

Hon'ble Members of the Legislative Assembly,

Vanakkam.

I am delighted to address the first session of the year 2013 and the sixth session of this fourteenth Assembly. This is my second address in this august House, for which I am greatly indebted to the people of Tamil Nadu. Over the years, this vibrant Institution has reached the pinnacle of glory, with great leaders making great contributions to nurture and uphold the sacred democratic values enshrined in our Constitution. Recently, we were witness to the historic moment which marked the completion of 60 years of this Assembly, to commemorate which, the Hon'ble Chief Minister **Selvi J Jayalithaa** had organised a befitting celebration. I take this opportunity to congratulate all of you and to remember, with pride and gratitude, all those great leaders and members who have

contributed to the evolution of this glorious Institution. At this juncture, I extend my best wishes for the New Year to all of you. Let us start this year with a firm resolve to make Tamil Nadu the *Numero Uno* State in all fields.

2. Ever since the new Government took over the reins of governance, our State is marching ahead under the dynamic leadership of the Hon'ble Chief Minister **Selvi J Jayalithaa**, who is known for her indomitable courage, determination, resoluteness and decisive action. She is an indisputable mass leader who exemplifies true leadership and is the epitome of boundless compassion towards the poor and the downtrodden. At the same time, the Hon'ble Chief Minister has crushed anti-social elements with an iron fist and re-established an atmosphere of peace and stability in Tamil Nadu in order to facilitate faster economic development. Her untiring efforts

to provide exemplary governance through well-designed schemes and strategies, to realize the aspirations of the people, have invited accolades from all corners of the world. For the first time, the Annual Collectors and Police Officers Conference was held for three full days in December 2012. The Hon'ble Chief Minister, committed to giving exemplary governance, sat through the whole conference with rapt attention and made an unprecedented 343 announcements on the spot, thereby fulfilling all the demands made by the District Collectors and Police Officers, in the interest of better administration.

3. The vision of this Government, as stated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister, is to achieve **“material progress with distributive justice”**. This could be possible only by following inclusive developmental strategies. The mission of our Hon'ble Chief Minister is to fulfill the essential minimum

needs like food, shelter and clothing so that all people, particularly the poor and marginalised, are able to lead a decent and dignified life. Under the visionary leadership of our Hon'ble Chief Minister, this Government has launched and implemented several schemes to achieve the objectives of a true welfare State. At the same time, Tamil Nadu is poised to take a great leap forward in economic and industrial growth, since several infrastructure projects have been launched to create the enabling environment for rapid economic development. This Government is pioneering innovative approaches like the State Balanced Growth Fund, as part of its inclusive growth strategies, to bring about balanced economic development in the State.

4. The first day of Chithirai has been observed as the Tamil New Year Day all over the world for ages. But this was deliberately changed during the previous regime. This

tradition was restored by the Hon'ble Chief Minister and she herself participated in the Tamil New Year celebrations during 2012 and distributed the newly announced awards such as Tamil Thai Virudhu, Kapilar Virudhu, U Ve Sa Virudhu and Avaiyyar Virudhu. The Tamil New Year Day will be celebrated in a grand manner this year also and **Kambar Virudhu for the best scholar propagating the ideals of Kamba Ramayanam and Sollin Selvar Virudhu for the best Tamil literary orator will be given from this year onwards.**

5. This Government is unparalleled in honouring freedom-fighters and Tamil scholars in recognition of their selfless sacrifices. Memorials are being built by this Government for such heroic and valiant personalities like Veeramangai Velu Naachiyar, Dheeran Chinnamalai, Sinthanai Sirpi Singaravelar, Suya Mariyadhai Sudaroli Jeevarathinam

and Thiyagi Sankaralingar. The Hon'ble Chief Minister has built and inaugurated a memorial for Colonel Sir John Pennycuick to honour his selfless service rendered to the people of Tamil Nadu by constructing the Mullai Periyar Dam. The gesture of the Hon'ble Chief Minister in announcing the construction of a memorial for Karikaal Cholan, who built Kallanai, making the Cauvery delta the granary of Tamil Nadu, is praiseworthy. I also wish to mention that the various institutions propagating the Tamil language and culture are provided with liberal financial support. The Government has sanctioned Rs.100 crores for the World Tamil Sangam at Madurai, Rs.11.84 crores for the Tamil University, Thanjavur, and Rs.3.23 crores for the International Institute of Tamil Studies, Taramani. **The present annual maintenance grant of Rs.40 lakhs to the historical Saraswathi Mahal Library will be enhanced to Rs.75 lakhs per annum.**

An expert committee will be constituted to recommend measures for upgrading this library to international standards.

6. Political stability with proper maintenance of law and order is a *sine qua non* for economic prosperity. Under the sagacious leadership of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, law and order has been well maintained in the State, making it a haven of peace and tranquillity. This Government will not spare anybody who tries to whip up communal passions. Land grabbers, anti-social elements and organisations that threaten public order have been severely dealt with. Land grabbing has been completely stopped and the inexorable hands of the law have caught up with these criminal elements. I commend our Hon'ble Chief Minister for providing strong leadership and giving uncompromising support and a free hand to the police to deal effectively with law and order issues. As a result of her

firmness and resolve, timely interventions to ban the release of sensitive films having the potential to disturb peace like "Dam 999" has averted serious law and order problems that could have engulfed the State. I urge film makers to show due respect for the sensitivities of the people while making such films and avoid hurting public sentiments. In a civilised society, heinous crimes committed against women and children should come to an end. I appreciate the boldness with which our Hon'ble Chief Minister has spelt out a strong, implementable and monitorable Thirteen Point Programme, including establishment of a Fast Track Mahila Court in each district, which has set the contour for policy makers and law enforcing authorities in the rest of India to adopt.

7. Whenever our Hon'ble Chief Minister has assumed the mantle of the State administration, the morale and discipline of the

Police Force have soared, because it is being provided with a clear mandate to firmly quell disorder and the Police personnel are given infrastructure, weaponry, transport and all that is necessary to discharge their duties without fear or favour. Our Hon'ble Chief Minister has substantially increased the allowances for Police, Fire and Rescue Services and Prison staff; increased the Tamil Nadu Police Benevolent Fund, and given orders to establish three Police Canteens, a first for any Police Force in the country. The Hon'ble Chief Minister has sanctioned the construction of additional accommodation at a cost of Rs.472.50 crores and launched a mega scheme viz., "Own Your Own House" for 36,000 Police, Prison and Fire and Rescue Services personnel. All these measures have made the Police Force feel thoroughly motivated and enthused them to display the highest levels of commitment and dedication in discharging their duties.

8. The fishermen of Tamil Nadu, who earn their livelihood in their traditional fishing areas of the Palk Bay region, are victims of repeated harassment and murderous attacks by the Sri Lankan Navy. Taking a serious view of this, the Hon'ble Chief Minister has addressed the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India on twelve occasions since May 2011 and urged him to immediately intervene and take up the cause of our fishermen with the Sri Lankan Government. This Government is anguished that the harassment of fishermen of Tamil Nadu by the Sri Lankan Navy still continues as an unending agony, even as the Government of India has been showing utter disregard towards the woes of the Tamil fishermen. I urge the Government of India to impress upon the Sri Lankan Government the need to exercise restraint and to refrain from making unprovoked attacks on Tamil Nadu's fishermen, who are also citizens of India.

9. The blatant violation of human rights and genocide of the Tamil citizens of Sri Lanka are highly condemnable. The Government of India should take this issue to international fora. The rehabilitation measures taken up by the Sri Lankan Government to resettle the displaced Tamil people and assuage their feelings are not proceeding as expected. I reiterate the resolve expressed by this Assembly on 8th June, 2011, to urge the Government of India to initiate action by working with other nations for imposition of an economic embargo on the Government of Sri Lanka till the Tamils living in camps are resettled in their own places and are allowed to live with dignity, self-respect and equal constitutional rights on par with the Sinhalese.

10. The Hon'ble Chief Minister is waging a relentless struggle to secure for Tamil Nadu, a rightful share of the water of Interstate rivers. In spite of several rounds of

discussion and even after the direction of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal to share water on a pro rata basis during a distress situation, the Government of Karnataka continues to utilize all the water of the River Cauvery brazenly and remains adamant and obdurate in refusing to release the water due to Tamil Nadu, with scant regard for the plight of the farmers in the Cauvery Delta. Due to the persistent and timely actions of the Hon'ble Chief Minister in approaching the Supreme Court, Karnataka was compelled to release 63.55 TMC ft. of water to Tamil Nadu. However, this still leaves a shortfall of 31.4 TMC ft. as per the pro rata distress sharing formula. As a result, this year, Tamil Nadu has suffered a major setback in food production in the Cauvery Delta area. Therefore, this Government has proposed to file a suit in the Supreme Court seeking compensation for the crop loss from the

Government of Karnataka. The Hon'ble Chief Minister has been urging the Government of India repeatedly to notify the Final Order of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal and I hope that the Central Government will accede to this demand without further delay. In the case of the Mullai Periyar Dam, the Empowered Committee appointed by the Supreme Court has found the dam to be structurally, hydrologically and seismically safe. The Government of Tamil Nadu hopes that the Supreme Court will deliver a favourable order upholding our stand.

11. The draft National Water Policy 2012 lays emphasis on the pricing of water and contemplates the setting up of an Authority to fix water tariff. The Government of Tamil Nadu considers this to be a gross infringement on the powers of State Governments. Water is a State subject and States should have the freedom to take decisions with regard to their

water resources. Similarly, the policy suggests incentivizing States to undertake reforms on the lines contemplated in the draft policy. This Government considers that such a move should not result in tying up the release of Central assistance with water pricing decisions as conditionality. The pricing of natural resources like water is a highly sensitive matter, particularly for agriculture, since it affects the lives of millions of farmers and the State must necessarily adopt a cautious approach. In the case of linking of Inter-State rivers, this Government reiterates its demand for taking up the Peninsular River Linkage Project immediately to pave the way ultimately for the National Water Grid Project in national interest. In a situation wherein no tangible action is forthcoming from the Government of India, this Government is continuing to implement its own Intra-State river linkage programme vigorously with State funds by giving it a special thrust.

12. With regard to the Goods and Services Tax (GST), the Government of India should ensure that the fiscal autonomy of the States is not compromised. The Hon'ble Chief Minister has already highlighted this issue in the recently held National Development Council meeting. The Union Government should be prepared to consider more radical approaches, including the delegation of the levy, collection and appropriation of the substitutes for Value Added Tax (VAT), Central Excise Duty and Service Tax within the State, completely to the State domain. The Central Government should confine itself to inter-state GST, customs duties and direct taxes, which are more buoyant and grow with the economy. Without the Union Government creating the requisite atmosphere of trust amongst the States, it would be impossible to implement the GST regime. I urge the Central Government again to view these issues in a broader and

more practical way, keeping in mind the federal perspective and giving due regard to the resource requirements and sensitivity of the States, so as to evolve a solution having broader acceptability amongst the States.

13. The Direct-Cash-Transfer initiative of the Government of India is not a panacea for all the ills in the present welfare programmes. *"Development is about transforming the lives of the people and not just transforming economies"*, says Joseph Stiglitz, well-known economist and Nobel Laureate. The noble ideals of transforming lives and eradication of poverty cannot be achieved merely by transferring money to the hands of the poor. Schemes such as the Public Distribution System and the supply of laptop computers free of cost, being implemented in Tamil Nadu, have multiple social objectives that cannot be substituted by a monthly emolument. Therefore, this Government supports the scheme of cash

transfer through bank accounts only for some schemes like social security pensions and scholarships to students. However, we strongly oppose any move to monetize and transfer the benefits as cash in schemes like the Public Distribution System, fertilizer subsidy etc., where access and timely availability of entitlements should take precedence over administrative convenience. Further, any attempt by the Government of India to bypass the State Governments and transfer benefits directly to the beneficiary, disguised as direct cash transfer is not acceptable to this Government. Any fund transfer from the Central Government should be done only through the State Government for better accountability. Similarly, allowing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the retail sector will put the livelihood of the poor self-employed people in peril. This

Government, therefore, strongly expresses its disapproval of FDI in the retail sector.

14. As announced in my previous address, this Government has formed the Tamil Nadu Infrastructure Development Board to co-ordinate and expedite the formulation and implementation of major infrastructure projects. I am happy to note that the Government has already notified the Tamil Nadu Tender Transparency (Public Private Partnership) Rules, 2012, to guide and monitor the increasing participation of the private sector in infrastructure development. The Tamil Nadu Infrastructure Development Act and the relevant rules have also been notified. These structural reforms are only the first steps in institutionalising the system of speedy clearance of projects for creating world class infrastructure in the State. **This Government will soon release the second volume of Vision 2023, detailing the entire list of**

projects that will launch the State on its chosen road to become the *Numero Uno* State in India.

15. Our State could achieve a growth of only 8.05% in Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) as against the target of 9% projected for the 11th Plan period. The poor performance of the agriculture and industrial sectors in the previous regime has pulled down the State's performance in that Plan period. Though the projection of the growth rate of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at the national level is only 8% during the 12th Five Year Plan, our State has set for itself an ambitious target of 11% growth. This Government will take all out efforts to achieve this ambitious target and to ensure faster, sustainable and more inclusive growth during this Plan period. I am proud to mention, that this Government has enhanced the original estimate for the 12th Five Year Plan allocation from Rs.1.85 lakh crores as

announced last year, to Rs.2.11 lakh crores. This is 148% higher than the 11th Five Year Plan allocation. **The Annual Plan allocation for the year 2013-2014 will be increased to Rs.37,000 crores from Rs.28,000 crores fixed during the current year, which is an impressive increase of 32%.** By prudent financial management, this Government will ensure that adequate financial resources are made available throughout the 12th Plan period for all developmental schemes.

16. This Government is fully committed to delivering transparent, efficient and exemplary governance by focusing on framing procedures and the use of technology. **This Government will launch an ambitious Comprehensive Project Formulation, Execution and Management System which will integrate and computerise the entire process of projects and works implementation in the State, right from**

the stage of preparation of estimates, tendering, award of tenders, execution of works including measurements, up to the final payment of bills. Such a system will also include an e-procurement portal and the adoption of electronic tendering procedures in Government. This is expected to significantly enhance the efficiency of the project management processes in various departments and greatly speed up the implementation of projects.

17. The State will soon create the State Residents Data Hub (SRDH) for integrating Aadhaar numbers with the biometry enabled individual citizens' data derived from the National Population Registry. The SRDH will ensure the availability of a Unified Data Repository to service all departments. This is expected to help the Government in better

targeting, effective service delivery, better accountability and enable effective monitoring of the schemes. It is also proposed to use this data hub for the Aadhaar based payment system to disburse welfare benefits, besides facilitating the implementation of Aadhaar enabled citizen centric service delivery.

18. This Government headed by the Hon'ble Chief Minister has been straining every nerve to resolve the power crisis, an unpleasant legacy left by the previous Government. The daily power consumption in the State has gone up from 180 million units per day in October 2012 to about 210 million units per day in January 2013. The Hon'ble Chief Minister has already made a detailed statement in this House on 31.10.2012 regarding the various steps taken by this Government for improving the power situation. The Stage III, 600 MW Mettur Thermal Power

Project has already commenced trial production. The 500 MW first unit of the joint venture between TANGEDCO and NTPC at Vallur has also been commissioned in November 2012. The second and third units of this joint venture of 500 MW each are expected to be commissioned by March and October 2013 respectively. Two units of 600 MW each at North Chennai will be commissioned by April and May 2013 respectively. By operating existing power stations efficiently and procuring power from the Power Exchanges and other sources, the load shedding has also come down considerably.

19. TANGEDCO has successfully obtained substantial transmission capacity of about 500 MW from January 2013 to March 2013 by participating in e-bidding for inter-regional transmission capacity. This has enabled TANGEDCO to avail of power from outside the Southern Region, which it had

already booked but was not able to avail of due to corridor constraints. In addition, TANGEDCO has also been able to get 150 MW of power from Odisha during the evening peak hours and early morning. Medium term power purchase of 500 MW for three years commencing from June 2013 has also been tied up. A Global tender has been already floated for the newly announced 660 MW Ennore expansion project and tenders would be soon called for 2 x 660 MW units each at Udangudi and Ennore with a total capacity of 2640 MW. I also congratulate the Hon'ble Chief Minister for announcing a truly path breaking Solar Energy Policy. As was done for Rain Water Harvesting, this Government will make the generation and use of solar energy a peoples' movement and achieve the targeted capacity of 3000 MW.

20. The State cannot achieve inclusive growth without ensuring higher growth in the Primary Sector. Therefore, the allocations for

this sector have been increased to an all time high level. The ambitious target of achieving 5% growth in the Primary Sector is proposed to be reached during the 12th Plan period through integrated management of crop husbandry, animal husbandry and by developing allied sector activities, with a specific focus on enhancing farm level income. Increasing crop productivity, post-harvest management, augmenting storage capacity and strengthening marketing infrastructure are the main focus areas of this Government. These efforts would give more flexibility to farmers to adopt a market responsive cropping pattern and move towards higher levels of income on a sustainable basis.

21. This Government follows a balanced approach in fixing the procurement price for agricultural crops to take care of the farmers' interests, without compromising the economic compulsion to protect the consumers.

This Government has enhanced the procurement price for paddy during 2012-2013 to Rs.1,350 per quintal for the fine variety and Rs.1,300 per quintal for the common variety. These rates are higher by Rs.70 and Rs.50 respectively, than the Minimum Support Price (MSP) fixed by the Central Government. Similarly, the State Advised Price (SAP) for sugarcane has been enhanced to Rs.2,350 per tonne including transportation cost, as against the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of Rs.1,700 per tonne fixed by the Central Government.

22. The deficient monsoon, the non-release of Cauvery water by Karnataka and the resultant delayed opening of the Mettur dam have severely affected the Agriculture Sector in the State, particularly in the Cauvery Delta area. The timely decision taken by the Hon'ble Chief Minister to provide twelve hours of uninterrupted three phase power supply to

the Cauvery Delta area and the special package of Rs.107.98 crores for Samba cultivation have helped to save the standing crops to a certain extent. As a special gesture, the Hon'ble Chief Minister ordered that the entire farmers' share of crop insurance premium in the Cauvery Delta area would also be borne by the State. Even so, the State is likely to suffer severely in achieving its food production targets. The Hon'ble Chief Minister has already assured the Cauvery Delta farmers that they will be compensated for the crop loss due to water shortage. The High Level Committee, constituted by the Government to assess the crop loss and recommend relief measures, has submitted its report and the Government will announce suitable relief package shortly.

23. The State is successfully increasing milk production in order to achieve a "Second White Revolution". The average milk procurement by the dairy co-operative sector

has increased by nearly 4 lakh litres per day. This Government's flagship schemes of distribution of free milch cows, goats and sheep, are being implemented smoothly. By March 2013, the Government would have distributed 24,000 milch cows and 10 lakh goats and sheep across the State. I am glad to note that Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe beneficiaries constitute nearly 40% of the total beneficiaries under these schemes.

24. Under the compassionate leadership of our Hon'ble Chief Minister, this Government issued orders to implement the scheme to supply rice free of cost to all family card holders. Coupled with a robust Universal Public Distribution System, this has completely eliminated hunger from the State and food security for the poor has become a reality. The State Government spends Rs.4,900 crores per year for food subsidy alone. Considering the adverse agricultural season,

our Hon'ble Chief Minister announced a special Pongal gift hamper consisting of 1 kilogram raw rice, 1 kilogram of sugar and Rs.100 in cash to all the 1.84 crore rice card holders on the festive occasion of Pongal at a total cost of Rs.300 crores. This has greatly boosted the spirits of our farmers during this difficult time and enabled them to celebrate the Pongal festival with customary enthusiasm and cheer.

25. During 2012-2013, the co-operatives disbursed Rs.3,317.69 crores as crop loan for the period up to December 2012, which is 23% higher than the corresponding period last year. This Government has also sanctioned Rs.72 crores during the current financial year to the District Central Co-operative Banks for the revival of the short term co-operative credit structures. The State Recruitment Bureau and a District Recruitment Bureau for each district have been constituted for the recruitment of personnel for the

co-operative societies. In consonance with the 97th Amendment to the Constitution, the State has established the Tamil Nadu State Co-operative Societies Election Commission to conduct free and fair elections to all co-operative societies in the State. The steps taken by the Government to make the co-operatives function again as vibrant democratic institutions by commencing the election process are laudable.

26. A growth rate target of 13.8% for the Manufacturing Sector is envisioned in the Vision 2023 to put the State on the path of faster economic development. Since non-availability of suitable land is a major hurdle in attracting new investments, the Government is considering a comprehensive policy to address the issues related to acquisition of land for industrial purposes. Enthused by the proactive approach of the State Government, 17 Memoranda of

Understanding were signed in the current financial year with domestic and foreign investors, for an investment totaling Rs.26,625 crores, which will generate direct and indirect employment for over 1.45 lakh persons. While Tamil Nadu is already one of the leaders in attracting investments, the State will strive to become one of the top three investment destinations in Asia and also the most attractive State for investment in the country.

27. Promotion of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) is given special priority by the State since it provides large scale employment. Under the Revival, Reform and Restructuring package for the handloom sector, an amount of Rs.127 crores has been allocated by the State. The Hon'ble Chief Minister has benevolently announced several measures to protect the tea industry, particularly, small tea growers. Tea factories under INDCOSERVE are being upgraded to

improve their operational efficiency at a cost of Rs.6 crores. A new tea factory will be opened at Nanjanad in the Nilgiris district to benefit small tea growers. A tea cluster common facilitation centre will be set up near Mettupalayam at a cost of Rs.15 crores.

28. In tune with the mission statement to provide "Health for All", this Government has been taking pioneering initiatives in both preventive and curative health care. It is indeed a matter of pride that the 12th Plan Document refers more than once to the exemplary performance of Tamil Nadu in the health sector and advises the Central Government to emulate many of the initiatives of the State. Tamil Nadu has already achieved the Millennium Development Goal of reducing Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) below 107. At present, MMR stands at 73 whereas Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) has dropped to 22. Tamil Nadu is one of the few states in the

country where the child sex ratio has been on the rise during the past decade. I am happy to inform the House that the State has received Rs.174 crores as incentive for achieving the target in the health sector under the 13th Finance Commission grant.

29. This Government's decision to convert the new building in the Omandurar Government Estate into a multi super specialty hospital, upheld by the Madras High Court and the Supreme Court, will strengthen tertiary health care facilities in the State by providing better and expert treatment for serious ailments to the economically weaker sections. The newly launched "Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme" has benefited 2,38,749 persons to an extent of Rs.534.39 crores so far. It is noteworthy that out of these, 82,829 beneficiaries availed of the facilities in Government hospitals and Rs.176.28 crores has been earned back by

these hospitals. This Government has taken immediate and effective action to control dengue. With the concerted efforts of the Government and the ingenuity of the Hon'ble Chief Minister in advocating the use of traditional medicines, the spread of dengue was brought under control.

30. This Government is striving to provide the needed infrastructure facilities in the State so as to ensure universal access to quality education. The Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) in the State for Primary schools is 27, which is much better than the national average of 30. The Trimester System and the Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation System, which have been established under the guidance of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, have been well received by the students, teachers and parents. The schemes of supply of free bus passes, text books, note books, bicycles, footwear, uniforms, school bags, geometry

boxes, atlases, maps, colour pencils etc., have contributed immensely to achieving a higher retention ratio by generating much enthusiasm amongst children. Although the State has made phenomenal progress in terms of total literacy, the gender gap in literacy is still quite large and this Government is taking all steps necessary to reduce it. I am sure that by the end of the 12th Five Year Plan, the State would have made significant strides in this regard.

31. As announced during my last year's address, legislation has been enacted to merge the various Universities of Technology, thus making Anna University the largest Technical University in the country. Eleven university constituent Arts and Science colleges have been opened during the current academic year in areas where the reach of higher education is inadequate. Similarly, the Government has announced the opening of a National Law School in Srirangam taluk, besides setting up

two Government Engineering Colleges and ten Government Polytechnic Colleges in needy places. The scheme of free distribution of laptop computers to students has been a huge success. Like many other pioneering schemes started by this State and later adopted elsewhere in the country, I hope this scheme will also be adopted at the national level.

32. With 48.45% of its population living in urban areas, Tamil Nadu has become the most urbanized State in the country. It has become the first State to experience the phase of rapid urbanization and its challenges. Therefore, the path set by our State on its way to addressing the challenges of urbanization would greatly influence the approach and policies at the national level in the area of urban development. The 12th Five Year Plan makes glowing references to the unique initiatives taken by Tamil Nadu like the creation of the State Urban Development Fund and

commended our efforts to bring about total sanitation. It is disappointing that the Government of India has not launched the JNNURM-II as was expected. However, Tamil Nadu has gone ahead with its own Mission Mode Projects in urban areas, the Chennai Mega City Development Mission and the Integrated Urban Development Mission, with an allocation of Rs.1,250 crores per annum from the State fund. The Government has completed the preparatory work for establishing the State Property Tax Board to guide and advise the local bodies on issues related to property taxes. This move will go a long way in strengthening the local bodies' own resources and instilling better fiscal discipline.

33. Fulfilling the housing needs of the urban poor is a daunting task. The slum population in urban areas in the State is estimated to be around 86 lakhs, as per the 2011 census. The housing shortage has been

estimated at 28 lakhs. This Government will work towards the objective of making all the cities in our State slum free by rehabilitating all the families who do not have a decent dwelling. The strategies of rehabilitation will be both *in situ* development and resettlement. I hope that the funding from the Government of India under the Rajiv Awas Yojana and other programmes will be adequate to tackle this massive problem within a specified time frame. **In order to make a beginning in this regard, seven pilot projects for the construction of 2,775 tenements for slum dwellers at a cost of Rs.206.09 crores will be taken up under the Rajiv Awas Yojana, for which the approval of the Government of India is awaited. More projects will be taken up in the coming years after completing the ongoing enumeration of eligible households.**

34. While the State is rapidly urbanizing, the infrastructure needs of our rural areas, where more than 50% of the population lives even now, are equally significant. This Government is aware that better social and economic infrastructure in rural areas will arrest the unhealthy congestion in towns and cities caused by fast and haphazard urbanisation. The rural habitation centric approach adopted in the THAI scheme is a commendable strategy in this direction. The novel and ambitious "Chief Minister's Solar Powered Green House Scheme" has been well received by the people. **Considering the plight of the people living in the houses constructed by Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) under the Tsunami rehabilitation scheme, this Government has decided to provide Rs.30.69 crores for laying weathering course on the roofs of**

16,883 affected houses to rectify roof leakages.

35. It is heartening to note that poverty in Tamil Nadu has been declining over the years. The 66th round of National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) survey data shows that the total population living below the poverty line is 121.8 lakhs, which is 17.1% of the total population. The percentage of population living below the poverty line in rural and urban areas is 21.2% and 12.8% respectively. The Pudhu Vaazhvu project launched by the Hon'ble Chief Minister is acknowledged by the Government of India as one of the best models in the country for poverty alleviation. The Tamil Nadu State Rural Livelihood Mission (TNSRLM), a new poverty alleviation scheme, is being jointly implemented by the State and the Central Governments, in a mission mode. It envisages the creation of sustainable livelihoods for

families living below the poverty line, within a target period of five to seven years in all the 31 rural districts of Tamil Nadu. As the Government of India's Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) was found inadequate to deal with the complexities of urban poverty, the State has launched the Tamil Nadu Urban Livelihood Mission, without waiting for the launching of the Urban Livelihood Mission promised by the Central Government. I hope that the Government of India will soon launch this important programme and assist the State in tackling the problem of urban poverty more pointedly.

36. The Tamil Nadu Vision 2023 envisages skill training to be given to 20 million youth over the next 11 years. This includes 15 million persons entering the job market in the next 11 years and 5 million persons who are already part of the work force. The Tamil Nadu State Skill Development Society is

being reconstituted as the Tamil Nadu State Skill Development Corporation to facilitate the participation of the private sector and trade associations. While training unskilled youth outside the education system, this Government will simultaneously focus on re-engineering our education system to enhance the skills and employability of outgoing students.

37. Considering the importance of a road network of high quality in spurring economic growth and equitable development, Rs.3,623 crores has been sanctioned this year for the improvement and maintenance of roads. This Government has sanctioned 121 new bridges at a cost of Rs.235 crores with the assistance of NABARD. **Preparation of a Detailed Project Report (DPR) has been undertaken for the Chennai Peripheral Ring Road for a total length of 162 km connecting Mamallapuram and Ennore. I am happy to inform the House that this**

Government has initiated steps for developing a deep water port at Nagapattinam through Public-Private-Partnership (PPP).

38. A good public transport system plays a vital role in supporting urban and rural livelihoods. In order to provide adequate transport facilities in the State, particularly to the unserved rural areas, the State Transport Undertakings (STUs) have increased the number of scheduled services from 19,167 in June 2011 to 20,500 as on December 2012. Also, with the introduction of new buses, the average age of the fleet has come down drastically, making bus travel a lot safer, more reliable and comfortable. State transport buses are the predominant mode of transport for the poor and the middle class. Therefore, in spite of steep fuel price hike, which came into effect from 14.9.2012, this Government has ensured that the burden is not passed on to the public,

by compensating the loss of Rs.383 crores per annum to the State Transport Undertakings. However, to our utter dismay, the Central Government, which only speaks about protecting the Aam Aadmi, has withdrawn the subsidy completely on the diesel supplied in bulk to STUs with effect from 18.1.2013. This has resulted in a sharp 23.75% increase in the fuel cost again, of Rs.744 crores per annum, adding up to a total annual increase of Rs.1,127 crores within 4 months, forcing the STUs to the precipice of financial disaster. This Government has decided to challenge this dual pricing policy of the Central Government in the appropriate court as it is against public interest and discriminates against STUs and benefits private operators who continue to enjoy subsidised fuel.

39. It is well known that the Department of Youth Welfare and Sports Development gets prominence whenever our

Hon'ble Chief Minister takes the reins of the State administration. The Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor stadium, constructed during her tenure in 1993, has helped us to create sports facilities of international standards in the State. This Government has now substantially enhanced the allowances and awards given to various sports persons. I am very glad to inform this august House that due to the initiative taken by our Hon'ble Chief Minister, the prestigious 20th Asian Athletic Championship will be held in Chennai from 2nd to 7th July, 2013. I am confident that this will motivate our youth to obtain access to international events and create the spirit of competing with the world's best.

40. This Government has issued orders for the creation of nine new taluks by bifurcating the existing taluks in the year 2012-2013. The High Level Committee constituted for this purpose is also examining

the need to create additional taluks. Its recommendations will be taken into account by the Government while forming new taluks in future. **This Government is committed to creating an Integrated Land Record Management System by functionally integrating the departments of Revenue Administration, Land Administration, Survey and Registration. Land Records Management Centres are being created in 21 taluks of Kancheepuram and Tirunelveli districts under the National Land Records Modernisation Programme. I hope that this initiative, when upscaled in the entire State, will make land records management more comprehensive and user friendly.**

41. Our State is well known for its inclusive welfare programmes. Enhancement of the Social Security Pension amount to Rs.1,000 per month by this Government has given substantial relief to the poor and the

destitute. There are several programmes targeting the differently abled, women and children in order to achieve the goal of inclusiveness. Also, many innovative schemes are being implemented for the socially disadvantaged groups viz. Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes, Most Backward Classes and Minorities. Extending the scholarship benefit to Adi Dravidar and Tribal students studying in private colleges is a path-breaking initiative. All these initiatives of this Government will certainly eliminate the gap in the socio-economic status of the different target groups.

42. I have outlined here a few of the policies and programmes formulated and implemented by this Government. Our Hon'ble Chief Minister, with the overwhelming support of the people, is providing efficient, transparent and people friendly governance. With her profound wisdom, innovation and sagacity,

I am sure that she will be able to fulfill the aspirations of the people and make the State a leader in the country in achieving inclusive growth, development and universal prosperity.

43. I am confident that this House will deliberate on all the key issues in a very constructive and positive manner and guide the Government to implement the schemes in an exemplary way. With these words, I conclude my speech and wish you all the best once again.

Nanri

Vanakkam

Jai Hind