



Speech

of

Dr. D. D. LAPANG

Chief Minister, Meghalaya

at the

55th Meeting

of the

North Eastern Council

at

Parliament House Annexe,
New Delhi

17th & 18th December, 2007

Hon'ble Union Minister, DONER & Chairman, N.E.C Shri Mani Shanker Aiyar-Ji, Distinguished Members of the North Eastern Council, Officials from the Government of India, N.E.C., State Governments and Friends.

I deem it a privilege to participate at this 55th Meeting of the North Eastern Council to deliberate on the theme - **“Eradication of Poverty in the NER”**. In the N.E. Region, the problem of poverty is peculiar since it exists in spite of the availability of bountiful natural resources which could be tapped, harnessed or utilized for improving the economic well being of the people.

2. Planning Commission has acknowledged that the North East has special problems and that the per capita income in N.E. which was above the national average in 1947 has fallen to almost 40 percent below national average today. **The main reason for economic backwardness has been lack of investment for Infrastructure and adequate investment in socio-economic aspects.** Among the States and U.Ts in the country, Meghalaya ranked **24th** in Human Development Index (**HDI**), **21st** in **Index of social and economic infrastructure**, **16th** in per capita consumption of electricity, **25th** in road density, **30th** in per capita utilisation of credit, **19th** in per capita income, **13th** in Infant Mortality Rate and **24th** in Literacy Rate. **This shows the task ahead for us to bridge the gaps in infrastructure and socio-economic indicators through proper investment, capable institutions and innovative programmes and policies.**

