

**PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**  
**NEW YORK**

**India's Approach to the 76th session of the UNGA**

The 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly [76th UNGA] opened on 14 September 2021 and will end on 12 September 2022. The general debate of the 76<sup>th</sup> UNGA was held from Tuesday, 21 September, to Saturday, 25 September, and on Monday, 27 September 2021.

2. H. E. Mr. Abdulla Shahid, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Maldives, was elected to serve as President of the 76th session of the General Assembly [PGA]. The election took place at United Nations Headquarters, in New York on 7 June 2021.

3. PGA H. E. Abdulla Shahid has spelled out five priorities for his presidency, called as five rays of hope. These are i) Recovering from Covid-19; ii) Rebuilding sustainably; iii) Responding to the needs of the planet; iv) Respecting the rights of all; and v) Revitalizing United Nations.

4. As set out in PGA's priorities, the challenges for the member states in the coming year will be many. The world continues to grapple with Covid-19 pandemic and its socio-economic impact. There is an urgent need for resilient supply chains to sustain vaccine production.

5. The covid-19 pandemic has also affected our efforts on the 2030 Agenda and reversed years of progress on poverty, hunger, health care, education, climate change, access to clean water, and environmental protection. The 'Decade of Action' for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) need to be put back on track.

6. Climate change is one of the defining challenges of our time. Without drastic actions by us collectively, adapting to its impacts in the future will be more difficult and costlier.

7. The pandemic has impacted how we fight terrorism. The world is witnessed to the increased use of terrorism by countries as a means of waging war against others. It is essential for all member states to not only not squander the gains of what has been achieved so far but also ensure that they do not give the slightest opportunity to provide excuses or justification for terrorism, thereby diminishing the collective fight.

8. The pandemic has also underlined the need for global solidarity and for reformed multilateralism. The cross-national and cross-domain challenges facing the world demand effective multilateral approaches. They require empowered and functional international institutions of governance.

9. Thus, the focus of 76<sup>th</sup> UNGA will be on measures towards overcoming the pandemic; combating terrorism; strengthening of multilateralism; furthering of human rights; combating climate change; strengthening development and furthering peace and security.

10. India's priorities during 76<sup>th</sup> UNGA will be defined and guided by the above challenges. India's priorities will also be guided by its core foreign policy objectives, including to support and enhance overall domestic socio-economic growth and strengthen security in the immediate neighborhood, in line with the vision of our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

**Priority issues:**

11. India is currently serving 2-year term as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. India has strived to achieve its priorities, i.e., New Opportunities for progress; An Effective

response to international terrorism; Reforming the multilateral system; A comprehensive approach to international peace and security; and Promoting technology with a human touch as a driver of solutions, by adopting an approach guided by "Five S's", as set out by the Prime Minister; Samman (Respect); Samvad (Dialogue), Sahyog (Cooperation), and Shanti (Peace), to create conditions for universal Samriddhi (Prosperity). India's overall objective during this tenure in the UN Security Council will be the achievement of N.O.R.M.S: a New Orientation for a Reformed Multilateral System. The 'Five S's will also be the guiding light in our approach to 76th UNGA.

12. At the 76th UNGA, India will engage on a wide range of issues ranging from socio-economic and cultural issues, terrorism, peacekeeping, human rights, legal matters, to budgetary issues. India shall continue to project its longstanding and growing credentials as a South-South development partner, especially in the context of the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, Financing for Development and also its commitment to the idea of global partnership under SDG 17 including on climate change; [as co-founder of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)].

13. An indicative list of priority issues for India during 76th UNGA are:

i. Maintain India's active engagement on issues relating to sustainable development and climate change.

ii. India will continue to showcase commitments and achievements in women led development particularly women's leadership and political participation at the grassroots level, prevention of sexual

harassment and violence against women, providing access to clean cooking fuel, sanitation and health coverage including maternal and child health etc.

iii. India will continue to advocate the need for resilient supply chains to sustain vaccine production to ensure equitably and affordable access. Promote Indian positions and arguments in the consultations and subsequent inter-governmental negotiations on Universal Health Coverage.

iv. Strengthen engagement with fellow developing countries, especially LLDCs, LDCs and SIDS through the India-UN Development Partnership Fund and IBSA Fund in the spirit of South-South cooperation.

v. Bring India's perspective to the debates relating to human rights including the right to development and will continue to highlight India's achievements in realizing the rights of different groups including women, children, minorities, and persons with disabilities.

vi. Attach greater prominence to issues relating to counter-terrorism; pushing for more transparency in the process of listing and delisting of entities and individuals in sanction committees.

vii. Engage substantively as a Troop Contributing Country in finalizing of mandates for UN peacekeeping missions. Raising the issue of pending arrears of closed peacekeeping missions and other claims.

viii. Take forward India's pragmatic and constructive approach on disarmament issues at the First Committee and UN Disarmament Commission and engage with all partners on issues related to space, small arms and light weapons, etc.

ix. Continue to pursue the issue of reform of the Security Council for a meaningful outcome in the 76th UNGA.

x. Continue efforts to further increase the visibility and footprint of the use of Hindi@UN project.

### **Developmental issues and climate action**

14. **2030 Agenda:** Strategies for a 'New India' by 2022, and the country's vision for 2030 are aligned with the spirit of achieving the 2030 Agenda. The various flagship programmes- Poshan Abhiyaan, Ayushman Bharat, Swacch Bharat, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Skill India, Ujjwala Yojana, Rural Electrification program, Smart Cities Mission –directly address the challenges highlighted by the SDGs. The slogan of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas' mirrors the essence of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, of leaving no one behind. **Localisation of SDGs** has been ascribed utmost importance, as the States and Union Territories are the actual implementers of the country's ambitious development agenda. India's success in adopting, implementing, and monitoring SDGs stands testimony to the principle of cooperative federalism. India would be highlighting and sharing details of these success stories for the benefit of other member states.

15. **South-South Cooperation:** India has considerable experience in South-South Cooperation, bilaterally as well as through collaboration with the UN. India has set up US\$ 150 million **India-UN Development Partnership Fund**, managed by UNOSSC. The Fund

continues to support South-owned and South-led sustainable development projects with a focus on LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. In four years, the Fund has accumulated a portfolio of **66 projects in 52 countries**. As part of **Covid response**, the India-UNDP Fund has commissioned **projects in 15 countries** ranging from Antigua & Barbuda in the Caribbean to Palau in the South Pacific. The IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa) Fund for the Alleviation of Poverty and Hunger also hosted at the UNOSSC is another unique mechanism for South-South Cooperation. We will continue our commitment in building on our development partnerships.

**16. Financing for Development:** The Addis Ababa Action Agenda aligns domestic & international resource flows, policies and international agreements with economic, social and environmental priorities. The annual ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development (FfD Forum) is an intergovernmental process mandated to discuss the follow-up and review of the financing for development outcomes and the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We will continue to contribute to this effort.

**17. Eradication of Poverty:** As global recovery from COVID is strived for, the 76<sup>th</sup> UNGA is set to look at **recovery and resilience**. One of the long-term effects of the pandemic will be that millions of people may be pushed into extreme poverty. In India, the Government is implementing a comprehensive development strategy to end poverty in all its forms, through accelerated economic growth and broader social safety nets. We will share our experience and continue to focus on poverty eradication.

**18. Focus on Climate and Nature:** 76<sup>th</sup> UNGA is associated with multiple conferences and meetings—such as **COP26** on climate change in November 2021 that will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; the **Ocean Conference** that aims to propel science-based innovative solutions for starting a new chapter of global ocean action; **COP15 biodiversity** in October 2021/May 2022 to review the achievement and delivery of the CBD's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020; **COP15 on desertification**

in May 2022 to focus on land degradation issues; **Stockholm+50** on human environment to discuss transformation leading to sustainable & green economies; apart from the **Energy Dialogue and Food Systems Summit** that took place during the High Level week in September 2021.

19. India is a leader in Climate Action. Addressing this challenge requires us to evolve a comprehensive approach which covers education to values, and lifestyle to developmental philosophy. Respect for nature, the judicious use of resources, reducing our needs and living within our means have all been important aspects of both India's traditions and its present-day efforts. As Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has said, respect for nature is an integral part of our culture and protection of environment comes naturally to us.

20. Among G-20, India is on track to meet its climate change mitigation commitments. We currently have the **fastest-growing solar energy programme** in the world. We have expanded access to **clean cooking fuel** to cover over 80 million households in need, which has led to energy saving of about 47 billion kWh per year and reduction of 38 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. This is among the **largest clean energy drives** globally. The renewable energy installed capacity in India has grown 162% in the last five years. India's solar installed capacity has increased by about 13 times in last 6 years. Government has revised the target of grid connected solar power projects to 100,000 MW under the National Solar Mission.

21. As we go into COP 26 this year, there are several threads that need to be addressed: Climate Ambition needs to go hand-in hand with the **framework for financial, technical and capacity building support** to countries that need it. We will also highlight the importance for countries to fulfill their pre-2020 commitments.

22. India along with South Africa have taken the lead in the WTO on a COVID-19 vaccine Intellectual Property Rights waiver and the use of flexibilities of the TRIPS Agreement and the Doha Declaration on TRIPS Agreement and Public Health. We are working actively with GAVI, WHO and ACT Accelerator. India will continue to mobilize

member states towards ensuring equitable and affordable access to covid-19 vaccines.

### **Human Rights & Social Issues:**

23. In the coming year high-level UNGA meetings on appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to **Combat Trafficking in Persons** (22-23 November 2021) and on **improving global road safety** (July 2022) will be convened.

24. During the 76<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly, India would continue to play a constructive and balancing role on all women-related matters considering India's emphasis on women-led development and protection and promotion of women's rights in implementation of SDGs.

25. India will continue to emphasize that discussions on Human Rights at the UN should be held with a constructive approach and the human rights processes at the UN should emphasize on dialogue, cooperation, transparency and non-selectivity in the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for everyone. The focus of the Human Rights Council, the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Special Rapporteurs and the entire Treaty Body mechanisms must be to strengthen the capabilities of national governments in their efforts towards promotion and protection of human rights. India had last presented its third Universal Periodic Review on its implementation of various human rights conventions in Geneva in May 2017.

26. Under the plenary agenda item '**Culture of Peace**', India will call upon the **United Nations Alliance of Civilizations** for greater inclusivity in the dialogue process to ensure that the inter-religious dialogue is broad-based and encompasses all faiths and not be selective. India would continue to impress that the Alliance should not be used as a platform for divisive political rhetoric and must focus on issues that unite us rather than on those that divide us.

27. **Commission for Social Development**, a functional commission of ECOSOC, is the advisory body responsible for the social development pillar of global development. It is the key United Nations body in charge of the follow up and implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995. The 60<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission will take place in February 2022 on the priority theme “Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda”. We will continue to use the general debate and other platforms to highlight our national policies and programs focused on inclusive growth, in line with SDGs, and directed towards realization of our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi’s vision of ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’[Self-reliant India].

28. India is a member of **Commission on the Status of Women**, a functional commission of UN ECOSOC, is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Commission takes a leading role in monitoring and reviewing progress and problems in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and in mainstreaming a gender perspective in UN activities. The 66<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission will take place in March 2022 on the priority theme “Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes”. Given India’s leadership role in climate change, we would focus on the role of women in environmental and disaster risk reduction actions and continue to play an active role in negotiating concise and forward-looking sets of recommendations for gender equality and women empowerment in the 76th UNGA.

29. India is a member of the **Committee on NGOs** of the ECOSOC which is the intergovernmental body responsible for granting consultative status with ECOSOC to non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As of August 2021, 5,593 NGOs enjoy active consultative status with ECOSOC. While supporting the role of civil society in the

working of the UN, India will continue to scrutinize the applications by NGOs thoroughly with an aim to prevent misuse of the status by dubious NGOs.

### **Decolonization and Political issues:**

30. India was the co-sponsor of the landmark 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, adopted by the General Assembly, which proclaimed the need to unconditionally end colonialism in all its forms and manifestations. In 1962, India was elected as the first chair of the Decolonization Committee (Committee of 24) that was established to monitor implementation of the 1960 Declaration and to make recommendations on its application. India continues to be an active member of the Committee. India believes that pursuing a pragmatic approach towards Decolonization would surely lead to fulfillment of legitimate wishes of the people of Non-Self Governing Territories. India remains committed to the objective of Decolonization and offers firm support to further accelerate the process.

### **Disarmament and non-proliferation:**

31. India is steadfast in its commitment to the goal of universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament. As a responsible nuclear weapon State, India is committed as per its nuclear doctrine, to maintain credible minimum deterrence with the posture of no-first use and non-use against non-nuclear weapon States. Without diminishing the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament, India supports the immediate commencement of negotiations in the CD of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty on the basis of CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein, which remains the most suitable basis for negotiations to commence, as reinforced by the outcomes of the GGE on FMCT as well as the High-Level Expert Preparatory Group on FMCT. India attaches very high importance to the CWC and supports all efforts to strengthen the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to enable it to fulfill its mandate within the framework of the Convention.

32. India has been consistent in expressing concerns on the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, which endangers international peace and security. There is also a growing concern in the international community about the possibility of terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction. Through its annual Resolution at the UNGA, titled "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction", India has been drawing the attention of the world towards these threats and the need to strengthen international cooperation to address them. India will continue pursue this agenda during 76th UNGA.

### **Administrative and budgetary issues:**

33. 76th UNGA is expected to discuss and consider inter alia, the issue of Scale of Assessment. The scales of assessment (for assesses contribution and peacekeeping contribution) are reviewed and approved every three years by the General Assembly on the advice of the Committee on Contributions (COC) and in turn the Fifth Committee. The scale of assessments applicable for the period 2022-24 will be reviewed by the Fifth Committee in the main part of 76th General Assembly in October-December 2021 on the advice of COC. India will engage constructively in a cooperative spirit to find an agreement on the scale of assessments.

### **Peacekeeping:**

34. India is proud of its long and rich tradition of contribution to UN peacekeeping operations. India has contributed more than 250,000 troops in 49 Missions over the years, cumulatively the largest from any country. UN peacekeepers today operate in a complex security environment involving armed groups, non-state actors and terrorists. The ever-expanding mandates of peacekeeping missions with limited resources has only added to the challenges and complexities that peacekeepers face on the ground. The strategy of peacekeepers needing to do more with less, is setting peacekeeping missions towards a potential crisis. Peacekeeping missions cannot be a long-term response to what are fundamentally political problems.

35. Against this background, India will work with other troop and police contributing countries towards reducing the burden on peacekeepers with responsibilities which ought to primarily lie with the host state or other relevant international organisations. India will continue to advocate authorization of carefully thought-out mandates to peacekeepers in close consultation with troop contributing countries.

### **Counter terrorism:**

36. India has always been at the forefront of global counter terrorism efforts. In 1996, long before the adoption of Resolution 1373, India took the initiative to pilot the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism with the objective of providing a comprehensive legal framework to combating terrorism. India has signed and ratified all the major conventions and protocols on terrorism adopted by the UN, and is part of all major global initiatives in that regard.

37. The world witnessed 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of September 11 attack earlier this month. The resolution 1373, adopted aftermath of September 11 attack in 2001, and the Counter Terrorism Committee continue to the important pillars of the global architecture against terrorism. Other UN initiatives, including the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, also play an important part in augmenting capabilities of member States and extending technical and capacity building assistance. The UN sanctions regime has also been an effective tool in the fight against terrorism.

38. In recent years, terrorist groups and lone wolf attackers have significantly enhanced their capabilities by gaining access to new and emerging technologies, including drones, virtual currencies and encrypted communications. Social media networks have contributed to the radicalization and recruitment of youth. The COVID-19 pandemic has only further aggravated the situation. Today, the world needs reinvigorated efforts to combat terrorism. Recent developments in our neighbourhood has raised the anxiety of countries with respect to weakening of global efforts to fight terror. The threat of terrorism

pervades across the globe with terrorists adopting to the new situations and expanding to new territories. Cross border terrorism remains a political tool for certain countries with established credentials of harboring terrorists' sanctioned by the Security Council. Nothing can and should justify terrorism.

39. India has proposed following eight-point action plan to the international community in the fight against terrorism: i) Summon the political will: don't justify terrorism, don't glorify terrorists, ii) No double standards. Terrorists are terrorists; distinctions are made only at our own peril, iii) Don't place blocks and holds on listing requests without any reason, iv) Discourage exclusivist thinking and be on guard against new terminologies and false priorities, v) Enlist and delist objectively, not on political or religious considerations, vi) Recognize the linkage to organized crime, vii) Support and strengthen the FATF, and viii) Provide greater funding to the UN Office of Counter Terrorism.

40. India will continue to pursue implementation of above action plan in the 76 UNGA and work with other like-minded member states to end the stalemate preventing the adoption of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. India will be chairing the Counter Terrorism Committee of the Security Council during 2022.

### **UN Reforms:**

41. The reforms of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council will continue to be one of the top priorities for India during 76 UNGA. Towards this end, India will continue to pursue the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) process in a purposeful manner to initiate text-based negotiations to be conducted with an overall objective of achieving concrete outcomes in a fixed timeframe.

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