

ECOSOC High Level Political Forum, 2021
General Debate
July 13, 2020
India Statement

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nations across the world are accelerating the implementation of sustainable solutions to the world's biggest challenges - ranging from poverty, hunger, gender inequality to climate change. COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted decades of development progress on many fronts and push millions back into poverty. We need to collectively fast track the achievement of SDGs that will ensure an inclusive and sustainable recovery from the impacts of the pandemic in this "Decade of Action".

A pandemic of this nature has necessitated not just a "whole-of-government approach" but a "whole-of-society" approach. It also requires us to source solutions and capacities on a global basis.

India has been driving an array of SDG initiatives, such as National Health Insurance Scheme, National Nutrition Mission and Clean India Mission. We have developed specialized tools and programs to implement, monitor and evaluate SDGs at various levels such as the "SDG India Index & Dashboard". Programmes are aimed at universal access to housing, sanitation, quality education, health protection, and clean energy which will improve quality of life especially of the most vulnerable.

Since the advent of the 2030 Agenda, we have expanded access to clean cooking fuel to over 85 million households in need; built over 110 million toilets in rural areas to improve sanitation; and added over 420 million bank accounts for the unbanked and majority of them women. Our food security programmes are successfully addressing issues of malnourishment among children and women. To cope with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have announced a food security scheme which will ensure sufficient food during COVID-19 targeting 800 million people under National Food Security Act.

Partnerships with the private sector and civil society are showing results in high-impact areas. India's second VNR entitled, "Decade of Action: Taking SDGs from Global to Local", at the 2020 HLPF, was a symbol of the "whole of-society" approach adopted. It was a unique saga of partnerships, playing a significant role in improving collaboration among various stakeholders across levels and contributing to progress on SDGs.

To enhance data collection at local level, we have developed “SDG India Index & Dashboard” using a globally accepted methodology with extensive consultations with civil society. It measures the progress at the national and local levels in our journey towards meeting the Goals and targets. The 2021 edition of the Index covers all 17 Goals, 70 targets, and 115 indicators. The utility of the Index extends beyond progress monitoring - it has implemented cooperative and competitive federalism in true spirit, by facilitating peer learning and healthy competition among States.

Right from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, India has been committed to sharing all our experiences, expertise and resources with the global community in this battle. Despite all our constraints, we have tried to share as much as possible with the world. And, we remain eager to learn from global practices.

India reached out to 150 countries in a spirit of solidarity to supply medicines, medical equipment and other urgent requirements when the pandemic began. Our partner countries have also come forward to help and support India in its time of need during the second wave of the pandemic.

We have also deployed technology to battle the pandemic. A recent illustration is the Co-WIN portal, which forms the technological backbone of India’s vaccination drive through which India has administered 380 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines as on 13 July, 2021. This is a scalable, inclusive and open platform that can be customized and ramped up for health interventions across the globe. India has offered Co-WIN as a digital public good to the world to combat COVID-19. We have even called for TRIPS waiver to scale up manufacturing of COVID-19 vaccines in developing countries

Despite our development needs, we have shown strong commitment to climate action. We are on track to meet our Paris commitment targets and according to Climate Action Tracker; India is the only G20 country with “2°C compatible” targets. Energy is at the centre of India’s ambition and agenda. We are augmenting India’s renewable power capacity with a target of installation of 450 GW renewable energy by 2030.

The role of international cooperation is more critical than ever before. India continues to strengthen global partnerships and is committed to South-South Cooperation to support efforts of developing countries especially LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS to achieve their developmental goals through necessary assistance. As a consequence, India has actively promoted the International Solar Alliance (ISA), the Coalition for Disaster Resilience Infrastructure (CDRI) and the India-UN Development Partnership Fund.

When we seek to 'build back better' from the current pandemic, it is important that not only we exhibit solidarity and share resources, but it is equally important for developed countries to come forward in the same spirit and make sure that there is no slackening in their commitments to achieve their Paris Agreement targets and the 2030 Agenda.

We need to make sustainability the cornerstone of our development philosophy and find need innovative solutions which can work at grass root level. India will continue to deepen its efforts to achieve SDGs. We will be guided by the approach of 'One Earth, One Health', which will help humanity in overcoming this pandemic.

Indian civilization considers the whole world as one family. This pandemic has made many people realize the fundamental truth of this philosophy. In this Decade of Action, we should act together in ensuring that the benefits of development reach everyone everywhere, leaving no one behind.

I thank you.