



सत्यमेव जयते

VISION DOCUMENT

VISION ASSAM : 2030

EVERYTHING FOR EVERYONE - ACHIEVING INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

February 29, 2016



**As the journey of SDG begins
highest inspiration comes from:**

“My dream is to empower everyone in Assam to realize everything as development partners for sustained and inclusive growth. The State Government is committed to achieve the SDGs by involving all stakeholders within and outside the government.”

---Shri Tarun Gogoi, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Assam

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

THE EARTH INSTITUTE

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Director
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Sri Tarun Gogoi
Hon. Chief Minister of Assam
Guwahati, Assam

January 5, 2016

Dear Sri. Gogoi,

I hope this letter finds you well. I wish you a very Happy and Healthy New Year for you and your family, and a year of great progress and achievement for Assam. I was alarmed today to learn of the earthquake centered in Manipur, but also affecting Assam, and I wish you all the best on this most recent event.


I am especially grateful to learn of your bold leadership in adopting the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 for the sustainable development of Assam. Sustainable development is an idea with universal applicability and appeal. In all societies, the combination of economic development, social inclusion and environmental sustainability is worth striving for. The balance amongst the three and the urgency of actions required, of course depends on local conditions and context. The new Sustainable Development Goals can help each country and state to pursue sustainable development in a measurable and context-specific framework.

It is truly special that Assam has become the first Indian state to formally adopt the SDGs for its development path. Feasible pathways to long-term sustainable development are complex and subject to technological uncertainty. Sound policy-making requires long-term planning that integrates strategies across many challenges, including food and nutritional security, social service delivery, energy policy, water resource management, urbanization, infrastructure, human rights, biodiversity, adaption to climate change, mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, sustainable business practices, and more.

Delivering sustainable development for the prosperity of people of Assam will require government agencies to work closely with private sector, civil society institutions and the knowledge community, including the universities. My colleagues and I are deeply committed to help you succeed in this important endeavor. May I kindly request that your senior officials engage with Dr. Shiv Someshwar, my colleague, in moving our important partnership forward? Dr. Someshwar will work closely with me on this matter.

I am looking forward to visiting Guwahati sometime soon, I hope in 2016, and look forward to seeing firsthand the exciting actions being undertaken to advance sustainable development in Assam under your able leadership.

With warm regards and all best wishes,



Jeffrey D. Sachs

cc. Dr. Shiv Someshwar

VISION DOCUMENT 2016

Vision Assam 2030

**EVERYTHING FOR EVERYONE -
ACHIEVING INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**

Preamble

The Government of Assam, in recognition of the unanimous adoption by all countries of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the United Nations General Assembly on September 25, 2015, and acknowledging their relevance and critical importance for the greater interest and well-being of the people of the state, has decided to launch an initiative entitled "Assam 2030 in the light of SDGs" from January 1, 2016 for implementing the SDGs in the state.

'VISION ASSAM 2030--EVERYTHING FOR EVERYONE - ACHIEVING INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT is the first outcome document produced under the initiative. It outlines the ambitions of the Government of Assam for a brighter future for the people of the state through the realisation of the SDGs. It also presents the overall perspective and broad approaches within which the vision is to be pursued.

The Vision Statement

Vision Assam 2030 envisions a transformed future for the people of Assam free from all forms of deprivation, inequities and insecurity to be achieved within the next fifteen years.

It envisages an Assam where there is no poverty and hunger; where basic education is accessible to all children; where girls and women have equal opportunities as others; where all citizens have access to affordable health care. It also envisions an Assam where every citizen is skilled; and gainfully employed and contributes to his or her own well being and to the well being of the State.

It sees an Assam that is just, safe and peaceful for all citizens, including the persons with disabilities, to live according to their abilities and desires, and to exercise their choices with full dignity and freedom.

It sees Assam as a State able to manage and maintain its natural resources well; effectively protect its environment; and fully preserve its unique bio-diversity. It anticipates an Assam where citizens are protected from floods and other natural disasters. In this vision people have clean air to breathe; pure water to drink and live in affordable shelter in clean and hygienic environments.

Sustainable Development Goals and Targets in Assam

SDG 1: End poverty in all forms everywhere

The first SDG identifies eradicating poverty in all forms and dimensions as one of the most critical challenges in the next fifteen years. Specifically, the Goal targets eliminating various forms of extreme poverty along with reducing the proportion of the poor, measured by the national and international norms, at least by half of the present level.

Ending extreme poverty was also the first of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that steered the development focus, priorities and policies globally during the period 2000-2015. The MDGs targeted that the proportion of the people living below the designated poverty line in various countries would be halved compared to that of 1990 during the period.

Given the trend of decline in poverty, Assam is set to achieve this extremely significant goal. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India estimates the poverty ratio in Assam at 27.3 percent in 2015 against the target of 29 percent. Even though the rates of decline tend to vary, the decline in the poverty ratio is noticed everywhere in the state viz. across regions, rural-urban, socio-religious groups and occupation categories. This underlines the overall inclusiveness

of the processes of poverty reduction in the state.

While the spurt in economic growth in the state facilitated poverty reduction in general, specific, directed policies and programmes initiated by the Government of Assam have also made a distinct contribution in reducing poverty and improving the lives of people. The Government initiated a wide range of policies for providing Food, Shelter, Health Services, Education and Employment to the poor and marginalised sections of society. A few examples of these are: Houses under IAY (Indira Awas Yojana) provided to the BPL families; CI sheets and cash grants given to families rendered homeless by flood and natural calamities; Interest free loans to farmers; Debt relief to farmers; Financial assistance by way of schemes like Kalpataru, Jeevan Jyoti Swaniyojan Yojana, Karmajyoti Self employment under PMEGP and the family oriented income-generating schemes for the youth of Tea tribes, SC/ST/OBC and minorities communities; the implementation of the MGNREGA, where job cards to 28.82 families have been given, the establishment of skill development centres and so on.

Building on the significant success in poverty reduction during the last fifteen years, the Government of Assam now would target complete eradication of poverty in the state in the coming fifteen years.

The Government of Assam, in light of the SDGs, therefore, adopts the target of ending poverty in all forms in the state by 2030.

SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

A hunger free, food secured society is a foundational requirement for achieving sustainable

development, and the goal of ending hunger is intimately linked to the reduction in the poverty. Deprivation in food and nutrition necessary for human survival is the most fundamental form of deprivation, which directly goes against the principle of sustainable development. The SDGs therefore target ending hunger as well as all forms of malnutrition particularly among children in their early ages and ensuring access to sufficient food through enhancing agricultural productivity.

The Government, through the Public Distribution system, MMASY (Mukhyamantri Anna Suraksha Yojana) and Aamar Dukaan, has worked towards ensuring food security. Recently, the Government has launched the NFSM (National Food Security Mission) towards achieving this Goal.

The agriculture sector in Assam has shown strong signs of recovery during the last decade. The growth rate of agriculture in the state which was mere 1.9 percent in the year 2005 has risen to 4.5 percent in 2013-14 whereas for the country as a whole it has declined from 5.6 percent to 4.9 percent during the same period. The trend of food grain production in Assam has also been on the increase. During the last half decade (2007-08 to 2013-14), the state registered an increase of 11 percent in total food grain production. Besides this, the average yield rate in the state too has shown an increase of 15 percent during 2007-08 to 2013-14, which is higher than the 9 percent rate of increase in yield in the country.

Improvement in agriculture has been one of the top priorities of the Government of Assam during the last fifteen years. The Government has undertaken several steps for development of the agriculture which has contributed positively to the overall improvement of the sector. The Government laid increased emphasis on increasing the total area under production, double-cropping, as well as on

improved productivity through farm mechanisation and adoption of best practises. The area under assured irrigation facilities has been enhanced and steps are being taken to improve availability of water for irrigation during the lean seasons. Availability of farm power has improved from 0.61 HP per hectare in 2001-12 to 1.25 HP per hectare in 2014-15. The Government has worked towards enhancing meat, milk, fish, pulses, oilseeds, and vegetables production to bring variety in the essential food basket. A wide range of programmes like RKVY, credit facility through the KCC, supply of tractors/power tillers/farm machinery at subsidised rates etc have helped in creating a marginal surplus in rice production as well as improved production of other food items.

Given the trend of recovery in agriculture, the Government of Assam now intends to accelerate growth in agriculture by addressing some of the most important challenges. Assam has the food availability of about 430 grams per person per day today which is about 80 grams less than what is available in the country as a whole. The cropping intensity in the state is 149, which simply suggests that most of the land in the state is cultivated only once a year. Removing hunger and ensuring food security in the future thus requires increasing the cropping intensity and enhancing productivity in agriculture.

The nutritional scenario particularly among the children has been a major concern for many years now. The first National Family Health Survey conducted way back in 1992-93 estimated that 44 percent of the state's children within the age of 3 are underweight. Subsequent rounds of the Survey put the figures at 35 and 36 percent in 1995-96 and 2005-06. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India has estimated the proportion of underweight children under the age of 3 for Assam at 29.5 percent, which remains

above the MDG target of 24.6 percent.

Eliminating malnutrition among children is vital for sustainable development since the children hold the future. The Government of Assam is committed to the complete elimination of malnutrition among the children of Assam. During the last fifteen years, several efforts have been made to address the problem of malnutrition in the state. The Government through the ICDS centres (Anganwadis) has targeted pregnant women, lactating mothers, children up to 6 years of age and also adolescent girls by a range of schemes to eliminate malnutrition. Apart from the Supplementary nutrition programmes, early education and immunisation is being provided in the Anganwadis. The government is encouraging setting up of 'Matri Guts' and 'Matri Mandals' in the Anganwadis to associate the community with the programmes, for better implementation. Pilot projects in Tea garden areas and among marginalised sections have been taken up to improve haemoglobin as well as nutrition levels. The Government has also recently launched a Child Nutrition Mission which is going to facilitate attainment of this vital Goal.

Building further on all these efforts, the Government of Assam envisions complete elimination of malnutrition among children in the next fifteen years.

The Government, in conformity with the SDGs, will aim at the complete elimination of hunger and malnutrition in the state. It will target doubling both agricultural productivity and the cropping intensity by emphasising sustainable agriculture. . The Government would continue encouraging climate resilient and organic agriculture and manage natural disasters in a better way, as these too, are a major cause of poverty.

SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages

This Goal recognises that preventing all premature deaths, particularly among the children, is essential for ensuring healthy lives and promoting overall wellbeing of people. It, therefore, targets at reducing the child and maternal mortality to a minimum by 2030 along with the associated targets of reducing other undesirable deaths arising out of preventable diseases, injuries, accidents and behavioural practices.

The child and maternal mortality scenario continues to be worrisome in the state. Today in Assam, 54 out of every 1000 children die before celebrating their first birth day. The number is quite high compared to the national level of 40. Further, 73 out of every 1000 children in the state die before completing 5 years, whereas the number is 49 for the country as whole.

Assam, however, has come a long way in reducing untimely deaths among the children in the state. In 2001, the number of children dying before the age of one was as high as 74. The number of children dying within a month of their birth in the state though slightly lower than the overall level in the country, viz. 27 in the state against 28 in the country, shows that this is a very difficult situation to make effective policy interventions, since most of the post-natal care ends after the first month of the baby's birth. Nevertheless, the Government of Assam is putting in much effort to lower the number of deaths among children in the state. The biggest challenge in this goal is access to decent medical care and availability of infrastructure both in terms of physical infrastructure and manpower.

The Government has taken up the challenge of improving health facilities as a result of which, the number of health institutions has risen between

2001 to 2015. For e.g., the number of Public Health Centres (PHCs) were 610 in 2001 and it rose to 1040 in 2015; the number of Community Health Centres (CHCs) increased from 100 to 151 and the number of Medical colleges from 3 to 6. Boat clinics have been introduced in the Char Area and support provided to improve facilities at Tea Garden Hospitals.

The efforts of the Government have started yielding results. The two rounds of the Annual Health Survey conducted by the Registrar General of India in 2010-11 and 2012-13 showed positive trends. The number of babies born in hospitals and health centres has increased as have the number of children receiving a full course of immunisation against preventable diseases, which has risen significantly.

For ensuring a better future all premature deaths among children must be eliminated and the Government, therefore, intends to strengthen, scale up and accelerate interventions towards this end in the next fifteen years.

The situation of maternal mortality is also worrisome. Not less than 300 mothers die while giving birth in every 100000 live births. The figure in the country is just about half i.e. 167. However, the situation was even worse in 2001-03 when 490 mothers were dying while giving birth. Taking care of mothers along with their children has remained a priority during the last fifteen years for the Government of Assam. This is reflected in numerous schemes and programmes that the Government has innovatively undertaken, along with the implementation of the national flagship schemes and programmes. Schemes like Janani Suraksha Yojana, Mamoni, Majoni, Morom, etc., have been taken up by the Government to improve the health situation in the State.

Besides targeting child and maternal mortality, improving health and wellbeing among the people in general necessitates reducing the incidence

of illnesses, especially chronic ones, as well as improving access to quality healthcare facilities. During the last fifteen years, health care facilities have been improved considerably in the state. The Government has been making efforts to provide adequate services and support people with disabilities. Apart from provision for aids and appliances, support services in terms of medical aid have also been developed.

All this notwithstanding, the Government recognises that healthcare facilities in the state remain inadequate and much more needs to be done. In Assam today, one hospital bed serves about 3000 population while one healthcare provider is available for a population of 1500. Ensuring health and wellbeing for all requires that facilities are enhanced, made affordable and quality improved. The Government will work towards making the National Health Mission a multi-sectoral programme by enlarging its scope and making it more focused on ensuring a healthy life and well-being.

Considering all these aspects, the Government of Assam, aims that by 2030, the state will significantly reduce all child deaths, and deaths among mothers while giving births to the global minimum; achieve full immunisation for all children; ensure universal safe delivery for all mothers; reduce the prevalence of chronic illness among all section of people to at least to half of the present level; and augment healthcare facilities and physical and human infrastructure to the extent facilitating and ensuring universal access.

SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Education is the key to human progress and

prosperity. This Goal identifies the instrumental significance of universal literacy and access to equitable and quality education in ushering sustainable development. The Goal, therefore, aims at ensuring that all boys and girls have full access and benefit from equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. It also targets at substantially increasing the number of youths and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

Assam has made significant strides forward in the front of education. The 2011 Census puts the rate of literacy in the state at 73 percent which is at par with the national level, marking a 10 percent improvement over 2001. Besides, significant progress has been made in school education during the last fifteen years, especially in the areas of enrolment and retention of students in schools. According to DISE (District Information on School Education) data, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Assam in 2013-14 at the primary level (class I-V) stands at 113.4 and that at the level of upper primary (class VI-VIII) at 93.1. The DISE data reveals that during the last decade or so the GER in the state – both at the primary and the upper primary levels – have improved markedly. In 2005-06 the GER at the primary level was 96.7 and that at the upper primary level was only 37.73. The major success has thus been at the upper primary level, in terms of gross enrolment.

The DISE data further reveals that this improvement in enrolment has resulted from a rise in the transition rate from primary to upper primary together with a fall in the dropout rates. In 2005-06, the transition rate from primary to upper primary was 86 percent which has increased to 93 percent in 2013-14. At the same time, the dropout rate at the primary level has come down from 11.2 in 2005-06 to 6.24 in 2013-14.

The overall progress in improving the school enrolment, retention and transition can be attributed to some of the major schemes and programmes launched by the Government. Govt of India funded programmes like the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan and subsequently the Right to Education Act 2005 have worked towards ensuring every child was under pressure to attend school. The Government of Assam has made this possible by making access easy, by providing new schools within 1 km radius for primary section and within 3 km radius for upper primary section and by providing for additional classrooms based on enrolment. The Government has constructed separate toilets for girls and boys in schools, has improved the availability of teachers, provided financial grants to schools etc. Additionally, scholarships have been provided to meritorious students of the BPL/SC/ST/Minority communities; efforts have been made to promote academic activities in colleges and universities; polytechnics and ITIs have been strengthened, the seat capacity of higher institutions have been enhanced etc. There has been special care taken for Children with Special Needs by mapping such children, providing aids and appliances and providing home based education where necessary.

Despite the success in enrolment at the elementary level, the enrolment at the secondary and subsequent levels in the state is still far from satisfactory. Data reveals that only about 50 percent of the students continue their schooling beyond the elementary level. The real benefits of schooling emanate from staying longer in schools. It is, therefore, essential that all boys and girls complete schooling at least up to secondary level. Moreover, at the stage of enrolment in tertiary levels there is need to offer many more vocational and skill based courses, as these are vitally important for improving employment prospects and quality of life.

The Government of Assam, accordingly, in pursuance of the SDGs, aims at ensuring all boys and girls in the State have full access to equitable and quality education up to the secondary level; the Government aims at a hundred percent literacy amongst youths (15-24 years); and ensuring enrolment in technical, vocational and skill-based education during the period 2015-2030.

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Achieving gender equality is the hallmark of any inclusive society. Sustainable development cannot be achieved when around half the population is denied the opportunities of freedom, choice and development. The SDGs acknowledge the significance of gender equality in attaining sustainable development and aim at ending all forms of discrimination among women and girls everywhere. Besides, it targets ending all forms of violence against women and girls in every sphere and ensuring full and effective participation and equal opportunities for women for exhibiting leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

Achieving gender equality in education was one of the goals of the MDGs. The State of Assam could achieve this very important goal during 2000-2015. The Gender Parity Index- the ratio of girls' to boys' enrolment- is favourable towards girls at all levels of education, viz., primary, secondary and higher secondary in the state. Most importantly, this is so for the Scheduled Castes as well as among the Scheduled Tribes as well. Achieving gender equality in education at all levels and among all sections of the population is a good achievement.

The 2011 Census shows that female literacy rates

in the state – total, rural as well as urban – are better than the national average. Besides, the gap between male and female literacy in the state has been lower than the national average (i.e. 11.5 in the state against 16.2 in the country). Further, the male-female gap in literacy has reduced by one third during 2001-2011. More importantly, the reduction in male-female gap in literacy has been noticed across all districts and sectors viz. rural and urban.

The Government of Assam recognises the criticality of gender equality and empowerment of women. This is evident from the release of the Chief Minister's Vision for Women and Children in Assam which was announced in 2012. The Vision identified 16 specific goals which are to be achieved in the state by 2016. The goals include reduction in IMR, MMR and Total Fertility Rate, improving the child sex ratio, reduction in the prevalence of anaemia among children and women, reducing malnutrition in children, reducing early marriage among girls, increasing enrolment and reducing school dropouts among girls, a 33 percent reservation for women in all skill development programmes, establishment of women cells in police stations, zero tolerance to child trafficking and witch hunting, promotion of self help groups for empowering women, improvement of water and sanitation in general and reducing the rate of stamp duty for women.

Besides this, the Government has launched numerous schemes, programmes and policies and has made some significant enactments aiming at equality and empowerment of women. Some of these schemes include 'Baidau', 'Nabau', Scholarship programmes, 33% reservation in Government jobs and 50% reservation in local bodies etc

While gender equality has been achieved to some extent in the field of education, much remains to be accomplished in employment. The female

work participation rate in the state is less than half that of the male, whereas the unemployment rate among females is about double the rate of males. It is therefore essential to ensure economic participation of women in the state through better creation of employment avenues for them and by empowering them to take the advantage of such opportunities. The SHG programme has been able to improve the participation of women in self-employment activities, mainly in weaving sector. This would continue to be a focus area apart from improving skills through the Skill Development Mission and more such programmes.

The Government of Assam in pursuance of the SDGs envisages removing all barriers related to economic participation of women in the state; to eliminate the gender differences in work participation; to enhance the scope and avenues of employment for women and to reduce the excess female unemployment rate by 2030. Further, it aims at halting all forms of violence and crimes against women in the next fifteen years.

SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Access to clean and safe water and access to adequate sanitation is crucial in achievement of all SDGs as these are not only necessary by themselves but carry enormous instrumental significances impacting critical health outcomes. Easy access to water and sanitation also has tremendous gender implications. This Goal aims at achieving universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water and to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and to end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations by 2030.

The Government of Assam is committed to provide clean and safe drinking water and sanitation to all. Much effort has been made during the last fifteen years towards this end. Steps have been taken to encourage more piped water schemes and develop spot sources to improve access to safe drinking water. Similarly, all schools have been provided with separate toilets for girls and boys.

Notwithstanding these positive developments, universal access to clean and safe water and sanitation is still a major challenge for the state as in the rest of India. As per the 2011 Census only 62 percent of the households have easy access to safe drinking water while only 39 percent have access to proper sanitation.

The Government is committed to bridging this gap and has been taking up town water schemes in major urban centres and ensuring modern sanitation practises amongst communities. The MANASA launched recently aims at promoting a sustainable, green, clean and open-defecation free state.

The Government of Assam in accordance with the SDGs aims at ensuring universal and equitable access to clean and safe water and adequate sanitation facilities in all households and habitations by 2030.

SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

It is well known that energy turns the wheels of development. An accelerated pace of economic growth generates greater demand for energy. The choice of energy usage, however, has severe implications on climate change globally. The dependency on coal, gas and diesel based

sources of power increases the potential emission of green house gases that contribute to global warming and climate change. This Goal recognises the significance of energy choice in promoting sustainable development and, therefore, target at ensuring affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all by 2030.

As the economy of the state grows, energy demand too is on a constant rise. Today, the state has an energy requirement of about 7500 million units (MU) compared to 3400 million units in 2001. During the period 2001 to 2014, the energy requirement in the state more than doubled. The peak demand, accordingly, has increased from 578 megawatt in 2001 to 1362 megawatt in 2014.

The Government of Assam recognises that provisioning of affordable, modern power is a priority area, which needs to be fully met in next fifteen years. Less than half the households have access to electricity and it is required that all households are covered by 2030. The Government has already initiated steps towards this end. The Karbi-Langpi Hydroelectric project and Lakwa Waste Heat Recovery projects have been commissioned. In addition, the Lakwa Replacement Project, Namrup Replacement Project and Bongaigaon Thermal Power Project are under various stages of construction. The total carrying capacity under the transmission sector has been increased from 530 MW to 1700 MW. Further, under various Rural Electrification projects including the Chief Ministers Power Supply Mission efforts have been made to improve transformer capacity and last mile connectivity to households.

Given these efforts, the proportion of households with access to electricity has increased from 25 percent to 37 percent during 2001-2011. The proportion has increased from 16 to 28 percent in rural areas. The percentage of villages electrified

has also increased from 77 percent to 89 percent during the same period. More importantly, the Government of Assam is making efforts to increase the energy efficiency in the state. These are evident from the successes in reducing the transmission and distribution losses as well as increasing operational efficiency including collection efficiency. Many Demand Side Management measures have been initiated. During 2011-2014 transmission and distribution loss has been reduced by 4 percentage points. In the face of ever increasing demand for energy, increasing energy efficiency certainly contributes towards sustainability.

The present installed capacity in the state under its own control stands at 377 megawatt which includes 217 megawatt of gas, 100 megawatt of small hydro and 60 megawatt of coal based power. As per the assessment of the Government of India, the state has the potential to produce about 571 mega watt of energy from renewable sources, which include 239 megawatt from small hydro power projects and 212 megawatt from biogas plants. Assam is utilising only 6 percent of the total potential renewable energy estimated. Sustainable development demands that the state's increasing energy requirement is met by fully utilising the renewable energy potential. The Government is committed to explore and enhance its renewable energy potential in the next 15 years.

The Government of Assam, in accordance with the SDGs, envisions utilising the full energy potential in the state, prioritising renewable sources and making the state fully meet future energy needs; working to increase energy efficiency to the maximum; and ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all households and habitations by 2030.

SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Inclusive growth and gainful employment are not only related to one another but also intricately linked to sustainable development. Economic growth, however substantial and fast paced, cannot contribute to sustainable development if it does not help in reducing poverty and generate sufficient employment. This Goal, therefore, identifies promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all to be achieved by 2030.

The growth rate of the State's economy is showing a turnaround in the recent period. Since 2009-10, the rate of growth of the State has been above the rate of growth of the country. Notably, comparing 2004 with 2014, the growth rate of the State has increased from 3.74 to 5.87 percent whereas that of the country has declined from 8.52 to 4.74 percent. It has been observed that the recovery in agricultural growth and the pronounced improvement in industrial growth together, with steady service sector growth, have contributed to this turn-around. Along with the increase in the agricultural growth rate from 1.9 to 4.5 percent during 2005-2014, the industrial growth rate in the state has also improved from negative 3.53 percent in 2005 to 4.28 percent in 2013-14, while the same for the country has fallen from 9.40 to 0.35 percent during the period. The growth rate of the services sector in the state however is 7 percent in 2013-14, compared to 7.9 percent in 2005. The growth rate of services in the country as a whole was 6.8 percent in 2013-14 against 10.9 percent in 2004-05.

The state has witnessed significant progress in the poverty reduction leading to fulfilling the MDG target. Based on the data collected by National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), it is further obtained that the growth elasticity in poverty reduction i.e. the reduction in poverty for each 1 percent increase in growth rate – has increased from about 1.5 percent in 1993-94 to about 2 percent in 2004-05, and then to about 3 percent in 2011-12.

Notwithstanding all the above achievements, the per capita net domestic product – an important macroeconomic indicator – at constant (2004-05) prices is still 40 percent lower than the national level. Further, the gap in the per capita is widening despite the higher rate of growth in per capita net domestic product in the state compared to national level in the last two years i.e. 2012-13 and 2013-14. It is therefore necessary to have a substantially higher growth in per capita in the next 15 year term to bridge the gap between the state and national level.

Employment remains to be a major concern in the state and is generally stated to be one of the main factors behind the recurrent insurgency issues. The Government of Assam has recognised the severity of the unemployment problem and has been making many attempts to provide gainful employment opportunities in the state. The major employer is the agriculture and the allied sector and several steps have been taken for improving farming and allied activities. Efforts now have been to improve the skills of the large educated youth population to prepare them for absorption into the service and industrial sector.

Despite these efforts, the unemployment remains as a challenge just as at the national level. At present, the overall unemployment rate in the state has been estimated to be around 7 percent. Unemployment rates among youth and women have been found to be particularly high in the state. The Government of Assam is fully aware of the criticality of adequate and gainful employment in

making growth more inclusive. The Government, through the Skill Development Mission and through direct interventions in other sectors, would work towards creating a class of Farming-entrepreneurs in Agriculture to do commercial farming in a modern and organic way. The Government would also promote Smart Villages in order to ensure gainful employment to its population in the rural area. Industry and Services Sectors would be encouraged by the planned promotion of the 'Ease of Doing Business' and single window systems wherever possible. The Government would also directly focus on sectors where women, marginalised communities and people with disabilities can be gainfully employed. Tourism in the State would also be developed in a sustainable manner as the state has tremendous potential in the sector.

The Government of Assam, in accordance with the SDGs, envisions bridging the gap in per capita income between the state and the country by accelerating the pace of growth in the state's economy; and eliminating unemployment among all sections, particularly among youth, women, marginalised communities and people with disabilities, by ensuring full and productive employment and decent work for all by 2030.

SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation

Growth and development are premised on the nature and quality of infrastructure. Basic infrastructure includes transport connectivity, communication, energy, irrigation and a wide range of social services including education, healthcare, sanitation, drinking water, credit and finance facilitating the

processes of development. Resilient infrastructure acts as a system, which anticipates changes and potential problems, adapts itself and survives all disruptions. Similarly, sustainable industrialisation is about striking a balance between resource use and manufacturing. Inclusive and sustainable industrial development is the primary source of income generation, allows rapid and sustained increases in living standards for all people, and provides the basis for adapting technological solutions to deal with environmentally acceptable industrialisation. Technological progress is at the foundation of efforts to achieve environmental objectives, such as increased resource and energy-efficiency. Without technology and innovation sustainable industrialisation suffers and without industrialisation development lags behind. This Goal acknowledges these deep inter-linkages and focuses on building resilient and barrier-free infrastructure for promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and fostering innovation in the next fifteen years.

For Assam, transport connectivity—road, rail, water and air—is one of the most critical infrastructure components. Improving transport connectivity, indeed, requires treating it as a system where effective inter-linkages are established between all modes of transport and all their components. Only then barrier-free mobility of goods and inputs can be ensured, production centres can be linked with markets and access can be provided to basic facilities like schools and healthcare centres.

Improving transport connectivity has been a priority for the Government of Assam during the last fifteen years. The Government has taken specific steps to improve the road connectivity in the state, particularly in rural and difficult to reach areas. Schemes like MMPDNA (Mukhya Mantrik Paki Dalang Nirmal Achan), RIDF, PMGSY, and the schemes to improve National and State Highways have contributed significantly towards the same.

The total road length in the state has increased to 55,784 km from 3700 km in 2001. Black-topped

road length has increased fourfold from about 4000 km in 2001 to about 25900 km in 2015. This has resulted in improvement in road length per lakh population to 146 km in 2014 compared to 131 km in 2004. However, about 23 percent of habitations in the state are still to be covered by all weather road connectivity. The Government has stressed providing all-weather road connectivity to all habitations and schools.

The economy of Assam is primarily agrarian. Assam has tremendous potential in rural industries, particularly in small and medium scale agro-processing industries, sericulture, horticulture, floriculture and handlooms and textiles. These are also many labour intensive industries with potential for generating gainful employment opportunities. The Government of Assam recognises the potential of these sectors and has undertaken several steps to usher in a process of industrialisation in the state led by these sectors. The Government is also laying emphasis on Agro and Food processing industries alongside encouraging Milk and fish production and weaving and sericulture in the State. All these steps of the Government have resulted in increased value addition in these sectors in the recent past. The Government of Assam envisages fully utilising the potential of the small, tiny and medium industry which is agriculture and allied sector based, in facilitating sustainable industrialisation in the state in the coming fifteen years.

The Government of Assam in accordance with the SDG targets will seek to ensure all weather connectivity to all habitations and to increase the share of manufacturing in the gross state domestic product by a threefold of the present level through promotion of sustainable industrialisation in the state by 2030. It will also seek to encourage development of the tiny, small and medium industry based on agriculture and allied sector activities

SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and across countries

Inequality distorts all development benefits. There are many facets of inequality. Not only is inequality found in relation to income, but a wide range of inequalities prevail in the society in relation to access to productive resources, opportunities for participation in social and economic activities, living standards, access to basic and social amenities and services. Reducing these inequalities is an extremely important goal for sustainable development. This Goal therefore, identifies reducing inequality both within and across countries as one of the goals to be achieved by 2030.

Assam is a state where land, particularly agricultural land, is the most important productive asset for a majority of rural people. Ensuring access to land for cultivation is thus fundamental in reducing inequality within the state. The Government of Assam reaffirms its prior, ongoing commitment to protect the rights and interests of cultivators and tenants and will continue with these commitments in the coming years too.

Reducing inequality also demands that the marginalised and the vulnerable sections of the society are given special considerations. The Government of Assam, during the last fifteen years has been undertaking many programmes aimed at the all-round development of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, tea garden population, religious minorities and other disadvantaged groups and those living in difficult areas and conditions.

The Government firmly believes that all these programmes have positively contributed in reduction of inequalities in many dimensions. It therefore will continue with these programmes along with new ones designed to achieve larger objective of social and distributive justice and reducing disparities.

The Government of Assam, in accordance with SDG targets, envisions reduction of inequality in all possible dimensions in the state by 2030, including, among others, better access to cultivable land and equality of opportunity for all sections of the society, especially the disadvantaged, vulnerable and those living in difficult areas and conditions.

SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Increasing urbanisation is changing human settlement patterns. Nearly half of the world's population lives in cities today. It has been estimated that, by 2030, almost 60 per cent of the world's population will live in urban areas. Most significantly, 95 per cent of urban expansion in the next few decades will take place in the developing world. While the cities are becoming global hubs of production and economic activities, the number of people living in slums or slum-like areas in cities continues to increase. Growing trend of urbanisation has serious implications on sustainable development. Besides, rapid urbanization is exerting pressure on fresh water supplies, sewage, the living environment, and public health. Against this backdrop, this Goal aims at making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Assam, on the contrary, has witnessed a relatively low degree of urbanisation. According to the 2011 Census, only 14 per cent of total population in the state lives in urban areas compared to 31 per cent in the country. In 2001, the proportion of urban population in the state was 12.7 per cent. Census data reveals that during the decade 2001-2011, the urban population in the state grew by 28 per cent while the number of designated urban areas in the state increased from 125 to 214.

Even though the degree of urbanisation in the state is relatively low in the state, demand for services and amenities have increased in recent years. Guwahati, which is the gateway to the North Eastern states, has seen a massive expansion during the last fifteen years. The Government of Assam is concerned with the emerging needs of urban dwellers. Several programmes have been undertaken in the last few years to cater to the needs of urban areas. Further, the Government aims at providing urban facilities in rural areas and encourage growth of Smart Villages and Small Towns.

These steps have resulted in significant improvements in urban living conditions; however, much remains to be done. The challenge of providing basic amenities to cities like Guwahati is similar to the challenges in all emerging cities of India. The problem of the cities of Assam is also related to effects of natural disasters, as erosion of cultivable land is promoting rural-urban migration. Urban areas in the state are yet to achieve complete provisioning of housing, drinking water, sanitation and electricity. 5.7 percent of urban households lack proper housing, 24.5 percent lack easy access to safe drinking water, 5 percent engage in open defecation and 16 percent lack electrification. About 2 lakh people lives in urban slums or slum like areas. Complete provisioning of urban amenities is critical for resilient urban cities.

Urban transportation and waste management are two other areas of great concern in the state. Affordable, reliable and efficient urban transport is an essential for safe, inclusive and sustainable urbanisation. Likewise, urban waste management is equally essential for resilient cities and urban areas. Guwahati generates about 204 tonnes of municipal solid waste (0.2 kg wastes per capita per day) out of which about one-fourth is recyclable as per a Government of India estimate. The total municipal solid waste generation in the state is 1146 metric tonnes per day. Resilient and sustainable urbanisation requires provisioning of efficient waste management.

Considering these aspects, the Government of Assam, in accordance with SDG targets, envisions to make all cities and urban centres in Assam inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable by ensuring hundred percent provisioning of basic urban services including housing, drinking water, sanitation and electricity; and by putting in place sustainable and efficient public transport and waste management systems by 2030.

SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

The process of sustainable development requires fundamental shifts in consumption and production patterns. This Goal mainly aims at ensuring sustainable consumption and production globally.

The essence of sustainable production and consumption lies in doing more and better with less. While on the one hand it necessitates minimising the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as increasing the resource and energy efficiencies in production, on the other it also stresses minimising waste and pollutants generated during consumption and promoting recycling and regeneration. It is, thus, about leaving the least ecological footprints while producing and consuming.

The Government of Assam acknowledges the significance of this SDG and in pursuance of the same envisages promoting sustainable consumption and production by emphasising on use of renewable resources and energy in production, adoption of organic farming and bio-fertilisers in agriculture, enhanced efficiency in resource and energy use, minimisation of waste generation in consumption and reducing the effect of ecological footprints.

SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact

Countries are experiencing adverse and drastic consequences of climate change. The consequences are manifested in the form of rising surface temperatures, decline in and erratic rainfall levels, change in seasonal cycles, loss of biodiversity reserves, depletion in the level of soil moisture, increasing occurrence of severe climatic events like floods, droughts, tsunamis, cyclones and earthquakes and a rising trend in vector borne diseases. Most importantly, climate change is a global phenomenon that does not limit itself to national borders. Emissions anywhere affect people everywhere. It is an issue that requires solutions that need to be coordinated at the international level and it requires international cooperation. This Goal aims at taking action to combat climate change and its impact.

The India Climate Statistics Report (2015) published by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), Government of India signals possible climate changes in the North Eastern region as a whole. The Report talks about a warming trend in the region with about 6 to 8 percent decline in rainfall during the last one hundred years.

The Government of Assam is concerned about climate change and its possible impact in the state. The Government, therefore, has drafted a State Action Plan on Climate Change (2015-2020) in September 2015. It identifies possible consequences of climate change in the state and also the major areas of vulnerabilities. The Plan also outlines a plan for adaptation and mitigation, which focuses on management of water resources, management of floods and erosion, managing agriculture and allied sectors, managing forests and biodiversity, managing resources and energy effectively and

efficiently. The Plan proposes to set up a separate State Climate Change Management Society to combat the consequences of climate change in the state.

The Government of Assam, in pursuance of the SDGs will take all necessary action to mitigate the effect of climate change and take necessary preventive steps following the principles outlined in the State Action Plan. This will include a campaign to inform the people of the State and to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to tackle climate change related issues and events in the state.

SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

This Goal recognises the significance of oceans, seas and marine resources and therefore, aims to sustainably use and conserve them for sustainable development. At first look it does not appear to be linked with the activities of a land locked state. However, it can be interpreted in the context of Assam for sustainable development of water resources and the fishery sector in the State.

The Brahmaputra and the Barak rivers are the two lifelines of the State. The Brahmaputra is the 6th largest river in the world. It is amongst the most flood prone rivers in the World with its 41 major and 121 minor tributaries making it also one of the world's most complex river systems. The other major river in the state, the Barak, originates from Japvo mountain of Manipur hills and flows through the plains of the Cachar district. The Government of Assam has always been concerned with the conservation and sustainable use of these two major rivers.

Besides the above, Assam has about 3500 freshwater natural wetlands covering an areas of about 1800 sq km, which are amongst the most precious resources of the state. Conservation of these resources is most crucial to protect the environment and maintain bio-diversity. The Government has enacted a significant piece of legislation towards this end. The Guwahati Water Bodies (Preservation, Conservation and Protection) Act, 2008 is aimed at conserving and protecting four wetlands within Guwahati viz. Deepor Beel, Saru Sola Beel, Bar Sola Beel and Silsako Beel. In 2010, the legislation was amended to add the Bondajan water body as a protected one. There is however need to effectively conserve water resources and protect all the Water Bodies of the State through appropriate legislation.

Conservation of the Brahmaputra and the Barak, along with all other rivers, water bodies and wetlands, is a priority for sustainable development in Assam. The Government of Assam, therefore, will plan the conservation and sustainable use of all rivers, water bodies and wetlands for development of the state through a separate and dedicated Missions and Societies set up for the purpose

SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of territorial eco-systems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Forests cover 30 per cent of the Earth's surface and in addition to providing food security and shelter, are key to combating climate change, protecting biodiversity besides being the homes of indigenous populations. Thirteen million hectares of forests are being lost every year globally while

the persistent degradation of land has led to the desertification of 3.6 billion hectares. Deforestation and desertification caused by human activities and climate change thus pose major challenges to sustainable development and have affected the lives and livelihoods of millions of people. This Goal targets protection, restoration and promotion of sustainable territorial eco-systems, proper forest management, combating desertification and halting and reversing land degradation and halting biodiversity loss.

Assam takes pride in the fact that the total forest cover in the State is just above 33 percent, which is the national goal. Forest cover in Assam extends over an area of 27,671 sq km. Together with a tree cover of 1582 sq. km outside the forests, the total green cover in the state stands at 37 percent of the total geographical area. It is estimated that 68 percent of the hill areas in the state are under forest cover.

The Government of Assam is making conscious efforts to conserve and maintain required forest cover. The state's forest cover has increased by 16.8 percent during 2000-2013. In a landlocked state with a huge pressure of population, this is significant achievement. The Government is committed to conserve its biodiversity and forest area and shall continue to work towards protecting its natural environment.

Assam is a biodiversity hotspot exhibiting rich floral and faunal diversity. Apart from an elaborate network of protected areas i.e., National Parks and Sanctuaries, the State also has two World Heritage Sites, two Biosphere Reserves and a thriving population of the Asiatic One-horned Rhino. Due to relentless efforts the wildlife population has exhibited positive growth.

Flood and erosion are, however, the two most serious challenges faced by the state. Floods are an annual

feature in the Brahmaputra-Barak basin where the maximum flood prone area is of the order of 4.33 million hectare. Floods affect a large segment of population in the state annually causing enormous loss of life, livelihood and property. It is estimated that, on the average, about 0.8 million hectares of land is annually affected by flood in the state.

Besides, a large number of towns and villages are affected by the erosive action of rivers. Over the years, changes in river course of the Brahmaputra have been frequent and continuous; resulting in a large amount of land loss due to riverbank erosion. The average annual loss of land is estimated at around 8,000 hectares.

The Government, in pursuance of SDG targets, envisions sustainable management of forests; combating desertification; halting and reversing land degradation and halting bio diversity loss by 2030 through better, efficient, and effective strategies for afforestation, flood and erosion management.

SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Peace, stability, social inclusion and effective governance based on the rule of law are important for sustainable development. Globally, it is noticed that some regions enjoy sustained levels of peace, security and prosperity while others fall into seemingly endless cycles of conflict and violence. High levels of armed violence and insecurity have a destructive impact on a country's development, affecting economic growth and often resulting

in long standing grievances among communities that can last for generations. Sexual violence, crime, exploitation and torture are also prevalent where there is conflict or no rule of law. This Goal aims to significantly reduce all forms of violence and to task governments and communities to find lasting solutions to conflict and insecurity. Strengthening democratic institutions, ensuring people's participation, establishing the rule of law, good governance and promoting human rights are the keys to this process.

It is evident that social inclusion through democratic institutions is the first pillar of this important SDG. Assam has a great amount of geographic, social and cultural diversity. These diversities provide the basis for equally diverse institutional arrangements in governance. The Government of Assam respects these diversities and believes that these institutional arrangements needs to be strengthened, democratised and made even more inclusive. While the Government of Assam during the last fifteen years has taken initiatives to hold regular Panchayat elections, it has also respected emerging political aspirations by setting up Autonomous Councils and Development Councils for specific communities allowing them to participate in the political and development processes. The Government feels that unless participation of women in these institutions is ensured, they cannot turn into fully inclusive and democratic institutions. The Government has made provisions for reservations for women in all tiers of institutions of local governance. This is a landmark provision for increasing political participation of women in the grassroots level institutions and deepening the level of democracy in the state.

The second pillar of the goal is the establishment of the rule of law for enduring peace and security. The rule of law and the process of development have significant interrelations and are mutually reinforcing, making it essential for sustainable

development. The State has come a long way from the troubled and insecure years of the 1990s. The Government of Assam during the last fifteen years has been successful in bringing back peace, stability and security to the state. The years of instability and insecurity have now largely ended.

The Government of Assam is also trying to decrease the crime rate in the state, particularly crimes against women through legislative and administrative measures. The Government has enacted a landmark legislation criminalising killing of women branded as 'witches'. Many administrative reforms have been initiated within the structure of the Assam Police to make the police more effective and efficient.

The Government of Assam, in pursuance of SDG targets, will strengthen democratic and inclusive institutions for transparent and accountable governance. It will aim at making society more peaceful and try to ensure a violence, conflict and crime free society for all.

SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development

The world today is more interconnected than ever before and the SDGs can only be realised with a strong commitment to partnership and cooperation. These partnerships include the partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society. These partnerships build upon universal principles and values, a shared common vision, and goals that place people and the planet at the centre. These partnerships are needed at all levels – global, regional, national and local. This Goal urges the revitalising of the global partnership for sustainable development.

The SDGs represent a set of overarching, aspirational, highly ambitious and demanding goals and targets, which would require enormous capacity and massive investments. Urgent action therefore is needed to mobilise, redirect and unlock massive amount of resources to deliver on the sustainable development objectives. Long-term, sustained and continuous investments are needed in critical sectors. These include sustainable energy, infrastructure and transport, as well as information and communications technologies. The public sector needs to set a clear direction. Review and monitoring frameworks, regulations and incentive structures that enable such investments must be retooled to attract investments and reinforce sustainable development. Besides, oversight mechanisms such as finance and audit institutions and oversight functions by legislatures needed be strengthened.

For a state like Assam, which is severely constrained in terms of resources and investments, increasing efficiency in managing public finances becomes very much essential. The Government of Assam, during the last fifteen years, has been trying to set and get the management of public finance right and efficient. All critical fiscal parameters of the state finances have improved considerably concomitant with an increasing trend in development and social sector expenditure in recent past.

The importance of information technology in the realising the SDGs is acknowledged and stressed in this goal. This is essential given the scope and scale of programmes, policies and targets, the agencies are expected to work together over the next fifteen years. Seamless flow of information within and across institutions is vital for kind of integration envisaged. It necessitates state of the art, advanced information technology platforms in transforming the architecture of governance for making it more open, efficient, transparent and accountable. The

Government of Assam is committed to realise such high end technology platforms in pursuing the SDGs.

The Government is also willing and keen to forge meaningful collaboration and partnerships. This is not only due to the specialised expertise across institutions and agencies but also due to the very nature of sustainable development, the indivisibility of the goals and externalities emanating out of globalising nature of societies and economies. Given the interdependencies and integration of the sustainable development goals, it is recognised that they would better be achieved working together in collaboration and partnerships.

It is further recognised that ecological boundaries, more often than not, overlap administrative boundaries and, hence, carry enormous externalities. Countries and states need to come together, collaborate and cooperate with each other in realising sustainable development goals. The Government of Assam recognises the value and critical significance of building meaningful and workable collaboration, networking and partnerships among neighbouring states as well as bordering countries. Such collaboration, networking and partnerships can be forged within the northeast and with the South and South East Asian Countries within the ambit of Look (Act) East Policy which is consistent with both the North Eastern Council's North East Vision 2020.

The Government of Assam, in accordance with the SDG targets, will aim at building capacities within the state at all levels; mobilising resources and expertise necessary to realise the goals set out in this Vision; and forging meaningful partnerships towards making this Vision a reality and thus transforming the future of Assam.

Perspective and Approach

Vision Assam 2030 incorporates three overarching and profoundly interconnected perspectives of sustainable development – achieving a faster growing economy that ushers in prosperity, making the processes of development socially inclusive and at the same time achieving these through environmentally responsible pathways. A defining characteristic of Vision Assam 2030 is that it will be realised through practices and methods that are deeply rooted to the principles of good governance.

Adhering to principles of good governance to achieve Vision Assam 2030 entails gearing all efforts to serving the people effectively; meeting their expectations and aspirations; strengthening and setting up innovative, effective and accountable institutions; building effective partnerships; collaborating and networking at diverse levels and more particularly with the private sector; and establishing robust, state-of-the-art information technology platforms.

These will be combined with making the Government more sensitive, aware and fully committed to achieving the goals and targets envisioned. The latter necessitates inculcating the ethos, principles and goals of sustainable development in formal functioning, planning and budgeting within the government.

Realising a Vision of this scale and ambition needs going beyond mere enunciation of a statement. Vision Assam 2030 recognises that transforming the future calls for innovative ideas and bold and creative steps and actions.

The Government of Assam is committed towards realising this Vision. The Government has decided

that the Planning and Development Department will act as the nodal department to ensure its fulfilment. An SDG Cell has already been established for this purpose. A Centre for SDGs has also been established in the Assam Administrative Staff College to support all departments in realising the Sustainable Development Goals.

All departments have been instructed to set up internal SDG Cells and will be asked to initiate the process of designing, planning, and implementing the policies and programmes in support of the goals outlined in the vision through declaring a Departmental SDG Charter.

The Government of Assam would also aim at broad basing implementation of SDGs by encouraging the preparation of a plan for implementing SDGs at the Gaon Panchayat and Municipal Board level. It will also encourage District Councils and Autonomous Councils to incorporate the Goals in their respective areas of operation.

The Government intends to initiate a process of wide ranging consultations which would remain a continuous process as the Vision and aspirations of the people cannot be static. The aspirations and needs of the people of Assam are dynamic and the Vision has to align to the changing aspirations of the people. The Government also recognises that this Vision to be a reality has to take every single citizen along as no Government can achieve this magnanimous task single-handedly. The Government in this task would be a facilitator and the People shall be the main stakeholders and drivers of this Vision.

The process has already begun with the first state-level "Partnership Workshop" held during February 10-11, 2016 where stakeholders including government departments, academic

institutions and civil society organisations, inter alia, deliberated on key issues in turning the Vision into an achievable reality. Consensus emerged during the deliberations regarding the requirement of preparing a detail, well-thought out Strategy Paper with clear road-map and way forward together with monitorable periodic milestones. Further, need for a new-age, futuristic and dynamic governance architecture in tune with the Strategy Paper has also been emphasised on. The futuristic governance architecture must be able to contemplate not only problems as well as the plausible solutions to them, which are presently non-existent but surely be forthcoming in near future. In this connection, criticality of forging meaningful partnership and engagement of all stakeholders has been stressed upon. It was acknowledged that besides institutional partnerships with the world's leader in SDGs such as Earth Institute, Columbia University, it is essential that SDGs in Assam are delivered through local partnerships involving diverse stakeholders – institutional as well as individuals. The SDGs are to be owned by the people of Assam and everyone needs to contribute in delivering the promise of "everything to everyone". The Strategy Paper, clearly, must ensure such ownership and engagement of people.

As a next step, wide publicity to the Draft Vision document was given for eliciting suggestions on the Document. The people have responded by way of mails, letters and feedback on the website. These suggestions would be duly incorporated in the Strategy paper on each of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Government would continue to have dialogues and forge partnerships by creating platforms and mechanisms which facilitate this continuous communication as it goes along towards implementation of SDGs.

Future Steps

This bold exercise needs detailed strategy and planning, along with commitment of resources. This Vision Assam 2030 document will therefore have to be followed by a comprehensive **Strategy Paper and Action Plan (SPAP)**. The seventeen SDGs have been clustered into eight broad areas each under the responsibility of a Working Group involving departments across the Government. These eight Working Groups will lead the preparation of the SPAP under the overall coordination of the Planning and Development Department. It is envisaged that the process of preparing the SPAP will be completed within six months after finalising this Vision document

The preparation of the SPAP is to be preceded and followed by intensive and extensive capacity building of the key stakeholders involved in the process. The Centre for SDGs in the Assam Administrative Staff College will be the lead agency in providing the capacity building needed.

As collaborations and partnerships are critical

in developing capacities, resource institutes, academic departments and other organisations will be engaged for providing research and analytical support. The Government intends to initiate a process of wide ranging consultations in the state involving different stakeholders and the public.

The Government of Assam is also committed to building an effective, dedicated and high-end IT platform under this initiative. Additionally, resources necessary for this major effort will also be made available adequately and timely. For this, there will be a well defined course of action with close monitoring and evaluation at every stage.

The Government would also prepare an effective strategy involving appropriate roles and coordination among the three pillars for attainment of the SDGs namely People, Partnerships and Projects.

The Government of Assam humbly requests all sections of society within the state and each and every citizen to support its endeavours and make Vision Assam 2030 a reality.

As the journey of SDG begins highest inspiration comes from:

"It is truly a milestone that Assam is first to produce the 1st SDG Vision document in the world. SDGs are really a bold idea for sustainable development and your grasp of the SDGs is a bold addition and it is an inspiration to all."

"Assam's approach to maintain balance on the three pillars of development viz. economic, social and environmental through adoption of SDGs in the state on mission mode will rejuvenate the whole world. I am sure that by turning this aspiration into a reality by 2030, Assam would become the world leader in sustainable development."

"I congratulate Assam for the Vision Assam 2030 document which has clearly brought out the targets with commitments towards achieving SDGs".

"I would like to thank Chief Minister, Assam and carry forward the entire matter to the knowledge of UN Secretary General for his appraisal."

---Prof. Jeffery D Sachs on February 10, 2016 (via Skype)

