



REMARKS

OF

SHRI S.K. SINGH

GOVERNOR OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

NEC's 50TH MEETING

12TH APRIL, 2005

AT
AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE ANNEXE,
NEW DELHI.

Hon'ble Chairman, Distinguished Members and other participants,

1. It is indeed a great privilege for me to participate in the 50th Council Meeting of the NEC for the first time and to deliberate about the development issues relating to the North Eastern States in general and Arunachal Pradesh in particular.

2. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Shri P.R. Kyndiah, Hon'ble Union Minister for DONER who has taken charge as Chairman of NEC. I also extend my warm congratulations and welcome the other 3 (three) newly appointed members, Shri P.P. Srivastava, retired IAS, Dr. (Mrs.) I.K. Barthakur, retired Advisor, Planning Commission and Shri B.N. Yugandhar, Member (North East), Planning Commission.

3. I am happy to note that the Union Government had accepted the "Report on Revitalization of the NEC" submitted by the Committee constituted under the Chairmanship of Shri P.P. Srivastava. In which, amongst others, it has been recommended for bringing out an inspiring and practical roadmap document like "NER Vision document-2020". The NEC must live upto its mandated role by concentrating more on regional issues by fostering greater regional interactions and cooperation amongst the North Eastern States.

4. The main focus of today's deliberations is the new mandate of the NEC as a Regional Planning Body for sustainable growth and development of the region. No doubt the Vision Document-2020, when it is out, will provide a clear roadmap as to how the region should be developed in the next two decades. This in a way, will be the regional plan for the NEC. However, it must be ensured that the regional plan is well integrated and coordinated with the State plans of the constituent states of the NEC, to avoid overlapping and duplication of efforts and resources, as well as to ensure that there are no lacunae in the overall coordinated effort at development. The regional planning process must also address the divergent and heterogeneous nature of the NER. The regional planning process, and the Development Vision must take into account the views of the constituent states and their inherent and state specific difficulties and constraints.

5. Arunachal Pradesh is one of the 18 'Hot Spots' of mega-biodiversity in the world. Sri H.D. Devegowda, the then Prime Minister in 2000 had announced the setting up of a National Institute of Bio diversity studies in Arunachal Pradesh. Unfortunately, no further initiative has been taken by the Government of India towards this end even though my predecessors had taken up the issue in the last two Council Meetings. Arunachal Pradesh is best suited for such an institute and I request the Chairman, NEC to expedite the setting up of the Bio-diversity Institute in the State early. During his recent visit to Shillong, the Union Minister of Human Resources

Development has proposed for establishment of a Management Institute in the NER. I would like to request the NEC to take up with concerned Union Ministry to establish the proposed management institute in Arunachal Pradesh as there is not a single national level institute in Arunachal Pradesh. I, therefore, request the NEC to take up this matter urgently with the Govt. of India.

6. I would also like to make a mention about poor allocation of funds for infrastructure development in the state. I understand that an increasingly larger share of funds are being retained at the disposal of NEC Secretariat. It is desirable that NEC should function more as a coordinating body rather than an implementing agency. Therefore, the allocation for Arunachal Pradesh should be suitably enhanced keeping in view the vastness of its area, backwardness and strategic point of view.

7. Arunachal Pradesh is perhaps the only State in the country which does not have an airport. The inaccessibility, geographical isolation and high cost of construction of roads in the State necessitate good air connectivity in the State. Substantial funds had been invested for improvement of the airports at Pasighat and Tezu, but were abandoned in the 10th Plan. I would urge the NEC to take up again, the improvement and renovation of the said airports and also explore construction of airports at Itanagar and Ziro.

8. Road connectivity is a basic infrastructure requirement for economic development. I would like to reiterate that the construction of East-West Highway along the foothills in Arunachal Pradesh from Bhairabkund to Ruksin is yet to be materialized. The phase-I works of this proposed road with 74.60 kms. was sanctioned during 1997-98 at an estimated cost of Rs.776.47 lakhs against which an expenditure of Rs.617.26 lakhs incurred, but subsequently the project was dropped by the NEC for want of EFC clearance. I would request the NEC to revive this project which will serve as a lifeline of Arunachal Pradesh and also as an alternative to NH-52 which passes through the state of Assam.

9. To tourism potential of the state can be exploited only with the provision of required tourism related infrastructure facilities. We need the assistance of the NEC for improvement of our tourist circuits and other tourism infrastructure. A suitable mechanism needs to be evolved to reduce the high cost of tourism in the North East. Travelling in the North East is both expensive and time consuming apart from non-availability of basic facilities to make the visit comfortable such as wayside amenities, clean toilets etc. The State Government has identified eco-tourism as a thrust area. The NEC may seriously consider for the establishment of a Himalayan Institute of Environment, Mountaineering and Adventure in Arunachal Pradesh. The state can be a major attraction for tourists seeking natural and

adventure tourism. Therefore, NEC may like to extend financial assistance for promotion of adventure tourism like aero-sports, trekking and hiking etc. to explore the rich socio-cultural diversity, handlooms and handicrafts and other varied traditional heritage. We organize the Brahmaputra Darshan and Buddha Mahatsova annually to showcase our tourism potential. I urge the NEC to finance such pioneering efforts to develop these facets of tourism in the State.

10. I honestly believe that unemployment and underdevelopment are the root cause of extremism. More jobs and economic opportunities must be created to prevent our youth from going astray. In fact, there is no cut and dried policy to solve the problem of insurgency in the States of the North Eastern Region. The peace process should be gradual, based on mutual understanding and through meaningful political dialogues. Though generation of employment is the corner-stone of our plan programmes, no State Government can assure white collar jobs to all as the scope for employment in Government organizations and institutions have already reached super-saturated levels. Therefore, every State Government needs to encourage private enterprise by providing necessary incentives and financial assistance, and other necessary facilities. This will definitely help in developing entrepreneurship and other self employment avenues amongst our

youth. The NEC may evolve appropriate strategy to provide both financial and logistic support.

11. I conclude with these words by expressing my gratitude and thanks to the Hon'ble Chairman.

Thank you.