via the IPTS. The IAP will continue to seek collaborative efforts with AAP in the areas of AAP publications, Practice Guidelines, CMEs, Exchange visitors, Collaborative research, specific issues such as Child Abuse, Disaster Management and Environmental Health.

The second area I intend to lay stress on is education. Fortunately with my predecessors having left me with a strong bank balance, I propose to continue programs such as the Asthma Training Module, RTI GEM, PALS Courses, Golden Hour Emergency Medicine Course and Advanced Science of Vaccinology albeit with some updating and revision.

We are in the process of preparing a uniform PG Teaching Module and if implemented across the country will go a long way in standardizing the way we are taught pediatrics from east to West and North to South. The undergraduates will not be forgotten and we are contemplating a book on clinical pediatrics. This year will also see addition to the sub-specialty series books by way of books on Respiratory Medicine, Neonatology, Nephrology and Endocrinology for practitioners.

On the social/financial front I intend to address the issue of Pediatric Health Insurance. Health insurance of unborn child, of the child with congenital defects or genetic disorders is area we need to focus our attention and land our voice. Members having ideas on this burning issue may please write to me directly with views.

Fourthly, I hope to increase the visibility of IAP to the lay public. The education and empowerment of our parents will go a long way in helping them make informed and balanced decisions regarding the health care of their dependents. By using the print, the electronic media and the face to face approach our team intends to create an information explosion

on a small series of carefully chosen topics such as Understanding the child, Expectations at school, Nutrition, Growth & Development, Vaccination, Diarrheal Diseases, Inhalation Therapy, and common emergencies at home, to name a few. Under this umbrella I also hope to hold classes on CPR for people in Police, Fire Brigade and other paramedics who could be called upon in time of emergency.

And lastly while the above mentioned endeavors come with width or breadth, as an organization we need to also strive for depth. This means looking into a small group of diseases which can have long term impact in the future health of our children. Impressed by the example of the KD Registry in Mumbai, I hope to set up registries or disease activity groups for conditions such as Kawasaki Disease, Childhood Diabetes, Obesity, Hypertension and management guidelines for Urinary Tract Infection and the like, the consequences of which are likely to be seen by adult physicians. Let them never fault us our acts of omission or commission.

If all these sound ambitious and a tall order—my friends, let me at least be allowed the luxury of dreaming. However, remember Rome was not built in a day and incidentally it was a Roman emperor who said “A man’s worth is no greater than the worth of his ambitions.” Blessed as I am with a capable team of office bearers and the ever willing, ever helping staff at the Academy office, I can see my dreams coming true.

I would like to conclude by thanking my late parents for having blessed me several times over for me to see this day and of course to my wonderful wife Rikki, our families and all of you without whose unflinching support I would never have made it.

Thank you all.

Jai Hind! Jai IAP!