

PRESS RELEASE

Speech of Thiru O. Panneerselvam, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Special Committee for Inter-linking of rivers at New Delhi on 6.1.2015 – read out by Thiru N.S. Palaniappan, I.A.S., Principal Secretary to Government, Public Works Department.

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Hon'ble Union Minister for Water Resources and River Development,

Hon'ble Minister of State for Water Resources and River Development,

Ministers of State Governments, Officers of Central and State Governments,

Tamil Nadu is a severely water stressed State and whatever water potential the State has, has been harnessed to the maximum extent possible. The State has been exposed to vagaries of the monsoon and there are areas including Chennai City where Tamil Nadu has to depend on neighbouring States for irrigation and drinking water. Therefore, Tamil Nadu has been consistently urging the Government of India, for linking Peninsular Rivers and divert West flowing rivers to East in Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu has also been attempting to link the rivers within the State.

In this august assembly, I would like to draw your attention to the consistent efforts my **revered leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma** has been taking for achieving the visionary project of interlinking of rivers. As early as August 1993, my revered leader had urged the then Prime Minister for the implementation of the Peninsular River Development Component which envisages diversion of surplus water from the Mahanadhi and Godavari Rivers to the water scarce basins of the Krishna, Pennar, Cauvery and Vaigai in the South and the diversion of the surplus waters of the West flowing rivers of Pamba - Achankovil towards East and requested to expedite the process of feasibility studies and for the implementation of the project in the interest of the Nation as a whole.

My **revered leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma** on 11.9.2001 had requested that the National Water Policy which recognises the need for making available water from the surplus basins to water shortage areas taking into account the National perspective should be given the necessary impetus with a time bound action plan.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Water Resources Council held on 1.4.2002, Tamil Nadu had urged that the Hon'ble Prime Minister should take a pro-active role for the quick implementation of the Peninsular Rivers Development Component which

includes Pamba – Achankovil – Vaippar link project and the “Nationalisation” of Inter State Rivers so that the scarce water resource could be utilised optimally in the overall interest of the Nation.

My **revered leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma** had after discussions with the Chairman, Task Force on interlinking of Rivers on 16.4.2003 urged that the process of Nationalisation of Rivers should be expedited through necessary legislation in order to facilitate the implementation of Peninsular Grid which involves the linking of the Inter State Rivers Mahanadhi – Godavari – Krishna – Cauvery – Vaigai and Gundar. She forcefully argued that the Peninsular Grid should be accorded highest priority and taken up as a first project and completed in the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan period itself. In the interlinking projects the rights of use of water flowing from the existing Inter State Agreements should not be disturbed and that the idea should be to increase the availability in water deficit States. Subsequently, on 24.4.2003, Puratchi Thalaivi Amma requested the Chairman, Task Force that additional quantity of 100 TMC ft. be spared at the Tamil Nadu border or a part thereof and aligned between Mylavaram on North Pennar and Sathanur and South Pennar.

My **revered leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma** in the Memorandum presented to the Prime Minister on 16.9.2004 had urged the Government of India to take up the Peninsular Rivers Development Project including the Pamba – Achankovil – Vaippar Link and the Nationalisation of Inter State Rivers.

My **revered leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma** in the discussion with the Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission on 30.11.2004 urged for the early start of interlinking of Rivers particularly the Peninsular River Water Grid linking Mahanadhi with the Gundar River. She also pointed out that China had made rapid strides implementing such projects and India should not fall behind.

My **revered leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma** in the 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Southern Zonal Council held on 31.5.2005, requested for the revival of the interlinking of Rivers of Mahanadhi with Gundar as it would greatly contribute to the economic development of the Southern Region and should be implemented as a fast track project. Further in the 51<sup>st</sup> meeting of the National Development Council held on 27.6.2005, she pointed out that the interlink of Rivers project which has been put into cold storage should be given priority and taken up rather than State specific projects.

My **revered leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma**, in the Memorandum presented to the Hon'ble Prime Minister on 3.6.2014 requested that all Inter State Rivers should be nationalised so that water resources of the country are optimally utilised by bringing forward suitable legislation.

Thus the Government of Tamil Nadu has been continuously urging the Government of India to implement the Peninsular Rivers Link so that the problems of the agriculturists and the people of Tamil Nadu as a whole could be alleviated.

#### **Implementation of the Project without waiting for consensus**

The Government of Tamil Nadu is of the view that since the Hon'ble Supreme Court has ordered for speedy implementation of the interlinking of rivers, the Government of India has to take up the Project under "**National Perspective Plan (NPP)**" as in the case of Ganga Rejuvenation Project. Otherwise, the interlinking of Rivers project will be a non-starter. In our view, waiting for developing a consensus with non-consenting States would only delay the project.

The Government of Tamil Nadu is of the firm view that with regard to Mahanadhi-Godavari-Krishna-Palar-Cauvery-Vaigai-Gundar link for which a Feasibility Report was completed by National Water Development Agency (NWDA) long back, preparation of DPR should be taken up without further delay and the work of interlinking should be taken up immediately.

Pending finalisation and execution of the entire component of this link, the Government of Tamil Nadu requests the Government of India to extend financial assistance including cost for land acquisition as per the prevailing Act for implementing Cauvery (Kattalai)-Vaigai-Gundar link. This will facilitate diversion of flood surpluses whenever they occur, to benefit the deficit areas.

#### **Pamba-Achankovil-Vaippar Link Project**

NWDA has prepared the Project Report for Pamba-Achankovil-Vaippar Link after assessing the yield and demand of Kerala including its future requirements. The diversion proposed to Tamil Nadu is about 22 TMC ft. of water, which is 20% of the surplus flows as assessed by NWDA. However, Kerala argues that it is against the interlinking of rivers programme. As this link is beneficial to both the States, the Special Committee should instruct NWDA for the preparation of DPR on priority basis, so as to implement the link speedily.

**Linking of Rivers within the State**

As the programme of interlinking of the Peninsular Rivers will be a long drawn process, the Government of Tamil Nadu has programmed to implement the linking of Rivers within the State like Pennaiyar (Sathanur Dam) – Palar link, Pennaiyar (Nedungal Anicut) – Palar link, Cauvery (Mettur Dam) – Sarabanga link, Athikadavu – Avinashi Flood Canal Scheme and Thamirabarani – Karumeniyar – Nambiyar link. The Government of Tamil Nadu had already posed the following projects seeking financial assistance from the Government of India which were not favourably considered by the previous Government:-

- (i) Pennaiyar (Sathanur Dam) – Palar link;
- (ii) Pennaiyar (Nedungal Anicut) – Palar link;
- (iii) Cauvery – Gundar link;
- (iv) Athikadavu – Avinashi Flood Canal Scheme

Such schemes proposed by the State Government may be considered by the Government of India and financial assistance including cost for land acquisition extended to this Government.

I, urge the Government of India that in the interest of the Nation, specific time bound Action Plan should be drawn by this Committee so that there could be no further loss of time, so that this project of utmost national importance – that of interlinking of rivers – is implemented speedily and effectively.

Thank you, Vanakkam.

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