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SECRETARY

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Dear Chief Secretary,

As you know, the Annual Plan discussions in the past few years had been delayed for various reasons. We are of the firm view that the Annual Plan discussions should be completed well in time. With this objective, it is proposed that the Annual Plan discussion meetings for the next year at the level of Deputy Chairman with the State/UT Chief Ministers/Lt. Governor should commence from the first week of January, 2000 so as to complete them by middle of February 2000. I solicit your wholehearted cooperation in this exercise. We will separately inform the schedule of meetings, in due course.

2. The level of budgetary support for the plan has so far not been decided and it may take some time before the final position becomes known. Meanwhile since the Annual Plan discussions are to be completed in a time-bound manner, it is felt appropriate that you may work on the basis of the Central support given to your State/UT in the current year.

3. The Working Group discussions were held this year for major States after a gap of two years. The general experience is that these working group meetings have been useful in exchange of views, in understanding the problems of the States/UTs in various sectors and as a learning exercise regarding the successes and failures else-where in the country. The Working Group discussions were, however, delayed for reasons known to you and the feedback received from the State/UT officials suggests that the Working Group meetings should be held before the Annual Plan discussions at the level of Deputy Chairman with Chief Minister/Lt. Governor so that the sectoral projections as well as the problems of different sectors could be raised at the highest level.