

High Level Political Forum

Ministerial Meeting

Statement by H.E. Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, India

July 17, 2019

India Statement on

“Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality”

Mr. President,

Thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to speak on behalf of India on the theme, “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”. The principle of “Leaving No One Behind” is fundamental to the theme and finds resonance with the Government of India motto of “*Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas [Collective Efforts Inclusive Growth]*”, which guides all development initiatives. The concerns of “empowerment, inclusiveness and equality” are being addressed quite comprehensively by India.

In its war against poverty, on the one hand, India focuses on economic growth to boost income of the poor, and on the other, works towards leveling off the field of opportunities for the economically weaker sections of society.

Mr. President,

Since 2015, India has made Agenda 2030, a cornerstone of the development policies. During the last five years, a large number of flagship programmes have been implemented with the aim of empowering the vulnerable segments of our society and improve inclusion access multiple dimensions. According to the recent UNDP – Reports - between 2000-2016; 271 million people were lifted out of multi-dimensional poverty. 300 million bank accounts, a majority for women, were opened during the past five years.

90 million toilets were built to eliminate open defecation by 2nd October 2019 and today 98% of India’s villages have rural sanitation coverage instead of 38% four years ago;

120 million women were handed over cooking gas stoves, thereby freeing them from the oppression of cooking on wood and bio-fuels with its adverse health impacts;

An ambitious health insurance scheme, "Ayushman Bharat" (PMJAY) was launched to provide a cover of Rs.5 lakhs (USD 7250) for 10 million poor households – thereby potentially covering 500 million people. In the past ten months, 35 million health insurance cards have been issued and more than 300,000 claims amounting Rs.4405 crore (USD 600 million) have been successfully processed in just seven months;

India is committed to provide housing for all by 2022 – 15.4 million houses were completed and handed over during the past five years under the PMJAY – (Rural) and another 10 million completed in urban centres.

All villages – Hundred per cent have now been electrified and 80 GW of renewable energy capacity has been installed;

A new Ministry for Water Conservation and Management (Jal Shakti) has recently been established to comprehensively address all water-related issues and provide tap water to all rural households by 2024.

Mr. President,

National Nutrition Mission, a multi-ministerial mission to ensure a malnutrition-free India was launched in March 2018.

The achievements are: Nourishment – Brought down the number of under-nourished children and women by 2% over past four years and Energy Transition – 170 GW of Renewable Energy by 2024 – 80 GW already installed by December 2018.

NITI Aayog oversees the program of SDGs – With the help of the UN system – established a Voluntary Reporting framework – for SDG implementation.

NITI Aayog just published SDG Index that reviews the large states on their implementation of SDGs – This is being done to ask states to maintain SDG in their development plans.

Aspirational District Program – to lift the 112 most backward districts to the national average.

India's scale of ambition and its commitment to Agenda 2030 would ensure that it will achieve many of its SDG targets ahead of 2030 and also contribute to the global achievement of Agenda 2030.

Two Mantras – Antyodaya – Ensuring the Last of the queue also gets the due and Vasudhaiva Kudumbam that ensures that we in India work and live with Nature and also allow growth and environment to become trade-offs.

Excellencies, the Government of India will continue the focus on stamping out all kinds of social exclusion and addressing the needs of the "furthest behind first".

I thank you once again, Chair, for giving me this opportunity.