

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. letter dated 14.12.2015 addressed by Selvi J Jayalalithaa, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

"You are personally aware of the devastation caused by the recent floods in Tamil Nadu, including in Chennai. The people worst affected in the floods were the poor and the vulnerable both in urban and rural areas. Such families lost their huts and dwelling places along with all their household belongings. The State Government has already undertaken an extensive exercise of enumerating the families which suffered destruction of huts and loss of household effects in the floods. Immediate ex gratia payments are paid out of the Disaster Response Funds. However, this does not permanently rehabilitate them or enable a reconstruction of their dwelling places.

Provision of durable housing to all is a priority for my Government. Accordingly, I have already announced that all those who lost their huts during the recent floods would be provided permanent houses. This is a programme to be implemented both in rural and in urban areas.

In Chennai city, about 50,000 families have already been surveyed and identified living along the banks of the Adayar and Cooum Rivers and the Buckingham Canal. All of these people would require to be provided alternative housing in order to ensure that they do not continue to live in a very precarious location with their lives and dwelling places at perpetual risk and also to ensure free flow in these important waterways of Chennai City.

Out of these 50,000 families, the Government of Tamil Nadu would be able to accommodate 25,000 families in tenements already constructed and under construction by the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board. I expect the resettlement of these people to commence within 2 weeks and to be completed in phases within a year. Until such time that they move to alternative housing, the State Government will provide temporary housing at its own cost.

For the remaining 25,000 families, particularly those residing along the Buckingham Canal and for a further 25,000 families residing in the vicinity of other water courses and water bodies in Chennai City and its suburban areas, affected in the recent flooding, we have prepared a project to construct 50,000 multi-storeyed tenements on various pieces of land that are available with the State Government. The cost of construction per unit of 380 sq. ft, including the cost of providing other common amenities, is expected to be Rs.10 lakhs per unit. The total cost of this massive special housing project will be Rs.5000 crores. I request

you to sanction a special scheme of constructing 50,000 houses for the urban poor who are to be resettled from water courses and water bodies at a total cost of Rs.5000 crores. The cost of the land, which in Chennai and its adjacent urban areas will be quite considerable, will be the contribution of the State Government. The flood affected families who are the beneficiaries of such a scheme would not be able to make the beneficiary contribution which is required to be made as per the norms of the existing schemes under the Housing for All programme. Further, the existing schemes under the Housing for All programme cover only a small portion of the unit cost of the houses to be constructed. Hence, it is very essential that a special programme is approved for the construction of houses at alternative locations for the 50,000 flood affected families residing along the Chennai water courses, with substantially enhanced Government of India contribution.

In addition to this special scheme, for those residing in the vicinity of water courses, many families residing in slums who do not require relocation have also suffered extensive damages in the floods. I understand that, under existing programmes of the Government of India, Rs.1.5 lakhs is provided as a grant for reconstruction of houses in situ. It is estimated that there are 50,000 such houses in Chennai and adjoining urban areas which were damaged in the floods. I request you to make a special allocation of Rs.750 crores for 50,000 houses at the rate of Rs.1.5 lakh per house as Central grant. The State Government will add a further Rs.1 lakh per house to provide a grant of Rs.2.5 lakhs per house for in situ reconstruction of houses in slum areas affected by the floods.

As you are aware, many rural areas in Tamil Nadu, in particular in Cuddalore, Tiruvallur, Kanchipuram and Thoothukudi districts suffered extensively in the floods and nearly 1 lakh hut dwellings were either partially or fully damaged in the floods. I propose that the construction of pucca houses in the rural areas can be funded under the Indira Awaas Yojana with an enhanced unit cost of at least Rs.1.5 lakh per house as a special allocation. I request you to make a special allocation of 1 lakh houses additionally for the flood affected rural areas in Tamil Nadu, over and above the normal allocation for the State, under the Indira Awaas Yojana at an enhanced unit cost of Rs 1.5 lakhs to enable the construction of permanent houses.

I would be grateful if you could instruct the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation and the Ministry of Rural Development to expeditiously accord the additional special sanctions I have sought, so that the construction of houses for the families most adversely affected in the recent devastating floods in Tamil Nadu could commence without any delay. "

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