

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB  
MUKHERJEE AT THE INAUGURAL CEREMONY OF THE 27TH  
INDIAN ENGINEERING CONGRESS**

Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi: 14-12-2012

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a privilege for me to be present here on the occasion of the inaugural programme of the 27<sup>th</sup> Indian Engineering Congress organized by the Institution of Engineers (India).

2. The Institution of Engineers (India) was formed in 1920 in response to a felt need for an institution that would serve the cause of advancement of engineering and technology in India. In 1935 King George V accorded it the Royal Charter and since then engineers attached to this Institution are known as Chartered Engineers. Prior to the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) being given statutory powers in 1987 of regulating engineering and technical education in the country, the Institution of Engineers performed this task under the Royal Charter. The AMIE examination, equivalent to degree courses in engineering was also initiated by the Institute as early as 1928 for in-service technical professionals wanting to pursue further

studies and acquire an engineering degree while continuing with their existing professions.

3. Ladies and Gentlemen, during the next three days of this Congress there shall be substantive discussions on many facets of engineering based on the central theme “Engineering for Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth”. The scientific and technical community shall eagerly await the results of these deliberations and I am sure these shall go a long way in enabling movement towards Government’s vision of fostering inclusive growth.

4. As we all know, India is poised to be an economic power. In terms of purchasing power parity, the size of our economy is the third largest in the world. The substantial growth rate that our country has achieved over the last few years is second only to China in the world. During the period 2003-04 to 2010-11, we have had an annual growth rate in excess of 8 per cent on six occasions. Though the growth rate was subdued after 2010-11 under the pressures from the global economic meltdown, India’s economy has been more resilient than most of the other emerging economy of the world.

5. A growth rate of 9 per cent per year has been envisaged during the Twelfth Five Year Plan period of 2012 to 2017. Such scales of economic expansion need several enabling factors prominent among them being education. We have, over time, created an infrastructure of good educational institutions for imparting quality education at all levels. In the higher education sector, India is endowed with 659 degree awarding institutions and 33,023 colleges. The number of Indian Institutes of Technology has increased from 7 in 2006-07 to 15 in 2011-12. The enrolment to higher education institutions in the country has similarly increased, from 1.39 crores in 2006-07 to 2.18 crores in 2011-12. Engineering comprised 13 per cent of the total enrolment in 2006-07. This figure has since increased to 25 per cent . The growth rate of enrolment in Engineering, which was close to 25 per cent annually during the Eleventh Plan period, is the highest for any field of study.

6. Several steps have been taken to bring about an improvement in the quality of technical education, particularly engineering. Virtual labs developed for science and engineering are being rolled out. The Government, with the support of the World Bank, has been conducting a three-phase programme for

technical education quality improvement. While the first phase from 2002 to 2009 covered 127 engineering institutions, the second phase from 2010 to 2014 would cover about 190 more engineering institutions.

**7. To achieve truly sustainable growth, however, poverty eradication is of utmost importance.** Poverty and a degraded environment are closely inter-related, especially where people depend for their livelihoods primarily on the natural resource base of their immediate environment. Removal of poverty is, therefore, a prerequisite for the protection of the environment. **Appropriate climate-responsive technologies are, accordingly, required to provide relief to the economically weaker sections of society.**

8. Several traditional practices that are sustainable and environment friendly continue to be a regular part of the lives of people in developing countries. These need to be encouraged rather than replaced by more modern but unsustainable practices and technologies. Technologies exist through which substantial reduction in consumption of resources is possible. Efforts to identify, evaluate, introduce and use these technologies must be made. The integration of agriculture with

land and water management, and with ecosystem conservation, is essential for both environmental sustainability and agricultural production. An environmental perspective must guide the evaluation of all development projects recognizing the role of natural resources in local livelihoods.

**9. Mechanisms must simultaneously be put in place to make available to developing countries the latest technologies at reasonable cost. Technology transfer must be informed by an understanding of its implications in the social, economic and environmental contexts of the recipient societies. Where possible, existing local technologies must be upgraded and adapted to make them more efficient and useful.**

10. I hope that the Institution of Engineers (India), which is the largest body of engineers and technologists in our country, will initiate steps to achieve these goals in consultation with all stakeholders. With these few words, I inaugurate the 27<sup>th</sup> Indian Engineering Congress and wish you the best in your deliberations.

Jai Hind.

