



Speech

of

**Dr. Donkumar Roy**  
Chief Minister, Meghalaya

at the

**57<sup>th</sup> Meeting**  
**of the**  
**North Eastern Council**

at

Parliament House Annexe,  
New Delhi

*7<sup>th</sup> January, 2009*

*Hon'ble Union Minister, DONER & Chairman, N.E.C Shri Mani Shanker Aiyar-Ji, Distinguished Members of the North Eastern Council, Officials from the Government of India, N.E.C., State Governments and Friends.*

I am happy to participate at this 57<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the North Eastern Council here in New Delhi. I admire the abiding interest and stamina of the Hon'ble Union Minister of DONER & Chairman, N.E.C in this regard for convening this 57<sup>th</sup> Plenary at the very beginning of the year 2009.

2. At the outset, I, on behalf of the people of Meghalaya, would like to wish Shri Mani Shankar Aiyarji, Hon'ble Union Minister, DoNER & Chairman of the North Eastern Council and all the distinguished members of this august House, a very happy & prosperous New Year, 2009. I hope that the initiatives and efforts put in by the NEC during 2008 would make further progress during 2009 to steer the region forward towards catching up with the rest of the country in the near future.

3. As regard the Action taken Report on the decisions taken at the 56<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NEC, the draft **State Education Policy** is in the process of finalization. Since our aim is to make the State of Meghalaya an Educational Hub in the region, we have invited the views from all sections of the society in this regard. We hope to bring out a comprehensive & vibrant Education Policy of the State very soon. The **State Sports Policy**, in line with the National Sports Policy, is also under process and

is expected to be finalized soon. The **State Vision Document-2020** is under preparation. The Agriculture Department is seeking help of the APEDA for **setting up of Packaging Centres** in Meghalaya for promoting sale & export of horticulture products from the State.

4. For the Annual Plan 2007-08, the NEC had proposed an outlay of Rs.1,803.72 crores but the outlay approved by the Planning Commission was only Rs.600.00 crores, a woefully inadequate amount. The NEC has a large number of spill-over schemes amounting to Rs.1,921.69 crores. As against the proposed outlay of Rs.1200.00 crores for 2008-09, the outlay approved by the Planning Commission is Rs.624.00 crores only. The State Government endorses the NEC's move to seek enhancement of the outlay during 2008-09 to Rs.1000.00 crores. The over all picture indicates that the proposed 11<sup>th</sup> Plan outlay of Rs.12,487.54 crores, at the present rate of increase, would stand reduced by 31.12%.

5. The Vision 2020 Document has proposed massive investment in the NER in order to grow at a rate of 11.78% GSDP & a per capita income of 10.47%. Unless an adequate enhancement of allocation is made, I am afraid that NEC will not be able to make much impact in the development of the NER, thus making the Vision 2020, a distant dream only.

6. Meghalaya's share out of the approved outlay of Rs.600.00 crores of NEC's Annual Plan 2007-2008 was of the order of Rs.79.14 crores and the highest ever. However, during 2008-09, a total of Rs.21.27 crores only has been released by the NEC as on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2008. It is requested that from the shelf of proposals pending with NEC, the prioritised schemes may be cleared at the earliest.



7. **Regarding the need for preservation and promotion of Art & Culture in the NER**, I am very thankful to you Sir, for your prompt action in recognizing the need to prioritise the development & protection of the indigenous cultures of the North East as well as vigorously promoting youth activities. Though this subject had been discussed in the 8<sup>th</sup> Sectoral summit, I am thankful to you Sir, for keeping this subject on the Agenda at this 57<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NEC. It is gratifying to note that while we are striving for faster development, we realize that we must do so while preserving and promoting our legacy and our Culture. The preservation and promotion of such culture through an institution like NEC is a welcome step towards national integration. I believe that the people of the NER can showcase their cultural mosaic and also weave economic value into the process by promoting culture tourism and preservation of heritage sites.

8. The 8<sup>th</sup> Sectoral meeting held on 20-21 July, 2007 in New Delhi has unanimously taken some decisions that included the setting up of Multipurpose Cultural Complexes and identification of flora and fauna. Preservation of flora and fauna is integral to the preservation and growth of culture. There is an urgent need to identify and document the wealth of flora and fauna of the region. In doing so, we will be able to identify resources which had hitherto gone waste due to ignorance. **I propose that the NEC sets up a Regional Institute of Environmental Studies at Shillong.** The State Government will allocate land free of cost for the purpose.

9. The 8<sup>th</sup> Sectoral Summit had taken a decision that 1% allocation from the NEC's budget will be made for the preservation and

promotion of culture of the region. This would work out to about Rs.7.00 crores in this current year. I propose that the amount be utilized first for promoting the study and documentation of various cultures. It may then be followed by other efforts for which the picture will become clear after the studies.

10. Efficient sanction of NLCPR schemes is essential. There is considerable delay at present. The technical vetting by Ministries may not be necessary except where expertise is not available in the State. The present procedure is cumbersome. One major issue has been the manner in which funds/resources are distributed/allocated amongst the states in the NER. This calls for:

- (i) an equitable & rational allocation to States.
- (ii) baseline assessment of Infrastructure and socio-economic gaps be prepared in partnership with the States, leading to specific proposals under NLCPR/NEC.
- (iii) Either a separate kitty for Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)/Private Institutions based on guidelines & rules be put in place or it may altogether be stopped.
- (iv) The allocation of 10% GBS every year may be made known to each State along with respective sectors.

11. Poverty alleviation has always been a priority of the Government of India. The **North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project (NERCORMP)** with its objective “to improve the livelihood of vulnerable groups in a sustainable manner through



improved management of their resource base” has some basic similarities to SGSY currently under implementation by the Ministry of rural Development. Since NERCORMP, funded by IFAD, is winding up, I propose that the **North Eastern Region Livelihood Project (NERLP)** be sponsored by the Ministry of DoNER with the assistance of **World Bank** as a follow-up of the highly successful NERCORMP. I request you to kindly take into consideration the following suggestions in respect of the State of Meghalaya while finalising the scheme with the World Bank:

- The North Eastern Region Livelihood Project (NERLP) may follow the IFAD models of NERCORMP and LIPH(Livelihood Improvement Project for the Himalayas), a joint venture of the State Government and IFAD being implemented in the five Districts of Jaintia Hills, Ri Bhoi, East Garo Hills, South Garo Hills and East Khasi Hills.
- The Meghalaya Rural Development Society (MRDS) will be prepared to take over and continue the Community Resource Management Project.

12. **Power Development Sector:** From a very low base, industrialization in Meghalaya has picked up since the announcement of the Central Government’s Industrial Policy for the North East. There is considerable scope for further development in the manufacturing sector in Meghalaya, based on the State’s mineral and horticultural resources. However, power is a crucial constraint. Large investments will be required in power generation, transmission and grid development. The installed

capacity in the State is 185.20 MW of Hydel Power but our requirement of power now stands at 610 MW and is likely to go up to about 1000 MW by the end of 11th Plan. It is, therefore, imperative that we urgently add to our generating capacity. At present, the State's share of Central Sector Generation is about 130 MW while the peak power availability is only 240 MW during the monsoon and 200 MW during the dry season.

13. Meghalaya also has a large scope for **small hydro** and some **non-conventional sources of energy**. For this purpose, Meghalaya would need liberal assistance from the NEC/DONER by way of **Viability Gap Support** during the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan. NEC/Ministry of DONER is requested to provide Viability Gap Support in respect of hydro-electric projects. It may further be suggested that the NEC should also support a feasibility study report and action plan for tapping of such potential for Power generation for the benefit of small and isolated villages in the region.

14. We are thankful to the NEC for having sanctioned an important project in Meghalaya during the closing year of the Tenth Plan viz., **“Construction of the 132 KV S/C transmission line from Agia in Assam to Nangalbibra in Meghalaya”** at a total estimated cost of **Rs.43.32 crores**. 9(nine) other smaller schemes comprising of Transmission, Mini Hydel Project and Survey & Investigation schemes sanctioned by the NEC are currently under implementation.

15. Meghalaya is keen to take up the Nangalbibra Thermal Power Project in the Garo Hills but the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) has not agreed to take it up. The State would request that NEC and DoNER take steps to impress upon the Public Sector Undertakings



of Government of India to be more sensitive towards the crucial needs of the North Eastern States.

16. Meghalaya has considerable potential in hydro electric power. However, during the presentation made by NEEPCO at the Thematic Groups Conference at the NEC Auditorium on the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2008, no mention was made about power projects in Meghalaya, from which we may infer that the Vision NER 2020 does not cover Meghalaya as far as hydro electric power sector is concerned.

17. **Roads Communication and their maintenance:** A number of road schemes in Meghalaya have been sanctioned by the NEC during the Tenth Plan (2002-07). Two important road schemes that have not been sanctioned as yet are (1) Improvement, Widening including Construction of new Road and Metalling & Black-topping of Nongstoin-Rambrai-Kyrshai-Chaygaon Road(66.50 Kms.) and (2) Construction including Metalling & Black-topping of Kynshi-Myriaw-Mirza Road (0-148 Kms.) –Phase-I = (0.50.00 Kms.). These schemes are included in the priority list of NEC road schemes for the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan. I request the NEC to kindly sanction these schemes early. While finalizing the priority road schemes for the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan, only 8(eight) schemes of Meghalaya have been incorporated which include the above two schemes. The **Bandapara (Assam)-Malangkona-Shallang(Meghalaya) Road-Phase-I** which have been approved in the NEC's Tenth Plan did not appear in the priority list of the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan. It may be mentioned that the State PWD has already prepared the DPR at an estimated project cost of Rs.25.00 Crores. This was submitted to the NEC. I would urge upon the Council to include this road scheme also in the priority list of the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan of the NEC.



18. NEC Road schemes involve inter-State connectivity. However, if one of the States has agreed to a proposal, the NEC may initiate project formulation for the portion falling in that State in case the other State takes considerably more time to examine the matter and give its consent. This will perhaps save time and cost overrun and expedite the implementation process.

19. As a policy, the NEC needs to keep a provision for maintenance of Roads since annual repairs and maintenance of roads are essential in order to prevent them from deteriorating into unusable assets. Under the NEC Programme, 945.855 Kms.(approx.) of road length have been constructed in our State. I strongly suggest that the NEC should consider providing funds for maintenance of these NEC roads.

20. I hope that the deliberations and decisions of this august House would be fruitful for the benefit of the people of the North East. In conclusion, I would like to thank you once again for having given me the opportunity to place our views before this august gathering.

**THANK YOU,**

**JAI HIND.**