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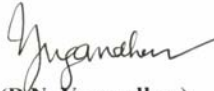
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Maharashtra, one of the most industrialized and progressive states of India, is currently at crossroads. The state has been facing enormous fiscal strain in recent years resulting in inadequate public investment in physical and social infrastructure. It is high time the state's economic policies are reviewed and corrective steps taken wherever necessary so that the state could realize its growth potential. The State Development Report (SDR), Maharashtra attempts a comprehensive and scholarly analysis of the major issues faced by the state's economy and puts forward a number of relevant and implementable recommendations.

The report reflects the growth potential of the state in the medium term. It suggests the need for better cohesion among various policy objectives and underlines the need for urgent measures for improving the social infrastructure, ensuring equity and human development. Further, it recommends the participation of the private sector in infrastructure development and calls for sincere efforts from the government to prevent the widening imbalances at various levels.

I would like to place on record Planning Commission's appreciation to all those who have worked hard in preparing the Report, especially Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR), Mumbai, the lead agency which coordinated the preparation of the report and the partner agencies i.e. Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune, Jammalal Bajaj Institute of Management Studies, Mumbai and Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

I appreciate the efforts of Dr. Vinod Kumar Sharma, Professor, IGIDR and Coordinator of the Report in bringing out this valuable document. I would also like to thank Ms. Sushma Choudhary, Pr. Adviser, Planning Commission, Shri N.D. George, Director, Planning Commission, other officers and staff of Planning Commission, and the officers of the Government of Maharashtra for their help in the preparation of this Report.

  
(B.N. Yugandhar)