



FOURTH GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING OF NITI AAYOG CONCLUDES¹

The fourth meeting of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog was held under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at Rashtrapati Bhavan on June 17, 2018. It was attended by 23 Chief Ministers and the Lieutenant Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, apart from Union Ministers, who are ex-officio members and special invitees.

At the end of the day-long deliberations, the Prime Minister highlighted the importance of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog as a platform to inspire cooperative federalism, stressing the need for effective center-state cooperation to advance development outcomes and achieve double-digit growth for India. He called upon States to fix growth targets for their economies as the world looks towards India soon becoming a USD 5 trillion economy. He advised the States to pay special attention to expanding their exports and attracting export oriented investment while organizing their investments summits and events.

Welcoming the constructive discussion and suggestions made by various Chief Ministers, the Prime Minister assured the gathering that these suggestions would be seriously considered in the course of decision-making. NITI Aayog was asked to follow up with the States within three months on the actionable points made by them.

The Prime Minister also called upon the Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Sikkim, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh to work together to make recommendations on a coordinated policy approach on the subject of 'Agriculture and MNREGA'. He also encouraged States to explore opportunities to increase corporate investment in agriculture, such as in food processing, warehousing and logistics.

He reiterated the Union Government's commitment to provide 100% coverage of seven flagship schemes to 45,000 additional villages and those in 115 Aspirational Districts by August 15, 2018. He urged States to identify 'aspirational blocks' to take development to the grassroots.

NITI Aayog will soon invite States for consultations on how to improve the 'Ease of Doing Business' in India and also to improve the 'Ease of Living' for the common man. The Prime Minister also emphasized that States may set up their own Committees to look into 'Ease of Living' for the common citizen, which is the need of the hour.

The Prime Minister expressed the hope that all Government buildings and street lighting across the country should be replaced with energy-efficient, economical LED lighting as soon as possible and also urged States to work towards the goal of a TB-Free India by 2025, five years prior to the global target of 2030.

The Prime Minister also took into consideration States' concerns over the Terms of Reference of the Fifteenth Finance Commission and encouraged States to think of new ideas or a new formula, which incentivizes states for their performance. For instance, good practices such as reducing wasteful expenditure and increasing technology use. He emphasized that the Finance Commission devolution formula has to take cognizance of the relative backwardness and low per capita incomes of some states.

¹ Available at: <http://www.pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1535698>

Elaborating on the Union Government's guiding principle of *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas*, the Prime Minister said the schemes of the Union Government are no longer limited to certain people, or to certain regions, and are reaching everyone without discrimination, in a balanced way.

The Chief Ministers of the various States highlighted issues such as adaptation to climate change, the need to design and implement State-specific schemes to suit local needs. They also presented the work done by the various states in implementing the Ayushman Bharat and the Aspirational Districts Programme.

All Chief Ministers expressed their commitment to celebrating the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in a befitting manner. The Prime Minister in his closing remarks said the best manner of showing respect to the Father of the Nation would be to not only achieve a 100% Open Defecation Free (ODF) status for the country but also to make India free from dirt and squalor by October 2, 2019.

The Prime Minister called for exploring the possibility of holding simultaneous and the advantages of a common voter list for each State.

The Prime Minister thanked the Chief Ministers for their suggestions and reassured all present that the Union Government will work towards resolving all issues pending with the States.

About the Governing Council of NITI Aayog

The Governing Council of NITI Aayog comprises the Prime Minister of India, Chief Ministers of all the States and Union Territories with Legislatures and Lt. Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and four Union Ministers as ex-officio members and three Union Ministers as Special Invitees. It is the premier body tasked with evolving a shared vision of national development priorities, sectors and strategies with the active involvement of States in shaping the development narrative.

The First Meeting was held on February 8, 2015, at which the Prime Minister laid down the key mandates of NITI Aayog such as fostering cooperative federalism and addressing national issues through active participation of the States. The Second Meeting of the Governing Council took place on July 15, 2015 and the Third Meeting was held on April 23, 2017, which laid down milestones in shaping the country's development agenda through strategy and vision documents.

The NITI Aayog has been mandated with fostering cooperative federalism through structured support initiatives and mechanisms with the States on a continuous basis, recognizing that strong States make a strong nation. It seeks to design and assist the implementation of strategic, long-term policy frameworks and programme initiatives, and also monitor their progress and efficacy.

The Governing Council, which embodies these objectives of cooperative federalism, presents a platform to discuss inter-sectoral, inter-departmental and federal issues in order to accelerate the implementation of the national development agenda, in the spirit of *Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat*.

Team ICSI

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