

TALKING POINTS

ADDRESS BY

**SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY,
HON'BLE MINISTER OF STATE
(PMO & PERSONNEL,
PUBLIC GRIEVANCES & PENSIONS)**

**ANNUAL CONVENTION – 2011
CENTRAL INFORMATION COMMISSION**

**ON FRIDAY,
THE 14th OCTOBER, 2011
AT 1015 HRS**

**AT
VIGYAN BHAWAN, NEW DELHI**

Respected Prime Minister,
Shri Satyanand Mishra, Central Information Commissioner,
Information Commissioners,
Secretary (Personnel) Smt. Alka Sirohi,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am grateful to Hon'ble Prime Minister for his august presence on the occasion Annual Convention 2011, by the Central Information Commission. It gives me great pleasure to participate in the Annual Convention. This annual gathering provides a useful forum to discuss whether the intent of the law that set out to provide 'a practical regime of the right to information to citizens' has been realized. It is important to reiterate the purpose of the Act as set out in its preamble: 'to promote transparency and accountability of every public authority' and also 'to contain corruption'. I heartily congratulate the Central Information Commission for organizing this convention for the sixth year.

2. This week marks 6 years of successful operation of the Right to Information Act. The Government aimed at creating an empowered citizenry, armed with information to maintain a vigil on the instruments of governance and make the Government visibly accountable to the governed. I must congratulate all walks of society who have contributed to its success both from outside the Government and within it. The Information Commissions have been a pillar in realizing the Government's dream of a transparent and accountable government, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them.

3. Credit for bringing this land mark legislation will go to Hon'ble Prime Minister and Hon'ble UPA Chairperson Smt. Sonia Gandhi under UPA-I.

4. This legislation is the recognition to the commitment of the Government to provide good governance. It is the one of the most important legislation in the history of the Indian democracy. RTI however has ensured direct participation of the citizenry at even earlier ages.

5. Transparency is pre-requisite for good governance and democracy. The Right to Information Act has made it possible for people at large to have an access to the information. An informed citizenry would make the Government to perform. Knowledge is power, and transparency is the remedy to the darkness under which corruption and abuse thrives. The transparent system created by this law is extending a helping hand in fighting the scourge of corruption. Government is leaving no stone unturned to make the citizens aware of the RTI Act. It was the National Anthem which infused patriotism in the masses and led us to independence, now it is the turn of RTI anthem which, I hope, will enthuse a transparent and accountable India. A logo has been designed to create an identity and to give a visible face to RTI.

6. The Act has created a system which enables the citizens to get information from the Government without any difficulty. The sanctity of the system is being maintained by autonomous Central Information Commission and the State Information Commissions. The Commissions have been given powers to ensure that the public authorities respect the right of the citizens to have an access to information. The Indian law is the only disclosure law in the world which has a penalty provision on defaulting Public Information Officers. The law thus ensures that the rights of the citizen are protected. In order to enforce this further the Commissions may make appropriate recommendations to public authorities

specifying the steps that ought to be taken for promoting such conformity with the spirit of the Act. Further the decisions of the Commissions are binding.

7. This year the convention will be discussing the issue of Transparency and Accountability with special reference to Public Private Partnership Projects. The resultant outcome, I hope will bring a sea-change in finalizing the govt. projects with private entrepreneurs. We expect to write a new chapter on creation of infrastructure.

8. We are receiving grievances and complaints about problems faced by people in using the Act. Government is making continuous efforts to train stakeholders through e-learning module, need based workshops etc. The e- governance programme will go a long way in making records at all levels RTI friendly and fulfilling the aspirations of people in early response from the Public information officers.

9. There cannot be any dispute about the fact that the right given by the Act to citizens has converted the prevailing culture of secrecy into culture of openness and transparency in the working of the Government. I can assure that it will go a long way in strengthening our democratic institutions, empowering the public, removing corruption and greater involvement of citizens in the development of the nation. I wish success to the Convention.

Thank You

Jai Hind.