



**GOVERNMENT
OF
NATIONAL CAPITAL TERRITORY OF DELHI**

Speech of
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**55th MEETING OF
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

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NEW DELHI

MR. CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AND DISTINGUISHED PARTICIPANTS.

1. The 54th Meeting of the National Development Council held in December 2007 discussed the 11th Plan document. The Eleventh Plan sought to build on the gains achieved in the 10th Plan and shift the economy to a path of faster and more inclusive growth. Today, in the 55th Meeting of the NDC, we are here to review the experience in the first three years of the 11th Plan and discuss the corrective steps that are required to be taken up in the identified areas and highlighted in the Mid-Term Appraisal.
2. We are also meeting in the background of a global economic slowdown and there is even talk of a “double dip” recession in some developed economies. Against this gloomy global economic scenario, the picture of economic growth in the Indian economy is much more optimistic with estimates of growth rates in the current year being revised upwards.
3. According to a recent UNDP survey done for the forthcoming HDR Report, the Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index indicates that about 55% of Indian population is poor and Nutritional deprivation is overwhelmingly the largest factor in overall poverty. These findings show that our

official poverty estimation methods are focused too narrowly to be able to capture the real extent of deprivation in the country. There is need for a broader approach.

4. The persisting urban gender divide and its adverse effects on women, particularly the poor and those living in slums, is also a matter of concern in the urban areas. Unless the gender divide is bridged, the cities will remain less inclusive and less safe and their development will be unsustainable. Women often suffer multiple shelter deprivations, including lack of access to safe sanitation. Developing gender-responsive cities is vital to the urban future and, in this respect; rising India has a great deal to learn from other countries.
5. The price rise in last couple of years has been the main focus of all our economic policies. Efforts were made to keep the rising trend of prices under check by both the Central Government and the State Governments. Delhi has taken various steps to keep the price of essential commodities under control by effectively implementing “Open Market Sale Scheme” launched by Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution. The Whole Wheat Fortified Atta was sold in 10 Kg bag @ Rs. 139.00 to the retail consumers through Kendriya Bhandar, NCCF Ltd, NAFED, Circle Offices and other sale points. Delhi also tied up with Mother Dairy outlets, Kendriya Bhandar for the

sale of essential commodities. The overall impact of all these efforts is corroborated by the average group wise / CPI comparison of metro cities and at all India level for the period 2008-09 and 2009-10. It has been observed that Delhi has lowest increase in general index @ 8.6% as compared to other metro cities and at all India level @ 12.4%. Under food group Delhi has lowest increase of 10.9% among all metro cities and at all India level, which saw an increase of 15%.

6. Let me now go on to discuss some of the issues which in my opinion deserve priority attention before this august platform. There is need to focus on these significant areas (i) Water and its availability (ii) Urbanization and strategies to cope with huge influx of population, (iii) Requirement of skilled manpower and (iv) Food security.
7. Indiscriminate exploitation of ground water for water supply and agriculture has led to a sharp fall in the ground water table in many parts of the country. Against this grim scenario of water availability in some areas, there is a steady increase of requirement of potable water in the urban areas because of rising population pressure on account of migration from rural areas and hinterland. In this backdrop of decreasing ground water table in many parts of the country and increasing demand of potable water in the cities and towns that are expanding

exponentially, this august forum may agree that management of water is a challenge that cannot be left to the future.

8. There is a role for targetted subsidies to help the poor to meet their essential requirements. We accordingly feel that while inefficiency on account of functioning of respective Water Boards should not be passed on to the consumers, yet there is a need to appreciate that for inclusive growth to be in place, the pricing of potable water has to be affordable. An integrated water management policy, on which the Planning Commission is working, should be taken up before the 12th Plan begins. We support the Planning Commission in its emphasis on water and its availability on a rational basis as areas which need to be given top most priority.
9. The Urban challenges deserve due attention of this highest development Forum of the country. The slums are the most visible manifestation of urban poverty and failure of the urban development process in the country. Addressing the slum challenges will require adequate but affordable housing through in-situ upgradation, improved water and sanitation system. JNNURM guidelines also need to take into account the increasing cost of land, building material and civic infrastructure services failing which the State Governments may face problems to meet the requirement

of funds from their own resources in view of cost escalation. For disposal of municipal solid waste with the best possible technical know-how, joint venture process may be explored in this area by allotment of sufficient and suitable land by land developing agencies.

10. Urbanization has also led to a multifold increase in the informal sectors. We have around 87% of the labour force in the informal sector which includes persons engaged in various form of retail activities all across the country. There is talk of opening up of FDI in retail sector. There is therefore a need to deliberate on this policy before a conclusion is drawn.
11. The growth in demand which supported rapid growth in GDP was pre-dominantly domestic demand. Also, it is well known that because of availability of large and low cost labour pool in emerging economies, the nature of business world wide has undergone a sea change. The developed countries are, by and large, outsourcing their requirements of products and processes because of easy availability of low cost labour in economies such as ours, and in other developing countries.
12. The possibility of growth, however, is fettered by low productivity of labour in our country. We therefore have to create a workforce empowered with improved skills,

knowledge and internationally recognized qualifications to gain access to decent employment and ensure India's competitiveness in the dynamic Global Labour market. The policy should aim to increase the productivity of workforce both in the organized and the unorganized sectors, seeking increased participation of youth, women, disabled and other disadvantaged sections and to synergize efforts of various sectors and reform the present system. Construction of new IITs, Engineering Institutions, AIIMS, Polytechnics and Industrial Training Institutes etc. may not be a difficult proposition. However, there are acute shortages of teaching personnel at various levels. This issue needs to be addressed simultaneously if we are to achieve our goal of creating professional and skilled manpower in adequate numbers in different disciplines and trades.

13. In spite of a number of National level Programmes viz Public Distribution System (PDS), Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), Mid Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) and also comparatively high economic growth rate, the issue of food security in the country is still a major concern for all of us. It is a matter of satisfaction that highest priority and due attention is being paid to the food security issue by the Central Government. At this juncture when various innovative and corrective measures are being stipulated to improve the contribution of these

National level Programmes on the one hand we may have to take some policy decisions so as to widen the scope and also to take into account the ground realities in implementation of some of the other National level Programmes like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGA), Swarn Jayanti Shehri Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY), JNNURM, Rashtriya Swasthaya Beema Yojana, Aam Aadmi Beema Yojana etc. Some amendments in their scope of coverage and eligibility criteria and also the cost escalation factor may be allowed in these programmes for their greater coverage and impact on the targetted groups which will also ultimately help in food security for the vulnerable groups of society.

14. Considering the increase of food prices coupled with huge influx of labour from other states, Delhi has started a unique food distribution scheme called “Jan Aahar”. Under this scheme, wholesome meal is provided in a hygienic manner @ Rs. 15.00 per meal. At present 7 “Jan Aahar” centres are distributing food. For the destitutes of the city, free meal is distributed at 14 locations with the help of corporate houses and NGOs.
15. Now I would turn to Delhi specific issues including progress made in our own humble way to contribute to the national objectives under various sectors. The 11th Plan recognized

that if access to education is to be achieved universally then we must have a large expansion in both quantity and quality of formal education and skill development. Government of Delhi is making earnest efforts to provide educational facilities to every child. The focus of our plan is on reducing dropout rates and improving the quality of learning by making schools more attractive, interesting and joyful.

16. Through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), we have succeeded in bringing a large number of left out children in Delhi to the class rooms. Government of Delhi is committed to implement the Right to Education Act and provide for all the requirements that are necessary under the Act. As Delhi Government has not been vested with the power to deal with land and its development, we feel handicapped to a great extent in getting suitable and sufficient land for construction of new school buildings in time from DDA.
17. The other programmes of inclusiveness are relating to the Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) and Mid-Day Meal, which are running successfully. Under Mid-Day Meal around 19 lakh school children are covered in Delhi. The ICDS programme on the other hand has been covering 6.31 lakh children at present. Government of Delhi is fully committed to ensure that the schemes are implemented in right spirit and cover entire universe of the targeted beneficiaries.

18. I now turn to Health Sector as many parameters under health sectors reflect the society's concern and Government intention to address the same. Government of Delhi is investing around 1.2% of its GSDP on health sector. Delhi's per capita expenditure of Rs. 663.00 on health is more than three times the national average. Currently, the bed population ratio in Delhi is 2.14 as compared to national average of 0.7 bed per thousand population. This investment has started showing positive results. Delhi reports a life expectancy at birth of 69.6 year's, nearly six years higher than the national average. Delhi's death rate of 4.8 per thousand populations is among the lowest in India. Delhi's infant mortality rate has fallen from 43 per1000 live birth in 1990 to 35 in 2008.
19. Government of Delhi has taken a number of initiatives to achieve the targets of Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) etc. The Govt. is trying to universalize the institutional deliveries which are about 76% at present through MAMTA Scheme.
20. The Ladli Scheme introduced by our Government in January 2008 has shown a positive impact in improving the sex ratio. The sex ratio in Delhi has increased from 848 in 2007 to 915 in 2009. The scheme has also contributed towards enrolment of more girls in the Schools and a much needed change in social attitude towards girls. At present,

around 3.00 lakh girl child have been registered under the Ladli Scheme.

21. Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) covers diseases requiring secondary health care upto Rs. 30000.00 per family per year. With the holistic aim of providing access to advanced medical treatment in case of critical illness to Vulnerable section of the society, a trust in the name of “Apka Swasthya Bima Trust (ASBT)” has been formed and registered. Apka Swasthya Bima Yojana-I would cover the diseases beyond RSBY. Under health sector, a number of projects are envisaged through Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode.
22. The Planning Commission has suggested a national target of Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses at 15% by the end of 11th Five Years Plan. Few years ago, in Delhi the AT&C losses were soaring above 50%. We have managed to reduce these losses below 18% by 2008-09. Given this encouraging scenario, Govt. of Delhi hopes that it will be in a position to attain the national target of 15% AT&C losses by the end of 11th Five Year Plan.
23. In Delhi we have taken up a number of projects to meet the constantly increasing demand of power of the capital city and to make it a surplus power State very soon. To achieve this we are commissioning major gas based power plants in

Delhi. A 1500 MW Gas based Project is being setup at Bawana. 750 MW Gas based Power Project is being set up at Bamnauli. Delhi's share of 750 MW from Jhajjar Power Plant will be available by August 2011. Besides this, power plants dedicated to meet power requirement of Delhi including 1000 MW plant in Badarpur and 1000MW plant in Dadri, in Uttar Pradesh, are also in various stages of execution. It is a matter of great pleasure for me to inform that our Government has already made arrangements for assured power supply for Common Wealth Games and Delhi will be a surplus power state during the year 2010-11.

24. The global economy is stabilizing and hopefully resuming growth. There is concern everywhere on the need to get back to a fiscally prudent position. It is essential to keep control over Non-Plan expenditure, most notably subsidies. There can be no two opinions that there is an imperative of controlling Non-Plan expenditure including some of the subsidies, which over a period of time have become either redundant or dysfunctional.
25. It is felt that there is a need to appreciate that for increasing mobility of city and citizen, road based public transport needs huge encouragement. On the other hand, the experience world over suggests that road based public transport requires some form of financial assistance from the Government. As such we may have element of subsidy

for the road based public transport system, which is the main mode of transport for the common people and would result in greater inclusiveness.

26. I am thankful to the Chairman of the NDC and this august forum for allowing me to deliberate on some of the issues which in the opinion of Government of Delhi are essential for faster and more inclusive growth of our great country. With this belief and fond hope, let me conclude.

JAI HIND

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