

**Presidential address by Hon. Education Minister at the  
Inaugural Session of the International Meet on  
Transnational Education (3 PM on January 3, 2014)**

Presiding over the Inaugural Session of the International Meet on Transnational Education, organized by the Kerala State Higher Education Council, I am happy to welcome the delegates, particularly those from outside the state and from abroad. Your presence here is testimony to your enthusiasm to join efforts to enhance the quality of higher education in Kerala. I hope that you will have fruitful exchanges in the next three days. The Government of Kerala looks forward to your conclusions and recommendations.

The Kerala State Higher Education Council has been working in several areas, which require urgent attention in the higher education sector. One among them is the expansion of our international linkages, with a view to adopting the best practices available in countries, which have achieved excellence in education. The objective of this International Meet is to exchange ideas on the latest trends in higher education and to develop models, which will be suitable for Kerala. The timing is indeed appropriate as we are about to embark on a major programme of expansion, equity and excellence through a paradigm shift in central funding for state institutions of higher education.

Kerala has had a long tradition of reaching out to the world for education, employment and enterprise. No country in the world is without the presence of people from our state. Our people can adapt themselves to various countries and cultures, as we ourselves have welcomed several streams of people from different countries and continents. Our graduates have flourished around the globe and contributed to learning and innovation in some of the advanced countries. Obviously, the basic education they have received in our schools and universities is sound and can be built on with modern methods of teaching and technology. I hope that this Meet will throw up ideas, which will enable us to use new methods and technology in our institutions. A special technical session has been planned to obtain political advice on the suitability of these methods in the Kerala context.

We would like our cooperation with the outside world to be reciprocal and balanced. Just as we would like our students and teachers to have access to the best systems in the world, we would also like to offer the best we have in terms of knowledge and specialization. An International Relations Group, set up by the

Government, has developed guidelines for the universities to design courses in special areas in which Kerala has special talents, whether it is indigenous medicine, classical dances, literature and martial arts. Considering the very low cost of good education in Kerala, it can become a destination for educational tourism and we have decided to set up facilities, which are palatable to foreign students. I hope we will be able to showcase some of these at this Meet to initiate a two-way collaboration in higher education.

Apart from the discussions on the new trends in education, we have sessions on quality assurance, credit transfer, world ranking system and role of the private sector, which are issues that are relevant to any system of education. I hope that the Thiruvananthapuram Declaration which will come out of this Meet would be comprehensive, practical and forward-looking.

I wish you the very best in your deliberations. I hope that you will take time off from your busy schedule to savor the natural beauty and the culinary specialties of Kerala.

Thank you.