

**Speech of Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu  
Third Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog**

**23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2017, New Delhi**

Hon'ble Prime Minister,

Hon'ble Union Ministers,

Hon'ble Chief Ministers and Lieutenant Governors,

Vice Chairman and Members of NITI Aayog,

Senior Officials!

Vanakkam!

It is my proud privilege to address the Third Meeting of the Governing Council of the NITI Aayog on behalf of the Government of Tamil Nadu, as the State continues to embark on the ambitious growth path charted out by our late Hon'ble Chief Minister, Puratchi Thalaivi Amma.

2. While the Meeting will review the work done by NITI Aayog over the past two years, the main issue to be discussed in this meeting is the contours of the Vision, Strategy and Action Documents, which would replace the Five Year Plans from the current financial year onwards. The work already done by NITI Aayog and the reports prepared will no doubt inform the drafting of the Vision, Strategy and Action Documents.

3. Tamil Nadu was one of the States that had called for removing the artificial distinction between Plan and Non-Plan expenditure and we support the move of the Government of India to do away with Five Year Plans. However, even at the time of the formation of the NITI Aayog, we had highlighted that given the challenges of economic development in India, there still is a strong case for preparing a blue print for action with clearly laid down goals and objectives to be achieved within a given time frame, addressing the critical issues that confront the economy and how to resolve them, and securing the consensus of both the Centre and the States. Both a longer term strategic view and a medium term perspective are required.

4. In Tamil Nadu, our late Hon'ble Chief Minister, Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, immediately on assumption of office in May 2011, commenced the process of drafting the Vision Tamil Nadu 2023 document which was launched on 24.3.2012. This document is an excellent model of a perspective plan.

5. The goals and themes of the Vision Tamil Nadu 2023 have been carefully determined as perceivable outcomes which will impact the lives of the common people in the most direct manner possible including substantial increases in income through generation of fruitful employment; improvement in the quality of life through provision of high quality infrastructure and services; focused growth of sectors where the State has a competitive advantage; and above all peace, prosperity and protection of the vulnerable.

6. Ambitious stretch targets were deliberately set to challenge and to inspire and to ensure that the legitimate aspirations of the people of Tamil Nadu are appropriately recognized. Growth and development have to be achieved in the most inclusive manner possible.

7. At the heart of Tamil Nadu Vision 2023, is the provision of world class infrastructure to all the residents of Tamil Nadu. The emphasis on infrastructure is necessitated on two counts – first, infrastructure development is investment intensive and generates significant employment opportunities and economic growth in its own right; second and more importantly, infrastructure development creates huge positive externalities in the economy by providing a fillip to economic and social development across all sectors.

8. Noting that innovation is key to achieving such ambitious growth rates, the Vision also envisions Tamil Nadu becoming the “Knowledge Capital” and “Innovation Hub” of the country. This requires the creation and nurturing of an appropriate environment that aids innovation and sustenance of knowledge.

9. I would encourage the NITI Aayog to study the Vision Tamil Nadu 2023 Parts I and II while preparing the Vision 2030 document for the country. The fundamental tenets put forth to connect Vision to Strategy are clearly articulated and are easily replicable at the national level.

10. The Vision we have for India is strongly aligned with the Vision we have for Tamil Nadu. By 2030, we would like to see India become the world’s largest economy rid of poverty and deprivation. The country should reach the status of an upper middle income economy, with the fruits of growth and economic success well distributed across all regions and socio-economic groups and in particular, to the hitherto most deprived. A per capita income of Rs. 10,00,000 (USD 15,000) (at today’s prices) should be the benchmark we should strive for by 2030. To achieve this goal, we must elevate our growth rates to double digits and sustain this growth trajectory over the next 15 years- a goal which I believe is very much attainable.

11. I envision an India that would become the global hub for knowledge and skilled human resources and an India that would have resumed its rightful position in the world as the fountainhead of innovation and enterprise. I see India emerging as a global leader, steering the geo-political and economic dialogue not

just to ensure security, but also the well being of not only its own citizens, but of the entire humanity.

12. While proposing this ambitious Vision, I am fully cognizant of the challenges we face. However, I am confident that this is achievable when all stakeholders are aligned and engaged. The Government of India should work closely with the State Governments in providing an enabling ecosystem for the growth strategies the States may have charted for themselves. The Government of India must not pursue a 'one size fits all' model, but instead allow States to plan and manage priorities falling under their jurisdiction. The Perspective, Strategy and Action Documents should provide sufficient elbow room for States to develop their own long and medium range plans. Tamil Nadu intends to adhere to the Vision Tamil Nadu 2023.

13. In the Strategy Document, there has to be an emphasis on how policy co-ordination is to be achieved, resources are to be garnered and implementation mechanisms created to work towards the longer-term goals. Hence, the plans must not merely focus on outlays, but also on the policy measures required for private sector participants in economic development to contribute their mite in achieving the sectoral goals.

14. This exercise of the NITI Aayog would also need to fit in with the United Nations initiative to establish a set of "Sustainable Development Goals" (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030 replacing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which were set for achievement by 2015. It is gratifying that India's performance has been satisfying, and in particular, Tamil Nadu's performance under the MDGs has been quite commendable. Hence, I welcome the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) based framework for tracking and measuring progress for the longer term Vision.

15. Tamil Nadu has already set in motion the process of mapping the 17 goals and 169 targets under the SDG based framework with reference to ongoing programmes and initiatives. Many of the targets suggested by this framework find mention and emphasis in the Tamil Nadu Vision 2023. My Government is committed to the realization of these goals for the State well before the timelines suggested by the United Nations. I strongly urge that NITI Aayog and the Government of India must finance the programmes required to fill the gaps identified in achieving the SDGs.

16. NITI Aayog and the Government of India must also put in place an integrated data management system to collect, compile, analyze and present SDG linked data for the whole country in a periodic manner. Specific indicators also need to be developed for this purpose at the earliest and communicated to the States.

17. As part of preparing the Vision, Strategy and Action Documents, I would urge the NITI Aayog to create sector wise Strategic Vision documents which would

provide a longer term perspective of where the nation aspires to be in that particular sector. Given the enormity of the task to be achieved, focus should be limited to a few crucial sectors to begin with including Education, Health, Agriculture, Infrastructure and Mechanisms of Inclusive Growth.

18. The Agenda papers state that NITI Aayog has engaged in extensive consultation with States on the preparation of Vision, Strategy and Action Documents. While Tamil Nadu has provided its views with regard to the overall approach to the Vision exercise, sector wise consultation has been limited only to some sectors.

19. India's agriculture sector continues to remain very critical, since no other country can grow the food which is required to feed the country which would have the largest population in the world. Improving farmer's income should be at the core of the country's economic strategy. Retraining agricultural workers, encouraging usage of advanced agricultural technology, supporting diversified agriculture and improving irrigation infrastructure are some measures to help address this challenge.

20. The agenda for this meeting rightly emphasizes Agriculture with two specific items – the Report of the Task Force on Agriculture Development and the paper on "Doubling of Farmers' Income". Tamil Nadu is suffering from one of the worst droughts in several decades, with a severe shortfall of 62 per cent in precipitation in the North East Monsoon season of 2016. Farmers in the State are in considerable distress and their representatives have voiced their grievances even in New Delhi. It is important that the legitimate grievances of the farmers receive sympathetic consideration from the Government of India.

21. Tamil Nadu is dependent on inter-State rivers, in particular, the Cauvery for meeting its water needs both for irrigation and drinking water supply. I strongly reiterate the demand for the immediate establishment of the Cauvery Management Board and the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee for the implementation of the Final Order of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal.

22. The long-term solution to ensure optimal and equitable sharing of the water resources in the country is the inter-linking of rivers. Under the Peninsular Rivers Development Component, our revered leader, the late Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Puratchi Thalaivi Amma has repeatedly urged the Government of India to implement the interlinking of the Mahanadhi-Godavari-Krishna-Pennar-Palar-Cauvery-Vaigai Rivers and further with the Gundar River and also to divert the surplus waters of the west flowing Pamba and Achankovil Rivers to Vaippar in Tamil Nadu. Based on the Supreme Court Order dated 27.2.2012, and our persistent requests, the Government of India constituted the Special Committee for Interlinking of Rivers which is yet to make significant headway. I reiterate the legitimate demand of our Revered Leader the late Puratchi Thalaivi Amma to nationalise all inter-State Rivers, so that water resources of the country can be optimally utilized.

23. The goal of doubling farmers' incomes has to be achieved by a combination of measures to increase incomes from crop cultivation and from allied activities including horticulture, animal husbandry and fisheries. The allocation of funds by the Government of India for agriculture and allied sectors, in particular for animal husbandry and fisheries, has come down considerably. The State Government has undertaken a number of measures to promote animal husbandry including through the free distribution of milch cattle, sheep and goats, and fisheries to supplement farm incomes. A special focus has been given in the last 6 years to boost Animal Husbandry infrastructure. A dry land agriculture mission has been launched to stabilise income of the farmers in arid lands. Diversification in crop cultivation through support for horticulture crops has been emphasized. Supply chain management, market integration and support to Farmers Producers Groups as building blocks for Farmers Producers' Organizations have been prioritized. The Government of India should revive the scheme for promoting agro-processing clusters and units. All these measures will increase farmers income and sustain farm activities in long run.

24. In a distress year, the emphasis needs to be on at least ensuring that the farmers' current income level is protected, for which agriculture insurance must come to rescue of the farmers. With the special efforts of Government of Tamil Nadu to promote the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), 15 lakh farmers have been enrolled in the Rabi season under PMFBY, covering a total extent of over 30 lakh acres. The State Government is coordinating with all the stakeholders for speedy settlement of insurance claims to the affected farmers to enable them to take up sowing in the forthcoming Kharif 2017 season. In order to instill faith amongst farmers in the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, it is very important that the insurance claims for the year 2016-2017 have to be settled by the insurance companies, within three weeks from the receipt of yield data based on crop cutting experiments in accordance with the Guidelines. All the requisite information has been provided, hence the insurance companies must be directed to ensure that the insurance compensation claims for the Rabi season 2016-17 are released to farmers in Tamil Nadu before the end of April, 2017.

25. A key vulnerable group in Tamil Nadu at present are the marine fishermen along the Palk Bay whose livelihood of fishing in their traditional waters has been repeatedly threatened by the aggressive actions of the Sri Lankan Navy. I urge that the traditional fishing rights of the Indian fishermen in the Palk Bay much be protected and their safety and security ensured. The non release of apprehended fishing boats for long periods, deprives fisherfolk of livelihood and causes irretrievable damage to their most important asset. I strongly urge the Government of India to secure the immediate release of the 133 boats in Sri Lankan custody in a refurbished condition. The long term solution to the problem lies in the retrieval of Katchatheevu Island. I also reiterate the request for the early sanction of the Comprehensive Special Package for Diversification of Fisheries which includes conversion of bottom trawlers to deep sea tuna long liners to ease the pressure on the Palk Bay.

26. Increasing the share of manufacturing in the economic output is the only time-tested strategy to create good jobs in large numbers. The Government of India should work closely with trading partners to build integrated global and regional value chains for various products and thereby make India a natural destination for manufacturing for domestic and international markets.

27. Infrastructure creation and sustenance is critical for economic advancement, with the Government at the Centre focusing on investing in pan-national infrastructure projects in Railways, Roads, Airports, Ports, Waterways and Power which would provide the right fillip for projects being implemented by the States and the private sector. States in turn should strive to provide world class infrastructure for their residents both in rural and urban areas.

28. India's biggest comparative advantage lies in its people. In the area of health and education, our people are entitled to the best quality of services that are available anywhere in the world and it is the duty of the Government of India and the State Governments to enable the provision of such services.

29. In the Health Sector, inputs of the State Government were sought on the draft Vision for the sector. While the overall objective of providing Universal Health Care is very laudable, there are some problematic issues in the draft Vision that require to be highlighted. Simplistic assumptions have been made that the overlapping roles of Central and State Governments in the Health sector have caused the less than optimal health care systems in the country. In fact, it is the federal nature of the health sector which has provided autonomy to some States like Tamil Nadu to prioritize the sector and establish more robust public health systems. The approach appears to be towards increasing the role of the State as a regulator and strategic purchaser of health care, through insurance mechanisms, while the provider role would be fulfilled by the private sector and the public sector, competing on equal terms. While publicly financed health insurance schemes, like Tamil Nadu's Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme, have been successful mainly for secondary and tertiary inpatient care, the existence of the public systems have ensured that cost levels are kept down and the most deprived are not denied services. Primary health care and outpatient care, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas has been provided almost totally by the public sector and should continue to remain so. We strongly feel that the vision of providing universal health care, particularly in Tamil Nadu, can best be achieved by strengthening the existing public health system and contracting in from the private system, only to fill in the gaps.

30. In the area of Education, the Government of Tamil Nadu strongly believes that its existing policy framework which is based on the principles of inclusiveness, equity, universalization and safeguarding the interests of regional language and culture and of the vulnerable, needs to be preserved. In this context, the introduction of NEET is a direct infringement on the rights of the State and would cause grave injustice to the students of Tamil Nadu who are already covered by a fair and transparent admission policy laid down by the Government

of Tamil Nadu, which has been working well. The Government of Tamil Nadu has taken a number of steps, starting from 2005, towards systematizing the admission process to professional courses including medical colleges, and after careful consideration, abolished entrance examinations for professional undergraduate courses in the State, by enacting the Tamil Nadu Admission in Professional Educational Institutions Act, 2006 which received the assent of the President under Article 254(2) of the Constitution and has survived legal challenges up to the Supreme Court. Tamil Nadu's admission system protects the interests of students, particularly from the weaker sections and rural areas, as such students cannot compete with urban elite students in Common Entrance Examinations. A large number of socially and economically backward meritorious rural students have benefited by the Government of Tamil Nadu's decision to abolish the Common Entrance Examinations. For admission to Postgraduate courses, the Government of Tamil Nadu gives preference to those who have served in rural areas, with special weightage for those working in hilly and tribal areas. The introduction of NEET would nullify such policy initiatives intended to further the socio-economic objectives of the State. The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly has recently unanimously passed two Bills for protecting the existing admission policy for undergraduate and postgraduate admissions in Government Medical and Dental colleges and Government quota seats which require the assent of the President of India under Article 254(2) of the Constitution of India. I reiterate the request for immediate approval of these two Bills to enable the State to continue its existing fair and transparent system of admission to Government Medical Colleges and Dental Colleges and Government quota seats in the State. I also urge the Government of India to not mandate common entrance examinations for other professional courses including Engineering and Veterinary Sciences, without considering the specific circumstances of each State.

31. There is an urgent need to improve productivity of our human resources and create good jobs for millions of job seekers who are migrating from the primary sector or newly entering the workforce. The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu was one of the members of the sub-group on Skill Development. It is gratifying that a number of key suggestions made by Tamil Nadu have been taken on board by the Sub-Group. One key suggestion of Tamil Nadu in the Sub Group was the need for role clarity in field level implementation of skill development programmes to reduce the overlap between Central Government and State Government initiatives. Organizations like the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) are directly engaging and funding training providers. State agencies are in parallel performing a similar function. This leads to duplication of efforts, poor oversight and creates arbitrage opportunities due to parallel operations. Tamil Nadu suggested that Central Government agencies including NSDC should confine themselves to national level standardization, accreditation and certification functions, provision of financing and establishing policy and legislative frameworks. Actual training delivery should be routed through State Government agencies which are better placed to mobilize candidates for training. Government of India should speedily move over to a model where the entire training delivery

under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana is handled by State Government agencies. Similarly, under the SANKALP scheme, adequate funding should be provided for strengthening the skill building institutional framework including for faculty development.

32. A significant step undertaken based on the report of a Sub Group of Chief Ministers was the rationalization of Centrally Sponsored Schemes. This process of rationalization has a number of positive features including a higher proportion of flexible funds, retention of the existing fund sharing pattern for six "core of the core" schemes and ensuring that the Centre's share of funding never falls below 50 per cent. However, a number of issues remain.

33. The key issue is that the share of State funds was increased for all the "core" schemes to 40 per cent uniformly. The main argument for this was that the 14<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission mandated an increase in the devolution to States to 42 per cent of the net Central Tax revenue. Tamil Nadu is one State that has been badly affected by the recommendations of the 14<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission as the horizontal share of the State declined by almost 20 per cent, effectively nullifying the impact of the increase in the vertical share in devolution. The situation has been exacerbated by the increasing tendency of the Government of India to levy cesses and surcharges on various Central taxes which keeps such receipts out of the devolution pool. Hence, meeting the increased State share of 40 per cent for Centrally Sponsored Schemes is a challenge for Tamil Nadu.

34. What has been even more challenging has been the under funding in the Union Budget for certain crucial schemes which has resulted in non-release of the Centre's share of committed funding for the scheme. I would like to draw specific attention in this regard to the Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for Scheduled Castes, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and the Rashtriya Madhyamik Siksha Abhiyan.

35. In the case of the Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for Scheduled Castes, the Government of Tamil Nadu has submitted the utilization certificates for the funds released by the Government of India up to the year 2015-16 and submitted claims for Rs.1882.04 crores for the year 2016-17 including the arrears of Rs.669.47 crores for the period up to the year 2015-16, and this very large amount is yet to be released by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. While the Ministry has admitted Tamil Nadu's claims, funds have not been released due to insufficient budgetary allocations. Given the sensitivity of the issue, I request that adequate budgetary allocations should be made for this scheme and the funds released to the States without any further delay. It also very important to ensure that the current absolute level of Central support for the Post Matric Scholarship Scheme should at least be maintained in the period beyond the end of the Twelfth Plan period on 31.3.2017.

36. In the case of the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and Rashtriya Madhyamik Siksha Abhiyan, the Ministry of Human Resource Development has been unable to meet its committed share of funding for the Annual Action Plans approved by the



Ministry due to reduced allocation of funds in the Union Budget. Tamil Nadu has a total pending release of Rs 1862.34 crores under the two schemes for the period upto 31.3.2017. This is very unfortunate considering that the Government of India levies Education Cess on various taxes specifically to fund the schemes. The non-release of the committed Central Share of funding not only adversely affects the fiscal health of the State, but also disrupts the effective implementation of schemes in very important social sectors. A significant portion of the revenue deficit problem now confronting many States stems from this pernicious practice.

37. There are Centrally Sponsored Schemes to cover priority areas like Agriculture, Rural Drinking Water Supply and Poverty Reduction. Unfortunately, the allocation of funds for schemes in these sectors is too meagre to give substance to the priority being accorded to the sector. Hence, the Government of India must ensure that the budgetary allocations are made for Centrally Sponsored Schemes in priority areas are stepped up substantially to ensure impact.

38. One of the consequences of the reorganization of a number of smaller schemes under broader umbrella schemes is that many are continued as sub-schemes with insignificant allocations which will not have any meaningful impact at the national level. In such cases, either the allocations should be increased to meaningful levels or the sub-schemes should be discontinued.

39. Compassion is the hallmark of a great nation and the manner in which it cares for its poorest and most vulnerable is what would make India truly great. Hence, elimination of poverty and providing a social safety net for the vulnerable that is second to none in the world should be what we strive for. At present at the National Level, the Rural and Urban Livelihood Missions only cover some selected blocks and selected large cities. Further the scale of funding for the Village Poverty Reduction Committees also varies substantially. In Tamil Nadu, we are supplementing both the coverage and financing through State funds and multilateral financing. However, it is important that the coverage of both the National Rural and Urban Livelihood Missions is extended to the entire country and the financing substantially stepped up so that poverty reduction is accelerated.

40. A historic reform of indirect taxes in India has been achieved with the passage of the Central GST, Integrated GST and GST Compensation Acts in the Parliament. The Tamil Nadu GST Bill will be placed before the State Legislative Assembly shortly. Tamil Nadu has been consistently raising its concerns about the impact of the proposed GST on the fiscal autonomy of States and the huge permanent revenue loss it is likely to cause to a manufacturing and net exporting State like Tamil Nadu. In the aftermath of the 101<sup>st</sup> Amendment of the Constitution, Tamil Nadu has been taking an active part in the deliberations of the GST Council so as to ensure that the rights of the States are protected. We are happy that the deliberations in the GST Council are taking place in a spirit of

consensus and significant suggestions made by Tamil Nadu have been accepted. I urge that the deliberations on the remaining issues should proceed in the same spirit of mutual give and take.

41. I would also like to strike a note of caution that the loss of revenue from implementation of GST could affect both the States and the Centre. In addition to the mandated compensation for loss of revenue due to implementation of GST, the States also get other transfers of funds from the Centre, both as devolution based on Finance Commission recommendations, and as the Central share of funds for Centrally Sponsored Schemes. Even within the GST framework, the quantum of funds required for compensating the States could be much higher than what was originally contemplated. In this context, I strongly emphasize that the Centre is obligated to ensure that other transfers of resources from the Centre to the States are not affected while compensating the States for GST implementation, as any cut-back in the over all transfer of funds would greatly impact the development expenditure of States.

42. Tamil Nadu has taken several steps to ensure that digital technology is fully harnessed for governance and for ensuring peoples' welfare. More than 99 per cent of all adults in the State have been issued Aadhaar numbers. The process of biometric enumeration of students and children in the age group of 0 – 5 years is currently under way and is expected to be completed shortly. Aadhaar seeded Ration Cards are currently being distributed. Several other population databases have also been seeded with Aadhaar numbers including beneficiaries under Old Age Pension, Labour Welfare, Land Records, and Scholarships.

43. Tamil Nadu was an early adopter of cash based Direct Benefits Transfer to bank accounts including under the old age pension, scholarship, maternity benefit, wage payment under MNREGA and relief payments for those affected by natural calamities. However, the last mile disbursements to the beneficiaries after bank transfers is still an issue as the banks' network of banking correspondents is inadequate causing inconvenience and difficulty for common people in rural areas to access their money in bank accounts. Further, Tamil Nadu is not in favour of monetizing and transferring as cash the subsidy element on food, fertilizer and fuel, as in such cases, more than the quantum of benefit, physical availability of the commodity is an issue.

44. The Government of Tamil Nadu has also entered into an MoU with Government of India for covering all the Panchayats under the BharatNet Scheme of Government of India. The process of establishing the network has started.

45. As regards digital payments, Point-of-Sale (PoS) machines are being installed in around 10,000 e-Sevai centres in the State, so that payments can be made digitally. The integration of Aadhaar with the beneficiaries database is helping to roll out the Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AEPS) as well. More than 140 services of the Government are provided online through e-Sevai centres and additionally 300 services will be provided within 2 months. More than 3 crore

transactions have taken place online through the e-Sevai centres established by the Government over the past 3 years.

46. When the NITI Aayog was formed, Tamil Nadu had urged that there should be a systematic mechanism in the new institution to take on board the views of the States at different levels in the hierarchy of the organization to enable federally empowered functioning and active participation of the States. NITI Aayog has played this role quite effectively. Views of State Governments have been proactively sought and taken on board, as reflected in the Sub Group Reports and other Papers that have been prepared and placed before us. However, one concern has been that NITI Aayog has not had sufficient clout with the Government of India Ministries to ensure that the views of the States are taken on board adequately in scheme and policy formulation falling within the domain of the Ministries. It would be much more useful if for all interactions which the NITI Aayog has with State Governments, there is effective participation by the Ministries dealing with the issue in Government of India.

47. We need to be careful to ensure that the meetings of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog do not become ritualistic exercises similar to the National Development Council. This should be a forum where the States are called to discuss, debate and evolve mutually beneficial policies and programmes instead of a mere ceremonial meeting where opinions are sought but no action is taken. The Chief Ministers' views should be heard and given due weightage.

48. We in Tamil Nadu, under the leadership of Peraringar Anna, Puratchi Thalaivar MGR and Puratchi Thalaivi Amma have always strongly pleaded for an increased role for the States in the development and nation building process and for greater fiscal autonomy for States. It is our belief that a Strong Union can emerge only out of Strong States and India's governance structure has to reflect more and more federal features.

49. I have placed before this august gathering the views of the Government of Tamil Nadu. I do hope that our views would be given due weightage and States will now find themselves full partners in the development process and together we are able to work to place the Nation on a high growth trajectory.

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