



GOVERNMENT OF GOA

**SPEECH
OF
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GOA**

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Hon'ble Prime Minister, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, distinguished colleagues and friends,

I congratulate the Planning Commission on what I consider one of the more thorough and honest appraisals in recent times. I have no hesitation in commending the document for endorsement to this august house.

In Goa, though a mid term appraisal was carried out by the Government then in power, there is need to realign priorities on the basis of the feedback from the people. Fortunately, the Dy. Chairman has been accommodating enough to allow the state the opportunity to finalise its sectoral allocations, even at this late stage, before passing the budget in the state assembly. Though my Government has been in charge for less than a month, I have begun the task of reappraisal of the State Xth Plan, and have no hesitation in stating that my endorsement of the MTA will be in the most flattering terms of all - we intend in Goa to adopt the key areas for action and fall in line with the MTA. We realize of course, that prior commitments leave little room for any significant adjustment in outlays to fit the objectives of the NCMP. This room for maneuver is further curtailed by the conditionalities of the Twelfth Finance Commission for debt write-off, but since the MTA has appreciated the state's problems in this regard and espoused their cause for flexibility in debt adjustments, I will not labour the point.

High in our priorities will be the regeneration of agriculture and horticulture. Though, at an annual compound growth rate of 10% in SDP, Goa has managed a growth rate higher than the national average, and has one of the highest per capita incomes, it is still in a position to appreciate the emphasis of the MTA on the need to take growth to all regions and districts. Despite rapid urbanization, with 49% of the population already based in its towns, Goa also forms a part of the low rural incomes and demand problem so frankly analyzed by the MTA. The share of agriculture in the State GDP has been sharply declining, and is now as low as 7%. I believe that if we continue to ignore the fact that a portion of our agricultural lands are already lying fallow or under sea water by the neglect of weirs and bunds, the rate of decline of agricultural incomes and agricultural workforce will accelerate, leading to faster urbanization than the infrastructure, the social fabric and employment generation in the services sector can take. Investment in irrigation and water management, in land and soil conservation, massive attention to the creation of farmland infrastructure

and a complete supply chain till the market have to be the objectives. To revive the agricultural extension system, we think that IT for agricultural information would be a more cost effective strategy, with not only dedicated e-chaupals but even cybercafes and e-governance kiosks providing extension information.

As to the market, we in Goa must look for an expanded market, and therefore plan with an export vision with the processed food consumer as the end of our supply chain. In fact, in this context I might venture to suggest that the state wise approach that has so far been followed by the Agriculture Ministry could benefit by being widened, even for the larger states, into a regional or agroclimatic zone approach, especially in the production of fruits, flowers, medicinal plants, organic produce and other such goods where we need to be able to cater to large orders in order to harness the export markets, and can make our produce more price competitive by sharing of post harvest infrastructure for such things as grading and certification. In regard to Irrigation, too, I would commend for consideration of the Planning Commission the agroclimatic zone or regional approach, especially for the planning of incentives and subsidies to guide cropping patterns for optimum water utilization. I believe firmly that in times to come water will be our most precious resource: it is incumbent upon us to resort to water management with a sense of urgency. We therefore intend to intensify efforts to make use of waste water and water run-offs by interlinking rivers and creating more water harvesting structures, and to develop an overall plan for water management.

I might venture two other suggestions - one, that the CSS pattern of one size fit all actually fits very few states, and should be changed to accommodate differences in agro-climatic zones, and state's perception and definition of needs. Secondly, the MTA talks of food security and in this context an MSP revised to cover input costs. While welcoming the honest introspection into the issue, and endorsing the conclusions reached, I would suggest that MSP along the same lines be extended also to the horticulture and floriculture sector, so as to provide a safety net.

The creation of conditions favourable for private investment is the other great emphasis of the MTA. While the identification of key actions to enable this cannot be faulted, its implementation is going to call for a change in set ways of planning incentives and subsidies, and therefore a lot of political cautiousness as well as a lot of professional support. I am sure the Planning Commission realizes this, and

therefore expect that it will provide state governments the support necessary to break down old systems and recreate them along lines that encourage sound and lasting public-private partnerships. What states are most chary of is the public opprobrium for a rise in cost of basic services without the infusion of efficiency that is expected from the private sector and that can justify it. Having in the last four years watched the state debt go up in building infrastructure with off budget borrowings and public funds, we in Goa would acknowledge the need for creating conditions for private investment in infrastructure, provided we can do it professionally and do it painlessly, using public funds as seed money.

In Goa, taking to heart the MTA conclusion that an acceleration of rural consumption is necessary to support balanced growth, we envisage the development of infrastructure so as to establish a rural-urban continuum. The compactness of the state, and the efforts at development since Liberation, have ensured a spread of schools, hospitals, electricity, water, roads and telecommunication facilities so as to reach almost all villages. We can do no better than to make this advantage the basis of a conscious plan to spread our towns to our villages, so to speak, to take urbanization to the rural areas, by giving to the villages the planning and facilities that make towns attractive, by improving transport and connectivity to centers of employment and work, and by spreading employment opportunity more evenly across the territory than concentrating it at one or two cities. I see this as the grand plan for the state, the vision of what Goa might be like in 20 years' time, and I would like to make it the basis of our planning for infrastructure development and creation of employment opportunity.

The third area of emphasis in the MTA is the social sector. We would heartily endorse the approach - Goa can afford to be a little smug here, for it is well in advance of the average quality of life indicators of the country, and spends almost 50% of the plan budget on the social sector. But we do not intend to stagnate in complacency - the agenda for the remaining years of the Xth plan will be to focus on the quality of education, beginning with elementary, by utilizing the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan model to create teacher support systems at the block level, but going beyond it to provide for independent assessment of learning achievement in order to improve the quality of learning in schools. We have already begun to revitalize our Technical Education system, by entering into an MOU with IIT, Bombay, and hope to use their expertise to guide us in matching educational output to job requirement. In

the health sector, we are Grafting schemes for medical insurance; in the social sector, the Dayanand social security scheme has provided basic social security net for the old, infirm and destitute. Part of our vision is to develop higher education as an industry, and medical care facilities for wellness tourism.

One aspect of which we are not proud is that our ratio of girls to boys in the 0-6 age group is declining along with the rest of the country- in fact, given the openness of the society and the high social status attached to women, it is sobering that even in Goa this should be so. I intend to ask for studies on the subject to find out the reasons; meanwhile, believing that part of the problem may be rooted in poverty, I would like to suggest we look at schemes that attach a value to the birth of a daughter in the family - perhaps by fixing a sum in her name from which the father can draw benefit for each milestone that she completes in her life. This serious demographic issue deserved of more focus in the MTA key areas for action. The implications on law and order of this violence on women even before they are born are nasty, and we need to deal with it before it tears at our social fabric.

The sector on which the strategy is not fully fleshed out is industries. It is implicit in the document that Industry will grow with its own resources provided governance provides it with the infrastructure and means to run efficiently. We have no quarrel with this, but are constrained to point out that this strategy will not work unless all arms of the central Government work in unison. A similar strategy was sold to states when the autonomy to fix rates of sales tax was substituted with a VAT rate uniform across all states. Those states that have cooperated now find industry fleeing to states where the Centre itself has gone against its own principle of a level playing field and granted exemptions from central taxes to certain states. I raise this issue in this forum, because the strategy implicit in this document will not work unless this issue is first sorted out. I can raise it in the inter-state council also, if that is more appropriate. My comments on e-governance and good governance I will hold over to the Inter State Council meeting. With these comments, Mr. Prime Minister, I endorse the Mid Term Appraisal priorities and strategies for adoption.

Thank you, JAI HIND.