

**SPEECH OF THE HON'BLE GOVERNOR FOR INAUGURATION OF
ASSOCIATION OF INDIAN UNIVERSITIES (AIU) EAST ZONE VICE
CHANCELLORS' MEET
ON REALIZING SDGS THROUGH HEIS FOR CLEAN ENERGY FOR
CREATING SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEM ON 10TH JANUARY 2022**

Namaskar,

I welcome you all to the Vice Chancellors' meet.

Esteemed Vice Chancellors, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Association of Indian Universities (AIU) is one of the premier institutions of higher education in the country. It was established in the year 1925 as an authorized central agency to support the Government and Higher Education Institutions to shape Higher education system of our country. Accordingly, Association of Indian Universities (AIU) is playing a vital role to live up to its mandate.

It is needless to state before you that this institution also plays an important role as a common platform for cooperation among Indian universities and liaise with government and other national and international bodies in other countries in the matters of common interest. Not only academic activities alone, AIU also conducts inter-university sports and cultural events at national and international level.

The fact that the stalwarts like Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Dr. Zakir Hussain, Dr. Syama Prasad Mukherjee, Dr.K.L. Shrimali served as its Presidents signifies the importance of the body.

I am happy that this East Zone Vice Chancellors' Meet being hosted by Tezpur University, on the theme 'Realizing Sustainable Development

Goals through Higher Education Institutions for Clean Energy and Creating Sustainable Ecosystem' will drive home an important point that is- the indispensable need of clean energy for sustainable development.

Further I am also happy that the Vice Chancellors of Indian Universities, Officers from United Nations, Officers from Ministries in Government of India, Officers from Apex Bodies like UGC, AICTE, NAAC, ICAR, etc. and many academia will be speakers and Session Chairs in the Meet which will happen through hybrid mode. I am happy that about 60 Vice Chancellors of the East Zone comprising of Assam, Arunachal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Tripura, and West Bengal, are attending the Meet physically. And about 100 Vice Chancellors of the East Zone will attend the Meet online.

Esteemed dignitaries, you all know that India is placed at 120th rank in Sustainable Development Report—2021. This calls for an urgent action from all sectors of the country. Due to their unique position in the society, the Higher Education Institutions have immense scope and potential to contribute towards achieving all the 17 SDGs and thereby accomplishing the 2030 target agenda. Taking a view of Indian context, I really feel that realizing the SDGs without the involvement of higher education sector is quite an impossible task.

It is really an irony that the impact ranking of Times Higher Education which assesses universities with reference to their contribution in realizing UN SDGs, only two public universities and nine private universities could find place. This compels us to think whether the Indian Higher

Education Institutions are responsible enough in their approach towards sustainability in delivering education. Most importantly, it makes us ponder, why we are not able to tap the potential of Higher Education Institutions in achieving SDGs. To apprise the Indian HEIs about their role in accomplishing SDGs as their prime responsibility, Association of Indian Universities is organizing Zonal and National Vice Chancellors Conferences in 2021-22 on the theme 'Realising Sustainable Development Goals through Higher Education Institutions'.

Dear friends, you all are aware that higher education institutions in India have displayed their potential during the COVID-19 crisis and demonstrated why their expertise and involvement matters a lot in solving the crucial challenges. We are left with one decade only to accomplish 2030 Agenda. I, therefore, sincerely believe that organizing such conferences are crucial steps to gear the HEIs to rededicate themselves to contribute significantly in achieving sustainable development goals.

I am happy that this East Zone Vice Chancellors' Meet is dealing with an important theme for the SDGs-7,13,14 & 15. I hope the discussion will primarily veer on the role of HEIs in the perspective of their contribution towards sustainable development. Besides, there should be stocktaking of global progress towards achieving SDGs; share knowledge, success stories and challenges. This meet should also suggest way forward in terms of action points for HEIs, government and other stakeholders. I moreover, hope that the action points for HEIs will primarily be focusing on three dimensions i.e., Teaching, Research and Community Development.

Dear learned dignitaries present here, it is again needless to reiterate before you that India at present is on the fast trajectory of development. However, we need availability of clean and green energy to maintain the momentum of accelerated growth processes. India taking into consideration of its rich flora and fauna needs green energy to fuel its growth in every sector. There are many roadblocks in unleashing the full potential of India's energy sector. Energy access therefore constitutes a core component of not only the sustainable development agenda but nation development also.

Moreover, SDG 13 calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impact. To my opinion the HEIs need to improve education, awareness and institutional capacity on climate change-mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and devising early warning signals. With regard to SDG 14 and 15, the HEIs should formulate strategies to meet the goals within the stipulated timeframe to help our country to catch up with other good performing nations.

I hope this East Zone Vice Chancellors' meet and the discussions and deliberations happen consequently will come out with tangible recommendations which can help the HEIs, Government and apex bodies of higher education in the eastern region to realise the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations at local level as well as global level for the welfare of the people and Planet. I moreover, hope that the recommendations of this meet will set agenda for discussions at the national level. On the basis of the recommendations of the National Meet,

'University Action Plan on Realizing SDGs' will be prepared which will be a handy guide for Higher Education Institutions of the Country and a Policy Document entitled **'Realizing SDGs through HEIs'** will be prepared and presented to the Government of India.

I wish all the dignitaries present here through on-line and off-line mode all the very best. Hope the brain-storming to be taken place over two days will help us to build and promote a sustainable development narrative surrounding the philosophy of Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

Thank you. Jai Hind.