

MEGHALAYA STATE PLANNING BOARD MEETING

OCTOBER 3-4, 2008

CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

The Meghalaya State Planning Board which met at Shillong on 03-04 October 2008 deliberated on the core areas of concern for holistic State Planning for the remaining years of the Eleventh Plan period.

The Board noted the comprehensive sectoral presentations made by the departments, the follow-up discussions including discussions in the Working Groups, the Chairman's Key Note Address and the exhaustive and all inclusive address of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Meghalaya.

Based on the aforesaid inputs, Human Development with Gender Equity, Basic Infrastructure particularly in the road and power sectors, Capacity & Institution Building and Research & Development, poverty reduction and employment generation, were benchmarked as the sheet anchor of the macro-canvas for the sustainable and accelerated development of the State. The Board particularly focused on the goal of maximum economic growth path harmonious with ground realities. It also recommended gender-balanced policies and strategies for their implementation.

For this purpose, realistic assessment of sectoral potential, present status thereof, pragmatic long-term, medium-term and short-term targets and a well considered strategy for achieving these targets and other standard vital development indicators, within a given time frame, needs to be adopted and documented. These targets should be periodically monitored and evaluated. The periodic performance-audit including social audit of the schemes and Outcomes should preferably be carried out by competent external agencies of established repute.

The Board decided to draw up a focused three-year State Working Plan to achieve the new priorities of the Meghalaya Progressive Alliance (MPA) Government as reflected in its recently notified Common Minimum Program (CMP). The proposed Working Plan will include recommendations for suitable enabling legislation to facilitate policies required to achieve the CMP Goals.

While resolving to review and assess, in-depth, the ongoing plan policies, programmes and projects, the Board will endeavor to identify barriers and

gaps of the existing plan development process, and make suitable recommendations for a new and focused approach.

The Board was of the considered opinion that besides Human Development, Capacity & Institution Building and Research & Development, the under mentioned areas were pivotal to accelerated economic growth and development of the State –

1. Comprehensive measures for human resource development through diversified Institutions of higher, technical and professional education, with emphasis on the teaching of science and mathematics at the secondary and higher levels.
2. Focused intensification of programmes for strengthening the agriculture sector and improving the overall sown area and productivity;
3. Programmes for fullest exploitation of the horticultural potential of the State, particularly High-Value Horticulture;
4. Intensified macro and micro water-shed management programmes to ensure the sustainability of tapped as well as untapped water-sheds. These measures will include afforestation of barren waste lands on the southern slopes of the State which are reported to be continuously losing over 22000 metric tonnes of surface soil, per square kilometer, per year;
5. Optimum exploitation of Hydel and Thermal Power potential, inclusive of required level of transmission and distribution network with linkage to the Regional Grid, and their efficient utilization. In addition, intensified programmes for optimum harnessing of renewable energy sources to be taken.;
6. Comprehensive Tourism (Eco-Tourism, Adventure Tourism, Ancillary Tourism based Activities);
7. Optimum Utilization of Mineral Resources, particularly coal and limestone, including realistic assessment of the mineable reserves of the State as of now;
8. Fullest exploitation of the potential of Information Technology in all areas of development activity and delivery of public services;
9. Intensified programs for Empowerment of Women in all spheres of development activity;

- 10. Proactive measures for harnessing and channelizing youth-energy for accelerated development, inclusive of qualitative and quantitative promotion of games and sports;**
- 11. Measures for addressing global warming and climate change concerns.**
- 12. Setting up of a Technology Mission for facilitating the aforesaid measures with appropriate technology.**

The Board has already constituted eight Working Groups, each assisted by an Expert(s) to be in constant touch with the concerned departments to review the performance of these departments. These Groups will conduct on site visits to evaluate ongoing projects, reassess priorities and prepare a holistic road map for the optimal utilization of human, infrastructural and financial resources potential of the State.

A Transparency Committee will endeavor to facilitate all programmes of the government being executed in an open, informative, qualitative, accountable, time-bound and transparent manner.

An Indigenous Knowledge Mission Team will assess and promote the State's potential for indigenous and traditional knowledge that has been verbally transmitted for centuries and sustained the life force of its people, its culture and the genetic resources necessary for the continued survival of the community. Emerging influences on tribal societies has made it imperative to plan to conserve these knowledge systems of the past, lest they be lost forever. The indigenous Knowledge Mission will endeavor to ensure effective harnessing of traditional knowledge systems, particularly those relating to Social, Political (Democratic), Ecological, and Herbal Medicine systems etc.)

The Board is keen to make a renewed bid for Meghalaya's socio-economic development and all inclusive growth. A well focused Vision with a clear Mission to enable Meghalaya to develop, progress and compete on an even footing with the rest of the country, and to imbibe the spirit of competition, an improved work culture for there is no substitute to hard work, and confidently surge on the path of self-reliance.

The Board is committed to make recommendation, which when implemented, will generate development. The States's abundance of natural resources coupled with the appropriate use of technology and backed by firm political determination and administrative competence will substantially accelerate the pace of development in Meghalaya.

The Board further recommended that the State Development Road Map be marked, apart from all other areas covered in these recommendations, by the under mentioned important milestones to be achieved over the remaining years of the Eleventh Plan and the following Twelfth Plan periods –

- 1. Launching a State Mission to double the overall productivity and production of the agricultural, horticultural and floricultural sectors, and in doing so to generate avenues for accelerated employment including self-employment of the Youth, besides causing exponential growth of the State's revenue resources.**
- 2. Launching a State Mission to generate and sustain a holistic tourism environment, particularly eco-tourism and adventure tourism, with a view to attract at least one million domestic tourists and fifty thousand foreign tourists, per year, to the State.**
- 3. Launching a State Mission for exponential improvement in the quality of education to ensure reduction of secondary school drop out rates total to below national levels, and to obtain total literacy of the State population and to improve and amplify vocational and professional education to cater to the employment-needs of emerging sectors.**
- 4. Launching a State Mission to improve accessibility to quality healthcare services to the common man, particularly to the BPL families. Health services may also need to be provided through a PPP mode to supplement the State initiative.**
- 5. Launching a State Mission to upgrade Urban Amenities & Services in Rural Area Clusters so as to bridge the rural-urban divide and increase the prosperity of rural Meghalaya.**
- 6. Launching a State Level Bamboo Mission to facilitate sustained production of raw materials for cottage level and handicraft industries, with a view to generate employment to fifty-thousand youth, besides resulting in One Hundred Crores rupees as State Revenue.**
- 7. Launching a State Mission for Water Management in an integrated manner, for optimum exploitation of waterways, increased irrigation facilities, generation of hydel power and provision of potable drinking water to the population of the State.**
- 8. Launching a State Mission for establishing Economic Zones specifically aimed at creation of accelerated employment, including self employment and optimum generation of internal revenue.**

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