UN in India

Annual Report 2022

UNITED NATIONS INDIA

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Acronyms

APCTT
Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology

AHF
Auxiliary Health Facility

CSO
Civil Society Organisation

DRM
Disaster Risk Management

FAO
Food and Agriculture Organization

GBV
Gender–based Violence

GoI
Government of India

HCFC
Hydrochlorofluorocarbons

IEC
Information, Education, and Communication

IFAD
International Fund for Agricultural Development

ILO
International Labour Organization

IOM
International Organization for Migration

IPC
Infection Prevention and Control

JRP
Joint Health Response Plan

LGBTI
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, & Intersex

MCH
Mother and Child Health

MHPSS
Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

MoEFCC
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

MoH&FW
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

MSMEs
Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises

NCD
Non–communicable disease

NCDC
National Centre for Disease Control

NFHS
National Family Health Survey

NHA
National Health Authority

NIMHANS
National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences

NTD
Neglected Tropical Diseases

PHC
Public Health Care

PPE
Personal Protective Equipment

RCCE
Risk Communication and Community Engagement

RMNCH+A
Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health

SDGs
Sustainable Development Goals

SERF
Socio Economic Response Framework

TISS
Tata Institute of Social Sciences

TPDS
Targeted Public Distribution System

UHC
Universal Health Coverage

UN Women
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

UN–Habitat
United Nations Human Settlements Programme

UNAIDS
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNCT
United Nations Country Team

UNCTAD
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNDP
United Nations Development Programme

UNEP
United Nations Environment Programme

UN ESCAP
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

UNESCO
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFPA
United Nations Population Fund

UNHCR
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF
United Nations Children's Fund

UNIDO
United Nations Industrial Development Organization

UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UNOPS
United Nations Office for Project Services

UNRC
United Nations Resident Coordinator

UNSDF
UN Sustainable Development Framework 2018–2022

UNV
United Nations Volunteers Programme

WASH
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

WCO
World Health Organization Country Office India

WFP
World Food Programme

WHO
World Health Organization

Foreword

Looking back, 2022 was a landmark year for India and the United Nations, which included a number of important milestones, including the historic Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebration of 75 years of Independence, the launch of the global Lifestyles for Environment (LiFE) Mission by Prime Minister Narendra Modi together with UN Secretary-General António Guterres, and India's assumption of the Group of Twenty (G20) Presidency.

The UN pulled together as a system with remarkable response support efforts during the darkest days of COVID-19, and we continued to support the Government of India's response to the health and socio-economic impact of the fast-spreading Omicron variant in the early months of the year.

Yet, just as a fragile recovery took root, new shocks emerged from a senseless conflict in Ukraine, driving increasing scarcity of life's basic necessities such as food and fuel, and wiping out years of progress in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Here in India, as in many countries, despite much progress, SDG5 on gender equality and SDG2 on nutrition continue to lag behind others, while the pandemic also drove significant learning loss, negative health impacts and other deprivations.

We estimate that up to half of some global SDG targets reside here in India. This underlines both the scale of the challenge ahead, as well as the potential dividend. As UN Secretary-General António Guterres noted, it is India that will "make or break the 2030 Agenda."

Over the course of 2022, we continued to work closely with the Government and our partners in civil society, the private sector, and communities across seven priority areas of sustainable development in the Government of India – United Nations Sustainable Development Framework 2018 – 2022.

The UN in India worked extensively with all levels of government to strengthen institutions to progressively deliver universal access to basic services, employment, and sustainable livelihoods to poor and excluded rural and urban areas. We worked to accelerate progress on the universal coverage of social protection systems, including policy support for the expansion of food and job guarantee programmes for vulnerable families and transgender communities.

The strengthening of child and adolescent protection systems was a particular focus, and with UN support, 1.8 million women and children were provided with enhanced gender-sensitive protective services, and 350,000 at-risk children linked with social protection schemes.

In July 2022, India crossed the milestone of delivering over 2 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses, with a number of agencies playing key roles at all levels of the campaign. The phenomenal success of the vaccination programme was underpinned by the digital CoWIN platform, developed and deployed with support from the UN. The UN also helped to further strengthen India's digital health platforms through the full implementation of the integrated real-time health information platform (IHIP).

UN agencies continued to work closely with the Government to strengthen health systems, the control of communicable and noncommunicable disease, routine immunizations and, strong cold supply chains, and the provision of quality Reproductive, Maternal, New-born, Child plus Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A) services throughout the pandemic. UN support to the Government's flagship water and sanitation (WASH) programmes contributed to reaching over 20 million people with safely managed WASH services.

Transforming the futures of India's young people – the largest youth generation in history – will be crucial for India to realize its potential for global leadership and development. We worked to safeguard and improve the lives of India's children, adolescents, and young people, targeting efforts to support the Government in supporting learning recovery, ensuring access to quality education and skilling and supporting the implementation of the School Health and Wellness Programme. The UN supported interventions that reached 5.7 million with learning recovery, helped refer over 754,000 out-of-school children back into education, and provided 40 million students with access to career information.

Nutrition remained a major focus area for the UN in 2022, and UN advocacy, policy support, evidence generation, and innovation, supported the Government of India's push for better nutrition outcomes. UN agencies supported significant increases in the amount of severely malnourished children receiving institutional care, helped re-establish community-based nutrition events in 89 percent of community centres, assisted in the mainstreaming of fortified rice, and helped vulnerable families and individuals access food safety net programmes.

While the year's record heat waves, floods and natural disasters in many parts of the country brought home the stark reality of climate change, 2022 also saw India's global leadership and ambition in climate action accelerate. The global Mission LiFE, launched in October by Prime Minister Modi together with the UN Secretary-General in Gujarat, promises to encourage sustainable lifestyles globally and bridge the development and climate agendas. The UN is a key knowledge partner in Mission LiFE, while also supporting the India-driven International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

The UN continued to support India with partners in achieving environmental sustainability, meeting commitments to multilateral environmental agreements, helping tackle challenges in air pollution and waste generation and increasing resilience to disasters through 2022.

We also supported India's efforts to harness the potential of a vast demographic dividend, promoting initiatives to ensure a healthy and educated youth generation competent in the 21st Century and life skills, empowering micro, small, and medium enterprises, and transforming gender relations to reduce discrimination against women and girls at work.

Gender equality remained a key and cross-cutting focus through all of our work. UN agencies worked closely with the Government to support flagship programmes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, the prevention of child marriage, and strengthening access to protection services for survivors of gender-based violence, while working towards empowering women in the workforce by providing them with better access to education, skills training, and job opportunities.

We also continued to work with state governments, NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) in the localisation and institutionalisation of the SDGs, assisting in consultations on developing sub-national level monitoring frameworks, the development of state-level SDG dashboards, as well as the first-ever city-level SDG Vision document. Notably, the India@75 side-event on the India-UN partnership at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2023, where India's model of SDG localisation received recognition, was the only such country specific side event featured at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) that year. The event saw Foreign Ministers of numerous countries appreciate India for its South-South and triangular cooperation support, underscoring that our development partnership with India is increasingly two-way, including also identifying and showcasing Indian good practice globally.

The year also saw a record level of multilateral engagement with India increasingly at the centre, and in turn we have had the privilege to welcome a number of high-level visits, including the UN Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly, UN entity global heads and regional directors, Queen Máxima the Secretary-General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Sustainable Energy for All, as well as former SG Ban Ki-moon, among others. India also hosted the 9th Session of the International Plant Treaty, the UN Food Systems Summit, a Special Meeting of the UN Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee in Delhi and Mumbai, and much more.

Having assumed the G20 Presidency in December 2022, India has set SDG acceleration as a core pillar and priority for one of the most powerful international platforms, providing an important opportunity to advance the 2030 Agenda. The UN is privileged to work closely with different Ministries and the G20 secretariat to help support what one could argue is a very timely "SD-G20" just as the world comes together at this year's UN General Assembly to take stock of progress and challenges at the 2030 Agenda halfway mark.

This coming year also marks the beginning of a new chapter for the UN in India, as we look ahead to launching our new offer of partnership, the Government of India – UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023 – 2027. The Cooperation Framework (CF) was formulated through extensive multi-stakeholder consultations followed-up by multi-stakeholder validation workshops, informed by the 2021 common country analysis (CCA). This first post UN reform, 'new generation' CF will be delivered by the UN Country Team together, a collective result of each individual UN entity's country programming all coming together in synergy.

We are increasingly planning, delivering and communicating together, yielding a 'whole' greater than the sum of our parts. Though on one hand we are one of the largest UN Country Teams in the world in a development setting and bring impressive capacities, on the other hand the immense scale of India and high level of national resources at central and state levels means we need to seek delivering as one to maximize impact and value addition.

The coming year presents a decisive moment for the world and SDG achievement, set against numerous challenges and considerable uncertainty. Yet, as the UN Secretary-General noted, India has a "unique opportunity to shape the global agenda, as a principal player and a model for others". Few if any countries are better positioned to help bridge divides and bring others together through political will and demonstrated solutions to help chart and navigate the immediate and longer-term path ahead towards a sustainable, inclusive and green future.

We across the UN System, from the global level to the 24 members of the UN Country Team of Agencies, Funds and Programmes and UN Resident Coordinator on the ground are proud, committed partners with the Government and people of India in this journey.

Shombi Sharp
UN Resident Coordinator in India

With 24 entities and 16 country offices, the UN Country Team (UNCT) in India is one of the UN's largest peacetime operations in the world.

The UN has presence across all 28 states and 8 Union Territories of India. The Resident Coordinator, the designated representative of the UN Secretary-General to the government, leads the UNCT, composed of the heads of all the UN entities active in India. The UNCT leads the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Framework, a development cooperation strategy between the Government of India and the United Nations in India, in support of the achievement of India's key national development priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), executed under the overall coordination of the Government of India's think tank NITI Aayog.

The UNSDF is underpinned by the overarching principle of the SDGs to leave no one behind, echoing the Government of India's message of Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas (development for all).

The programmatic work outlined in the UNSDF targets seven low-income states (Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh), the North-East region, and the 112 aspirational districts prioritised by the Government for development. Our work is focused around improving the lives of the most marginalized, poor, and vulnerable communities.

For over 70 years, the UN-Government of India partnership has contributed to important initiatives like eradication of polio, supporting White Revolution for increased milk production, foundation for first Penicillin plan in South Asia, setting up landmark institutions including IITs, and supporting the implementation of flagship programmes for achievement of the SDGs. The UN's role has evolved into a stronger partnership, but better suited to the needs and context of a middle-income country, which plays an active donor role for the Global South, and whose leadership is informing transformations in other parts of the world.

The UN in India

Country Offices : UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, WFP, UN-Habitat, UNEP, WHO, UNIDO, FAO, ILO, UN Women, UNHCR, UNAIDS, UNOPS, IOM, UNV

ESCAP : Sub-Regional Office for South and South West Asia (India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Türkiye)

IFAD : South Asia Hub (India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan)

UNESCO : New Delhi Cluster office (India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka)

UNODC : Regional office for South Asia (India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives, Sri Lanka, India)

Bretton Woods Institutions : IMF, World Bank

Secretariat : UN OICT, UNDSS, UNIC

multidimensional poverty, measured through the UNDP–OPHI Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), between 2005–06 and 2019–21. The Government of India's commitment to inclusive growth is reflected in the range of large–scale innovative flagship programmes and schemes launched over the past 20 years to achieve India's development goals such as rural electrification, sanitation, housing for all, clean and renewable energy expansion, financial inclusion, universal elementary school education, smart cities, and skills development.

India's South–South cooperation efforts have also expanded markedly in recent years and are expected to further expand in cooperation with other United Nations member states in the spirit of mutual benefit and solidarity embodied in the recently agreed Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA+40) outcome. India has also had a leadership role in global institutional initiatives with a South–South and triangular cooperation focus, including the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

At the outset of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) journey, India carried a disproportionately large share of the burden of

many global SDG targets. The country remains home to one of the world's largest populations of women and men living in poverty. Considerable scope also exists to reduce the number of informal workers. Focus also needs to be put in reducing air pollution levels, particularly in major cities.

According to NITI Aayog's SDG India Index, 2020–21, progress has been lagging on 7 of the 16 SDGs. SDG achievements have been highest on Goal 7 "affordable and clean energy" followed by Goal 6 "clean water and sanitation". However, achievements have been slower on Goal 2 "zero hunger", Goal 5 "gender equality", Goal 8 "decent work and economic growth", Goal 9 "industry, innovation & infrastructure", and Goal 13 "climate action".

India was ranked 132 out of 189 countries on the Human Development Index, with an HDI value of 0.633 putting the country in the medium human development category. In 2019–21, 35.5 percent of Indian children under five were stunted, 19.3 percent moderately wasted, and 32.1 percent underweight. India's female labour participation rate, at 22.3 percent, is among the lowest in the world.
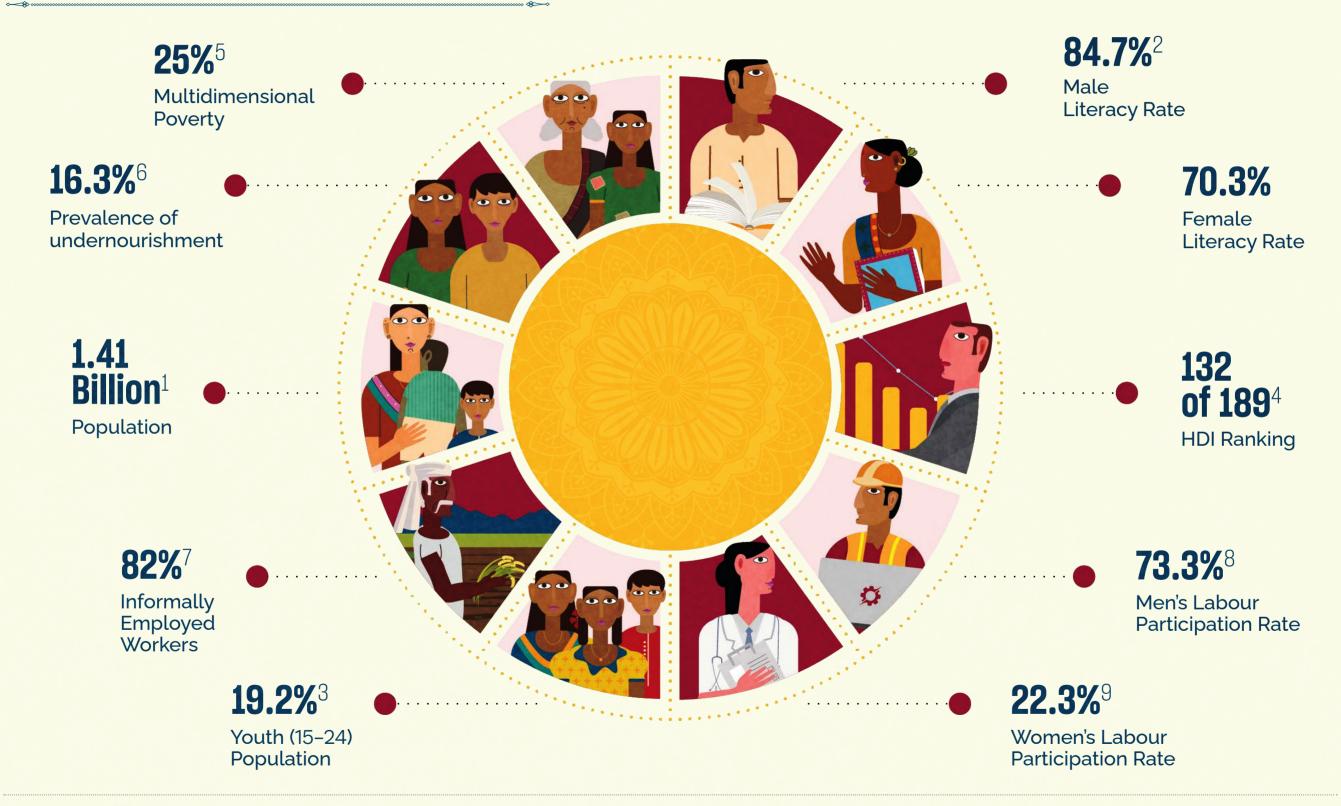
Country Context

India is a founding member of the United Nations and one of the original signatories of the United Nations Charter. It has been an independent nation since 15 August 1947 and celebrated its 75th year of independent statehood in 2022. India is the world's largest democracy and a federal union comprising of 28 states and 8 union territories (UTs), which are geographically and linguistically diverse, with the Constitution of India recognizing 22 different scheduled languages. The largest country on the South Asian subcontinent, India is the seventh–largest country in the world by landmass and the most populous

nation. Having recently surpassed the United Kingdom as the world's fifth–largest economy, India's position is expected to continue to rise in the coming years as one of the fastest growing major economies.

In 75 years of independence, India has transformed from a slow–growing predominantly rural and agriculturally–based food–deficit economy to a fast–growing, more urban, service–dominated food exporting economy with a sizable manufacturing sector and emerging middle class. 415 million Indians have been pulled out of

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India Key Development Figures

25%[5]
Multidimensional
Poverty

16.3%[6]
Prevalence of
undernourishment

**1.41
Billion**[1]
Population

82%[7]
Informally
Employed
Workers

19.2%[3]
Youth (15–24)
Population

84.7%[2]
Male
Literacy Rate

70.3%
Female
Literacy Rate

**132
of 189**[4]
HDI Ranking

73.3%[8]
Men's Labour
Participation Rate

22.3%[9]
Women's Labour
Participation Rate

[1] World Population Prospects 2022, UN DESA
[2] National Sample Survey, 2017–2018
[3] 2011 Census of India
[4] UNDP Human Development Report 2021–22
[5] NITI Aayog, National Multidimensional Poverty Index Baseline Report, 2021
[6] FAO, The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022
[7] ILO, Informal Employment Trends in the Indian Economy, 2020
[8] Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), Quarterly Bulletin (October – December 2022)
[9] PLFS

The Government of India – United Nations Sustainable Development Framework

The Government of India – United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (GOI-UNSDF) 2018–2022 was the framework of cooperation, results and strategies that brought together the work of the UN agencies in the country and guided the UN in India's cooperation with the Government of India from 2018 to 2022. The UNSDF was aligned with India's national development agenda and the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and underscores the core programming principle to leave no one behind.

The counterpart for the UNSDF 2018–2022 was NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India) India's premier think tank, vested with the authority to coordinate the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs in India. The UNSDF was implemented through the overall strategic oversight of a Joint Steering Committee (JSC), co-chaired by the Vice Chairman of the NITI Aayog and the UN Resident Coordinator.

The total budget allocation for the GOI-UNSDF was US$1.53 billion, with the biggest allocations for health, water and sanitation, nutrition and food security, and climate change, resilience, and energy. The UN repurposed a large part of its budget and approximately 80 percent of the planned activities towards the COVID-19 response in 2020–21.

Key recommendations from an independent evaluation of the UNSDF are summarized in the 'Looking ahead' chapter of this report.

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The UNSDF consisted of seven Priority Areas (Results Groups)

Result Group

RG 1: Poverty and Urbanisation

By 2022, institutions are strengthened to progressively deliver universal access to basic services, employment, and sustainable livelihoods in poor and excluded rural and urban areas

2022 Expenditure (USD)

12.16 Million

Result Group

RG 2: Health, Water and Sanitation

By 2022, there is improved and more equitable access to, and utilization of, quality, affordable health, water, and sanitation services

2022 Expenditure (USD)

98.5 Million

Result Group

RG3: Education and Employability

By 2022, more children, young people, and adults, especially those from vulnerable groups, enjoy access to quality learning for all levels of education

2022 Expenditure (USD)

15.1 Million

Result Group

RG4: Nutrition and Food Security

By 2022, all children enjoy essential nutrition services and rural smallholders, and other vulnerable groups have improved livelihoods and greater access to a nutritionally adequate food basket

2022 Expenditure (USD)

47.5 Million

Result Group

RG5: Climate Change, Clean Energy and Disaster Resilience

By 2022, environmental and natural resource management is strengthened, and communities have increased access to clean energy and are more resilient to climate change and disaster risks

2022 Expenditure (USD)

3.6 Million

Result Group

RG6: Skilling, Entrepreneurship and Job Creation

By 2022, people vulnerable to social, economic, and environmental exclusion, have increased opportunities for productive employment through decent jobs and entrepreneurship

2022 Expenditure (USD)

2.6 Million

Result Group

RG7: Gender Equality and Youth Development

By 2022, institutions are strengthened to progressively deliver universal access to basic services, employment, and sustainable livelihoods in poor and excluded rural and urban areas

2022 Expenditure (USD)

12.1 Million

Result Group

Total UN expenditure in 2022

2022 Expenditure (USD)

192 Million

India's G20 Presidency

India assumed the rotating one-year presidency of the Group of 20 (G20) in December 2022. Representing 85 percent of global GDP and 60 percent of the global population, G20 is the premier forum for global economic cooperation, bringing together the world's largest economies from the developed and developing world. As the only lower middle-income country in the G20, with development a national priority, and solidarity among developing countries a pillar of its foreign policy, India brings a unique voice and perspective to the highest table of the global economy.

India's G20 Presidency has put sustainable development front and centre of the G20 agenda, especially issues related to accelerating SDGs achievement, climate action and financing for development. The UNCT is a key knowledge partner of India's G20 Secretariat, with UN agencies working closely with line ministries in the preparation and scoping of priorities for the G20 Working Groups. In addition to the working groups, UN agencies have been positioned in all relevant Engagement Groups, such as Empower 20, Business 20, Youth 20, Think 20, Civil 20 etc.

POVERTY AND URBANISATION

Introduction

India has made impressive gains in economic and human development in recent decades, yet this progress was threatened by the COVID–19 pandemic and its aftershocks. While India managed to provide food or cash support to a remarkable 85 percent of rural households and 69 percent of urban households during the pandemic, the World Bank estimates that India saw an increase of 23 million poor people in 2020. At the same time, the last three decades have seen increasing inequalities. These inequalities have contributed to the obstacles preventing some of India's most vulnerable and marginalized groups from enjoying the full benefits of India's growth. The vulnerability and marginalization experienced by many of these groups have also been exacerbated by persistent discriminatory attitudes and behaviours linked to historical legacies of discrimination.

At the same time, continued rapid urbanisation is heightening the risk of spatial inequalities. Demand–supply gaps in housing mean that one in six people in urban areas lives in slums, a proportion which has improved over time, but increased in absolute numbers due to rapid urbanisation While the traditional focus of anti–poverty programming in India has been on rural poverty, rapid urbanization may be changing the nature of poverty and the needs of the poor. This requires addressing issues of income, employment, and access to basic services across both rural and urban dimensions.

The UN in India continued to work extensively with the Government of India to strengthen institutions to progressively deliver universal access to basic services, employment and sustainable livelihoods to poor and excluded rural and urban areas. UN agencies worked with all levels of government to strengthen social protection systems, especially for women, children and vulnerable groups. Support was particularly focused on improving Government schemes which transfer benefits directly into the accounts of beneficiaries. UN agencies also worked to increase access to social and health services, including sexual and reproductive health and family planning services, especially for poor and marginalised communities.

UN agencies also supported the preparation of national indicators for measuring all aspects of poverty and deprivation, to help identify newly vulnerable groups, and to formulate policy solutions, integrating health, social and economic priorities. This included support to NITI Aayog for the development of the second National Multidimensional Poverty Index, as well as the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) for improving national indicators on disability.

Localisation of the SDGs remained an important area of cooperation, and UN agencies supported national consultations on developing sub–national level monitoring frameworks for the SDGs, the Northeast SDG India Index, as well as state–level SDG Dashboards and vision documents. In addition, the UN supported demonstration pilots on capacity building, local governance, and decentralized monitoring, especially focusing on women and child related indicators as a part of the Local Indicator Framework developed for multiple states.

The UN continued to support India's sustainable urbanisation agenda as well as the delivery of basic social and health services, particularly to the urban poor and slum dwellers. This included technical support to flagship programmes and policies including the New Urban Agenda and Smart Cities Mission. Universal access, and gender and disability–inclusive spaces remained a focus of our support through 2022.

10 Million girls

across 4 states benefited from girl child cash–plus programmes with UNICEF support

12 of 16 UNICEF

supported states institutionalized child budgeting with UNICEF technical assistance

2.2 Million tribal people

offered easy access to forest and land ownership rights with UNDP support

8 states/UTs

supported in the development of SDG monitoring frameworks by the UN

21,772 stakeholders

including government officials, trained with UNDP support for the farmers insurance scheme PMFBY

1 Million+ Households

benefited from government social protection schemes, catalysed by UNICEF advocacy and technical support

4,900+ refugees and asylum seekers

were supported in accessing justice systems by UNHCR

1.8 Million women and children

provided with enhanced gender–sensitive protective services with UNICEF support

895,539 children

provided with family based alternative care and preventive and rehabilitative care services and 350,000 at–risk children were linked with social protection schemes with UNICEF support

Strengthening social protection systems

UN agencies actively engaged with various levels of government to accelerate progress towards universal coverage of social protection services.

On child sensitive social protection, UNICEF offered technical support to the Government of India in the horizontal expansion of food security and job guarantee programmes for vulnerable families, the expansion of the national maternity benefit programme Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) to include second–born girl children, as well as grants for children who lost caregivers during the COVID–19 pandemic. UNICEF supported state governments in implementing girl child cash–plus programmes across four states, with an outreach of approximately 10 million girls, and initiated multi–state girl child cash transfer programmes. In addition, policy dialogues were conducted with government and partners on portability of social protection schemes for migrant families, with a focus on children. Over one million households benefited from government social protection schemes, catalysed by UNICEF advocacy and technical support.

UNICEF's technical assistance resulted in new or improved conditional cash transfer (CCT) schemes to promote girls' transition to secondary school and delay the age of marriage. Technical assistance towards the improvement of birth registration services, including linking with national identity systems helped to dramatically improve coverage. Additionally, disaster–prone communities were supported through humanitarian cash transfers and community–based situation monitoring of women and children to inform shock–responsive social protection.

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Last year, thirty-four-year-old Ramilaben lost her husband and the father of her two children to COVID-19. Not only did her family lose their sole breadwinner, but they lost their savings too, taken by her husband's medical bills and last rites. Ramilaben relied on her below-poverty-line card under the National Food Security Act to feed her family of three.

Uptake of government social security for the most vulnerable is often hindered by lack of awareness of eligibility. Increasing awareness about the government's social protection schemes and enabling communities to access them remains a priority for UNDP. This is why the agency is working closely with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to support 10,000 marginalized households in Gujarat to improve their lives and livelihoods under the joint initiative — PROGRESS.

As part of PROGRESS, UNDP has supported over 3,000 people like Ramilaben, in the villages of Jamnagar and Devbhumi Dwarka, to link them up with social security programmes. Thanks to PROGRESS, Ramilaben has now received a one-time payment from the National Family Assistance Scheme and is receiving a widow pension scheme.

Supporting India's National Multidimensional Poverty Index

UNDP continued to provide technical support to NITI Aayog, the Government of India's apex policy think tank, in the preparation of the second edition of India's National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). This index provides estimates of the MPI at the national and state levels, giving policymakers an evidence base for informed decision making. The index adapts the Global MPI to an Indian context and identifies various deprivations and their intensities based on a range of indicators including nutrition, school attendance, electricity, and asset ownerships. An MPI briefing session was conducted by UNDP with the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) to disseminate findings of the global MPI and share learnings on India's progress towards poverty reduction.

Strengthening Local Governance Structures

India's Forest Rights Act (FRA) is a landmark legislation which recognizes the rights of forest dwelling communities to live in the forest, and empowers them to protect, manage, and govern forest resources. To strengthen the implementation of the act, UNDP engaged with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and two states with high tribal populations (Chhattisgarh and Odisha) and has helped develop a digital tool to streamline and digitize the forest rights recognition process. Digitization of the previously offline process offered easy access to forest and land ownership rights for 2.2 million tribal people, who uploaded 30,000 claims of rights to the portal. In 2022, the digital tool was institutionalised and transferred to the sub-national governments.

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Promoting Child-Friendly Local Governance and Child Budgets

With UNICEF assistance, Child-Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) initiatives continued to be adopted across numerous states in India. UNICEF collaborated with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj for the mainstreaming of the Child Friendly Gram Panchayat (CFGP) and Women Friendly Gram Panchayat (WFGP) model.

This included grassroots capacity building of Gram Panchayat (GP) functionaries and adopting a participatory approach to developing village plans with a focus on women and children, included advocating for making Mahila Sabhas (women assembly meetings) and Bal Sabhas (children's assemblies) mandatory before the Gram Sabhas (GP general body). Advocacy with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and State Departments of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj is helping institutionalise the participatory approach.

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UNICEF worked with 16 state governments to integrate child and gender-responsive governance in the Panchayat Raj Institution training curriculum and into GP development plans (GPDPs). Technical assistance and continued advocacy led to the institutionalization of child budgeting and outcome-oriented child budgeting in 12 of 16 UNICEF supported states. Public Expenditure Reviews (PERs) were also conducted to enhance fund utilization by state governments. With a focus on children, UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) and state departments of WCD, Education, Health, and Finance, to build capacity to estimate budgeting requirements for Early Child Development (ECD). UNICEF has also submitted an innovative financing model to support financing of ECD and other priorities for women and children.

Strengthening Social Service Delivery

Improved social service delivery to alleviate poverty and the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on the most vulnerable continued to be an important focus for UN agencies. In collaboration with the International Institute for Population Sciences Mumbai, UNFPA published a draft India Ageing Report, highlighting the institutional responses towards care of the older population. Further, a documentation of good practices for elderly care during the COVID-19 pandemic was prepared and disseminated.

UNDP supported the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) in the development of the 'Handbook on the Prevention and Management of HIV Stigma and Discrimination' and supported the development of social protection training modules for State AIDS Control Societies (SACS) officials.

To support the Government of India in reaching transgender communities with welfare measures, UNDP supported the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) and NITI Aayog in conducting five regional consultations, with more than 300 stakeholders across the country on the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act and the SMILE Scheme and collaborated with CSOs like SANGATH to develop an advocacy booklet on trans-affirmative medical education.

© UNDP India

For Basanti Sethy, 71, a widow living in Gojabayani slum of Bhubaneswar, her smartphone has opened a window to a new world. She can now use the photo to pay utilities, shop for medicines and use mobility apps.

Digital illiteracy has prevented large sections of the elderly and people living with disabilities in India from benefiting from technology. For them, accessing essential services still means depending on a relative or a neighbour, or waiting in long queues at banks or government offices.

A partnership between UNDP and the Odisha State Government has helped not only impart digital, but also financial literacy through the help of local civil society organizations to more than 20,000 elderly residents, including people with disabilities.

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Helping Protect Rural households

UNDP supported the Ministry of Agriculture through a dedicated Technical Support Unit for the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) insurance service for farmers, with the aim of improving institutional and programme responsiveness, expanding coverage, and offering innovative measures for risk management and reduced crop loss for the rural population of India.

In 2022, enrolment by non-loanee farmers to PMFBY increased by 18% while settling long pending claims worth 82.5M USD and 99.2M USD in Telangana and Jharkhand respectively.

Additionally, the process of land record integration implemented in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh resulted in validation of around 90% of insured areas through electronic land records. Average insurance premiums saw a decline of around 37% in Madhya Pradesh and 30% in Maharashtra. The project trained over 21,772 stakeholders, including state government officials, insurance companies, banks, and other stakeholders. The project also developed a yield estimation system which will be rolled nationwide from 2023 to 2025.

Protecting Children

To ensure the strengthening of child and adolescent protection systems, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) in formulating and rolling out Mission Vatsalya, bringing greater focus on prevention, family–based care, professionalisation of the child protection workforce and integrated Child Protection Information Management Systems and community-based Child Protection Committees.

Across 17 states, UNICEF strengthened child protection structures and the capacity building of 603,462 functionaries leading to enhanced gender–sensitive protective services for 1,858,034 women and children, an increase of 60% from 2021. Case management modules were rolled out in five states, as well as mapping and capacity gap assessments of the child protection (CP) workforce, informing the framework for the professionalisation of the CP workforce under Mission Vatsalya.

Through UNICEF's support to the government and other stakeholders across 17 states, 895,539 children were provided with family–based alternative care and preventive and rehabilitative care services were provided in 314 districts across 14 states. 14,446 child protection functionaries were also capacitated on gate keeping, family–based alternative care and case management. Care Leaver Associations, to build peer support and linkages to services, were also established in seven states. To prevent child labour, unsafe migration and trafficking, UNICEF supported the government in linking over 350,000 at–risk children with social protection schemes. UNICEF also worked at the national level, as well as with seven state governments, to support migration policies and programmatic action for families affected by migration.

UNICEF also signed a Statement of Intent with NITI Aayog to develop a 'State of India's Children' Report to provide status and trends in Child Development That will help leverage fiscal and social protection policy spaces toward better child sensitive public policy and programs.

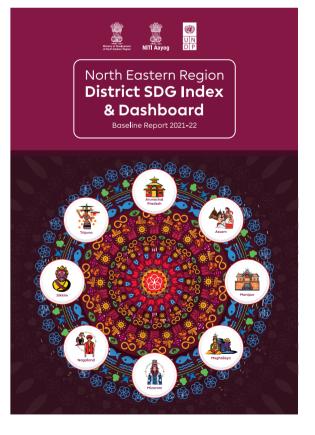©UNICEF/UN0695398/Bhardwaj

Localising the SDGs

India has embraced the SDG framework extensively at many levels, from the centre down to the district level. The localisation of the SDGs, given the diversity of the country, is central to accelerating India's SDG achievement, increasing agency and accountability.

At the national level, UNDP provided technical support to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) for national consultations on developing a sub–national level monitoring framework for the SDGs. UNDP also supported NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Development of Northeast Region (MoDONER) resulting in the NER District SDG Index 2.0. The Index ranks the 103 districts of the Northeast region on 15 SDGs using 84 indicators mapped across 50 global targets. The Index and dashboard serve as critical tools in identifying current gaps in SDG performance at the regional, state, and district level for Northeast India. Notably, the Northeast SDG India Index was used by the Ministry of Development of the North–East Region as a rationale for a new scheme "PM–DevINE", with a budget of 667M USD, aimed at addressing social and infrastructural gaps in the region partially identified by the index.

Other state–level activities included UNDP's support for the development of SDG Dashboards for the states of Nagaland, Maharashtra, Jammu and Kashmir, and Mizoram. UNDP continued to provide high quality technical support to the central and six state governments (Haryana, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Nagaland, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu) to enable concrete actions towards data–driven decision–making, alignment of budgets with the SDGs and capacity development. UN agencies also supported the development of SDG monitoring frameworks for 8 states/UTs.

UNDP also engaged with the union territory of Chandigarh by helping prepare India's first–ever city–level SDG vision document. UNDP also signed an agreement with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to support the alignment of local plans with the SDGs.

In addition, to enhance public–private partnerships for the SDGs, UNDP developed the Akanksha portal with the Government of Karnataka. It was awarded the India CSR Impactful Program Award in 2022 and has mobilized more than 37M USD in funds for over 78 projects aimed at socio–economic development to date.

FAO engaged with MOSPI to implement a project to build national and state capacities to monitor SDGs related to food and agriculture, and to align national and state indicator frameworks with global SDG indicator frameworks. Under the project, FAO created knowledge products, analyzed survey methodologies, and conducted trainings of government officials.

North Eastern Region
District SDG Index & Dashboard
Baseline Report 2021-22

Supporting Sustainable Urbanization

Leveraging an inclusive and participatory approach to strengthening urban policy frameworks and municipal services, UN agencies worked closely with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), to champion India's New Urban Agenda (NUA) in support of sustainable urbanization.

To foster stakeholder engagement and to enhance urban capacities, UN-Habitat hosted the annual Urban October, a month-long conversation on sustainable urbanization conducted through many virtual and physical events and activities. During the month, the organisation developed training programmes with technical inputs for presentation and lectures on sustainable urbanization, SDGs and NUA in collaboration with HUDCO's Human Settlement Management Institute and other key stakeholders. In partnership with the Bhopal Municipal Corporation, UN-Habitat engaged in a review of SDG implementation in Bhopal, to prepare for the Voluntary Local Review (VLR), a first-of-its-kind initiative in the city.

UNICEF provided technical support and advocacy for child database mainstreaming in the Urban Outcome Framework of the MoHUA. The institutionalisation of children and youth participation in city governance, urban planning, and municipal budgeting is currently being worked on with a baseline survey across 49 cities in India.

Additionally, UNIDO and UN-Habitat continued implementation of their joint programme, Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot (SCIAP), in collaboration with the MoHUA in Bhopal, Guntur, Jaipur, Mysore and Vijayawada. With the objective of imbuing sustainability strategies into urban planning and management at the city level, the agencies are aiming to create an enabling climate for investments in green infrastructure, effective service delivery, and enhanced quality of life for all citizens. Gender-sensitive programmatic interventions continue to be an important focus for all agencies as they integrate gender-inclusive mobility and open space activities and conduct capacity building sessions on gender-inclusive planning. UNIDO and UN-Habitat also supported comprehensive sustainability assessments and development of sustainable city plans for the five cities, while also supporting investments in critical waste and sanitation infrastructure.

UNFPA supported the Patna Municipal Corporation in organizing a multi-stakeholder consultation to review the Bihar Slum Policy and organized meetings of the drafting committee. UNFPA trained 333 Sanitation inspectors and aupervisors on provisions of 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, health and gender issues and leadership qualities. Additionally, 68 women sanitation workers were trained on mechanized cleaning and supported in joining a co-operative.

Under the Bhubaneswar Smart City project, UNFPA facilitated the training of 394 sanitation workers on sexual and reproductive health issues, 100 auto drivers were sensitized on safe mobility for girls and women, 320 adolescent girls were trained in self-defence, and 1,070 school students were reached on health and empowerment topics.

Trained women sanitation workers under the Women's Mechanized Cleaning Cooperative cleaning sewer in Patna

Mainstreaming Disability Inclusion

As per the National Census 2011, India has around 30 million persons with disabilities (PWDs), or 2.21% of the population, while around 25% of Indians require universal accessibility to live independently and with dignity. The Government of India has made much progress in the advocacy, rights, and social inclusion for PWDs in recent years. However, there is limited data available on access to essential services for PWDs or general disability-specific everyday needs within urban environments.

The United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) is a partnership that brings together UN entities, the government, private sector, persons with disabilities, and civil society to advance the rights of persons with disabilities in India and around the world.

Under the UNPRDPD project, the UN in India, in partnership with Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IIT Delhi), Social Alpha and Saksham, and WHO, developed a report on the Assistive Technology Landscape in India', as well as supporting the development of the Draft National Strategic Framework on Assistive Technology in India.

The UN also partnered with the Centre for Women and the Law, the National Law School of India University, to produce a legislative gap analysis on the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as with the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy for a policy brief on 'Gender and Disability Inclusion in Urban Development.'

To ensure that PWDs are captured in India's National Indicator Framework (NIF), the UN consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities, has developed a set of 8 non-negotiable proposed indicators for inclusion in the NIF. Further, around 14 non-negotiable indicators from within the NIF for which disaggregated data can be collected based on gender and disability have also been identified. This has been submitted to the government for

further deliberations and mapping of data sources.

In addition, trainings on gender and disability inclusion in urban development were organized under the Smart Cities Mission with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in four smart cities (Varanasi, Pune, Chennai Smart, and Bhubaneswar). UNPRPD also partnered with NIUA to build the capacity of urban practitioners to embed the principles of Universal Design and Inclusion in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of public infrastructure projects.

The UN in India also supported the National Institute of Urban Affairs in designing and implementing the Smart Solutions Challenge and Inclusive Cities Awards 2022 to crowdsource tech–enabled solutions for city–level accessibility challenges.

To build pathways for a more resilient recovery of people with disabilities, five regional multi–stakeholder consultations were organized in partnership with five organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) in 2022. A 10–point advocacy charter was developed to inform the work of the Government and the UN agencies, including advocacy strategies for the next 2–3 years.

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Supporting Refugees

As of 31 December 2022, 49,059 refugees and asylum seekers spread across 13 states in India were registered with UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency with over 92,000 Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu directly supported by the Government of Tamil Nadu. Registration and refugee status determination of those forced to flee enables them to establish their identity and certify their refugee status while helping local authorities and partners in providing protection, humanitarian and life–saving assistance.

Refugees continue to be amongst the most vulnerable populations in the country with the assistance needs increasing manifold due to the COVID–19 pandemic and ensuing conflict in neighbouring states such as Myanmar and Afghanistan.

UNHCR provided emergency cash assistance to 3,291 households comprising of around 8,828 individuals in 2022. The emergency cash assistance serves as a safety net for refugees and asylum seekers at heightened vulnerability especially due to the socio- economic impact of the pandemic and mitigates the risk of them resorting to negative coping mechanisms such as child labour and child marriage.

Over 4,900 refugees and asylum–seekers were supported in accessing justice systems and facilitated with legal counselling and representation when required. UNHCR also worked with partner organizations to capacitate 269 community groups through 123 community engagements held with refugee participants. Over 17,400 refugees and asylum seekers including women, men and boys were trained in 489 GBV awareness sessions.

2,231 children were enrolled in school and the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) while 4,310 students were supported with bridge, tuition and language classes to help them cope with the Indian education system.

155 community service providers from the refugee community worked with UNHCR's implementing partners to help refugees with translation services, information about health and providing support to access local health facilities. With the support of the Government of India and NGO partners, over 43,200 refugees and asylum–seekers were given access to health care including medical tests and treatments.

17,738
women and girls
received sanitary materials

981
refugees
were provided with labour market opportunities across locations

229
individuals
were supported with skill development training

23,311
refugee
and host community households received food kits or food vouchers.

19,778
Households
received blankets in time of winter

9,753
Households
received mosquito nets to protect them from vector–borne diseases, particularly during monsoons

© UNDP India

Supporting the 16th Indian Census

The 16th Indian Census is expected to take place in the coming years. The UN in India is providing technical and financial support to the Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India (ORGI) to ensure that the upcoming census will be of high quality, uphold international principles and standards, and produce data that is widely disseminated and utilised to inform development efforts.

Under the Joint UN Support for Census to MOSPI for Training and communication for the Census round 2021, UN Women developed audio–visual assets, including training and reading materials, to build gender sensitivity among master trainers and enumerators to ensure a gender lens in the data collection. UNFPA developed an e–learning module on house listing operations, and initiated its translation into 17 languages with the help of Entraltech and the ORGI.

Introduction

India has made considerable gains in health in the past decade. Government initiatives have led to significant declines in infant, child and maternal mortality rates, and increases in the institutional delivery rate. Flagship programmes like the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme and the National Health Mission have improved the availability, accessibility, and quality of healthcare services in the country. The supply of family planning services has improved significantly over the past decade, and contraceptive prevalence has improved. The incidence, prevalence and death rates from HIV/AIDS have also declined sharply in recent years. Similarly, there have also been significant reductions in the incidence of neglected tropical diseases and vector–borne diseases and the shrinking of endemic areas.

While India has made significant public health gains, the quality and reach of maternal health services, poor birth outcomes, communicable and vector–borne diseases, and childhood malnutrition, coupled with a growing burden of noncommunicable diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and mental illness, remain major causes of morbidity and mortality.

India's COVID–19 vaccination campaign, the largest in the world, was a remarkable success, delivering over 2 billion vaccine doses, yet the pandemic also exposed gaps in public health infrastructure. With several scientific bodies predicting further waves of the COVID–19 pandemic, better protection of the population against health emergencies has emerged as a key priority.

Through 2022, UN agencies worked closely with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in the roll out of Ayushman Bharat, routine immunization, the control of communicable and noncommunicable disease, and continued comprehensive support to fighting the COVID–19 pandemic. Informed by the experience of the pandemic, the UN focused on helping build resilient and responsive health systems. This included strengthening primary health care systems, ensuring good quality essential health services, strong supply chain mechanisms, and information systems.

The pandemic also highlighted the importance of health information platforms. The World Health Organization (WHO) worked to ensure the full implementation of the integrated, real–time health information platform (IHIP), and supported integration of all health information systems and disease surveillance with IHIP.

UN agencies also worked to ensure the continued provision of quality Reproductive, Maternal, New-born, Child plus Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A) services throughout the pandemic, sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents, as well as efforts to strengthen the continuum of care for common noncommunicable diseases, and the elimination of neglected tropical diseases.

Safe water and sanitation (WASH) are critical for public health and sustainable development, and India's high–impact flagship programmes like the Swachh Bharat and the Jal Jeevan Missions have led to rapid progress and impact. Over 500 million people have been provided access to toilet facilities in the last seven years, and over 80 million households have been provided with new tap connections in just the last three years. UN agencies continued to provide technical assistance and capacity building support to implementing agencies to ensure the continuity of WASH services.

Health and Water and Sanitation

More than 90 million disaggregate case records

generated in WHO–supported health data platform

66,300 interstate migrant workers

across the country reached with sensitization on COVID myths

177,503 COVID-19 vaccination sessions and over 1.6 million beneficiaries

monitored by the UN

16 oxygen pressure swing adsorption

facilities established with UNICEF support

54,366 health care workers trained on COVID-19 case management

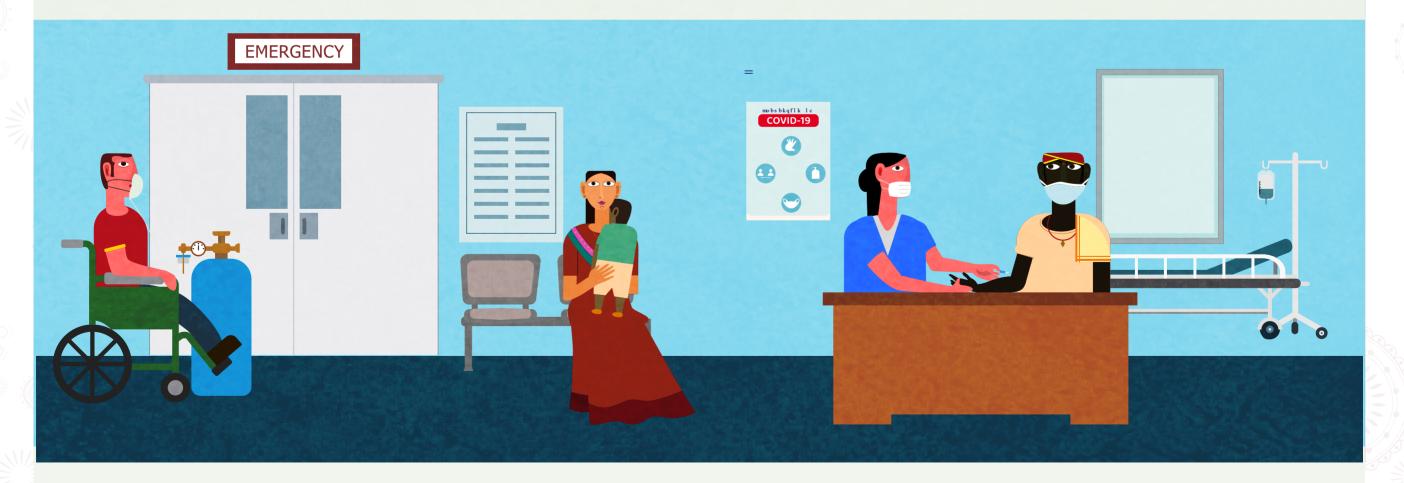protocols in 23 states with UNICEF support

82%

India's Effective Vaccine Management score in 2022, up from 68% in 2018

6 million children and 1.5 million pregnant women

were given routine immunisations in UN–supported sessions

13 million people

provided access to hand hygiene facilities with UNICEF support

EMERGENCY

COVID-19

Strengthening Health Systems

WHO provided support at the national and state-levels for health systems strengthening, with the goal of achieving Universal Health Coverage, including expansion, and monitoring of comprehensive primary health centres (PHCs) and Health & Wellness Centers (HWCs) in states and aspirational districts. Support included:

Documentation of good practices

and different models of primary health care provision and increasing access;

Assessment of performance linked payments

for the Community Health Officers and Primary Health Care teams at Ayushman Bharat HWCs;

Operational research

on behalf of National Health Authority to strengthen evidence for policy decision making under the scheme;

Multi-state review and analysis

on state health protection scheme convergence to serve as a guidebook.

Assessments of the health workforce

with a special emphasis on the primary health care service delivery in Assam and Chhattisgarh;

Health Labor Market Analysis

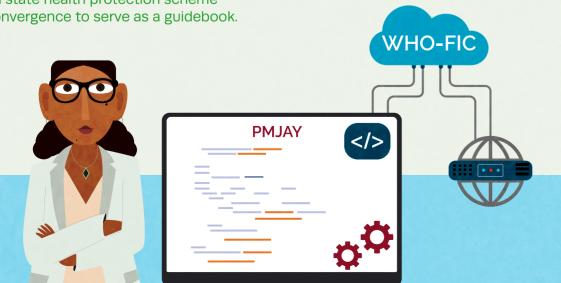for Assam and Gujarat;

Technical assistance & capacity building

for introduction of ICD-11 & ICHI coding systems (WHO-FIC) within the Transaction Management Software (TMS) of Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY);

Technical assistance

to states on health financing;

WHO continued supporting the development and operationalization of the Integrated Health Information Platform (IHIP) for MoHFW, a web-enabled dashboard which provides near-real time data to the government and public health officials to detect, monitor and respond to outbreaks of more than 33 diseases across the country. The new Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) and Health Management Information system (HMIS) in India are now using the IHIP platform which has been implemented in all 36 states/UTs. More than 90 million disaggregate case records have been generated the past year on the new platform, making it one of the world's largest online platforms for disease surveillance.

WHO provided support to various states for improving the health workforce and healthcare delivery system. In Gujarat, WHO supported the state government in conducting a Health Labour Market Analysis to inform policy decisions and develop a health workforce plan. In Uttar Pradesh, WHO helped to activate a drug and vaccine distribution management system, provided training to CHOs on DVDMS, and increased public health access. WHO also supported the government of Chhattisgarh in establishing the Integrated Public Health Labs Program, known as Hamar Lab, to strengthen diagnostic services. WHO also provided technical assistance in quality certification for health care workers and improved cleanliness, hygiene, and infection control practices in public health facilities in multiple states.

To provide online training to health care workers on health topics, including TB, Drug-resistant TB, health emergencies, leprosy, and so on, WHO helped develop the "Swasth e-Gurukul" platform, which has provided training to more than 20,000 users. The platform provides the possibility for trainees to undergo the training either at their own pace or by attending a scheduled course of fixed duration. Live sessions are periodically conducted to enhance the knowledge of health care providers on recent changes in policy or programme guidelines.

UNDP supported the National Health Mission (NHM) and the Government of Assam in the digitalization of their special initiative on community-level health camps known as "Swasthya Seva Abhiyan", monthly community outreach camps covering a range of preventive and curative services under the NHM. The digitalization has enabled real-time data entry and actionable analytics for programme managers.

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Ankita, a 25-year-old Auxiliary Nurse Midwife, has been working at a Primary Health Centre in Mumbai, vaccinating people against COVID-19. Millions of healthcare workers like Ankita, have been at the forefront of the fight against the pandemic, be it in hospital wards during surges or administering life-saving vaccines.

Armed with Co-WIN, which also streamlined the Covid-19 vaccine supply chain, frontline workers like Ankita led the charge of vaccinating India against the deadly disease.

WHO-FIC

PMJAY

</>

Winning over COVID

The CoWIN (Winning Over COVID-19) digital platform was developed by the Government of India with the support from UNDP and is the cornerstone of the country's successful vaccination drive. CoWIN has been used for administering over 2.2 billion doses and registered more than 1.19 billion beneficiaries, resulting in the vaccination of 97% of the eligible population with a minimum of one dose of COVID. 55,811 refugees and asylum-seekers benefited from the national COVID-19 vaccination policy as of December 2022.

The deployment of CoWIN was given an invaluable boost by an already existing digital vaccine and cold chain management system, the Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network, eVIN, developed and deployed by the Government of India with support from the UN since 2015. The UN helped institutionalise eVIN in 21 states through agreements for government cost sharing. The financial allocation for eVIN was made by all 28 states and 8 union territories under National Health Mission funds, helping efficient and effective healthcare service delivery across India.

WHO and UNICEF also supported the MoHFW in its continuing fight against COVID-19 through the capacity building of health care workers.

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During 2022, WHO supported 55 training workshops at state and district levels for Infection Prevention and Control and COVID vaccination, training nearly 5,700 health staff. In Uttar Pradesh, WHO supported several door-to-door surveillance campaigns for COVID-19 awareness and the identification of symptomatic cases. WHO monitored 11,839 teams and 53,135 houses during the campaign. UNICEF, with support of its partners, implemented capacity building and supportive supervision of 54,366 health care workers on COVID-19 case management protocols in 23 states. WHO supported the development of a COVID-19 dashboard which includes an early warning system, which is being used by GoI to monitor epidemiological trends at the district level to provide timely advice to states and UTs. x

Support was also provided for two state-level workshops for the reorientation of infection prevention and control and refresher training on COVID-19 vaccinations. COVID-19 vaccination monitoring continued in 2022 with 177,503 sessions and over 1.6 million beneficiaries monitored.

WHO has been involved in several studies related to COVID-19 in India. These include a seroepidemiology study on SARS-CoV-2 across five states, capacity building for medical institutes on conducting seroepidemiology, a therapeutic trial across multiple sites, and a hospital-based case-control study on the effectiveness of the Covaxin and Covishield vaccines.

IOM India with support from UNFPA explored the key drivers that influenced COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and acceptance among migrant workers. IOM then assisted the public and private entities in migration and mobility to ensure better COVID-19 vaccination coverage through on-ground and online awareness generation activities with partner Civil Society Organizations, dissemination of communication materials designed to drive vaccination intent, conducting two-way online consultations between experts and migrants to bust COVID-19 myths and misconceptions, sensitization workshops with frontline health workers, reaching 66,300 interstate migrant workers across the country.

Emergency Preparedness

The UN continued to support health emergency preparedness, including the establishment of 16 oxygen pressure swing adsorption (PSA) plants by UNICEF, and the handover of 5 oxygen PSA plants to state health departments in six states, helping to improve the capacity for surge oxygen supply. UNDP helped improve the surge capacity of oxygen supply across 15 hospitals across 6 states, with more than 3,500 oxygen beds by setting up oxygen PSA plants.

The UN, through WHO, supported the establishment of around 155 Auxiliary Health facilities to help develop surge facilities for testing, vaccination, and case management for augmenting the government's COVID-19 response. The UN also supported a national consultation and two technical expert group meetings for developing and endorsing a national curriculum on Public Health Management, Prehospital Management, and Clinical Management Modules, and also supported the conduction of a full scale all-hazard tabletop exercise followed by a mock drill at the National Center for Disease Control, New Delhi.

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Maintenance staff checks the PSA Oxygen Generation Plant at a Community Health Centre in Chowkhim, Arunachal Pradesh, The plant was installed with the support of UNICEF in October 2021.

Ending the HIV Epidemic

The UN Joint Team on AIDS (UNJT), coordinated by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) worked closely with the Government of India, state governments, ministries, and civil society to advance towards the national target of 'Three Zeroes' – zero new infections, zero deaths and zero discrimination.

The UN Team worked to fast-track the 95-95-95 targets for HIV/AIDS – which means at least 95 percent of people living with HIV (PLHIV) know their status, receive antiretrovirals, and have viral loads suppressed. The UN advocated on the new Global AIDS Targets for 2025 with the National Aids Control Organization (NACO), and MOHFW, including the 95-95-95 targets, which were adopted in the National AIDS and STD Control Programme 2021-2026.

The UN provided technical assistance to monitor gaps in the treatment cascade and the roll-out of more efficacious treatment regimens under the The National AIDS Control Programme (NACP). With NACO and MOHFW, the UN supported the dissemination of NACP Phase-V and its key strategies among more than 300 community representatives and other stakeholders. The UN supported the surveillance of the HIV epidemic as well as response at various geographic levels.

Under its joint initiative in Gujarat – the Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF) – the UN Team worked to fast-track the 95-95-95 targets for HIV/AIDS, a critical support for the Gujarat State AIDS Control Society's efforts to strengthen testing coverage, treatment coverage, and integration with critical services, helping reinforce the rights and wellbeing of affected communities. UNFPA replicated the institutionalized and integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV service delivery package in an additional two states, Madhya Pradesh, and Bihar, by building on the results and lessons learned from UNFPA's pilot project in Gujarat on the integrated SRH and HIV services with UBRAF.

UNAIDS, with WHO and UNICEF, supported adoption of One Stop Centers by NACO, for patient-centric, community-led care, as well as technical support to the launch and roll-out of the 'Sampoorna Suraksha' initiative launched by NACO to strengthen the testing and treatment cascade. Additionally, the NACO AIDS App, which was released by the National AIDS Control Organization in 2021 was translated into 11 different local languages in 2022 for widespread use and dissemination. UNDP supported the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) in the development of the 'Handbook on the Prevention and Management of HIV Stigma and Discrimination' and supported the development of social protection training modules for State AIDS Control Societies (SACS) officials

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Ensuring Continuity of Routine Immunizations

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The UN, led by UNICEF, UNDP and WHO, continued to support essential immunization services in India. To achieve the goal of full immunization coverage for 90 percent of children in India's Universal Immunization Programme (UIP), UN agencies supported three rounds of Intensified Mission Indradhanush 4.0 (IMI), a special catch-up vaccination drive, held in 378 districts. Six million children and 1.5 million pregnant women were immunised in these three rounds. 1,522 refugee and asylum-seeking children were immunised.

The UN provided advocacy and technical support at the national, state, and district levels for planning, capacity building, and immunization review meetings. UN agencies also supported one national and 10 state-level effective vaccine management assessments to strengthen the immunization supply chain.

A national routine immunization (RI) and Urban immunization review meeting, involving state immunization officers was conducted by the UN, focusing on gaps in immunization programmes, with the aim of reaching zero-dose children. The UN supported the development of state level RI strengthening plans and a monitoring system

which allows tracking progress at state, district, and sub-district level, using live dashboards and including accountability mechanisms. WHO developed state-level RI improvement plans for all states/UTs by applying a risk analysis approach to identifying high priority districts/blocks for improving RI services. In Rajasthan, faith-based leaders and influencers from tribal communities were oriented and engaged for encouraging the communities on immunization and to dispel misinformation.

A focus on tribal immunization continued and 15 states successfully implemented tailored immunization strategies to maximise reach in tribal communities. The strategies emphasised the demand side of immunization through strengthened community mobilisation activities, building the capacity of health workers, program monitoring, integration of immunization services with other health care delivery packages and intersectoral convergence.

Additionally, in 2022, the Government of India took full ownership of the eVIN, Co-WIN and U-WIN vaccine platforms, the three digital pillars to strengthen access to vaccines under the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP).

Strengthening Immunization Supply Chains

The National Effective Vaccine Management (EVM) 2022 was conducted by MoHFW in partnership with UNICEF as the lead partner and supported by WHO and UNDP across a sample size of 330 cold chain points in 34 states. The EVM score for India, based on this assessment, was 82%, which compares favourably with the global benchmark of 80%. The National EVM score also represents a consistent increase from 53% in 2013 and 68% in 2018, as a result of sustained technical support by UNICEF, along with WHO and UNDP, at national and state levels.

Under the guidance of the MoHFW, UNDP continued to maintain, upgrade and host the Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN) platform and continue to monitor and handhold cold chain handlers in maintaining the real–time status of vaccine logistics at 30 thousand government cold chain points across all 36 states and UTs of India. eVIN supports the management and delivery of vaccines in the right quantity, right quality, at the right time and right temperature, across the entire India.

UNICEF's sustained and comprehensive technical support for immunization supply chain strengthening in India had led to the development of two apex centres for supply chain support to the Government of India. In 2022, these apex national centres were successfully transitioned out of UNICEF support to full government funding. These centres will continue to play a critical role in cold chain planning, monitoring, and providing needs based technical support to the Government of India for new vaccine introductions, along with continuing the capacity building interventions.

Leveraging learnings from CoWIN and eVIN, the MoHFW initiated U–WIN, a programme to digitise India's universal immunisation programme, as a pilot in 65 districts across all 36 States and UTs.

© UNICEF/UN0650545/Panjwani

Dr Shailendra Yadav is happy to see less vaccine wastage and increased immunisation after a solar direct drive (SDD) vaccine refrigerator was installed at his Primary Health Care Centre in Rajsamand, Rajasthan. Being located in a remote area with a severe electricity shortage, the SDD installation has made it possible to easily store vaccines. The SDD was procured by UNICEF as part of its cold chain strengthening project.

Supporting Infectious Disease Elimination

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A woman gets tested for malaria at Awapalli Haat Bazaar Clinic in Usoor, Bijapur district. Tribal communities living in forested areas are among the most vulnerable groups affected by malaria. Early detection and treatment is helping the region move towards Malaria-Mukt Bastar Abhiyan (Malaria-free Bastar Campaign) goals. WHO India is assisting Bijapur in planning, implementation, and supportive supervision of health programmes.

UN agencies continued to support the Government of India in the elimination of tuberculosis (TB) through help in planning, capacity building, supervision, monitoring, evaluation, and promoting research. Support from WHO included the development of paediatric TB guidelines, training modules and a workbook on TB for gram panchayats, and the development of policy papers, including new national treatment guidelines.

WHO supported India in strengthening surveillance, monitoring, and capacity building for malaria elimination. WHO also supported the National Institute of Malaria Research and the National Institute of Research in Tribal Health to conduct malaria therapeutic efficacy studies of Artemisinin–based combination therapies. WHO supported development of a strategic plan for Malaria elimination for 2023–27 and the Independent Review of Malaria Program (MPR) in India. Support was also provided for the development of an advanced analytical dashboard with interactive graphics and GIS maps. To prevent malaria and other vector–borne diseases, over 9,700 refugee and asylum–seeker households were provided with mosquito nets.

WHO also supported a joint monitoring mission for Lymphatic filariasis, with help of nearly 60 experts in the five states of UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, and Telangana.

WHO supported the Government of India in the implementation of the National Action Plan for Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and through sectoral meetings to capture inputs for development of a second National Action Plan. 12 states/UTs were supported on State Action Plans for Containment of Antimicrobial Resistance

To maintain India's polio-free status, WHO is providing technical support to prevent, detect and rapidly respond to cases of polio through AFP and environmental surveillance. The goal of polio transition in India is for the Government of India to gradually take-over all polio related functions and activities at the sub-state level, including surveillance, monitoring, and reporting functions.

99.8%
of implementation blocks eliminated
kala-azar in four endemic states

Neglected Tropical Diseases

WHO provided technical assistance on disease elimination, including Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) which are a diverse group of 20 diseases that mostly impact poor communities in the Global South. The NTDs prioritised for elimination in India include visceral leishmaniasis, lymphatic filariasis, and leprosy. WHO's NTD field technical assistance network of nearly 40 officers support state implementation of NTD elimination.

Leprosy remains a substantial burden in India, accounting for 54% of the global reported cases. India achieved the goal set by the National Health Policy (2002) of elimination of leprosy as a public health problem, in 2005. However, new transmission continues to occur at the subnational level. In 2022, 4,107 new child cases were reported in India, indicating recent transmission. Children, adolescents, and adults affected with leprosy are provided WHO-supported multidrug combination therapy, and prophylaxis provided to household and community contacts to prevent transmission and development of disease.

India has been implementing a deworming programme for seven years to prevent soil-transmitted helminths (STH) infection through biannual Mass Drug Administration of albendazole to people under the age of 19. The programme has resulted in a significant improvement in the prevalence of STH. The WHO country office collaborated with ICMR institute to conduct a pilot project to test the feasibility of wastewater surveillance for STH infection.

WHO's NTD national and field teams assisted in monitoring the implementation of mass drug administration (MDA) rounds to prevent Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) in nine states. The country completed the first-ever Joint Monitoring Mission for the LF Elimination Programme in five states with the support of WHO.

UNDP collaborated with the Government of Himachal Pradesh and Telangana and other partners like CIFF, RTI International, to generate evidence to aid STH Transmission breaks. A qualitative study was also conducted to understand the feasibility of using CoWIN-like digital architecture for NTD Programmes.

Laboratory Strengthening

Mental Health Services

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WHO provided support to government institutions for laboratory testing during the COVID–19 pandemic. This support included the provision of next generation sequencing equipment, external quality assessment panels, and support for building capacity for immunological testing. The National Center for Disease Control and Indian Council for Medical Research were among the institutions that received support. The outcomes of the support included the building of next–generation sequencing capacity, strengthening the quality assurance of COVID–19 network laboratories, and the strengthening of immunological testing capacity.

In 2022, WHO provided support for various initiatives related to mental health in India. This included the finalisation of a training module on mental health self–care aimed at nurses who were heavily impacted by the COVID–19 pandemic. WHO also supported a virtual session on mental health during the IAPSM Conference in Nagpur, attended by over 1,500 participants. WHO supported MoHFW in organising the first national workshop to address the mental health needs of people affected with leprosy. WHO also supported the Tele–MANAS program, a flagship initiative to provide mental health services to unreached populations. WHO contributed to the drafting of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy, which was released in November 2022. WHO also supported mental health promotion for college students in Uttar Pradesh and provided support for mental health in cancer patients in Chhattisgarh.

UNDP is working with the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS),

Bengaluru on the development of the Holistic Psychosocial support module for LGBTQI Communities. In this regard, consultations were held with the Community, CSOs, and other stakeholders to seek their inputs on the module. Further, the module was field

piloted in Mumbai and Bengaluru to further strengthen it. It is expected to be rolled out in early 2023 under the National Mental Health Programme of MoHFW.

UNODC delivered a technical session on ways to meaningfully engage young people through education and strengthening their socio–emotional resilience at a two–day NCERT National Conference on Mental Health and Well–being in Schools and Role of School Administrators, attended by over 500 school administrators, leaders and other stakeholders.

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Sukma Netam, 23, is a student and volunteer for a community-based awareness programme on mental health and wellbeing for children and adolescents in Chhattisgarh. The civil society organisation Chhattisgarh Agricon Samiti (CAS) has been working to promote sustainable development in Chhattisgarh since 2007, and has partnered with UNICEF with the goal of fostering collective action for improved mental health in the community.

Addressing Non-Communicable Diseases

Mr Mutta Telam was diagnosed with diabetes and high blood pressure at a Health and Wellness Centre. WHO India provides technical assistance to the Government of India, state governments and union territories to strengthen primary health care services.

© WHO India

WHO provided technical inputs to MoHFW for the implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products. Financial, coordinating, and technical support was provided to develop a web–based portal for reporting violations related to Electronic Cigarette Ban Act 2019. WHO also provided technical support to MoHFW for review and finalisation of the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS–4) report.

The Government of Uttar Pradesh reached out to WHO India to improve facility–based injury and emergency care systems in the state, which has the highest number of road accident deaths in the country. As part of the initiative, 100 "champions of change" were trained by AIIMS Trauma Centre

Delhi, following which emergency care facilities were developed in their medical colleges.

To strengthen hypertension management and control, the India Hypertension Control Initiative (IHCI) was launched as a multi–partner initiative between WHO, MoHFW, state governments, and other stakeholders. This initiative, which is currently being implemented in more than 100 districts in 21 states, is in the process of being upscaled by MoHFW in collaboration with WHO India. IHCI was awarded the 2022 UN Interagency Task Force and the WHO Special Programme on Primary Health Care Award at the UN General Assembly in September 2022.

Supporting Reproductive, Maternal, New-born, Child, and Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A) Services

To strengthen Reproductive, Maternal, New–born, Child, and Adolescent Health (RMNCHA) services, the UN supported the national roll–out of training programmes and mentoring visits to selected health care facilities for ensuring quality of care during labor and the immediate postpartum period. The UN supported the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization and national stakeholder consultation for COVID and pregnant women's vaccination. Frequently Asked Questions for medical officers on COVID–19 vaccination in pregnant and lactating mothers were also developed.

UN agencies supported the revision of Child Health Training Packages. Three Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMNCI) training packages were harmonized, digitized, and updated, through a revision process guided by technical expert groups.

The UN also supported family planning and increased use of modern contraceptive methods and reduced the unmet need in Aspirational Districts of four focus states (Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha and Bihar). The UN also regularised the maternal death surveillance and response meetings in the Aspirational Districts of four focus states through capacity building and regular follow ups.

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The UN's advocacy and co-convening of Family Planning 2030 focal point members in the country contributed to achieving a key milestone in the national family planning programme, with Government of India approving two additional methods of contraception (subcutaneous injection of depo medroxyprogesterone acetate and single rod subdermal implant) into the basket of choices for contraceptives. WHO supported the MoHFW in ensuring global evidence was reflected in national guidelines and training manuals. The UN also facilitated the use of a comprehensive set of indicators focused on reversible contraceptives, availability of services and commodities, for the review of the family planning programme. This brought in a complete shift of focus from the earlier approach of review that focused only on distribution of commodities and acceptors of sterilisation.

In a significant development, WHO led negotiations with the global United Nations Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group (MMEIG) – comprising of WHO, UNICEF, UNFPPA, the World Bank Group and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division) to ensure India's reporting on SDG 3.1.1 or Maternal Mortality Ratio is accurately reflected in the new round of estimates covering 2000 to 2020.

As part of India's Midwifery Services Initiative, support for the roll-out of midwifery through the training and orientation of midwifery educators and state nursing council members and the establishment of a national midwifery training institute continued.

In partnership with UNICEF, WHO and USAID, MoHFW conducted the India Newborn Action Plan (INAP) midterm review in four representative states and eight representative districts, interviewing approximately 100 health care workers and 3,000 pregnant and recently delivered women to conduct bottle neck analysis (BNA).

Constant advocacy, implementation support, regular mentoring and supportive supervision by UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO along with implementation partners contributed to the improvement of India's institutional delivery rate, which is now at over 90 percent.

WHO supported MoHFW to strengthen maternal, perinatal, and child death surveillance and response (MPCDSR) as part of the country's commitment to end preventable maternal and child deaths. The MPCDSR integrated information system launched nationally in September 2021, and was formally launched in eight states in 2022. Regional training on MDSR and CDR were conducted, and log-in IDs were created for reporting and data entry from all levels of the public health system.

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Adolescent Health

The UN is supporting the Adolescent Health Division of the MoHFW for a web-based data management system covering comprehensive indicators related to adolescent health. The UN also supported the development and management of an online dashboard which provides easy access of disaggregated RMNCH+A indicators/data (by gender, wealth, caste, education and by residence) to government and partners.

The UN supported the expansion of the availability and accessibility of adolescent friendly services, especially for sexual health, along with mental health and phyco-social support by supporting the government in creating a pool of 1,772 trained Medical Officers across the country; and also strengthening 476 service delivery points for providing adolescent friendly health services in four UNFPA focus states.

As part of WHO's ongoing Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) activities, in partnership with Radio Mirchi, WHO conducted a campaign on the International Safe Abortion Day (28th Sept 2022). The campaign had two key messages – one on the basics of abortion law, and another on access. The campaign reached 49.8 million listeners across the country, emphasizing the importance of safe abortion care.

To address misinformation on COVID-19 and other health topics, especially among children, WHO and the Indian Council of Medical Research launched a training programme in the Delhi region aimed at building the capacity of school students, teachers, and principals to identify and combat fake news and misinformation online. The programme targeted students in grades 9–12 from diverse socio-economic backgrounds across 24 government, government-aided, and private schools in the Delhi-NCR.

The UN also provided technical assistance MoHFWy in drafting technical guidelines and Standard Operating Procedure for setting up Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics. Additionally, demand generation and awareness among youth about sexual and reproductive health and HIV AIDS was done using various platforms, including mass media and digital campaigns.

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Ensuring Access to Water and Sanitisation (WASH) Services

The UN provided technical assistance, wide-ranging capacity building, and promotion of safe practices to improve Water and Sanitation (WASH) services with its partners. UN agencies supported around 10 million people in promoting COVID-appropriate WASH behaviours.

The UN worked on the issue of biomedical waste management through involvement of the health and environment sector. In consultation with the Central Pollution Control Board, more than 500 officials of state and district government and civil society were sensitised and trained on various aspects of biomedical waste management.

UNICEF support focused on capacity building and monitoring of the implementation of Government flagship programmes on WASH, with an estimated budget of 17 billion USD annually almost fully financed by the government. UNICEF's support contributed to reaching 4.4 million and 20 million people with safely managed sanitation and water respectively and 150,000 schools improving from limited to at least basic WASH facilities. 13 million people have been provided access to hand hygiene facilities at household and community level.

UNICEF continued its strategic technical assistance to Open Defecation Free+ (ODF+) interventions by supporting the development of State-level roadmaps to achieve ODF+, through annual implementation and sustainability plans. To complement Government efforts for successful implementation of the national Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), UNICEF provided technical support in operationalizing the JJM and strengthening institutional arrangements such KRCs and ISAs for capacity building and handholding on water safety planning at village levels. UNICEF also contributed to prioritising community ownership,, with gender transformative roles in implementation of JJM, and the need to focus on water quality monitoring and surveillance.

UNHCR established and maintained 52 WATSAN (Water and Sanitation) committees. These were functional in various refugee settlements and 201 members of these committees received cash for work for their support in maintaining cleanliness and hygiene of their settlements and toilets.

UNHCR's partner in Telangana is also working with private support to improve WASH in refugee settlements by constructing and renovating low-cost latrine designs to contribute to the attainment of Swachh Bharat Mission on water and sanitation and address issues of gender equity and inclusion with cash for work schemes.

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Shanti, a villager who recently received an installed tap connection in her home in rural Himachal Pradesh, smiles proudly when she talks about how her family's life has been changed since. Piped drinking water has been transformational for millions of families like Shanti's, relieving the disproportionate burden faced by women and girls of carrying water long distances, while also bringing beneficial impacts for their education, safety, and household income. And according to a study co-authored by Nobel laureate Michael Kremer, the success of the Jal Jeevan Mission by 2024 could save the lives of around 136,000 children, every year.

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the closure of schools and learning loss, derailed the steady progress India has made in improving access to quality education in the last two decades. Over 247 million children were affected in elementary and secondary education, and 28 million children in pre-school education. Among them, children with disabilities, children living in vulnerable areas such as slums or rural areas, and children belonging to the most vulnerable communities were most affected due to limited access to connectivity and devices.

In 2022 all schools and early childhood development (ECD) centres in the country had reopened, after one of the longest school closures globally, impacting learning proficiency and out-of-school children in particular. The UN continued to support the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Women and Child Development to ensure equitable access to quality learning and skills, focusing on the most vulnerable, and redoubling efforts to reach the children at risk of falling furthest behind. Targeted efforts to reach out-of-school children in high concentration states led to over 754,000 students being identified and referred to formal education, while UNICEF India's contribution to the development of National Guidelines on Learning Recovery are expected to reach 132 million students in Grades 1 to 12.

UN agencies supported the effective implementation of the Ayushman Bharat School Health and Wellness Programme (SHWP), a flagship programme on improving health and learning outcomes for students, jointly developed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and Ministry of Education. The UN offered technical and policy support for the programme, supporting the training of school health and wellness ambassadors through guidelines, mentoring and online orientation sessions.

To help develop life skills, an essential skill set of competencies related to knowledge, technical skills, resilience and self confidence, UN agencies worked with students, teachers and communities to mainstream life skills into Indian school curriculums. UN-supported life skills education was significantly scaled-up and expanded across school systems in priority states, reaching over 4 million students in 2022.

The UN also provided evidence-based policy support through reports, publications and guidance notes, including UNESCO's fourth edition State of the Education (SoE) Report for India, with a focus on the potential of AI and digital transformations for India's education sector.

UNHCR continued to advocate inclusion, facilitate access, and provide safe spaces for refugee and asylum-seeking children to learn. UNHCR also supported the access of refugees and asylum-seekers to tertiary education.

EDUCATION AND SKILLING

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754,593

out-of-school children identified and referred to formal education

5.7 Million

students reached with UNICEF-supported learning recovery programmes

400,000

anganwadi workers enrolled in UNICEF supported early early childhood education course, benefitting **7.2 million** young children

285,000

plus teachers trained as Health and Wellness Ambassadors with UN support

5 Million+

adolescent students empowered with life skills with UNICEF and UNFPA support

39.8 Million

students in 15 states accessed career information

2,237

refugees and asylum seekers admitted into government schools and NIOS through UNHCR support

10 Million

preschoolers benefitted from parents receiving supportive parenting resources

705 refugee girls supported with cash-based assistance to continue education and promote gender equity

Supporting Learning Recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of schools led to serious knock-on effects for the education of children, leading to learning loss and the risk of many children not returning to school. UNICEF kicked off learning recovery efforts with advocacy campaigns to ensure that all children return to school, especially the most marginalised groups. At the policy level, UNICEF India contributed to the development of National Guidelines on Learning Recovery which are expected to reach 132 million students in Grades 1 to 12. UNICEF supported learning recovery programmes and back-to-school campaigns benefitted 5.74 million children (48% girls) across nine states.

UNICEF supported the government in four states to develop a 12-week school readiness curriculum, a teacher guide, and learning materials which benefited all 800,000 students (49% girls). Approximately USD 4 million has been leveraged from the government for the printing of school readiness and learning recovery packages for students in early grades.

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Ajith Kumar is a Grade 3 student of the Kempalinganahalli Government Higher Primary School in Bangalore Rural district. He is participating in the Foundational Learning Study 2022 conducted by the NCERT and supported by UNICEF. The Foundational Learning Study was conducted across all states in India during March 2022.

Improving literacy and numeracy skills

Even prior to the pandemic, India was already facing a learning crisis and less than half of children enrolled in primary education were achieving minimum proficiency levels in language and mathematics. The National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2021 indicated a broad decline in learning outcomes at almost all levels compared to previous surveys.

Launched in March 2022 by the Department of School Education and Literacy of the Ministry of Education, the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN) Mission aims to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy in primary classes and to ensure that all children attain grade level competencies in reading, writing and numeracy. UNICEF is a member of the national committee contributing to the design of the mission. To support NIPUN, the national Foundational Learning Study (FLS) was conducted, surveying 86,000 students in literacy and numeracy in 10,000 schools across 36 states/UTs. This not only set the baseline for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) mission but also established the benchmark for literacy in 20 languages and numeracy as well as reporting of Sustainable Development Goal (SGD) 4.1.1. India now has robust systemic level learning assessment data and evidence from the National Achievement Survey and the Foundational Learning Study to address the learning crisis and help guide education reforms in the country.

Supporting evidence-based education policy and planning

UNESCO Higher Education Chairs in India serve as think tanks and bridge–builders between academia, civil society, local communities, research, and policymakers. The Chairs allow regular conversation around ongoing work, as well as discussions on priorities, future course of action and potential inter–sectoral synergies.

UNESCO's fourth edition of the State of the Education (SoE) Report for India on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Education brings out current promising innovative practices as well as emerging AI applications. The Report highlights the unique needs of the Indian education sector and provides 10 recommendations on how these needs may be met through human–centred applications of AI.

UNICEF provided technical support to Ministry of Education and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) for the development of assessment frameworks, sampling design, preparation and review of test items, psychometric analysis of the FLS as well as the design, roll out, and preparation of national and state analytical reports and dissemination of National Achievement Survey as well. India now has robust system level learning assessment data and evidence from the National Achievement Survey and the Foundational Learning Study to inform planning and policy to address the learning crisis and help guide education reforms in the country.

Early Childhood Education

More than 400,000 anganwadi workers and field supervisors from Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal enrolled for an online early childhood edu–cation (ECE) course developed by UNICEF in multiple languages (Hindi, English, Assamese, Odia, Marathi). The capacity–building programmes have renewed focus on ECE activities and are benefiting more than 7.2 million children enrolled in anganwadi centres. Additionally, 10 million preschoolers (50% girls) benefited from parents receiving supportive parenting resources.

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Getting out-of-school children back into education

School closures due to the pandemic impacted over 286 million children in India. The longer that children are out of school, the more functional skills they lose and less likely it is that they will be retained or return into the formal education mainstream, and become more exposed to the risk of child marriage and child labour.

UNICEF supported the strengthening of school education departments' systems for effective identification and mainstreaming of out–of–school children in the most vulnerable areas in 11 states (Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal). 754,593 out–of–school children (51% girls, 4 transgenders of which 2,447 with disabilities) were identified and referred to formal education and 375,628 (168,179 girls and 207,449 boys) among the overall children identified, joined formal entry programmes. UNICEF also devised and supported four state education school departments (UP, Chhattisgarh, Jammu and Kashmir and Jharkhand) to use automatized systems (APPs) for easier data collection, and to support mainstreaming into formal education.

School Health and Wellness Programme

The School Health and Wellness Programme (SHWP), an Ayushman Bharat initiative, is the government's flagship initiative for establishing healthy behaviours in schools, including mental health, and is being rolled out with technical and policy support from UN agencies in 13 states. The programme aims to reach 260 million schoolchildren and their families by 2030. In 2022, the programme expanded to 52 percent of the country's 736 districts, reaching 3.46 million schoolchildren in 156,880 schools.

UNICEF helped to train the National Resource Group (NRG) and the NRG, in turn, trained State Resource Groups to further train 235,311 teachers (48 percent female) across 156,880 schools as Health and Wellness Ambassadors and to orient 129,016 school principals. Complementing SHWP, UNICEF also supported a self-esteem development programme for 2.4 million adolescents (63.3% girls) across eight states through the training of 41,353 teachers (50.6% female).

UNFPA is supporting the roll-out of the School Health and Wellness Programme in 32,216 schools across Odisha, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Delhi. UNFPA reached 30,000 students in training 20,000 principals and 50,000 schoolteachers as health and wellness ambassadors who delivered the SHWP curriculum. A comprehensive resource package to conduct Health and Wellness Days in school and community settings was developed, cutting across the 11 themes of SHWP. A demand for additional mentoring and support for teachers designated as health and wellness ambassadors was met by UNFPA's 30-hour mentoring module. Further, the capacity building of 1,200 medical officers enabled the creation of a cadre of state level master trainers to build the capacities of district and block level medical officers to provide adolescent-friendly and gender-responsive services.

UNESCO, in collaboration with the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), supported the implementation of the SHWP. Several online orientation sessions were organized for 29,000 principals of Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) schools, and around 180 principals, teachers, and counsellors as master trainers from 16 CBSE Centers of Excellence in 29,000 schools.

UNESCO supported conducting regional workshops to enhance awareness and knowledge about sexual and reproductive health rights. The workshops covered the south, north, and northeast regions, over 100 HIV positive women and 45 adolescent girls from twenty-six states gained knowledge on challenges and issues on SRH-HIV prevention, treatment care and support of women living with HIV.

UNESCO and partners came together to raise awareness on Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management under the programme #KeepGirlsInSchool. Under this project, a total of five teaching and learning draft modules have been developed on various thematic areas.

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Life Skills and Career Guidance

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Psychosocial competencies, including resilience, personal agency, and self-confidence, can empower individuals and help them move out of poverty. Research indicates a positive correlation between life skills and increased attendance levels, enhanced classroom behaviour and improved academic achievement. Given the positive correlation between skills and learning outcomes, UN agencies are supporting the expansion of life skills education within Indian school curriculums and communities.

UNICEF supported the development of various 21st century skills programmes, including coding, financial literacy, and self-esteem benefitting 1.1 million adolescents. The innovative programme on self-esteem and positive body image is being implemented across eight states, with 125,000 teachers (47% female) empowered to enable 219,678 (48% girls) children to overcome negative appearance ideals and to break gender norms based around body image. Additionally, 39.8 million students (50% girls) were able to access career information in 15 states.

Both UNFPA and UNICEF supported life skills education, reaching over five million adolescents. UNICEF supported the integration of life skills into the current curriculum, helping train 1,236 teachers (41% female) on life skills, benefiting 151,487 adolescents (50% girls) in five states.

UNFPA's life skills education was significantly scaled-up and expanded across 11 school systems in priority states, reaching approximately 2.97 million students in 26,322 schools in 2022. During the year, 32,764 teachers were trained to deliver life-skills education. The programme reached the most vulnerable and those from marginalized communities through tribal residential schools (1,150 schools), special schools for adolescents with disabilities (155 schools) and madrasas (1,910 schools).

UNFPA also supported the roll-out of life-skills education through community-based platforms of the National Adolescent Health Programme, reaching 2.06 million adolescents with life skills education in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Odisha.

52 UN Volunteers in 27 states contributed to 33,820 young people, 44% of them women and 67% marginalized, being connected with career counselling and guidance, employment and entrepreneurship skills, including 21st Century skills. This was conducted under the government-funded project 'Strengthening Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan and National Service Scheme', implemented by UNV in partnership with UNDP.
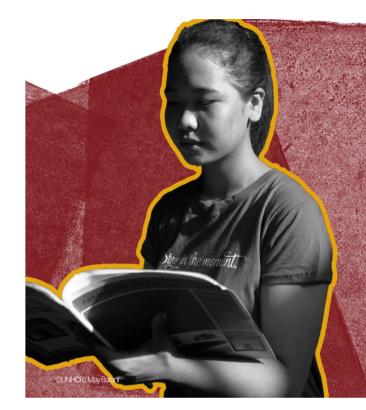
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16-year-old Lankapati Krishna a 11th Class student who learned about anger management from life skill training offered by his school in Gujarat. Lankapati used to get angry and throw things around, but since life skills training, he learned to control his anger. He starts his day with mediation now, which is helping him stay calm and confident.

Transforming Education

The global Transforming Education Summit was convened in response to a global crisis in education and to revitalize efforts to achieve SDG 4 in September 2022. UNESCO and UNICEF coordinated the process of India's national consultations with education stakeholders, contributing towards the pre–summit meetings and the Transforming Education Summit itself.

UNESCO and UNICEF supported the Second Asia–Pacific Regional Education Minister's Conference (APREMC II) and the 4th meeting of the Regional Network of the SDG 4 National Coordinators in June 2022. APREMC II provided a platform for education ministers to convey and reinstate national commitments towards achieving national education goals. The APREMC II outcome document (Bangkok statement) contains concrete priority actions, recommendations, and a roadmap to rebuild and transform the Asia–Pacific region's education systems.

UNESCO and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) organized the UNESCO India–Africa (UIA) Hackathon from 22–25 November 2022 at Gautam Buddha University in Noida, Uttar Pradesh. The event brought together 603 students, educators, teachers, and the research community of India and its African partners. The Hackathon was organized around the following themes: (i) Education; (ii) Renewable Energy/Sustainability; (iii) Drinking Water and Sanitation and Agriculture and Health and Hygiene.

Supporting the Education of Refugees

Education is a critical element of the refugee response, giving refugees the knowledge and skills to live productive, fulfilling, and independent lives, and mitigating child protection risks like child labour and child marriage within refugee communities.

UNHCR supported refugees and asylum seekers to ensure inclusion and access to Government schools. UNHCR facilitated 2,237 new admissions into government schools and National Open Schooling. Accelerated learning programmes were supported at 24 locations for 4,106 children and 1,106 children were provided with educational kits to promote learning. UNHCR also supported the access of refugees and asylum–seekers to tertiary education. In the academic year 2021/2022, 62 students received a scholarship from the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) to enrol in or continue their university studies. 249 life skills sessions were conducted for 6,175 refugees and asylum seekers. To address gaps in services, UNHCR provided scholastic material and cash–based interventions to refugee learners in seven states.

©UNHCR/May Barani

For Theresa Lian Huai, a 16-year-old asylum-seeker from Myanmar living in Delhi, learning Hindi is more than mastering a new language. It is a gateway to understanding India's culture and traditions. "The language courses (Hindi and English) have enabled me to communicate with the host community, establish connections and make new friends," says Huai. UNHCR's partner in Delhi, BOSCO, provides language classes for refugee and asylum-seeker youth in India. She enjoys being in class with her classmates and wishes to overcome the language barrier.

One of the aims of the community centers run by UNHCR's partner in New Delhi is to help young refugees and asylum-seekers enter the formal education system in India either through the National Institute of Open Schooling or government schools and resume their education in India.

When asked about her future, Huai says "I want to become a doctor and help a lot of people."

Introduction

India has transitioned from being a food-deficit nation to a self-sufficient food-producing country in the last 30 years, and as of 2021 graduated from FAO's list of low income food-deficit countries. While India has made strides across nutrition and food security in recent decades, it still has a long way to go. India remains home to the largest population of food insecure people in the world, a third of the world's undernourished people, and more than one in three children under 5 suffering from stunting. The outbreak of COVID-19 further impacted food supply, livelihoods, and the ability to access affordable, nutritious food, thereby affecting all forms of malnutrition, exacerbating micronutrient deficiencies and low birth weights. The impact was even worse for vulnerable and marginalized groups.

UN advocacy, policy support, evidence generation and innovation supported the Government of India's push for better nutrition outcomes in the country in 2022. Infants, young children, adolescent girls and mothers benefited from high-impact nutrition interventions with UN support. The restoration of quality essential nutrition services at scale was effective in UN supported states.

UN agencies supported vulnerable families and individuals in accessing their entitlements to nutritious diet through the major food safety net programmes of the Government of India, enhanced the capacity of the government to store and manage its public distribution systems, strengthen farm-based livelihoods, and improved food safety surveillance.

The UN continued to provide technical assistance for mainstreaming fortified rice in the food safety nets across districts across seven states. Nearly 3,800 rice millers and 4,800 government officials were sensitised by WFP on rice fortification across these seven states.

In addition, food security for the most vulnerable trench of the population was improved through support to the production of Take-Home Rations, technical assistance on rice fortification in public food safety net programmes and to Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). Finally, small-scale producers were supported to improve irrigation facilities, crop diversification and improved farming systems

Nutrition and Food Security

59 automated take-home-ration

production units benefited nearly 3 million people with WFP support in Uttar Pradesh

Over 2.3 million households

in seven states benefited from IFAD financing

Double the number of children with severe wasting

received treatment in UNICEF supported states in 2022

WFP sensitised 3,800 rice millers & 4,800 government officials

across seven states on fortified rice

Iron Folic Acid (IFA) supplementation increased

from 48% to 50% for adolescent girls and from 90% to 95% for pregnant women with UNICEF support 2021–2022
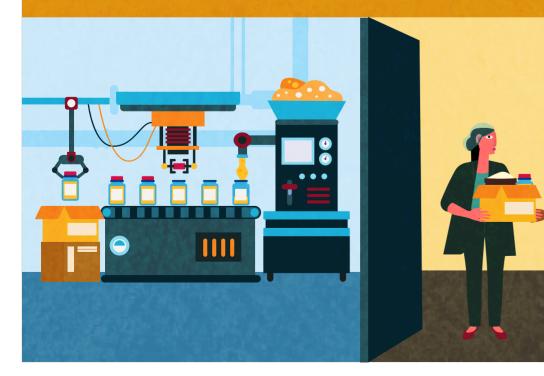
Nutrition events re-established

in 80% of early child development centres in UNICEF supported states

Adolescent and Maternal Nutritional Services

UNICEF's support to the Government helped strengthen health systems and ensure the continuity of nutrition services for 67 million adolescent girls and 30 million pregnant women. Continued efforts for the improvement of nutrition services, including Iron folic acid (IFA) supplementation for the prevention and treatment of anaemia, led to an improvement in uptake from 48 percent of adolescent girls in October 2021 to 50 percent by December 2022. Consumption of IFA supplements among pregnant women improved from 90 percent to 95 percent in the same period.

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17-year-old Kumari Preetiben Dineshbhai Vasava takes an IFA tablet. Her nutritional status and haemoglobin levels were reported as underweight and anaemic during an assessment on the Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Day (VHSND), in June 2022. Under the PURNA scheme, she was provided with take-home-rations and counselled on dietary diversity and the importance of IFA tablets. After the consultation, her weight and nutrition have improved, and she feels active and healthy.

Caring for Children with Severe Wasting

Policy Support for Better Nutrition

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Palo Tamsoy holds her daughter Sita Tamsoy (12 months) at the Malnutrition Treatment Center (MTC) in Chaibasa, Jharkhand. Sita weighed 5.2kg at the time of admission, marking her as considerably underweight. MTCs are health facilities where children with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) are admitted and provided with medical and nutritional care. Once discharged from the MTC, the child is followed up every 15 days for two months.

The launch of POSHAN Abhiyaan (Nutrition Mission) in 2018 has helped refocus the agenda on nutrition. The POSHAN 2.0 (2022) guidelines from the Ministry of Women & Child Development, emphasised that POSHAN 2.0 will focus on maternal nutrition, infant and young child feeding norms, and treatment protocols for wasting. Maternal nutrition and wasting were included as priority areas with high level support from UN agencies.

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India has made notable progress in the reduction of stunting, from 38 percent in 2016 according to NFHS–4, to 35.5 percent in 2019–20 (NFHS–5). Adolescent girl undernutrition rates have improved from 20 percent in 2016 to 18 percent in 2019–20. Moreover, marked improvements were recorded in the proportion of children 6–23 months receiving minimal dietary diversity (from 12 percent in 2016 to 21 percent in 2019–20).

While India has made progress in the number of malnourished children, 19.3 percent of children under 5 still suffer from wasting according to the latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS–5). UNICEF supported the re-establishment of essential nutrition services following COVID19–related disruptions, especially services for children affected by severe wasting. The number of children with severe wasting receiving facility and community–based treatment doubled in UNICEF' supported states in 2022.

Supporting Social and Behaviour Change

UNICEF's consistent assistance to government partners resulted in the efficient implementation of a range of social and behaviour change (SBC) initiatives across 14 states to enhance the uptake of nutrition services. The integration of SBC activities into state and district–level work plans resulted in community–based events that are increasing nutrition awareness, demand for quality nutrition services, and the adoption of positive nutrition practices, especially around complementary feeding, maternal nutrition and WASH behaviours.

Community–based events, including a platform for group counselling on infant feeding, were re–established in 89 percent (639,178 out of 718,984) of community early child development centres (Anganwadi centres) in 12 UNICEF supported states.

Furthermore, there was a renewed focus on complementary feeding during major national SBC events actively supported by UNICEF, including the Poshan Maah (National Nutrition Month), Poshan Pakhwada (National Nutrition Fortnight) and Annaprashan celebration (community–based celebration of the introduction of the first complementary food) organised by Anganwadi workers.

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Early Childhood Development counsellor Yeshaben Sahu teaches pregnant and breastfeeding mothers about nutrition in the anganwadi centre in Nava-Vaghpura Village, Gujarat. Every month, Mother Support Group meetings are held with pregnant and breastfeeding mothers. Anganwadi workers along with ECD counsellors discuss different aspects of maternal, infant and young child feeding and care, diet diversity, and positive parenting.

Multisectoral Partnerships

Through its support to the Private Sector platform IMPAct4Nutrition (I4N), UNICEF intends to leverage private sector support and funds for nutrition. Launched in 2019, I4N today has more than 361 pledged businesses. In 2022, the first state–level I4N secretariat was set up in Madhya Pradesh in partnership with a leading private sector university. Support has been leveraged for media space, employee engagement, and the enrollment of additional pledged partners.

Supporting Food Safety Nets

Take–Home Rations (THR) are part of the Integrated Child Development Services scheme and are distributed to children aged 6–36 months and to pregnant/lactating women to fill nutrition gaps. WFP supported the government of Uttar Pradesh in operationalizing 59 automated THR production units, benefiting nearly 3 million people. Nearly 30,000 Anganwadi workers were trained on the importance of improved THR consumption in Uttar Pradesh with the support of the UN's digital capacity building initiatives.

One Nation One Ration Card is a national, digitized ration card that enables migrant workers and their families to access the public distribution system (PDS) rations throughout the country. In the state of Meghalaya, nearly 2.1 million people were reached by a WFP–developed campaigns on the One Nation One Ration Card programme, as well as grievance redressal mechanisms.

The UN continued to provide technical assistance for the mainstreaming of fortified rice in the food safety nets across 130 WFP–supported districts in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Bihar, and Odisha. Nearly 3,800 rice millers and 4,800 government officials were sensitised by WFP on rice fortification across these seven states.

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WFP also continued its support to improve the accuracy and efficiency of the Targeted Public Distribution Systems by expanding the deployment of Annapurti, an automated grain dispensing machine, to five new locations. The solution acts as a key enabler especially for migrant workers to access their entitlements under the National Food Security Act (NFSA).

To reduce storage losses of publicly procured food grains under the NFSA, WFP set up a second mobile storage unit in the state of Uttarakhand and installed three smart warehouses using Internet-of-Things (IoT) enabled technology. To strengthen the capacity of officials in the Ministry of Food, WFP developed and supported the government in launching an online learning management system with seven learning modules in the areas of supply chain and beneficiary management.

WFP co-hosted a high-level mission from the Government of Nepal for a South-South and Triangular Cooperation knowledge exchange with the Government of India, with a focus on sharing best practices from India's food security safety nets and the implementation of the National Food Security Act.

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Improving Food Safety

WHO supported the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in developing a monitoring and surveillance plan for unhealthy trans fats in the food supply system. This included technical support to adapt and adopt the WHO protocols for trans fat assessment, reviewing the data from the laboratory analysis, and identifying challenges with the data quality to support improvement in testing and identifying areas for capacity development.

WHO also collaborated with the FSSAI to launch a digital campaign on food safety aimed to create public awareness on reducing the burden of foodborne diseases. The combined reach of the campaign on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter was over 12 million.

FAO, in partnership with the Spices Board of India, organized a Training of Trainers (ToT) on good agricultural practices and good hygienic practices in spices for 60 master trainers who trained 1,200 farmers, including women farmers, for strengthening the spice value chain. Market linkages were strengthened through organising buyer-seller meets where 57 exporters, 141 farmers, and 43 FPOs from the project region participated. To ensure the quality of spices, capacity assessment of the labs in the project area was done to test spice samples.

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Supporting Rural Livelihoods

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FAO, in collaboration with the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), developed training manuals and compendiums of best practices and success stories for Community Resource Persons (CRPs) to strengthen their capacities to support on-farm livelihoods for adoption of sustainable and resilient farm-based livelihood interventions and practices across the country.

In collaboration with NITI Aayog, FAO published a book titled 'Indian Agriculture Towards 2030: Pathways for Enhancing Farmers' Income, Nutritional Security and Sustainable Food and Farm Systems' through Springer in early 2022. The Honourable Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, released the book as the Chief Guest. FAO collated the recommendations emerging from the thematic discussion papers prepared of the National Dialogue into a set of nine policy briefs with key messages for the transformative shift in agri-food systems to achieve the SDGs.

FAO collaborated with the Government of Andhra Pradesh to support farmers in adopting sustainable agri-food systems. Developed Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) packages for select crops in six agroclimatic zones of Andhra Pradesh, trained 160 Agriculture and Horticulture scientists and officers, and 260 farmers on just transitions to sustainable agrifood systems. These individuals then trained 14,000 sub-district officials. Additionally, FAO organized a state-level workshop to design monitoring and evaluation tools and framework for supporting farmers on GAP certification.

IFAD financed projects in 7 States – Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Uttarakhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Maharashtra – supported over 2.3 million households, improving irrigation facilities, providing quality planting material, crop diversification, introducing tree-and-livestock based farming systems as well as improving cultivation practices and introducing organic nutrient and plant protection measures.

Increases in productivity were reported for both Rabi and Kharif crops due to introduction of improved varieties, changes introduced in the cropping patterns and farming practices in the project areas. Agriculture productivity has also increased due to the use of simple tools and agricultural implements reducing the time required for farming as well as increasing the use of improved technologies. Enterprise development has also been a focus area for the IFAD projects for forward and backward linkages with agriculture and additional source of income and livelihood.

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UNHCR with its partners in India supported refugees, asylum-seekers and host communities in India with monthly food rations. Food distributed was keeping in mind each community's dietary preferences and mainly consisted of rice/wheat, lentils and spices.

Climate Action, Clean Energy & Disaster Resilience

Introduction

India has made significant commitments and progress on environmental sustainability in recent years. The government is party to key multilateral environmental agreements, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Montreal Protocol, and the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity. India has also launched the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) to mitigate and adapt to the climate change impacts and this has been further decentralized with each state developing its own State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC). The Panchamrit targets announced by Prime Minister Modi at COP26, and ambitious targets to meet its energy requirements through renewables by 2030 and zero emissions by 2070, backed by recently upgraded Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) targets, as well as the launch of Mission LiFE, or Lifestyle for Environment, and the e International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), are all converting local action into international collaboration.

At the same time however, India, itself is uniquely vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters, and environmental sustainability is emerging as India's next major development challenge. Among the most populous nations, India is one of the most densely populated. Although its carbon emission per capita remains relatively low, it is still among the largest carbon emitters in the world, due to its large size. India's overall growth, especially in the past few decades, has not met its potential for sustainability due to environmental degradation and a growing scarcity of natural resources.

The UN continued to support India in achieving environmental sustainability and increasing its resilience to disasters through 2022. UN agencies supported India in fulfilling its commitments to multilateral environment agreements and helped tackle challenges in pollution and waste generation by scaling up tested approaches and building capacities for managing poor sanitation practices, pollution, and waste. The UN also supported the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem restoration, helping mitigate the impact of climate change, support the economy,

and provide livelihoods and health security to the communities.

UN agencies addressed the challenge of deteriorating air quality in major Indian cities and its impact on human health through technical support and advocacy, working on integrated strategies for clean air and sustainable agriculture production, involving government, regulatory bodies, CSOs, and the private sector.

The UN also continued its support of disaster management systems in India, working closely with the government and its partners on risk–informed programming to strengthen resilience and reduce disruptions in delivery of services, helping minimise the impact of disasters. UN agencies worked across the country in building the capacities of government departments and civil society organisations to strengthen the resilience of children, communities, and critical service delivery systems at the national and subnational level.

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3,312 hectares

of wetlands and community common pool resources protected and restored with UNEP support

More than 11,605

metric tonnes of plastic waste and **6,234 metric tonnes** of dry waste collected with UNDP support

10,443 officers

reached with trainings on child–centric disaster risk reduction by UNICEF

More than 12,000 marine fishers

in Odisha reached by WFP for improved safety, catch and sustainable fishing

Over 146,000 tons CO_2 emissions

prevented and investments and more than USD 29M in energy efficiency investments by 750 MSMEs facilitated by UNIDO

Over 500,000 young people

mobilized to act on plastic pollution through UNEP outreach

3 million people

(1.3 million women, 1.7 million men) reached by UNICEF–supported Flood Preparedness campaigns

Over 1 million

hectares sustainably managed through UNDP interventions through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Green Climate Fund (GCF)

1,064 local self-governments

in Kerala integrated Eco–DRR principles into their disaster management plans with UNEP support

Supporting Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Measures

UNDP's technical and advisory support to the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC) led to the finalisation of the reporting requirements of India to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). UNDP also supported India in meeting obligations to achieve targets under the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), Montreal Protocol, the Swachh Bharat Mission, the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).

UNDP interventions made through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Green Climate Fund (GCF) investments and other donor supported programmes led to the sustainable management of 1 million hectares (including 964,787 hectares inside Protected Areas in high range mountain ecosystems) and the prevention of the release of 33,654 kg of CO2 emissions through the implementation of landscape–level strategies, circular economy approaches, adoption of renewable energy solutions, and site–specific plans for key biodiversity areas.

UNIDO completed its GEF project with the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), facilitating investments of over USD 29M in energy efficiency and renewable energy by 750 MSMEs in 23 industrial clusters, cumulative energy savings of 24,000 tons oil equivalent and the mitigation of 146,000 tons CO2 emissions. UNIDO continued its support for the deployment, validation and commercialization of low carbon cleantech innovation, with practical solutions already commercialized for first and last mile cold chain operations, portable solar irrigation pumps and industrial burners and pumps.

The Angul District Administration in collaboration with the UNEP and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) signed a tripartite agreement to develop a first–of–its kind district–level road map on circular inclusive and green economic growth.

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South-South and Triangular Cooperation

India has accelerated its global climate leadership by co–founding the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). ISA is a platform aiming to increase the deployment of solar energy solutions in the Global South, especially in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), by offering investments and technical support. The CDRI is a partnership of national governments, international organizations, multilateral development banks, the private sector, and knowledge institutions that aims to promote resilience in new and existing infrastructure projects to weather climate and disaster risks.

UNDP supported the establishment of the CDRI Infrastructure Resilience Accelerator Fund (IRAF), a multi–donor trust fund for global action on disaster risk resilience and strengthened partnership with the International Solar Alliance, including an initiative to support 10 countries to scale up solar applications.

WFP, in partnership with the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) released a regional workshop report, a compendium of inspiring practices on food and nutrition security in disasters and climate fragilities in Asia, and a document 'On the path to Building Resilience: India's Experiences of Managing Disasters' for facilitation of mutual knowledge exchange and enhanced south–south cooperation. WFP also supported a ministerial level mission from Nepal to learn from India's experiences on implementing sustainable food security through agriculture advancements and National Food Security Act.

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Supporting Conservation and Management of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Restoration

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FAO signed an implementation agreement with the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) for collaboration in landscape level planning, implementation and monitoring of tiger conservation in Mizoram, Odisha and Uttarakhand. Similarly, FAO has reached an understanding with the Chief Wildlife Wardens of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan for similar collaboration. This will facilitate a dialogue between production and conservation stakeholders in the landscape and synergize interventions in the agriculture and the environmental protection sectors.

Landscape assessments were undertaken in all the five project landscapes states, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Uttarakhand, which were used to prepare community–based landscape management plans. FAO also advocated for the integration of land species and indigenous varieties as eligible items for support under ongoing government agriculture development programmes, and supported the People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs) in the project landscapes of Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Odisha and Uttarakhand.

Building Climate Resilience and Sustainable Agriculture

WFP, in partnership with the Fisheries Department of the Government of Odisha, reached more than 12,000 marine fishers through a 'Secure Fishing' application to increase their incomes through daily catch, improve their safety, and empower them to make decisions.

In a demonstration project to improve resilience of smallholder farmers in Odisha, WFP trained Agriculture University staff to analyse historical data for the development of tailored climate products for target districts with the Participatory Information on Climate Services for Agriculture (PICSA) approach.

WFP also conducted the training of extension workers and 435 farmers and women–led self–help–groups to facilitate adaptation planning. In partnership with the MS Swaminathan Research Foundation, WFP completed climate vulnerability and capacity assessments in three states.

As a part of mainstreaming environmental concerns through climate resilient agriculture practices, WFP supported the state Government of Odisha and NITI Aayog in promoting millets as a climate resilient crop. WFP led the documentation of best practices for millet mainstreaming in partnership with the Odisha Millet Mission, developed six policy briefs, led multiple technical sessions, and published a compendium of best practices on food and nutrition security in climate fragilities and disasters.

Finally, ESCAP in collaboration with its network of institutions, as a part of a subregional project, carried out a national study for India to better understand the status of crop residue management in the country, identifying gaps and opportunities, collecting good practices for straw management, and designed action plans for interventions at the national level.

Finding Solutions for Air Pollution

Air pollution is one of India's greatest environmental challenges. The country is home to 22 out of 30 of the world's most polluted cities, and a recent study in the Lancet estimated that India's economy loses 1.4 percent of GDP to air pollution-related death and illness.

UNEP India launched the Air Quality Action Forum (AQAF) with Paytm Foundation to help mitigate the impact of air pollution in India. The AQAF has convened more than ten consultations with multiple stakeholder groups and has a membership of over 100 organizations. The support of the stakeholders is directed and leveraged in specialized areas like research, policy formulation, policy implementation, awareness generation, and the mobilization of resources.

To strengthen district-level capacities, UNEP is undertaking the capacity building of District Nodal Officers on climate change in more than 730 districts across India to strengthen capacities on air pollution and human health matters.

UNDP and the EU have partnered in the "Advancing health and environmental sustainability through action on air pollution" project to support the government in addressing air pollution as a key determinant of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), as part of a broader efforts to respond to environmental degradation and the changing climate. This project is part of the three-year, multi-country programme which aims to strategically address the interlinked challenges of NCDs and air pollution.

Mission LiFE

LiFE, or the Lifestyle for Environment Mission, was launched by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, together with UN Secretary-General António Guterres in October 2022 as a global movement that aligns the development and climate agendas. The LiFE Mission, first proposed by Prime Minister Modi at COP26 in Glasgow, gives special focus to the impact individual behaviour and consumption habits can have on the planet, and encourages the adoption of environmentally sustainable lifestyles. The goal is to scale climate change mitigation solutions based on behavioural and lifestyle changes that shift demand for goods and services towards those with significantly reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and polluting footprints.

UNDP is a key knowledge partner for Mission LiFE. A compendium prepared by UNDP with best practices from India on sustainable lifestyles was launched at COP 27.

As one of the invited knowledge partners of MEA on LiFE, UNEP along with the One Planet Network provided technical inputs to Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in developing G20 issues notes on LiFE, and provided technical support in organising an international side event on LiFE during the first G20 Development Working Group meeting in December 2022. UNEP also organised an event on linking LiFE with individual actions on air pollution control.

Sustainable Tourism

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UNEP signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) and the Responsible Tourism Society of India (RTSOI) to promote and mainstream environmental sustainability in the tourism sector. The Ministry of Tourism, in association with the Central Nodal Agency for Sustainable Tourism (IITTM) and in partnership with UNEP and RTSOI, launched a series of regional workshops on 'Development of Sustainable and Responsible Tourist Destinations' in line with National Strategy for sustainable tourism and guidelines of Swadesh Darshan scheme 2.0. UNEP also co-organized a CEO roundtable on sustainable tourism, which led to seven representatives from the tourism industry signing the Global Tourism Plastic Initiative commitment to manage plastic pollution. UNEP also provided technical inputs to the Ministry of Tourism on discussion documents for the G20 Tourism Working Group meetings being held under India's G20 Presidency.

Sustainable Fashion

In partnership with the Centre for Environment Education (CEE) UNEP initiated development of "Roadmap 2030", which identifies goals and supporting actions that aim to transform the Surat Textile cluster into an environmentally and socially sustainable textile hub. As part of this initiative, a Textile Innovation Mela was organised at the Surat International Exhibition and Convention Centre in November 2022, showcasing 32 innovative technologies that can be adopted to make the textile industry sustainable. In addition, UNEP developed India's first Sustainable Fashion Curriculum in partnership with the National Institute of Fashion Technology, and organised a national consultation to discuss sustainability initiatives across the textile value chain with the Ministry of Textiles.

Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE)

The Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) brings together five UN agencies (UNEP, UNIDO, UNDP, ILO, UNITAR), eight funding partners, and 22 partner countries, to work together to for coordinated transformation of economies into drivers of sustainability by supporting nations in reframing economic policies and practices around sustainability.

PAGE in India is closely working with eight sectoral line Ministries at the national level and two departments at the subnational level and is providing technical and analytical support in development of enabling frameworks to support green economic transformations.

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Green Economy Learning Assessment

(GELA) is a tool which aims to assess the capacity gaps and training needs for mainstreaming and advancing the Inclusive Green Economy (IGE) at the national and state levels. A GELA study focusing on SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities and SDG 13: Climate Actions was conducted by UNITAR and UNDP under PAGE in Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand with the Environmental Planning & Coordination Organization (EPCO) and Directorate of Environment Protection and Climate Change (DEPCC). Key gaps in capacities were identified for different levels of stakeholders and potential institutions identified to provide training to the target stakeholders, on Inclusive Green Economy.

Ecolabelling

Through PAGE, a study of global and national best practices on ecolabels was delivered by UNEP to the MoEFCC. A deeper analysis of eco–labelling criteria has been carried out for strengthening/developing ecolabels for select products in categories like textiles, paper, wood substitutes, electrical and electronic goods, indoor paints, cement, and steel. The reports' findings were presented to MoEFCC and other key stakeholders in three rounds of consultations.

Green Rural Economy and Development

The objective of inclusive development in India cannot be realized without the development of the rural sector. Greening rural development plans and programmes has an immense scope in forwarding the agenda for an Inclusive green economy in India. In 2022, PAGE established partnership with the Ministry of Rural development to develop a policy approach and a time bound strategy, for integrating principles of environmental sustainability and inclusive green economy, in local level development planning.

Sustainable Public Procurement

SSP is an enabling policy tool for transition to green and inclusive economies. The total volume of public procurement comprising both goods and services in India is estimated to constitute about 25 percent of its GDP and the potential of SPP for shifting markets towards green economy is immense. PAGE supported market assessment studies on Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) for writing and printing paper and room air conditioners (RACs) which were presented at a national workshop on SPP, jointly organized with the Ministry of Finance. The workshop gathered industry and experts perspective on SPP recommendations and criteria outlined for Writing and Printing Paper and RACs, and identified way forward for implementation of these criteria in the public procurement system. Currently two additional analytical studies are underway for developing SPP criteria for two priority areas (waste management as a service and cleaning and disinfection as a service).

Green industry and green jobs

Through PAGE, UNIDO supported the development of a policy brief on high–level assessment of issues and opportunities for green manufacturing in India, as well as a follow–up analysis focusing on just transition policy and sustainable technology and innovation with a focus on the textile and apparel sectors. A policy dialogue on 'Unlocking inclusive & green manufacturing growth and diversification in India' was held in November 2022. In addition, an additional assessment was initiated by ILO to understand India's policy readiness to create green jobs and ensure a just transition, with a specific focus on the energy sector. Assessment of Green Jobs and Decent Work Opportunities in the textile and apparel sectors is also being conducted to identify green jobs and decent work opportunities in the textile and apparel sector in Jharkhand.

Managing Plastic Waste and Pollutants

Under the India–Norway Marine Pollution initiative, UNEP supported the MoEFCC on sustainable plastic waste management. UNEP developed the 'Countrywide analysis of the status of regulation, implementation, and compliance of Single Use Plastic (SUP) bans in India', and the 'Status of Research Capacities and Information systems of Marine Plastic Litter in India' reports. Additionally, UNEP commissioned three analytical studies on (i) scaling up alternatives for identified single use plastic items in India; (ii) sustainable packaging and use of recycled plastic, and; (iii) a study on plastic waste recycling and end of life disposal in India, to support implementation of SUP bans and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) guidelines in the country.

To support implementation of EPR guidelines,

UNEP conducted regional workshops with industries for spreading awareness and building capacities on implementation of EPR regulations. UNEP also supported sub–national actions in Ladakh, Agra, Dehradun, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Delhi through capacity building workshops and policy support on key issues such as enforcement of SUP bans and incentivisation policy for alternative manufacturers. UNEP signed a MoU with the Ministry of Defence to build the capacities of more than 1.7 million young national cadet corps (NCC) on issues related to plastics waste.

Through the Tide Turners Challenge (TTC) UNEP mobilized over 500,000 Indian youth to act on plastic pollution. UNEP reached more than 115,000+ youth through TTC Phase 4.

In 2022, UNDP supported the collection and processing of 11,605 metric tonnes (MTs) of plastic waste and 6,234 MTs of dry waste, preventing more than 33,654 kgs of CO2 emissions. The agency also worked on the social inclusion and dignity of labour for waste pickers, which included offering formal employment, supporting financial inclusion as well as health security and social security to 1,692 waste pickers (48% women).

ILO interventions on green and decent jobs in the waste value chain included improving capacities to improve safety and health of waste collectors and organizing and managing workers' collectives in two states in India. As part of a pilot on 'waste to wealth' in public institutions and to provide decent jobs to informal waste workers, collaborated with Pune Municipal Corporation and SWaCH for operationalizing six biomethanation units that convert organic waste into biogas at source.

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25-year-old Poonam Mangesh Ghor segregates dry waste at the waste management centre Samarth Bharat Vyaspeeth (SBV), a social organisation, in Thane, Maharashtra. Samarth Bharat Vyaspeeth (SBV), a social organization, with Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC) began the Decentralized Waste Management Centre where different types of waste such as dry waste, floral waste and garden waste are recycled at a single location and employs the ragpickers for operations of the plant. It is an integrated approach to co-locate waste recycling of various types. It is known as the Project Revitalization with Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Revitalize as its policy.

Supporting Sustainable Cooling

Space cooling accounts for 30–40% of all electricity use in India, and the amount of installed air conditioners (AC) capacity in India is estimated to more than triple over the next decade. Government, as the largest consumer in the economy, is positioned to leverage this position to favour sustainable products.

Under the framework of the Cool Coalition, UNEP and RMI, in partnership with the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark under the India–Denmark Green Strategic Partnership, are developing a programme to sustainably cool India's cities. The Cool Coalition is supporting five states and more than fifteen cities in the implementation of India Cooling Action Plan, which is taking comprehensive action to tackle extreme heat and rising cooling demand. The ongoing work is focused on creating best practices, methodologies, policy recommendations, and knowledge centres for urban cooling, heat adaptation (including district cooling) and horticultural cold chains.

Development and Promotion of Non-Persistent Organic Pollutant Alternatives to DDT

Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) is an insecticide that effectively kills malaria spreading mosquitoes. Unfortunately, it is also a Persistent Organic Pollutant (POP) that pollutes the environment and can have harmful effects on the health of animals and people. UNEP and UNIDO are helping India to develop, manufacture and regulate environmentally friendly and sustainable alternatives to DDT. In 2022, UNEP produced a draft gap analysis and Action Plan for the MoEFCC for strengthening the regulatory framework for alternatives to DDT, guidance documents, as well as updated Integrated Vector Pest Management (IVPM) training modules. In parallel, UNIDO continued to support the development and commercialization of alternatives to DDT in partnership with Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizes and HIL India Ltd. 1.2 million Long Lasting Insecticidal Nets have already been manufactured and supplied, while further work is ongoing to commercialize bio–pesticides.

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Strengthening Disaster Resilience

Extreme weather events in India are happening more often, and with greater intensity. Globally, climate change has increased the number of natural disasters five–fold over the last 50 years, and according to the Centre for Science and Environment, India was battered by natural disasters or extreme weather events nearly every day of 2022. To support India's disaster risk management and response, UN agencies worked closely with the Government of India to increase institutional and community resilience, helping integrate climate change adaptation and mitigation measures and disaster risk reduction into national policies, strategies, planning and programmes.

UNICEF's technical assistance to states/UTs focused on strengthening critical service delivery systems to ensure that its targeted population of 664 million vulnerable people, including 286 million children have uninterrupted access to basic services during disasters.

Through UNICEF support, eight states have gained adequate capabilities to apply and integrate risk informed planning in their programmes to strengthen the resilience of children, communities and development systems against natural hazards, climate change and civil strife.

The Child Centric Disaster Risk Reduction (CCDRR) Centre, a joint initiative between UNICEF and the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, trained 1,440 officers from the departments of Health, Education, Women & Child Welfare, Revenue, Panchayat Raj, Rural Development and Youth Affairs on system strengthening for child centred disaster preparedness and response. 22 online training programmes reached 10,443 officers from various line departments.

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UNICEF continued to support national and state level Disaster Management institutions to develop relevant policies and implementation capability to utilize provisions of the 15th FC funds for emergency preparedness, response and mitigation, in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Telangana, Odisha, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. At the national level, UNICEF support to the National Disaster Management Authority for the development of policy guidelines on soil erosion will help states to utilize the FC funds to address risks related to soil erosion, leading to an improved protective environment for children.

Across states UNICEF extended technical support to stakeholders to strengthen the public health approach to disaster risk management by integrating flood preparedness and pandemic preparedness. As part of enhanced household level preparedness campaign, UNICEF and Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) jointly reached 27,364 children, 1,128 pregnant women and 1,331 persons with disability on vaccine promotion and flood preparedness. 3,903 officials, frontline workers and volunteers have gained knowledge and skills to respond safely to floods in the context of public health emergencies.

The National Institute of Disaster Management, with technical assistance from UNICEF, developed a comprehensive Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) training module for DRR program managers and implementers. This has helped enhance abilities and skills of government functionaries and key stakeholders to integrate SBCC in disaster risk reduction and management.

With the surge in natural and man-made disasters in the last few years, Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction (Eco-DRR) has become increasingly important. Eco-DRR is an approach where the regulatory functions of ecosystems (such as forests, wetlands and mangroves) are systematically harnessed to mitigate, prevent, or buffer against disasters.

UNEP, with support from the European Union and in collaboration with Partners for Resilience (PfR), is focusing on scaling-up Eco-DRR interventions and promoting large scale implementation of Eco-DRR to advance implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Sustainable Development Agenda.

UNEP, with support from the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) also developed a model for integrating nature-based solutions for ecosystem restoration and Disaster Risk Reduction, into the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guaranteed Scheme (MGNREGS) programme as well as the the Ayyankali Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme, the urban counterpart to the MGNREGS. Following the training, a third of the 1,064 local self-governments in Kerala now have Eco-DRR integrated in their local disaster management plans.

Working with National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), WFP developed a training module and supported capacity development to mainstream food and nutrition security in emergency preparedness and response. Capacity building sessions were organized to strengthen the capacities of practitioners in collaboration with NIDM. An exercise of Strengthening Humanitarian Systems in India was undertaken with stakeholders such as Sphere India and AIDMI.

UNFPA collaborated with its implementing partners to enable effective response to the needs of the communities affected by floods in the eastern states of Assam and Odisha and to those affected by the Myanmar crisis in the bordering north-eastern states of Manipur and Mizoram.

In Manipur and Mizoram, UNFPA's support included training of 43 One Stop Centres and civil society organizations for ensuring an effective response to GBV among the refugee population. Additionally, 3,500 women and girls were provided with dignity kits, and 50 pregnant and nursing women were provided mother and baby kits to take care of their health and nutrition in the crisis-affected areas. Seven health camps were also organized in the two states to ensure focus on sexual and reproductive health access both for persons of concern and for host families. In Assam, UNFPA's support enabled provision of dignity kits to 5,200 women and girls, and mother and baby kits to 550 pregnant and nursing women. In Odisha, 2,174 women and girls were supported with dignity kits.

3,500 women and girls

were provided with dignity kits, and 50 pregnant and nursing women were provided mother and baby kits to take care of their health and nutrition in crisis-affected areas by UNFPA.

7 states

assisted in utilizing 15th Finance Commission Disaster Risk Management funds by UNICEF

14 state governments

extended technical support for to apply and integrate risk informed planning in their social sector programmes by UNICEF

94 international non-governmental organization

and 22 Inter Agency Groups in 22 states improved preparedness and response in line with the Core Commitments for Children (CCCs) thanks to UNICEF

UNICEF technical support

led to DRR, climate change and village-level disaster risk plans being integrated in 7 hazard prone districts in Uttar Pradesh.

Introduction

In 2022, India overtook the UK as the world's fifth-largest economy, and is expected to continue to rise in the coming years as one of the fastest growing major world economies. India faces a unique moment in history, as a large mass of its population enters a working age and its dependency ratio bottoms out, creating the potential for a demographic dividend of enormous proportions. If this large working age population can join the workforce and move into higher value-added and higher productivity occupations, it will have a maximum effect on India's sustainable development trajectory.

Yet, despite a strong growth record, the Indian economy faces structural challenges in integrating a critical mass of working age young people while also creating more decent jobs that produce higher value for the economy. India's ambition to catapult the country up the manufacturing value chain to position itself as a global manufacturing hub will require building capacities to generate large scale employment, transforming gender relations to reduce discrimination against women and girls at work, empowering micro, small, and medium enterprises to move into new, more productive sectors, and seizing the demographic opportunity by ensuring a healthy, well-nourished, and educated youth generation who are competent in the 21st Century life skills which better quality jobs require.

To help accelerate these processes, the UN is working to promote decent work for all women and men, to achieve economic growth that is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. These efforts are led by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN's specialized agency promoting decent work for all, together with UN Women, UNDP, UNIDO and UNHCR. IOM significantly contributed to and continues to promote ethical recruitment, safe, orderly and regular migration, and migrants' welfare, protection and access to basic services.

The UN also worked to support the policy environment for businesses, in particular, MSMEs, at the local, state and national levels. Agencies worked with MSMES to develop innovation, technology ecosystem, access to financing and market linkages with small producers and industries and markets, including digital markets to improve productivity and working conditions.

The UN system in India also supported online school-to-work transition programmes, skilling, entrepreneurship, and job creation with protection of workers' health, rights, incomes, and families, especially those in the informal economy. Efforts were particularly concentrated in low-income states and districts.

The UN also worked to realize the transformational potential of the large share of working age women who are currently not in the labour force, supporting the Government of India and civil society organizations in strengthening women's capacities and skills and generating opportunities for improved livelihoods.

Skilling, Entrepreneurship, and Job Creation

© India

Over 32,000 workers and entrepreneurs

upskilled and trained by ILO, UN Women, UNDP and UNHCR

9,400 vulnerable women

reached by UN Women's Second Chance Education programme

Over 20,000 workers trained

on gender–sensitization by ILO and UN Women

Over 18,000 workers in four states

trained through Workers Information and Support Centres on their rights with ILO support

161 MSMEs completed a programme

to eliminate unsafe working conditions and improve business operations by UNIDO
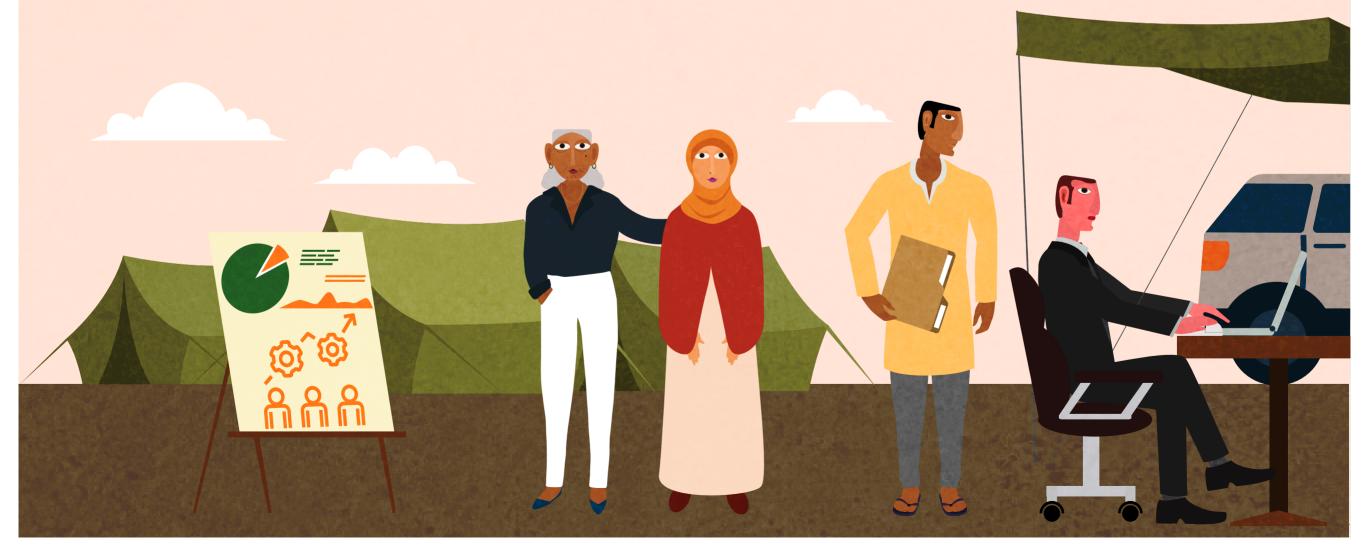
2,200 unorganized workers

linked to social security schemes by ILO

Over 570 women entrepreneurs

connected to markets and networks by ESCAP

2,255 refugees and asylum seekers

connected to skill development, entrepreneurship training and labour market guidance by UNHCR

Building Key 21st Century Skills

Decent work begins by equipping workers with the skills and training required by the labour market. UNDP contributed to the economic empowerment of nearly 30,000 individuals from marginalised groups, with a focus on youth and women (46 percent), by building capacities and enhancing their access to livelihood opportunities and social protection by scaling up initiatives on career guidance, 21st-century skilling, and entrepreneurship promotion, experimenting with new ones, building new partnerships and through strengthening last mile delivery and institutional capacity.

Improving Livelihoods through Entrepreneurship

To promote employment creation and entrepreneurship as a key aspect of decent work for all, ILO trained 100 youth and 55 trainers under the Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) programme in collaboration with the state governments of Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. Under the ongoing support, the entrepreneurs will be mentored and counselled to generate business ideas and register the business under various government schemes. Through its Innovation Challenge, UNDP supported and promoted youth innovation and entrepreneurship in tier III cities. UNDP also partnered with Startup Odisha, an initiative of the MSME Department of the Government of Odisha, to promote the start-ups of budding entrepreneurs in the state, and organised several training programmes on SDGs to encourage start-ups to align their proposals with sustainable development.

UNDP India

G Akash recently completed his ITI diploma in Electronics and Communication. At 19, he is a first-generation learner — the son of a mason, belonging to Raichur, an aspirational district in Karnataka. Under Project Code Unnati, a partnership between UNDP-SAP to boost youth innovation and entrepreneurship, he is among a handful of young students from Karnataka who won the Youth Innovation Challenge in 2022 winning a seed budget of one lakh rupees for his solar-powered electric bicycle. As a seed budget winner and young entrepreneur, Akash and his friends created a solar-powered electric bicycle that gets supply from solar panels. The panels are mounted on the bicycle and the hub motor is connected to the effortless riding and can be charged using solar energy.

Since 2020, UNDP India and SAP Labs India have been working together to boost entrepreneurship and youth innovation under its project, Code Unnati. The project aims to improve access to entrepreneurship and employment opportunities for 20,000 youth and 5,000 women across three districts of Karnataka

Strengthening Women's Economic Empowerment

Women face unique challenges in India's labour market and have a low labour market participation rate of only around 23 percent, impacting their autonomy and livelihoods. Women were also often the first to lose their jobs during the pandemic. Improving women's access to decent employment and entrepreneurial opportunities remained a focus for UN agencies through the year.

In 2022, the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), launched the Inclusive Education policy with technical inputs provided by UN Women. The Second Chance Education and Vocational Learning Programme was implemented in 200 rural villages across 12 districts in four states of India and reached out to 9,400 women from vulnerable socio-economic groups of scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and religious minorities. In 2022, 536 women were enrolled in NIOS and the state open schooling system; 2,130 attended skills and employment training.

The first-ever Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) Action Dialogue Series was launched by UN Women, led by WEPs signatories, to mobilize private sector commitments for tangible actions to empower women in the workplace, marketplace, and communities. The office leveraged excellent relations established with the private sector companies through the tools and training imparted to the WEPs signatories under the programme. The initiative builds on a large WEPs signatory base of 333 private companies in India as a result of the implementation of the EU-funded WeEmpowerAsia Programme from April 2019– August 2022.

With a focus on partnerships with the private sector, the UN Women's FLIGHT project livelihood interventions enable young women from Government Industrial Training Institutes to take up decent jobs and apprenticeships, in partnership with the Skill Development, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Innovations Department of the Government of Maharashtra. As a result, 20 private sector companies have been mobilized to employ young women from ITIs, and efforts were made for establishing gender responsive infrastructure in the companies.

Out of a total target of 750, 186 young women have completed the employability skills curriculum under FLIGHT and have received a complete scholarship of INR 6,000. Gender sensitization training was provided to 551 young women, 34 parents of young women, 289 staff members from different institutes under the project, and 170 young boys (in ITI) to create an enabling environment for young women to learn and grow in their careers.

To address harmful stereotypes in the advertising industry, UN Women's Unstereotype Alliance (UA) India Chapter developed Gender Portrayals Guidelines for the Indian advertising industry. The guidelines were launched in June 2022 by the Honourable Union Minister for Women & Child Development, Ms Smriti Irani.

UN Women worked with Unstereotype Alliance India Chapter's Ally, The Advertising Club and successfully introduced for the first time Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Award as part of ABBYs Awards 2022, held at Goa Fest. The nomination and selection of this new category of award was based on Unstereotype Judging Criteria (UJC).

ESCAP continued implementing the "E-Commerce Capacity Building for Women-led MSMEs in South Asia" project, which enables women entrepreneurs in South Asia to expand their reach and participate in local, regional, and international supply chains. More than 570 Indian women entrepreneurs have been trained and connected to an extensive regional network of women entrepreneurs as a part of the program.

© UNDP India

Savitramma grew hopeful of running her own business after learning about beekeeping as as a business model in her gram panchayat. After consultations with experts and her family, she borrowed INR 70,000 (USD 870) from the Community Investment Fund (CIF) and used the funds to buy the necessary machinery and raw materials for rearing bees.

Under the National Rural Economic Transformation Project being implemented by the State Government in partnership with UNDP, Savitramma and many entrepreneurs like her were supported by training on important aspects of business operations, regulations, and creating market linkages.

What started as an enterprise with four beehive boxes, has grown to twelve. She now supplies pure honey to more than 100 customers every month and 25 kgs of honey every quarter to various companies. Her income has tripled to INR 9000 (USD 112) per month.

Supporting MSMEs

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India's micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) account for over 99% of all businesses in the country, and are the largest employer in India outside of agriculture, employing 45% of all workers. While some MSMEs operate at the highest industry standards, many do not meet today's standards on productivity, environmental sustainability, and health and safety of workers.

UDAY PRIDE, an automotive component supplier development programme, funded by India's Ministry of Heavy Industries and run by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in collaboration with the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA) facilitates small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the sector to overcome challenges related to low productivity, and insufficient and inconsistent quality, as well as scalability issues, resulting in SMEs becoming more efficient, reliable and cost-effective suppliers, thus facilitating their inclusion in domestic and global automotive supply chains. So far 161 MSME component manufacturers completed the programme and were able to eliminate unsafe working conditions, reduce quality rejects by on average 75%, free up and clean up working areas, and make annual savings in excess of USD 609,000.

Furthermore, UNIDO collaborated with the Ministry of MSME on scaling up the implementation of and investments in energy efficiency, including introducing solar thermal technology for process heating and cooling, covering 12 MSME clusters in the tea, rice milling, chemicals, pharmaceutical, metal and textile industries.

Protecting Workers

Social protection for all is a crucial element of decent work to ensure workers are taken care of during and after employment, especially for vulnerable workers like the elderly, women and workers with disabilities. In 2022, the ILO linked 2,200 unorganized workers to various social security schemes provided by central and state governments.

ILO also focused on the capacity building of workers on their rights and on the elimination of discrimination, violence and harassment in the workplace. Towards this, over 18,000 workers were trained in four states through Workers Information and Support Centres. Additionally, UN Women trained 2,747 women on gender equality in the workplace.

UNDP is strengthening the capacity of skilling and employment ecosystem actors and promoting industry–institution cooperation at the state and district level, which has resulted in improving the outcome of government–funded measures.

IOM, in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs, conducted extensive research on emerging labour markets and employment opportunities for Indian migrants in selected countries in Europe, including in elderly care. The market analysis covered labour shortages, recruitment strategies, the role of immigration policies, integration of foreign workers, India as a source, training and adaptation programs, challenges in recognition of qualifications, promoting safe working conditions, and gendered nuances of the emigrating workforce.

In late 2022, IOM conducted several national and international consultations with key government and non–government stakeholders, highlighting the need to look at labour migration beyond the socioeconomic component and focusing on the human nuances and determinants of the migration journey. The stakeholder consultations concluded with IOM recommending concrete actions for deepened operationalization of bilateral mobility and labour partnerships between India and key destination countries.

In 2022, ILO's International Labour Conference added safety and health to the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The landmark decision means that all ILO Member States commit to respect and promote the fundamental right to a safe and healthy working environment, whether or not they have ratified the relevant Conventions. In India, ILO promoted safety and health at work by conducting trainings for workers and employers, and signing an MoU with the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals on using International Chemical Safety Cards to promote the safe use of chemicals in the workplace.

UNDP supported the Ministry of Corporate Affairs with technical expertise in the drafting of India's National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, which articulates the key role business plays enabling human rights, and assists businesses in aligning their activities with the realization of human rights for all.

UNDP's training and capacity building on responsible business behaviour targeted at small and medium businesses is being institutionalized in partnership with the Institute of Indian Corporate Affairs (IICA), Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

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The ILO implemented a programme in Telangana's cotton-growing districts by partnering with Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) under 14 panchayats to help farmers engage in social dialogue and collective bargaining, which are the core tenets of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW). These Principles lay the foundation for building equitable and just societies and have been incorporated into the by-laws of FPOs. These FPOs have helped reduce costs for farmers, from production to sale, to improve the sustainability of the crop.

Through advocacy, awareness programmes and capacity building with the support of trade union partners, workers were able to address problems that the local village and mandal committees were not able to resolve effectively on their own. With the trade union partners' support, farmers have formed a trade union and have been empowered to discuss issues like wages, working hours, facilities at work, government schemes they are entitled to, and other rights they were unaware of.

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Supporting Vulnerable Workers

In the aftermath of the pandemic and with multiple crises facing global sustainable development, refugees are among the most vulnerable section of workers. UNHCR promotes livelihoods and economic inclusion for refugees and supports them in becoming more resilient and achieving self-reliance. To achieve gender and economic parity, 45 percent of UNHCR's livelihood interventions are targeted at women. Skill development, entrepreneurship development training and labour market guidance opportunities were facilitated for 2,255 refugees and asylum seekers during 2022.

In 2022, IOM conducted five capacity-building workshops for employers at garment and textile supply chain businesses to strengthen their migrant workers' recruitment, management, and protection systems in line with national and international legal standards through its flagship CREST project. Using the Pre-Departure Orientation Training manual, five training of trainer (ToT) sessions were conducted in five states to impart guided training and disseminate critical information related to labour migration such as ethical recruitment channels, elimination of recruitment fees/commission imposed on migrant jobseekers, transparent employment terms and conditions, integrated support services, and effective grievance redressal systems. Furthermore, three International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS) training to promote ethical recruitment of migrant workers was imparted to recruiters and private recruitment agencies across three states.

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Gender Equality and Youth Development

Introduction

Over the past two decades India has witnessed a significant improvement in women and girls' lives, including decline in fertility rates, rise in educational attainment, and increased employment opportunities for women owing to high economic growth. Yet, women and girls continue to face challenges in many domains, including crimes against women, unsafe cities, and domestic violence exacerbated by the pandemic.

Gender equality remains a key unfulfilled aspect of India's socio-economic transformation. Women and girls remain among some of the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in India. Attitudes towards women and women's empowerment continue to pose a challenge. The systemic and structural barriers women deal with in accessing rights and entitlements are formidable. The declining child sex ratio, the practice of gender-biased sex selection and child marriage all illustrate the extent to which gender discrimination and gender inequality are deeply ingrained.

There is a growing recognition in India that its long and medium term development goals cannot be achieved without addressing head-on the remaining significant obstacles to gender equality that stand in the way of the transformative change envisioned by the SDGs. This is summed up in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for India to transition from women's development to a 'women-led development' framework. Major initiatives like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao for the protection, education and survival of the girl child; the Mahila Shakti Kendra for the economic empowerment of rural women; and the reservation of local government seats for women have been working towards closing the gender gap in social, economic and political life.

Approximately one-third of India's population is between the ages of 10 and 24 years, the largest youth cohort in the world. It is important for all young people to obtain skills and knowledge they need for long-term success. This also calls attention to their health and well-being, including their unique sexual and reproductive health needs and mental health. There is however a mismatch between what students entering the workforce have been taught in school, and the skills necessary for the marketplace, especially in terms of skills for the future, while the health needs of many adolescents continue to be unmet.

UN Agencies worked closely with the Government of India to provide technical support for flagship programmes like Mission Shakti, the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) and Ayushman Bharat. UN Women were able to influence the gender responsive governance environment. Several agencies worked together to strengthen gender-responsive social protection and care systems. UNICEF and UNFPA continue to lead a joint programme on harmful practices and ending child marriage. The UN strengthened plans, strategies, and budgets at national, state, and local levels to realise India's national and international commitments towards advancing gender equality and the rights of women and children. The UN supported governments and CSOs in fighting the root causes of inequality, including harmful social practices such as child marriage and gender-biased sex selection. At the same time, the UN worked to promote meaningful participation and empowerment opportunities to increase the voice, choice, agency and security of children, youth, women, and vulnerable groups and communities

Over 100,000 women

were reached with information on the prevention of gender–based violence with UN Women support

1,858,034 women and children

received enhanced gender sensitive protective services through UNICEF support

Over 1,000 personnel

from the law enforcement system were trained on gender–based violence with UN support

17,738 vulnerable women and girls

were supported with sanitary materials by UNHCR

10 million community members

were engaged on ending child marriage and violence by the UN

Over 23 million young people

were reached with career guidance, employment support, civic engagement, and 21st–Century skills with UN support

Over 1 million volunteers

mobilized by UNV for youth empowerment and civic action

Over 80 million young people

reached on mental health, reproductive health and other health issues with WHO support

Policy Support to Close the Gender Gap

UN Women supported the Ministry of Women and Child Development in developing an assessment paper on India's global standing on gender equality on four key indicators – economic participation; educational attainment; health and survival; and political empowerment, which will inform the comprehensive implementation strategy for the flagship Mission Shakti programme. UN Women supported the development of Gender Vision 2035 with the NITI Aayog, the think tank of Government of India, and most recently, in coordination with select international entities on Gender Vision Document 2047.

UN Women has helped build a favourable environment for mainstreaming gender in the planning and budgeting processes. An outcome of this work has led to central and state governments committing to gender budgeting. The continued advocacy with the government on reviewing the Gender Budget Statement, an important tool to analyse budgetary allocations from a gender perspective, resulted in the formation of a Working Group by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

UN Women supported the Ministry of External Affairs and NITI Aayog in undertaking the review and drafting of the national reports on the Universal Periodic Review and SDGs. UN Women also supported its nodal ministry, the Ministry of Women & Child Development, on progress reviews on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) commitments as well as the annual Commission on the Status of Women review report.

WFP contributed by preparing e-learning modules partnership with Mission Shakti, the Government of Odisha's Department of Women Empowerment. for the capacity strengthening of staff in gender equality. WFP Also developed an e-learning module on gender and protection which will be made available to all CSOs in India.

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Supporting the Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence

Over 1,000 personnel from the law enforcement system, including police and lawyers, were trained on Gender-Based Violence (GBV), particularly on cyber violence during the pandemic. UN Women organised a workshop to learn, reflect and exchange ideas on what strategies, approaches, and programmes work or could work for primary prevention of violence against women (VAW) in India. Members from 48 civil society organizations, national and state government representatives, UN agencies, and independent researchers deliberated for three days on the issues at stake.

With the aim of creating a safety net for vulnerable women including widows, refugees, and survivors of violence, efforts were made towards linking them to government social security schemes, providing training and conditional and non-conditional or one-time cash transfers. Through these efforts, UN Women reached out to 5,008 women with conditional cash transfers and 1,130 women with unconditional cash transfers. Additionally, information on COVID-19 safety protocols and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence reached out to 100,000 women through SMS messages.

UNFPA supported capacity building 90 health sector professionals (Principals of Nursing Colleges, Medical Officers) and 555 judicial officers, and One Stop Centre (OSC) staff and police personnel. Capacity building of 69 CSO members on sexual harassment at workplace.

Through UNICEF support, 1,858,034 women and children received enhanced gender sensitive protective services.

UNHCR and its NGO partners worked closely in 13 locations with refugees and asylum seekers on GBV prevention and response through 269 community-based structures. Survivors were supported through a multi-sectoral response through referrals for psychosocial support, health, legal, and safe shelter support. Women and girls were engaged in GBV prevention activities, focused on preventing harmful traditional practices and promoting positive behavioural change, while men/boys were involved to promote their role as agents of change. 489 GBV awareness-raising sessions conducted reached 17,487 refugees and asylum seekers. In addition, 17,738 vulnerable women and girls were supported with sanitary material.

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Strengthening Women's Leadership

UN Women reached out to more than 700 young people from 20 states through the feminist youth leadership programme, aimed at advancing the Gender Equality Forum's mandate by strengthening action coalitions of selected young leaders.

Supported the Prevention of Child Marriage and Harmful Practices

The rate of child marriage in India has declined from 26.8 percent to 23.3 percent during the last five years. While India has made good progress in reducing the child marriage rate in the last decade, there is a concerning stagnation and even an increase in some states.
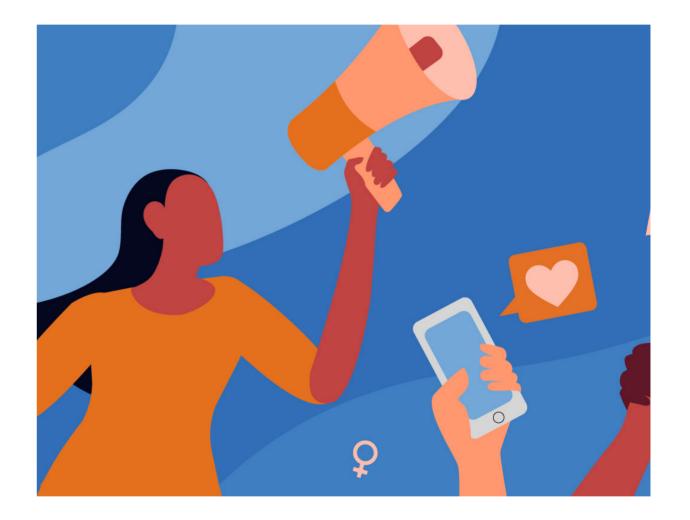
UNFPA supported dialogue building with diverse stakeholders on the issue of minimum legal age at marriage and provided technical inputs to the draft of the National Youth Policy (2022). 430 Appropriate Authorities and Nodal Officers and 248 judicial officers and prosecutors were trained on the law addressing gender biased sex selection in India. UNFPA also led the development of a strategy for joint Civil Society action in consultation with 104 CSOs on enhancing the value of women and girls and for effective implementation of the law.

UNICEF advocacy and evidence generation, and State and district support in 181 districts enhanced visibility on child marriage and enabled 12.9 million adolescents to access programmes on life skills, child protection, and other services. 10 million community members (50% being women) were engaged on issues of ending child marriage (ECM) and violence prevention and adolescent empowerment and 5 million girls at risk were linked to social protection schemes on prevention of child marriage and education support.

To empower refugee youth, regular capacity building sessions were conducted with 35 youth groups including awareness raising sessions on child rights, child marriage, child labour, harmful social and gender norms.

UNFPA in partnership with UNICEF, supported a study on the impact of the POCSO Act on adolescent sexuality in India. Both agencies also developed a technical note on child marriage and its drivers based on analysis of data from NFHS–V.

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Joint Campaigns for Gender Equality

UN agencies working on gender equality and youth joined hands for campaigns on the International Day of the Girl Child, International Youth Day, 16 Days of Activism against Gender–Based Violence, and International Women's Day, for panel discussions, poster exhibitions and social media campaigns on on women's empowerment, breaking stereotypes and gender sensitive language. Various social media campaigns were launched with hashtags including #breakthebias and #notoviolence.

The global theme of 16 Days of Activism "UNiTE by 2030 to End Violence against Women initiative", called for action to increase awareness, galvanize advocacy efforts, and share knowledge and innovations to end Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

Women's Economic Empowerment

To enhance women's access to economic and livelihood opportunities, UN Women worked with Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) to facilitate cash-for-care initiatives, along with micro-grants for entrepreneurs in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. So far, 918 women have been supported with cash transfers and through trainings on gender-based violence, nutrition, digital and financial literacy, and micro-enterprise building.

The Digital Sakhi programme was envisaged by UNFPA in Madhya Pradesh to empower adolescent girls with communication and digital skills. 81 adolescent girls from various districts of Madhya Pradesh were selected for the programme.

UNICEF strategic support to the Ministry of Woman & Child Development in the formulation and roll-out of Mission Vatsalya led to a greater focus on GBV prevention and workforce strengthening. UNICEF also supported the roll-out of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) operational guidelines under Mission Shakti, with a strong focus on adolescent empowerment.

© IFAD

Kavita is proud to call the misty hills of Uttarakhand in northern India her home. The fertile soil here has always provided everything her family needs. But now, the age-old rhythms of the seasons are changing. "Previously the weather was good. The rain would come as it should and the crops were spared. But now the weather has changed," says Kavita. "When it's time to harvest, the rain comes and destroys the crops. Half of it goes to waste."

"My dream for the future is to stay in my village. I don't want to leave. I want to be on my own land. To earn a living, I want to cultivate this barren land and make my life here." To help make that dream happen, Kavita has joined a self-help women's group which has installed water tanks and planted fruit tree seedlings through the IFAD-supported REAP project.

Child Protection

© UNICEF/UN0695403/Bhardwaj

Village elders work actively with Rajasthan Police to protect children in their villages. In February 2022 Sandhya Paliwal (left), Heera Kumawat (centre), and Ramlal Kumawat (right) were winding up work at their farm when they heard the cries of a small girl from inside a closed well. Sandhya and Heera took no time in giving their sarees to Heera Kumawat to use as a rope and pull the girl child out of the well.

This act of mindful vigilance and action not only saved a child's life, but also has inspired Sandhya, Heera and Ramlal to continue to work with the police as 'Gram Rakshaks'. They are the first firewall against any potential crime that may happen against children in their village.

Adolescent Parenting interventions by UNICEF were undertaken in Jharkhand, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan, including a targeted reach to tribal communities. Gender transformative approaches to adolescent programming were adopted in local government with UNICEF support, which led to the piloting of girl-led platforms and positive masculinity interventions in seven states. In addition, UNICEF published the 'Drivers Study of Violence against Children in India' and 'A situation assessment of POSCO cases in India' studies.

UNHCR strengthened community-based child protection mechanisms, including 35 youth clubs, 17 adolescent boys and girl's groups, 81 children's groups and child protection committees, with 3,319 members continuing to work jointly with UNHCR and partners to enable children and youth to play an integral role in their own protection.

Enabling Adolescents and Youth Participation for Social Impact

YuWaah, India's chapter of Generation Unlimited, reached more than 23 million young people with career guidance, employment support, civic engagement, and 21st century skills training. Innovative initiatives for 21st century skills, including Passport–to–Earning and Fundoo, were launched and scaled, and the YuWaah aggregator platform, a marketplace for skilling, economic and social impact opportunities, was piloted.

UN Volunteers' joint project with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYAS), 'Strengthening Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan and National Service Scheme', seeks to provide catalytic support to the youth volunteering schemes of the MoYAS. The goal of the project is to establish increased recognition of the scheme and diversified opportunities for youth volunteerism in the project areas.

In 2022, UN Volunteers, mobilized and galvanized 1,162,621 non–UN Volunteers for youth empowerment and civic actions through career guidance, skill building, employability and entrepreneurship workshops and trainings across 58 districts in 27 states.

© YuWaah

Mansi Thakar, a UN India YuWaah Advocate, was born and brought up in Mahua, a small village in the coastal state of Gujarat. Growing up near the ocean, she regularly spent time by the beach. She was bothered by the pollution and waste that was not only contaminating the coastal environments but also harming marine life and birds. Mansi and her friends started a regular clean up at the beach. They would participate in the Tide Turner Plastic Challenge, a global youth movement to fight plastic pollution around the world by UNEP, gaining knowledge about the harmful effects of plastic pollution and how to curb it.
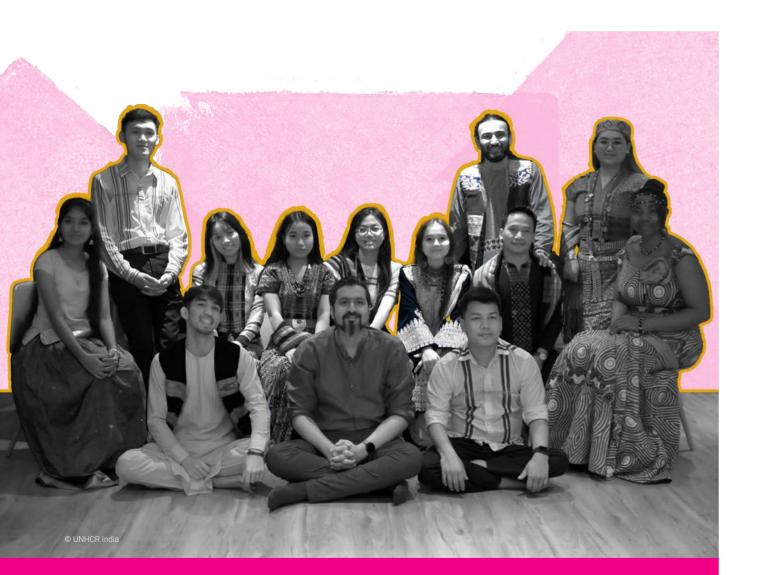
Lockdown Learners Series

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The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) organised a consultation in partnership with the Central Board of Secondary Education with senior officials from 12 key government departments, focusing on ways to mainstream education on integrity, peace, SDGs, and health.

Over 57 interactive activity–based sessions on peace, crime prevention and SDGs were conducted with young people and educators across 9 states/UTs between January and April 2022, under the Lockdown Learners series. The series received an award for 'Outstanding Educational Leadership' at the Jagran Josh Educational Awards 2022 convened by the Dainik Jagran.

UNODC trained over 100 rural educators and conducted an interactive workshop on SDGs, peace, crime prevention and integrity for 120 students aged 10–14 of the Round Table Abhinav Vidyalaya (RTAV), a rural school in Uttar Pradesh.

Engaging Refugee Youth

UNHCR worked with partners to 15 locations with refugees and asylum seekers on GBV prevention and response through 241 community–based structures. To empower refugee youth, regular capacity building sessions were conducted with 37 youth groups including awareness raising sessions on child rights, child marriage, child labour, harmful social and gender norms reaching out to 14,455 refuges and asylum seekers.

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UNHCR India Goodwill Ambassador and Multi-Grammy Award Winner, Ricky Kej worked with 12 refugee youth to produce a rendition of the Indian national anthem on the occasion of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, India's 75th year of independence.

Improving Adolescent Health

WHO supported the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in the training of National Adolescent Health Counsellors, who reached more than 80 million young people through the public health system on mental health, reproductive health and other youth issues. WHO also supported a study on gender–based violence (GBV), put together a report on the mitigation of the gendered impact of COVID–19, and supported Respectful Abortion care in partnership with FOGSI. WHO facilitated the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI), and MoHFW India to become one of the first countries in the Region to roll–out COVID–19 vaccination for pregnant women.

The RKSK digital platform (dashboard and mobile app) is a web–based data management system comprising a mobile application and an interactive dashboard supported by WHO. It offers comprehensive indicators related to adolescent health and aims at strengthening monitoring and streamlining reporting systems for the national Adolescent Health Programme (RKSK). The platform also integrates monitoring of GBV and all forms of violence among young people.

UNFPA, In partnership with Kalinga Institute of social sciences, and in close collaboration with the Department of Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disability (SSEPD), of the Government of Odisha, launched the Samarthaya programme, with the goal of implementing life skills education in 155 special schools across Odisha for adolescents with disabilities.

In close collaboration with the Women and Child Development Department and UNICEF, UNFPA Odisha is providing technical support for strengthening the Advika programme to deliver Life Skill Education in out–of–school settings. The programme since its launch in 2020 has scaled up its intervention to all the 30 districts of Odisha.

UNFPA also supported Rajasthans's Beti Bachao, Beti Padha outreach and a review of the state policy. They helped develop a policy brief on Integrating Menstrual Health and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.

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Engaging Men in Gender Equality

UNESCO's Transforming MENtalities programme aims at engaging men and boys for gender equality. UNESCO has supported an educational toolkit on promoting positive masculinities in schools, as well as a community–based behavioural change toolkit using digital and traditional media and non–media outlets.

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Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

The Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) is part of the UN's new systems–wide strategy to combat sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). The UN in India has adopted new measures and strengthened existing ones, including the appointment of PSEA focal points in all agencies, to better prevent, detect, report and take action against personnel who commit abuse. In 2022, the UNCT engaged a full–time PSEA coordinator.

Prevention Measures

- Town Hall meetings that oriented over 4,000 staff in PSEA

- Orientation for support staff in local languages (Delhi)

- Joint LTA for Implementing Partners (IPs) assessments

- 400+ Civil Society IPs across agencies completed capacity assessments

- 500+ agencies trained online through UNICEF/UNFPA and UN PSEA network

- Guidelines for capacity assessment of Implementing Partners

- Guidance note on PSEA aligning with law of the land (POSH, POSCO)

Reporting

- Standard Operating Procedures for SEA Complaints and Referrals

- Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to SEA Victims in India developed

Investigations

- The UN did not received reports of any cases of SEA in 2022.

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The UN Country Team commissioned an independent evaluation of the Government of India – United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (GOI-UNSDF) 2018–2022, which found that the UNSDF was relevant to and supported the achievement of India's development priorities. It was well-aligned with international conventions, including the Agenda 2030. Further, it was flexible enough to maintain the relevance of its presence in alignment with GOI's evolving and changing needs and priorities, including the COVID pandemic.

In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Evaluation Team found that in other humanitarian crises situations such as the Kerala and Fani cyclones, displacement of migrant labour and other hazards, the UN demonstrated its institutional potential to serve as a unifying mechanism. In all the above crises, the UN agencies came together to pursue common goals, and promoted complementary strategies. The seven RGs added value to this collective action and convergent programming even in normal times.

The Evaluation Team found that the standard setting and neutral convening role of the UN were highly valued by all respondents. The UN leveraged this advantage to craft several normative products and to convene various actors for pushing for the universalisation of SDGs, human rights, gender equality and Leaving No One Behind.

The evaluation also found that UN technical and policy support to the Government had added significant value, with support around inclusive growth, social inclusion and the environment contributing towards the improvement of public services.

Key recommendations from the evaluation report informed the strategic approach and governance structure of the Government of India – United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023–27.

Lessons Learned

Key recommendation from the Evaluation of the GoI-UNDF 2018-22 informing the GoI-UNSDCF 2023-27

Recommendation 1:

· The UN should focus on accelerating the achievement of Agenda 2030 and beyond in line with UN reforms and post-COVID building back better

Recommendation 2:

· The UN should reposition itself as a knowledge and evidence generating institution by capitalising on its global presence and convening power

Recommendation 3:

· The GoI-UNSDF should focus more on strategic outcomes and less on technical and operational issues

Recommendation 4:

· The UN should further strengthen its normative and convening role

For the UN in India, 2023 marks the beginning of a new chapter in our partnership with India, as we prepare to launch the Government of India – UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023 – 2027. Anchored in the priorities of the Government, partnerships with stakeholders, and the comparative advantage of the UN, the new Cooperation Framework (CF) will contribute to consolidating progress and opening new areas of collaboration across four pillars of sustainable development; (i) People; (ii) Planet; (iii) Prosperity; and (iv) Participation.

The UN Country Team's (UNCT) joint response to the COVID–19 pandemic tested a new "all hands on deck" approach to management and working together. This served as a proof of concept for the implementation of the UN reform and taught the entire UNCT that this new way of working is indispensable for managing the cascade of new crises and risks that India and the world are facing, from the still–ongoing pandemic, to war in Ukraine, the climate crisis, and disruptions to food and fertilisers.

In 2023, the UN looks forward to further translating the lessons from the crisis response into ongoing, longer–term development cooperation with the Government and people of India. Our new Outcome Group and Steering Committee governance structure is designed to facilitate joint UN agency thought leadership and substantive collaboration. Apart from monitoring expected CF results and information sharing, the Outcome Groups will carry an expanded and more strategic role, which will include strengthening the UN's role as a knowledge provider through sharing of global and national good practices and fostering technical cooperation; conducting joint policy analysis and knowledge products; exploring opportunities for joint programming and resource mobilization; and strengthening the UN's normative role to advocate for human rights, gender equality, and leaving no one behind.

UN support will have a renewed focus on systemic transformations in priority areas including health, food, education, gender equality, employment, climate, and digital transformations.

Through 2023, UN agencies will continue to support India in translating its demographic transition into a dividend, focusing on ensuring India's economic growth provides quality employment, greater female labour force participation, decent working conditions, more higher value–added jobs, and increased productivity levels for small businesses.

Gender equality will be an even stronger focus for us, as the newly constituted Gender Task Team will ensure integration of gender equality and women's empowerment principles into all of the work of the UN, beyond silos. UN programming will continue to help strengthen institutions and empower communities to address inequalities and discriminatory norms and practices, including the prevention of child marriage, gender–based violence. The UN will seek to further deepen our partnership with the Government of India to ensure the transformative promise of 'women–led' development.

From the Panchamrit targets announced by Prime Minister Modi at COP26, to support for the International Solar Alliance, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure to enormous investments in renewables and electric mobility, India is increasingly bringing

Looking Ahead

scale, expertise and leadership to global climate action. The Lifestyles for the Environment Initiative (LiFE), launched by the Prime Minister together with UN Secretary-General António Guterres in October 2022 offers an opportunity to drive a global mass movement to align consumption choices and behaviours with the principles and objectives of sustainability. The UN is a key knowledge partner of Mission LiFE, and will continue to support its operationalization through 2023.

UN agencies will continue to take actions to protect the environment, address climate change, pollution, biodiversity loss and restore ecological integrity, including support for the National Clean Air Programme, theAir Quality Action Forum partnership and renewable energy initiatives.

To ensure a society that empowers its marginalised populations and provides sustained access to quality services, UN agencies will continue supporting the strengthening of health systems to be resilient to future shocks, address existing health challenges, and sensitise communities to adopt positive health behaviours, as well fighting malnutrition by ensuring access to affordable and diverse foods, through technical and policy support to India's targeted public distribution system and other nutrition services.

We will continue providing technical assistance to the Government of India at the national and state levels to ensure that children and youth benefit from access to quality learning and skills and realise the full scope of their potential, including through support to the roll-out of the School Health and Wellness Programme, and continuing support to learning recovery efforts.

In 2023, India has significant opportunities to bring its voice and perspective on development issues to the highest tables of international development. India's presidency of the Group of 20 (G20) Presidency will be a major opportunity to showcase India's approach to the SDGs and influence the global development priorities of the major economies from the perspective and for the benefit of the Global South.

UN agencies are engaged in many ways working with ministries, the G20 Secretariat and G20 Engagement and Working Groups to help ensure that this G20 moves the needle on critical areas like digital public goods, women-led development, just green transitions and SDG financing and acceleration overall.

The timing of the India Presidency is also fortuitous, as it leads directly to the midpoint stocktaking of the 2030 Agenda and progress on the SDGs. The Delhi G20 Summit will be immediately followed by the 2023 SDG Summit at the UN General Assembly a few weeks later. The G20 SDG Acceleration Action Plan, which India is putting forward, should bring fresh ideas and momentum to the Summit, helping to ensure the transformative and accelerated action we need to achieve the SDGs has major financial and political backing.

The G20 presidency year will also coincide with the International Year of the Millet, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on India's proposal, highlighting the potential of this nutritious and climate-resilient native crop.

In 2023, more than ever, India is uniquely positioned to set the global agenda, including getting the G20 countries refocused on achieving the SDGs, both because of its inclusive approach to development and diplomacy. As the UN Secretary-General noted, India has a 'unique opportunity to share the global agenda, as a principal player and a model for others'. We across the UN Country Team continue to be proud, committed partners with the Government and people of India in this journey.