

74th Session United Nations General Assembly
General Debate of the Second Committee
INDIA STATEMENT

By Mr. Siddharth Malik, First Secretary
8 October, 2019

Thank you Mr. Chair, we congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on assumption of charge of the Second Committee. We associate with the statement delivered by Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and would like to make some additional points in our national capacity.

Mr. Chair,

We have embarked on the journey towards achievement of Agenda 2030 adopted four years ago. We have crossed some of the initial milestones on the path charted for the implementation of SDGs. India is on the right trajectory to achieve the SDGs and implement the 2030 Agenda. Our Prime Minister, during his address at UNESCO headquarters in Paris in August, 2019 said that the targets for Climate Change which were set in COP-21 to be achieved in 2030, India will achieve most of them well ahead of time.

More than 140 Member States, including my country, have presented our Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) in the first four year cycle. We will present our Voluntary National Review for the second time at High Level Political Forum in July, 2020.

Mr. Chair,

We welcome the steps taken by Secretary General to reform the UN development system. One of the key elements of the reforms is the 'reinvigorated Resident Coordinator System'. The objective of the new system is to strengthen accountability, transparency and development of an effective UN system which will become a driving force in achieving the 2030 Agenda. In that spirit, we made a voluntary contribution to the UN Special Purpose Trust Fund for the new Resident Coordinator System.

Mr. Chair,

The developmental vision endorsed by the international community under the SDGs has been mirrored in our country's national development. We have crystallized

the SDGs in our flagship programs launched in the last five years. India's efforts in implementing the 2030 agenda will be an important contribution to our collective success. The world can count on India and we also look forward to the support of the international community for assisting the endeavors of India and other developing countries.

Under the National Mission on Financial Inclusion, a record number of over 370 million new bank accounts have been opened for the poor in the last five years. We have leveraged these bank accounts with the power of a biometric identity system and mobile phone, to deliver subsidies and services. This has helped us in saving more than US\$ 20 billion by checking corruption.

Mr. Chair,

The issue of Water and Sanitation is essential to achieving all the SDGs, particularly those on health, nutrition, sustainable cities and gender equality. 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. We have launched a mass campaign across the entire country to make India free of single use plastic.

In order to comprehensively address all water-related issues and provide tap water to all households by 2024, we have recently established a new Ministry for Water Conservation and Management (Jal Shakti). We have launched the Ayushman Bharat, a cashless health insurance scheme which aims to cover more than 500 million beneficiaries and provide coverage of Rs 500,000 per family per year. Since the launch of the scheme in the last one year more than 4 million people have been benefited.

Mr. Chair,

India envisions of becoming a leader in renewable energy and has introduced several new initiatives for clean and green energy. By 2022, India plans to produce 175 GW of renewable energy that will include 100 Giga-Watt of solar power. Beyond that time frame, we are working towards achieving the target of 450 Giga-watt of renewable energy. The International Solar Alliance, championed by India and France, now joined by 79 nations and established with UN as a multilateral treaty, is making ambitious strides for making tangible contribution to the global efforts on climate action. We have also installed solar panels on the roof of UN headquarters in New York.

Mr. Chair,

India remains committed to fully embracing the Sendai Framework and Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi in June, 2016 released the National Disaster Management Plan. Last month, we launched a Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure with a supporting Secretariat based in Delhi. The Coalition will act as a mechanism to assist countries to upgrade their capacities and practices, with regard to infrastructure development. It will address the loss reduction targets under the Sendai Framework, enable implementing of a number of SDGs and also contribute to climate change adaptation.

India has taken several steps to implement the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). We organized the COP-14 of UNCCD from 2-13 September in New Delhi, which saw adoption of an ambitious Delhi declaration. At the Conference, we decided to increase the total area that would be restored from its land degradation status from the earlier target of 21 Million Hectares to 26 Million Hectares between now and 2030.

Mr. Chair,

Research and innovation would be the driving force for the 4th industrial revolution. India has introduced flagship programs such as 'Startup India' and 'Digital India'. Today, India is the world's third largest start-up nation. We have the cheapest rates of data services in the world. In just last three years, the online instant payment transactions have grown from mere 100,000 to 920 million amounting to Rs 1.2 trillion in August, 2019.

Mr. Chair,

The BAPA+40 Conference that took place in Buenos Aires in March 2019, resulted in adoption of an ambitious outcome document on South-South cooperation and its role in implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Now, the challenge is to translate principles into concrete action.

Here at the UN, in 2017, India established the India-UN Development Partnership Fund to work with fellow developing countries in the spirit of South-South cooperation by providing support to projects that aim to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. A sum of US\$ 150 million has been committed for the next decade focusing on developmental projects in LDC, LLDC and SIDS. In just about two years, the Fund

has been able to develop 38 projects in 36 partnering countries. 29 Projects are already under initiation and implementation stage with many nearing completion.

Responding to the call of the Addis Agenda, India has contributed to the UN Tax Trust Fund. We have also contributed to the trust funds for Technology Bank for LDCs and for organisation of the mid-term review of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs to be held later this year.

Mr. Chair,

We wish you all success in all your endeavors. You can count on the unstinted support of my delegation for the successful conduct of work of this Committee in the weeks ahead. I thank you.