

Hon'ble Members of the Legislative Assembly,

Vanakkam. It is indeed a great pleasure to address the first session of the year 2011 and fifteenth session of thirteenth Assembly of Tamil Nadu. I feel greatly honoured by this opportunity given by the people of Tamil Nadu to address this House for the ninth time.

2. Kalaingar remains the leader par excellence in preserving the Dravidian culture which is part of the genesis of the history of mankind. His untiring efforts in the development of Tamil Nadu and preservation of Tamil heritage and cultural identity ever since he took charge as the Chief Minister for the fifth time are laudable. Declaring 1st of Thai month as the Tamil New Year day is the most notable amongst all these efforts. While appreciating this Government for its gesture of enabling all sections of society to celebrate Tamil New Year on the day of Tamil festival of Pongal by distributing a pack containing rice, jaggery, cashew nuts, raisins and cardamom as Pongal Gift, I do extend my warm greetings to the affectionate people of Tamil Nadu on the occasion of Tamil New Year and Pongal.

3. With a view to protecting the antiquity and unique nature of Tamil language and enriching it in accordance with the changing times,

Chief Minister Kalaignar obtained the status of classical language for Tamil and conducted the First World Classical Tamil Conference from 23rd to 27th June last year at Coimbatore in a grand and befitting manner. This has been greatly appreciated not only by the Tamils spread across the world but also by other people. Subsequently, several steps have been taken by this Government to lay a strong foundation for the constructive growth of Tamil language, thereby, creating a permanent identity for the ancient Tamil heritage. According preference in government employment to those who have studied in Tamil medium, exploring

the links with Indus Valley Civilisation, under-sea explorations and archaeological research on submerged Kumari and Poompuhar, **World Classical Tamil Tholkappiar Forum** to be inaugurated in Madurai at a cost of ` 100 crores, opening of **Classical Tamil Park** on 24th November last year by the Chief Minister Kalaignar in Chennai, establishing **Paavendhar Classical Tamil Research Library** at Fort Saint George, Chennai and proposed **Genetic Heritage Gardens** at a cost of ` 32 crores to preserve the bio-diversity of the ancient Tamil lands, namely, Kurinji, Mullai, Marudham, Neidhal and Paalai are some such efforts. These are great efforts taken by this government to preserve Tamil cultural heritage on a permanent basis. Millennium year celebration of Big Temple

at Thanjavur built by Chola King Rajarajan held between 22nd and 26th September last year is yet another testimony to the enormous efforts taken by this Government to preserve the rich heritage of ancient art and culture of Tamils.

4. Subsequent to the announcement that all efforts would be taken for reconstituting the Legislative Council in the State, Tamil Nadu Legislative Council Act has been enacted by the Parliament in 2010. Pursuant to this, the Election Commission of India has initiated appropriate action for conducting elections to the Legislative Council.

5. Construction of the New Legislative Assembly, Legislative Council and Secretariat at a cost of ` 910 crores are in progress at Omathoorar Government Estate. It is a matter of great pride for all of us that the present assembly session is taking place in this elegant building which was inaugurated on 13th March last year by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh in the presence of UPA Chairperson Thirumathi Sonia Gandhi in a function presided over by Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaignar. Construction of second phase of Secretariat Complex and new Kalaivanar arangam which is taken up at a cost of ` 60.86 crores are under progress. Similarly, a World Class Library constructed in Chennai to commemorate the birth centenary of Anna at a cost of ` 178.78 crores has been inaugurated by Chief

Minister Kalaignar on 15th September 2010 at a function presided over by the Finance Minister Perasiriyar.

6. Instead of becoming complacent with the fulfilment of all the election promises, this Government have continuously formulated several new and progressive schemes and implemented them successfully. While tirelessly marching on the path shown by Anna to see God in the smile of the poor this Government is implementing various social security schemes on priority basis to achieve the goal of social justice besides several development schemes to ensure inclusive and sustained economic growth.

7. Peace continues to prevail in the State due to excellent maintenance of law and order by the Government. With a view to ensuring effective policing in Tamil Nadu, better working conditions have been provided to the police force by accepting the recommendations of Third Police Commission. Accordingly various measures like modernisation of police force, filling up of vacancies, construction of new police stations and quarters for the police personnel and creation of various other infrastructural facilities were taken up. This Government is continuously striving to maintain social harmony and to establish casteless society bereft of sectarian differences.

8. Despite the lives lost and tears shed, thousands of Sri Lankan Tamils are still languishing in the camps behind the barbed wire fences. The rehabilitation measures for those Tamils who have been sent back from the camps to their original homes are still incomplete. Not even preliminary steps have been initiated on their long cherished political solution. The attacks on Tamil fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy continue to take place. This Government is deeply concerned about all these developments and urges the Central Government to take immediate steps to protect the fishermen of Tamil Nadu and mitigate the sufferings of Sri Lankan Tamils.

9. The entire State received good rains this year. The average rainfall this year during north-east monsoon has been 1169 mm till date as against the normal average of 945 mm. The coastal districts suffered flood damages owing to this. On behalf of the members of this Assembly, I extend my deep condolences to the bereaved families of 203 persons who lost their lives in the heavy rains. This Government have undertaken relief measures on war footing after quickly assessing the damages caused to the life, property, crop, roads, ponds, and so on. Ministers and senior officers are continuously inspecting and monitoring the work

of providing relief and restoration works. Chief Minister has conducted regular reviews and sanctioned a sum of ` 500 crores for immediate relief measures. Apart from this, another ` 500 crores have been sanctioned for permanent restoration measures and works are under progress. Following the appeal to the Central Government for an assistance of ` 1,832 crores from the National Disaster Response Fund, a central team promptly visited Tamil Nadu and inspected the affected areas. I hope that Central Government will provide this assistance at the earliest. Relief for the partially damaged huts has been stepped up from ` 1,000 to ` 2,500 and for the fully damaged huts from ` 2,000 to ` 5,000. Houses other than huts have also been provided with a relief of ` 1,500 for partial damage and ` 5,000 for severe damage. As against the earlier provision of only ` 1 lakh per person to the family whose member has lost life due to floods, an assistance of ` 2 lakhs per person has been provided now by giving an additional amount of ` 1 lakh from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. Since paddy crop has been severely damaged by the floods in various places, compensation for damage to paddy crop has been increased to ` 8,000 per hectare from ` 7,500. Considering the request of farmers that it is not adequate, the Chief Minister has ordered to increase the compensation to ` 10,000 per hectare for the damaged paddy crop. Similarly, the compensation has been increased for un-irrigated dry

crops from ` 2,000 to ` 4,000 per hectare and for irrigated crops other than paddy at ` 7,500 per hectare. **This Government is formulating a special scheme for preventing damages caused by floods on account of inadequate drainage capacity in Nagapattinam, Thiruvarur and Thanjavur districts by establishing a proper drainage system to control the floods on a permanent basis as these districts frequently face such damages.**

10. **Heavy rains during north-east monsoon cause floods in Sarabanga river, Thirumanimutharu and Ayyaru. An investigation will be undertaken to study the possibilities of designing a special scheme to benefit agriculture by interlinking these three rivers through a channel and diverting flood water to the ponds and lakes in the dry areas of Salem, Namakkal and Trichy districts through which these rivers flow. This will also recharge the ground water.**

11. I appreciate the efforts of Hon'ble Chief Minister in announcing and popularising 'Rajarajan 1,000' a System of Rice Intensification (SRI) over a substantial area in order to increase the yield of paddy which is the staple food of Tamil Nadu. Special efforts are being taken to increase production as well as productivity of pulses. Similarly, efforts

like precision farming, drip irrigation and farm mechanisation under National Agriculture Development Programme implemented with the Central assistance, have resulted in reduced expenditure with enhanced productivity and income besides extensive adoption of better technology by farmers. As a result of these excellent measures, food production has reached 84 lakh tonnes in the year 2009-2010 as against 71 lakh tonnes during 2008-2009. Compared to last year, total area under cultivation has also gone up by 13.80 percent and touched 60.19 lakh hectares during the current year. Area under pulses has also gone up by 36.70 percent over the previous year. Despite the damages caused by floods in certain districts, food production in the State is expected to go up this year.

12. The rate of interest for crop loans has been gradually reduced from 7 percent for those who repaid the loan on time and interest free crop loan scheme was launched during 2008-2009 for the first time in the country by this Government.

As a result of this, disbursement of crop loans by co-operative banks has increased substantially every year and crop loans to the tune of ` 2,092 crores have been disbursed till date this year as against the target of ` 2,500 crores. The new scheme of 'Joint Liability Groups of farmers' launched with a view to enabling small and marginal farmers to adapt to higher

technology and increase productivity has shown good results. In future, this scheme will emerge as a movement similar to women's Self Help Group bringing a great change in agricultural production.

13. Accepting the request of the coconut farmers, this Government have also established Coconut Farmers Welfare Board recently. **With a view to fulfilling long pending demand of the palm and coconut farmers, processed palm juice and preserved tender coconut water will be sold through the outlets of Khadi & Village Industries Board. This Government will take appropriate steps for procuring coconut and making copra through Coconut Farmers Welfare Board. The coconut oil so produced by the Board will be supplied for the purpose of cooking under noon meal scheme by replacing palm oil and will also be sold through co-operative stores.**

14. This Government is according importance to the implementation of crop insurance scheme for enabling the farmers to recover from the crop loss due to natural calamities. As a result of this, 9,01,643 farmers have been paid compensation of ` 974 crores during last four years of this Government as against just 2,38,036 farmers receiving the compensation of ` 145 crores during 2001-2006.

15. Considering the importance of conserving ground water, Government of Tamil Nadu is implementing a massive scheme of construction of check dams over three years starting from 2008 at an estimate of ` 550 crores. Irrigated Agriculture Modernisation and Water-bodies Restoration and Management (IAMWARM) scheme benefiting 6.17 lakh hectares of land is under implementation since 2007 at an estimated cost of ` 2,547 crores with the assistance from World Bank. With an objective of making use of flood waters, schemes like construction of Kattalai barrage at Mayanur across the river Cauvery at a cost of ` 189 crores and interlinking of Thamiraparani river from Kannadian canal with Nambiyaru at a cost of ` 369 crores are being implemented. Besides preventing floods in these areas, these schemes will lead to proper storage and usage of water for agriculture which is otherwise getting discharged into the sea.

16. To protect the forest wealth of Tamil Nadu, 'The Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Conservation and Greening Project' will be implemented at an estimated cost of ` 686 crores with the financial assistance from Japan International Co-operation Agency.

17. Acknowledging the long standing demand of fishermen, a scheme for supplying kerosene to the

country boats at subsidised rates was announced and 200 litres of kerosene is being supplied per boat to the fishermen at subsidised rates with a monthly allotment of 3,200 kilolitres. Government is providing ` 80 crores per year as subsidy under this scheme.

18. Tamil Nadu is considered as one of the most preferred states for industrial investment. After this Government assumed charge, 43 major industries have been attracted with an investment of ` 50,615 crores. TIDCO and Indian Oil Corporation are jointly establishing a 5 million tonnes capacity LNG import terminal with a gas pipeline network and power plant near Ennore with an investment of ` 10,000 crores. This will ensure energy security for the industrial development. The objective of promoting industrial development to bring about socio-economic transformation in southern districts is being fulfilled with the initiative of establishing various industries such as Videocon plant at Manamadurai, granite cutting and polishing unit of Tamil Nadu Minerals Limited in Melur, ATC Tyres plant in Tirunelveli district, second expansion unit of Chettinadu Cements Limited in Dindigul district and unit of Fenner India Limited in Nilakkottai. An integrated textile park at Vadippatti in Madurai district set up with an investment of ` 100 crores has been inaugurated on 18th December last year. The Thoothukudi Unit of SPIC had

stopped production of urea and ammonia based fertilizers in 2007. Due to the relentless efforts taken by the Hon'ble Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers, SPIC industry has resumed production of urea from the first week of November 2010. As a result of implementation of such innumerable projects for industrial promotion by this Government, employment opportunities have increased significantly in Tamil Nadu.

19. Tourism promotion is one of the top priorities of this Government. As a result of several novel initiatives like medical tourism, eco-tourism, rural tourism, adventure tourism and 'Virunthinar Potruthum' (care for guests), Tamil Nadu ranks first in the country in medical tourism as well as in attracting foreign tourists and third in attracting domestic tourists. **A special tourism development project for beautification of tourist centres and improvement of basic facilities along east coast corridor and southern tourist circuit will be implemented by this Government with financial assistance from Asian Development Bank with an outlay of ` 450 crores.**

20. With a view to giving fillip to the economic growth, this Government has undertaken various projects like widening of the existing roads, constructing new roads and bridges and upgrading the quality of the roads. A sum of

₹ 8,716 crores has been spent on road infrastructure over the last four years through highways department. During the financial year 2010-2011, a sum of ₹ 3,358 crores is being spent for road improvement. An additional sanction of ₹ 282 crores has been obtained for Tamil Nadu Road Sector Project being implemented with assistance from the World Bank. The projects of six lane Chennai Outer Ring Road at a cost of ₹ 1,081 crores and 24.6 km long four lane road from Singaperumal Kovil to Thiruperumpudur via Oragadam are very important for easing the traffic congestion in and around Chennai city. This Government have undertaken numerous such road projects including 26 kms four lane Coimbatore Western Bye-pass Road and four laning of Coimbatore - Mettupalayam road.

21. For safe and rapid commuting and easing the traffic congestion in the city of Chennai, 45 kilometres long Chennai Metro Rail Project was launched at an estimated cost of ₹ 14,600 crores with the financial assistance from Japan International Co-operation Agency and Central Government. These works are progressing at a fast pace. The Government is also taking action for its extension upto Thiruvottriyur at an estimated cost of ₹ 3,001 crores. I urge the Central Government to continue their financial assistance for this project. **Under the second phase of Chennai Metro Rail, a project study will be taken up for establishing new**

lines linking Moolakkadai - Thirumangalam, Moolakkadai - Thiruvanmiyur and Luz - Poonamallee via Ayyapanthangal.

22. In order to improve the public transport system, 12,137 new buses have been purchased during the last four years. Another 3,000 new buses are being added to the fleet during 2010-2011. This has resulted in reduction of average age of buses belonging to transport corporations to 4.41 years thus improving the quality of service. This Government have also introduced special type buses like ultra-deluxe, semi-low floor and air conditioned buses. As a result of all these efforts, the average number of persons using Government buses per day has gone up from 177 lakhs in 2006-2007 to 205 lakhs in 2009-2010.

23. The demand for electricity is growing on account of rapid industrial growth and overall economic development. It has increased from 8209 MW at the end of 2005-2006 to 11,000 MW in 2010-2011. Generation of electricity by Tamil Nadu Electricity Board has increased only marginally from 5383 MW to 5572 MW during the same period. As the projects for generation of electricity have long gestation period, lack of farsighted planning in the past has led to the present crisis. The works for several new projects have been

initiated after this Government assumed charge. These works are going on in full swing. Works for 1200 MW North Chennai Thermal Power Station at a cost of ` 4,600 crores, 600 MW Mettur Thermal Power Project at a cost of ` 3,100 crores, 1500 MW thermal power plant at Vallur near Chennai in collaboration with the National Thermal Power Corporation at a cost of ` 9,000 crores, 1000 MW Tuticorin Power Plant at a cost of ` 4,909 crores and 1600 MW Udangudi Power Plant at a cost of ` 9,000 crores in collaboration with BHEL are under progress. The works for generation of an additional 93 MW Hydel power at Bhavani and Periyar dams at a cost of ` 1,285 crores are also underway. Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Company (TANGEDCO) is taking suitable measures for putting up co-generation plants for the generation of 183 MW power with an investment of ` 1,126 crores in 12 co-operative and state owned sugar mills. In addition to this, some projects are also being implemented by private sector. As a result of all this, an additional capacity of 900 MW will be added during the year 2010-2011 itself. The demand for electricity in Tamil Nadu is estimated to be around 14,224 MW and the generation is expected to be at 16,425 MW by the end of Eleventh Five Year Plan. Thus, Tamil Nadu will become a power surplus state in 2012 by completely eliminating power deficit.

24. To achieve the goal of universal education, Sarva Sikhsa Abhiyan scheme is being implemented with the financial assistance from Central Government. This Government infused self-confidence and enhanced the learning ability among the students through innovative methods like activity based learning. As a beneficial outcome of the initiatives taken by the Government, the drop out rate in primary schools has come down from 3.81 percent in 2004-2005 to one percent last year. Similarly, the drop out rate in middle schools has also come down from 7.58 percent in 2004-2005 to 1.79 percent last year. **As per the report published by the National University for Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) in 2008-2009, Tamil Nadu ranks fifth in India in terms of Educational Development Index which measures the quality of school education. Similarly, a survey conducted by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in 2008 mentions that school children in Tamil Nadu stand first in terms of competency in mathematics and language skills.**

25. With a view to enabling poor students to pursue higher education without any impediment, tuition fee for post graduate courses in Government and Government aided arts and science colleges has been fully waived. **As a**

unique measure, this Government ordered that the government approved tuition fee will be fully borne by the Government on behalf of students from families with no graduates, securing admission to professional courses through single window system. This year 80,450 students have benefited under this scheme.

26. This Government have started Anna Universities of Technology at Trichy, Coimbatore, Thirunelveli, Madurai and Chennai. With an objective of having at least one engineering college in each district, this Government have established 12 new engineering colleges apart from establishing 12 new arts and science colleges. **Besides these, Government Arts and Science colleges will be established by this Government in Kancheepuram district between Rajiv Gandhi salai and east coast road at Nemeli, at Nagalapuram in Thoothukudi district, at Harur in Dharmapuri district, at Kallakurchi in Villupuram district and at Thiruchuli in Virudhunagar district. To largely benefit the students in districts like Thanjavur, Thiruvarur and Nagapattinam, which are predominantly agrarian in nature, a new agricultural college will be established at Kivelur in Nagapattinam district. As announced by Chief Minister in the agricultural officers conference recently, I have great pleasure in informing you that this Government which has the unique**

distinction of starting the first Veterinary University in the country and also for starting Agricultural University at Coimbatore, will establish this year a separate University at Krishnagiri for Horticulture, which has a promising future within agricultural sector. The Central University at Thiruvarur and Indian Institute of Management at Trichy have been established by the Central Government because of the efforts taken by Chief Minister. Works for establishing a world class university at Coimbatore are in progress.

27. While addressing the 98th Indian Science Congress in Chennai last week, Hon'ble Prime Minister stated, "Tamil Nadu has a unique place in the world of Indian science. India's first Nobel Laureate in the sciences, Dr.C.V. Raman, was a proud student of Presidency College, Chennai. So was Professor S.Chandrasekhar. The State has also produced one of India's greatest mathematicians, Srinivasa Ramanujan". This is a matter of great pride and satisfaction for all of us. During his address at Madras Institute of Technology on 14th November 1990, Chief Minister Kalaignar had stated, "a science city shall be established at Chennai by bringing together the area covering Anna University, various centres of knowledge surrounding it and all other places engaged in similar kind of scientific innovations." The establishment of science city as visualised by him remains

unrealised till date. **It is my great pleasure to inform you that a 'world class Mega Science City' will be established at Chennai by bringing together more than 69 institutions of advanced research like Anna University and Indian Institute of Technology so that it will flourish as a pristine centre facilitating higher scientific research to encourage the younger generation in advancing their knowledge leading to scientific inventions in future.**

28. The scheme for providing assistance to unemployed youth was announced in 2006-2007 and a sum of ` 284 crores has been disbursed to 4,01,704 unemployed youth so far. This scheme has been extended from this year to the unemployed youth who were not successful in 10th standard examination. Realising that this is not a permanent remedy, this Government have taken up various measures for eliminating the problem of unemployment. Since this Government assumed charge, 5,05,314 persons have been provided with jobs in Government.

29. Notwithstanding the implementation of various training programmes for employment generation by the Government, in order to avoid a situation, where even after successful completion of higher education, many students are unable to get jobs due to the existing gap between the skills required by the industries and those

acquired by these students passing out of schools and colleges, an innovative scheme namely 'Employable Skill Training to the Unemployed Educated Youth' was announced by the Chief Minister Kalaignar on the occasion of the Independence Day last year. This scheme will find a permanent solution to this problem besides facilitating the industries in selecting unemployed educated youth directly and imparting specific skills as per their requirement and ultimately employing them in the same organisation. Under the first phase of this scheme, selection camps were conducted in Thiruvallur, Thiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Thirunelveli, Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri districts and out of 49,495 youth who attended these camps, 17,600 were given training cum appointment orders. This Government will take action to cover one lakh youth as per the target set under this scheme by conducting such camps in the remaining districts. In the next phase of this scheme, a situation will be created where the youth will get the job immediately on completion of the course in the educational institutions by facilitating the students to acquire additional abilities like communication skill and also by adapting the syllabi as per the requirement of industries through closer interaction between the educational institutions and industrial establishments.

30. Many social workers and private organisations like Tamil Maiyam have also conducted job fairs

at Nagercoil, Kariappatti, Vellore, Ooty, Virudhunagar, Cuddalore, Trichy, Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi with the help of Ministers, Members of Parliament, Members of Legislative Assembly and District Collectors. Out of 2,33,712 unemployed youth who attended the fairs, 1,33,998 persons were able to get employment. This Government welcomes all such initiatives and appreciates their commendable service.

31. Health and hygiene are fundamental for the development of human resources and economic growth. This Government is implementing special health and family welfare programmes enabling even the downtrodden people also to lead a healthy life. World Bank has agreed to provide an additional assistance of ₹ 627 crores for the second phase of Tamil Nadu Health System Project, earlier implemented at a cost of ₹ 506 crores. Women and child care and prevention, diagnosis and treatment of non-communicable diseases such as heart diseases, diabetes, breast cancer and cervical cancer are being taken up under this project throughout Tamil Nadu. 108-ambulance service implemented by the State Government with Central assistance is considered to be one of the best schemes to provide emergency healthcare. Similarly, various schemes including "Nalamana Tamizhagam" are being implemented under National Rural Health Mission at an outlay

of

₹ 776 crores and 46 lakhs with Central assistance. As a result of improvement in facilities at Primary Health Centres under these schemes, the number of institutional deliveries in Public Health Centres has gone up by 277 percent in 2009-2010 compared to 2005-2006. Infant Mortality Rate has fallen to 31 per thousand in the year 2010 from 37 in the year 2005-2006. Maternal Mortality Rate has also reduced to 79 per lakh from 111 during the same period. **With a view to further reducing Infant Mortality Rate and save all newborn babies, this Government have decided to introduce a new 'Emergency Critical Care Scheme' for children upto the age of one year through approved private and government hospitals at a cost of ₹ 10 crores for this year. A sum of ₹ 15 crores will be allocated for its implementation during next year.** After assuming charge, this Government have established new medical colleges in Thiruvarur, Dharmapuri and Villupuram districts. Works are in progress to establish new medical colleges in backward districts like Sivaganga, Perambalur and Thiruvannamalai. **New medical colleges will be opened in Ramanathapuram, Cuddalore and Dindigul to fulfil the objective of having 'one medical college per district' as envisaged by this Government. As a result of this, the number of qualified**

doctors in Tamil Nadu will increase significantly in the coming years. Tamil Nadu, which is the birth place of Siddha medicine is the only State in India running Government Colleges for all the five disciplines, namely, Siddha, Ayurveda, Unani, Yoga and Naturopathy and Homeopathy. With a view to developing the traditional system of Indian medicines and Homeopathy a University of Indian medicine and Homeopathy will be established in Kanyakumari district this year covering existing six government colleges of Indian medicine and Homeopathy along with 26 similar private colleges.

32. "Kalaignar Health Insurance Scheme for Life Saving Treatment" to benefit the poorest of the poor has been launched and is being implemented by this Government with an objective of achieving universal health care. About 1.34 crore families are enrolled under this scheme so far, where the entire insurance premium is borne by Government on their behalf. So far, 2,55,744 persons have availed treatment worth ` 667 crores under this scheme. This scheme has led to a great transformation in health care throughout the State. Besides becoming a model for the entire country, this scheme is hailed as the most outstanding one amongst all the welfare schemes implemented by this Government.

33. The scheme of providing financial assistance to the old aged persons, widows, destitute women, agricultural labourers and differently abled persons is very important amongst all social security schemes. The monthly assistance of ` 200 provided to all these persons was enhanced to ` 400 from September 2006, and further enhanced to ` 500 per month from December 2010 by this Government as announced by Chief Minister Kalaignar on 24th November last year in the State Agriculture Officers Conference. At present, overall 22,26,850 persons are receiving assistance under this scheme.

34. Including Agricultural Labour Welfare Board, Construction Workers Welfare Board and Welfare Board for Fishermen, 37 Welfare Boards have been established for the workers in unorganised sector and 2.11 crore persons have been enrolled as members in these Boards so far. The Government have enhanced the old age pension for the eligible members of these boards to ` 500 per month from ` 400 per month. After this Government assumed charge, welfare assistance of ` 876 crores has been disbursed through these boards.

35. Further, having regard to the welfare of the persons from Tamil Nadu working abroad, the

Government have ordered the establishment of a Welfare Board for these Tamils.

36. Ensuring food security through Public Distribution System is yet another outstanding social security scheme. Tamil Nadu is the only state in India that implements this scheme as Universal Public Distribution System besides providing rice at one rupee per kilogram. This has ensured food security for all sections of society. Over and above this, Tamil Nadu also stands out as a state providing tur dhal, urad dhal, palm oil, wheat flour and packets containing ten spices and condiments at subsidised rate through Public Distribution System. Through this, the Government is insulating the poor and middle class people from the adverse impact of rising prices in an effective manner.

37. This Government have increased the number of eggs provided to children through noon meal centres from three per week to five per week. The children who do not eat eggs are provided with banana on these days. The financial allocation this year under the noon meal scheme has also been increased to supply additional quantity of rice, oil and vegetables. As a result of such initiatives, the children are able to get adequate nutrition and develop their intellectual abilities with good education, thereby creating an atmosphere

to enable the growth of healthy future generation in Tamil Nadu.

38. This Government have empowered the women by providing 33 percent reservation for them in Local Bodies and will continue to urge the Central Government to take similar measures for ensuring 33 percent reservation for women in Parliament and State Legislatures through suitable constitutional amendment.

39. The movement of Self Help Group has gained momentum, facilitating economic development of women in the State. 5,54,538 self help groups have been formed so far. Total savings available with these groups are around ` 3,214 crores at present. The revolving fund provided to them during the last five years alone is to the tune of ` 529 crores. The loan assistance provided through banks for their economic upliftment is ` 9,032 crores. For the economic development of these women, an elegant shopping complex named aptly after Mother Teresa has been inaugurated by Chief Minister Kalaignar in Chennai on 1st November 2010 which provides a platform to these women to sell their products. Besides, construction of such a befitting monument by this Government in the name of Mother Teresa who lived for the poor, celebrating her birth centenary on 4th

December 2010 is being regarded as an appropriate gesture of this Government.

40. This Government have completely removed the upper income limit prescribed for differently abled persons for availing assistance under various government schemes. They have been exempted from payment of tuition fees, special fees and various other fees in government colleges and universities. Day care centres have been established in six districts with an objective to provide proper treatment to differently abled persons suffering from muscular dystrophy so as to limit the severity of the disease. For the first time in India, early intervention centres have been started in Tamil Nadu for enabling the differently abled children below six years of age suffering from hearing impairment, loss of vision and mental retardation to secure admission in main stream schools. Through the special camps organised for admitting all the differently abled children in the age group of six to fourteen under regular or inclusive education system, 95,128 differently abled children have been screened and admitted this year. Conveyance allowance for differently abled Government employees has been raised by this Government from ₹ 300 to ₹ 1,000 per month. A new scheme called 'Vazhikattum Thittam' will be implemented for bringing awareness about different facilities provided by government to the differently abled persons. It is

worth mentioning that for the first time in India, a separate welfare board for differently abled has been established to ensure their welfare in addition to creating a separate department under the direct control of Hon'ble Chief Minister, who has willingly taken up such responsibility.

41. For the welfare of Arundathiars who are living in the lowest strata of society, three percent reservation within the overall quota for scheduled castes has been provided. As a result 91 students from this community have secured admissions in medical colleges and another 1,771 students have secured admissions in engineering colleges this year.

42. **Government frequently receives representations that the ownership of panchami lands assigned to scheduled caste poor in Tamil Nadu years back are taken possession by non-scheduled caste people; with the passage of time these lands have been illegally transferred to others; industries have been set up on many such encroached lands by changing title and by violating conditions. There are also news paper reports on this. Hence, this Government have decided to constitute a Committee under the Chairmanship of a retired High Court Judge to examine various problems regarding panchami lands in accordance with law and**

submit a report to the Government suggesting measures for resuming these lands and restoring the ownership back to them.

43. With an important objective of providing infrastructure facilities in rural areas on par with urban areas, this Government has provided basic amenities like link roads, street lights, drinking water, drainage, libraries, ponds, playgrounds, burial grounds in all 12,618 village panchayats over the past five years under “Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam” at a cost of ` 2,549 crores. **The Government have now decided to sanction a special allocation of ` 320 crores in anticipation of approval of NABARD for improving the rural roads.** Apart from this, under the centrally sponsored Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme, ` 1,847 crores have been disbursed during the year 2010-2011 as wages by generating employment of 21.42 crore man-days till date. It is worth mentioning that while hearing a public interest litigation in April 2010, Honourable Supreme Court of India stated that Tamil Nadu is one of the best-performing States in implementing this scheme and other States should emulate it. ‘Vazhnthu Kattuvom Project’ which is a new initiative among poverty eradication programmes is being implemented in an exemplary manner in 2509 village panchayats in 16 districts of

Tamil Nadu at a cost of ` 717 crores with the assistance from World Bank. **This scheme has been extended to 10 more districts at a cost of ` 950 crores this year. This will benefit 9.6 lakh poor families living in 1,661 village panchayats of these districts.** It is highly satisfying that the Country Director of the World Bank, who came recently to sign the loan agreement for this project, appreciated that 'Vazhnthu Kattuvom Project' stands out as the best project in its design and implementation among all the World Bank funded projects across various countries of the world.

44. About 44 percent of the total population in the state lives in the urban areas as per 2001 census. Hence, this Government is implementing various schemes for improving basic amenities fulfilling the requirements of people residing in urban areas on a priority basis. Under centrally sponsored Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, various amenities like provision of drinking water, sewage disposal, storm water drains, solid waste management, housing and transportation are being provided. In addition to this, basic infrastructure is also being provided by availing financial assistance from international funding agencies like World Bank through Tamil Nadu Urban Development Fund-III, Japan International Co-operative Agency and KfW of Germany. **This Government announced a Special Road Programme this**

year and allocated ` 1,051 crores for the improvement of roads in urban local bodies. The works for improving about 3500 kilometres of roads belonging to urban local bodies are being undertaken on war footing using this fund.

45. Chennai and its adjoining areas are growing at a rapid pace. Other cities like Coimbatore, Madurai, Salem, Trichy and Tirunelveli are also expanding in a similar fashion. On account of this growth, there is a need to improve the basic facilities in these semi-urban areas also. **For providing various basic amenities like drinking water, roads, drainage, solid waste management and street lights in Chennai City and adjoining suburban areas along with the towns which serve as growth centres and fall within the districts of Tiruvallur and Kancheepuram, the Corporations of Madurai, Coimbatore, Trichy and Tirunelveli, the newly established Corporations like Erode, Tiruppur, Vellore, Tuticorin and in all Municipalities in the State, about ` 15,000 crores will be required over the next 5 years. This Government will take appropriate measures to provide quality infrastructure in these areas by mobilising this amount from its own resources besides availing assistance from international funding agencies.**

46. Since assuming charge, this Government is formulating and implementing various major projects for providing drinking water. With a view to benefit the districts like Ramanathapuram which is facing severe shortage of potable drinking water, this Government implemented a special combined drinking water scheme at an outlay of ` 616 crores. Due to the great efforts taken by this Government, the Hogenakkal Combined Water Supply Scheme has been launched at an estimated cost of ` 1,929 crores to benefit the people in Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri districts which are severely affected by high level of fluoride in groundwater. The works for this scheme are progressing at a rapid pace. This project will be completed by December 2012. It will provide permanent solution to the drinking water problem of 30 lakh people in Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri districts. Similarly, this Government is implementing Combined Water Supply schemes worth ` 1,882 crores for the benefit of 42 lakh people in Madurai, Salem, Coimbatore, Tiruppur, Virudhunagar, Nagapattinam and Trichy districts. A combined water supply scheme at an estimated cost of Rs.1,295 crores has been announced for the benefit of about 25 lakh people in Vellore Corporation and its surrounding areas. This Government have already taken steps to commence the works for this scheme. The 100 million litres per day capacity Minjur Desalination Plant for augmenting the drinking water supply of Chennai city has

been commissioned. Similarly, works are under progress at Nemeli for setting up a desalination plant at a capital cost of ` 533 crores with the financial assistance from Central Government. Apart from this, through implementation of several small and medium projects during the past five years, this Government ensured that drinking water problem did not surface anywhere in the State.

47. As stated in Sangam literature, ultimately what a man needs is simple food and two pieces of clothing and hence, food, clothing and shelter are the basic necessities of people. Having regard to the various difficulties faced by lakhs of people living in huts and with a goal of transforming Tamil Nadu into a hut-free state within a specific time frame, this Government have launched the unique humanitarian scheme of 'Kalaingar Veedu Vazhangum Thittam'. To realise the dream of Hon'ble Chief Minister to convert Tamil Nadu into a State without huts, 21 lakh huts were enumerated and it was ordered to convert these huts into concrete houses within the span of six years with a Government assistance of ` 60,000/- per house. But based on the representations that this amount is not adequate, it was further increased to ` 75,000 per house. Three lakh houses which were taken up in the first phase are nearing completion now.

A sum of ` 2,250 crores has been allocated for this purpose

during the year 2010-2011. As a section of the people further represented that even the amount of ` 75,000 is not adequate to construct the houses as per their requirements, this Government is extending necessary assistance to raise loan of upto ` 20,000 per house through nationalised banks at a reduced rate of interest which they can repay in instalments. Apart from these three lakh beneficiaries, all the other eligible persons have been issued identity cards which will enable them to get houses. **As the construction of concrete houses taken up this year is progressing fast, another three lakh beneficiaries from among those who have been issued identity cards will be permitted to commence the construction of houses in the next phase during this year itself.**

48. It was this Government that established Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board in the year 1970 with an intention of creating slum-free cities in Tamil Nadu similar to creating hut-free villages. About 1.06 lakh houses have been constructed by this board till date. **In order to intensify these efforts, this Government have initiated action for converting approximately two and a half lakh huts existing in all the town panchayats of Tamil Nadu into concrete houses over the next five years and the construction for this will start from the year 2011-2012.**

49. The changing economic scenario has triggered migration of people to the cities. The lack of adequate number of decent housing on permanent basis to these people has resulted in eight lakh families residing in slums as per 2001 census. All these families are living in unhygienic and unsafe conditions and it has been noticed that most of them are living on objectionable poramboke lands. Realising that there will be further delay of several years till all these families get decent houses, **a special scheme is being formulated by the State for providing all poor families living in urban slums with safe houses in the vicinity of the sources of their livelihood itself before the year 2017 by utilising the grants wherever available from Central Government for all such schemes and meeting the entire additional requirement from own resources of the State. Survey for this scheme has already commenced. The work for the first phase of constructing these houses under this scheme will commence in the year 2011-2012 after issuing Identity cards similar to those issued under the Kalaigiar Veedu Vazhangum Thittam. This will ensure safe housing for everybody by creating hut-free villages and slum-free cities all over Tamil Nadu.**

50. Safe houses are being provided to the poor families in rural areas under centrally sponsored Indira Awas Yojana. The houses constructed at some places under this scheme have been damaged badly and the poor residing in these houses have been requesting for assistance from the Government as they lack the necessary funds to undertake repairs on their own. Accepting this request Government have decided to provide financial assistance of ` 15,000 per house after enumerating badly damaged houses which were constructed more than 10 years ago, thereby enabling the beneficiaries to carry out the repairs on their own.

51. As a result of the rapid pace of urbanisation, lower and middle income group persons in corporation and municipal areas are finding it very difficult to buy a house. Having realised this, the Government of Tamil Nadu has planned to construct houses and assign plots to lower and middle income groups in Chennai and areas surrounding it as well as in towns including Coimbatore, Madurai, Trichy, Erode and Hosur over 1,100 acres of land belonging to Tamil Nadu Housing Board at an affordable price on no profit no loss basis. Immediate steps will be taken for creating house

sites with basic infrastructure, houses and multi storied apartments under this scheme without compromising on quality. The system of allotting houses and plots under the Government Discretionary Quota in vogue for past several years in Tamil Nadu Housing Board is being put to an end from today.

52. Keeping in mind the verse of Vadalur Vallalar that “I wither on seeing the wilted crop”, this Government upholds the humanitarian value that life of people should not wither away like the wilted crop. This Government works resolutely on the principle of “service to people is service to god” bestowing undivided attention on providing amenities, namely, shelter to live, food to ward off hunger and clothing to enable decent living for the downtrodden people who live in the bottom rungs of the society. Thus, even foreigners wonder at our welfare schemes. This Government is working with the commitment that the service to people is even above the service to God and is fulfilling its responsibilities with righteousness towards our motherland Tamil Nadu which is the pride of our glorious nation. With the firm faith that people will continue to support this regime in future as on today, I conclude my speech by once again conveying my sincere Pongal Greetings for Tamil New Year.

Nandri

Vanakkam