



*56th Meeting  
of the  
National Development Council  
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**Address of  
Dr. Mukul Sangma  
Chief Minister  
Meghalaya**

*Honourable Prime Minister,  
Distinguished Members of the National  
Development Council and Friends,*

I express my gratitude to the Prime Minister for inviting us to this meeting of the National Development Council to discuss and approve the Approach Paper to the Twelfth Five Year Plan. I compliment the Planning Commission for preparing a very insightful Approach Paper for the Twelfth Plan. While agreeing with its general tenor and approach, I would like to submit that the emphasis for the States of the North East must be on bridging the infrastructure gap besides accelerating a sustainable, inclusive and rapid economic growth for equitable economic development of the country. The opportunities that would be available by way of strengthening economic and strategic cooperation with neighbouring SAARC

nations must also get due emphasis in the Twelfth Plan.

## **2. A Realistic Growth Target for the Nation in the Twelfth Plan**

Given that the growth performance of the Indian economy is likely to be 8.2 per cent per annum in the Eleventh Plan period along with the external context, it is quite appropriate to fix the growth target for the Twelfth Plan at 9.0 percent per annum. At the same time, we have to keep in mind the necessity of maintaining equity across States as well as social classes. This higher growth than in the present plan period is necessary to improve the quality of life of our people and providing employment opportunities to our ever increasing labour force. A business-like approach is needed to overcome the constraints of energy, water and infrastructure.

### **3. Growth Target for Meghalaya**

While the nation could achieve an annual growth rate of 8.2 per cent, Meghalaya showed a higher growth rate of 9.0 per cent during the first four years of the Eleventh Plan. Since the State lags behind the national per capita income, it will have to grow at a faster rate than the country to catch up. A study undertaken by the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) indicates that Meghalaya will have to grow at the rate of 11 percent per annum if it is to catch up with the rest of India by 2030. The recommendation is based on the assumption that the rest of the country grows at a constant rate of 9.0 percent during this period. While this is a laudable goal, it can be achieved only if necessary investments in infrastructure and human resource development are made.

I would like to emphasize the urgent need for providing more physical, social and economic

infrastructure in the North Eastern Region, in general, and Meghalaya, in particular so as to ensure that the region catches up with other States in terms of growth and development. The investment required for the Region will have to come primarily from the public sector since there is little scope for either pure private investment or investment under public private partnerships.

#### **4. Integrated Basin and Livelihood Development Programme**

Inclusive growth with a focus on poverty reduction, employment generation and livelihood provision is highlighted in the Approach Paper. With the same goal we have already launched a State flagship programme known as the “Integrated Basin and Livelihood Development Programme (IBDP)”. Under this programme, we are making several interventions in mission mode in areas like horticulture, aquaculture, animal husbandry, sericulture &

weaving, apiculture, energy, water and natural resource management. The core objective of these missions is to facilitate sustainable livelihoods for the people by leveraging upon the strengths of the State in the availability of abundant natural resources. Simultaneous focus is also being ensured for building up an integrated knowledge management system to meet the requirements of scientific planning and participatory development; creation of necessary infrastructure; capacity building of all stakeholders; investment promotion; robust regulatory framework; convergence and effective governance. The programme also attempts a paradigm shift in the approach to development facilitation by looking at target groups as entrepreneurs and not merely as beneficiaries.

## 5. Promoting Convergence and Co-ordination among Departments

Over the years, a need has been felt for greater and more effective co-ordination and convergence among the various departments in the Government. Keeping that in mind, we have created necessary institutional mechanism in the form of Basin Development Council and Basin Development Authority at the State level and Basin Development Units at the district level. In addition to these, three institutes have been established for ensuring effective capacity building of various stakeholders. These are the Institute of Natural Resources, Institute of Entrepreneurship and Institute of Governance. Besides this, we have also introduced a Scheme for viability gap funding to encourage convergence.

## 6. **Emphasis on Agriculture**

Since agriculture is the mainstay of 70% of the State's population, priority has to be given for agriculture with strong emphasis on horticulture and plantation crops. The problems of agriculture in my State have to be evaluated in the context of very less cropped area covered by irrigation facilities and huge untapped potential for organic farming. Further, to transform the agriculture sector from subsistence to commercial farming, significant capacity building is needed in technology adoption and marketing. Assistance from the Government of India, both financial and technical, is vital for agricultural development. In order to access niche markets, a time-bound programme of organic certification for selected spices and fruits is under consideration and that in turn will enable farmers to get premium on the price for such produce.



## **7. Development of Off Farm Activities**

We have been implementing a programme known as Training of Rural Educated Youth for Self-Employment in Farm-based Activities. Because of its success during the past few years, this programme will be expanded further to encourage more seekers of employment to become entrepreneurs and service providers in the agriculture and allied sectors.

## **8. Horticulture Development**

It is noteworthy that the State's foray into high value low volume crops namely, strawberry and commercial floriculture like Rose, Liliium, Gerbera, Chrysanthemum, Anthurium, Carnation, Birds of Paradise has helped us penetrate national and international markets. High value vegetables like Brocolli and Coloured Capsicum are also being expanded through the Technology Mission Scheme. We have plans to upscale the volumes of production of such

horticulture crops. We also expect to expand and strengthen the cold chain network to provide better marketing facilities to the farmers during the Twelfth Plan period.

## **9. Integrated Water Resource Management**

Water is increasingly becoming a scarce commodity. It is feared that India will face acute shortages of water in times to come. Meghalaya is blessed with bountiful water which needs be harnessed and stored. During Twelfth Plan period, integrated water resources management, basin planning, water quality monitoring and management, establishment of Small Multipurpose Reservoirs (SMRs) and participatory water resource management have been identified as thrust areas. As the success of effective water resources management will primarily rest on people's participation and community mobilization, we are undertaking a

programme for awareness and capacity building for different stakeholders.

## **10. Aquaculture Mission**

While the State has a great potential for fish production, there is a wide gap between consumption and production of fish. To fill the existing gap and meet the growing demand, fish production has to grow at more than 12.0 per cent per annum during the Twelfth Plan period. Keeping this in mind, we are preparing to launch the Aquaculture Mission with effect from the first of January, 2012 to expand the area under fish ponds by 10,000 hectares covering about one lakh farmers. They will be provided sustainable livelihood by ensuring quality fish seed, training in improved methods of rearing as well as marketing of their produce. Special attention to hatchery development, feed mills in a PPP mode and technology induction is being given. At the

end of the Twelfth Plan period, we hope to become self-sufficient in fish production.

## **11. Interventions in Health and Family Welfare**

Despite improvement in the health facilities and health indicators in the State, many challenges still exist in the health sector. In this context, the State Government has undertaken a number of new initiatives for improving the health indices in the State. A new scheme to motivate pregnant mothers to deliver at health institutions has been taken up where the mother is provided with a cash incentive of Rs 5000/- with matching ASHA incentives from the State Plan. The Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK) has been initiated in the State from July, 2011 ensuring free service delivery to all pregnant women including transport, diet etc.

It may also be highlighted that there has been no outbreak of any disease in the State in

the last two years and the Malaria deaths in the State reduced from 189 in 2009, to 89 in 2010 and only 25 in 2011.

In respect of the health care infrastructure, the State has sufficient district hospitals, CHCs and PHCs. However, there is a huge shortfall in terms of sub-centres. The State is also facing a shortfall in the availability of both general and specialist doctors including para-medical staff. To address the problem of shortage of specialists, training for Emergency Management of Obstetrics Care and LSAS (Life saving and anaesthesia skills) has been introduced and doctors who have completed the training have been posted at designated locations. To address the problem of accessibility, ambulatory services have been augmented and the 108 EMRI service has been further strengthened.

The Ganesh Das Hospital, which has been awarded the ISO certification for quality

treatment, is being renovated and construction of a new building is expected to begin soon. A Cancer Wing at Civil Hospital, Shillong is being established. Several cancer awareness and detection drives through fully equipped Mobile Cancer Detection Units are being carried out in the State.

The setting up of medical colleges at Shillong and Tura is expected to be initiated in the near future. Additional public health facilities will also be commissioned during the Twelfth Plan to further augment the network of health institutions in the State. We would urge the Central Government to provide the necessary expertise and financial assistance in this endeavour.

## **12. High Sex Ratio**

The State has a high and increasing sex ratio. The State is in top quintile with a high sex ratio of 986 in 2011. It is only because of the

progress made in the last two decades that the sex ratio could reach such a high level. The ratio is improving by 1.5 points per annum and, if the same pace continues, the sex ratio will reach the ideal level of 1000 by the end of the decade.

### **13. Efforts to Shift from Second to Third Stage of Demographic Transition**

The State has the highest decadal growth rate of population at 27.82 per cent. However, the trend of accelerated growth is reversed and there is decline in the growth rate during 2001-11 as compared to the previous decade. The high population growth rate is because of our good performance in reducing the death rate without commensurate reduction in the birth rate. Thus, the State is in the second stage of demographic transition in which birth rate will be high and death rate low. The total fertility rate or the total number of children for a woman, as observed from the NFHS, is 3.8 as against the national

average of 2.7 in 2005-2006. On the other hand, we have been able to reduce the IMR to 53 which is lower than the National average. Another significant achievement of the State has been the removal of the rural-urban gap in IMR. At the national level, rural IMR is significantly higher than the urban one. The State will make further efforts to reduce the birth rate and reach the third stage of demographic transition in which the birth rate as well as the death rate will be low.

#### **14. Educational Development**

The State has shown significant improvement in literacy in the last decade. Literacy rate increased to 75.5 per cent in 2011 from 62.6 per cent in 2001, an increase of 1.3 percentage points each year. The improvement in female literacy rate is higher than in male literacy rate. While male literacy rate improved by 11.8 percentage points, female literacy rate improved by 14.2 percentage points. Thus, the gender gap



in literacy is narrowing down. However, significant challenges persist. The first is the poor performance of the rural sector as compared to the urban. In 2001, urban literacy rate of Meghalaya is higher than its national counterpart by 7 percentage points, but the rural sector lagged behind the nation by 2.4 percentage points. We have to make strong interventions to improve the rural literacy rate in the State. To achieve this, basic infrastructure like availability of classrooms, buildings and teachers have to be improved. The quality of teaching also needs to be improved through proper teacher training. A massive investment has to be made in improving the infrastructure in the education sector which is quite inadequate at present. As high as 20 per cent of the schools have no building, 24 per cent of the buildings are in a dilapidated condition and 67 per cent of the schools have shortage of accommodation.

In order to improve the quality of teaching, the State Government is inviting recognized teacher training institutions in the private sector to run training courses for the existing teachers. To curb the demand for Government jobs, we are committed to improving the curriculum and course content in schools and integrating vocational courses in the mainstream syllabi.

In the field of Higher and Technical Education, the setting up the National Institute of Technology at Sohra with financial assistance from the Central Government is under way.

To ensure quality school education, three International Schools under our well established Pine Mount banner will be set up in three districts. We are also keen to set up Ekalavya model residential schools in the State for which assistance of the Central Government is being sought.

## 15. Power Sector

Meghalaya has an estimated hydro power potential of about 3000 MW and a number of hydro power projects are on the anvil for implementation during the Twelfth Plan period. However, the cost of construction of dams for hydro power is prohibitive and the State Government would require the Central Government's assistance along with institutional funding. We have initiated steps to augment capacity addition in generation by involving the private sector. MOAs were signed for Umduna (57 MWs), Umjaut (69 MWs) and Rangmaw (65 MWs) with Independent Power Producers (IPPs). MOAs have also been signed for projects under Joint Venture for Kynshi I and II HEP's (900 MWs). An Agreement has been signed with NEEPCO for Garo Hills Thermal Project (500 MWs). One Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a thermal project in Nangalbibra,

South Garo Hills, has been signed under IPP mode for a 240 MW project.

In respect of Rural Electrification, out of 5782 villages in the State 3965 villages have access to electricity. The remaining 1817 villages will be electrified under RGGVY and other ongoing schemes.

We have also taken steps to address the transmission constraints in the State. In order to strengthen the transmission and distribution system, and reduce Aggregate Technical and Commercial losses, the State Government has taken up implementation of the Restructured Accelerated Power Development Reforms Programme in nine towns of the State. The scheme has been approved at an estimated cost of Rs. 33.97 crores.

The State Government is keen on promoting Green City and Energy Efficiency initiatives. As part of this, the street lights of

Shillong and Tura towns are proposed to be electrified using energy efficient LED bulbs and solar energy is being harnessed.

The Approach Paper has rightly pointed out that one of the most serious challenges being faced by the Indian economy is energy management. We need to develop innovative ideas for meeting our energy requirements in the absence of which economic development would come to a standstill. With growing energy costs, the State Government is considering adoption of coal to liquid technology which can provide fuel at a more reasonable price.

## **16. Priority for Improvement of Communication Facilities**

Road connectivity is crucial for the overall development of the State as it provides access to markets, educational hubs, health care facilities, etc. The road length in the State is 9233 km. The road density in Meghalaya is 41 km per 100 sq.

Km of geographical area, which is far below the national average of 75 km. Because of the hilly terrain, we have been able to connect only 52 percent of the total villages in the State. Though there were problems in the implementation of the PMGSY in the initial period, they have now been sorted out and implementation of this programme is expected to improve substantially in the Twelfth Plan.

Investment in roads is crucial for overall growth. It has been experienced that the repairs of temporary nature result in wastage of resources because the durability of such repairs remains quite low. If the quality of road network has to be ensured, sufficient investment has to be made in this sector in a timebound manner. We have undertaken an initiative for upgradation of major district roads and State highways and would require one time assistance for this purpose.

I would like to mention that the North East has a distinct problem of difficult terrain and very small habitations. There are many habitations with population of less than 250. These are the areas that should get priority in development as they are highly inaccessible and have very high poverty level. Certain norms fixed by the Government of India render such sparsely populated and remote areas ineligible for Central Government assistance. I would strongly urge that for such areas the population norm may be done away with and if necessary other appropriate yardsticks may be applied.

We are grateful to the Government of India for their initiative in the conversion of the NH-40 into four lane from Shillong to Guwahati as well as for the Shillong Bye Pass. Besides this, the 2-laning of the intra-State Shillong-Nongstoin-Tura road has started. We expect that the construction of 2-lane Jowai Bye-Pass and the expansion of

certain portions of NH 51 including construction of Tura Bye-Pass will commence during the first part of the Twelfth Plan period.

We are also grateful to the Central Government for the keen interest it has shown in the construction and upgrading the airports at Umroi and Baljek. We hope that the air connectivity will continue to be further expanded during the Twelfth Plan so as to enable the State to ensure export of its horticultural and other produce and also provide better communication necessary for development of different industries like tourism and IT.

In respect of railway connectivity, the Tetelia - Byrnihat railway line is in the initial process of land acquisition and the Byrnihat - Shillong railway line is under alignment survey. Besides the above, we are interested in the construction of a railway all along the southern part of the State which runs parallel to the



international border. A proposal for connecting Jowai and Silchar with a railway line is also under consideration.

### **17. Low Industrial Development**

Despite the presence of rich mineral deposits, industrial development in the State is still lagging far behind. At present, there is a predominance of cement manufacturing units with some steel manufacturing units. The State is keen to set up traditional industry based on sericulture and weaving, horticulture produce, etc.

IT industry is also another feasible avenue because of the availability of a large percentage of English speaking youth in the State. To ensure the development of IT industry, the State Government will strive to ensure the basic infrastructure such as power, communication and availability of land.

## **18. High Potential Tourism Development**

The State is blessed with scenic and serene landscape with numerous streams, rivers and waterfalls as well as rich bio-diversity and varied traditional cultures. There has been a marked increase in the number of tourists visiting the State during the past few years. The growth in tourism is also expected to create demand for employment in the hospitality industry. The existing tourist infrastructure in the State is not sufficient to cope with the demand.

## **19. Skill Development**

Skill development is an important area to ensure livelihood of the common man. More than one-half of the youth look for government jobs. This is mainly because of inadequate skills and entrepreneurship development. The State Government has recently taken up the Meghalaya State Employment Mission, which seeks to develop the existing skills of the local

people in various fields. We also hope to take advantage of the financial assistance being provided by the Central Government for such purposes. We propose to continue providing IT skill up-gradation and empowerment to unemployed youth of the State free of cost with the assistance of NIIT. The first phase of the training of 2000 youths with Symantec from Singapore had been successfully completed and a number of youths have been gainfully employed after the programme. The training programme under Department of Electronics and Accreditation of Computer Courses (DOEACC) will continue with special focus on training and skill up-scaling for women. The establishment of Meghalaya Institute of Entrepreneurship will also help in improving the skills of the youth for self-employment.

## 20. Trade with Bangladesh

The recent visit of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India to Bangladesh has helped to usher in an understanding of the difficulties as well as the expectations between Bangladesh and the North Eastern States. We congratulate our Hon'ble Prime Minister for the initiatives taken, and hope that pending and unresolved issues will be addressed expeditiously in the spirit of statesmanship which has been portrayed by the leaders of both countries. It is an undeniable fact that having trade links with Bangladesh will be beneficial to the entire N.E. Region. The markets for the N.E. Region historically and geographically lie in our neighbouring countries, and these need to be rebuilt with appropriate trade protocols and improvement of infrastructure at the export points. Basic infrastructure such as communication, power, etc. to the existing land custom stations in the

region is urgently required as this will provide an impetus for development of trade between our country and Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. Greater attention should be given to a trade corridor from Bhutan to Chittagong through Dhubri and the Garo Hills. In this connection, the construction of a bridge on the Brahmaputra connecting Dhubri with Phulbari will open up trade between the two countries. We are gratified to say that the border haat at Kalaichar in West Garo Hills District has been a huge success. Another Haat at Balat in East Khasi Hills District is being operationalised soon.

## **21. Cultural Development**

The different tribes of Meghalaya provide a rich and diverse culture. Besides this, the people of the State are known for their musical talents. With a view to tap such talents, we are setting up a Music Academy in Shillong as well as constructing amphitheatres at different places

in the State. Art and Culture Societies at the State and District levels are being encouraged for preservation and development of our cultural heritage.

## **22. Environmental Issues and Management of Natural Resources**

The Approach Paper has also highlighted the need for ensuring protection of the environment in a manner that it can facilitate sustainable and rapid growth. Among all the natural resources of Meghalaya, forests contribute maximum to the State's economy. A large proportion of families are dependent on forests for their livelihood. The traditional dependence on forests is on shifting cultivation and collection of edible forest products for their livelihood. The shifting cultivation cycle is getting reduced as a result of which there is a threat to forest cover. We are making efforts for rejuvenation and restoration of bio-diversity. A

mission mode programme for promoting livelihoods in the forestry and plantation crops sector is being taken up for implementation in the State.

**23. Need for further decentralization of administrative functions:**

While implementing the agenda of promoting convergence amongst various Central Government schemes and programmes, it has been experienced that the guidelines of some ministries do not provide requisite flexibility to the States to take appropriate decisions necessitated by the local conditions. I would like to complement the Planning Commission for taking this up in right earnest through a sub committee for restructuring of Centrally Sponsored Schemes. We have recently received the draft report of the sub committee. We shall examine the report and revert with our feedback shortly.

#### 24. **Security related expenditure:-**

By and large, Meghalaya has been peaceful except for certain pockets in the State. This is mainly due to the relentless efforts of our security forces. However, certain basic infrastructure such as housing facilities and police station buildings needs to be provided for the security forces. The Government of India is requested to kindly consider providing assistance as part of the Plan to the State Government for such purposes during the Twelfth Plan period.

#### 25. **Conclusion**

Meghalaya is also on the high growth path and is making serious efforts to overcome its constraints. Firstly, the high population growth will be used as an advantage by creating productive employment. Skill development programmes have been taken and the Institute of Entrepreneurship is going to give further impetus for the programme. Secondly, water is



bountiful because of high rainfall but a lot of it wasted. The Aquaculture Mission and the Small Multipurpose Reservoir (SMR) Mission will impound water for its productive use as well as improving ground water recharge. Thirdly, efforts are being made to preserve the cultural heritage of the State by establishing a music school at Shillong. Fourthly, the State is a pioneer in focusing on the issues like environment and climate change management and sustainable development.

Once again, I thank the Hon'ble Prime Minister for affording this opportunity for interaction on the Draft Approach Paper to the Twelfth Plan.

Thank you.

JAI HIND