

74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Second Committee

Agenda Item 22:

Eradication of Poverty and Other Development Issues

INDIA STATEMENT

By Mr. Sandeep Kumar Bayyapu

First Secretary

16 October 2019

Mr. Chair,

India aligns itself with the statement delivered by the delegation of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77. We welcome Secretary General's reports under the agenda item 22.

While there has been substantial progress in lifting people out of poverty in recent years across the world, the scale of the problem is large and poverty eradication continues to be the greatest challenge for humanity. The 2018 global Multidimensional Poverty Index shows that, during that year, there were 1.3 billion poor people around the world.

There are significant differences in the scale of absolute poverty that exists in societies across the world. The inequality both among and within nations is stark and the disparity continues to grow. There are several factors that contribute to the problem, structural economic problems arising out of historical contexts; lack of natural resources; natural disasters; chronic conflicts; lack of social protection; lack of access to education and health, unsustainable debt burden; unfair terms of trade and investment; and policy choices sometimes imposed externally, all contribute to poverty.

In an inter-connected world, the consequences of poverty are no longer limited to only some parts of the world but have much wider impacts through civil unrest, armed conflicts, and large scale movements of people.

Mr. Chair,

We should take a solemn resolve that the United Nations' Third Decade for the Eradication of Poverty should be its last. There is a need to take targeted policy interventions to empower the marginalised and vulnerable sections of society, to improve their access to education, housing, healthcare, social protection, basic

services, employment, and facilitating financial inclusion can go a long way in lifting people out of poverty.

Mr. Chair,

India is taking a number of initiatives to eradicate poverty. According to UN Development Programme, India has lifted 271 million people out of poverty between 2006 and 2016, recording the fastest reductions in the multidimensional poverty index values during the period. India has allocated resources towards a more inclusive development. We have effectively deployed the tool of modern technology to empower the poor and the marginalized.

Mr. Chair,

The Jan Dhan Yojana, the world's largest financial inclusion scheme, has led to an additional 370 million bank accounts for the poor who were outside the banking net. More than 1.3 billion people have already been issued biometric-based unique identity cards known as Aadhar cards. This coupled with the use of smart phone apps has become the basis for wide ranging delivery of e-services and direct benefit transfers, especially to marginalised sections, improving transparency and cutting corruption.

Ayushman Bharat, a cashless and paperless, universal health coverage scheme of a very vast scale was launched last year. The scheme is targeted at 500 million people and to provide a coverage of US\$ 7,000 per family every year. More than 5 million people have availed medical treatment under the scheme in last one year.

The issue of sanitation is essential to eradicate rural poverty. We have been able to successfully implement the world's biggest sanitation campaign within the Clean India Mission, building over 110 million toilets in just 5 years. On the occasion of 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on 2 October 2019, the villages in rural India declared themselves open defecation free.

We have launched the National Nutrition Mission, the world's largest nutrition program to make India malnutrition free by 2022. This will help in tackling the problem of under-nutrition, anemia, low birth-weight and stunting among children.

Housing is another area where our government is undertaking large scale efforts. Under the Prime Minister's, housing for all program, the world largest housing program for the poor, India aims to construct 40 million new homes between 2015-2022. Over 18 million homes for the poor have been constructed under these efforts in recent years.

In April, 2018 we achieved the target of 100% village electrification under the Rural Electrification Scheme (Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana).

Micro-credit Scheme (Mudra Yojana) aims at extensive skills development programme and to turn poor into entrepreneurs by providing loans to small and micro enterprises. More than three fourths of the beneficiaries are women.

Under the Clean Cooking Fuel Initiative (Ujjwala scheme), 80 million free LPG connections have been provided to the poorer sections. This has ensured provision of clean energy that lies at the intersection of climate, health and energy access.

Mr. Chair,

India continues to play its part through our longstanding and expanding development partnerships in a spirit of solidarity and South-South cooperation with fellow developing countries, especially LDCs including in Africa and those with special vulnerabilities such as the SIDS in their efforts towards poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Mr. Chair,

To conclude, I would like to say that India's success in eradicating poverty is essential for our collective action in achieving the first SDG. We are on the right track by following the path shown to us by Mahatma Gandhi that is of 'Antyodaya' or the up-liftment of the poorest of the poor. It means that only once we are able to ensure welfare and prosperity of those at the bottom of the pyramid; we will be able to achieve development in true sense.

I thank you.