NITI Aayog Organizes High-Level Workshop on Ease of Doing Business & Investment Promotion

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NITI Aayog today hosted a high-level Workshop on Ease of Doing Business and Investment Promotion in New Delhi, bringing together senior policymakers from the Centre and States to accelerate business reforms across India.

The Workshop was held under the leadership of **Shri Rajiv Gauba**, Member, NITI Aayog and featured a Special Address by **Shri B.V.R. Subrahmanyam**, CEO, NITI Aayog. Senior officials from eight States participated physically, while officials from other States and Union Territories joined virtually. The event also saw participation from DPIIT, Department of Revenue, Ministry of MSME, and representatives of leading industry bodies including CII, FICCI, and FISME.

Deliberations were held across seven core reform areas vital to investment facilitation and improving the ease of doing business at the sub-national level. These included Decriminalisation of Laws; Deregulation and Compliance Burden Reduction; Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP) Implementation; Development of Industrial Infrastructure; Single Window Clearance Systems; Financial and Taxation Reforms; Investment Promotion Strategies.

During the session on decriminalization and compliance reform, several States presented their ongoing initiatives stemming from the Jan Vishwas Act 1.0, highlighting efforts to decriminalize minor business-related offences at the State level. States also emphasized a shift toward enhancing the "Speed of Doing Business", with a focus on reducing the number of stages in the business lifecycle to enable faster, more seamless operations for enterprises.

The discussion underscored the need to convert minor business offences into civil penalties, while also streamlining compliance mechanisms to reduce the burden on entrepreneurs. States shared examples of removing imprisonment clauses, adopting self-certification regimes, removal of licence renewal and simplifying regulatory touchpoints to encourage ease of compliance and build trust with businesses.

There was also a strong emphasis on aligning State-level actions with the national Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP) framework, ensuring that reforms lead to measurable and comparable improvements. Industry representatives advocated for the enactment of a national-level legislation to harmonise decriminalization and compounding provisions, across States. They also suggested the introduction of a Trusted Taxpayers Programme for both direct and indirect taxes, to incentivize compliance and promote a more facilitative regulatory environment.

The **spirit of cooperation and consensus within the GST Council** was widely appreciated during the discussions. Participants highlighted the **gradual reduction of tax rates**, particularly benefiting small companies—**90% of whom have transitioned smoothly to the new regime**. The **rationalisation of TDS** was also acknowledged as a significant step, with participants noting that such measures have contributed meaningfully to **reducing litigation and enhancing tax certainty**, thereby supporting the overall Ease of Doing Business agenda.

During the workshop, **States showcased models for plug-and-play industrial infrastructure, hastle free land allotment, and investor-focused service delivery**. Discussions also highlighted the **need for end-to-end digitisation of State Single Window Clearance Systems**, with emphasis on integration, predictability, and measurable turnaround times.

Participants discussed **how fiscal incentives could be made more predictable, timely, and easier to claim**, especially for MSMEs. The importance of **logistics connectivity and Customs efficiency** in attracting large-scale investment was also underlined, especially in the context of Make in India and global value chain integration.

The final session on **Investment Promotion Strategies** stressed the need to **institutionalise investment promotion as a continuous, core State function rather than an event-based activity**. States presented **innovative, sector-specific strategies grounded in local strengths and global demand trends**.

The role of **dedicated Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs)** was underlined, with a focus on **building professional capacity, investor handholding, and post-investment support**. Many States shared how they are **leveraging data analytics, CRM tools, chatbots and digital platforms** to systematically manage investor pipelines and engagement.

A key takeaway from the session was that **long-term investor trust depends not only on facilitation at entry, but also on consistent post-establishment support**, including **timely grievance redressal, policy stability**, and seamless coordination across departments. Additionally, **strong branding and coordinated domestic and international outreach**—including collaboration with industry associations and Indian missions abroad—was recognised as a critical enabler for attracting quality investment.

In his Special Address, **Shri B.V.R. Subrahmanyam**, CEO, NITI Aayog, underscored the critical role of **state-level execution** in shaping India's overall investment climate. He emphasized that **there is much to learn from within the country itself**, citing the diversity of successful models across States. He called for **streamlined systems, enhanced accountability, and coordinated efforts between the Centre and States** to make India the most attractive and dependable destination for global capital.

Delivering the Keynote Address, **Shri Rajiv Gauba**, Member, NITI Aayog, noted that **Ease of Doing Business is a work in progress** and stressed the importance of reforms at the **municipal level within States**. He highlighted the potential for **collaboration between NITI Aayog and DPIIT** to support States in adopting a **principle-based approach to decriminalisation**. He also urged all States to undertake their own version of **Jan Vishwas-type reforms**, aimed at reducing regulatory overreach and fostering business confidence.

Shri S.C.L. Das, Secretary, Ministry of MSME, highlighted the need to strengthen the **institutional interface of MSMEs with CBIC and State/UT governments**. He further underlined the importance of ensuring **affordable finance, skill development, digitisation**, and robust **forward and backward market linkages** for MSMEs to thrive in a competitive business environment.

The Workshop served as a platform for **experience-sharing, peer learning, and forward-looking strategy development**. It reinforced NITI Aayog's commitment to **supporting States through knowledge exchange, benchmarking, and reform-oriented collaboration**. The insights from the discussions will feed into the creation of a **Model FDI Promotion Template**, intended to guide States in enhancing their investment readiness and reform execution.

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