SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE AT THE LAUNCH OF THE MOBILE GOVERNANCE PROJECT, 'KARNATAKA MOBILE ONE'

Bengaluru, Karnataka: Dec 8, 2014

1.   I am happy to be here this afternoon for the launch of 'Karnataka Mobile One', the Mobile Governance project of the Government of Karnataka. I compliment the State Government for this pioneering effort of starting an integrated mobile-enabled services delivery system. This unique initiative, which I am told is the first-of-its-kind in the country, signals a new era in Governance.

2.   This Mobile Governance project will make available services like bill payments, traffic alerts, traffic fine payments and other utility services through the mobile phone. It will also enable access to *Sakala*, the platform for time-bound delivery of services, as well as prompt redressal of grievances. It is commendable that Karnataka, which is a leading centre of IT, has cohesively merged technology, innovation and governance to create a novel process of citizen-government engagement.

3.   Good decision-making calls for pooling of knowledge, experience and views of all stakeholders including citizens. Recognizing this *mantra* of statecraft, Karnataka pursues the deepening of bond between the government and the governed. This, according to me, epitomizes the philosophy of governance that our ancient treatises like *Bhagavat Gita*, *Arthashastra* and *Manusmriti* had propounded. These treasured scriptures provided a prescription for governance based on a collaborative system between government and citizens.

      Ladies and Gentlemen:

4.   Happiness of citizens is the foremost objective of a welfare state. It is the fulcrum on which rests it's other goals. Driving its fulfilment calls for good governance that has such sacrosanct elements as adherence to rule of law, participatory decision-making, equity, inclusiveness, responsiveness, transparency and accountability.

5.   The Constitution of India is a model of good governance principles. The Preamble, the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of State Policy comprise the tenets of governance. They provide a reference point for value based governance of our country. Fundamental rights are essential for the development of personality of every individual and for the preservation of human dignity.

6.   The Directive Principles of State Policy is a blueprint for good governance. Parliamentary enactments, and government policies and programmes have helped transform these directives into actionable points for governance. For instance, entitlements for food, education and job, backed by legal guarantees, have empowered citizens. Schemes for universal healthcare and education have shown good results. Recently, the Government has provided further boost to inclusive development through a slew of innovative schemes aimed at complete financial inclusion, provision of digital infrastructure, cleanliness campaign and creation of model villages.

7.   The key parameter of success of public programmes is the meeting of the expectations of people. In the context of good governance, it implies the availability of effective delivery mechanisms. Responsiveness in catering to the needs of the citizens is a challenge the public administration of our country has to deal with. The efficacy of public institutions depends on the delivery mechanism and the institutional framework of rules, regulations and procedures, which has to evolve continuously to respond to the changing times. There is a pressing need, on the one hand, to improve organizational capabilities to cater to the increasing demand for services and improvement in the quality of service delivery, and on the other, to improve transparency and accountability. This underscores the need for innovative solutions based on technology. Late Carl Sagan, the astrophysicist, author and science communicator, had said and I quote: "*We have arranged a civilization in which most crucial elements profoundly depend on science and technology*" (unquote).

8.   The 'Aadhaar' project was initiated providing every resident with a unique identification number aimed at improving delivery and easy access to benefits and services. The Direct Benefits Transfer Scheme launched in January 2013 leveraged the Aadhaar system to improve targeting, eliminate waste, usher in greater transparency, reduce transaction costs and enhance efficiency. This initiative demonstrated how good governance practices can be consolidated using suitable technology models. E-governance holds great promise for a quantum leap in governance standards. The need of the hour is to leverage India's leadership position in ICT to introduce technology-intensive solutions for governance.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

9.   Dramatic developments in the IT sector have transformed the society. It has created an eco-system for the Government to tap technology-enabled solutions for deployment in the area of governance for the benefit of the common man. Karnataka, for one, is an IT hub portraying a success story that has few parallels. It contributes to thirty percent of the total software exports of our country.

10.   Not only has the State created a conducive environment for the expansion of the IT sector, it has skilfully combined innovation and government vision to bring about reforms touching the lives of citizens. E-initiatives like *Bhoomi*, which is an on-line system for land records management; *Kaveri*, which is a valuation and e-registration system of the Department of Stamps and Registration; *e-swathu*, which is a software that lists properties in urban local bodies and that has now been integrated with *Kaveri*; and e-procurement have set governance benchmarks. Karnataka also has the distinction of being the first Indian state to have a dedicated secretariat for e-governance. I commend your passion to deploy technology in governance. In this context, I want to express my delight at having been associated with the demonstration of 3D holography, which is a cutting-edge technology.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

11. Mobile phone has revolutionized the communication system like none other. It has brought people closer, shrunk distance and alleviated geographic separation. The total number of mobile phone subscribers in India is 93 crore with a density of 75 percent. 41 percent of the subscribers reside in rural areas. The monthly growth rate of mobile phone subscription of 0.76 percent in the rural areas is higher than the 0.55 percent in the urban areas. These numbers have significance from the policy perspective of governance.

12. The 'Digital India' programme launched in August this year envisages the creation of a digitally-empowered society and knowledge economy by breaking the divide between digital 'haves' and 'have-nots'. One of the components of this programme is the availability of government services in real time from mobile platforms. It is in this context that I consider the 'Karnataka Mobile One' to be an initiative of great foresight. It is heartening to note that nearly five hundred G2C and over four thousand B2C services have been integrated into this platform and I am told more services are being on-boarded. This, to me, will translate into 'meaningful governance' and take e-governance to the next level.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

13. The name 'Karnataka', according to one of its etymological strands, originated from '*Karu-Nadu*'. True to its meaning 'elevated land', I expect this State to continue pursuing its lofty goals. In a rapidly changing world, it is the learners, pioneers and doers who will usher in a new era for citizens. Through your endeavours, you have displayed that and I compliment you for the same. Do not rest on your laurels; continue with your efforts to improve governance. With the thought that creativity in the present is essential to create a better future, I conclude. I wish you all good luck for a successful implementation of the mobile governance programme.

Thank you.
Jai Hind.

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