



GOVERNMENT OF UTTARAKHAND

ADDRESS OF

Maj. Gen. B.C. Khanduri, AVSM
(Retd.)

CHIEF MINISTER OF UTTARAKHAND

IN THE

54th MEETING

OF

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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NEW DELHI

Hon'ble Prime Minister, Hon'ble Ministers of the Union Cabinet, Hon'ble Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, Hon'ble Chief Ministers and other dignitaries present in this august gathering.

1. At the outset, I would like to congratulate and thank you for calling the 54th meeting of this premier forum at a time when our country is passing through growth and economic-development. However, as a responsible forum for economic change, it is necessary for us to ensure that benefits of growth and development percolate uniformly down to men and women at the lowest socio-economic strata of society.

1.1. Attempts to reduce the economic gap between rich and poor, and also the rural-urban divide, have to continue. It is imperative to address such issues urgently which are likely to adversely impact our economy in future. ***Benefits of growth need to be distributive, and growth itself should be "inclusive"***. When we talk of inclusive development and resultant growth we generally mean enhanced participation of those primarily dependent on agriculture in the economy but in the context of a State like ours there are many dimensions of inclusive development and growth.

1.2. Hon'ble Prime Minister himself is a votary of differentiated approach and action plan for the varied geographical regions of this vast country, because problems, constraints, resource endowment and economic development are not uniform across the country. While it is a welcome step to augment plan resources for agriculture and education but, ***we just cannot ignore the needs and natural resource base of various regions and States.***

1.3 Our State can be broadly divided into two regions, i.e. the hills and the plain area, but the hills themselves are geoclimatically sub-divided into the high mountain region, the middle Himalayas, and the Himalayan foot-hills. ***An area of concern for us is the issue of connectivity and far-flung habitations cut-off from the mainstream of economic activities.*** We also have to consider the inclusion of weaker-sections like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, women; physically challenged, and the other marginalised segments of society in the economic mainstream. This forum has assembled appropriately to deliberate upon this issue in particular and finalise the document of the "Eleventh Five Year Plan".

1.4. The Planning Commission has already done a detailed macro-level exercise that gives a picture of achievements during the Tenth Plan. In addition, sector-wise detailed recommendations have been given by various Working Groups on the Eleventh Five Year Plan. This helps us in devising strategies for the future. Even though States have already been given the opportunity to discuss and deliberate upon the Draft Approach Paper for the Eleventh Plan, their concerns have been given due consideration.

1.5. The State of Uttarakhand, also called "*Dev Bhumi*" or "Abode of the Gods", is one of the newest States in the country. Despite limited economic resources it has registered "two-digit average growth rate" against the given target of 6.8% for the Tenth Plan.

1.6. We express a sense of satisfaction that our approaches and strategies are recognized by the Planning Commission. We have been given due space in the Mid-Term Appraisal Report of the Tenth Plan and also in the Draft Uttarakhand Development Report prepared by the Planning Commission.

1.7. The Planning Commission has assigned us a

growth target of 9.9% for the Eleventh Plan. Given the performance of the State during the Tenth Plan, this target appears attainable. However, capacity of the State to sustain high growth will depend upon whether the long-term factors (governance, climate, stability, infrastructure support etc.) get relevance over temporary factors (tax exemptions, cheaper power etc.).

2. Regional Disparity

2.1. Regional disparity among various micro-development regions of the State exists mainly due to topographic and geographical reasons. ***Raising infrastructure is a mammoth task especially when we have to fulfil the expectation of sparsely distributed population in the hills.*** Similarly, managing urban areas and slum development is a challenging task in the plains. Agriculture in the hills is below subsistence level due to scattered, small and marginal holdings. However, we see this as our strength as well since there is scope for diversification of agriculture to horticulture, floriculture, organic farming, establishing seed-banks, promoting indigenous grains etc.

2.2. But, the issue of establishing marketing and transportation facilities for agriculture and allied sectors, agro-processing and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) is a challenge for the State. And, we feel that in hill States, this requirement can be fulfilled only with Government support.

3. Focus on Women

3.1. Due to non availability of adequate employment opportunities in the region, the men-folk either join the army and para-military forces or migrate in large numbers to cities and towns all over the country in search of employment. The main burden of work in the fields and the homes has fallen on women. ***Recognizing the contribution of women to the economic development of the State, we are trying to create an enabling environment for our womenfolk.*** We have incorporated "Gender Budgeting" in the Budget of 2007-08 presented before the Legislative Assembly in July 2007. The State Government has also started various interventions to reduce the drudgery of rural women, such as creation of fodder banks, providing LPG in remote areas etc. As a step towards empowerment of women, we have reduced the stamp duty for property transaction in the name of women.

4. Challenges

4.1. The Draft Eleventh Plan has already identified the challenges of reversing the deceleration of agricultural growth, employment creation and employability, providing essential public services with better quality of delivery, increasing manufacturing competitiveness through development of infrastructure, expansion of vocational training institutions, strategy to protect environment, legal framework to improve rehabilitation and resettlement, good governance and transparency. Whereas some of these issues will require interventions mainly supported by the Central Government, actions and policies of the State Governments will primarily strengthen the process of inclusive growth.

5. Agricultural Growth

5.1. Our State has registered an average annual growth rate of 3.3% in Agriculture during the Tenth Plan. However, this has been uneven during those five years mainly due to rain-fed below- subsistence agriculture in hill regions, which account for 56% of the net sown area of the State. The target of raising the growth rate of agricultural GDP to around 4% needs focus on

various issues. Some areas identified by us are:

- i. Greater diversification of agriculture emphasizing horticulture that includes cultivation of herbs and medicinal and aromatic plants, tea, bamboo, natural fibres and silk. The State has comparative advantages in these areas.
- ii. Improving productivity, particularly in rain-fed areas and reducing the grain-loss and wastage by adopting sound post-harvest practices.
- iii. Overcoming the limitations of a large number of scattered, small and marginal holdings through voluntary consolidation scheme.
- iv. Development of seed-banks and promotion of organic farming.
- v. Ensuring easy availability of inputs including micro-finance.
- vi. Establishing marketing and transportation linkages.
- vii. Ropeways (in areas not connected by roads), to transport marketable products.

5.2. However, raising the production of food grains, pulses and oilseeds should remain central to the strategy as shortage of these can jeopardize development in any other field. We have attempted revamping of farm research

apparatus, (specially our attempts at State Horticulture College, Bharsar and Hill Campus, Ranichauri), as a long term measure. However, outcomes of this may not be witnessed during Eleventh Plan itself, and thus we are in agreement with other States that the time is ripe to jolt the farm research system to deliver the Second Green Revolution. As various watershed management programs in the hills have not delivered to the desired extent, ***checking soil erosion, moisture conservation and recharging of water resources should be given focus while financing and implementing National Rural Employment Guarantee Program (NREGP), Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Program (AIBP), Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF) etc.***

5.3. Inadequate information about best crops, best practices and problems that are faced by farmers is also a crucial issue. We feel that any agricultural or horticultural development has to include a continuous process of scientific and market analysis that will suggest the most remunerative crops for a particular region. Our traditional crops have emerged as cash-crops, which have a niche market. These have organic branding to their credit. At the same time, possibilities of agri-diversification are being explored and awareness camps are being organised for progressive farmers.

The State is also developing an integrated one-stop Agriculture Portal which encompasses all the needs of the farmers.

6. Soil Erosion

6.1. Soil erosion in Uttarakhand is one of the major concerns. The acceptable limit of soil erosion is at the rate of 4 Ton/Hect/Year. However, sources of Central Soil and Water Conservation Research and Training Institute Dehradun reflects that in Uttarakhand 88% percent area is experiencing soil erosion at the rate of more than 10 Ton/Hect/Year. This figure is 59% for Jammu & Kashmir and 72% for Himachal Pardesh. Moreover, 35% area in Uttarakhand is suffering from very severe soil erosion, which is above 40 Ton/Hect/Year. ***Soil erosion in Uttarakhand is, therefore, in an alarming state. I have broached the issue with Hon'ble Union Agriculture Minister.*** Currently there is no programme to check soil erosion. If nothing is done in this direction there is the danger of flight of hill population to the cities and the plains resulting in human misery and problems of resettlement and rehabilitation.

7. Employment and Employability

7.1. As the agriculture sector has its own limitations, productive employment opportunities will have to be created in off-farm activities and various sectors of our GDP-Drivers, which broadly fall in Industry and Services.

7.2. The existing underemployment rate in Uttarakhand is similar to some other high literacy States like Kerala and Tamil Nadu. There is a sharp increase in the number of job-seekers, from 3.42 lakh persons in March 2002 to 4.68 lakh persons in March 2007, as reported in the Live Registers of Employment Exchanges. The Planning Commission has estimated a requirement of 6.41 lakh additional jobs in the State during the Eleventh Plan.

7.3. Concern has been rightly expressed in the approach paper that care has to be taken to manage the livelihood changes and to ensure that employment is generated at all levels of skill in non-agriculture sectors. We agree with the observation that the inadequacy of widely dispersed and sustainable off-farm productive employment opportunities is a basic cause of most divides and disparities which hampers the objective of inclusive growth.

7.4. Creation of employment opportunities including self-employment is an important feature of the Eleventh Plan. With

growth in industry, services and other driving sectors, employment opportunities are also growing. ***Our endeavour will be to develop local human resource through proper training and skill development in line with the changing demands of technology and emerging employment opportunities.***

7.5. Building on the success of the self-help group movement, the State would need to up-scale the Social Venture Capital Company set up under the IFAD sponsored livelihood project and make it applicable for the whole State. The add-ons in terms of administrative support for making this a reality will be required from the Eleventh Plan resources.

7.6. Uttarakhand is making steady progress in the cultivation of herbs, medicinal and aromatic plants. With a modest beginning in 2003, the State is steadily but surely stepping-up this farm activity, which holds a great potential for diversification especially in small farm holdings. We are determined to up-scale it. Similarly, we are endeavouring to popularise water-mills, bamboo and Jatropha plantation natural-resource and appropriate technology based livelihood options.

7.7. ***Tourism is one of our main thrust areas.*** Development of tourist areas creates employment opportunities not only in hotels, restaurants and other kind of lodgings but also in the tour-operating sector. More importantly, employment will also be created through indirect channels in a variety of sectors including local handicrafts. ***We shall be creating employment through promotion of leisure, religious, adventure and nature & wildlife tourism.*** This will also help in improving the economic status of people indirectly linked with this industry.

7.8. As far as employability is concerned our sustained efforts in the IT sector are bearing fruit. Projects, like AAROHI and SHIKHAR, which were started during the Tenth Plan to provide computer education in schools and colleges have been successful in infusing interest in students to opt for higher courses and employment in the IT sector. Our students are getting placements, job offers and good-packages in leading IT-companies. ***Our efforts to facilitate job opportunities for the youth through the IT sector will continue during the Eleventh Plan period.***

8. Financial Inclusion

8.1. The State has taken substantial strides in promoting

Self-Help Groups under various programmes and projects relating to livelihoods, watershed development, women empowerment, community forest management etc. The public sector banks are making efforts to achieve financial inclusion by opening No-Frill Accounts of every household in the State. However, public-sector financial institutions have a limited reach and there are a large number of women-headed households participating in the economy. In the absence of non-governmental Micro-Finance Institutions (MFIs) in the State, the State has set-up an MFI with its own resources with the mandate to not only provide micro-credit to the needy urban and rural households but also to facilitate availability of various financial services requisite therefor.

9. Public Services – Education and Health

9.1. There are two types of challenges being faced while providing essential public services – (1) reducing imbalances and discrimination and (2) ensuring quality. As the Eleventh Plan emphasizes inclusive growth, there is urgent need to overcome inequalities in terms of regional spread of literacy, gender discrimination and socio-economic deprivation, maternal-mortality rate, female foeticide, clean drinking water,

and access to basic sanitation facilities.

9.2. Education:

9.2.1. In primary education access has improved considerably and net enrolment ratio at primary level is 99.20% and at upper-primary level is 98.92%, which is near universalization. Only 0.8% of children are out of school, who belong to deprived groups of society. The State Government has started PAHAL Program for these children under PPP. The challenge is to check drop-out among girls at upper-primary level. The State Government has opened 25 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyalaya in educationally backward blocks for drop-out girls. ***The State Government has also tried to incentivise girl child education with its own resources through schemes like the "Gaura Devi Kanya Dhan Yojana" motivating all girls of BPL families to complete their education upto higher secondary levels.*** The State is also providing free education to all girls upto the level of Graduation.

9.2.2. In the backdrop of "Right to Education" being emphasised through legislation, efforts need to be made to sustain the gains of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) by improving quality of teaching & learning and better facilities at the

secondary level. ***Launching of SSA-II will be beneficial as universalisation of secondary education is one of the approaches identified for the Eleventh Plan.*** However, SSA alone will not be sufficient for the development of employment opportunities unless it emphasises promotion of vocational and job-oriented education.

9.3. Health:

9.3.1. Although our State stands above the national average in respect of most of the health-targets being monitored, there are areas of concern. Poor health and nutrition status of women, low incidence of institutional births, ***problems of access to health care in rural areas especially in hill districts, poses a major challenge***, especially when there is shortage of medical and para-medical manpower in remote areas.

9.3.2. The current demographic norms for Primary Health Centers and Sub-Centers need to be relaxed for the hill districts because of their sparse population. The current norms of Primary Health Centers are one PHC/20 thousand population for hill areas and one Sub-Centers/ 3 thousand population (for

hill areas). An adequate norm would be one Primary Health Centers per 10 thousand population and 1 Sub-Center per thousand population. ***We re-emphasise that apart from the population norm, the distance and time required to reach the health facility should also be considered.***

9.3.3. A state like Uttarakhand which has a difficult terrain and is at a greater risk of natural calamities, substantial planned assistance needs to be earmarked for development of a comprehensive trauma care network. This would involve the setting up of primary secondary and tertiary trauma facilities, linking them up through a modern emergency transport system equipped with advanced life support system. The entire network would require modern communication links and their linking up to call centers for round the clock emergency call services.

9.3.4. Number of Primary Health Centres (PHCs), Community Health Centres (CHCs) and State Allopathic Dispensaries (SADs) are gradually increasing, but manning them with qualified doctors remains a challenge. Doctors, passing out from medical colleges outside the State or from the private medical colleges affording high fees do not prefer to serve in relatively remote places. Because of the shortage of

MBBS doctors and specialists, a trained workforce of paramedics needs to be built up. To meet this challenge, the State is in the process of opening two State Medical Colleges. For this, major investment is required for construction works to fulfil the Medical Council of India (MCI) standards. ***For hill States, the MCI norms regarding land requirement and contiguity of land should be relaxed.***

9.3.5. Innovative solutions to problems would, have to be sought. Partnership with communities and NGOs as well as private enterprises could be fruitfully tried; but public expenditure would have to continue playing a leading role. AIIMS like Medical Institute at Rishikesh will help us in extending medical facility to a seriously ill patient from far-flung areas. In the absence of which he has to be taken either to Delhi or left without treatment to meet his/her own destiny.

9.3.6. Proactive role of various State governments and the central government is needed to ensure that access to knowledge and curative health services do not become a factor of affordability. True inclusive growth can be ensured by reducing the gaps between services provided by public and private institutions, reducing the rural-urban divide, male-female discrimination and also by bringing the marginalised and the destitute into the net of affordable health care.

10. Water Resources - Drinking Water and Irrigation

10.1. Drinking Water

10.1.1. Uttarakhand is a state having immense water resources but nearly half of its population has no access to safe drinking water. Women and children in the hills have to trudge long distances to fetch a pitcher of water. ***This basic amenity must be accorded top priority in a state like ours.***

10.2. Irrigation

10.2.1. If irrigation facility is augmented, which is only about 12% in the hills, the issue of diversifying agriculture and horticulture as also the migration of population to urban centres and the plains gets resolved to a great extent. Hence, there is a strong case for higher priority and allocation for creating irrigation facility.

11. Manufacturing Competitiveness and Infrastructure

11.1. We reiterate that the strategic initiatives outlined in

the Eleventh Plan document to target high industrial growth are welcome steps. The State is grateful to the Centre for extending the validity of the Industrial Package up to the year 2010, even though this package was initially awarded up to the year 2013. This has given a fillip to setting up industrial units in the State, an area deprived of industrial activity hitherto. Such corrective measures need to be taken to provide a level playing field, and is a positive step towards reducing regional imbalances. ***Given the present condition of industrialization in the State, there is a strong case to extend the period of the package up to the year 2013.***

11.2. Manufacturing sector which was almost non-existent before the creation of the State is now showing a positive impact on the GSDP. During the period of the Tenth Plan we have been able to create an investor-friendly atmosphere resulting in attracting many big industrial houses.

11.3. A State like Uttarakhand has vast water, forest and solar resources affording ample potential for development and growth. The State is already implementing a number of hydro power projects, mega and mini both, yet there is scope for more. ***However, rivers in the hill areas are affected by “too***

much and too little water syndrome” and there is problem of silting of Dams. These natural phenomena need strategic planning for power projects. For us, hydro power would be our saviour, perhaps the biggest revenue earner someday, as other sources of revenue would touch plateau at some point of time. Since hydro power is a renewable source of energy which will benefit the whole nation, it would be in national interest for the Center to make more investment in this sector.

11.4. Assured regular power supply is an essential prerequisite for modern industry. In our State, we have identified over 20,000 MW hydro-power generation potential. A Road map has also been drawn for better transmission and distribution. The trio of generation, transmission and distribution requires high investment which is beyond the capacity of the State. However, as the draft Plan Document also reveals, shortage and unreliable power supply will be a drag on the pace of the country's development. In this area, the State needs constant support from the Centre.

11.5. Community owned and operated micro and mini hydro projects and water mills have livelihood potential. Similarly, livelihood options through community forestry, agro forestry, eco tourism, adventure tourism, cultivation of

medicinal and aromatic plants and other forest based enterprises have to be tapped to the fullest extent. Solar energy can supplement energy needs of households and businesses nine months in a year.

11.6. Apart from power, our manufacturing competitiveness is highly dependent on air-connectivity, roads, railways, ITES etc. Industrial units being set-up in the State are highly dependent on the raw material procured from various parts of the country; and they have to transport the finished goods to the markets which are mainly outside the State. Under this situation, we are in need of better transport linkages with the rest of India. We are thankful to the Centre for sanctioning the Muzaffarnagar-Roorkee railway line and a six-lane road between Delhi-Dehradun. Faster completion of these projects is essential to keep us competitive.

11.7. Till now we don't have direct road connectivity between the two regions of our State. We have to enter Uttar Pradesh to reach the other half of our State. There are thousands of villages without road link. Villagers walk for two days with their produce as head load to reach the road head. In the era of globalization, there are habitations for which Polling Parties have to be dispatched two or three days in advance

from the District Head quarters.

11.8. In the absence of rail network in the hills we need better air connectivity within the State. Dehradun Airport is under expansion and four airstrips were constructed a decade back. ***A large number of Helipads are required in hill areas for tourism development as well as evacuating affected people during a natural calamity or disaster.*** No new rail line has been constructed after independence. New rail services need to be introduced.

12. Developing Human Resource

12.1. The draft Eleventh Five Year Plan has rightly pointed out that rapid growth may result in shortage of high quality skills needed in knowledge intensive industries. Setting-up of the "National Skill Development Mission" is a welcome step as it reinforces the state's decision to link ITIs and Polytechnics with industries through PPP mode. As a strategy for the Eleventh Plan we shall be working on developing new course-curriculum for ITIs and other vocational training institutes. During the Tenth Plan Uttarakhand Board of Technical Education Act (2003) has been passed in order to ensure quality. We have also established the Uttarakhand Technical University,

Dehradun in 2005-06. This process has facilitated various quality Institutes in the State to start a number of vocational and professional courses.

12.2. Our IT Initiatives such as AAROHI, SHIKHAR, SAKSHAM, Networking Academies, Microsoft's SHIKSHA and Intel's Teach Program would continue in the Eleventh Plan. These capacity building programs are giving an edge to our students, teachers and youth.

12.3. Uttarakhand is known for some of the best schools in the country. This gives our youth a competitive advantage especially while seeking admission in good colleges and universities. We have introduced the CBSE syllabus in State-owned schools, which has facilitated our students to get quality reading material from the market apart from regular NCERT books and other publications.

13. Environmental Concerns

13.1. Environmental sustainability will have to be an important feature of the Eleventh plan. In the absence of environmental sustainability, future growth could be jeopardized. This would be a major assault on inter-generation

equity. Ensuring environmental sustainability will require a two-pronged approach. On one hand it has to be ensured that the growth process in agriculture and allied activities, industry and part of the service sector does not impose too much of a strain on the resource-base while, on the other hand it would involve adoption of policies and measures for the protection, conservation and judicious use of natural resources mainly land, water and forest cover.

13.2. About 65% of the area of the Uttarakhand is under forest cover. This forest area is vital to the ecology of the great Indo-Gangetic plain. Rivers like the Ganga and the Yamuna, which have their origin in Uttarakhand, form lifelines for the northern plains of India, which sustain perhaps the most dense habitations of humanity. Therefore the importance of preserving the forests in Uttarakhand cannot be exaggerated. However, it needs to be appreciated that integrated development of the State and its people is constrained and hampered as a result of various forest preservation statutes. Appropriate provision for suitably compensating Uttarakhand should be included in the Eleventh Five Year Plan, which would balance the invisible losses incurred by the State due to preserving these forests in the larger interest of the Nation.

13.3. As I have already alluded to the role of connectivity in inclusive development and growth, the State is hamstrung in enhancing connectivity in the hills in the absence of which economic development of far-flung hill habitations can not be thought of. We have to pay the price of protecting forests. On the one hand our developmental activities get hampered due to the stringent provisions of the Forest Conservation Act, and on the other we are compelled to pay for compensatory afforestation and Net Present Value (NPV). Even 'settled revenue lands' have been categorised as 'forests', confounding the development woes of the State. I think there is very little incentive for protecting forest and increasing forest cover. ***I would urge this august forum to ensure ploughing-back of funds realized from user-States for obtaining clearance under the FCA and to exclude 'settled revenue lands' from the definition of 'forests' under the FCA.***

13.4. The below subsistence agriculture in the hills is further afflicted with the menace of wildlife, 'an off-shoot of environment protection'. Attacks by leopards, tigers, elephants, wild boars, monkeys etc. on the populace and standing crops are of frequent occurrence, resulting in very few families interested in farming.

13.5. Carbon trading, which has a great economic potential in a State like Uttarakhand, is yet not a business proposition in our State. In the wake of the Kyoto Protocol, there is a vibrant market where more than 250 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent have been transacted. It has therefore, attracted considerable attention of the likely buyers of credits, producers and others. However, due to complexity of trading in carbon credits and pace of development it is difficult to stay fully informed about it, especially at the State level. We are an environment friendly and non polluting State. ***We need consultative, advisory and technical assistance to reap the benefits of carbon trading.*** A window may therefore be provided whereby hand holding of State agencies may be done till such time as they develop the capacity for such transactions. ***Pilot projects may be taken up for States like ours which is well endowed with natural resources like large forest area and hydro-power potential.***

14. Rehabilitation and Resettlement

14.1. The development process is complex, in the sense that sometimes for greater benefits mankind has to make certain sacrifices as well. This is specifically true in case of

power and irrigational projects; urban development projects; construction & broadening of roads etc. Natural disasters and calamities add to the plight of our citizens. The Eleventh Plan Document speaks of a transparent set of policy rules that address compensation, proper resettlement, and rehabilitation. It also emphasizes giving project affected persons a permanent stake in project benefits, as the most affected groups are women, tribal and other vulnerable sections of society. We welcome this approach which will provide a legal framework in terms of the rights of the displaced.

14.2. The State is disaster prone, situated as it is in earthquake risk zones 4 and 5. Landslides, cloudbursts, flash-floods, avalanches etc. are of frequent occurrence. There is no Government of India policy of rehabilitating disaster affected people. Relocating disaster affected people is a Herculean task in as much as no government land in the hills is outside the definition of forest and there is too much pressure on the land in the plains. ***The Government of India must pitch in to rehabilitate disaster affected people.***

15. Good Governance and Transparency

15.1. The recent news reports in national newspapers

about e-Governance reveals that various departments and organizations are primarily creating silo websites, which either have no or limited interface with others. Further, there is a lack of central repository of government data to regularly publish duly examined reliable statistics on the web. It is, therefore, clear that objectives of e-Governance are yet to be achieved and that we have to wait to really bring-in transparency and deliver citizen services through the net. In our State also, IT and e-Governance initiatives will bear fruits in future, if support systems can be put in place soon.

15.2. We have been successful in empowering people through effective implementation of the provisions of the "Right to Information Act". However, our experience says that the major demand is coming from government employees rather than from people seeking various services. Information mongers need to be discouraged, so that RTI Act achieves its purpose fully.

15.3. We are planning to implement the recommendations of the State Administrative Reforms Commission in order to reduce red-tapism, improve governance and make the administrative system more responsive towards public grievances.

16. - To conclude, I would once again like to bring forth the State's viewpoint to ensure inclusive growth during the Eleventh Plan, by recommending that-

- i. Determination of Plan Priorities should be according to region and state-specific needs, problems and constraints of economic development and status of resource endowment.*
- ii. States should be provided consultative, advisory and technical assistance to reap the benefits of Carbon Trading.*
- iii. The proceeds of Compensatory Afforestation and Net Present Value (NPV) realised from the States should be ploughed-back through the Plan.*
- iv. The Forest Conservation Act, 1980 should be so amended as to exclude the 'settled revenue lands' from the definition of 'forests'. Alternatively, the lands not having forest cover should not be treated as forest.*
- v. Adequate priority should be given in the Plan to programmes for checking soil-erosion.*
- vi. Universalisation of Secondary Education be taken up by launching SSA-II.*
- vii. The Second Green Revolution should be initiated keeping in mind the below subsistence*

- *agriculture in hilly areas of Himalayan States.*
- viii.** *Extension of drinking water facilities to uncovered habitations and higher allocation for creating irrigational facilities be made since this adds to agri-diversification.*
- ix.** *Resources from the Eleventh Plan shall be required to extend administrative support to the self-help group movement and delivery of micro-finance.*
- x.** *The legal framework to protect the rights of people being displaced due to variety of developmental projects and natural disasters be enacted at the earliest. Also, under the CRF disaster affected people should be rehabilitated.*
- xi.** *Hand-holding of State by the Centre is required to meet the high investment required for generation, transmission and distribution of power.*
- xii.** *Support should be given by the Centre to establish State Medical Colleges.*
- xiii.** *Norms for raising the health and medical infrastructure be relaxed keeping in mind the remoteness of the hill villages and also low population density.*

I once again thank you for giving me the opportunity to express our views in this august forum.

Maj. Gen. B. C. Khanduri AVSM
(Retd.)