

**JULY 12, 1996**

*Honourable Speaker and Members of the Tenth Kerala Legislative Assembly,*

I heartily welcome you all to this first session of the Tenth Legislative Assembly. I wish that the next five years of your tenure would be marked by important achievements in the public life of the State.

2. You are meeting against the background of epochal changes at the national level. The age of one party rule has come to an end. The Congress Party lost its mandate in the last elections to the Lok Sabha. No single party, however, could take its place. As expected, the B.J.P. Government headed by Shri A. B. Vajpayee was a shortlived one. Shri H. D. Deva Gowda who was elected as the leader of the United Front consisting of 13 parties including the Left assumed office as the Prime Minister with the support of the Congress headed by Shri P. V. Narasimha Rao. This is a powerful expression of the people's determination to see that the Hidhutwa forces are kept out of power.

3. In Kerala the electorate gave a clear verdict against the corruption and communal politics. I hope everybody concerned will draw appropriate lessons from this electoral verdict. May a new era of secular and anti-caste politics begin in the political life of Kerala.

4. My Government is distinctly different from its predecessors. Firstly, after decades of large size Ministries, the people saw the formation of a Government in which only one tenth of the MLAs became Ministers, thus strictly adhering to a well-accepted but rarely practised norm. Secondly like the earlier 1987 LDF Government, my Government too is a genuinely Left and Democratic Government, all the caste and community based parties and groups have been scrupulously kept out of the Front and its Government. I hope that all other parties and political groups will follow this example so that Kerala is rid of the cancer of communalism.

5. The first priority of my Government will be to increase agricultural and industrial production without which the State's achievements in other sectors like education, public health and other social service sectors cannot be sustained for long. It is important for the State to have healthy agriculture and industry to ensure its social economic and cultural advancement. This, however, requires the strengthening and democratic functioning of the Panchayats, Municipalities and Corporations. They should be completely involved in activities connected with increasing industrial and agricultural production. The Panchayats and Urban bodies should be given more powers, financial resources and technical assistance from the development departments of the State Government. My Government will, therefore pay full attention to the major problems of co-ordinating the activities of the development departments in the State Secretariat and in the offices of the heads of the development departments. My Government will also take steps to make amendments in the State legislations and also getting the Central legislations amended wherever necessary with a view to making Panchayat and Urban bodies functional and making them the main agencies for socio-cultural and economic development.

6. The problem of increasing agricultural and industrial production is intimately connected with the availability of power. Hydel, Thermal, Nuclear and all other sources of power generation will be tapped; but the ecological risks involved in some of the energy schemes will not be overlooked. Solving the power crisis would have the highest priority in my Government's agenda.

7. Another sector which is facing a deep crisis is that of education. Only in full consultation with all sections of the people concerned—the students, their guardians, the teachers and the general public—will it be possible to reorganise the system of education. My Government, therefore, propose to appoint a Committee consisting of experts and others interested in this field to study the problems in depth and make recommendations to Government. Once the report is available, my Government will come back to the Legislative Assembly with specific proposals for detailed consideration.

8. One of the most pressing problems of the State is severe unemployment. A major portion among the unemployed is educated, with strong motivation and aspirations for employment in the organised sectors. My Government will give utmost importance to tackling this very serious problem by taking all possible steps to create additional employment opportunities.

9. My Government will strengthen the democratic character of the co-operative movement in the State. Co-operatives will be further extended to areas of agricultural and industrial production for creation of more employment opportunities.

10. Rising prices of essential commodities has been affecting the normal life of the common man for long. My Government has already taken and will continue to take adequate measures to curb the increasing prices by strengthening the public distribution system.

11. My Government will take immediate steps to re-open the factories closed during the tenure of the previous Government. Every effort will be made to revitalise the public sector and make it profitable. My Government will move the Government of India to considerably enhance the Central sector investment which has been sharply declining during the past several years.

12. My Government will protect the interests of the employees and teachers and service pensioners. My Government will discuss the problems with the representatives of the employees and teachers organisations and those of the Service Pensioners and will have a sympathetic approach in settling their problems. Steps will be taken to implement the reasonable demands of the Police force and to ensure the democratic functioning of the recognised Police associations.

13. A problem which poses serious concern is the widespread corruption at the official and political levels. Some of the cases discussed in the earlier legislatures have shown how deep is the malady in Kerala. My Government will adopt an uncompromising position in discharging the task of bringing to trial and punishing those involved in corruption regardless of the high positions they occupied in the bureaucracy or in political parties.

14. My Government is committed to the mission of dissuading people from the consumption and manufacture of alcoholic drinks. It would therefore provide every assistance to the temperance campaign as a movement.

15. My Government will do everything possible to see that the rule of law is strictly enforced so that the guilty do not escape from the clutches of the law. The police under the new dispensation would ensure peaceful life to the people. My Government are well aware of the fact that atrocities against women have been on the increase for some time past. This must be put to an end. My Government have already taken steps in this direction.

16. My Government will pay special attention to such problems as non-availability of drinking water, essential commodities etc., and take special steps to help the vulnerable sections of the society.

17. This in general outline is the perspective with which my Government will be functioning—a process in which I seek the advice of the honourable members of the Legislature.

18. My Government are firmly committed to ensure the maintenance of law and order as it is a prerequisite for the peaceful life of the people and the development of the State. The Police force will be equipped and trained to meet this objective. Special courts will be established to try cases of atrocities against women. My Government also propose to increase the strength of women police force from the existing 2% to 10% of the total strength of the Police force.

19. Action to constitute the State Rapid Action Force meant to deal with grave law and order problems, particularly those in abnormal situations is in progress and will be completed during the course of the year. A computer network connecting all police stations in the State also will be established. A Police Academy for imparting training to the police officers of various ranks will be established. The Police Housing and Construction Corporation will be entrusted with construction work to be completed within 3 years using institutional finance. A major scheme for construction of house for policemen will also be launched by the Corporation. A Police Headquarters Complex will be constructed in Thiruvananthapuram. Maximum assistance available from Government of India will be utilised for these construction and modernisation programmes.

20. My Government propose to establish new Courts/Tribunals in the State. Ongoing schemes under which buildings for Courts and residences for Judicial Officers under construction will be continued this year also. A new open jail will be established in the Malabar area in the State. It is also proposed to establish three well equipped hospitals which will function round the clock under the control of the State Health Services Department in each of the three Central Jails in the State. A Computer network connecting the three Central Jails and the open Jails with the Jail headquarters is also proposed to be established. Schemes for renovation of jail buildings have been drawn up and will be implemented next year.

21. A training centre will be set up for imparting regular training to the personnel of the Fire Services Department. Fire Force Stations in accordance with the priority list drawn up will be established. Staff strength of the Department will also be increased. A fire station complex will be established at Thiruvananthapuram, utilising the amount sanctioned by the 10th Finance Commission.

22. Five years of economic reforms have inflicted considerable damage to Kerala's Industrial Sector. The threat of public enterprises being closed down or privatised had destabilised the working of several enterprises and some more vulnerable were even closed down. The reforms had adversely affected the working of the traditional sector industries as well, because of denial of working funds and other assistance. The present Government is committed to setting right these distortions, so that immediate help is given to the lakhs of poor workers who are dependent on the traditional industries like cashew, coir etc. My Government have already taken some positive directions as in the case of coir where Rs. 2 crores have been sanctioned for distress purchase of coir and coir products.

23. My Government intend to provide all help to the small sector by making improvements in the administrative sector of the schemes and by helping them in marketing their products and taking joint initiative among the industries themselves in technology development, raw materials procured quality control and other areas.

24. The Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation as well as other promotional agencies will be revamped and given a new direction. They will consider proposals for expansion and diversification of existing industries in the private as well as public sector on a priority basis, use the existing industrial base in the State to the fullest possible extent by taking steps to serve the sick industrial enterprises and draft out plans for helping out the traditional industries in their efforts towards modernisation, market diversification and export development.

25. Availability of quality infrastructure at low cost is essential for industrial development. KINFRA and other infrastructural development agencies will take the initiative to formulate strategies and programmes for joint ventures by the existing industries with regard to the development of captive power, common communication facilities and other infrastructural services. The Government will also take all possible initiative with the help of Industry Associations, Management Institutions and other related agencies so that a new Management Culture is developed in our State.

26. Special attention will be given for further improvement of cordial labour relations that exist in our industrial enterprises. There are problems related to multiplicity of trade unions as well as relations with the labour from the informal sector and these need to be resolved. Worker's rights will be fully protected and Government will take all possible initiatives to encourage the creative participation of workers and trade unions in the development and management of our industry sector.

27. In order to ensure early settlement of labour disputes, my Government will strengthen and tone up the conciliation structure. A peaceful and favourable atmosphere will be ensured for the workers in the unorganised sector also. Labour laws will be effectively enforced with a view to securing meaningful participation and contribution of workers so as to create an atmosphere conducive to a steady industrial growth.

28. My Government will evolve a machinery to look after labour problems arising during the construction phase of a new industry and thereafter during the early stages of its working and to find practical solutions in the minimum time possible. Revised guidelines for the recognition of the Trade Unions in the State will be formulated in consultation with the leaders of the Central Trade Unions. In the social security sector, the working of various welfare Boards will be streamlined and made more effective.

29. My Government attach the highest priority to power development which will determine the pace of economic development of the State in the years to come. Over the years the State has been reduced from a power-surplus to a power-deficit position. The main reason for the power shortage in our State is the growing demand both in the domestic and industrial sectors. When the demand has been growing at a steady 12% rate, the generation has remained almost stagnant.

30. Special attention is now being given to the completion of all on-going projects such as Lower Periyar, Kakkad and Kuttiyadi Extension Projects.

31. In order to find out a lasting solution to the growing power deficit situation, my Government propose a three-pronged strategy. This strategy mainly focusses on completion of all the existing major hydel projects and other potential mini hydel projects on a time bound basis. About 57 mini hydel projects have been tendered for private participation, giving priority in allocation to captive generation.

32. As an immediate measure, an Emergency Action Plan has been launched which is expected to generate additional power to the tune of 400 MW within the next 9-12 months. We are taking all necessary measures to improve the voltage position in Malabar area. For immediate generation of power in the next 9-12 months, my Government have decided to establish 25 mini thermal projects through competitive-bidding process through Kerala State Electricity Board and Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation. These projects once completed will give relief to the present power problem of the State.

33. Having realised the need for long-term power planning, my Government have decided to facilitate setting up of a few major power projects in the private sector. With this it is expected that the long-term needs of the State in the power sector will be fully satisfied.

34. The National Thermal Power Corporation will be requested to take immediate steps for the implementation of the Kayamkulam Power Project.

35. My Government will make all efforts to get early clearance for the Pooyamkutty Hydel Project. Implementation of Southern Gas Grid Project will also be actively followed up.

36. My Government attach high priority to systems improvement, reduction in transmission losses, energy conservation and energy management. Efforts made in reducing the transmission losses have yielded satisfactory results.

37. An Energy Management Centre has been sanctioned with headquarters at Thiruvananthapuram. This Centre will be developed as a Centre of Excellence for scientific advice on conservation of energy in industry and agriculture besides acting as a nodal agency for co-ordinating the efforts of conservation and management of energy in the State.

38. With a view to improving the quality of electricity installations and equipments, facilities for meter testing and testing of equipments are being developed. The Meter Testing and Standards Laboratory being developed in the Engineering College Campus, Thiruvananthapuram is proposed to be developed as an approved testing centre of the Bureau of Indian Standards.

39. In the context of the decreasing trend of production of paddy in the State, Government propose, to step up its production through a comprehensive scheme involving group farming, seed production programmes, pest control schemes, crop insurance, smallscale mechanisation and integrated crop development. The question of giving subsidy for paddy cultivation in addition to existing facilities will be examined. The pumping subsidy scheme will be more effectively implemented through 'Pada Sekhara Samithis'. The capacity of the public sector institutions under the Agriculture department will be increased for making available agricultural implements to the farmers at low cost. The rules relating to subsidy for purchase of quality pump sets will be simplified. A scheme for increasing irrigation facilities and implementing it by forming Block level committees consisting of representatives of Panchayats and agriculturists for efficient utilisation of water for agricultural purposes will be formulated.

40. It is proposed to allot more funds under Plan Schemes for giving assistance to main factors concerning production for making the group farming scheme more effective. For meeting shortage of labour in certain agricultural activities, it is proposed to give encouragement for mechanisation in certain areas.

41. In addition to the existing schemes for making available pulses, vegetables and fruits, encouragement will be given for cultivating them as inter-crops. Provision will be made in the first instance to make available to the agriculturists necessary seeds, fertilizers, insecticides, loans, technology etc., through the Department in selected Panchayats. As an incentive an award of Rs. 25,000 will be given to the best agriculturist producing vegetables. Steps will be taken to get more financial assistance through Technology Mission for the development of cultivation of pepper.

42. In order to encourage production of decorative flowers which is growing as a global industry it is proposed to formulate and implement a comprehensive scheme for boosting production of the decorative flower like Anthurium and Orchid for the benefit of house wives and agriculturists. The best florist will be given an award of Rs. 25,000.

43. On the basis of a survey being conducted, it is proposed to implement a scheme with Central assistance for planting new coconut seedling after cutting away the disease-infested and less productive trees. Efforts will be made to increase the consumption of coconut and coconut products and to provide better opportunities for diversification and marketing of coconut produce.

44. In order to educate the people about agricultural operations and to encourage each and every family to produce agricultural produce to the extent possible, schemes will be formulated and implemented through Farm Information Bureau and other institutions under the Agriculture Department. In order to avoid complaints regarding distribution of financial assistance to agriculturists the Vigilance Cell will be restructured.

45. My Government will take all measures to provide the necessary linkages and overcome crucial bottlenecks for the growth of the Animal Husbandry and Dairy sectors. With a view to providing adequate milk to the Milk Power Plant of MILMA at Alappuzha, ready to be commissioned, a Special Dairy Development Programme will be organised in Alappuzha, Kottayam, Pathanamthitta and Idukki districts. Steps will be taken to increase the sale and consumption of value added milk products mainly by strengthening the units engaged in manufacture and sale of milk products. This will help augment the producer's income. Kerala being a State with a very high percentage of crossbred cattle, fodder development will be intensified by associating the Grama Panchayats and by utilising common and private land.

46. In the Poultry Sector, My Government plans to introduce a major scheme for providing day-old chicks to farmers along with all the inputs necessary, including veterinary care. This will substantially increase the availability of eggs and poultry meat in Kerala reducing our dependence on neighbouring States. Similar programmes already initiated by Kerala Livestock Development Board, the Meat Products of India, Kerala Agricultural University and Animal Husbandry Department for the supply of piglets to farmers will also be strengthened.

47. Urgent action will be taken to recruit doctors and other staff in order to start the functioning of veterinary dispensaries sanctioned in all panchayats.

48. My Government will formulate integrated policies and programmes in the Fisheries sector for increasing fish production ensuring that the benefits reach both the fishermen and consumers. The policy of my Government is that the licences issued for deep sea trawling by the Central Government should be cancelled and that no new licences are issued. The Government of India will be approached for this. Detailed schemes will be formulated for developing inland fisheries sector. The integrated development of the Fisheries sector will be achieved through the involvement of Panchayats. The marketing of fish will be effectively organised on a scientific basis.

49. My Government will explore ways and means for strengthening the co-operative movement in our State. The pre-eminent position of the co-operatives in our State will be further improved. The report of the Expert Committee on amendments to the Co-operative Societies Act will be considered by the Government and suitable amendments made to the Act with a view to improve the functioning of the co-operatives. My Government are committed to the democratic functioning of the co-operative institutions in the State. To restore democracy in the co-operative sector, elections would be conducted to all the societies and apex institution.

50. The Left Democratic Front had made an election promise that if voted to power, Government would reduce the price of rice distributed through the Public Distribution System. In fulfilment of that promise my Government will reduce the price of rice distributed through ration shops by one rupee per Kilogramme, subject to a maximum of 4 Kilogrammes per week per card. This will be implemented before the ensuing Onam festival. The Civil Supplies Corporation will continue its market intervention operations to stabilise open market prices. However, instead of the Civil Supplies Corporation fixing the price and linking the sale price to the market price, Government will fix the retail sale price of commodities sold through Maveli Stores and link such prices to the need to control open market prices. Government are committed to provide any additional financial help needed for this. The priority of the Government will be to strengthen the operation of Maveli Stores rather than increase their numbers.

51. In the field of school education my Government feel that the time has come to take stock of the qualitative aspect of education and attempt a fundamental change. As a first step towards this, a total curriculum reform, with emphasis on physical education, music and other activities will be attempted after discussions with experts in the field. Efforts also will be made to impart training to teachers at all levels. The existing quality improvement programme will be strengthened and will be taken up as a mass movement involving local panchayats, parents etc., to bring about a total involvement and attitudinal change. A comprehensive legislation of pre-primary education will be brought about to control mushrooming of pre-primary schools and to curb the practice of imposing enormous academic burden on children of tender age. A survey regarding the manpower requirement in trades will be conducted by a premier organisation to assess the necessity for starting vocational courses and strengthening such institutions.

52. Government are aware that many of the schools suffer from lack of proper buildings and drinking water supply. In the six districts where the World Bank Programme is being implemented (Wayanad, Kozhikode, Kasaragode, Palghat, Idukki and Thiruvananthapuram) thatched buildings will be converted to permanent buildings during the project period. In the remaining eight districts Government propose to convert the thatched sheds into semi-permanent sheds, over a period of three years.

53. A proposal for providing drinking water and toilet facilities to school children under the 10th Finance Commission Award at a total cost of Rs. 4 crores will be submitted to Government of India for approval.

54. Eventhough several new colleges and new courses in the existing colleges have been started in the past few years, the task of imparting of quality education to the students and preparing them for emerging employment opportunities leaves much to be desired. Many self financing colleges also lack essential infrastructure facilities. My Government propose to recast the present system to give opportunities of higher learning to everyone without discrimination. Special schemes for fee concession and scholarships for students of weaker sections and lower income groups will be formulated and implemented. Infrastructure facilities, with external assistance, if necessary, in the existing colleges and technical institutions will be strengthened. The policy of the Government will now be to address the problem of educated un-employed for giving emphasis to job oriented courses making optimum utilisation of the existing infrastructure facilities. With this view, new vocational courses would be sanctioned and teachers properly trained. My Government propose to set up a Re-organisation Institute for this purpose. The continuing education programme for several job-oriented courses will also be set up. Special emphasis will also be given to computer education.

55. In line with the policy of UGC, my Government propose to delink the pre-degree courses from the existing colleges and create a separate set up for the purpose. Government will also try to bring about uniformity in the examinations calendar of various Universities so that courses are completed within the prescribed time.

56. Utmost importance will be given for the development of library movement in the State. All support will be extended to the new Indian Institute of Management being established at Kozhikode as one of the premier management institutions in the country. A centre will also be established for imparting training for various all India level examinations.

57. An integrated health programme for children will be introduced, pooling the resources of the Health, Education and Sports Departments. As a first step, a physical fitness programme will be started in all the schools of the State. As part of the measure to provide new job opportunities to youth, it is proposed to upgrade their skills in the area of allied medical sciences, using the facilities in the medical colleges and other hospitals, without adversely affecting their existing use. KHRWS and other autonomous bodies will be playing a significant role in this regard. A new Cancer Care Centre with advanced facilities will be established at Kozhikode.

58. Rapid development of transport infrastructure is essential for the development of the State. My Government will give top priority to develop transport facilities. Roads having reached almost saturation point, it has become necessary to develop Inland Water Transport, Air Transport and Railway, to divert part of the traffic in future. My Government will take steps to persuade Government of India and National Waterway Authority of India to speed up development of National Waterway III which is at present not able to carry larger vessels. In addition to development of the existing stretch from Kollam and Kottappuram, steps will be taken to extend the National Waterway III to Kovalam in the South to Kasaragode in the North. Early completion of Cochin Airport will be facilitated by augmenting resources through public contribution, NRI investment and share capital participation. All remaining works in connection with Thiruvananthapuram International Airport will be speeded up. The functioning of the Calicut Airport will be improved by persuading Government of India to develop it as an International Airport. As regards the doubling of the Railway lines, the Shoranur-Mangalore line and the Kollam-Thiruvananthapuram line will receive the highest priority. In addition, gauge conversion of Kollam-Shenkottah line, electrification of Erode-Ernakulam-Thiruvananthapuram section and construction of Railway overbridges will be emphasised.

59. My Government will give more emphasis to the development of minor/medium ports in the State facilitating the growth of trade, industry and employment opportunities. Immediate steps will be taken for development of ports at Vizhinjam, Kodungallur, Beypur and Azhikal through private investment. The Kerala State Maritime Development Corporation Limited will be made operational soon. Government are also seriously considering the feasibility of structuring an institute in shipping line which will produce job opportunities for youth.

60. The ongoing schemes of Social Welfare department will continue to be implemented. New schemes will be introduced to help weaker sections of society which need assistance. The State Women's Commission will start functioning very shortly. In tune with the Central Legislation for the Handicapped, the State Policy for the Handicapped will be evolved and implemented as early as possible.

61. The entire State will be covered under ICDS projects as early as possible. It is also proposed to implement a special employment programme for women through ICDS projects. The welfare fund scheme of Anganwadi Workers will be modified appropriately. Pensionary benefits for them will also be considered.

62. Although a number of schemes have been implemented for the benefits of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes both by the State and Central Governments, during the past fifty years, their socio-economic conditions have not risen to the level of the other sections of society. My Government therefore propose to set up a committee of experts to analyse and assess objectively the policies and programmes so far undertaken and also to make recommendations for future course of action. The recommendations of this committee will be taken into account in the preparation of the Ninth Five Year Plan. Simultaneously the Department of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and also the Corporations under them will reorganised to ensure people's participation. Government will take measures to facilitate improvement in the educational efforts of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe children. Efforts will be made to create more employment opportunities for them.

63. Government will initiate measures to improve the socio-economic condition of the Backward classes of our State and to ensure a decisive role for them in nation building. A Backward Classes Development Department will be set up for the purpose. The Backward Classes Development Corporation will be restructured and its activities streamlined.

64. The people-oriented programmes of the Rural Development Department will be implemented efficiently through panchayats this year. About Rs. 150 crores worth of assistance will be given to the people below poverty line for self employment ventures. Priority will be given to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, weaker sections and women. 25000 houses will be constructed for the weaker sections and Scheduled Castes. A scheme will be implemented this year for integrated development of Attappady and for revitalising the environment. My Government place great emphasis on the 'Clean Kerala' programme, and awareness campaigns will be conducted to ensure its proper implementation.

65. One lakh houses for the benefit of weaker sections of the society during the financial year 1996-97 will be constructed through various Government agencies including the Kerala State Housing Board and with the active participation of voluntary organisations in India and also from non-resident Indians. My Government

will grant a capital subsidy of Rs. 9000 and an interest subsidy of 8½% for each house. One lakh houses for the benefit of the low, middle and higher income groups will be constructed through loan schemes and general house construction schemes. A scheme for 200 housing complexes for the benefit of the weaker sections of society will be implemented through the local bodies. My Government also propose to start construction of Satellite townships during the current financial year in Thrippunithura and Kalamassery near Ernakulam and Akkulam near Thiruvananthapuram.

66. Nirmiti Centre will be started in all Panchayats with a view to utilise the low-cost house construction techniques developed by the Nirmiti Kendras for meeting the housing problems faced by the weaker sections and also to take up local construction works and to train artisans in these techniques. 'Nirmiti Heritage' (traditional villages) will be organised in each district depicting Kerala's own traditional architecture, culture and life style. Three Regional Centres of the Academy Wing of the State Nirmiti Kendras will be started during this year.

67. Every year, we are losing vast areas of land due to heavy tidal waves. Owing to financial constraints, my Government are not in a position to protect the sea coast to the extent necessary. A project report comprising all the vulnerable roads in the Coast has been prepared and submitted to Government of India to be posed for World Bank assistance comprising 158 original works and 96 reformation works, costing Rs. 4055 crores.

68. The Ground Water Department proposes to make a detailed hydrogeological survey in the State with special emphasis to drought-prone areas. The selection of locations will be made on the basis of technical findings and with the concurrence of the people's representatives of the area. The construction programme envisaged for the current year, and to be posed for the Central Assistance is construction of 1000 bore wells and 100 filter point wells and filtering them with handpumps. This scheme will provide drinking water to 50000 families. A Central Ground Water Division will also be started at Thiruvananthapuram with the assistance of Government of India. Six water supply schemes at a project cost of Rs. 1500 crores have been submitted before Overseas Economic Co-operative Fund of Japan. A sewage treatment project for 10 coastal centres formulated by the Kerala Water Authority has been sent to Government of India to be posed before Global Environmental Facility.

69. The present framework of revenue administration is unsuited for modern times. My Government propose to carry out a comprehensive modernisation programme at six levels—village, taluk, sub division, district, Board of Revenue and the Secretariat. The Board of Revenue will be abolished for which Government will revive the bill introduced in the Assembly in the early 1980's. The organisational set up of revenue administration from village office onwards will be restructured by 1st April 1997 with a view to serve people better, in a corruption free manner. More powers will be delegated to lower levels and additional powers and functions will be transferred to Panchayat Raj set up. New villages, taluks and sub divisions will be organised in a phased manner. Procedural formalities will be simplified. Special arrangements will be made to investigate into complaints from the public. Special attention will be devoted to the management of land which is a very scarce commodity in our densely populated State. Considering the increasing demand for land, effective measures will be taken to protect Government land. Committees consisting of elected representatives will be set up at Taluk and District levels to facilitate corruption-free assignment of land. Surplus land will be distributed to eligible persons. Special arrangements will also be made to get stay orders in Courts vacated so that more surplus land is made available for distribution.

70. My Government are very keen to issue pattayams to occupants of forest land prior to 1-1-1977 by removing all legal hurdles. A package will be drawn up for rehabilitation of tribals, who had lost their land, which will include giving of land and other financial assistance. Statutory arrangements will also be made to enable pattayams to be given to settlers who took the land of tribals into their possession.

71. The administration of relief during natural calamities will be made corruption-free, ensuring people's participation. Efforts will be made for the creation of a permanent infrastructure. My Government propose to strengthen the present Land Use Board into a potential Statutory Body in accordance with the directions of Government of India. A Land Use Policy will be framed within the framework of National Policy-Guidelines. A resource based perspective plan will be prepared to ensure sustainability in conservation, development and management of our land resources in tune with the present Panchayat Raj System.



72. My Government want the three tier Panchayat Raj system and the Municipal system to evolve as dynamic units of self-government capable of attending to the immediate needs of the people. Immediate action will be taken to remove the ambiguities and inadequacies in the present system of delegation of powers and to empower local bodies in more areas of developmental and welfare administration, the objective being to ensure that atleast 50% of the funds hitherto handled by the State Government should be expended on matters transferred to local Government. A High level committee has been constituted to propose immediate measures for local government reform and the reform process is expected to be completed before the end of the current year.

73. Improvement of the quality of life in urban areas is a matter of high priority. Development of roads, environmental improvement and poverty alleviation are critical areas which need immediate attention. Special emphasis will be given to the development of the State capital. A detailed strategy paper on urban development will be presented in the current session of the Assembly.

74. My Government will utilise the full potential of the tourism sector which is poised for a phenomenal growth in the State. The various projects already started will be completed within a specified time. The, Development of Bakesh Tourism Complex and the Veli-Aakkulam Project which have already been commenced will be speeded up.

75. Entrepreneurs in the private sector who come forward to set up classified hotels will be given all facilities. My Government will also organise special training courses in the various tourism-related institutions in order that there is no dearth of qualified and experienced hands in running hotels and restaurants.

76. A New Culture Policy will be formulated which will give due importance to classical, folk and tribal arts. The twenty-eighth International Film Festival will be conducted at Thiruvananthapuram in January, 1997 with Government of India assistance. C-DIT will be developed, keeping in view the prospects of Imaging technology. The working of Film Societies, cultural troupes and amateur drama troupes will be revived.

77. A Forestry Action Plan for the State has been drawn up as part of the National Forestry Action Plan, formulated by the Central Government. A Kerala Forestry Project, designed to tap World Bank aid for development of the Forestry sector, will be implemented from 1997 onwards. Proposals for future management are being formulated with a view to conserve the biodiversity and natural heritage of the forests. At the same time they will be responsive to the community and help uplift the economic conditions of the rural poor by providing employment opportunities in a wide range of sectors like wood production, water supply, tourism, traditional medicine and industries based on non-wood forest produce. My Government also propose to strengthen the Force for protection of Forests and Wild Life.

78. Kerala with its rich biodiversity is the most ideal region in the country for development of Bio-technology and genetic engineering aiming at developing new products, services, technologies and to solve location specific problems in the areas of Agriculture, Health, Animal Husbandry etc. Infrastructure facilities of Tropical Botanical Garden and Research Institute and Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Development of Education Science and Technology will be optimally utilised, as also Science and Technology manpower and inputs for entrepreneurship development and employment generation. The MEGSAT (Mission-Oriented Employment Generation through Science & Technology) programme will be revitalised, reoriented, diversified and made effective with the co-operation and association of Development Departments of the State and voluntary organisations. PRM (Panchayat Resource Mapping Data) will be integrated with NRDMs (Natural Resource Data Management System) GIS (Geographic Informations System), and Satellite Data for micro-level planning and formulation of sustainable Development strategies. It is expected that this will give new impetus to the decentralised planning in the Kerala context.

79. My Government will give utmost importance to sustainable and environment-friendly development programmes. Development activities along coastal zone will be regulated with people's participation. Decentralised power generation aiming at rural development will be given vital importance. It will also be the Government's endeavour to supplement electric supply sources with increased use of new and renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar and small hydropower.

80. We are passing through a crucial phase in our nation's history. The 1996 Lok Sabha elections have given a clear and decisive mandate in favour of secular, progressive and democratic forces. My Government on its part will make all efforts to contribute its share to the building up of a nation that is economically self-reliant and strong, socially united and culturally well-integrated and progressive.

81. I wish your deliberations all success.

JAI HIND