

Hon'ble Prime Minister, Union Ministers, Chief Ministers of States, Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog, Members of the Governing Council, Officers of the Union and State Governments, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Punjab is the 'Sword Arm' of the country that has also provided it food security since the 1970's. It is a matter of great pride that Punjabis immediately after Independence, rose to the clarion call given by the then Prime Minister Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru to make the country self-sufficient in food production. Notwithstanding the trauma of Partition suffered by virtually every Punjabi family, the enterprising farmers of Punjab worked day and night, adopted new technologies and new seeds to raise the productivity of food grains and within few years, the country that was importing wheat and rice from Western countries was ready to export surplus food grains to other countries. The valiant Punjabi Soldiers during external aggressions by inimical countries in 1962, 1965, 1971 and during the Kargil War of 1999 stood like rock and protected the frontiers of our great nation. It is a matter of great pride that even in the freedom struggle, a large majority of freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives, belonged to the pious land of Punjab.

2. During the 3rd meeting of Governing Council, the Prime Minister stressed upon the State Governments to work with the Union Government as “Team India” to realise the vision of our founding fathers by 2022, the 75th anniversary of our Independence. Mr. Prime Minister, every Chief Minister sitting here in this meeting sincerely wants to realise the dream of a vibrant and developed nation, as envisioned by our freedom fighters. Sir, you would agree this momentous task cannot be accomplished until and unless we empower all the States in the true spirit of co-operative federalism. Yet, it is also true that the power of States is

being apportioned by the Union Government slowly and steadily, thereby weakening the States in the process. India, which the Constitution describes as a “Union of States”, cannot be strong with weak States. Cooperative federalism should remain corner stone of all decisions of Union Government that affect the states.

3. The meeting of the NITI Aayog allows States to articulate their areas of concern in a joint forum before the Union Government. There are areas which are a cause of significant concern, which if not addressed collectively can impede the larger process of development and nation-building. I have highlighted some of these concerns along with the issues that have been listed on the agenda. I now draw the attention of the Governing Council to the following key issues of concern:-

DOUBLING FARMERS INCOME

4. The farmers of Punjab that made India self-sufficient on food security front are in real distress today. It is the bounden duty of the Union Government to come to the aide of the '*Annadata*' of the nation by supporting the state's initiative of debt waiver besides accepting the roadmap submitted by the State Government for doubling the farmers' income in the State. Mr. Prime Minister, I seek your personal intervention for announcing the National Debt Waiver for the farming community with a wider ambit to include farm labourers also. Farmers' across the country, are waiting for a national initiative to minimise, if not, eliminate their economic miseries.

5. The road map to doubling farmers' income by 2022 must include clear and precise plans specific to state/crop/agri-climatic conditions that can produce quantifiable outcomes. Punjab has taken lot of initiatives for doubling its farmers

income. My Government is providing extension services and organizing district, block and village level training camps for farmers with focus on better quality seed, soil health, quality fertilizer, pesticides and insecticides. A Cotton Surveillance App has been introduced to control pests and other diseases in the crop. Sugar-Cane tissue culture plants are being distributed to the farmers for better yield thereby increasing their income. Kisan Haat and Kisan Bazar are being promoted in agriculture offices for direct marketing of farmer produce to the consumers. We have also made comprehensive amendments to State's APMC Act.

6. The objective of doubling the farmers' income can never be achieved unless the farmer gets the fair value of its farm produce. Punjab has always advocated that for calculating MSP, C2 formula should be implemented as per Dr. Swaminathan Report and not just $A2 + FL$. The recommendations of Dr Swaminathan should be fully implemented.

7. Entrepreneurship in Contract Farming will bring investment and best practices of developed countries. We are also conscious that Punjab needs to shift from highly water intensive traditional crops to more water efficient horticulture crops, vegetables and flowers so that diversification of agriculture leads to increase in incomes for our farmers. The State through its resources is providing the requisite impetus and we have already submitted to Government of India our requirements in filling the existing gaps in infrastructure, up-grading production technology and marketing support for these crops. These have to be linked to efficiency of inputs, introduction of new varieties, new technologies, food processing units that leads to value addition and post-harvest management of the products. In this regard, I would urge the Government of India to restore the

funding pattern of RKVY to 100% CSS.

We, therefore, seek technical support from NITI Aayog in preparing a road map for doubling the farmers' income in the State and also a special dispensation from Government of India for original Green Revolution states to boost the sagging incomes of the farming community. The Original Green Revolution states should be declared a special agriculture zone as their problems and issues deserve a different approach and strategy for a sustainable solution.

MSP SUPPORT FOR ALTERNATE CROPS

8. The wheat/paddy rotation in Punjab, which has sustained the food requirements of India, has substantially depleted Punjab's water table and impacted its soil-nutrient balance. The answer to the crisis is through crop diversification by encouraging alternative crops like maize, soyabean, oilseeds, pulses etc. MSP was announced for 23 crops but the procurement at MSP is effective only in case of wheat and paddy and to some extent in cotton where Cotton Corporation of India carries out price support operations in some of the cotton markets in the country, in case prices fall below MSP. There is no effective offtake by any designated agency of Government of India and hence MSP is ineffective except in wheat and paddy. **There is an urgent need to designate agencies of the Government of India to procure and provide MSP matching the returns of wheat and paddy in order to incentivize the farmers to take up cultivation of alternate crops and thereby achieve diversification and save precious water. Besides, Deficiency Price Support has to be implemented effectively, immediately, sufficiently and practically.** The State of Punjab

would also welcome NITI Aayog's support in planning and implementing micro irrigation systems in agriculture to enhance the water productivity in the State.

FARM DEBT IN PUNJAB

9. Mounting farming debt has resulted in farmers suicides across the state. To ameliorate the situation, the State Government has decided to provide an institutional crop loan waiver to all the marginal and small farmers having outstanding loans as on 31/03/17. Crop loan up to Rs.2 lac to marginal and small farmers is waived off as per the notified scheme. This would provide debt waiver to 10.25 lac farmers of Punjab. However, to put the agriculture sector on a path of high trajectory growth and development with an assurance of better quality living for farmers of our country, a loan waiver for farmers by Government of India at the national level is a must.

At the cost of repetition, I would reiterate that the Government of India should consider the issue of an agricultural loan waiver at the National level on priority to make agricultural sector more resilient and the agricultural economy more resurgent. I would request the Prime Minister to constitute a Committee of the Union Government and some Chief Ministers to finalise the blue print of the scheme in consultation with other States.

GRANT OF TAX CONCESSIONS/ INCENTIVES AT PAR WITH NEIGHBOURING STATES

10. To boost industrial growth and economic activity, the state has already approved a New Industrial and Business Development Policy-2017. We hope that it will spur the growth of industry in Punjab creating large scale

entrepreneurial and employment opportunities in the State. However, grant of fiscal concessions to the States of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand has stagnated the industrial growth in Punjab. It is also true that new industrial development in these States has come largely in the border belt, i.e. bordering Punjab in the case of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir. The matter was taken up by the state with Government of India at various levels and we have requested that the State, being a frontline border State, should be provided same economic package as has been provided to these states. **Punjab needs Government of India's support by way of special industrial package for our thickly populated Border Areas which bear the brunt of a proxy war almost on a daily basis.**

AYUSHMAN BHARAT

Health and Wellness Centres

11. To serve the health needs of the population of Punjab, the State Government has decided to strengthen all the 2950 Health Sub-Centres and upgrade them as Health & Wellness Centres by 2023. During the infrastructure gap analysis of Sub-Centres, it has been found that to strengthen these Sub-Centres, major infrastructure up-gradation is required for which about Rs.600 Crore will be needed by 2030. **I request the support of the Government of India for infrastructural upgradation of these centres in order to deliver comprehensive Primary Health Care in the State.**

Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Swasthya Suraksha Mission

12. Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Swasthya Suraksha Mission (PMRSSM), entitles coverage of around 14.96 lakh families in Punjab. However, the State has some major concerns about this scheme in its current form as my Government aims to provide universal coverage in the State. Our main concerns are as follows:

- The Government of India (GoI) is not contributing 60% of the actual premium rates achieved through open tendering process but shall release 60% of the national ceiling rate as determined by GoI. The State shall have to make 100% contribution on account of excess amount of premium over and above this national ceiling limit determined by GoI. Given State's constraint of resources, the Government of India should provide financial assistance for covering all households (nearly 45 lacs) of the state under the scheme.
- As regards to the appointment of Ayushman Mitras in each empanelled hospital by the State Government, it is not clear that whether GoI will share the administrative cost of hiring them.
- Clarity is also required on the extent of leverage to be given to the States to amend the treatment rates as every State is distinct in respect of endemicity, incidence and prevalence of disease pattern, geographic distribution of provider network and manpower availability and economic profile.

13. The State has, however, undertaken all the activities relating to identification and additional data collection drive of SECC Data in urban and rural areas. The State shall also undertake constitution of SHA (State Health Agency) at the earliest, with few customizations in the structure. **We look**

forward to early and satisfactory resolution of our concerns to achieve proper and effective alignment between the GoI and our State in this regard.

BORDER AREA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

14. The security and vulnerability of the border depends upon the threat perception from across the border. The border areas of Punjab, along the Pakistan border, are thickly populated unlike in other States. Greater emphasis needs to be laid on the border areas which fall along the international border with Pakistan keeping in view the previous wars and externally-aided terrorism. Despite the existing security scenario, increased threat from cross border terror activities and huge expenditure being incurred by the State Government to safe guard the nation, the criteria adopted by the GoI for allocation of funds under BADP remains unfavourable to Punjab.

15. The area along the International Border needs bigger investments involving crore of rupees in the sectors of health, education, roads and other infrastructure for its overall socio-economic development. The problems of this area were highlighted in the 3rd Meeting of Governing Council of NITI Aayog held on 23-04-2017 and also to the Union Home Minister during his visit to Ferozpur on 17.10.2017. I have also personally requested your intervention for institutionalizing of a grant/ economic package for development of border areas of Punjab which it deserves on account of national security concerns.

16. I reiterate the demands of the border areas raised during the 3rd Meeting of Governing Council of NITI Aayog - (i) a special one-time infrastructure development package for improving the border areas, (ii) Centre Government to acquire all lands that lie beyond the border fence, (iii) GoI to compensate lands

which are damaged or rendered ineffective for farming due to periodic military deployment, (iv) GoI to provide the same level of tax incentives and promotional schemes to this region as is given to the hill States and north-eastern region, and (v) Special development and maintenance of Border Roads under the National Highway programme of the country.

WATER RESOURCES

17. Water is increasingly becoming the most scarce and precious resource. We need to pay attention to the challenge posed by the need to manage our water resources in a manner which enables the finite water resources to meet the growing demands of rapid growth. I would only underscore the need for GoI to take a proactive and pragmatic position in this regard. In order to arrest the rapid depletion of our ground water reserves and to plan for future, a Mission Directorate of Groundwater Management has already been set up in Punjab.

18. Ground water will continue to be a major resource for both irrigation and drinking purposes. To augment the declining ground water, till date, a total of 372 structures have been constructed for Artificial Recharge in the state. Besides, Artificial Recharge Scheme have been prepared under PMKSY. My Government has taken steps for improving water productivity by promoting large scale adoption of Underground Pipeline, Micro Irrigation and Solar Power among farming community. We currently have coverage of 44,000 km long underground pipeline for around 4.72 lakh hectares area and there is a target to cover 1.23 lakh hectares during the next 4 years. Micro Irrigation (MI) system has been installed on more than 33,000 hectares and it is proposed to cover 16,745 hectares upto the year 2022. Renewable energy is also being promoted through Solar Pumps for irrigation. More than 100 pumps have already been

installed and there is a target to install 400 solar pumps during the next 4 years. Community based Solar Powered Micro Irrigation Projects have also been proposed to be installed in canal commands of sub-mountainous areas. The State is conscious of the agriculture-ground water-energy crisis and has introduced certain research projects to incentivize farmers to conserve ground water.

19. A major problem with most irrigation systems is the erosion of the financial capacity of the State Governments to funnel resources to maintain and upgrade projects. Punjab has a very well-developed and interlinked river system and a large 14500 km long Canal System. The estimated value at the present price level of Water Resource Infrastructure in the State is more than Rs. 50,000 crore. Unfortunately, this infrastructure is fast deteriorating and has in turn has increased the dependence on ground water resources of the State, leading to a continuous trend of decline of ground water level. There is an alarming annual over exploitation of ground water to the extent of 1.16 Million Ham (9.42 MAF). The ground water availability is decreasing with passage of time as the water table is falling in almost 85% area of the State. Out of a total of 138 blocks of the State, 105 blocks are over-exploited and only 26 blocks are in safe category.

20. Needless to say, these figures are alarming and there is an urgent need to reverse this trend. Optimal utilization of surface water is one of the ways forward. The State intends to take action to reduce the dependence of the farmers on underground water by saving water and delivering it to every shareholder as per their requirement by the correction of system deficiencies through lining of channels and proper upkeep of irrigation infrastructure. The goal of bridging the IPC-IPU gap under ISBIG can only be realized fully if rejuvenation/modernization of the entire systems is taken up. It is strongly felt

that it would be in national interest that **a State Specific Grant of Rs. 2575 crore for 2020-21 to 2024-25 be provided to the State by the 15th Finance Commission so that projects for modernization of canal systems can be taken up in their entirety and the declining trend of ground water level be reversed.** We will also be taking this issue up when the Finance Commission visits Punjab later this year.

21. As per the present policy, 99 AIBP projects in the country have been prioritized for the completion in phases upto December 2019. Till that time no new projects are being accepted under AIBP (PMKSY). In 99 projects under AIBP there are only two projects considered from Punjab i.e. Project for Rehabilitation of 1st Patiala Feeder and Kotla Branch, and Extension of Kandi Canal Stage-II, which are almost in final stages of completion. GoI is thus disincentivizing Punjab for efficiently completing these projects. to include our two submitted projects i) Project of Extension, Renovation & Modernization of canals being fed from River Sutlej amounting to Rs. 918.25 crore, and ii) Project for Rehabilitation, Renovation and Modernization of various distributaries systems along with allied works in Punjab State (UBDC System) amounting to Rs.1112.34 crore. **I seek the indulgence of the Prime Minister to approve the acceptance of these projects under AIBP and grant of early investment clearance and funding.**

22. The project for relining of inter-state Rajasthan Feeder and Sirhind Feeder canals are of great importance to both Rajasthan and Punjab for stopping the seepage from the canals and thus improving the irrigation water supply to the two states apart from arresting water logging in the State of Punjab. **There is, thus an urgent need to include these projects in the priority list of the Ministry of Water Resources.**

23. Being a major contributor of food grains to the central pool and keeping in view the dire necessity of proper upkeep of its irrigation infrastructure, in the national interest, **Government of India is, therefore, requested to grant 'Special Category State' status to Punjab under the AIBP.**

POSHAN ABHIYAAN

24. Our Government is implementing Poshan Abhiyaan in true spirit for increasing the birth weight, reduce both Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) in the 7 Districts of Punjab i.e Faridkot, Ludhiana, Mansa, Shri Muktsar Sahib, Ferozepur, Tarn Taran & Moga. It would be rolled out in phased manner in the remaining districts of the State. I assure my Government's full commitment to this campaign.

ASPIRATIONAL DISTRICTS

25. Ferozepur and Moga have been selected as Aspirational Districts from the State. The State will ensure to adopt a focused approach and convergence of efforts of Central, State and Local Governments to focus on the outcome that matter to common people in these districts. The State Government has nominated the Nodal Officers both at the State level as well as the district level for proper coordination with the Prabharis.

STATE LEVEL INITIATIVES

Pre-Primary School classes and Smart Schools

26. The State of Punjab has been one of the pioneers in starting pre-primary classes in all the government primary schools. All primary school children in 3-6

year age group will be admitted in pre-primary classes. This initiative will help to enhance learning levels of children at all the levels of school education. The Anganwadi centres which are at present taking care of the children from 0-6 year age group will keep functioning as such. In addition, my Government has also taken up an initiative to upgrade one Senior Secondary government school in each education block as smart school on pilot basis.

Tandarust Punjab

27. My Government has launched Mission Tandarust Punjab to achieve human excellence in sustainable manner by providing clean drinking water, improving ambient air quality, ensuring growing and consumption of unadulterated food products and improvement in the physical and mental health of the people of Punjab. To achieve the desired goals under the mission, the State has converged the services of various departments at the district level under the watch of the Deputy Commissioners. We are actively associating the people in inculcating consciousness about good health and healthy living in proactively taking action against some of the malpractices that have become almost an accepted part of our lives.

Mahatma Gandhi Sarbat Vikas Yojana

28. My Government has launched the Mahatma Gandhi Sarbat Vikas Yojana (MGSVY) programme for inclusive growth of the distressed sections of the society. The aim of the scheme is to identify poor and distressed rural households which have been deprived of the benefits of the various welfare schemes launched by State Government through exclusion errors on various counts. The programme seeks to proactively provide benefits of welfare schemes to all

categories of distressed persons, be it debt-stressed farmers, families of chronically ill patients or martyred soldiers, abandoned old persons, drug addicts, etc. 8.90 lakh individuals have been identified in the first phase for being assisted under one or more government schemes and benefits to 5.50 lakh persons have been already extended.

Ghar Ghar Rozgaar and Karobaar Mission

29. Ladies and gentlemen, one of the foremost challenges before the country is to provide jobs to our youth and to improve their standard of living. There is an increasing schism between haves and have-nots and this must be addressed effectively. We have started a Mission to focus on creating employment opportunities and improving the employability of our youth. The Mission also envisages the setting up of District Employment and Enterprise Bureaus in each district as one-stop facility for assisting our youth in employment, skilling and entrepreneurship.

Water Supply & Sanitation

30. I am happy to inform that rural Punjab was declared Open Defecation Free (ODF) by Government of India in March 2018. State Government has launched Mission Swachh & Swasth Punjab to provide potable water and sanitation facilities in the rural areas. The State Government has successfully implemented 24x7 Metered Water Supply in 125 villages by involving the community in planning, implementation and metering water consumption. Availability of 24x7 water has resulted in greater level of satisfaction and reduction in wastage of water. We plan to replicate this success and cover 1000 villages over the next 2 years.

River Action Plan

31. There are four major rivers namely Sutlej, Beas, Ravi and Ghaggar flowing in the State of Punjab. Our Government has planned a programme to tackle the pollution due to discharge of untreated/partially treated sewage and industrial effluents of the cities by constructing the Sewage Treatment Plants(STPs) as some of these rivers provide drinking water to both southern Punjab and Rajasthan. State Government has already installed 31 STPs along the River Satluj, 9 STPs along the River Beas and 13 STPs along the River Ghaggar. Besides, this, 3 Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETP) are being installed in Ludhiana city to make Buddah Nallah pollution free. **I would request you to sanction us a one-time grant under the National River Conservation Plan to undertake a comprehensive programme to clean our rivers on the lines of the Ganga Action Plan.**

Paddy Straw Management

32. The burning of paddy straw has become an environmental hazard and the machinery required to manage it is prohibitively expensive for the farmers. In line with the decision of GoI, we have taken up the initiative to provide the requisite machinery to the farmer groups/Primary Agriculture Cooperatives Societies with subsidy component to be provided by the state. The government has made it mandatory to attach Super Straw Management System (SMS) with self-propelled combined harvesters. Significantly during the Kharif 2017, the burning of paddy straw has come down to 62% of the paddy sown area as compared to 85% during the same period in 2016.

33. However, it is also important to appreciate that this is essentially an economic problem and cannot be tackled fully, either through regulation or enforcement. **We have recommended payment of bonus @ Rs.100 per quintal of paddy procured, over and above the MSP, as a conditional cash transfer linked to zero burning of paddy straw.** This additional cost is on account of investment in acquisition of residue handling machinery, attaining the skills required for its efficient use and to off-set its cost of operation and maintenance.

34. In addition, other interventions aimed at accelerated in-situ management of paddy straw have been planned and are in the process of being implemented in Punjab. The State Government has announced a 'Paddy Straw Challenge Fund' with a prize money of US\$ 1 million aimed at discovering technology for rapid in-situ management of paddy straw in the field. The proposed fund is aimed at seeking out technology from a universal set of innovators represented by private/public agencies or individuals and to reward the most suitable solution and innovator.

Greenfield Expressway between Delhi and Katra

35. Mr. Prime Minister, there is a proposal to connect the national capital Delhi with Katra (in Jammu & Kashmir) via Amritsar through a greenfield expressway. This inter-state project will be of great economic and strategic importance and could also provide a gateway to access the markets of Central Asia once our relations with our neighbours normalize. The State Government has communicated its consent on the proposed alignment and we request you and the Union Minister of National Highways to initiate work on this project at the earliest.

Celebrations of 550th Birth Anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji

36. In 2019, the world will celebrate the 550th Birth Anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. We have chalked out a series of programmes to observe this historic occasion and I have written to the Prime Minister to constitute a National Organizing Committee so that this event can be celebrated across the country and abroad in a befitting manner. The State Government has also sent a memorandum to the Prime Minister seeking financial assistance of Rs. 2145 crore for this historic event. I hope the Government of India will come forward to assist the State Government in this regard.

Commemoration of the Centenary of Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar

37. The country will be also commemorating the centenary of the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy next year in 2019. We have requested the Government of India to sanction a one-time grant of Rs. 100 crore for upgradation of the precincts of the Jallianwala Bagh and to institute certain activities for paying the nation's homage and tribute to our great martyrs.

38. I also assure the Government of India that we will be actively involved in celebrating the 150th anniversary of the birth of the Father of our Nation Mahatma Gandhi in a befitting manner.

CONCLUSION

39. Mr. Prime Minister, we are a Union, and our great nation can prosper and leap frog only when all parts of this Union move together in unison. We have all realised that we can carry out even the most challenging reforms if we move in a

proper, synchronized manner. While we as States contribute our might to nation building and protecting the unity and integrity of the nation, a large share of responsibility rests on the Government of India to anchor the Union in the true spirit of co-operative federalism. The Union Government needs to provide greater financial assistance to the states, particularly in resolving critical matters concerning the farmers, the youth and the poor belonging to the scheduled castes. I am sanguine that the Union Government and all the States shall today commit themselves to building our nation together and dedicate ourselves to the service of the poorest of the poor as the great Mahatma Gandhi wanted us all to. That will be our most fitting tribute to the Father of the nation, whose sesquicentennial we celebrate next year.

40. In the end, I convey my sincere thanks to Hon'ble Prime Minister, Union Ministers, my colleague Chief Ministers, Vice Chairman and Members of the NITI Aayog and all other dignitaries present. I am sure that today's deliberations shall lead to the development and progress of our great Nation in the true spirit of cooperative federalism.

Jai Hind.