

**Hon'ble Prime Minister,  
Hon'ble Dy Chairman, Planning Commission,  
Hon'ble Union Ministers,  
Esteemed Members,  
Distinguished Invitees and Friends.**

I am happy to participate in this, 55<sup>th</sup> meeting of the National Development Council which will consider the Mid-Term Appraisal of the XI<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan and other issues of national importance. The Mid-Term Appraisal document prepared by the Planning Commission is an honest stocktaking of the state of our economy and the corrective steps that need to be taken, by both the State and Central Governments, to achieve the targeted growth rate.

2. We have noted that 9% growth target for our economy during the XI<sup>th</sup> Plan is now proposed to be revised to 8.1% due to unsatisfactory performance in the agriculture sector which suffered a major slowdown due to severe drought conditions during 2009-10 and the global economic melt-down in mid-2008-09. The appraisal document very appropriately calls for stepping-up public investments in agriculture and infrastructure sectors. We endorse the revised growth rate of 8.1% for the XI<sup>th</sup> Plan and agree with the goals and policies suggested in the Mid-Term Appraisal document.

3. We have observed that through the MTA, the Planning Commission has identified sectors in which corrective steps are needed. While recognising that there are positive achievements, it has been frankly admitted that here are also slippages in the first

three years of Plan period. Hence the need for corrective action. Sir, we laud the UPA Government's determination to reverse the declining trend in the growth rate of agriculture and infrastructure sector through substantive interventions under the flagship programmes. This, we believe, is a step in the right direction.

4. The MTA also outlines several measures to ensure better service delivery & good governance to achieve inclusive growth and thereby reduce poverty during the XI<sup>th</sup> Plan period. This is a welcome & bold step. We believe this will require strengthening of the planning machinery at all levels particularly in the States and at the district level.

5. Sir, we suggest that the planning process should, following the same pattern, aim at providing need-based development for each region in a manner that would strengthen the national objectives. It is in this context that I would like to particularly mention a few special requirements in respect of Manipur State with reference to areas outlined in the Mid-Term Appraisal document.

6. The industrial and service sectors have recorded unprecedented growth. Anti poverty and employment oriented programmes have gained momentum. This momentum should not only be sustained but should be further fortified. Human resource development programmes have been given a new direction with allocation of higher outlay. The universalisation of elementary education, with focus on RTE and a combination of SSA and MDM, will help in improving enrolment and retention. It will also help reduce the drop-out rate. This objective of integrating different activities within human resource development sector encompassing health,

education and other related sectors will go a long way in developing human resources.

7. Sir, shortfall in agriculture sector which can be attributed to aberrant weather conditions have restricted over-all growth rate. This should, however, not erode our confidence since our economy has proved itself to be resilient enough. We recognize and appreciate, the need for expeditious completion of three irrigation projects in our state by providing adequate funds so that the required output of food grains in the remaining years of the XI<sup>th</sup> Plan can be achieved and offset the losses of the past.

8. The performance of major and medium irrigation has been indicated as poor. The present indication is that the target of creating 57.22 thousand ha of irrigation potential (cumulative) during 11<sup>th</sup> Plan will not be fully met. The improvement in cropping intensity has been marginal at around 134% during the first three years. There was shortfall in foodgrain production during the third year of the plan. The State Govt is, however, fully geared to compensate the losses by taking up special modernization programmes.

9. In respect of infrastructure development programmes, road development assumes particular importance. There is need for more extensive road network and improvement of the existing roads especially in the North Eastern States. I may take this opportunity to mention that the density of road per 100 sq. km. of area in 2002 for Manipur State was only 51.2 kms. as against 74.73 kms all India average. We are, Sir, currently faced with a serious shortage of

essential commodities due to the extremely poor condition of NH-39 and NH-53. One of the principal reasons for the poor state of affairs is inadequate allocation of funds and lack of adequate manpower and equipment with the BRO. During the rainy season, both NH-39 and NH-53 are not roadworthy. MTA of 11<sup>th</sup> Plan correctly lays emphasis on speeding up implementation of NHDP to achieve a completion rate of 20 kms of highway per day. This is considered to be a good initiative as this will be beneficial for quick upgradation of the National Highways in Manipur.

10. The uncertainties and scarcities arising out of economic blockades of National Highways, the life-lines of Manipur State, need to be addressed on topmost priority by upgradation and improvement of NH-53 and NH-150 to all weather and double lane highways. Since road projects are capital intensive by nature, timely flow of funds to the implementing agencies should be ensured by the Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport & Highways.

11. Sir, poor connectivity is one of the root causes impacting on industrialization. The high cost of production makes our manufactured items non-competitive. In order to achieve sustained and rapid road development in the N.E. Region, the capacities of the State PWDs need to be enhanced considerably through sustained and specific training programmes. Similarly, capacities of local contractors also need to be built up. We suggest that the Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport & Highways take-up this responsibility. The Special Accelerated Road Development Programme may be

restructured and provided additional funds for expediting completion of roads already taken-up under this ambitious programme..

12. Sir, a special mention may be made of the need for expediting completion of the railway projects taken-up in the NE region. The construction of railway line from Jiribam to Tupul in Manipur should be accelerated to complete it within 2014. This railway line must be extended upto Imphal within 2016 and further extended to Moreh on the Indo-Myanmar border. If our proposal is agreed to, besides providing providing stable and reliable means of transportation of essential commodities into Manipur state, it can become the backbone of the Trans-Asian Railway Network.

13. The power sector also deserves priority under planned development of the backward NE region. In Manipur State, we have to rest content with availability of less than 110 MW as against the peak demand of 170 MW. The per capita consumption of energy in Manipur is 148 Kwh as against 717 Kwh for all India. We are making serious efforts to take-up two important power projects, namely, the 66MW Loktak Down Stream HE and the 1500MW Tipaimukh Power Project for enhancing the availability of power.

14. In the first three years of the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan the Govt could provide better healthcare facilities and Primary Health Centres in the rural areas have been strengthened. The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) has contributed to strengthening primary healthcare through grass root level public health interventions based on community participation. The shortage of specialist doctors and nurses in

Manipur is of continuing concern. Special arrangement for the reservation of seat for the students from North East for admission to Post Graduate courses in different medical colleges may kindly be made. I request the Hon'ble Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission to continue providing funds for establishing the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences (JNIMS) at Imphal in the State sector.

15. Poverty alleviation programmes continued to receive the much needed emphasis during first three years of XI<sup>th</sup> Plan period. Achievement by the end of 2009-10 under MGNREGS was 421.25 lakhs mandays and 800235 nos of households were provided job cards. Under IAY, against the target for construction of 24305 houses during 11<sup>th</sup> Plan, 12154 houses have been constructed so far. The MTA correctly emphasizes the need for reduction of poverty in rural areas and inclusive growth through implementation of MGNREGS.

16. Our national mission for raising the living standards will not be complete without a parallel thrust to ensuring availability of drinking water particularly in rural areas. Out of 2870 habitations in rural areas, there are 588 Not Covered (NC) habitations, 1378 Partially Covered (PC) habitations and 904 Fully Covered (FC) habitation under Rural Water Supply. As regards water supply for Imphal, our capital city, we have sought external assistance from JICA through the Ministry of Finance. May I request the Hon'ble Finance Minister to advise his officials to expedite approval to our proposal.

17. Through this August forum, I would like to draw attention of our respected Prime Minister and Chairman of the Planning Commission to seriously consider allowing us to import foodgrains and POL products from neighbouring Myanmar through the Moreh-Tamu sector of the India-Myanmar border. A Land Customs Stations (LCS), with basic infrastructure facilities like warehouse and weighbridge, have been established at Moreh with assistance of the Ministry of Commerce. We have recently acquired and handed over 45 acres of land to the Deptt of Border Management, Ministry of Home Affairs at Moreh for establishing an Integrated Check Post (ICP). May I request the Hon'ble Union Home Minister to expedite setting-up of the ICP. This will give a meaning to the Look East Policy of the Govt of India.

18. The borrowing limit of Rs.263 crore imposed by Central Govt based on the recommendation of 13<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission will restrict the availability of funds for plan financing. If the ceiling on borrowings is not increased, we will not be in a position to avail the entire 10% loan component to finance our state plan and may have to forego other resources. This needs to be reviewed in the context of fiscally poor states.

19. The MTA report has once again reiterated the need for restructuring the BRGF for better implementation of the projects. Projects under BRGF are implemented only in three hill districts of Manipur. Since the programme aims at bridging the development gaps and address backwardness, there is an urgent need for extending the programme to the remaining two hill districts, namely, Ukhrul and Senapati.

20. Sir, I am pleased to report that the long overdue elections to the 6 District Council have been held during May-June, 2010. We propose to devolve most development works in the hill districts to these District Councils and, thus, empower the tribal people inhabiting these districts. In addition, we have, considerably enhanced the flow of funds to TSP & SCSP areas. The new approach develop scheduled tribes inhabited areas with supplemental provisions should be kept up.

21. Sir, the problem of unemployment among the educated and uneducated youths requires immediate care and attention. Taking a cue from your initiative under the National Skill Development Programme, we have entered into agreements with private sector partners for imparting skills to our young boys and girls to enhance their employability. We have made a beginning during 2009-10. This process is being strengthened and expanded during the current Financial Year. We will continue to earmark funds towards skill development programmes.

22. Sir, global warming and climate change is another important issue which occupies a place in the MTA report. To check deforestation and ecological damage to our environment, collective efforts of all concerned are needed. We have taken initiatives for preservation of water bodies, conservation of wetlands, plantation of trees and the conservation and management of Loktak Lake and Associated Wetlands. These initiatives need to be fortified and continue to be supported by the Planning Commission.



23. Manipur shares a long and porous international border with Myanmar. There is unrestricted cross-border movement of militants and smugglers. This has fed and fuel militancy in our state. We have proposed border fencing of the India-Myanmar border to the Ministry of Home Affairs. May I through this forum request serious consideration to our proposal so that effective border management is ensured to check militancy and restore normalcy in Manipur and other NE States. I also request that the Govt of India consider deploying the BSF along the India-Myanmar border for effective surveillance and better border management.

24. With these observations, I fully endorse the views in the agenda for this 55<sup>th</sup> meeting of the National Development Council.

Thank You Sir.