

**58<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission for Social Development  
'Affordable housing and social protection systems for all to  
address homelessness'**

**INDIA STATEMENT  
By  
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Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of my delegation, I take this opportunity to felicitate you and other Bureau members on your election.

We also thank the Secretary General for the comprehensive reports.

My delegation aligns with the statement delivered on behalf of the G77.

This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development.

In Copenhagen we pledged to empower people to maximize their capacities, resources and opportunities and to eradicate poverty, unemployment and social exclusion.

Despite sustained economic growth over the last few decades, we are still striving to achieve these goals.

As per Human Development Report 2019, while there is broad convergence among basic capabilities, divergence among enhanced capabilities is a formidable challenge.

Climate change is exacerbating poverty and inequality.

Rapid technological changes are opening new vistas. But it is also upending the nature of jobs, posing urgent policy challenges.

Rapid urbanization is creating unprecedented opportunities. It is also deepening the rural urban divide.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with its clarion call to leave no one behind, complements the Copenhagen agenda. The social dimensions of sustainable development, therefore, needs particular focus in this Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs by 2030.

This year's priority theme is of particular relevance in this context.

Homelessness is symptomatic of deep rooted economic and social challenges. Homeless people are often the poorest and the most vulnerable in the society, in both developed and developing countries.

Yet, the issue of access to affordable housing is often not accorded the same level of priority at an international level, as the other basic needs.

This year's priority theme, therefore, provides a unique opportunity analyze the complex causes and consequences of homelessness, and to come up with action oriented outcome.

We need to focus on protecting the homeless persons and families, as much as we need to address the structural issues that render people homeless.

Equitable access to affordable housing as well as to social protection to the vulnerable are key to preventing homelessness. These are also potent measures for integrating homelessness people to the society and to the economy.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of India aims that every Indian would have a house with all basic amenities by 2022, when India celebrates the 75<sup>th</sup> year of independence.

To achieve this, India has launched the world's largest affordable housing programme for the poor, called the Prime Minister's scheme on Affordable Housing for All.

This Mission is implemented separately both in rural and in urban areas. Over 18.4 million houses have been built under this programme.

Giving a fillip to gender equality and to address vulnerabilities faced by women in terms of their right to property, the title of each home under the mission is under the woman head of the household, or held co-jointly.

The programme also facilitates adoption of green, disaster resistant building materials and construction techniques for ensuring faster and cost- effective construction.

Mr. Chairman,

India has taken several other innovative measures to providing a social safety net for people and their family.

Innovative use of digital technologies has been the driving force behind many of the transformative initiatives.

India's biometric-based unique identification system - 'Aadhaar', now covers over 90% of the country's population, facilitating access to a range of social protection services.

380 million people, who previously did not qualify to open bank accounts and access financial services, today have bank accounts opened through the government's Financial Inclusion Initiative.

With the aim of ensuring accurate targeting of subsidies to beneficiaries, the government has launched the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme.

By leveraging Bank Accounts, the Unique Identification Number and mobile telephony, the government has disbursed more than USD 125 billion through Direct Benefit Transfers.

This has enhanced efficiency of social protection programmes and reduced pilferage.

To ensure income security, under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), a minimum of 100 days of wage employment is provided to every rural household in a year. More than 50 per cent of jobs created are taken by women.

A pension scheme targeting low income workers in the unorganized sector has been launched. Over 20 million beneficiaries have subscribed to this programme.

The government has also launched life and disability insurance at an affordable rate for those who never had access to insurance earlier.

As a step towards Universal Health Coverage, India is implementing the world's largest healthcare programme - "National Health Protection Scheme" - covering nearly 500 million people. Since the launch in September 2018, 8.3 million secondary and tertiary care hospital treatments have been made available free of cost.

Other initiatives such as providing 80 million clean cooking gas connections to underprivileged families has improved the health of millions of women and children.

The "National Nutritional Mission" is geared to improve nutritional status of children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers to make India malnutrition free by 2022.

In education, our current focus is on improving quality, expansion of secondary and tertiary education and skills development for improved employability for the youth and closing gender gap.

Save the Girl Child, Enable her Education programme, addresses empowerment of women through awareness generation and education, over a life-cycle continuum.

Various government initiatives are boosting the growth of distance education and promoting E-learning and M-learning platforms.

The Accessible India Campaign which promotes barrier-free access in public spaces and in virtual ecosystems for the persons with disabilities.

Transparency is essential to evaluate public policies and their outcomes. India has adopted SDG India Index as a government-led, sub-national measure of progress on the SDGs. It is the first of its kind in the world.

As India endeavors to build a more prosperous and inclusive society, we are stepping up our development partnerships with fellow developing countries through the India-UN Development Partnership Fund and the IBSA Trust Fund.

Mr. Chairman,

We remain committed to engage with the Member States and the UN system for accelerated action to realize the commitments made 25 years ago at the World Summit for Social Development.

I thank you.