

Rotary International honors Doctors Without Borders

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The global humanitarian organization, Rotary International has presented its World Community Excellence award to the International Medical Organization, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) or Doctors Without Borders. The award was presented at the annual conference of Rotary International District 3140 in India on February 2, 2013 at Aamby Valley, Pune.

MSF has been working in India since 1999. It has also been an active voice in public advocacy for affordable medicines for the masses and raised issues regarding compulsory licensing in Indian pharma and patent suits such as the Novartis Glivec case. In Mumbai, it runs a centre that provides comprehensive HIV care for patients with specific medical needs, such as those also infected with multidrug-resistant tuberculosis. Elsewhere in India, MSF provides basic healthcare and secondary medical care, as well as specialist care for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, kala azar, mental health issues and malnutrition. It currently runs medical programs in states including Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur and Nagaland.

Dr Inamdar, district governor of Rotary International District 3140 said that, "MSF has done monumental work in areas torn by strife, war and community upheaval. It is a non-political and non-religious organization par excellence, which undoubtedly deserves this award".

Accepting the award, MSF's international president, Dr Unni Karunakara, said, "Today, some 30,000 MSF doctors, nurses, surgeons, psychiatrists, logisticians, engineers, and support staff provide medical care to people caught up in conflict, affected by natural disasters or epidemics, or simply excluded from health services in more than 70 countries around the world. Our motivation remains as it was in 1971, the year MSF was formed: we are humanitarians."

MSF has also provided medical care during several emergencies in India, from treating victims of the earthquake in Gujarat in 2001 to those affected by violent clashes in Assam in 2012. On February 2, 2013, MSF distributed relief items, including cooking utensils, hygiene essentials and shelter materials, to people affected by a fire in Mahim slums of Mumbai.

MSF offers healthcare to people based only on need, irrespective of race, religion, gender or political affiliation. This award recognizes the organization's work around the world and its commitment to improve people's access to lifesaving healthcare.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is an independent international medical humanitarian organization that delivers emergency aid to people affected by armed conflict, epidemics, healthcare exclusion and natural disasters in more than 70 countries. MSF offers healthcare to people based only on need and irrespective of race, religion, gender or political affiliation.