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**Message from the Chief Election Commissioner of India
on the eve of
Tenth National Voters' Day - 25th January 2020**

It is my proud privilege and pleasure to congratulate citizens of our country on the eve of 10th National Voters' Day. Since the Election Commission of India was established on 25th January 1950, the Commission dedicated 25th January to be celebrated as National Voters Day, or popularly known as NVD, ever since 2011.

A voter is the most important stakeholder in our electoral process. It is heartening to note that in the 2019 Lok Sabha General Elections, a record number of 61.30 crore voters exercised their right to franchise to choose their Members of Parliament across 543 Parliamentary Constituencies along with General Elections held then for State Legislative Assemblies of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim. After Lok Sabha elections, ECI successfully conducted elections to State Legislatures of Haryana, Maharashtra, Jharkhand. Currently electoral process in NCT Delhi is underway.

It is heartening to note that concerted efforts of outreach through our *Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) flagship Programme*, resulted in enthusiastic participation of 29.24 crore women voters; 61.46 lakh Persons with Disabilities and 18.05 lakh Service Voters, as a result of which Elections to 17th Lok Sabha in fact became a festival of Democracy. More than 12 million officials, including security personnel, helped manage the massive logistics arrangements. SVEEP helped connect ECI with 91 crore registered Voters at 10.36 Lakh Polling Stations across the country during 2019 Elections.

NVD 2020 is a unique celebration of the largest democracy of the world, as it marks illustrious seventy years of the Election Commission of India and 10th NVD celebrations. The celebration reminds us of the Constitutional Rights of adult suffrage granted to every Indian citizen irrespective of religion, caste, community, language, region or socio economic considerations. On this day, while reiterating our abiding faith in democracy, we renew our resolve to uphold the rich democratic traditions of our country and the sanctity of free, fair and peaceful elections.

The main purpose of the NVD celebration is to encourage, facilitate and maximize the enrolment, especially of new voters. The Day is utilized to spread

awareness among voters for promoting informed participation in the electoral process. I welcome the new voters particularly to join our ever extending family.

Voter participation starts with registration in the Electoral Roll and culminates in exercise of right to vote on the polling day. In a democracy, each and every vote matters. The Election Commission has taken sustained initiatives to maximize participation from all categories of voters and to make elections informed, inclusive, accessible, ethical and participative.

ECI team across States has harnessed technology to make voting experience smoother through VoterHelpline Apps; Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System for Service Voters; Absentee Voter Facilitation to Octogenarian voters, marked PwDs as well as for Voters on Essential Services. ECI endeavours that 'No Voter is Left Behind' both in the process of registration and in participation. I hereby call upon all eligible citizens, 18yrs and above, who have yet not enrolled themselves, to come forth to register and participate wholeheartedly in all future elections.

I once again extend my heartiest congratulations and best wishes to every citizen of the country on the National Voters' Day.

Jai Hind!

(Approx 525 words)