

4. The pattern of Working Groups discussions has so far been that every State/UT is assigned a particular date on which the concerned departmental officers interact with the Sectoral Advisers in the Planning Commission and the sectoral outlays are firm up. To allow greater flexibility and to complete the exercise of Working Group discussions before the meetings of Deputy Chairman with the Chief Ministers/Lt. Governor, it has been decided that different Sectoral Advisers of the Planning Commission may call the meetings pertaining to their sectors individually rather than calling all the important officers of the State/UT on a particular date. We feel that this will enable the Sectoral Advisers to have discussions with the State/UT representatives in greater depth.

5. You may kindly note the change in the structure of Working Group discussions for the next year and may like to emphasise on the departmental officers to attend these meetings in right earnest and with complete information as may be asked for. Considering the financial stringency faced by different States/UTs, it is suggested that the Working Groups should confine themselves to sectoral outlays as decided for the current year unless the State/UT can indicate any enhancement in the outlay because of additional resource mobilisation efforts. It is our endeavour to finish the sectoral Working Group exercise by end of November, 99 and Sectoral Advisers of Planning Commission would intimate the schedule of Working Group meetings pertaining to their sector to your departmental officers with a copy to Secretary, Planning who may coordinate the exercise. We seek your cooperation in completion of Working Group meetings in time.

6. The next year will be the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the Ninth Five Year Plan. It would appear that the scope of taking up new schemes next year would be limited specially keeping in view the financial stringency faced by different States. You may like to advise the departmental officers not to propose new schemes unless absolutely necessary. In any case, it would be desirable that the Working Groups do not recommend outlays which cannot be supported keeping in view the resource position of the State/UT.

7. It facilitates the work of Sectoral Working Groups if the Annual Plan document for the next year is made available by the States/UTs before the Sectoral Working Group meetings. Considering the time constraint, this may not be feasible this year. However, I would still request that you may formulate the Annual Plan document for the next year, as early as possible and make available the required number of copies at the earliest and in any case latest by 15<sup>th</sup> of December, 99 so that any comments on the State/UT Plan schemes could be discussed during the Deputy Chairman level meeting with the State/UT Chief Ministers. Joint Secretary (State Plans) would separately be sending the formats of Annual Plan document to your Planning Secretary.