

There was a time when development was believed to depend on the quantity of capital and labour . Today we know that it depends as much on the quality of institutions and ideas . Early last year , a new institution was created , namely , the National Institution for Transforming India or NITI . NITI was created as an evidence based think tank to guide Indias transformation . One of NITIs functions is - to mainstream external ideas into Government policies , through collaboration with national and international experts - to be the Governments link to the outside world , outside experts and practitioners - to be the instrument through which ideas from outside are incorporated into policy-making . The Government of India and the State Governments have a long administrative tradition . This tradition combines indigenous and external ideas from Indias past . This administrative tradition has served India well in many ways . Above all , it has preserved democracy and federalism , unity and integrity , in a country of glorious diversity . These are not small achievements . Yet , we now live in an age where change is constant and we are variables . We must change for both external and internal reasons . Each country has its own experiences , its own resources and its own strengths . Thirty years ago , a country might have been able to look inward and find its own solutions . Today , countries are inter dependent and inter connected . No country can afford any longer to develop in isolation . Every country has to benchmark its activities to global standards , or else fall behind . Change is also necessary for internal reasons . The younger generation in our own country is thinking and aspiring so differently , that government can no longer afford to remain rooted in the past . Even in families , the relationship between the young and old has changed . There was a time when elders in a family knew more than those who were younger . Today , with the spread of new technology , the situation is often reversed . This increases the challenge for government in communicating and in meeting rising expectations . If India is to meet the challenge of change , mere incremental progress is not enough . A metamorphosis is needed . That is why my vision for India is rapid transformation , not gradual evolution . The transformation of India cannot happen without a transformation of governance . A transformation of governance cannot happen without a transformation in mindset . A transformation in mindset cannot happen without transformative ideas . We have to change laws , eliminate unnecessary procedures , speed up processes and adopt technology . We cannot march through the twenty first century with the administrative systems of the nineteenth century . Fundamental changes in administrative mindsets usually occur through sudden shocks or crisis . India is fortunate to be a stable democratic polity . In the absence of such shocks , we have to make special efforts to force ourselves to make transformative changes . As individuals , we may absorb new ideas by reading books or articles . Books open the windows of our minds . However , unless we brainstorm collectively , ideas remain confined to individual minds . We often hear of new ideas and understand them . But we do not act upon them , because it is beyond our individual capacity . If we sit together , we will have the collective force to convert ideas into action . What we need is a collective opening of our minds , to let in new , global perspectives . To do this , we have to absorb new ideas collectively rather than individually . It requires a concerted effort . As many of you know , ever since taking office , I have personally participated in structured brainstorming sessions with bankers , with police officers and with Secretaries to Government , among others . The ideas coming from those sessions are being incorporated into policy . These efforts have been to tap ideas from inside . The next step is to bring in ideas from outside . Culturally , Indians have always been receptive to ideas from elsewhere . It is said in the

Rigveda , which means , let us welcome noble thoughts flowing in from all directions . This is the purpose of the Transforming India Lecture Series . It is a series which we will attend , not as individuals but as part of a team who can collectively make change happen . We will draw the best from the wisdom and knowledge of eminent persons , who changed , or influenced change in the lives of many , to make their nation a better place in the planet . This lecture will be the first in a series . You have all been given a feedback form . I look forward to your detailed and frank feedback to help us improve this process . I request you to suggest names of experts and panelists from inside and outside India . I also request all Secretaries to Government to conduct a follow up discussion in a weeks time , with the participants from their Ministries . The purpose is to convert ideas that emerge in todays session into specific action points relevant to each group . Wherever possible , I request the Ministers also to participate in these sessions . One of the greatest reformers and administrators of our time was Lee Kuan Yew , who transformed Singapore to what it is today . It is therefore fitting that we are inaugurating this series with Shri Tharman Shanmugaratnam , Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore . He is a prolific scholar and public policy maker . Apart from being Deputy Prime Minister , he is also the Coordinating Minister for Economic and Social Policies , Minister of Finance and Chairman of Monetary Authority of Singapore . In the past , he has served as the Minister of Manpower , Second Minister of Finance and Minister of Education . Shri Shanmugaratnam was born in Nineteen Fifty Seven and is of Sri Lankan Tamil ancestry . He earned his Bachelors degree in Economics at the London School of Economics . He has a Masters degree in Economics from Cambridge University . He has another Masters degree in Public Administration from Harvard University . At Harvard , he was honoured with the Littauer Fellow award for his outstanding performance . Shri Shanmugaratnam is one of the worlds leading intellectuals . I would like to give you an example of the range and sweep of his ideas . Today , Singapores economy depends a lot on transshipment . But if global warming melts the polar ice caps , new navigation routes may open and possibly reduce Singapores relevance . I am told he has already started thinking about this possibility and planning for it . Friends . The list of achievements and honours received by Shri Shanmugaratnam is long . But we are all eager to listen to him . Therefore , without further delay , it is with great pleasure that I welcome Shri Tharman Shanmugaratnam to this stage and request him to enlighten us on the subject of India in the Global Economy .