

Speech of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh for the 57th NDC meeting on 27th Dec. 2012

Hon'ble Prime Minister and the Chairman of the National Development Council

Hon'ble Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission

Hon'ble Union Ministers, My colleague Chief Ministers

Respected Members and Senior Officers of the Planning Commission, Various Ministries and Other States

Friends from the Media

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen

1. This is my first meeting as a member of the National Development Council. I share the excitement and pleasure which one feels while participating in an event of this level, where, apart from finalizing the vision and strategy for the development of our nation, we also meet a galaxy of distinguished luminaries, able administrators and dynamic leaders. To each one of you present here today, I convey greetings and best wishes from my beautiful State of Arunachal Pradesh.
2. To begin with, I would like to offer my sincere thanks on behalf of my entire State to our beloved Prime Minister and Chairman, NDC, Dr. Manmohan Singh Ji in whose leadership, the people of Arunachal Pradesh have reposed great hope and trust. He has a special soft corner for not only Arunachal Pradesh but for the entire North Eastern Region. The entire Planning Commission has been strongly supporting the development initiatives of my State and this visibly enhanced technical and financial assistance has generated a lot of goodwill amongst the patriotic people of my State for the Central Govt. and the Planning Commission. I am hopeful that under the present development oriented leadership at the Center, this trend will continue in the future also.
3. My State is a sentinel of our nation in the east, having an international border of almost 1680 km with China, Myanmar and Bhutan. The people of my State have stood shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the country in safeguarding the integrity of our geographical boundaries. Though we are small in numbers, we have the distinction of being the greenest State of the country, and also, of having the highest hydro-power potential. My State is a mega bio-diversity hot-spot of the world and has been recognized by the travel icon *Lonely Planet* as the 4th best tourism destination in the world in 2012. Although we started with very low baselines of development, we have today made rapid strides in every field with the result that today we have become one of the fastest growing States in the country.
4. We have a very important agenda before us today – that of finalizing the 12th Five Year Plan document. What we deliberate upon and decide today will guide the destiny of our nation for the next five years. Before coming to

specifics, let me say that the draft document compiled by the Planning Commission is a well-compiled and well-researched document which has brought out certain very important facts and highlighted critical areas that require our attention. I particularly liked the methodology of comparisons of trends with other countries in each sector which will help us adopt international best practices while formulating our growth policies.

5. I am glad to share with you that as against the target growth rate of 6.4% during the Eleventh Five Year Plan, my State has achieved an overall GSDP growth rate of 9.4%. This is 1.5% points higher than the national GDP growth rate of 7.9%. (Chpater 11, Vol 1). Further, ours is one of the eight States of the country where the actual realization during the 11th FYP has been higher than the original projections. Our per capita income, which was about 10% lower than the national average at the beginning of the 11th FYP is today almost 10% higher. Our results are all the more meaningful as in the 8th, 9th and 10th five year plans, our growth rate was consistently lower than the national growth rate by about 1.5 percentage points on an average. This has been made possible only due to the constant, liberal and unflinching support provided to us by the Planning Commission of India and the Central Government under the able leadership of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Sh. Manmohan Singh Ji.
6. Most of the mega-flagship projects announced by the Hon'ble Prime Minister during his visit to the State on 31st Jan. 2008 are on track and progressing satisfactorily. The State will soon have a new State-of-the-art secretariat, its first railway line, operationalization of several new airfields, 4-lane connectivity to the State capital and a Trans-Arunachal highway running along the length of the State from west to east. We have been able to add almost two thousand kilometres of rural roads and increased the availability of power in urban areas from 12 hours a day on an average to 19.5 hours. Our production of fruits has been almost 600% of our 11th plan target. I am also glad to share with you that as per the CAG report on State and Union Finances for 2010-11, our per capita expenditure on social services, health, education, agriculture, transport and rural development has been amongst the highest in the country. We have been able to achieve this while giving highest priority to our natural environment by preserving our forest cover and have been guided by twin factors of accountability and transparency in all our efforts.
7. Our achievements have been recognized by the rest of the nation and we were honoured with the IBN-7 diamond State award by the CNN group and the most progressive Small State Award by the India Today group last year.
8. I would now like to dwell on our vision and priority areas for the 12th Five year Plan.
9. The 12th Five year Plan Size of my State has been tentatively indicated as Rs. 21,126 cr by the Planning Commission of India which is an increase of 167.3% over the original projection of 11th FYP and 94.2% over the actual realization. I gratefully thank the Planning Commission and the Central

Government for this allocation and assure you that our actual realization, once again, will be much higher than this projection. Education, health, employment generation, tourism, agriculture & horticulture, power and physical connectivity will be our focus areas for the 12th Five Year Plan.

10. My State is the future power-house of our country and capacity addition through mega hydro-power projects would remain our highest priority area during the 12th FYP also. It is indeed an appreciable step that the draft plan document has devoted a specific section to 'Evacuation of Power from the North-East' as this was a long felt requirement. I also extend my heartfelt thanks for giving approval to the scheme of strengthening transmission systems in Arunachal Pradesh through NLCPR-Central pool of resources. This would help us in bringing down our AT&C losses considerably and at the same time, help us provide stable and round-the-clock power to several of our hitherto unconnected areas.

While agreeing with the proposition that the transmission system to evacuate 50,000 MW of power from the North-east through the Siliguri chicken's neck may have some redundancy initially, I propose that we may as well live with this redundancy and high cost of transmission for some initial years rather than delaying the setting up of these evacuation systems till the time a significant number of projects are completed. This will be a time-consuming project considering the inadequate transmission and distribution systems in most of the north-east at present and the sooner we start, the better it would be.

There are three specific areas of concern that I will like to raise at this juncture as regards the power sector in my State. Firstly, we need financial resources to the extent of almost thirteen thousand crore rupees for providing State Government equity for the projects being developed as joint ventures with PSUs or Independent Power Producers. As resources of such magnitude are simply not available with us at this juncture, I would urge the national Government to provide us this funding in a phased manner over a period of next eight to ten years. The only option left with us in case we don't get access to these resources would be to forego our State Government's ownership of these projects which would not be in the larger national interest.

Secondly, delay in forest clearances continues to be a cause of concern, delaying many components of our power projects, beyond repair. While the concept of a single window clearance committee for technical, environmental and forest clearances is being mooted for some time now, little has been achieved on ground. In a State where the forest cover is already in excess of 82%, it becomes difficult to locate additional land for compensatory afforestation. I hope these points will be kept in mind by the decision makers while making the forest clearances, more liberal and flexible. I am not for a moment suggesting that this should be at the cost of our forest wealth but technical delays should certainly be plugged by administrative reforms.

Our third cause of concern is the complete halt in progress of works on the 2000 MW Lower Subansari Hydro-electric project due to irrational objections

from certain sections of people in Assam and no effective steps being taken either by the Central Government or the Assam Government to contain these protestors. This project is a national wealth and is almost 80% complete. Once operational, the power requirements of the entire North-east region would be taken care of and my State would get revenue to the extent of Rs. 300 Crore annually which would help us address many of our developmental needs. Hon'ble Sir, we are infact quite disappointed with the developments on this front and invoke your kind indulgence in putting this project back on track as delaying in its implementation is causing huge loss to NHPC and the State Governments of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.

11. Poor physical connectivity in the State is the single biggest cause of concern as we enter the 12th Plan period. Less than 30% habitations in the State have access to all-weather pucca roads. The road density in the State is only 22, which compares poorly with the national average of more than 80 and North-East average of more than 50. There are several administrative head-quarters in the State which require multiple days of foot-march. Considering the large area of the State, increasing the road-density by even 1 (one) point requires an investment of about Rs. 2,000 cr and resources of this magnitude are simply not available. Further, almost 76% of our habitations do not satisfy the minimum population criterion of 250 to become eligible for PMGSY funding.

In this backdrop, the sanction of Trans-Arunachal highway and 2-lane roads to District HQs (total project length of almost 2,400 km) has provided us some relief. We propose to accord high priority to timely execution of these schemes. Most of these are under implementation at various stages.

I would also request you that atleast two major road projects in the State should be made a part of 12th plan document – the Guwahati-Tawang link through Bhutan by constructing the Lumla-Tashigong gap and the 157 km Miao-Vijayanagar link under PMGSY.

Further, I am informed that the revised financial sanction for the Itanagar railway project has not been accorded by the Ministry of Railways which has delayed the project beyond its target completion date of Dec. 2012. The project is almost 90% complete and I urge the Ministry of Railways to release the balance funds as the people of my State are eagerly looking forward to their first train and the first railway station. Further, the rail connectivity in the central and western sectors of the State needs to be expanded during the current plan but I see no mention of these areas in the plan document. This may be looked into.

12. Of late, my State has made tremendous progress in Agriculture clocking growth rate of 14% in 2010-11 which is unprecedented figure. Infact, as the draft Plan document highlights, our Agricultural growth rate between 2006 to 2012 was 7.8% compared to the national growth rate of 2.5%. We are naturally blessed – infact ours would be the only State in the country where fruits like apple and tropical fruits like pineapple grow within the same State. We hope to continue with this good performance during the 12th FYP also. Introducing double cropping, setting up of fruit processing industries and

providing marketing linkages to the farmers would be the focus areas of our efforts. We will lay additional focus on apples, kiwis, oranges, pineapples, ginger, cardamom, spices, medicinal plants and off-season vegetables. As our growth efforts have largely been individual-based private initiatives, we will devise programmes to provide logistic support to small farmers. You will be happy to know that this year, we have launched Chief Minister's Agriculture Mechanization programme and Tea and Rubber Cultivation programmes to further catapult the growth rates in these sectors and also provide employment to our unemployed youth.

However, lack of irrigation facilities, which is affecting double-cropping remains a serious cause of concern and my State has developed a draft master plan for agriculture and allied sectors to address this important issue. We will soon be approaching the Central Government with this master plan and I would today request the Union Government to support us in this endeavour.

13. Our Government has taken it as a challenge to provide atleast one job, either in private or public sector, in each family before the end of the 12th Five Year Plan. Accordingly, we have set ourselves a target of creating 1,00,000 (one lakh) new jobs during the 12th Five Year Plan. Chairman sir, you will be happy to know that we have already constituted Skill Development Council and Employment Generation Council under my chairmanship to help us achieve this target. We have also set-up a Livelihood Mission School in one of the districts on a pilot basis and this will soon be replicated in all the districts. Substantial allocation of financial resources has been made to Department of Industries, Tourism, Trade & Commerce, Agriculture, Horticulture and under Border Area Development Programme this year for skill development and capacity building of youth.
14. Health, as always, will continue to be a priority sector. The suggestions in the draft plan document on *Universal Health Coverage* are endorsed. My Government supports the combination of a tax-funded as well as an insurance based model for providing access to good health to all. However, the suggestions in the draft plan document of a general nature and specific suggestions would have helped in framing of the policy faster. This may be looked into before finalizing the document.

This year, we will launch Chief Minister's Universal Health Insurance Scheme under which we will provide insurance cover of upto Rs. 2.00 lakhs to 2 lakh families in the State. Further, we plan to strengthen all our health institutions by creating posts of specialist doctors and nurses on PPP mode. Besides, the first medical college of the State will come up during this plan period. Our health indicators have been traditionally better than the national averages and the targets given in the Plan document – IMR of 19 and Anaemia levels of 25% compared to national averages of 25 and 28% are accepted and shall be achievable.

Our two major constraints in the health sector are sparsely distributed population (which makes it difficult to provide health-care at the door-steps

and also raises the per capita costs) and lack of available specialist doctors. Specialist and super-specialist doctors are not ready to work in this difficult part of the country on government salaries and hence, I recommend if a model on the lines of Lakshdweep and Andamans islands, where Central government specialists are posted for limited periods of three months on rotational basis may be looked into for my State as well.

15. On the education front, the literacy rate of my State (66.95%) is the second lowest in the country and it is a cause of concern. However, it has to be viewed in the background of very low baseline levels that we started with at the time of independence when we had only three schools. The overall literacy rate in 1961 was as low as 7.13% and female literacy rate, only 1.42%. Till then we have made considerable progress and in the last decade, the gap with the national literacy rate has been reduced from 10.5% points to 7.09% points. During the 12th FYP, it will be our endeavour to improve the literacy rate to 80% and reduce the drop-out rate to 5% and the gender gap in literacy rate to 7%. Specific action plans for proper training of primary teachers and checking teacher absenteeism in remote areas shall be developed and implemented.

Lack of flexibility under SSA and inability to provide State share for flagship programmes under the education sector remain our biggest constraints in this sector. Construction of teachers' quarters, repairs of existing schools and purchase of regular school furniture should be allowed under SSA. Both these have been addressed subsequently during my address.

On the higher education front, we will see opening of a new State University, a law college, model degree colleges in each District and several new polytechnics and ITIs. In addition, nursing colleges, hospitality management institutes and aviation services training institute will also be opened. However till these institutes come up, we need higher representation for our students in Central Government professional colleges. The State Govt. has been allotted only 24 seats in the Central Govt. Medical Colleges and 150 seats in Central Govt. Engineering Colleges. Last year, 3,520 students applied for the 24 medical seats and 3,659 for the 150 engineering seats in the Joint Entrance Examination in the State. The seats are thus grossly inadequate compared with the requirements. The State has no medical college of its own and only two engineering colleges, one of which has started functioning only last year. In order to open up vistas of higher education in premier professional colleges of the country for the well-performing students of my State, I would request you to increase the number of seats in medical colleges to atleast 50 and those in engineering colleges to atleast 300 during the current plan period. I have also submitted a memorandum to the Hon'ble Union Minister of Human Resource Development highlighting the key requirements of our State recently and would request for early initiation of action on our requests.

16. The telecommunication sector in the North-east is far behind the national levels and there needs to be a separate section in the Plan document on how the service quality of existing services can be improved. The mobile and landline services, both of BSNL and private service providers in this part of

the country, even in capital cities are abysmally poor. Further, the central service provider should aim at providing broadband services in all sub-divisional head-quarters and mobile 3G services in all circle head-quarters in Arunachal Pradesh before the end of 12th FYP.

17. My State endorses the proposals for re-structuring the Centrally Sponsored Schemes that are highlighted in Chapter 10, Volume I of the draft Plan document. Measures like limiting the categories of schemes and providing flexibility to the extent of 20% in funds utilization for State-specific requirements are indeed, welcome steps that would act as force multipliers in making the outputs of these programmes, more effective. However Sir, it seems that the consistent demand of almost all the North-eastern States, i.e. 100% central funding of the flagship schemes considering the limited own resource base in these States has not found a place in the document. I am given to understand that this was recommended by the BKC Committee also and would therefore urge the Central Government to introduce this meaningful change before finalizing the 12th Five Year Plan.
18. While my State shares the developmental concerns and priorities of the rest of the nation, some of its requirements are unique because of its strategic location, distinctive socio-cultural mosaic, limited availability of resources and very low baselines of development. As has been highlighted by my predecessors during the earlier NDC meetings also, if we were to prioritize the areas of concern of the State Government, 'effective management of the international border' would emerge as the single largest focus area. We share international border with three countries and all these borders are strategically important. Our border in the north and north-east is subjected to irrational claims of China over our territory. Our 440 km long border with Myanmar is treacherous, porous and infiltration-prone. Infact it is no coincidence that the only three insurgency affected districts of my State – Tirap, Changlang and Longding share a long border with Myanmar. The border with Bhutan too is slowly becoming sensitive from security point of view.
19. The State Government has been consistently advocating a two-pronged strategy to address this problem. Firstly, we have to understand that large portions of the international border are snow-clad, thickly forested and have a very challenging terrain. It is not possible to physically man or fence this entire border. Infact, it is the presence of only few scattered habitations of Arunachalis that establishes our territorial sovereignty in these areas. While my Government has been trying hard for providing facilities to such settlements at their door-steps, it is impossible to do so without the support of the Central Government because of the huge magnitude of resources required. In such areas of national concern therefore, the Central Govt. should also not apply the typical formulae of economic cost-benefit analysis before sanctioning infrastructure development projects.
20. To provide administration at the door-steps of the citizens in these areas, we have been setting up Administrative offices, known as circle offices in such border areas. However, even as on date, there are 22 such administrative centres which do not have road connectivity and require multiple days of foot

march to reach. Our army and para-military patrols need porter tracks and foot suspension bridges in border areas to increase the efficacy of their patrolling and dominance strategies. We need to provide clean drinking water facilities, apart from access to electricity to these habitations so that they do not move away from their original locations. We had submitted detailed project reports to the Planning Commission on these 3 projects way back in September 2010. This was followed by the visit of Hon'ble Member of the Planning Commission to some of these forward areas. Hon'ble Prime Minister Sir, I would like to request you to ask the concerned offices to put up these proposals to you and I am sure you wouldn't delay their sanction by a day considering their importance for our overall national priorities.

21. Several specific requests of the State Government have been pending in the Central Ministries. However, at this juncture I would like to highlight only those which I would like to be a part of the 12th plan document. These are –

- a) Relaxing PMGSY norms to cover habitations with less than 250 population in sparsely populated States like Arunachal Pradesh
- b) Allow State-specific estimates to be framed for works contracts under Central Schemes to provide for high transportation costs to remote and unconnected areas
- c) Include 4-laning of Itanagar-Bandardewa stretch under SARDP-NE programme during the current plan
- d) Include provision of rail connectivity to Tenga, Pasighat and Rupai-Namsai
- e) Provide domestic resources for our two important projects – upgradation of Itanagar capital city and Flood Control and Management project along major river basins which could not be projected for funding under ADB loans due to objections from China.
- f) Start air-dropping of PDS commodities in unconnected villages along the international border

22. On the security front, there have been several welcome developments. The 1st Battalion of Arunachal Scouts has been raised and the 2nd has been sanctioned. Several important UG cadres of ultra organizations have been apprehended in Lohit, Tirap, Longding and Changlang districts of the State in the last 3 months or so and two organizations have been almost wiped out. The Central Government has sanctioned a massive package for strengthening the State police set-up in Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts and we have already finalized the recruitment of more than 2,000 youth from these districts in the State police. This single step will have a remarkable turn-around effect on the insurgency situation in these districts.

23. However, several security related projects need to be fast-tracked. The 2-laning of Tezpur-Tawang highway, which is the only lifeline to Tawang defence sector is progressing painfully slow. Further, only three battalions of Assam Rifles are guarding the Myanmar border which is grossly inadequate and they need to be supplemented with at least five more battalions. Sir, ours is the most under-staffed State police of the nation with only one policeman for every 7 sq. km of area. I would today earnestly urge you to sanction

special packages for the State police in all the districts of the State in a phased manner, on the lines of Tirap-Changlang package. I assure you sir that the returns from this, tangibly and intangibly, would be many many times the investment made.

24. I am happy that the subjects of Regional Equality and Look-East Policy have been addressed in Chapter 11 of Volume 1 of the Plan document. It has been almost two decades since the Look East Policy of India, and subsequently 'Look East through North-East' doctrine was conceptualized. However, the progress on ground on various aspects which were originally envisioned, like border trade and commerce, controlling cross border movement of UG elements, increase in flow of information, cultural exchanges and people to people contact has been minimal. In the absence of such progress, there hasn't been any tangible benefit that has accrued to the North-eastern region in particular although several years have passed since we adopted this policy.
25. The chief pre-requisite for a meaningful Look-East policy is land connectivity. During my interactions with the Central Government, the issue of re-opening of Stilwell Road has been highlighted on several occasions. Most of the 1,726 km long historic Stilwell Road is now in a usable condition and only about 160 km portion in Myanmar needs renovation and repairs. Opening of this road provides direct connectivity to Yunnan province of China. It is in national interest to build this 160 km portion through an agency like BRO and open this road for trade and commerce at the earliest. In addition, the Border Trade at Pangsau Pass must also be formalized on priority. It is noteworthy that the major items of trade from Myanmar would be valuable timber (teak), precious gems, medicinal plants and other agricultural products. The timber could help revive many of the wood-based industries that had to be shut down in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh following Apex Court's restrictions on timber operations in 1996 and also create job opportunities to unemployed youth.
26. On similar lines, tourist circuits with South-east Asian nations have to be opened. As an instance, a Buddhist tourist circuit from Thailand to Myanmar to Arunachal Pradesh could become commercially viable within a short span of its launch. Again, Arunachal Pradesh has a hydro-power potential of about 60,000 MW and about 42,000 MW has already been allotted for development. Feeding the excess power generated into a South-East Asian power grid and trading natural gas from countries like Myanmar in return would be an idea worth consideration. Bangladesh, for instance, has been long demanding supply of power from the north-east and if we are able to achieve this, we will lay the foundations of permanent peace and friendship between the two nations, in addition to checking illegal immigration into our national borders.
27. The NER Vision Document 2020, adopted by all the Governors and Chief Ministers of north-eastern States in 2008 has identified the Look East Policy as the cornerstone for development of this region. It is time to make the policy more meaningful and shift from words to action. Physical connectivity through land, as highlighted earlier, will have to be the essential pre-ingredient for any of the other steps to make an impact and for this, I would today request this

august house to include 'Opening of Stilwell Road' as an agenda item in the 12th FYP document.

28. Strong administrative and governance systems are a must for fast-paced growth. My State belongs to the AGMUT cadre of IAS and many officers from outside the State come here and put in dedicated efforts for the development of the State and we would like this system to continue. Of late however, there has been a trend on the part of the Ministry of Home Affairs to take unilateral decisions on the transfer and postings of IAS and IPS officers to and from the State without due consultation with the State Government. The officers who are willing to serve here of their own will are transferred out whereas unwilling officers are posted in. Infact, sometimes, officers are posted for less than one year to complete their mandatory hard area posting tenure and such short tenures are of no benefit to us. Sir, Arunachal Pradesh is a State and not a Union Territory. I would request you to ensure that there are due consultations with the State Government before taking decisions on transfers of senior officers and the hard and irrational stand currently being adopted be modified to give primacy to the views of the State Government while effecting such transfers. Also, our cadre strength in IAS is only 37 and it is not possible to manage a full-fledged State with such small strength of officers. Many smaller States have much bigger cadres. I would request this strength to be increased to atleast 75 within the AGMUT cadre for which my State will soon submit a detailed proposal.
29. Today, the NDC meeting has provided us a platform for assessing our progress on various development fronts during the 11th FYP and evolving policy guidelines for the 12th Plan. I am sure that the deliberations on the draft 12th FYP document here today will kindle some thoughts, ignite some sparks and leave us in a mood of introspection on what further action needs to be taken on the road to sustainable and inclusive development. The outcomes of the appraisal shall help us fine-tune our policies and administrative systems for ensuring better and more efficient outputs. I shall be glad if the proceedings of the meeting are documented early and shared with various State Governments, Civil Society representatives, planners and industry leaders so that meaningful follow-up action can be initiated in time. I am positive that our Hon'ble Prime Minister and the Union Govt. will continue to have special focus and a special place in its heart for the North Eastern region of India in general and Arunachal Pradesh in particular and strengthen our hands in all our developmental efforts. It is the vision of hope that I brought here from every home of Arunachal and it is this vision that I carry back today to every family of my State.
30. I once again thank the Hon'ble Prime Minister, senior cabinet ministers and deputy chairman of the Planning Commission and commend the organizers on the picture-perfect arrangements.
31. Lastly, I extend New Year Greetings to all the participants.
32. Thank you all. Jai Arunachal Jai Hind