

FOREWORD

I have a vision of an India free of poverty, illiteracy and homelessness – free of regional, social and gender disparities – with modern physical and social infrastructure – and a healthy and sustainable environment. Above all, an India which stands tall and proud in the comity of nations, confident in her capability to face all possible challenges. In short, I dream of an India which is counted among the ranks of developed nations before the end of the second decade of this new century.

The most pressing challenge facing us in the coming years will be to provide every Indian with the opportunity to realize his or her full creative potential. Demographic trends indicate that the rate of growth of our working age population during the next ten years will be the highest we have ever experienced, and unless we achieve a significant improvement in the pace of creation of work opportunities, there will be an increase in the level of unemployment. Such a situation cannot be allowed to materialize.

Unemployment not only entails high human costs, it can also lead to serious social disruption, and put enormous strain on the fabric of our society. More importantly, the youth of our country is our most valuable resource and there can be no greater shame than to let it go waste for the lack of will and determination. Future generations will not forgive us for opportunities lost. We have, therefore, made a commitment to the young people of this country that our economy will generate one crore work opportunities each year for the next ten years so that their talents and potentials are utilized for the benefit of the Nation.

These dreams cannot be realized without rapid growth and development. We must, therefore, explore every conceivable way to accelerate the rate of growth of the economy. We must collectively show the firm resolve to actualize the latent potentialities of our great country, putting behind all doubts and differences.

Planning has been one of the pillars of our approach to economic development since independence, and has stood us in good stead. Planning is not a static concept, and each of our Plans has reflected the changing imperatives of the times. The Tenth Plan carries forward this tradition.

While working out the road-map we need to follow to realize my vision of doubling the per capita income of our country and providing one crore work opportunities in the next ten years, the Planning Commission has firmly kept in view the ongoing process of transition to a market economy. The changing role of the Government and its relationship with the private sector, forms the cornerstone of the Plan.

There are four dimensions of this transformation that I consider to be of critical importance, which need to be guided at the highest political level.

First and foremost is the centrality of good governance to the development process. The best policies and programmes can flounder on the rock of poor governance and shortcomings in implementation. The Tenth Plan document has highlighted this issue by focusing on governance and implementation in a significant manner. We need to bring about dramatic improvements in the functioning of our administrative, judicial and internal security systems in order to foster a dynamic and vibrant market economy.

Second, over the years, we have created numerous barriers to inter-state, and even intra-state, trade and commerce. Creation of a common economic space is one of the basic advantages of nationhood. All over the world, countries are coming together for this purpose, but we have continued to maintain and erect barriers. We must reverse this process decisively.

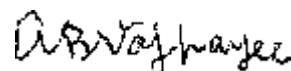
Third, we have inherited from the past a wide range of controls and restrictions on entrepreneurial initiatives, which have retarded the emergence of an investor-friendly climate in the country. We must

shed the mind-set of shortages that had given birth to this regime of pervasive controls, and create an environment which welcomes entrepreneurship with open arms.

Finally, effective delivery of basic social services to our people cannot be ensured unless the institutions that are charged with these functions are made accountable to the people themselves. For this it is necessary to empower the Panchayati Raj Institutions by transferring to them both functions and resources. The PRIs must become the cutting edge of our three-tier political structure and the focal point of democratic decentralization.

The unanimous adoption of the Tenth Five Year Plan by the National Development Council is an affirmation of our collective belief in the potential of our country and the extent to which we share a common vision of our future. I congratulate the Deputy Chairman, Members and officials of the Planning Commission for having done a commendable job in shaping and giving substance to this shared vision. I would like to express my appreciation for the contribution made by a wide cross-section of our political leadership, representatives of civil society, academics, industrialists, and individuals from various walks of life, in this truly National effort. The process of Plan formulation encapsulates our deep commitment to democracy and the consultative process that form the core of our National ethos.

It is, however, important that we effectively communicate the goals, strategies and tasks of the Tenth Plan to the various constituencies of our diverse society, without whose support we cannot hope to move ahead rapidly. We need to generate enthusiasm about the Plan and its targets among our people, especially our youth. We can achieve these ambitious targets only when we are able to make development a people's movement, and the Tenth Plan a people's Plan. I seek the cooperation of all political parties, social organizations, voluntary agencies and the media in this important endeavour.



(Atal Bihari Vajpayee)
Prime Minister of India, and
Chairman, Planning Commission

New Delhi
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