

"Economic Reforms – An Unfinished Agenda"

Good morning, respected judges, dear teachers, and my dear friends,

Let me start with a question that might sound simple, but it's one that carries profound consequences: What is the price of progress? We often celebrate economic reforms as the solution to our greatest challenges. We're told that they unlock prosperity, reduce poverty, and create a world of opportunities. But as we stand here today, we must confront an uncomfortable truth: Economic reforms, as we know them, are an unfinished agenda.

Why unfinished? Because despite years of change, millions of people still struggle to make ends meet. Despite promises of equality, inequality is rising faster than ever. Despite the rapid pace of technological advancements, many are left behind. So, I ask you again—what is the true cost of progress if it leaves so many behind?

1. The Slow, Steady Drift: Where is the Momentum?

Let's begin with the most frustrating reality of economic reforms: they move at a snail's pace.

Imagine this: an economy on the edge of a breakthrough. The doors of opportunity wide open. But then, something happens. There's resistance. Bureaucracy. Politics. Special interests. And before you know it, the door slams shut. The ship of change veers off course. It's like watching a dream get delayed over and over again.

How many times have we heard about reforms that promised to reduce corruption, to improve education, or provide healthcare to all? And yet, for many, those promises remain a distant dream. We know we need change, but when will it come?

Think about the workers in developing countries who continue to work under unsafe conditions, their rights ignored, because the reforms that promised to protect them never fully materialized. Or the farmers who toil for years, but are still trapped in outdated systems because land reforms, despite years of promises, have not been executed.

So, I ask you: Why does change move so slowly when the world is moving faster than ever before?

2. The Great Divide: Are We Growing Together?

Now, let's address something more urgent—inequality. While the rich get richer, the poor get poorer. The gap between them widens every day, and reforms, meant to address this divide, often miss the mark.

Economic growth is often celebrated in grand terms: GDP rises, markets expand, and the stock market hits record highs. But who does this growth really benefit?

Take India, for example, one of the world's fastest-growing economies. Yet, millions of people live in slums, with little to no access to education or healthcare. Ask yourself—does it matter if a country's GDP doubles when its citizens don't feel the benefits?

We cannot call it true progress when half the world is left out. When growth only benefits the elite, is it really growth?

Economic reforms, therefore, cannot just focus on numbers—they must focus on people. Growth must be **inclusive**. It must create opportunities for the poor, the vulnerable, and the marginalized. Only then will we truly experience economic justice.

3. The Digital Revolution: Are We Ready for Tomorrow?

And then there's the digital revolution—disrupting industries and transforming economies. We talk about the rise of artificial intelligence, automation, and globalization. Yet, we also have to face the truth: economic reforms, in many places, are outdated and ill-equipped for this new world.

Look at the factory workers whose jobs are being replaced by robots, or the traditional retailers who are struggling to survive in a world of online giants. The question is: How can we prepare our economies for the future, when we're still trying to catch up with the present?

The reality is, many workers today are not equipped to compete in a digital economy. Reforms need to prioritize education, reskilling, and innovation. Young people should not fear losing their jobs to robots, but instead should be empowered to create and work alongside technology.

Consider the opportunities of tomorrow: **green energy** jobs, digital entrepreneurship, biotechnology. If we fail to adapt our reforms to these changing realities, we risk leaving entire generations behind. How will we ensure that no one is left out of this new world?

4. The Climate Crisis: Can We Afford to Ignore the Planet?

Now, let me ask you this: What good is economic progress if we destroy the very planet we live on?

The climate crisis is no longer a distant threat. It's happening now. The forest fires, the melting glaciers, the rising sea levels—these are not problems we can afford to ignore. Yet, how many economic policies still prioritize profits over environmental protection?

We've built economies that rely on fossil fuels, deforestation, and waste. But today, we face the consequences of that growth. In a world that is rapidly changing, the unfinished agenda of economic reform must include a *green revolution*—one that integrates environmental sustainability into every aspect of our economic planning. We need policies that promote renewable energy, protect our natural resources, and reduce waste.

The future of our planet cannot be treated as an afterthought. Will we choose economic growth that destroys the Earth, or will we choose one that builds a sustainable future for generations to come?

5. Strengthening Institutions: The Backbone of Reform

Finally, let's talk about institutions. Reforms will only succeed if the institutions meant to carry them out are strong, transparent, and capable. Without solid institutions, even the best reforms are like a house built on sand.

For instance, take corruption—the silent killer of progress. Even in economies where reforms have been implemented, corruption undermines every effort. Land reforms are delayed. Social welfare programs are misused. Foreign investments are siphoned off by corrupt officials.

Institutions must be strengthened. They must be accountable. If we are to finish this unfinished agenda, we need governments that not only pass laws but *enforce them fairly*. *If we want real change, we must demand real accountability.

Conclusion: The Call to Action

So, as I stand here before you, I challenge you all to think about this: What kind of world do we want to build? A world where progress is measured only by numbers and profit? Or a world where progress is defined by opportunity, equality, sustainability, and justice?

The unfinished agenda of economic reform is not a burden—it is an opportunity. An opportunity to reshape the future, to make sure that the promise of economic reform is delivered to everyone. But that future will not build itself. It requires bold action. It requires vision. And it requires us to be brave enough to challenge the systems that have held us back for too long.

So, I ask you: Are you ready to finish the unfinished agenda? Are you ready to build a future where everyone has the chance to thrive, where growth is not a privilege for the few, but a right for all?

The time is now. Let's not wait for another decade of empty promises. Let's make economic reforms a reality for everyone.

Thank you.