

74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

**Plenary Meeting of General Assembly to adopt the
Political Declaration of the High-level Political Forum
on Sustainable Development**

INDIA STATEMENT

By

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Thank you, Mr. President,

Four years ago, the global community took a pledge to 'leave no one behind' and to make the world a more sustainable place. The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals provided the action plan to make this a reality. We are now entering the final decade of achieving the SDGs. Though we have made considerable progress in the first four year cycle but challenges remain in the road ahead.

Mr. President,

The underlying principle of India's development agenda is 'through everyone's support, for everyone's development and towards everyone's trust'. This slogan mirrors the essence of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, of leaving no one behind.

A country's ability to achieve and sustain long-term economic growth is determined by its ability to increase productivity through the use of better technology, together with human and physical capital.

In India, fintech has contributed significantly to the rapid expansion of access to financial services and financial inclusion. A record 370 million marginalized people have been brought into the financial system in five years. The spread of mobile telephony and linking it with digital biometric cards and bank accounts has enabled the government to target subsidies and deliver e-governance services.

The "Clean India" campaign, the world's largest behavioural change campaign, has seen the building of over 100 million toilets in a span of 5 years. This has boosted enrolment and retention rates of girls in schools.

In April, 2018 we achieved the target of 100% village electrification and have doubled our efforts to achieve 100% electrification at the household level within the next few months.

In September 2018, we have launched the world's largest government funded health coverage scheme – Aayushman Bharat, which targets 100 million households and a potential to provide free health services to a population of 500 million. The cashless and paperless health scheme provides cashless coverage of up to \$7,000 per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization.

Our initiative of providing “Clean Cooking Gas” to 80 million underprivileged families has improved the health women and children in the semi-urban and rural areas.

We also plan to wipe out malnutrition from India by 2022 through the “National Nutritional Mission”.

We plan to build 40 million affordable homes for the poor and the marginalized sections of the society by 2022.

Mr. President,

Through all these development initiatives, India has made significant progress in the eradication of absolute poverty. According to the UNDP, India has lifted 271 million people out of poverty between 2006 and 2016, recording the fastest reduction in the multidimensional poverty index values during the period.

Mr. President,

India is committed to fulfil its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) well before the target date and protect its rich environment and pursue a path of sustainable low carbon development.

Just 17 countries in the world contain 70% of its biodiversity, earning them the title “megadiverse.” India is one of these megadiverse countries accounting for 7-8% of the world's biodiversity but still able to feed 18% of the global population.

We are of the view that it is possible to strike a healthy balance between development and conservation. The 33% growth in India's tiger population from 1,411 in 2006 to 2,967 in 2019 validates this.

We plan to encourage sustainable mobility with a target of more than 30% of vehicles as Electric vehicles by 2030.

India plans to install a cumulative 450 GW of renewable power over the coming years and have pledged to eliminate all single-use plastic in the country by 2022.

We have also pledged to restore 26 million hectares of degraded land by pursuing a massive afforestation programme.

To address the issue of water scarcity, we have launched a Water Conservation Campaign (Jal Jeevan Mission) with a target to supply piped water to all Indian households by 2024.

We have also launched the 'Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)' – a global partnership where knowledge is generated and exchanged on different aspects of climate and disaster resilient infrastructure.

Mr. President,

We have been successful in even monitoring SDGs. The responsibility for overseeing SDG implementation has been assigned to the national think tank – the National Institution for Transforming India, which is chaired by the Prime Minister of India.

In order to provide high-quality, timely and reliable data, we have launched the India Index an online dashboard, which monitors implementation of the SDGs at state level and provides incentives to the provinces appropriately, bringing competition to perform better.

In the spirit of sharing experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learnt to accelerate the implementation of the Agenda 2030, India presented its VNR at the 71st session and will present its second VNR at the next High-Level Political forum in 2020.

Mr. President,

Our goal is to ensure that the fruits of India's progress and development percolates down to each of its 1.3 billion citizens, particularly those who are denied of their rights and lawful share of development.

India's progress in SDGs is crucial for the world as the country is home to about 17% of the world population.

Despite being a developing country, in the spirit of South-South Cooperation in 2017, India established the India-UN Development Partnership Fund to assist fellow developing countries to achieve their SDGs. A sum of US\$176 million has been committed to the Fund for the next decade to focus on developmental projects in LDC, LLDCs and SIDS.

Mr. President,

India is on the right path to achieve the SDGs and we will continue to partner with fellow developing countries in a spirit of South-South cooperation to share our experience and expertise in their efforts to achieve the SDGs.

Mahatma Gandhi once said, “there are two days in the year that we cannot do anything – yesterday and tomorrow”. He meant that we need to act ‘today’ to address our developmental challenges.

I thank you.