



CONGRESS

Aam Aadmi ke Badhte Kadam  
Har Kadam Par Bharat Buland

— Lok Sabha Elections 2009 —

# MANIFESTO

— of the Indian National Congress —

## Highlights

## Why Congress?

### The Only Truly National Party

- This is a National Election for installing a government at the Centre that will govern for all of India
- The Congress is the only party with an all-India perspective and presence

### A Track Record of Performance

- The Congress Party's record speaks of its commitment to inclusive growth and development
- The Congress-led UPA government has delivered on the pledges it made to the people in 2004, and will continue to build on this work

### For a United and Secular India that can Fight and Defeat Terror

- Only the Congress Party believes in and works for a united and secular India
- Only a united and secular India can tackle terrorism in a manner that protects the secular fabric of our society

### A Vision for All Indians with Empowerment of Weaker Sections, Women and Youth

- We have a vision and programmes for all sections of our diverse society
- Our actions demonstrate a commitment to the equality of women, empowerment of weaker sections, economic security for farmers and opportunities for the youth

### A Prime Minister with Integrity, Wisdom and Sound Judgement

- In Dr. Manmohan Singh, we have a Prime Minister with unique qualifications, unparalleled experience, impeccable reputation and unquestionable integrity
- His wisdom, knowledge and expertise is needed now more than ever, as the country faces new challenges



**A Vote for Congress. A Vote for Security, Dignity and Prosperity for Every Indian.**

# A Report Card of the Congress-led UPA Government

## Promises Made and Kept

### Good Governance

#### The Right to Information Act, 2005

- ♦ A historic legislation, enabling every citizen to demand responsiveness and accountability from public officials at all levels

### Employment for Poor

#### National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)

- ♦ Providing 100 days of legally guaranteed employment to each rural household seeking employment, ensuring livelihoods and creating community assets
- ♦ Employment provided to 9 crore citizens across India through the scheme

### Urban Development

#### Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM)

- ♦ An unprecedented programme to change the face of our towns and cities by investing in infrastructure and basic services for the poor
- ♦ Projects amounting to Rs. 42,000 crores sanctioned and in progress

### Health & Education

#### National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)

- ♦ New emphasis on quality and accessibility of primary healthcare
- ♦ 6.5 lakh women trained and accredited as social health activists (ASHAs) to provide health services to the people

#### Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Mid-day Meal Scheme

- ♦ Five-fold increase in outlay on primary education compared to the NDA government
  - ♦ Ensured availability of cooked mid-day meals to 15 crore children across India every day

### Empowering Weaker Sections

#### Women's Rights

- ♦ Instituted a new law to protect women from domestic violence
- ♦ Ensured equal rights for women to inherit property

#### SC/ST, OBCs and Minorities

- ♦ Huge expansion in scholarships for SC/ST, Minorities and OBCs
  - ♦ Land Rights for STs/Forest Dwellers

### Record Economic Performance

#### A New Growth Trajectory for India

- ♦ Delivered a record 8.8% average economic growth rate, as against 5.8% average under the NDA government

#### Record Spending on Social Sector

- ♦ Unprecedented step-up in government spending on health, education, agriculture and infrastructure

### Rural Development

#### Bharat Nirman

- ♦ A programme to transform rural India by expanding irrigation, all-weather roads, housing for the poor, drinking water availability, electricity and phone connectivity in all villages

### Economic Security to Farmers

#### National Farm Loan Waiver Program

- ♦ Waived loans worth Rs. 65,000 crores bringing huge relief to small farmers

#### A Better Deal for Farmers

- ♦ Unprecedented increase in MSP and procurement prices to farmers
- ♦ Three-fold increase in credit availability and reduced interest rates for farmers

### National Security

#### A Better Equipped and Prepared Security Apparatus

- ♦ Unprecedented increase in funds, powers and resources to our security agencies; stronger anti-terror laws

#### Establishment of the National Investigation Agency

- ♦ A new specialist agency to investigate and prosecute terror-related cases

#### Securing Jammu & Kashmir

- ♦ Success in addressing terrorism in J&K, as evidenced by the record turnout in the J&K assembly elections

### New Global Standing for India

#### Successful Foreign Policy

- ♦ Concluded civil nuclear agreements with many countries, on our own terms
- ♦ Secured a place of honour for India in every global forum





# The Way Forward 2009-2014

## Elements of our Proposed Work Agenda

### We will guarantee the maximum possible security to each and every citizen

- Ensure zero-tolerance towards terrorism
- Raise and position more specialist forces across the country
- Continue the process of equipping our security forces with cutting-edge weapons, technology and analytical tools
- Do a comprehensive review of VIP/VVIP Security to ensure that our elite forces are not diverted from national security responsibilities
- Ensure a National ID for every citizen by 2011

### We will build on the success of the NREGA and take the scheme forward

- Ensure availability of at least 100 days of work at a real wage of Rs 100 a day as a guaranteed entitlement under the NREGA

### Along the lines of NREGA, we will enact a National Food Security Act

- Enact a Right to Food law that guarantees access to sufficient food for all people, particularly the most vulnerable sections of society
- Every family living below the poverty line will be entitled, by law, to 25 kgs of rice or wheat per month at Rs 3 per kg
- Set up subsidised community kitchens in cities for the homeless and migrants

### We will guarantee health security for all

- Build on the success of the National Rural Health Mission (NHRM) and implement it with an even greater sense of urgency
- Ensure that every family living below the poverty line is covered by the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) over the next three years

### We will make quality education affordable to everyone

- Provide scholarship or an educational loan without collateral to all students admitted to any recognized course in any recognized college or university, on a need basis

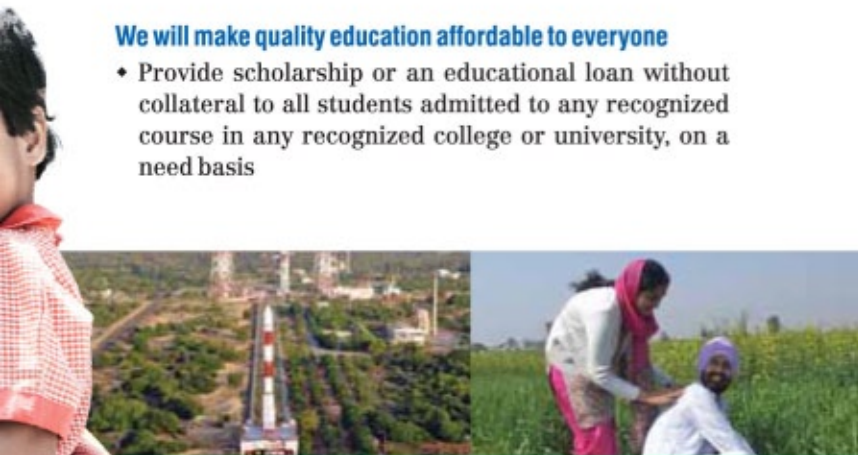
- Focus more sharply on outcomes and learning levels in education and not just on enrolment
- Add one more model school in every block, every year, over the next five years
- Institute a major programme for training of teachers and improving the physical environment in schools
- Ensure timely implementation of the higher education expansion launched under our government – 8 new IITs, 7 new IIMs, 5 new Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research, 30 new Central Universities, 20 new Indian Institutes of Information Technology and 374 new colleges in educationally-deprived districts

### We will implement a nation-wide skill development programme

- Institute an extensive skill development programme to enhance the employability of youth and to reap the “demographic dividend”
- Invest Rs. 30,000 crore in the National Skills Development Mission, and ensure that a wider, more comprehensive spectrum of skills is imparted

### We will expand schemes for the well-being of farmers and their families

- Provide access to bank credit at lower rates of interest to every small and marginal farmer in the country and provide interest relief to farmers who repay loans on schedule
- Systematically pursue programmes for agricultural diversification, agri-processing and rural industrialization
- Ensure Minimum Support Price (MSP) and procurement at the doorsteps of farmers
- Ensure passage of the National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill, 2007, that could not be passed because of the obstructionist tactics of the BJP



## We will give even greater impetus to the empowerment of weaker sections of society

- ♦ Ensure that the Bill for reserving 33% of the seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the State legislatures is passed, as a next step to the success of reservations for women in panchayats and nagarpalikas
- ♦ Endeavour to ensure that at least half of the country's rural women population is enrolled as members of self-help groups linked with banks
- ♦ Establish an Equal Opportunity Commission
- ♦ Expand social security schemes for workers in unorganized sector occupations and ensure equality of opportunity to persons with disabilities
- ♦ Provide free education at all stages – primary, secondary and university – for boys and girls belonging to dalit and adivasi communities
- ♦ Pursue affirmative action policies for SC/ST communities in the private sector
- ♦ Pay the coaching fees for entrance exams for at least one lakh SC/ST students every year

## We will bring a sharp focus on the special needs of children, especially the girl child

- ♦ Ensure that the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, which was established in 2006, continues to protect the interests of children as guaranteed by laws
- ♦ Ensure the universalisation of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) by March 2012 and provide an anganwadi in every habitation
- ♦ Introduce special incentives for the girl child to correct the adverse sex ratio and to ensure education of girl children
- ♦ Provide monetary incentives for the girl child, in districts that have an adverse sex ratio, to be credited to the girl child's account on her completing primary, middle, secondary and higher secondary school

## We will connect all villages to a broadband network in three years time

- ♦ Connect every village to a broadband network within three years. This will help locate new, non-agricultural jobs in villages and open vast new opportunities for our rural youth.

Thus the vision of Rajiv Gandhi – the use of IT for rural transformation – will be realized in even greater measure



## We will give special focus to the small entrepreneur and to small and medium enterprises

- ♦ Provide a “new deal” to SMEs and for first-generation entrepreneurs, assuring them greater access to collateral-free credit, liberating them from the multiplicity of laws and forms, and freeing them from the clutches of inspectors
- ♦ Institute a targeted cluster-based approach to the growth of SMEs, by giving clusters, mostly located in small and medium towns, access to finance, technology, marketing support and infrastructure

## We will maintain the path of high growth with fiscal prudence and low inflation

- ♦ Strive to maintain the growth momentum generated under the Congress-led UPA government (9% per year for the first four years of our term, achieved for the first time in India's history)
- ♦ Pursue relentless emphasis on growth that accelerates the generation of productive jobs for our youth
- ♦ Maintain high growth with low inflation, particularly in relation to prices of essential agricultural and industrial commodities
- ♦ Maintain a path of fiscal responsibility so that the ability of the Centre to invest in essential social and physical infrastructure is continuously enhanced
- ♦ Target subsidies so that it reaches only the truly needy and poor sections of our society
- ♦ Ensure that the people of India own part of the shares of public sector companies
- ♦ Support the manufacturing industry which has seen a revival in recent years, particularly labour-intensive manufacturing
- ♦ Ensure the highest standards of corporate governance in private companies, especially to protect the interests of small shareholders and small investors





### **We will introduce the goods and services tax (GST) from April 1, 2010**

- Introduce a moderate goods and services tax (GST), as the next decisive step after the successful introduction of the VAT. Once GST is implemented, all other central and state-level indirect taxes such as VAT, excise duty, service tax, entertainment tax, luxury tax, etc. will stand abolished and bring substantial relief to the aam admi
- GST will create a seamless national common market for our farmers, artisans and entrepreneurs and will boost employment. State finances, and more importantly the finances of panchayats and nagarpalikas, will be put on sound foundation



### **We will give a completely new look to urban governance**

- Create a new model of urban administration with financially-viable self-government institutions as the pivot
- Undertake a massive programme of low-cost social housing and sanitation to make our urban areas more livable

### **We will offer a new deal to our youth to participate in governance**

- Continue our commitment of empowering our youth, a process which was pioneered by Rajiv Gandhi who gave all 18 year-olds the right to vote and declared Swami Vivekananda's birthday on January 12th as National Youth Day
- Design and launch a voluntary national youth corps which would enable young men and women in the age group of 18-23 to serve for up to two years in constructive nation-building activities
- Make a beginning to induct youth into organs of government. To start with,

reserve a proportion of seats in panchayats and nagarpalikas for men and women below the age of 35 years

### **We will pursue judicial reforms to cut delays in courts**

- Ensure the implementation of the the Gram Nyayalaya Act that was passed by Parliament last year
- Gram Nyayalayas at the headquarters of the intermediate panchayats and mobile courts in the rural areas will bring speedy, affordable and substantial justice to the aam admi

### **We will ensure energy security for our country**

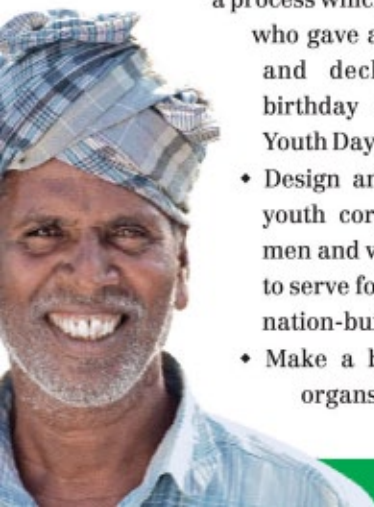
- Ensure that the country adds at least 12,000-15,000 mw of energy generation capacity every year through a mix of sources
- Ensure that rural electrification and reduction in distribution losses is given the highest priority
- Increase the share of nuclear power, both through domestic and foreign technology, which has now become possible by the civil nuclear agreements signed by our government

### **We will take further steps to preserve and promote our heritage**

- Institute a statutory National Heritage Sites Commission. This will be an important instrument to strengthen the foundations of our pluralistic culture and inheritances

### **We will intensify the involvement of overseas Indians in development**

- Ensure the continuation of the successful activities of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs that was created by us in May 2004 to connect with and maximise the contributions of the overseas Indian community to our country's progress
- Establish four new universities with 50% of the seats reserved for PIO/ NRI students



## An Appeal

- ♦ The Indian National Congress has been central to the public life of our country for almost 125 years
- ♦ It embodies the very idea of India like no other party
- ♦ Throughout its long history, the priorities, policies and programmes of the Indian National Congress have been anchored in a vision of an economically prosperous, socially just, politically united and culturally harmonious India
- ♦ Steadfastness to basic principles has never impeded responsiveness to new and emerging challenges
- ♦ The people of our country have, time and again, placed their trust and confidence in the Indian National Congress
- ♦ It has been the relentless endeavour of the Indian National Congress to fulfill the expectations of our people
- ♦ Much has been accomplished in the past six decades
- ♦ But much more remains to be done
- ♦ The Indian National Congress comes before the people of India with utmost humility, proud of its achievements but always conscious of the tasks awaiting us as a nation
- ♦ The Indian National Congress appeals to the people of India to vote for it on the strength of its contributions, its convictions, its concerns and its charter
- ♦ Through this manifesto, the Indian National Congress renews its resolve to remain the foremost instrument of socio-economic transformation based on conviction, commitment, competence and compassion
- ♦ Through this manifesto, the Indian National Congress rededicates itself to the politics of service and the politics of strengthening the foundations of the modern Indian nation-state
- ♦ Through this manifesto, the Indian National Congress pledges to the people of our country its determination to implement its promises with a single-minded sense of purpose
- ♦ *Vote for the Idea of India: Vote Indian National Congress*
- ♦ *Vote for Unity through Diversity: Vote Indian National Congress*
- ♦ *Vote for Economic Growth with Communal Harmony: Vote Indian National Congress*
- ♦ *Vote for Economic Growth with Social Justice: Vote Indian National Congress*
- ♦ *Vote for Security, Stability, Continuity and Integrity: Vote Indian National Congress*
- ♦ *A Vote for the Congress is a Vote For Your Future and the Future of Your Children*



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