

## **Remarks of the Dr.S.P.Gupta, Member on the occasion of release of Report of India Vision 2020 on 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2003.**

Honourable Deputy Chairman, media friends and colleagues,

It is a great privilege for me to submit the Vision 2020 Document to the Planning Commission and policy makers and public in general for their reactions and support. I am very much indebted to Deputy Chairman for giving me this opportunity to build up the vision for India at this typical juncture where domestic and global scenarios are changing very fast. I had the privilege of having a Committee consisting of experts in their respective areas covering economics, politics, social aspects, security, public administration, environment etc. The preparing of the vision document was not an easy task, which is neither a dream nor an extrapolation of the past. It is neither a blind imitation of other countries nor an extrapolation of whatever has happened in the past in the country. We have to locate the hidden potentials of the country, its strong points at the base from which we have to build the foundation. As has been quoted in the Report, it would be wrong to say that in 1947 India started to reconstruct a modern nation from the scratch. Rather it began the process of rediscovering its rich cultural heritage and spiritual values that had formed the foundation of India in the past. It is on this foundation that we seek to formulate the vision for India 2020. To support this view, I quote Lord Macaulay's presentation to the British Parliament "I have travelled across the length and breadth of India and I have not seen one person who is a beggar, who is a thief. Such a wealth I have seen in this country, such high moral values, people of such caliber, the very backbone of this nation, which is a spiritual and cultural heritage". Preparing a vision for 20 years ahead is very difficult, especially if we look back at the fast changes that have taken place in India and abroad for the last 20 years, which are very fast and many of them could not have been predicted. At the same time, for any substantial change of the socio-economic and political structure of an economy 20 years is also not very long. In this vision document, we identified over the next 20 years drastic changes from the past trend in the domain of demography, technology, globalisation and role of competition, governance and decentralization, the new concept of security, the consciousness of environment and need for sustainable growth, the need for sharing the wealth of not only the country but also of the planet earth, emphasizing on poverty, equality and the right for employment, the balance between national sovereignty and global commitment, the concept of self-reliance, vis-à-vis cooperative action, the whole issue of women's rights, and the basic value of culture, civilization and the distinguished entity of a nation in the global village. These are the broad changes which impinge on the new scenario of 2020 to emerge in India and abroad. Here the changes are so fast that only an individual country's past experience will not be guided for future. Therefore, intra country experiences, countries at different stages of development have to be reckoned and benefits to be derived and from their lessons, we had made an intra country comparison of the growth process and the features that emerge in the growth process taking 200 countries from the World

Development Report, (UMI). Also, we find the vision cannot be 'business as usual' picture. Therefore, we have derived two scenarios (i) on 'business as usual' basis and (ii) 'best scenario'; clearly specifying the policies needed to move from one scenario to the other and also the hazards and risks of sticking only to 'business as usual' scenario. 'Business as usual' scenario in many cases resulted in 20-30 per cent differences in the poor utilisation of resources and lower achievement of social goals. In the adjoining bullet points, we have given only a few selective broad trends and a few numerical indicators. The Report has many such more indicators. As has been mentioned, the Report only picks up key issues from all the 22 selected background papers of top experts who were committee members and also invitees both from outside and within the Planning Commission. These papers are in the process of being edited and published and they will be placed on the Internet very shortly. These papers, however, reflect the individual authors' views. Among them they are not always consistent and the Report has thrashed out a coherent and consistent view. The official Report is on the basis of several deliberations among the Committee members. I want to emphasis that the Report is not purely an economic exercise nor are the economists the right persons to give the vision. Vision comes from all walks of life and for ordinary people. Therefore, we have interacted with many people even outside the Committee. I would like to conclude with a quotation from the Report.

Identifying potentials and anticipating the challenges to our future progress in different sectors of the national economy does not constitute a vision of the country's future. These disparate threads need to be woven together to reflect the integrated nature of our national life. Then, there still remains the question of whether to be preoccupied by the negative possibilities or to throw our full weight behind efforts to fully realise the positive potentials revealed by this analysis. That will determine whether we regard the following statement as a promising glimpse of what India can become in 2020, or as mere fantasy and wishful thinking.

Some may regard this vision as an anxious attempt to imitate and catch up with the West. But there is an important distinction to be made between blind imitation and intelligent emulation that draws upon the discoveries and experiences of others to address universal needs common to all human beings and all societies. India, with its rich cultural heritage and thousands of years of history of civilisation, need not aspire to become like country A or B. For India, realising the vision for 2020 is not an end in itself, but rather an essential condition for allowing the spirit of this country to emerge and flourish.