

Speech of Tmt Panabaka Lakshmi delivered at the SIMA's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations to be held at 10.30 a.m., on August 22, 2009 at SITRA Auditorium, Coimbatore

7/2009(SIMA, Coimbatore)

Hon'ble Union Minister of Textiles, Sri Dayanidhi Maran, Sri K.K.S.S.R. Ramachandran, Hon'ble Minister for Handloom & Textiles, Govt. of Tamil Nadu, Sri Palanisamy, Hon'ble Minister for Rural Industries, Govt. of Tamil Nadu. Smt. Rita Menon, Secretary (Textiles), Government of India, Sri Venu Srinivasan, President, CII, and Sri Dalmia, Chairman, CITI, Sri Velayutham, Chairman, Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council, Dr. K.V. Srinivasan, Chairman, SIMA, Mr. Kannan, Chairman, Organising Committee, Members from Textile industry, other dignitaries, Government officials, Ladies & Gentlemen and media. A very good morning to all of you.

2. I have great pleasure in participating in the Platinum Jubilee celebrations of The Southern India Mills' Association. It is heartening to note that SIMA has been behind the growth of the textile industry in the last seven and half decades in South India and played a pivotal role in making its members as leaders in the global textile market. I also appreciate transparent and pro-active approach of SIMA, right from its inception, in liaising with the State and Central Governments in framing various policies relating to the textile industry. I compliment the founders, the past chairpersons, who are the doyens of the industry, the Committee Members and the member of the mills of SIMA for their achievements during the last 75 years.

3. The Indian textile industry which has been the backbone of our economy is more than 3000 years old. This industry is the second largest employment provider next only to agriculture particularly for the people below the poverty line and women from rural areas. We are fully aware of the various problem highlighted by Dr. K.V. Srinivasan and definitely we are making necessary plans to tackle the issues one by one.

4. We are also seized of the issue on raw materials. In this regard our Ministry has now formulated a 47-member Working Group to draft a National Fibre Policy wherein we have given due weightage for the industry. I am sure we would soon address all the issues concerning the raw material so that the industry could sustain its competitiveness in the long run.

5. As far as the export competitiveness is concerned, we are making our efforts to convince the Commerce Ministry so as to enable the textile industry to regain its share in the global market. The global economic melt down has seriously affected our exports because we are mainly depending upon US, EU and Japan markets. I am sure soon we will be able to capture our markets. I strongly suggest that all of you should target other untapped markets also to increase our global share. It is also very essential to change our product profile by increasing value addition to suit to these markets. Our thrust should also go to Technical Textiles to have wider market access. Industry should fully avail the Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme in this direction. Technical textiles, we have been talking yet to make a good beginning. SITRA is centre of excellence

for medical textiles and therefore the textile entrepreneurs should take full advantage of R&D facilities available here and make a palpable progress in this direction.

6. Our UPA Government has identified the textile industry as a core sector for the economic development and has been providing maximum benefits. Our Government under the able guidance of Smt. Sonia Gandhiji and under the leadership of Dr. Manmohan Singhji has taken a historical decision to release Rs. 2546 crores as subsidy in a single tranche to clear all the backlog applications upto June 2009 under Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme. This will go a long way for the upgradation of various machinery to be purchased in this regard including Technical Textiles. The efforts taken by my senior Minister Sri Dayanidhi Maran in this regard is laudable. Our Government is fully committed to resolve all the problems faced by weavers, artisans and textile industry.

7. Before I conclude I thank the organizers for giving me an opportunity to participate in this important function and let me congratulate SIMA once again for their glorious contributions and wish them a bright future.

Thank you

Jai Hind