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Annexure-A

**Text of the opening remarks of the Hon'ble Prime Minister  
in the 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Island Development Authority**

My Cabinet colleagues, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, Members, Planning Commission, Shri Bishnu Pad Ray, Mr. Hamdullah Sayeed, Lt. Governor, Andaman & Nicobar Island, Administrator Lakshadweep and Officials, I welcome you to this 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Island Development Authority. The IDA is an important institution to bring to the centre of our attention the problems of our remote island territories and to evolve constructive solutions.

We last met two and a half years ago. I am informed that since our last meeting in January, 2009, the work relating to construction of houses, school buildings, health centres, Anganwadi centres, roads, electricity connectivity, water pump-sets, wells and coastal mangroves plantation which were damaged during the Tsunami have all been completed. I complement the Andaman & Nicobar Island Administration for successfully managing this enormous task of rehabilitation. I am also happy to note that during the course of this period the Standing Committee of the IDA and Cabinet Secretary's Inter-ministerial review meetings have facilitated considerable progress on a large number of pending issues relating to rehabilitation, drinking water, health, sanitation, connectivity etc in respect of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.

A number of steps have been taken to augment drinking water facilities in these islands. Low temperature thermal desalination plant has already become operational in Minicoy Island. A similar plant in Agatti is expected to be operational by the end of next July. I am also informed that the laying of the sub-sea pipeline between Rutland Island and Port Blair will be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2012. The work relating to increasing the height of the Dhanikhari Dam near Port Blair will be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2011. I have been assured by the Administration that during the interregnum they are fully geared to meet any drinking water crises. Further, the Administration has also been directed to explore the feasibility of installing desalination plants in smaller Islands.

The Lakshadweep group of islands is situated in an ecologically sensitive coral growth area. As of now, human waste is disposed off into the sea, as no island has a sewage treatment plant. With an increase in population, sensitivity of these pristine islands is at risk, owing to the dumping of these wastes into the sea. The issue of installation of sewage treatment plants in all the ten inhabited islands needs to be addressed expeditiously. For this purpose, DRDO was requested to experiment with the range of bio toilets innovated by them. Two demo units were established by DRDO in each island and are found to be functioning satisfactorily. A team from DRDO is