



From the CGDA's Desk

First, an honest confession! I didn't write this message from the CGDA's desk, though it says so. I wrote this from my home in the wee hours of June 1, 2015 – before cockcrow when it was all quiet and a dull aching summer stillness engulfed the gummy air hanging low beyond my bedroom window – and hours before I took over as the CGDA and (worse!) even before I had demitted charge of my previous assignment in the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change. So, why did I use the title I've given which perhaps I could've done without? Doesn't it amount to intellectual dishonesty? Strictly speaking, it does. And I'm fully aware of it.

For me to have persevered with it is hence quite strange, only worsened by my confession. Well, the reason I use the title is because I had used the same when I was a CDA/PCDA. I liked it the first time I did and also through the years, even like it today – only perhaps more! Old habits die hard. It's almost as if I couldn't find a better alternative. But rest assured every time I write henceforth, it shall be only from my desk, and from nowhere else. A small folly but something I couldn't do without – I couldn't have written this the first day of taking charge off the CGDA's desk!

I begin with this small confession because it is intellectual dishonesty that's in my mind lately. And to all members of my extended DAD family I won't wish to be anything less than truthful while extending my hearty and warm greetings as the CGDA and conveying to them what I wish to do and, in turn, what I expect them to do. At the cost of sounding presumptuous, I would say upfront that *honesty, fairness, transparency, equity, efficiency, effectiveness, value-for-public funds spent* shall permeate every endeavor of mine. Needless to say, since you all individually and collectively make up this vast DAD family, I would naturally expect the same from you.

I must admit to another personal weakness. I am an ardent single-speaker and (naturally) I don't fancy double-speakers, let alone multi-speakers. We so easily discern a double- or multi-speaker, don't we? Though we wouldn't say it in so many words, we all get to sense the lies that are peddled around and the wool that's pulled over our eyes. It creates disquiet among people – not the best way to create a healthy ecosystem to work in – and tension kicks in, stressing us all. We need to avoid this. This is also the reason why we need to be *polite*. Politeness begets politeness and ripples out, embracing all and offering a working atmosphere that is a win-win for all. So let's do that and keep pomposity out.

Being a service department, *empathy* is something I can't avoid stressing. Put yourself in other men's shoes (chappals and floaters!) and think how it feels to be given a shoddy short shrift. Think! You'll get the answer yourself. I don't need to elaborate. *Honesty, fairness, equity et al* are entwined and, needless to say, are the armoury to ensure *transparency*. It is heartening that *transparency* is the buzzword today. We speak of it as the oxygen in official transactions. *Efficiency, effectiveness, economy and value-for-money realization* are indeed the props of transparency architecture. So let's all work together to provide all of these.

I don't intend to typecast this page with homilies. Nor do I intend granting this column any timeline. I'll convey anything I think important enough to convey regardless of frequency. It could be monthly, weekly, even daily, as per the diktats of importance and the thoughts to convey. But one thing is clear and constant: it shall need all of you to put your body and mind together all the time and work in making this great department an exemplar for all others to emulate and follow. Cheers and Godspeed!