



सत्यमेव जयते

ADDRESS

OF

SHRI DORJEE KHANDU

CHIEF MINISTER
ARUNACHAL PRADESH

53RD MEETING
OF
THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

AT

VIGYAN BHAWAN

NEW DELHI
MAY 29, 2007

**Hon'ble Prime Minister, the Chairman of NDC,
Hon'ble Union Ministers, Hon'ble Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission,
Hon'ble Chief Ministers,
Senior Officers, Ladies and Gentlemen.**

I feel privileged to participate in this important meeting of the National Development Council. At the outset, I must compliment the Planning Commission and the Sub-Committee of National Development Council on Agriculture and Related Issues for preparing the comprehensive report. This report deserves serious consideration by all of us. It is an opportunity to discuss the basic problems afflicting agriculture sector in the country to find out appropriate remedies. I would like to share my views on some of the important issues and recommendations highlighted in the agenda with reference to my State.

2. Arunachal Pradesh is a land of forests and rivers. Over 81% of the area of my State is under forests yet agriculture and allied activities are the main source of livelihood for majority of the people of Arunachal Pradesh. Agriculture contributes about 25% to the GDP of my State and provides employment to nearly 70% of the work force. The net cultivable area of the State is around 2.05 lakh Ha, while the gross cultivable area is 2.55 lakh Ha. About 80% of the net cultivable area is without assured irrigation. Of the net cultivable area, while 32% is under shifting cultivation (jhuming), they contribute only 13.8% to the total crop production. Against the estimated food requirement of 3,05,824 MT for my State, the food production actually available for consumption is 2,07,487 MT resulting in a deficit of around 98,337 MT of food grains. The agriculture in my State is beset with problems of poor and deteriorating land resource base, small and fragmented land holdings, lack of assured irrigation facilities, lack of appropriate technology and inadequate credit and marketing facilities.

3. Arunachal Pradesh is a hilly State. The soil being acidic and unproductive and topography of the land unsuitable for settled cultivation, jhuming has been practiced since time immemorial often to the detriment of forests with its present reduced cycle. Our farmers toil hard in their jhoom fields but obtain very poor yields. Wherever possible, Jhum cultivation has to be replaced with terraced cultivation. So also, better land management has to be introduced encompassing agro-forestry and horticulture. There is also the urgent need to dovetail the watershed development programmes in my State with the goal of reducing jhuming and replacing it with sustainable cultivation. For all these, I solicit the assistance of the Central Govt for pilot projects and for treating more jhum areas under the Watershed Development Programme in Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSCA).

4. In some areas of the State, where settled rice cultivation is followed, there is the problem of nutrient supplements, single kharif rice and rabi fallows. Since rice cultivation is chemical and fertilizer free by default and not by design, productivity issues arise. As pointed out in the agenda papers, there is ample scope for introducing multiple cropping, nutrients management, rabi crops to increase the cropping intensity

and enhancing productivity by improved farm practices. This calls for enhanced assistance from the Central Govt. Further as my State has decided to go ahead with the organic movement, technical and financial support from Government of India is required for setting up of bio-fertilizer and compost production centres in the private sector with the objective of fulfilling the nutrient requirement for the crops in the near future.

5. For rejuvenating agriculture, our main thrust would be on increasing the level of production and rate of productivity with focus on enhancement of farm incomes. This would call for multi-pronged measures like reclamation of soil acidity by appropriate treatments, introduction of location specific technology and adequate package of inputs mix by way of appropriate cropping pattern, effective extension services and availability of credit. This can create a green revolution in agriculture in the State especially in the production of cereals. Diversification of agriculture and intensive cultivation with double cropping will be of utmost importance with a view to attain self-sufficiency in food grains and to increase employment opportunities as also for creation of income generation avenues. Specific strategies for different agro-climatic zones, location specific technology and appropriate policy packages would enhance productivity. The major productive areas in my State are scattered and without proper road connectivity. Taking full cognizance of the present state of agriculture development and requirement of our State, re-orientation and restructuring of strategies and policies best suited to Arunachal Pradesh will be necessary to achieve the cherished goal of self-sufficiency and self-reliance.

6. Assured irrigation can go a long way in ensuring settled cultivation in a hilly State like Arunachal Pradesh. Existing schemes under irrigation are essentially micro in nature and hence not sufficient to cater to actual needs. They are based on the concept of diverting water from seasonal streams/rivers to the fields. To address the demand for perennial irrigation, minor and medium size irrigation projects have to be taken up in all the predominant food grain producing areas of the State. This will entail heavy investment for which special assistance is required. The Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP), which was designed to bring on-going irrigation projects to quick completion, has helped. However, only small localized irrigation projects have been taken up under the programme so far. Further, the potential created by such small projects could not be utilized due to inadequate follow up by Command Area Development Activities. The ground water potential also needs to be exploited at a higher scale. Command Area Development works need to be taken up in a big way to bridge the huge gap of about 60% between creation and utilization of irrigation potential in the State. There is a need to accelerate the programme of Command Area Development so as to make it an effective instrument for transition towards irrigated agriculture and optimizing water efficiency. Frequent flash floods affecting agriculture have accentuated the need for a comprehensive flood management policy. With a view to gainfully utilize the irrigation potential created so far, it is necessary to take up repairs, renovation and rejuvenation of completed projects that get affected by erosion, landslides and floods.

7. There is ample scope for development of animal husbandry & dairy sector in my State. The demand for poultry and dairy products far exceeds their production. Due to shortage of funds, the State Government is not in a position to provide adequate fodder to animals and poultry birds. Non-existence of layer farm in the State is another critical drawback, which result in low production of eggs from the existing poultry farms. Effective control of animal diseases, scientific management of genetic stock and its upgradation, quality feed and fodder, extension services etc are areas which require immediate intervention and support.

8. Despite having vast and varied fishing resources, the State is not in a position to make any visible breakthrough in pisciculture. The State has an estimated 7000 Ha of aquatic resources, of which only 31% have been utilized. The vast potential of pisciculture of my State could be tapped through scientific exploitation of fisheries in mid and high altitude areas, rivers and reservoirs.

9. The banking activities are yet to be fully developed in Arunachal Pradesh. The Credit-Deposit (CD) ratio is abysmally low. The CD ratio for Scheduled Banks at 17.25% and for all banks at 23% is the lowest amongst the North-Eastern States. Private entrepreneurship among the local people is yet to emerge because of banking sector's inability to provide short and long-term investments. The customary laws govern Land tenure system in the State, which is a hurdle for obtaining bank loans from the financial institutions. Simplification and relaxation in the processes of collateral security/mortgages for availing agricultural loans is required. Innovative schemes such as Kishan Credit Card, creation of Self Help Groups and other micro credit schemes have yet to gain ground in my State. Further, Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) in the State are also financially and operationally weak and far from becoming self-reliant in respect of mobilization of resources through deposits. While in the other States of the country, a significant proportion of agricultural credit is provided by co-operative institutions, the cooperative credit structure in Arunachal Pradesh is financially weak. As a result, the avenues for credit in agriculture and its allied sectors are very limited. Special measures would be necessary for increasing the flow of credit in my State. Financial assistance to the cooperative institutions is required to strengthen their capital base through share capital contribution and managerial subsidy. In this context, the NABARD can play a pivotal role in extending loan to the cooperative institutions. Being a tribal State, special financial support is required to our Scheduled Tribe population to enable them to avail themselves of institutional credit facilities.

10 As regards risk mitigation measures for farmers under National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS), risk coverage in agriculture activities in Arunachal Pradesh is non-existent. There is a need to cover risk on potential production coverage so as to encourage progressive farmers.

11. Poor extension support to agriculture, lack of technical know-how and R&D facility are the other constraints being faced by the State. There is an urgent need to review the policies and functioning of the ICAR to embark upon R & D activities in the

State. The State Agriculture Department needs strengthening by way of manpower and infrastructure to address the problem of agriculture development. The department is not able to provide required extension services. The age old traditional practices of agriculture are still relevant, particularly in the field of rain water harvesting, recycling of organic waste, grain storage and pest management. The traditional knowledge could be blended with the modern techniques. Furthermore, establishment of KVK in each district will help the local farmers to acquaint themselves with modern technology and new farming practices.

12. I have highlighted some of the conditions prevailing in Arunachal Pradesh with regards to agriculture and given some views and suggestions on the various issues brought out in the agenda. I would also like to endorse the recommendations of various Working Groups of the Sub-Committee of NDC on Agriculture and Related Issues. I feel that these recommendations should be translated into concrete action plans for each individual State. In doing so, the proposals must address and recognize the historical background, ethnic and physiographical diversity as also the current status of development and the future requirements of the State. Such fine tuning is necessary in view of the fact that the recommended action plans if uniformly applied to all States do not always meet local needs optimally. The uniform policy prescriptions might not do justice to a backward and hilly State like Arunachal Pradesh.

13. Before I conclude, I thank the Hon'ble Chairman and the distinguished Members of the Council and dignitaries present here for having given me this opportunity to put forth my views and also for giving me a patient hearing.

JAI HIND