

OPENING REMARKS BY DR. MONTEK SINGH AHLUWALIA, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN, PLANNING COMMISSION, AT THE ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF ISLAND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (IDA) TO BE HELD ON 23RD MAY 2006 AT YOJANA BHAVAN, NEW DELHI

Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Members of Parliament representing Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep, Senior Officials of the Government of India and UT Administrations,

1. I welcome you to the Eleventh Meeting of the Standing Committee of IDA. We are meeting after a year to take stock of the progress on the discussions at the last meeting and identify specific actions in various sectors for a decision by the Island Development Authority (IDA). The Hon'ble Prime Minister has desired that a meeting of the IDA be convened urgently. The next IDA under PM is expected to be held in the latter half of June 2006 wherein we expect finalization of policy directions based on our deliberations on the comprehensive agenda set up for today.
2. After successfully completing the phase of relief, post Tsunami and drawing up and approving detailed plans on reconstruction, we are currently in the phase of implementing them. The Hon'ble PM, while approving and reviewing the plans and during his visits to Andaman & Nicobar Islands, has repeatedly emphasized that our reconstruction effort should be a model effort. I feel that not only within India, but even in comparison to other affected countries, we need to ensure that we set up world class quality infrastructure. In this endeavor, I expect the Ministries and Departments in Government of India to render all possible technical and administrative assistance to the young, committed though small A&N Administration.
3. Since we met last year, areas of progress are shipping, drinking water, jetties and tourism in Lakshadweep and agriculture, housing, ports and jetties in Andaman & Nicobar Islands. However substantial improvements are needed in the pace of our progress. For example even now, sites are yet to be specified for the 12 Fish Landing Centres in A&N identified in a Master Plan of 1997. Carrying capacity of the A&N is an issue under consideration since 1987. After the Supreme Courts directions of May 2002, draft Regulations on regulating entry and residence in the islands are still under inter-ministerial discussions.
4. I am happy to inform that after detailed deliberations with a wide spectrum of opinion makers, the State Development Report of A&N Islands has been finalized and SDR Lakshadweep is expected to be finalized shortly. These SDR's have been prepared under the overall guidance of Dr. (Mrs.) Syeda Hameed, Member Planning Commission.
5. A long list of agenda items including post Tsunami reconstruction, sustainable development, tourism, shipping, ports and jetties, ecological considerations etc. is scheduled for discussions. I look forward to the advice and