



**GOVERNMENT
OF**

NATIONAL CAPITAL TERRITORY OF DELHI

SPEECH OF

**SMT. SHEILA DIKSHIT
CHIEF MINISTER, DELHI**

**NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
MEETING**

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NEW DELHI

Mr. Chairman, Members of the National Development Council and distinguished participants,

1. The National Development Council in its 52nd Meeting considered the Approach Paper prepared by Planning Commission for the 11th Five Year Plan. We discussed the same at length in this forum. Government of Delhi broadly supported the strategy indicated in the Approach Paper towards “faster and more inclusive growth”. We felt that the inclusive growth strategy was a right beginning for the 11th Plan which inter-alia envisaged a second green revolution to raise the growth rate of agricultural GDP to around 4%. Today’s meeting is specific to the growth of agricultural sector that is so crucial for the rural areas to get out of poverty and deprivation. This meeting is a timely initiative to address the concerns regarding stagnating agricultural growth for about a decade or so.

2. Delhi is a city-state and our geographical area is very limited to 1483 Sq. Kms. As per latest Agricultural Census, 2000-01, the NCT of Delhi had a total of 27594 agricultural holdings, while there was a total of 34888 agricultural holdings as per agricultural census of 1995-96. This decline in agricultural holdings reflects the pace of urbanization in the NCT of Delhi. The estimate of gross state domestic product shows that share of agriculture and allied activities in Delhi had declined from 3.79% in 1993-94 to 1% 2003-04. Urbanization in the National Capital Territory is an inescapable reality. Yet, in our humble way we feel Delhi must contribute its mite towards all that could be done to revitalize agricultural growth, especially in the following areas.

3. Keeping in view, the declining and stagnating role of traditional crops in Delhi, our Government has been giving stress on diversification by way of shifting to horticulture, floriculture and vegetable crops. This

diversification policy has already resulted in bringing around 5400 hectares of land under floriculture as against a target of 5500 hectares for the entire 10th Five Year Plan. We have also taken steps to strengthen the State Grading Laboratory to take up grading and certification of fruits and vegetables so that farmers can fetch remunerative prices for their crops. In the 11th Plan, Government would encourage the present trend of diversification into horticulture and floriculture in a big way with an aim to capture the export potential that exists for floriculture. This is in tune to the 11th Plan strategy of Planning Commission to raise agricultural output.

4. Government is also proposing to promote cultivation of medicinal plants. The Rajkiya Ayurvedic Sansthan being set at Khera Dabur in Najafgarh will, in addition to having teaching, clinical and research facilities, undertake research and developmental activities in medicinal plants and herbs. Further, looking

at the potential of Agro & Food Processing Industries in creation of large number of jobs, our Government would like to see that these types of industries/business do come up in the near future in Delhi. For this, Government is committed to provide in full measure all financial and managerial assistance and support that would be required.

5. The successful examples of roof top kitchen gardens in many cities would be studied for exploring its implementation in Delhi. High-tech and precision agriculture as in Israel, is expected to be relevant to bring in manifold increase in productivity.
6. Incidentally, I would like to mention that our Government is conscious of water conservation and the potential of recharging of water scarce areas through various measures which is crucial for optimum crop production. In the Approach Paper of Planning Commission for 11th Plan, one of the thrust

areas for raising agricultural output is to improve water management, rain water harvesting and water shed development. Keeping this in view, during 11th Plan, we have an ambitious scheme of construction on-line-channel water storage capacity to improve the quality of subsoil water and to increase the level of aquifers. With the storage of rainwater, there will be a substantial recharge of ground water in the surrounding areas. We are also taking another major scheme of conservation and protection of 450 lakes and water bodies for conservation and storage of water and as well as recharge of aquifers. In Delhi, drip irrigation is also being encouraged to conserve water.

7. Being a trading hub in north India, Delhi is already facilitating trading in agricultural commodities, modernizing the mandis and in enabling free movement of agri-commodities in the interest of the growers, traders and the consumers.

8. I would like to conclude with an appeal that on a national scale, we must have a mission to double or triple the average yields of major crops. This would reduce pressure on scarce land and water resources and would help us to utilize less fertile areas for other purposes in the country. Therefore, we must re-recognize the vital role that agriculture can continue to play in the national development so as to tap the full potential of Indian agriculture to meet the rising demand and to take advantage of the liberalization of the international trade.

Thank you,

SHEILA DIKSHIT
CHIEF MINISTER, DELHI