

April 8, 2020

My dearest CSIR family members,

You are all aware that we are passing through an unprecedented situation at this time, seen rarely in the history of the mankind. You would have learnt from many different sources that the magnitude of the situation has not been encountered by humanity in a long... long... time. It is pertinent to note that the disease, now called as COVID-19, caused by the virus- Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2), transcends all categorizations of classes, colours, religions or Nationality of individuals and attacks all with equal ferocity. Therefore, it is time for all of us to sit back, introspect and resolve collectively how we are going to win this war by defeating the virus.

It is understood that there will be disruptions in terms of our day-to-day lives, economies, jobs, livelihoods of people, and also a significant toll on human life, but if we unite ourselves, we can resolve to get out of it with minimum damage. It is utmost important that CSIR family and extended family follows the Government instructions very closely. For example, when the Government has advised for social distancing, the advice must be followed strictly by all of us and by all our family members. We have to remember that any deviation from such advices not only puts us and our family members at risk, but also increases the risk of transmission to other individuals many fold. This war cannot be won by few doctors, Governments, policy makers, health care individuals, but rather by collective actions of all of us. I therefore urge you all and your families to take all necessary precautions to stay safe during the pandemic.

As a proud CSIR family member, I would like to bring to your attention the proactive role CSIR is playing in Covid-19 mitigation. We at the collective leadership level of CSIR have decided to focus on five broad areas, namely, (1) surveillance including digital methods, (2) rapid and cheap diagnosis, (3) development of new therapies, including new drugs, repurposing of known drugs and vaccines, (4) hospital assistive devices and (5) supply chain and logistics involved in each of these, where we believe the expertise of CSIR Scientific Community can be effectively leveraged to compliment the National efforts on tackling COVID 19 emergency. Work has begun on war footing on all these five areas. In this work, not only different pan-CSIR teams have been formed, but also through our flagship NMITLI programme, we are seeking academia and industry to join us to find innovative solutions. In the coming time, we have to ensure that we bring the best out of CSIR minds in these areas and provide solutions to the society for which we will be known in the future. If there was ever any moment in our history that we needed to challenge ourselves to find innovative solutions to the most important problem, I believe this is that

moment. To paraphrase Swami Vivekananda- I urge the entire scientific community of CSIR to rise, awake and stop not until we have discovered truly innovative solutions in these five areas. If any of you would like to join the collective efforts, there is space to accommodate other ideas and initiate work on those, if found suitable. I will keep you updated on progress of these initiatives. I will soon be addressing all the CSIR family on web, and I request all of you to join me in the address.

I would once again like to remind everyone that wars are fought with valorous soldiers, brave men, armies and with weapons. The current war is being fought by healthcare providers, scientists, technologists, industrialists, politicians, administrators all together, by men and women, old and young, of all creeds, united by a single goal. I urge you all in the CSIR Family to be a part of this war and fulfill justifiable expectations of us by the Nation through our scientific and technological prowess. We have done it in the past, I am sure we can do it again. Stay safe, stay protected from COVID 19.

[SHEKHAR C. MANDE]