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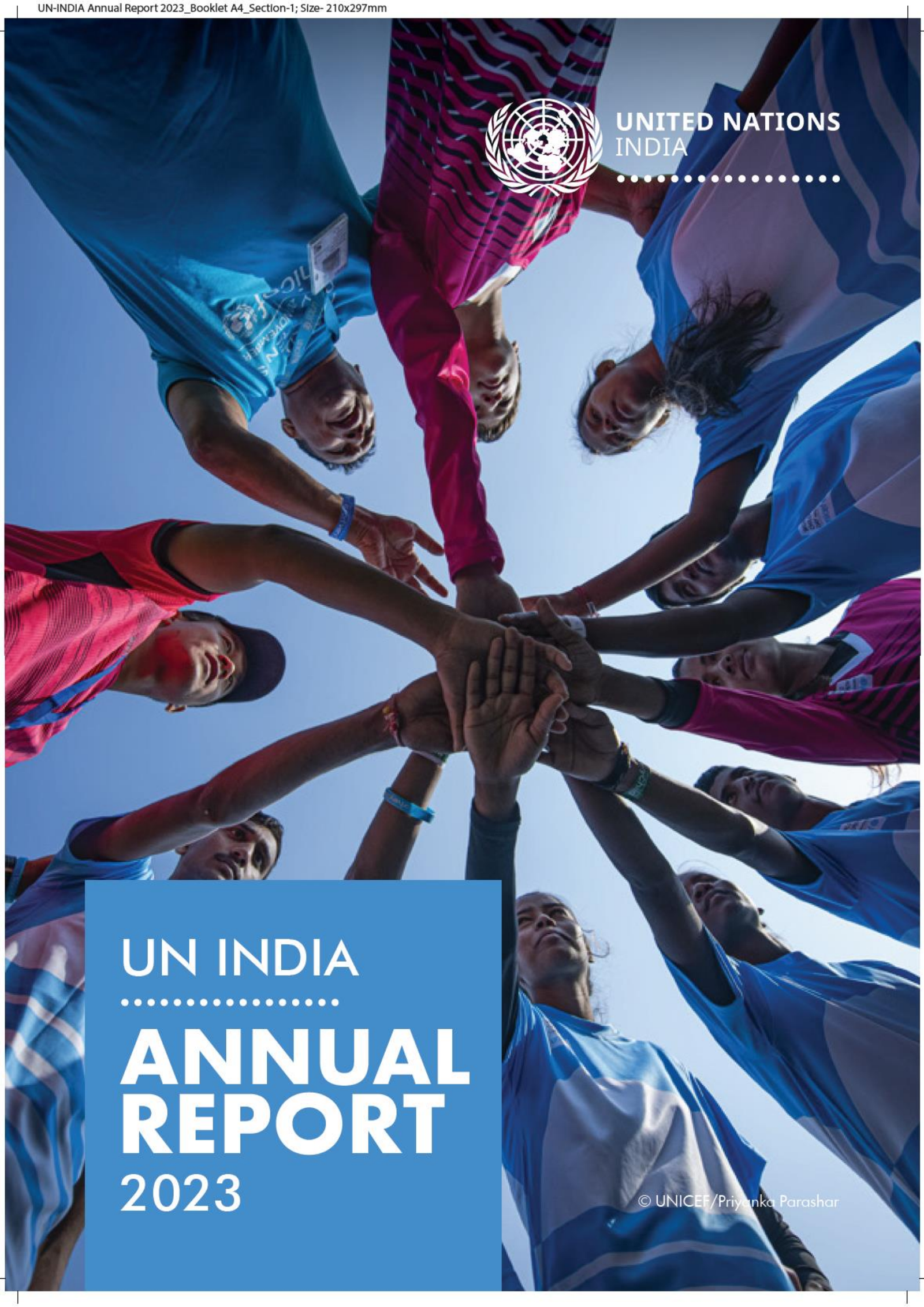

UNITED NATIONS
INDIA

UN INDIA
ANNUAL REPORT
2023

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CONTENTS

Foreword by the Resident Coordinator ..... i-ii

UN Country Team in India ..... iv-vii

01

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA 01-05

Key Development Indicators

02

UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM SUPPORT TO NATIONAL PRIORITIES IN 2023 07

2.1: Overview of the GOI-UNSDCF 2023 - 2027 08-09

2.2: UNSDCF Results

OUTCOME 1 - Health and well-being 10-19

OUTCOME 2 - Nutrition and food security 20-25

OUTCOME 3 - Quality Education 26-33

OUTCOME 4 - Economic growth and decent work 34-41

OUTCOME 5 - Environment, climate, WASH, and resilience 42-49

OUTCOME 6 - Empowering people, communities, and institutions 50-59

2.3: Support to Partnerships 60-63

2.4: Results of the UN working more and better together 64-67

2.5: UN partnership with India's G20 Presidency 68-69

03

UNCT KEY FOCUS FOR 2024..... 71-75

Abbreviations 76-77

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FOREWORD BY
THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR

This past year in review was a truly momentous one for India – and for the UN in India. From taking the mantle as the world's most populous country, to the breakthrough Chandrayaan-3 lunar mission, and perhaps most significantly, the successful G20 Presidency, the world's attention shifted to India in 2023.

Yet the year began under strong global headwinds. At the midpoint, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was assessed as having gone dramatically off course, with only 15 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on track. Conflict, climate change, the lingering effects of the pandemic and a growing debt crisis continued to put the greatest pressures precisely on the poorest countries and communities least responsible for their cause.

Against this backdrop, India demonstrated much-needed leadership at home and on the international stage, delivering development solutions at scale and helping build consensus across divides.

India's G20 Presidency refocused the grouping on taking greater responsibility for putting the 2030 Agenda back on track. By government invitation, the UN in India was proud to be an important partner in the process, under the overall UN Sherpa leadership, with technical inputs, and through deploying specialist human resources.

Significantly, this year saw the launch of the first new-generation Government of India - UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-27 (SDCF), the guiding instrument for UN system value partnership in India's SDG achievement. Reflecting the increasingly two-way nature of our engagement here and India's development trajectory, the SDCF includes South-South Cooperation for the first time, in which the UN team will also help disseminate Indian best practices internationally for the benefit of other countries.

Through the year, the UN worked with government partners to strengthen India's health systems, with priority areas including routine immunizations, sexual and reproductive health services, the national roll-out of mi+dwifery services, as well as addressing communicable and non-communicable diseases.

UN advocacy, policy support and evidence generation continued to support the government's leadership to push for SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) including technical support to issues such as iron folic acid (IFA) supplementation, and the mainstreaming of fortified rice. And we supported government efforts to ensure that all children have equitable access to quality education, including strong support to the Ayushman Bharat School Health and Wellness Programme.

UN agencies also continued to advocate for economic growth and decent work for all women and men. The UN worked with Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises to develop innovation and technology ecosystems, safe, orderly, and regular migration, social protection systems, and links to green jobs.

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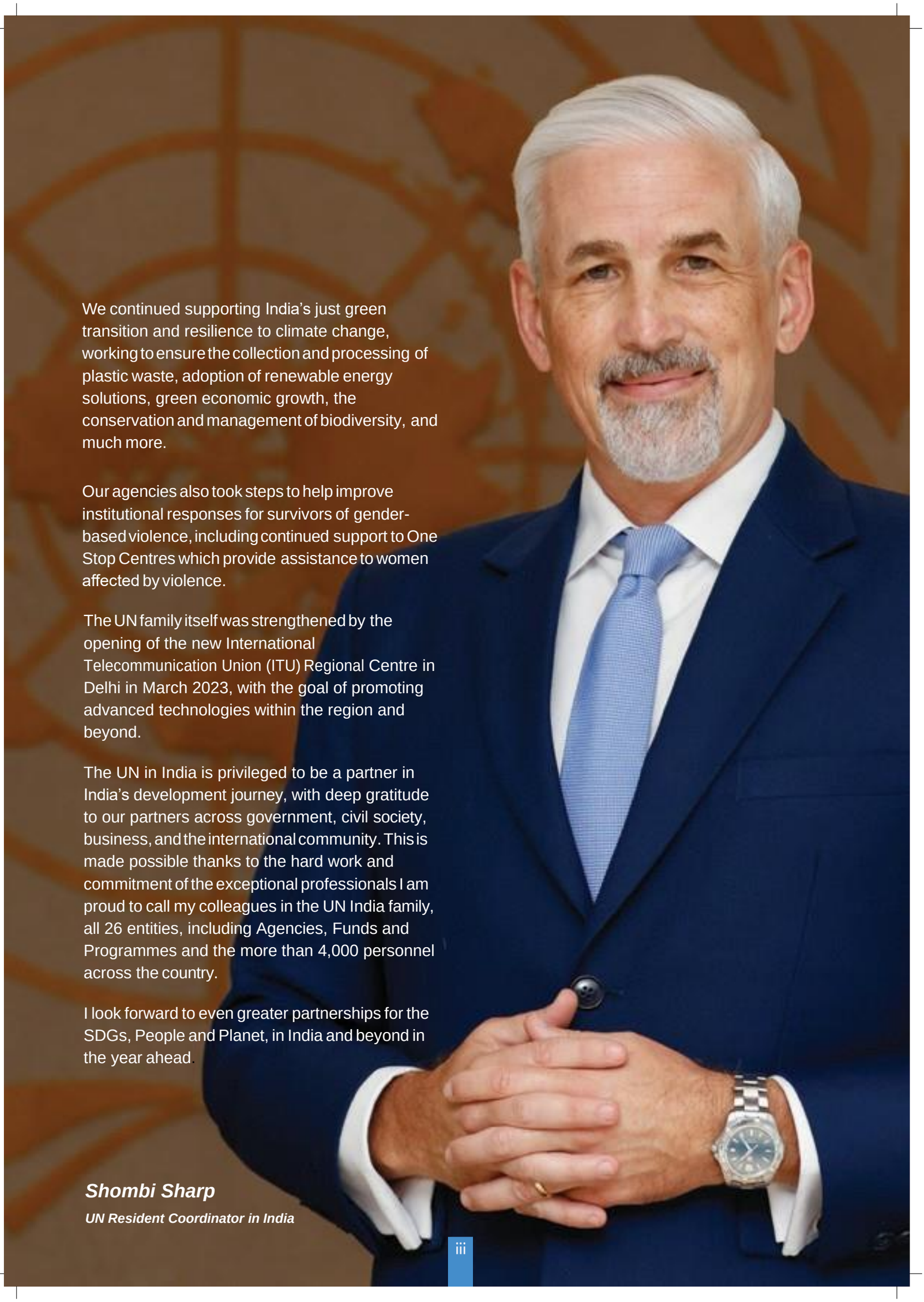

We continued supporting India's just green transition and resilience to climate change, working to ensure the collection and processing of plastic waste, adoption of renewable energy solutions, green economic growth, the conservation and management of biodiversity, and much more.

Our agencies also took steps to help improve institutional responses for survivors of gender-based violence, including continued support to One Stop Centres which provide assistance to women affected by violence.

The UN family itself was strengthened by the opening of the new International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Regional Centre in Delhi in March 2023, with the goal of promoting advanced technologies within the region and beyond.

The UN in India is privileged to be a partner in India's development journey, with deep gratitude to our partners across government, civil society, business, and the international community. This is made possible thanks to the hard work and commitment of the exceptional professionals I am proud to call my colleagues in the UN India family, all 26 entities, including Agencies, Funds and Programmes and the more than 4,000 personnel across the country.

I look forward to even greater partnerships for the SDGs, People and Planet, in India and beyond in the year ahead.

Shombi Sharp

UN Resident Coordinator in India

UN COUNTRY TEAM **IN INDIA**

With 26 entities, the UN Country Team (UNCT) in India is one of the UN's largest operations in a development setting. 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 Cooperation Framework, a development cooperation strategy between the Government of India and the United Nations in India. The UNSDCF supports 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 think tank NITI Aayog.

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COUNTRY OFFICES

SECRETARIAT

FIELD OFFICES

BRETTON WOODS INSTITUTIONS

REGIONAL OFFICES

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)

Regional Office of Asia Pacific Centre for the Transfer of Technology

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

Regional Office (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka)

New Delhi Cluster Office (India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka)

Category 1 Institute of UNESCO with global mandate

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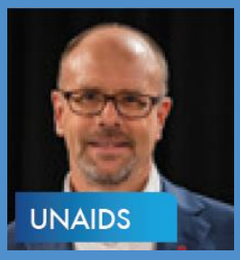

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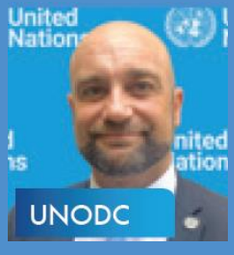

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Mr. Sanjay Awasthi
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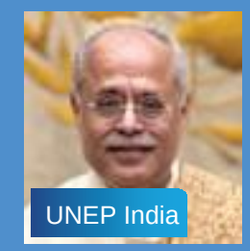

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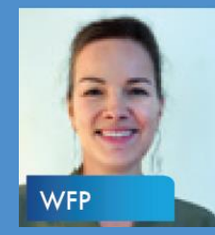

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01

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA

India became the world's most populous country in 2023[1], while its G20 Presidency marked the assumption of a greater global leadership role on development issues in solidarity with the Global South. Now the world's fifth biggest economy, it is also the fastest growing major economy, with real GDP growth for the 2023/2024 fiscal year estimated at about 7 per cent.[2]

India has made significant progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and continues to drive its policy action, innovation, and development priorities to ensure the country stays on track. More than 135 million people have exited multidimensional poverty in just five years, as many as the population of the UK and France, combined.[3] Sustained investments have also led to significant progress in decreasing maternal mortality rates, school enrolment ratios, households using clean cooking fuels, reductions in disaster mortality, and increased renewable energy capacity.

According to data from NITI Aayog's SDG India Index 2020–21, the Government's official monitoring tool, momentum still needs to be accelerated for India to fully reach its SDG targets by 2030. While SDGs related to health, clean energy, water and sanitation, and sustainable cities show significant progress, seven of the 16 SDGs are lagging behind.

Despite significant achievements in reducing hunger, India continues to face a considerable burden of food and nutrition insecurity, with progress uneven across the country's vast and diverse geography. Incidence of anaemia has increased, affecting more than half of young children, adolescent girls and women of reproductive age.[4]

Gender equality (Goal 5) has faced slower progress. At the same time, gender equality is a focus area for the Government, which promoted a women-led development model during its G20

[1] UN DESA Policy Brief No. 153, April 2023
[2] Reserve Bank of India, Governor's Statement: December 8, 2023
[3] NITI Aayog, National Multidimensional Poverty Index: A Progress Review 2023
[4] National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), 2019-21

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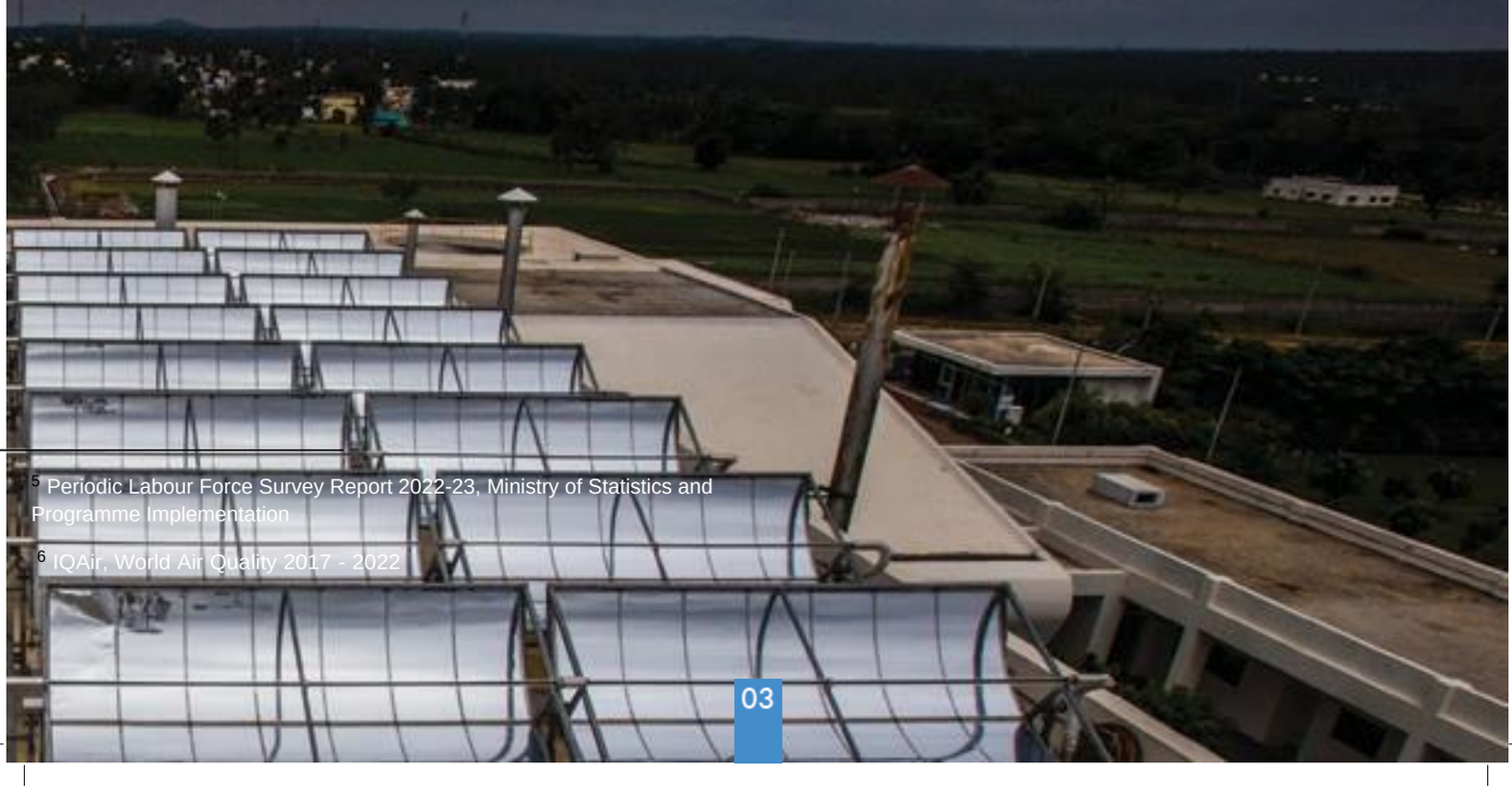
Presidency, and recently passed an important reservation bill for women in the central and state parliaments. While a low female labour force participation rate (LFPR) in India is one of the most pressing challenges, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation indicates that female LFPR improved by 4.2 percentage points in 2023, reaching 37 per cent.[5]

While the economic growth of 7 per cent in 2023 was brisk, and reportedly the highest among large economies, more will need to be done to improve its quality in terms of inclusion, sustainability and shared prosperity to leave no one behind. The most recent Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2022-2023 shows both a decrease in unemployment and increasing LFPRs for both men and women (78.5 per cent and 37 per cent respectively), yet the Indian labour market still faces considerable structural challenges. Most Indians of working age continue to be informally employed in low-wage, low-productivity agricultural and service sector jobs.

While India has also made significant progress on SDGs related to protecting the planet, including a notable expansion of renewable energy generation capacity within ambitious climate commitments, its rapid economic growth and large, aspirational population has also led to externalities contributing to climate change, biodiversity loss, and air pollution. The National Clean Air Programme is seeking to address hazardous levels of air pollution, though the country is still home to many of the world's most polluted cities.[6]

Given its size, development profile and increasing support to the Global South, India's progress over the next five to seven years will greatly influence the success of the 2030 Agenda for the world. As the UN Secretary-General has noted, India is the one country that can most make achieving the SDGs a reality, globally.



[5] Periodic Labour Force Survey Report 2022-23, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

[6] IQAir, World Air Quality 2017 - 2022

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Population in 2023
1.42 billion[1]

Multidimensional Poverty Headcount
24.85% 2015
14.96%[8] 2023

GDP Growth
7%[2]

Maternal Mortality Ratio:
97[9] **per 100,000 live births**
from 130 in 2014-2016

Total Fertility Rate
2.0
2.2 in 2015[3]

Prevalence of Stunting in Children Under 5
35.5%[10]
38.4% in 2015

Youth (10–24) Population **26%**[4]

Informally Employed Workers

2017	2023
68.4%	74.3%[11]

Urban Population
36%
33% in 2015[5]

Male Labour Force Participation rate
78.5%[12]
75.8% in 2017-18

HDI Ranking
132 of 189[6]

Female Labour Force Participation Rate
23.3% 2017-18
37%[13] 2023

Internet Subscribers
26.98% 2015
59.97%[7] 2023

[1] World Population Prospects 2022 revision, UN Population Division, 2022
[2] Reserve Bank of India, Governor's Statement: December 8, 2023
[3] National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), 2019-21
[4] World Population Prospects 2022 revision
[5] Estimate for 2022. World Urbanization Prospects: 2018 Revision, UN DESA
[6] UNDP Human Development Report 2021-22
[7] SDGs National Indicator Framework Progress Report 2023, MOSPI
[8] NITI Aayog, National Multidimensional Poverty Index: A Progress Review, 2023
[9] Special Bulletin on Maternal Mortality Ratio, 2018-20, Sample Registration System, Office of the Registrar General, India
[10] NFHS-5, 2019-21
[11] In the non-agriculture sector. Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Report 2022-23, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI)
[12] PLFS 2022-23, MOSPI
[13] PLFS 2022-23, MOSPI

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02

UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM SUPPORT TO **NATIONAL PRIORITIES IN 2023**

UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM SUPPORT TO NATIONAL PRIORITIES IN 2023

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2.1 Overview of the GOI-UNSDCF 2023 - 2027

2023 saw the launch of the first “new-generation” Government of India - UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-27, the central instrument for planning and implementing UN system support to India’s SDG achievement. The UNSDCF represents the collective offer of UN agencies, funds, and programmes in partnership with the Government of India and other stakeholders to support the national development priorities of India.

The UNSDCF was the product of an extensive and inclusive year-long collaborative effort. NITI Aayog, the Government of India’s public policy think tank, had a central coordination and leadership role, in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs, government nodal ministries, UN agencies, civil society, and other partners.

The Cooperation Framework contributes to four pillars of sustainable development; (i) People; (ii) Planet; (iii) Prosperity; and (iv) Participation; and differs from previous Frameworks in important ways. This includes the application of new standards for UN coherence, an emphasis on partnerships and policy support, with renewed commitments to gender equality, youth empowerment, human rights and leaving no one behind. To further deepen our partnership in critical areas, for the first time, the SDCF has included South-South Cooperation as a key engagement priority. This will help codify Indian

best practices and models in key areas of South- South cooperation, in line with our commitment to bring Indian development solutions to the global stage.

The total expenditure for the UNSDCF in 2023 was US $ 188.8 million, with the biggest expenditure for Health and well-being, at US $ 104.5 million.

Outcome	2023 Expenditure (million USD)
Outcome 1: Health and well-being	104.5
Outcome 2: Nutrition and food security	19.9
Outcome 3: Quality education	12.4
Outcome 4: Economic growth and decent work	6.0
Outcome 5: Environment, climate, WASH and resilience	25.7
Outcome 6: Empowering people, communities and institutions	20.3
Total expenditure of Outcome Groups	**188.8**

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2.2. UNSDCF Results

OUTCOME 1
Health and well-being

By 2027, communities, especially the most disadvantaged, demand for and benefit from inclusive, universal, affordable, accessible, accountable, and quality health care services, while adopting positive health practices.

CONTRIBUTING AGENCIES

World Health Organization | UNFPA

unicef | UNAIDS

UNDP | UN WOMEN | UNHCR

WFP World Food Programme | IOM UN MIGRATION | INDIA

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

The UN supported the strengthening of India's health systems, focusing on universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and addressing communicable and non-communicable diseases. Special emphasis was put on responding to emerging challenges, including the threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), zoonotic diseases, as well as eliminating neglected tropical diseases.

UN support was anchored in national flagship programmes and schemes, including Ayushman Bharat, the Midwifery Services Initiative, Family Planning, national immunization programmes, and national digital health information platforms.

UN support to Intensified Mission Indradhanush 5.0 routine immunizations helped ensure that life-saving vaccinations were delivered to the most vulnerable communities in hard-to-reach areas. This has been boosted by the roll-out of the U-WIN digital platform, developed with UN support, which is registering and tracking the vaccination status for all pregnant women and children, enhancing vaccination monitoring across the country.

In maternal and child health, the UN supported the roll-out of essential newborn care training and accelerated reductions in newborn mortality. LaQshya (Labour Room Quality Improvement Initiative) certification of labour rooms and operationalization of Special Newborn Care Units (SNCUs) have further improved RMNCAH+N services. The UN also supported family planning programmes, expanding the basket of available contraceptives, and helping draft the Family Planning 2030 roadmap.

The UN also supported the development of the National Multisectoral Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Common Non-Communicable Diseases and initiatives to eliminate neglected tropical diseases such as lymphatic filariasis, kala azar, and leprosy.

The UN supported evidence generation and the establishment of robust data systems to inform policies and programmes and facilitate implementation of globally acknowledged high-impact practices.

Emergency health preparedness was strengthened through the creation of a National Emergency Medical Team and support for managing health-care services during mass gatherings. Technical assistance in implementing International Health Regulations further enhanced India's disease prevention and control capabilities.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

11% increase

in Sexual and Reproductive Health budget allocations in four UN-supported states

60 million vaccine doses

tracked and 25 million pregnant women and children registered on U-WIN platform

979 Special Newborn

Care Units operationalised

5 National Midwifery

Training Institutes founded

150,000 Ayushman Bharat

Health and Wellness Centres established with UN support

Over 40,000 healthcare workers

trained on non-communicable diseases with UN support

STRENGTHENING IMMUNIZATION SERVICES

The UN continued its work to improve immunization coverage at all levels. To achieve the goal of full immunization coverage for 90 per cent of children in ***India's Universal Immunization Programme*** (UIP), UN agencies supported three rounds of Intensified Mission Indradhanush 5.0 (IMI), a catch-up vaccination drive, as well as the creation of surveillance systems to identify regions with inadequate immunization coverage.

To eliminate Measles, each of India's 795 districts must achieve a vaccine coverage of more than 95 per cent. With UN support, 295 districts across the country have now achieved Measles and Rubella Vaccine coverage of more than 95 per cent. To further drive measles and rubella elimination, WHO supported the implementation of a surveillance system for the diseases.

To ensure India's polio-free status. WHO investigated over 27,700 cases of Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) with more than 54,500 stool samples collected and tested in WHO-accredited polio laboratories. Environmental surveillance is operational in 32 cities across the country, with over 1,800 sewage samples tested in 2023.

The CoWIN (Winning Over COVID-19) digital vaccination platform was developed by the Government of India with the support from UNDP and was the cornerstone of the country's successful vaccination drive. The technology was based on the existing digital vaccine and cold chain management system, eVIN (Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network).

Building on the success of these systems, UNDP helped initiate the U-WIN (Universal Immunization Program-WIN) pilot in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. U-WIN aims to register and track vaccination status of all pregnant women and children in the country. The system will enable real-time data on routine immunisation sessions and individual tracking, driving vaccine coverage and better vaccine distribution. The U-WIN pilot was rolled out across all 36 states and UTs of India, and digitally mapped 185,000 public health facilities with 800,000 immunization session sites, registered over 25 million pregnant women and children, and tracked over 60 million vaccine doses in 2023.

Supporting Reproductive, Maternal, New-born, Child, and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH+N) services.

STRENGTHENING MATERNAL AND NEWBORN SERVICES

The UN strengthened its support for the national flagship programmes leading to sustained positive change in maternal and newborn survival and development. The UN and partners supported the roll out of the revised ***Navjaat Shishu Suraksha Karyakram*** (NSSK) training package, which provides skills for essential newborn care and resuscitation. A mid-term review of ***India's Newborn Action Plan*** was also supported, helping accelerate ***reductions in newborn mortality equitably across states.***

The UN helped improve the quality of RMNCAH+N services across its focus states. Improved practices and documentation through staff capacity building on evidence-based practices and on-site supportive visits helped facilitate the ***LaQshya*** and MusQan accreditation of public health facilities. Significant strides were made in LaQshya certification, with 100 per cent of targeted facilities in UNFPA-supported districts receiving LaQshya certification, and 90 per cent of labour rooms in UNICEF-supported aspirational districts now LaQshya certified. Further, 979 Special Newborn Care Units (SNCUs) were operationalised in UNICEF-supported states.

WHO collaborated with academic institutions for the revision of ***Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illness*** (IMNCI) and Facility Based IMNCI training packages, providing a rational and effective management approach for childhood illnesses. WHO and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) collaboratively conducted one national and nine regional training workshops in 2023 that trained about 350 master trainers across all states for scale-up. Digital packages were also developed in partnership with government academic institutions as an alternate strategy to expedite scale-up.

To promote Nurturing Care Frameworks for Early Childhood Development (ECD) and targeted approaches for children with ***developmental delays and disabilities,*** WHO advocacy led to a standardized national training package on Early Intervention in newborn care. UNICEF programming on inclusive ECD empowered state governments in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu to strengthen ECD service delivery, including for children with disabilities.

The Government of India is rolling out ***midwifery services*** across the country to improve quality of care. The UN continues to support the initiative, supporting the establishment of NMTIs and the training of midwifery educators. UN support and advocacy have been key to the establishment of five NMTIs in Gujarat, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana and West Bengal. UNFPA established midwifery-led care units (MLCUs) in the linked hospitals of two NMTIs to facilitate respectful maternity care and physiological births. Some 100 per cent of the midwifery educators trained in the first batches of the Rajasthan and Punjab NMTIs were deployed in NMTIs, MLCUs and upcoming State Midwifery Training Institutes (SMTIs).

Further, WHO is supporting the Midwifery Central Coordinating Unit (CCU) in implementation of the midwifery programme. WHO is supporting the maintenance and upgrading of the Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response (MPCDSR) software along with capacity building and roll-out of the software system across the country. Login credentials have been created for 27 states and so far, 15,380 maternal deaths and 61,044 child deaths data entry have been completed in the portal. WHO is also supporting Antenatal Care (ANC) implementation research in the states of Assam and Tamil Nadu.

WHO, along with the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW) and MoHFW, collaborated to enhance capacity building in high-burden states' aspirational districts for RMNCAH+N programme management. This included a National Training of Master Trainers and subsequent training of 48 programme managers in 24 districts of Northeast states, including Assam in 2022. Further training will expand to cover other high-burden states' aspirational districts.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

The UN supported state governments in planning and budgeting processes to ensure adequate funding of Sexual and Reproductive Health services and the efficient utilization of allocated budgets. As a result, the budget allocation for SRH services increased by 11 per cent in four UNFPA focus states, with funding rising from USD $ 270 million to USD $ 300 million. Additionally, with UNFPA technical assistance, SRH services in 12 priority districts saw marked improvements, with the majority now offering at least five reversible contraceptives and safe delivery services.

WHO supported the development of India's Family Planning 2030 (FP 2030) commitments. WHO further supported an in-depth analysis of the Government's budgetary line which shows that total allocation for Family Planning has seen a 48.6%

increase from 2019-20 to 2022-23 (from Rs.33,484,737.9 thousand to Rs.49,755,619.0 thousand), a remarkable achievement as India reaches replacement fertility levels. Self-care interventions are among the most promising approaches to improve health and well-being, both from a health system and user perspective. WHO helped develop the "Family Planning Self-Care Kits," which was showcased during the G20 Summit and recognized as a digital innovation.

The UN worked to empower ***women's self-help groups*** (WSHGs) with information and skills to enhance access to quality sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services. In support of this, UNFPA designed a Learning Management System containing modules on digital and financial literacy, gender-based violence, and SRHR. This system aims to reach and skill 600,000 WSHGs in Odisha as part of the Mission Shakti programme.

The UN also launched awareness campaigns to combat harmful practices and social norms while promoting young people as agents of change. UNFPA worked across three states, reaching over 500 schools and colleges with information on sexual and reproductive health. WHO India provided technical assistance for digitizing, reporting, and monitoring of ***Adolescent Health*** (AH) services through the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) dashboard, a component of the Ministry of Health's Ayushman Bharat Programme. In efforts to reduce teenage pregnancies, WHO focused on capacity building and training of Adolescent Health (AH) counsellors. Over 22,000 refugee women and girls received SRH services through UNHCR and partners, including the provision of hygiene kits.

The UN supported the increased use of ***modern contraception methods*** and the roll-out of new contraceptives. UNFPA supported the expansion of the contraceptive basket by introducing two new contraceptives, single-rod subdermal implants and DMPA subcutaneous injections into the National Family Planning Programme and organised exposure-cum learning visits for government officials of four States. WHO developed an India-adapted Medical Eligibility Criteria (MEC) Wheel for contraceptive use, including India's indigenous method, centchroman.

WHO organized the first-ever multi-stakeholder consultative meeting on ***improving infertility care*** in India, in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research. WHO continued advocacy for infertility to be recognized as a disease to be covered in the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana insurance scheme.

ENDING THE HIV EPIDEMIC

The UN Joint Team on AIDS (UNJT), led by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), collaborated closely with the Government of India, state governments, ministries, and civil society to progress towards the national goal of achieving ***'Three Zeroes': zero new infections, zero deaths, and zero discrimination*** related to HIV/AIDS. The UN Team focused on accelerating efforts to meet the 95-95-95 targets, which entail ensuring that at least 95 per cent of people living with HIV (PLHIV) are aware of their status, receive antiretroviral treatment, and achieve viral load suppression. As a part of UNJT, UNODC strengthened the skills of law enforcement officials, and in particular, prison officials on prevention, treatment and care of people living with HIV. UNODC has also contributed in strengthening the capacity of the community on HIV prevention in people who use drugs.

UNAIDS supported the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) in the latest round of HIV estimates, as well as strategic insights and advice

which are helping inform HIV services, surveillance, and prevention of transmission.

The UN also took leadership in initiatives including the triple elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and addressing HIV comorbidities. A total of 12,454 early infant diagnosis tests were carried out in UN-supported states. WHO's evidence-based guidance and policy advice have led to significant changes in national policies regarding HIV, Hepatitis, and sexually transmitted diseases (STIs). This includes the adoption of paediatric treatment optimization, shorter TB preventive treatment for people living with HIV, and an integrated approach for managing HIV alongside comorbidities. UNFPA strengthened the skills of public health service providers and community outreach teams to deliver integrated SRH and HIV services, with a focus on women, including vulnerable groups and those at risk or living with HIV in Bihar and MP.

TACKLING NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

MoHFW partnered with WHO for an initiative to treat more than 75 million people with ***hypertension and diabetes*** by 2025. WHO has been supporting the implementation of the initiative through Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) consultants positioned in most Indian states. Since May 2023, these consultants have facilitated the training of over 40,000 health care workers. The UN is also supporting the MoHFW in developing the National Multisectoral Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Common Non-Communicable Diseases 2023-2030.

SUPPORTING INFECTIOUS DISEASE ELIMINATION

The UN continued to work for the elimination of ***tuberculosis*** (TB) and other infectious diseases together with the Government. WHO support to Health and Wellness Centres played an important role in ensuring quality TB services, including family care support to the people affected with TB. WHO support ensured the quality of diagnostic services and the availability of TB drugs at the primary care level.

To support India's efforts in the elimination of malaria, WHO helped with the digitalization of reporting systems, supporting the development of the Integrated Health Information Platform (IHIP) Malaria Elimination Modules. WHO also supported a national training of trainers on malaria prevention, as well as the publication of the National Malaria Elimination Plan 2023 - 2027 and an independent review of India's Malaria programme.

ELIMINATING NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) are a diverse group of 20 diseases that mostly impact poor communities in the Global South. WHO prioritized the elimination of NTDs in India, including lymphatic filariasis, kala azar, and leprosy.

Supporting the elimination of ***lymphatic filariasis*** (LF), WHO assisted the Government by ensuring the quality of mass drug administrations by deploying over 500 trained monitors in 8 WHO-supported states. WHO also supported the development of national LF guidelines, and the inclusion of LF in the digital Integrated Health Information Platform (IHIP). WHO also continued to support the elimination of kala azar, including indoor residual spraying, and the integration of the disease in IHIP. WHO helped develop modules on psychosocial support for people with leprosy, documentation on best practices from India, as well as a national roadmap for leprosy elimination. WHO continued to ensure people with leprosy received free medication.

STRENGTHENING THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The UN continued to support the strengthening of people-centred health systems, aiming to realize Universal Health Coverage by facilitating the expansion and oversight of comprehensive primary health centres (PHCs) and health & wellness centres (HWCs) across various states and aspirational districts. UN support also included strengthening regulatory systems, enhancing clinical trial capabilities, fostering innovation in emerging technologies, and ensuring access to high-quality medical products. UN support contributed to achieving the target of 150,000 Ayushman Bharat-Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs), which have been renamed as Ayushman Arogya Mandir (AAM).

India's National Health Policy stresses the importance of a professionally trained and motivated health workforce. To support this priority, WHO employed a ***Health Labor Market Analysis*** to inform evidence-based planning for the health workforce. This approach included initiatives aimed at enhancing the performance and management of primary health-care workers, including performance linked payments and evaluations of health-care workers.

Further, WHO played a role in strengthening India's healthcare infrastructure by providing guidance to enhance the ***National Regulatory Authority*** for vaccines and supporting the monitoring of medical product safety. WHO also led a pioneering virtual initiative on ***Good Manufacturing Practices*** (GMP), involving all three levels of WHO, to enhance local pharmaceutical manufacturing capacities for medicines.

UNHCR, with the support of its implementing partners, engaged with over 200 government health facilities across 11 locations in India to raise awareness about the difficulties encountered by ***refugees and asylum-seekers*** in accessing health services. Support was provided to 21,744 refugees and asylum-seekers in accessing government healthcare services. Furthermore, 308 vulnerable individuals received cash assistance to cover emergency or expensive medical tests and treatments, while 1,085 received support with medications. Psychosocial counselling was provided to 1,014 individuals, and 3,145 households were given mosquito nets to mitigate health risks from vector-borne diseases.

The UN also supported the enhancement of ***Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene*** (WASH) and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) services in 540 healthcare facilities in 23 states. A significant milestone was achieved in 2023, with 70 per cent of these health-care facilities found to be WASH compliant based on a standardized checklist. In addition, WHO facilitated over 7,000 health-care workers across 12 states for training in biomedical waste management, with 56 per cent female participation. UNHCR supported refugees by constructing and repairing toilets and distributing tarpaulins to 1,401 households affected by heavy rainfall.

WHO continued assisting the MoHFW in developing and implementing the ***Integrated Health Information Platform*** (IHIP). IHIP is a web-based platform that offers real-time data on disease outbreaks throughout the country. WHO support involved expanding IHIP to incorporate various programme-specific applications, such as the Health Management Information System (HMIS), vaccine-preventable diseases (VPD), malaria, leprosy, climate-related health issues, and visceral leishmaniasis (VL).

To support ***antimicrobial resistance*** (AMR) containment efforts, WHO worked closely with the MoHFW in the development and implementation of State Action Plans on AMR, strengthening the

national nodal centre for AMR surveillance and the development of national and state-level AMR networks.

BUILDING EMERGENCY HEALTH PREPAREDNESS

WHO has played a crucial role in strengthening the implementation of ***International Health Regulations*** (IHR) to enhance India's disease prevention, control, and response capabilities. An advanced draft on Implementing IHR in India has been prepared, with ongoing WHO technical support. The successful implementation of National Centre for Disease Control's (NCDC) Disaster Management Plan and Chemical Emergency Modules was achieved through mock drills and training, focusing on gender equality, health equity, and inclusivity.

In collaboration with the MoHFW, WHO initiated the development of a comprehensive guidance document on zoonotic diseases under the One Health approach. The document considered national frameworks and lessons from global health emergencies, especially the COVID-19 pandemic.

The idea of a National Emergency Medical Team in India, conceptualized by WHO, led to the development of a strategic operational framework. WHO is providing technical assistance to the Government of India in managing essential and emergency health-care services during mass gatherings. Adherence to WHO guidelines on mass gatherings ensures evidence-based technical support for health-care service planning, with a focus on prioritizing vulnerable populations such as women, children, and people with disabilities.

WHO collaborated with the MoHFW and several states to prioritize ***Infection Prevention and Control*** (IPC) initiatives and advocated for national and state-level IPC programmes. Assistance included organizing national and state-level training of trainers on IPC and support to MoHFW in harmonizing national IPC guidelines.

WHO actively participated in risk communication and community engagement initiatives. Projects included a social media literacy project, a comprehensive radio campaign, and collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on pandemic preparedness. Training manuals, such as 'Shramik Saarthi,' were developed to address migrant health and social determinants. To bolster the implementation of IHR and improve India's capacity to prevent, control, and respond to diseases, the UN offered technical assistance to the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). This included support for organizing a national consultation workshop on IHR. The NCDC Disaster Management (DM) plan and Chemical Emergency Modules were successfully implemented through mock drills and trainings.

In 2023, humanitarian needs escalated in the Northeastern states of Manipur and Mizoram due to a surge in arrivals from Myanmar amid ongoing conflict. To address this, six health camps were set up in Mizoram, benefitting 672 individuals, including 160 men, 325 women, and 187 children. The health camps were conducted in close coordination with district administration and government health service providers. To ensure safe and healthy motherhood, referrals for secondary and tertiary health care were facilitated for 476 women from Myanmar, including 161 pregnant women, 279 lactating mothers and 36 aspiring mothers.

UNFPA and UNICEF joined forces to significantly expand access to healthcare during the ongoing Manipur crisis. Initially deployed in 4 districts of Manipur, Mobile Medical Teams (MMTs) were extended to cover seven districts in total. The MMTs complemented existing government efforts by providing essential services by offering screenings, primary healthcare, and referrals, particularly focusing on women and children in camps.

WHO India /Rajiv So lanki

BRINGING PRIMARY HEALTH CARE TO REMOTE POPULATIONS

Mr. Telamukta, residing in Chichalgondi, a remote village in Chhattisgarh, India, had long endured swollen legs and breathlessness without seeking medical attention due to the distance from health-care centres. However, during one of his routine visits to the Haat Bazaar community market for groceries, he encountered a mobile medical unit offering check-ups and treatment, marking a significant opportunity for him to finally address his health concerns.

"I was informed that I have diabetes and hypertension. Now I am feeling better after taking the medicines. Coming to this location has proven advantageous for me, as the doctors were able to identify the underlying issue of my condition. This is why I make regular visits here to get my medications," informed Mr Telamukta.

All services and treatments are provided free of charge. This means greater equity in access, that firmly places primary health care as the foundation of a stronger health system overall. This is a big step towards achieving universal health coverage (UHC), where everyone can access the health services they need without experiencing financial difficulty.

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INDIAN WOMEN HEALTH WORKERS LEAD CHARGE

Introduced in 2015, the Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network, or eVIN, has been a game-changer for the women health workers supporting India's immunization programme. Developed by the Government of India and UNDP, with GAVI support, this technology has revolutionized vaccine management in the country and is empowering health workers to do their jobs efficiently.

Gurjeet Kaur, a 36-year-old cold chain handler at the primary health centre of village Shampura in Gurdaspur, confirms this. "This app has boosted my confidence. I never thought I would work with data to prepare and upload my reports. It sounds daunting, but eVIN makes it easy. I am connected with my team and other vaccinators through the smartphone – we post and respond to queries in real time and get our work done."

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OUTCOME 2

Nutrition and food security

By 2027, all people, including children, women, and marginalized populations, have increased access to and consumption of adequate, affordable, and diverse nutritious food, and quality services year-round.

CONTRIBUTING AGENCIES

WFP | unicef

FAO | UNHCR | UNIDO

World Health Organization | IFAD Investing in rural people

In 2023, the UN continued to contribute to the Government of India's efforts to achieve SDG 2 (Zero Hunger). The UN aimed to strengthen Government programmes aligned with the National Food Security Act, 2013, address malnutrition and food insecurity, promote healthy diets and behaviours, and work to enhance the efficiency of food distribution, especially for vulnerable groups.

The UN supported efforts to strengthen food-based protection systems, including the expansion of fortified rice distribution to reach more than 400 million people in seven states. Additionally, UN agencies helped provide nutritious take-home rations to over 12 million young children and pregnant or breastfeeding women. Further, the UN supported supply chain optimization and improved warehouse management to reduce storage losses.

The UN assisted in preventing and managing child malnutrition by developing guidelines, conducting training, and enhancing data systems. Through UN advocacy, six UN-backed states mobilised over USD $ 80 million for child nutrition. Together with 14 state governments, the UN supported essential nutrition services under the POSHAN Abhiyaan programme, which benefitted approximately 75 million children.

To address the significant challenge of anaemia, the UN supported the Government's Anemia Mukt Bharat strategy through technical assistance, helping improve monitoring across the country. Iron-Folic Acid (IFA) supplementation coverage, vital for anaemia prevention, remained consistent in 2022-23, with millions of adolescents and pregnant women receiving supplements. Over half of UN-supported districts provided crucial nutrition services to pregnant women.

The UN continued promoting better diets and nutrition through social and behaviour change (SBC) initiatives. More than 100,000 community events were supported and nearly 10 million people were reached with information on healthy diets. The UN also supported food safety measures, including initiatives to improve quality control and enhance the livelihoods of spice farmers and in the dairy industry.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

406 million people

across seven states received fortified rice through food-based social protection systems

12.1 million children and mothers

received take-home rations

1.7 million children

with severe wasting treated in UN-supported states, up from 831,534 in 2022

Approximately

75 million children

aged 0-6 years benefitted from growth monitoring and promotion services

23.5 million pregnant women

received Iron-Folic Acid tablets, up from 22 million in 2022.

19 per cent increase

in Health Ministry's domestic anaemia control investments (USD 100.9 million in 2023-24)

STRENGTHENED FOOD-BASED PROTECTION SYSTEMS

The UN system worked with the Government of India to ***enhance nutrition in food-based protection systems,*** including mainstreaming fortified rice, school kitchen gardens, and increasing the availability of nutritious foods for young children and pregnant and breastfeeding women, through policy advocacy, technical support, social behaviour change communication campaigns, and capacity building activities.

Fortification of rice, a staple for 65 per cent of Indians, is an effective way to address widespread micronutrient deficiency, especially for the most vulnerable populations. With WFP support, the Government scaled up the distribution of fortified rice, reaching 406 million people across seven states. Nearly 21.8 million people received information and messages on age-appropriate feeding practices, healthy diets, good nutrition, and the value of ***fortified rice.*** Through technical assistance, 12.1 million young children and pregnant and breastfeeding women received nutritious ***take-home rations.***

To improve the nutritional value of supplementary foods provided under the Government's I***ntegrated Child Development Services*** (ICDS) scheme and to ensure dietary diversity, WHO developed the ICDS Supplementary Nutrition Programme

Optimization Tool. The tool provides state-specific recommendations to improve the nutritional profile of supplementary foods across 30 states and will aid the implementation of new nutritional recommendations under the latest National Food Security Act.

To ensure that all beneficiaries, especially the most marginalized, have access to food-based safety nets, WFP launched innovation and technology products to enhance the efficiency and inclusivity of the Government's Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). This includes the ***Annapurti solution,*** automated grain dispensing machines which ensure beneficiaries receive their fair share of subsidized grains. Annapurti machines were deployed to 24 new locations, bringing the total up to 29.

To address the challenge of limited grain storage space and to reduce storage losses, WFP supported the Government with ***supply chain optimization in 31 states and UTs,*** as well as warehouse management innovations. This included pilot projects, including the modernization of four warehouses as SMART warehouses using Internet-of-Things technology and the deployment of four flospan storage units and one mobile storage unit for grain storage. The success of these pilots led to policy changes, including a new national policy on supply chain optimization and instructions for grain storage agencies across the country to scale up SMART warehouse solutions.

Refugees and asylum-seekers are currently not included in the Government's food security initiatives. UNHCR provided food assistance to more than 16,590 individuals and provided cash assistance to almost 7,000 persons with specific needs, which included the elderly without effective family support, persons with disabilities, and women and children at risk.

EXPANDED COVERAGE OF NUTRITION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

To support the Government in the prevention and management of malnutrition in children, the UN helped in the development of state guidelines, programme planning, trainings, and data management systems, and facilitated programme monitoring and reviews. This included investments in strengthening the capacities of national and state level Centres of Excellence, which serve as knowledge hubs that support quality nutrition services. UNICEF continued to focus its efforts on the prevention and management of early growth

faltering in infants under six months of age, with programming initiated in 10 states. As a result of continued advocacy at the state level, five UNICEF-supported states (Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh) ***mobilized over USD 80 million for child nutrition priorities.***

In collaboration with 14 state governments, UNICEF supported the implementation of essential nutrition services under the POSHAN Abhiyaan programme. Approximately ***75 million children,*** aged 0-6 years, benefitted from growth monitoring services under the programme. Within the 14 UNICEF-supported states, community-based management of severe wasting expanded from 314 (71 per cent) to 349 (80 per cent) districts, leading to a significant increase in children receiving treatment, ***up from 831,534 to 1.7 million*** between 2022 and 2023 (information reported through government data sources not in public domain).

The year 2023 also marked a milestone for the nutrition community in India as the Ministry of Women and Child Development unveiled the ***Protocol for Management of Malnutrition in Children.*** This milestone protocol for eradicating acute malnutrition in children across India is the culmination of nearly 15 years of unwavering advocacy and programming efforts by the UN, led by UNICEF. Subsequently, 10 out of 12 UNICEF-supported states initiated programming in 22 districts to demonstrate the operational feasibility of the care of under six-month infants, which is part of the protocol.

SUPPORTED DELIVERY OF ADOLESCENT AND MATERNAL NUTRITION SERVICES

Anaemia is a serious public health challenge in India, with 57 per cent of women aged 15-49 years anaemic according to government data. To strengthen the Government's ***Anemia Mukt Bharat*** (AMB) strategy for the prevention of anaemia, UNICEF provided technical support in the form of national and state nutrition reviews and data system strengthening. UNICEF support led to enhanced monitoring of AMB across India, including through a standard monitoring checklist and rapid assessments in 15 states with NITI Aayog and a partner coalition.

The provision of ***Iron-Folic Acid*** (IFA) supplementation for the prevention and treatment of anaemia in adolescents and pregnant women, a long-term UN priority, held steady in 2022-23. In 2023, 52 million adolescents received weekly IFA supplements. In 12 UNICEF-supported states, 34.4 million adolescents and 23.5 million pregnant women received IFA in 2023, up from 22 million in 2022. Through advocacy and support, 51 per cent of UNICEF-supported districts provided 8 of 13 essential nutrition services to pregnant women, and 97 per cent reported no stock-outs of IFA tablets.

UNICEF advocacy led to a ***19 per cent increase in the Health Ministry's domestic investment for anaemia control*** (USD 100.9 million in 2023-24).

ADVOCATED FOR SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

In 2023, the UN continued to support the Government, partners and civil society to deliver ***Social and Behavior Change*** (SBC) for the promotion of better diets and nutrition. UN advocacy and support to the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) resulted in 13 states developing costed SBC action plans. Approximately eight million self-help groups were engaged in promoting positive behaviours. The UN supported partnerships with community radios, faith-based organizations, and SBC alliances to amplify priority nutrition messaging during national nutrition and gender campaigns. The UN supported more than 100,000 community-based events across nine states with over 67,000 UN-trained volunteers (youth networks such as National Service Scheme, Nehru Yuva Kendra Scheme and community based volunteers). These efforts led to information on healthy diets and

nutrition reaching over 10 million people. Further, on World Food Safety Day 2023, WHO collaborated with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India for a social media campaign which reached an audience of 147 million.

SUPPORTED FOOD SAFETY AND LIVELIHOODS

The UN continued to support the Government in developing standards and protocols for food safety. This included an FAO initiative to expand the production and export of ***safe, high-quality spices together with the Spices Board.*** The initiative aims to improve spice farmers' incomes through the value chain by emphasizing food safety measures and export market access. Through a training of trainers approach, more than 1,700 farmers and 200 other stakeholders in the spice value chain received training in best practices. The initiative was further supported by a digital extension developed in partnership with the Digital Green Trust. FAO also brought together stakeholders from the dairy industry, including the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, with the aim of creating strategies for enhancing livestock keepers' incomes through protocols for clean and safe milk.

IFAD supported investments in Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, and Uttarakhand, helping state governments to transform local food systems to become more sustainable, remunerative, inclusive and nutritious. IFAD targets its investments on the most vulnerable rural groups and communities, often in extremely remote areas, to adopt profitable, sustainable, and resilient livelihoods, enabling adaptation to climate change and market volatility. Projects focused on linking farmers to markets, enhancing productivity through access to finance, technology, productive assets and infrastructure, and strengthening rural institutions. In 2023, IFAD disbursed USD 38.7 million, directly reaching 590,000 people, and benefitting an estimated 1.9 million people. In addition, IFAD is also supporting three grant projects on gender transformation, agroecology, and empowerment of persons with disabilities, respectively.

EVIDENCE AND KNOWLEDGE SUPPORT FOR BETTER POLICY

The UN continued to generate a wealth of evidence and knowledge products for policy makers, including on sodium benchmarks to prevent hypertension, fortified rice, good agricultural practices for spice crops, trends in unhealthy ultra-processed foods in India, anaemia dashboards, and recommendations on food nutrition labels.

The UN engaged a wide variety of stakeholders, from national and state governments to ministries, academia, self-help groups, and farmers with training on improved nutrition, food safety, and hygiene. This included a leadership module developed with NITI Aayog and Yashwantrao Chavan Academy Of Development Administration (YASHADA - State Institute of Rural Development, Maharashtra), which was used to equip approximately 5,000 block-level officials across 500 aspirational blocks with skills and attributes to help them lead and support the delivery of interventions in the most vulnerable areas of the country.

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NATIONAL FOOD SAFETY NETS SUSTAIN HOPE OF A BETTER LIFE

In Bhouma Nagar, Odisha, a bustling line forms outside a fair price shop, where Gauri Pradhan, a single mother, eagerly awaits her turn. Grateful for the subsidized grain she receives, she reflects,"I am happy to receive this ration that supports my family." Gauri's story highlights the vital role of India's National Food Safety Act, in ensuring food security for millions. Despite challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, these food subsidies serve as a lifeline for families like Gauri's, preventing hunger and enabling them to meet other essential needs. As Gauri prepares lunch with the rice she received, she emphasizes, "Food not only sustains us but also keeps our hopes of a better life alive." WFP works with national and state governments in the country, driving transparency, accountability, and efficiency of food safety nets, ensuring Gauri and countless others find not just nourishment but also the promise of a brighter future.

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OUTCOME 3
Quality Education

By 2027, all children and young people, especially the most vulnerable, have equitable access to quality learning and skills development within safe and inclusive education environments

CONTRIBUTING AGENCIES

unicef | unesco

UNFPA | UN WOMEN | UNHCR

The UN took a comprehensive approach towards improving education in India, with a focus on inclusivity, quality, and holistic development. Through partnerships, capacity building, and targeted interventions, the UN contributed to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 - Quality Education and helped advance the rights and well-being of all learners in the country.

The UN continued to support the Government of India to ensure equitable access to quality learning and skills, focusing on the most vulnerable, including refugees and asylum seekers. Through evidence-based planning, the capacities of state level education department officials were improved to roll out surveys and to target interventions using data effectively for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable communities, including children with disabilities.

UN agencies worked with government partners to ensure that mainstream life skills were incorporated in school curriculums and training programmes.

UN provided support towards empowering children with disabilities, promoting gender equality in education, and enhancing health and wellness in schools through support to the Ayushman Bharat School Health and Wellness Programme.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

More than 100,000
education officials trained in school safety

12 million preschoolers
received play-based learning

30 million adolescents
benefit from increased career-guidance funding

At least 75,000 teachers
trained as Health and Wellness Ambassadors

800,000
out-of-school children reintegrated into education

More than 2 million young
people accessed life-skills training

EVIDENCE AND KNOWLEDGE SUPPORT FOR BETTER EDUCATION POLICIES

UNICEF supported the preparation of 17 state gender and equity profiles to strengthen the ***Samagra Shiksha*** programme for evidence-based planning of the education sector, with a focus on education interventions for children from vulnerable communities. To enhance quality education in relatively underdeveloped blocks, the UN supported NITI Aayog in the development of an education sector module for the ***Aspirational Blocks Programme.***

The UN continued to engage with the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to support the implementation of the next ***National Assessment Survey*** (NAS), a nationally representative large-scale survey of students' learning. UNICEF contributed to establishing and strengthening the NAS, which has developed into a robust learning assessment data system in India led by the Ministry of Education to improve learning outcomes. The recommendations outlined in UNESCO's 2021 State of Education Report for India, titled No Teacher, No Class, continued to inform UN-organized workshops and webinars on enhancing teacher development at the state level.

Twelve state governments were given technical assistance for creating guidance documents, modules, standard operating procedures, and courses for ***comprehensive school safety programmes*** (CSSP), leading to improved

capacities of ***101,076 education officials,*** (including 40% women). Elements of climate action have also been integrated in five states: Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

GETTING CHILDREN BACK IN SCHOOL

Nearly 800,000 out-of-school children, including 14,131 children with disabilities, were integrated back into mainstream education with UNICEF's support. This was facilitated through the development of digital platforms designed to monitor out-of-school children, children with special needs, and children in the most vulnerable communities. With UN support, eight states have initiated ***early warning systems*** for identifying children at risk of dropping out from schools. For example, in Uttar Pradesh, 8,213 government schools in four districts used the early warning system to identify children at risk and kept them in school.

PROVIDING LIFE SKILLS TRAINING

To make secondary education more relevant to adolescents' needs, more than 2 million young people, nearly half of whom were girls, were provided with ***access to 21st-century life skills opportunities.*** UNFPA engaged with more than 43,000 institutions, including government schools and special schools for young people with disabilities, ensuring access to life-skills education for 3.9 million girls. Ongoing UN efforts to strengthen the education system have enabled 3.3 million students -- with 44 per cent being girls -- across 16 states, to make informed decisions about their future. This support is facilitated by 24,387 trained teachers, of whom 36 per cent are women. Through advocacy led by UNICEF and YuWaah, an estimated 30 million adolescents are benefitting from increased national funding for career guidance, including the recruitment of 8,000 block-level career counsellors. UNHCR-supported learning programmes helped develop the life skills of 6,749 refugees and asylum-seekers.

More than 72,000 teachers were trained on social and emotional competencies and digital pedagogies for classrooms with the goal of reducing stress amongst teachers, hence creating healthy classrooms in India with the technical support of UNESCO MGIEP in collaboration with Navodaya Vidyalaya and Directorate of Education NCT.

EMPOWERING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

The UN is committed to advancing inclusivity in the Indian education system, aligned with SDG target 4.5. UN advocacy and technical support prioritized the ***education of children with disabilities,*** leading to the implementation of guidelines for disability inclusion across four states. Nearly 300,000 children with disabilities (42 per cent of them girls) benefitted from improved learning experiences through accessible materials and teacher training.

In 2023, UNESCO collaborated with the ***National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People*** (NCPEDP) on the 'Missing Million' campaign to gather accurate data on disability in India. The agency also organized panel discussions and events to promote inclusive schooling and raise awareness on disability rights and needs. Additionally, UNESCO, NCPEDP and corporate partners developed a teaching module addressing the menstrual needs of girls with disabilities to promote their well-being and empowerment.

UNFPA partnered with the Rajasthan state Government to expand the ***School Health and***

Wellness Programme under Ayushman Bharat to special schools. This involved customizing the curriculum for adolescents with disabilities, training special educators, establishing model sites, and deploying assistive technology to enhance learning. In Odisha, UNFPA partnered with the Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) to launch the Disability Innovation & Experience Lab. The lab offers assistive technologies for visual and hearing impairments, facilitating the exploration of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Through a curriculum inclusive of life-skills education and counselling, adolescents are engaged actively, supported by various experience camps.

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

The UN supported the strengthening of the education system to promote ***gender equality and to empower girls and women.*** Efforts were focused on enhancing data collection methods to inform actions for gender equality, and improving legal, policy and planning frameworks. These frameworks advance rights and foster inclusive, safe, and accessible teaching and learning practices to empower all learners. This included advocating for STEM education and digital competencies, through activities such as webinars, policy dialogues, and awareness campaigns and ensuring safe, gender-equitable learning environments.

UN Women's advocacy led to the adoption of a gender policy by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) in India, aimed at tackling the 33 per cent gender gap in women's enrolment in open schooling. The policy, impacting over 4 million students, will extend to State Open Schools through NIOS, benefitting marginalized women and girls nationwide, especially in remote and rural areas.

ENHANCING HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN SCHOOLS

The UN played a crucial role in the roll-out of the Ayushman Bharat ***School Health and Wellness Programme*** (SHWP), the Government's flagship initiative for establishing healthy behaviours in schools. With UN support, the SHWP expanded from 377 districts in 2022 to 526 districts in 2023. Eight states were assisted in training more than ***75,000 teachers as Health and Wellness Ambassadors across more than 26,000 schools.*** A UN-led review and advocacy of the SHWP implementation in 2023 across all states resulted in the adoption of an app- based real time monitoring system operationalized by teachers to track continuous progress of the programme.

UNFPA collaborated with MoHFW to assess the SHWP in ***10 states through rapid assessments.*** This helped to identify areas for improvement and programme efficiency. Further, UNESCO, in collaboration with NCERT and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), conducted training sessions to support the implementation of the SHWP. More than 180 principals, teachers, and counsellors from northern and western regions participated in these workshops in New Delhi. Additionally, UNESCO developed a two-day capacity-building programme on Health and Wellbeing in partnership with CBSE. So far, 385 training sessions have been held, benefitting more than 22,000 teachers.

Some 700 Adolescent-Friendly Health Clinics were equipped with qualified and trained counsellors who have provided counselling to ***nearly 450,000 adolescents.*** UNFPA consistently provided supportive supervision to these counsellors, supporting them with job aids, training materials, and refresher courses. Additionally, UNFPA developed a comprehensive resource package to conduct ***Adolescent Health and Wellness Days*** for sensitization of parents and community members on

adolescent health and well-being issues to create a supportive environment for adolescents to adopt healthy behaviours.

In August 2023, a comic book titled Let's Move Forward was jointly developed by NCERT and UNESCO to promote the health and wellness of learners. The comic book will be distributed to all 1.5 million schools nationwide and will complement the efforts of the School Health and Wellness Programme in promoting the health and wellness of adolescents. Additionally, WHO and UNESCO worked with NCERT in the development of 11 animated videos focusing on the 11 themes of the SHWP. The videos are available in 11 vernacular languages.

SUPPORTING EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

UNICEF played a vital role in facilitating collaboration between the Departments of Women and Child Development (DWCD) and Education (DoE) in 15 states. This collaboration resulted in improved delivery of early childhood education (ECE) in approximately ***1 million early childhood development*** (ECD) centres and preschools. Continuous support was provided for the development of multi-year plans to strengthen ECE. Field visits were also conducted to clarify roles and responsibilities, enhancing the effectiveness of ECE delivery.

Furthermore, UNICEF developed an online course available on the ***UNiLearn platform in eight languages,*** aimed at improving the capacity of more than 185,000 ECD workers to deliver quality ECE. This initiative directly benefitted 12 million preschoolers, with half of them being girls, by promoting play-based learning.

PROMOTING FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY

UNICEF enhanced understanding and knowledge in 11 states on language mapping, parental engagement to support learning, the role of state academic teams, and communication strategies for ***Foundational Literacy and Numeracy*** (FLN). To optimize resources and prevent duplication, UNICEF collaborated with other agencies for joint planning and monitoring of the FLN Mission rollout.

In nine states, approximately ***300,000 schools*** witnessed improved implementation of FLN strategies. This improvement involved several initiatives such as updating the FLN curriculum, developing instructional plans, enhanced professional development for teachers, strengthening monitoring, and increasing parental involvement in supporting learning at home.

SUPPORTING THE EDUCATION OF REFUGEES

While refugee and asylum-seeking children have access to national education systems, they face challenges due to unaffordability and inability to access government social welfare schemes due to lack of legal documentation.

In 2023, UNHCR continued its advocacy efforts with authorities to enhance ***the inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers*** in the public education system. Several interventions were made for school enrolment, including through advocacy to education authorities for equitable access of refugee children to government schools. UNHCR facilitated the enrolment of more than 4,000 refugees in primary and secondary schooling. To tackle gaps in services, UNHCR and partners assisted at least 1,000

students with school uniforms and scholastic materials and provided cash incentives to 841 refugee girls to promote girls' education, build gender equity, and mitigate risks of school dropout, child labour and child marriage. In addition, 69 refugee students received a scholarship from the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) to enrol in or continue their university studies. Some 174 refugees benefitted from vocational training.

HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY FOR CLOSING THE DISABILITY DIVIDE

Abhilipsa Panda, a visually impaired 14-year-old from Louis Braille School, had a transformative experience at the Disability Innovation and Experience Lab (DIEL) in Odisha. She was introduced to gadgets and aids like Hexis, a kindle-like device, in which before she saw new possibilities beyond braille. Abhilipsa discovered tactile diagrams aiding her science education, previously left out of her syllabus. Abhilipsa dreams of becoming a teacher, inspired by DIEL's impact. Operated by the Department of Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disability and UNFPA, DIEL in Jatni, Odisha, empowers individuals like Abhilipsa by providing accessible education and assistive technology.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Virajsinh Ashoksinh Rathod's journey at Vadodara Primary School exemplifies the transformative power of inclusive education. When Virajsinh commenced his education in grade 1, he struggled with a short attention span, seemed disconnected and exhibited hyperactive behaviour, making it challenging for him to stay focused in class. Despite these challenges, Virajsinh found unwavering support from his teachers and peers.

Diagnosed with 60% Autism, the school rallied behind him, implementing tailored measures such as structured classrooms and sensory breaks. Now in the 8th standard, Virajsinh has developed a strong bond with his teachers and displays a keen desire to attend school regularly. His remarkable progress stands as a testament to the collaborative efforts of the school community, showcasing the potential for every child to thrive with the right support.

OUTCOME 4

Economic growth and decent work

By 2027, people will benefit from and contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth through higher productivity, competitiveness and diversification in economic activities that create decent work, livelihoods, and income, particularly for youth and women.

CONTRIBUTING AGENCIES

ILO, UNIDO, ESCAP, APCTT, ESCAP, ITU, IOM UN MIGRATION INDIA, UNEP, IFAD Investing in rural people, UNDP, unesco, UNFPA, UNHCR, unicef, UN WOMEN, WFP

In 2023, the UN focused on ensuring that the working population in India continued to benefit from and contribute to inclusive growth. The UN worked together with the Government, employers, worker's organizations, businesses, youth platforms and civil society organizations to promote decent work for all women and men.

The UN supported the empowerment of young people by connecting them with job opportunities and 21st-century skills to harness the potential of

India's demographic dividend. Collaborative efforts between UN agencies and the national and state governments led to over 30 million adolescents receiving career guidance. Millions of job seekers benefitted from the enhanced National Career Service (NCS) portal, while policy support was given to modernizing India's apprenticeship ecosystem.

The UN also worked to support entrepreneurship, particularly for women, providing training and support for aspiring entrepreneurs across India with private sector partners. The UN system continued to focus on micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), helping small businesses increase productivity and meet international environmental, labour and health standards.

The UN's efforts extended to supporting labour migration frameworks and protecting vulnerable workers. Through consultations and technical assistance, the UN supported the transition of workers from informal to formal economies, gender-responsive policies and the elimination of workplace violence and harassment.

The UN's initiatives strengthened discourse on business and human rights (BHR), and promoted responsible corporate practices.Efforts to promote green economic growth saw innovative pilots being launched as well as the introduction of new skill development programmes in emerging sectors.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

30 million adolescents
received career guidance

45,000 young people
reached with apprenticeship opportunities

700,000 marginalized labourers
received access to social welfare schemes

Over 4,000
people received entrepreneurship training

17,000 unorganized
workers reached by labour unions

Over 135 million USD mobilized
to support women's self-help groups

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SKILLING AND DECENT WORK

Through 2023, the UN worked to empower young people by linking them with job opportunities and 21st-century skills.

UNICEF and YuWaah's joint engagement with the Government contributed to 30 million adolescents receiving support on ***career guidance*** through the recruitment of 8,000 block level career counsellors from increased national funding of USD 25 million. UNICEF supported three states in initiating a digital roadmap for the education sector and leveraged digital technology to reach adolescents on career guidance. UNDP contributed to the empowerment of more than 60,000 young people by scaling up career guidance, counselling and skilling for livelihood opportunities.

YuWaah continued to collaborate with the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) to enhance the ***National Career Service (NCS)*** portal, ensuring smooth navigation for young users. This involved creating instructional videos, providing value-added services like employment awareness and job support programmes for NCS users, and promoting job fairs. As a result, four million new job seekers were onboarded to the NCS platform during the year.

Initiatives such as the 'Apprenticeship Working Group', addressed challenges in the ***apprenticeship ecosystem,*** leading to the production of policy recommendation documents. ILO also produced policy recommendations on apprenticeships, offering innovative ideas and policy options to modernize and transform work-based learning in India. YuWaah's efforts to promote apprenticeship opportunities have been bolstered through partnerships and joint campaigns, reaching approximately 45,000 young people. ILO supported the assessment of apprenticeship programmes including the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) and Specified Skilled Worker Programme (SSW) to maximize their impact.

In addition, YuWaah intensified its focus on entrepreneurship, partnering with companies like PwC and creating accessible content on the UReport platform, with partners like Deasra and Development Alternatives, benefitting approximately 40,000 young people. UNDP initiatives such as the Startup Ideation Challenge in Karnataka and Gujarat, along with the regional Youth Co:Lab intervention in partnership with Atal Innovation Mission, supported over 1,000 young individuals in turning their ideas into viable startups. In Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, state governments adopted ILO's entrepreneurship curriculums and training methods to engage youth in generating business ideas.

UNHCR supported refugees and asylum-seekers with job placements in the informal sector, micro grants to start their own businesses, guidance on labour market opportunities and entrepreneurship development training.

SUPPORTING LABOUR MIGRATION FRAMEWORKS

To enable the recognition of skills and qualifications of migrant workers and students in the South Asia region, ILO convened a sub-regional technical meeting, "South Asia Qualifications Reference Framework (SAQRF)". ILO also organized a symposium to promote gender-responsive migration governance and enhance the safety, working conditions, and well-being of women migrant workers. Additionally, UNDP supported the development of an online portal and android application to enable real-time monitoring of labour migration, facilitating targeted support based on movement patterns.

PROTECTING VULNERABLE WORKERS

UNDP worked with the Government of Chhattisgarh to establish inclusive ***social protection systems.*** Through establishing labor resource centres, labour canteens and the implementation of a helpline, over 700,000 marginalized labourers received improved access to social welfare schemes. UNDP's initiatives linked over 11,700 households across health and insurance-related schemes, with nearly half being safai saathis or waste pickers.

ILO worked to expand social protection to care workers and ***digital labour platform workers,*** especially women. Consultations were organized with government, employers' and workers' organizations, civil society, academia, and platform companies with the aim of identifying actionable policy interventions. ILO also serves as the convenor for the SDG 8.7 Platform, which brings together constituents, stakeholders and partners to achieve the SDG 8.7 target of ending child labour in all its forms.

ILO continued to support the Workers' Organizations by offering information and support services, including training, to vulnerable and crisis-affected workers, through Workers Information and Support Centres (WISC). ILO provided technical support to unions in devising a plan to engage with over 17,000 unorganized workers across various sectors such as construction, plantation, care, self-employment, and street vending. This initiative helped raise awareness about key labour rights, enrol workers in social security schemes, and enhance their leadership skills.

To support the financial and digital literacy of women in urban poor communities, WFP trained 750 women from 60 ***self-help groups (SHG).*** UNHCR supported the establishment of 22 informal SHGs of refugee women in Delhi and Hyderabad to provide women the opportunity to save money and equip them with new skills and work in group enterprises. In Odisha, support was provided to Mission Shakti, the Government of Odisha's Department of Women Empowerment, in developing e-learning modules on financial literacy and women's empowerment. In addition, efforts are under way to develop a compendium of schemes for women's SHG members and a compendium of best practices on SHG-based livelihood interventions.

SUPPORT TO MSMEs

UNDP conducted entrepreneurship training for over 4,000 individuals, with 46 per cent being women, and connected them with business development services. Additionally, UNDP directly supported over 600 micro-enterprises, 99 per cent of which were women-owned, in Delhi NCR and Gujarat to initiate or expand their businesses. In Gujarat, UNDP's initiatives empowered over 3,400 farmers to negotiate effectively with traders and access online prices for agricultural produce, enabling them to make informed decisions regarding market opportunities.

ESCAP, in collaboration with its partners UN Women, UBUNTU and others, trained around 1,300 women entrepreneurs from MSMEs on how to use digital marketing tools to promote their businesses.

IFAD continued its support to MSMEs, particularly through facilitating access to finance. In Maharashtra, for example, the IFAD-supported Nav Tejaswini project facilitated credit links for 316,211 people and mobilized over 670 million in collateral-free financing from rural financial institutions for 1,133 women-led micro-enterprises, mainly in food processing and services. Additionally, over 11319 million were mobilized from banks to support women in self-help groups in agriculture, showcasing a commitment to empowering women entrepreneurs and boosting agricultural productivity.

ILO supported the development of the Indian ***MSME ecosystem*** to meet international standards on productivity, environmental sustainability, and health and safety of workers. This included facilitating a government and industry delegation from India to the Republic of Korea. The delegation gained important insights into key MSME policy initiatives in the Republic of Korea, including practices adopted by MSMEs to meet international standards, particularly in labour and environmental compliance. ILO also organized trainings on modernizing quality management practices and increasing productivity in MSMEs in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.

UNIDO supported 275 MSMEs in the ***auto components sector*** in enhancing their productivity and operational efficiency. This assistance was tailored to meet the rigorous quality, delivery, and cost standards set by OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturers) and Tier 1 buyers. UNIDO provided technical support through a blend of on-site guidance and online learning resources, focusing on manufacturing excellence and lean manufacturing principles. As a result, 202 companies managed to save 90 million.

UNIDO also helped India's ***paper industry*** adopt cleaner and more efficient technologies. UNIDO built transportable demonstration units showcasing three advancements: filtering wastewater for reuse, improving energy use in mills through burning agricultural waste, and controlling paper mill odours with chlorine dioxide. These proven technologies needed adjustments for India's unique paper production conditions. UNIDO brought together technology providers, research institutes, and paper mills to customize the solutions. The collaboration especially benefitted smaller mills, which often lack resources for experimentation. By witnessing these demonstrations, smaller mills could see how tailored technologies could address their business needs, improve sustainability, and boost production.

PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

To operationalize ***ILO Convention No. 190,*** the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work, technical assistance was given to the All India Organizations of Employers and the Employers Federation of India. ILO conducted training sessions on gender discrimination, violence, and harassment in four states and UTs. In addition, ILO advocated for the effective implementation of the Sexual Harassment Act 2013.

The Alang ship-breaking yard in Gujarat is the world's largest ship recycling site. Working practices may involve exposure to harmful chemicals and hazardous conditions. ILO is working with partners to promote a just transition to decent and safe jobs for workers in Alang as the industry shifts towards greener practices. This includes linking ship recycling workers to government welfare schemes, and policy recommendations on sanitation workers.

UNDP strengthened discourse on ***business and human rights (BHR)*** with the private sector, notably with the Business 20 Engagement Group Secretariat during India's G20 Presidency. UNDP also worked with the private sector to promote the adoption of Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) processes. Additionally, UNDP prioritized collaboration with civil society organizations (CSOs) to strengthen access to remedies for corporate accountability issues in 2023.

PROMOTING GREEN ECONOMIC GROWTH

UNDP partnered with the Jharkhand Livelihood Promotion Society (JLPS) and the Food Industry Capacity & Skill Initiative (FICSI) to implement an innovative pilot project aimed at enhancing the ***millet value chain*** in Jharkhand. Additionally, UNDP partnered with the Skill Council for Green

Jobs to introduce four new National Skill Qualification Framework job roles in emerging sectors such as solar cold storage and electric vehicle charging. Through this collaboration, 1,000 individuals, including 29 per cent women, were equipped with the requisite technical skills to pursue employment opportunities in these rapidly evolving sectors.

ILO, through the Partnership Action on Green Economy (PAGE) India, conducted a comprehensive assessment on ***green jobs and just transitions.*** Based on the findings, recommendations were provided to enhance the policy landscape, aligned with ILO's guidelines on Just Transitions. Additionally, ILO published policy documents on creating sustainable enterprises to support the MSME ecosystem.

FOSTERING INNOVATION

UNIDO partnered with India's Department of Science and Technology (DST) to launch a ***National Manufacturing Innovation Survey*** (2021-2022). The survey assessed innovation in Indian manufacturing across two levels: individual firms and five key sectors (automotive, textiles, pharmaceuticals, ICT, and food & beverages). By identifying what helps and hinders innovation in manufacturing, the survey provided valuable insights for strengthening India's science, technology, and innovation ecosystem.

INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

In Maharashtra, ILO's Sparking Disability Inclusive Rural Transformation (SPARK) project, funded by IFAD, has identified young persons with disabilities to act as Disability Inclusion Facilitators (DIFs). Eleven youths have been trained as disability inclusion strategists and communicators, to act as a bridge between persons with disabilities and the community and SHGs which can provide access to microfinance. The Disability Inclusion Facilitators are working to change attitudes and perceptions around persons with disabilities, and help them access entrepreneurship opportunities.

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HELPING WOMEN ENTER THE WORKFORCE

Komal, a second-year Bachelor of Computer Applications student from Nangal Kalan, Punjab, honed her confidence and communication skills through UNDP's capacity-building programmes, leading to a successful placement at Innovsource Services Private Limited. She has many aspirations for her future, such as completing her education with excellent grades, gaining more knowledge and experience in her field, and pursuing a Master of Computer Applications (MCA) degree. With her first salary, Komal wants to take her mother for a medical check-up to ensure her good health. She wants women to have self-confidence and trust in their abilities. Komal believes women can overcome the social and familial barriers that often hold them back by talking to their parents.

AWARENESS CAMPAIGN ON DOMESTIC WORKERS WITH DELHI METRO

The pandemic highlighted the critical role of care workers in society and the economy, prompting the launch of ILO's awareness campaign with a focus on domestic workers' rights. This initiative involved wrapping a Delhi Metro train with messaging to raise awareness about these rights, aligned with ILO conventions. With the Delhi Metro serving approximately three million passengers daily, the campaign reached a diverse audience.

The ILO has been working to promote domestic workers' rights for several decades. Prior to the campaign, a workshop was conducted with the Government of the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi focusing on the rights of domestic workers. This workshop produced recommendations for the Labour Department to pursue further action.

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OUTCOME 5

Environment, climate, WASH, and resilience

Government of India, state governments, communities, private sector and other actors take informed actions to address climate change, pollution, biodiversity loss and restore ecological integrity through improved knowledge, capacity and mainstreaming of relevant actions across sectoral programmes, policies and plans.

CONTRIBUTING AGENCIES

In 2023, the UN continued to support the Government of India and stakeholders in climate change adaptation, mitigation, disaster risk reduction and ecosystem restoration, aligned with global environmental goals. The UN also worked to tackle the challenges of pollution and waste generation, and building capacities for managing sanitation practices.

The UN supported India's transition to resource-efficient and clean economic growth, resulting in a reduction of over 4.9 million tonnes of CO_2 emissions. Technical assistance was provided to develop state-level climate action plans and India's national reports under India's commitment to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The UN played a key role in supporting Mission LiFE, India's flagship initiative promoting environmentally conscious living.

The UN also contributed to ecosystem restoration and biodiversity protection efforts across India. With UN support, Ladakh designated its first biodiversity heritage site, and India's first Night Sky Reserve was established. Over 10,000 hectares of land were safeguarded and rehabilitated with UN support. The UN also supported India's fight against land degradation by conducting analyses and compiling best practices for restoration.

Through comprehensive partnerships with government agencies, the UN supported the collection and processing of more than 7,000 metric tonnes of plastic waste. The UN also promoted climate-resilient agri-food systems, empowering farmers, especially women, with sustainable practices and technologies.

The UN played a key role in strengthening disaster resilience for vulnerable populations. Through technical support, capacity building, and strategic partnerships, the UN supported central and state governments in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

The UN system also prioritized ensuring access to clean water and sanitation services (WASH), supporting national flagship programmes, and facilitating essential WASH services to millions of people.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Over 10,000 hectares
of land safeguarded and rehabilitated

Over 4.9 million tonnes
of CO_2 emissions prevented

Over 7,000 metric tonnes
of plastic waste processed

500,000 villages
achieved Open Defecation Free plus (ODF+) status

124 million people
linked to safe water supply

168,340 schools
implemented climate-smart clean and green school improvement plans

SUPPORTING CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION MEASURES

UNDP played a key role in supporting climate change efforts of the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC). UNDP supported MoEFCC to implement climate-friendly alternatives in ***Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises*** (MSMEs) within the refrigeration, air-conditioning (RAC), and polyurethane (PU) foam sectors. This achieved a reduction of over 4.9 million tonnes of CO_2-equivalent emissions and contributed to the phasing out of ozone-depleting substances.

UNDP also provided technical support to MoEFCC for finalizing and submitting India's ***Third National Communication*** and its first Adaptation Plan, both mandatory reports under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

UNDP also supported climate action at the ***state level.*** The agency assisted Ladakh in developing its State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) which is currently under review. Additionally, UNDP helped Madhya Pradesh get its SAPCC approved by the state government.

UNDP further strengthened India's global leadership role in climate change by supporting MoEFCC and NITI Aayog in rolling out ***Mission LiFE,*** a flagship Indian initiative focused on promoting sustainable lifestyles. UNDP played a key role in developing and launching a compendium of 75 best practices on LiFE from around the world.

UNEP partnered with the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) to establish a Cooling Hub at NIUA. This hub will serve as a centre for knowledge exchange and collaboration, promoting the adoption of sustainable cooling technologies and practices in urban areas.

UNEP played a key role in advancing ***eco-labelling*** standards in India. Through the Joint UN Programme on Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE), UNEP supported studies on eco-labelling. These studies provided valuable insights that directly contributed to the development of the draft Ecomark Certification Rules. This new eco-labeling system will help consumers identify environmentally friendly products and promote sustainable practices in the Indian market.

UNESCO MGIEP reached out to 60,000 K-12 learners across the country, through specialized courses in climate change mitigation, biodiversity preservation, and global citizenship, designed to inculcate the development of social and emotional skills in young learners while taking a nuanced view of these complex subjects.

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION AND BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION

With UNDP assistance, ***Ladakh*** designated 'Yaya Tso', a high-altitude lake spanning over 6,600 hectares, as the first biodiversity heritage site of its kind. Additionally, the Hanley village cluster, along with its wetland complex covering 100,000 hectares, was declared India's first Night Sky Reserve. Further, UNDP supported crucial conservation initiatives in ***Sikkim's Kanchendzonga Biosphere Reserve.*** These initiatives focused on protecting the habitat of snow leopards. Soil and moisture conservation measures were implemented, along with the installation of biodigesters. These combined efforts have safeguarded and rehabilitated over 10,000 hectares of land.

To support India's fight against land degradation, UNEP conducted a comprehensive analysis of land degradation to support the country's reporting on progress towards achieving Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets under the ***UN Convention***

to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Furthermore, UNEP collaborated with FAO and MoEFCC to compile a compendium of best practices for restoring areas affected by forest fires. These efforts align with the G20 commitment to enhance cooperation on forest fire mitigation and restoration. The compendium will serve as a valuable resource for developing targeted actions to contribute to the goals outlined in the UNCCD.

Through its global ***TEEB AgriFood Initiative,*** UNEP conducted studies to assess the social, economic, and environmental benefits of sustainable farming practices in India. These findings aim to inform future agricultural policies and ensure alignment with Goal B of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

ESCAP's ***Urban Act project,*** developed with the Ministry of Urban and Housing Affairs and supported by the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), aims to promote low carbon resilient cities. The project is being piloted in Panaji, Coimbatore, and Shimla.

With India as a part of regional activities, UNODC supported capacity building to wildlife crime control bureaus and other law enforcement agencies through trainings, and training of trainers, on responding to aspects of wildlife crime, including online investigations.

MANAGING PLASTIC WASTE AND POLLUTANTS

UNDP's Plastic Waste Management (PWM) programme enabled the collection and processing of nearly 7,000 metric tonnes of plastic waste and over 2,200 metric tonnes of dry waste up to November 2023. This initiative helped prevent the release of over 22,047 metric tonnes of CO_2 by diverting plastic waste from landfills to recycling facilities. In 2023, the project operated in four cities across four states.

UNEP and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) partnered with the Ministry of Tourism to raise awareness on transitioning the tourism sector towards a circular economy for plastics. Tools like the ***Global Tourism Plastics Initiative*** (GTPI) are being utilized to support this transition. Both the Government of Punjab and the Central Nodal Agency for Sustainable Tourism signed onto the GTPI in 2023.

As part of its Sustainable Cities programme, conducted with backing from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, UNIDO provided assistance to five cities – Bhopal, Guntur, Jaipur, Mysuru, and Vijayawada – in Sustainable Urban Planning and Management, and technology demonstration projects. For instance, in Bhopal, 125 Bio CNG vehicles were utilized for door-to-door waste collection. Similarly, in Guntur, 220 electric vehicles were deployed for waste collection, which were connected to 500 kilo-watt peak floating solar panels.

UNEP provided comprehensive support to MoEFCC on various intergovernmental processes, including the ***Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution*** (INC), and technical expertise on the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm and other international conventions related to hazardous chemicals. UNEP also raised awareness and provided guidance on non-persistent organic pollutants (POPs), alternatives to DDT for producers, registration holders, and users. UNIDO worked to develop and commercialize a set of natural products as an alternative to DDT, including Bt-based biopesticides, neem-based botanical pesticides and innovative Long Lasting Insecticidal Nets (LLIN), 1 million of which were manufactured.

UNIDO has assisted in managing and eliminating Poly-Chlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), a persistent organic pollutant (POP) found in electric transformers across power and industrial sectors.

At the Bhilai Steel Plant, a static facility was set up and put into operation to handle and destroy 112 metric tonnes of pure PCBs, PCB-contaminated oil, and equipment. Additionally, mobile dichlorination facilities were utilized to treat 200 metric tonnes of PCB-contaminated oil.

CLIMATE RESILIENT AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS

In 2023, the UN worked to empower farmers with the knowledge and tools to make informed decisions and adopt sustainable practices. The UN not only worked to improve agricultural methods but also to build resilience against the challenges posed by climate change, to create strong, climate-resistant livelihoods and food systems for the future.

WFP worked towards climate-smart agriculture in India throughout 2023, WFP efforts focusing on promoting diversification to resilient crops, particularly millets. WFP actively advocated for strengthening the ***millet value chain*** through knowledge products and discussions held on prominent platforms including G20 and the International Year of Millets.

Further, WFP supported women's economic empowerment and sustainable food systems by supporting the creation of ***12 solar-powered enterprises.*** These innovative businesses processed nearly 19 metric tonnes of fruits and vegetables, boosting the incomes of the women involved and significantly reducing food spoilage after harvest.

UNEP joined forces with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and the National Centre for ***Cold-chain Development*** (NCCD) to launch the Cold Chain Programme in India. The programme aims to improve the infrastructure and practices for storing and transporting perishable agricultural products, reducing food spoilage and waste.

FAO's Green-Ag project, funded by the Global Environment Facility, helped farmers in Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Odisha, and Uttarakhand learn sustainable farming and livestock management practices through ***farmer field schools.*** FAO is also developing a Spatial Decision Support System (SDSS). This system will be a valuable tool for farmers by combining crop data and land management techniques in different regions.

FAO partnered with the Government of Andhra Pradesh and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) for a dialogue on transitioning Andhra Pradesh towards a more sustainable agri-food system. To guide this transition, five policy briefs with sectoral recommendations were prepared.

The IFAD Investing in Agroecology Value Chains Project, funded by BMZ, supported agroecology enterprises and producer organizations to promote sustainable agricultural practices, improve smallholder livelihoods, and integrate lessons into Policy Engagement and Knowledge Management.

FAO joined forces with the National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA) and Weather Risk Management Services Pvt. Ltd (WRMS) to create innovative forecasting and predictive tools for farmers in ***rain-dependent regions.*** The tools leverage a variety of data sources and powerful big data analytics to allow farmers and planners to make informed decisions about crop selection, especially in rain-fed regions.

UN Women's ***Carbon Offsetting Rice Emission*** (CORE) programme provides training to women farmers in sustainable rice farming practices, reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with rice cultivation. Additionally, the programme empowers these women by enabling their access to diversified livelihood opportunities within the rice value chain and facilitating their leadership roles. Moreover, it establishes mechanisms through which

women farmers can benefit from carbon credits generated by their adoption of emissions-reducing methods.

STRENGTHENING DISASTER RESILIENCE

Through 2023, UNICEF supported communities struck by ***natural disasters.*** In Gujarat, following Cyclone Biparjoy, UNICEF provided technical expertise to conduct rapid needs assessments and critical supplies to assist the State Emergency Operations Centre and the State Disaster Management Authority in their relief efforts. Similarly, in response to the Glacial Lake Outburst Flood impacting northern West Bengal and Cyclone Michaung in Tamil Nadu, UNICEF offered technical support for rapid needs assessments and delivered essential supplies to the affected population.

UNDP supported the ***Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure*** (CDRI) in developing a significant report on global infrastructure resilience. The report focuses on how to minimize damage and service disruptions during disasters, aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, a global framework promoting disaster preparedness and risk reduction strategies.

UNICEF also supported ***post-disaster needs assessments*** (PDNAs) in three states. The assessments led to the allocation of USD 357 million by the Central Government to five states in 2023. Subsequent at-scale allocations by governments against PDNAs have created an opportunity for resilient, child-responsive recovery actions in these increasingly disaster-prone states. To enhance the preparedness at state level, UNICEF worked with state government authorities in issuance of preparedness guidelines and setting the standard to enhance the resilience of school facilities.

UNICEF partnered with the ***National Disaster Management Authority*** (NDMA) and two key ministries to develop comprehensive ***disaster management programmes.*** Working alongside the ministries of Jal Shakti and the Panchayati Raj, UNICEF provided technical expertise to create national-level programmes for each sector. These initiatives cover 75 districts each, aiming to significantly improve disaster preparedness and response capabilities at the local level. In addition, UNDP is supporting the NDMA to launch new National Hazard Mitigation Programmes in 2024. These programmes will specifically target lightning and forest fires, helping communities better manage these risks. WFP's technical assistance played a crucial role in unlocking government funding for drought mitigation planning across 12 Indian states.

Inclusive and shock responsive ***social protection*** in emergencies is critical to vulnerable populations, whose livelihoods, food security, and shelter can be threatened by disasters. Recognizing this, UNICEF partnered with the Institute for Economic Growth (IEG), and convened stakeholders under the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR) to achieve shock responsive social protection, enabling vulnerable communities to bounce back faster and build long-term resilience.

UNFPA continued to support disaster management authorities in Bihar and Odisha by providing ***5,000 dignity kits*** with essential hygiene supplies to women and girls in flood-affected districts. To build longer-term resilience, UNFPA provided technical expertise to the Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) to establish a dedicated gender cell. This cell will work on integrating gender equality considerations into all disaster preparedness and response initiatives. Additionally, to empower communities to be better prepared for future disasters, UNFPA conducted capacity-building programmes for 206 community volunteers on disaster risk reduction interventions.

ENSURING ACCESS TO SAFELY MANAGED WATER AND SANITATION (WASH) SERVICES

UNICEF, provided technical assistance, wide-ranging capacity building, and promotion of safe practices to improve Water and Sanitation (WASH) services in India. 2023 saw India make significant progress in the provision of safely managed water supply and sanitation services, reaching 124 million and 17.3 million people, respectively.

About 500,000 villages are now reported to have achieved ***Open Defecation Free plus status*** (ODF+) by not only maintaining ODF status but also implementing robust solid and liquid waste management systems and ensuring a cleaner environment for children.

UNICEF support for the Swachhata Hi Seva (SHS) campaign contributed to the mobilization of over 1 million people and organization of 1,280,766 community engagement activities across India for ODF+. Films developed for SHS played in cinema halls (9,300 screens) across India.

A total of ***933 health-care facilities*** gained access to sustainable WASH services and a further 168,340 schools implemented climate-smart clean and green school improvement plans including menstrual hygiene management services to ensure girl-friendly school environments in target states.

UNICEF also played a strategic role in strengthening WASH results monitoring in line with Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) indicators, a collaborative effort between UNICEF and WHO, aimed at monitoring progress on WASH globally. This involved organizing consultations with various ministries and the global WHO/UNICEF JMP team. Through this collaboration, UNICEF was able to offer more data-driven suggestions and direction, leading to improved monitoring of WASH accessibility, particularly for children in remote or hard-to-reach areas.

As the Government of India significantly expanded the provision of WASH services through the national water and sanitation flagship programmes, UNICEF strategically scaled-up its policy engagement and technical support to ensure the effective monitoring and quality assurance of WASH action plans. This support focused on the creation of implementation guidelines, training sessions for partners at all levels, and community engagement initiatives aimed at fostering lasting behavioural change.

UNOPS provided strategic technical support to the national flagship programme on providing clean drinking water to all rural households by a multi-pronged approach at the national, state, district and village level. The focus was on instituting scalable delivery models in 268 villages from 19 districts across the states of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Assam. These districts were prioritized because they are water-stressed and/or have water quality issues.

Working as a sector partner to the Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India, UNOPS supported in building the capacity of key stakeholders, especially the community using participatory approaches to instil ownership and long-term sustainability of the scheme.

UNOPS worked closely with the Governments of Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Assam and Rajasthan to capture and document the good practices in water management and developed compendiums for wider dissemination.

WATER WARRIORS OF THE JAL JEEVAN MISSION

Munni, Deepti, Urmila, Laxmi, and Manisha, residents of Masora Village in Chhattisgarh, serve as Jal Bahinis, or water warriors, leading change in their community. The Public Health Engineering Department, Chhattisgarh, in partnership with UNICEF, initiated the Jal Bahini programme to empower five women in each village to champion access to water and water quality related initiatives. With 109,000 Jal Bahinis across 19,668 villages, Chhattisgarh has achieved significant milestones, conducting nearly 2 million water quality tests since 2021. India's flagship programme, the Jal Jeevan Mission, aims to provide functional household tap connections to all rural households by 2024.

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OUTCOME 6

Empowering people, communities, and institutions

By 2027, a strengthened and more coordinated, inclusive and accountable governance system is in place at the national and local levels enabling all people, especially the most marginalized and vulnerable, to be protected, empowered, engaged and enjoy human rights and social justice, and lead their lives with respect and dignity.

CONTRIBUTING AGENCIES

UN WOMEN | UNFPA | unicef

ESCAP | IOM UN MIGRATION INDIA | UNAIDS

UNDP | United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

WFP | World Health Organization | UNHCR | UN-HABITAT

The UN worked closely with the Government of India and partners to end all forms of discrimination by empowering people and communities. A core focus of the UN's activities was the promotion of meaningful participation and empowerment opportunities to increase the voice, choice, agency and security of children, youth, women and vulnerable groups and communities.

The UN system continued to contribute to strengthening institutions and systems for SDG localization through technical support to NITI Aayog, central ministries, state, and local governments. With

UN support, SDG Coordination Centres were established in three new states.

The UN, in collaboration with its partners, worked both in the prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV), particularly among marginalized communities. The UN took a multi-sectoral approach to ending GBV by engaging health-care and judicial officials, and identifying best practices and increasing awareness.

UN agencies worked to strengthen child protection services, with initiatives focused on enhancing community care services, advocating for child-friendly policing, and facilitating the reintegration of children with their families.

Various UN-led initiatives engaged millions of adolescents and young people. UN-developed platforms provided training and support to marginalized youths, career opportunities, and empowered young people to create positive change in their communities.

The UN assisted in the implementation of social protection programmes and policies that were gender transformative, shock responsive, and disability inclusive. Efforts led by the UN in improving social policy data management systems and facilitating birth registration initiatives across India contributed to social protection and information systems.

Partnerships between the UN and state governments led to the adoption of child and gender-responsive budgeting initiatives, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment across numerous states.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

43 Ministries & Departments

and 10 states supported in implementing gender responsive policies and programmes.

600,000 women in self-help groups

trained on digital and financial literacy, sexual and reproductive health, and gender-based violence.

Rights of persons with disability

Indicators framed for tracking progress on disability inclusion in the National Indicator Framework (NIF).

1 million adolescents

including adolescents from refugee and asylum-seeking communities received mental health and psychosocial support services.

5.7 million girls & 1.2 million community members

equipped with knowledge and resources to prevent child marriage.

16 million people, with 49 per cent being tribal women

benefitted from decentralized planning for village development.

SDG LOCALIZATION

The UN continued to support SDG localization and institutionalization in India, mainstreaming the global targets in the development priorities of India's states and union territories.

To support policy making and monitoring systems at the sub-national level, UNDP established ***SDG Coordination Centres*** (SDGCCs) in two new states, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. These centres spearheaded data-driven initiatives, such as supporting the SDG Indicator Frameworks in Uttar Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, and developing an SDG Dashboard for centralized data collection and monitoring in Nagaland. In Haryana, UNDP supported the State Government in aligning its budgeting with the SDGs, In addition, to enhance public-private partnerships for the SDGs, UNDP developed the Akanksha portal with the Government of Karnataka.

UNDP played a key role in developing and launching India's ***National Multidimensional Poverty Index*** together with NITI Aayog. The report has emerged as a vital source of comprehensive national poverty data, underscoring UNDP's impactful role in promoting a data-driven approach to combat multidimensional poverty.

UNFPA continued its partnership with the ***Ministry of Panchayati Raj,*** to localize SDG 5, 'Gender Equality', by building the capacities of elected representatives and Panchyati Raj functionaries from the states of Odisha, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan to address discriminatory social norms and promoting gender equality and social inclusion.

PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The UN worked across the country and with different organizations to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV), especially among marginalized groups.

Partnerships with ***civil society organizations*** (CSOs) like AALI (Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives Trust) and PCVC (International Foundation for Crime Prevention and Victim Care) were crucial for addressing GBV. A study with AALI assessed One Stop Centres for GBV support, identifying areas for improvement. PCVC facilitated consultations to enhance response strategies. Moreover, PCVC contributed significantly by creating resources, including a comprehensive directory of service providers, to aid survivors of GBV.

UNFPA supported the training of over 2,000 health personnel, One Stop Centre staff, and judiciary members on GBV laws and policies, using a ***multi-sectoral approach to end GBV.*** UNFPA also collaborated with the Rajasthan Police Academy to establish a gender cell and the roll-out of regular gender sensitization of police personnel and expanded the cross-sectoral coordination of GBV prevention and response with allied departments such as the Department of Women and Child Development, and Panchayati Raj Department.

WHO mapped out all One Stop Centres in India, and is developing resource packages for them. Additionally, UN Women's focus on ***SMART cities*** as safe cities through a safe tourism lens, along with the training of government officials on gender laws, is helping create safer environments in Goa. In Tamil Nadu, UN Women partnered with H&M Group to promote violence-free workplaces in the textile industry.

UNHCR, in collaboration with its partners, organized 665 awareness-raising sessions on GBV prevention and multisectoral response services, reaching 16,266 refugees and asylum seekers. Men and boys were involved in promoting their role as agents of change. 221 GBV survivors were supported through referrals for psychosocial support, medical care, legal aid and safe shelter.

Additionally, the UN worked with CSO partners to address the needs of women in ***crisis-affected regions*** in Manipur, Assam, Mizoram and Bihar, including strengthening GBV prevention and response and promoting long-term empowerment.

To address the harmful practice of ***gender-biased sex selection*** (GBSS), UNFPA partnered with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to improve knowledge and skills on the implementation of laws against GBSS, reaching more than 480 implementing authorities in all 33 states and union territories. UNFPA also organised dialogues and consultations with 191 CSOs, community-based organizations (CBO), women-led organizations and other change agents to promote human rights based approaches in addressing GBV and harmful practices such as GBSS and child marriage.

UNICEF and UNFPA, through their ***Global Programme to End Child Marriage,*** helped accelerate progress on ending child marriage. The programme directly engaged and empowered over 5.7 million girls, equipping them with the knowledge and resources to avoid child marriage. This effort is further amplified by reaching 1.2 million local community members, including traditional and religious leaders on enhancing the value of women and girls and preventing harmful practices like child marriage.

SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

The UN supported India's South-South cooperation through initiatives aimed at sharing knowledge, expertise, and best practices with international partners. UNFPA facilitated inter-country visits for senior officials from India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and state health departments to Indonesia and Kenya, enhancing programme management and service delivery strategies in contraceptive delivery. ***Exchange programmes*** between UNFPA Bhutanese and Indian counterparts focused on technology and innovation for adolescents and youth, fostering cross-border learning and cooperation.

UN-Habitat supported India in revitalizing regional platforms, including the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing & Urban Development (APMCHUD) and supported regional forums on disability inclusion and sustainable urban development.

To promote cross-learning and sharing of good practices in the South Asia region, UNODC organized a study visit of prison and health officials from Maldives and Sri Lanka to India with an aim to strengthen knowledge exchange on drug treatment, care and support for people in contact with the criminal justice system.

CHILD AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

With UN assistance, child and gender-responsive budgeting initiatives continued to be adopted across numerous states.

Technical assistance and continued advocacy led to the institutionalization of child-responsive budgeting

in 11 out of 16 UNICEF-supported states. This has resulted, on average, in a 10-12 per cent increase in spending on children, including immunization, nutrition, and early learning services. Additionally, UNICEF contributed to a standardized approach to child budgeting through collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Women and Child Development.

UN partnerships with the ***Ministry of Panchayati Raj*** aimed at integrating child and gender-responsive planning in local governance, with a focus on grassroots-level change. Dialogues and consultations with state governments played a crucial role in integrating gender and child rights into local governance frameworks. In West Bengal, UNICEF's initiatives unlocked USD 300,000 across 166 Gram Panchayats (village councils).

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

To enhance women's access to economic opportunities, UN Women partnered with the ***Self-Employed Women's Association*** (SEWA BHARAT). Together, cash-for-care initiatives were implemented along with micro-grants to entrepreneurs in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, aiming to alleviate pandemic-induced burdens. Further, to expand the reach of assistance, UN Women and SEWA BHARAT also linked 2,636 marginalized and vulnerable women with various social security schemes, providing not only short-term relief, but fostering long-term resilience.

In addition, with the support of UN Women, 5,388 women from rural and vulnerable socio-economic communities received enhanced education, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. Further, UN Women supported the gender sensitivity training of over 12,000 women and community members on harmful social norms.

UNFPA developed a learning management system with modules on digital and financial literacy, sexual and reproductive health and GBV, for the Government of Odisha to be applied for building capacities of over 600,000 women in self-help groups linked to the state government's Mission Shakti programme.

UNHCR prioritized livelihood opportunities and cash assistance to women and girls at risk of GBV and GBV survivors to increase their resilience. To promote economic empowerment of women, 56 per cent of livelihood interventions targeted female refugees.

STRENGTHENING CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

The UN supported the implementation of critical national child protection regulations and legislations. UNICEF focused on enhancing community care services by establishing child protection committees, developing guidelines, fostering consensus on access to justice, and mobilizing government resources for specialized and community-driven Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) initiatives.

Across 17 states, UNICEF facilitated the preparation of ***child protection guidelines*** and government orders to reinforce the implementation of Mission Vatsalya. Nine states have initiated the integration of Child Protection Information Management Systems (CPIMS), while five states have started implementing standardized modules on case management.

UNICEF's advocacy efforts with the ***Supreme Court Juvenile Justice Committee*** led to increased attention on the protection of children in the legal system and the promotion of non-custodial sentences. UNICEF partnered with law enforcement agencies in 17 states t o promote child-friendly policing. Overall, 474,410 child protection functionaries (41 per cent female) were capacitated in 17 states on child protection concerns.

In Maharashtra, UNICEF supported the capacity enhancement of the workforce in 76 ***Child Care Institutions*** (CCIs), resulting in the successful reintegration of 494 children with their families. Similarly, in Karnataka, through capacity-building initiatives, district functionaries reunited 2,404 children (1,246 boys and 1,158 girls) with their families. In Odisha, UNICEF supported the digitization of the Ashirwad scheme, resulting in 50,827 children receiving timely monthly cash assistance. In Rajasthan, UNICEF's technical assistance led to an increase in grant amounts under the Palanhar scheme to over $145 million USD, benefitting around 700,000 children. Through UNICEF's support to 17 state governments, 126,973 children benefitted from ***family-based alternative*** care and preventive and rehabilitative care services.

To combat child labour, unsafe migration, and trafficking, UNICEF helped link 144,709 vulnerable children with ***social protection schemes.*** Further, UNICEF helped rescue and safeguard 13,000 children from labour and trafficking across three states.

UNHCR supported 315 unaccompanied and separated children with psychosocial support and 14 refugee children were supported in accessing institutional care. To empower refugee youth, capacity-building sessions were conducted with 125 youth and children groups consisting of over 2,500 members on child rights, child marriage, child labour and harmful social and gender norms.

SUPPORT TO COMMUNITY BASED MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING PROGRAMMES

UNICEF partnered with civil society organizations and government agencies in 17 states to deliver ***Mental Health and Psychosocial Support*** (MHPSS) initiatives for community-based, targeted, and specialized care services to children, adolescents, and their caregivers. These initiatives strengthened the child protection and mental health system by establishing a continuum of referral links and enhancing capacity at each point of care.

UNFPA is collaborating with the Adolescent Health Division of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) to enhance adolescent-responsive health services across 769 ***Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics*** (AFHCs) in four priority states. UNFPA is also partnering with the Department of Education in Madhya Pradesh to introduce innovative tele-counselling services. As a result of these interventions, mental health and psychosocial support services have been extended to 598,173 adolescent girls and 543,588 adolescent boys.

UNHCR, with its partners' support, stepped up the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support. In 2023, 699 refugees and asylum-seekers were provided with psychosocial and counselling sessions across the country.

UNESCO MGIEP advocated for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) to be included in the official communique of Y20 India 2023 under the theme 'Peacebuilding & Reconciliation: Ushering in an Era of No War', which was agreed upon by all nations. The final Y20 Statement reads: 'Implement frameworks that eradicate prejudices towards young generations and enable youth to assume leadership roles in the decision-making process within global multilateral institutions such as the Antarctic Treaty System. This can be accomplished through secondments, learning exchanges, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies, peer mentorship, collaborative research, open governance models, and implementation of United Nations (UN) Resolution 2250, which urges Member States to consider setting up mechanisms that would enable young people to participate meaningfully in peace processes and dispute resolution. Additionally, we urge the UN to establish a Youth Advisory Group on

Peace and Security and expand UN Volunteers (UNV)'. UNESCO MGIEP also provided consultation to NCERT to formulate the National Curricular Framework and participated in the Y20 summit in Varanasi. The Institute also trained 18,000 (age group of 18-35) youth from more than 12 Indian universities in social emotional skills for stepping into leadership roles in their communities.

HELPING PROTECT RURAL HOUSEHOLDS

UNDP worked to make the Government's flagship crop insurance scheme, the ***Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna*** (PMFBY), more affordable, accessible, and attractive to farmers. Through seven digital solutions, which addressed key concerns for farmers, including reliable data, yield estimation, and grievance redressal, the premium rate for the 2023-25 tender cycle was reduced by 32 per cent, leading to significant savings of USD 1.25 billion for the central and state. This reduction in premiums contributed to a 23 per cent increase in farmer enrollment from the previous season, with a record 26.9 million farmers insuring their crops. Notably, 15 per cent of these new enrollees were women farmers.

ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

The UN, in collaboration with government partners, provided access to youth platforms, which engaged youth in civic issues, gender equality, and eradicating harmful practices like child marriage. Around 3.7 million adolescents (53 per cent female) and 9.2 million community members (60 per cent female) were reached. In eight states, UNICEF supported district administrations in implementing 195 action plans to ***end child marriage*** and empower adolescents. Over 14 million young people participated in UNICEF-supported social impact initiatives in 2023.

Additionally, ***UPSHIFT,*** a social innovation and social entrepreneurship programme for marginalized youth, trained at least 300,000 students, generated more than 50,000 youth-led ideas, and trained over 25,000 school teachers.

YuWaah, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), facilitated 25 million pro-planet actions on the ***Meri LiFE*** platform, with 10 million initiated by youth. Launched in support of India's Mission LiFE for sustainable lifestyles, Meri LiFE promotes individual climate actions, engaging stakeholders, especially youth, in activities like energy conservation, plastic reduction, and sustainable food practices through its web portal and mobile app.

YuWaah launched the ***Youth Hub platform,*** co-created by PwC India, Capgemini, and CIFF in October 2023. The platform aims to connect young people to curated jobs, skills, and volunteering opportunities, and enables access especially for girls and youth from marginalized backgrounds.

UN Women organized pre-departure meetings engaging youth and women's rights groups to plan effective civil society participation at the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women ***(CSW67).*** At CSW67, UN Women's civil society delegates actively participated in significant events, such as the CSW Youth Forum, where six Indian Youth Advocates were involved in the #FeministFutures parallel event.

UN Women supported the formation of feminist labs, engaging youth leaders to foster feminist movement building and leadership in youth. The programme helped empower 100 ***youth leaders,*** fostering networks for feminist youth leadership. UN Women, together with Gender at Work India, launched five knowledge resources for young feminist leadership building.

UNFPA is the lead technical partner in the ***Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram programmes,*** which focuses on promoting adolescent health through a community-based, peer-led approach. This initiative operates in 36 districts, involving 7.7 million adolescent boys and girls across four priority states identified by UNFPA. Additionally, UNFPA has introduced an innovative Youth Advisory Group (YAG) composed of 50 young individuals from five states in India. UNFPA is actively investing in equipping these members with the necessary skills and knowledge to serve as advisors and youth leaders, aiming to drive positive social impact in sexual and reproductive health and rights. UNFPA, in partnership with National Health Mission, Government of Madhya Pradesh also developed and launched a safe, personalized and non-judgmental virtual platform 'JustAsk' driven by artificial intelligence (AI) to address the critical need for accurate and accessible information and services on sexual and reproductive health, safe Internet use among adolescent and youth in India.

Observing the ***International Day against Drug Abuse*** and Illicit Trafficking in South Asia, UNODC spearheaded a special e-feature, youth and community engagement, dissemination of World Drug Report findings, training programmes for law enforcement personnel, online and in-person dialogues with stakeholders, and engagement with academic institutions to enhance knowledge and capacities in addressing the drug problem. In Bilaspur, Chattisgarh, UNODC supported the police-led 'Nijaat' campaign, which directly reached over 50,000 people in local communities and youth about drug use prevention, through collaborative events in communities, schools and colleges. Also, scores of young people in India extended support to UNODC and took a pledge on the World Drug Day, with videos, art and community sensitization, youth-led and youth-focused activities in several states, reaching over 10,000 young people.

STRENGTHENING SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS

The UN supported inclusive social protection schemes through technical support, stakeholder dialogue, advocacy, and evidence generation. ***Disability inclusion*** was prioritized at all levels, with USD 500,000 mobilized for a disability study as a joint UN initiative. The establishment of the Social Protection4Nutrition Community of Practice, involving over 20 partners, marked a significant milestone. In addition, UNICEF developed an Urban Social Protection Framework and Urban Child Data Framework, which were launched at the International Mayoral Summit. Some 12 million girls were reached through UNICEF-supported cash transfer programmes.

To improve the uptake of social protection schemes and to identify implementation gaps, UNICEF undertook major studies on ***social welfare schemes,*** including Girl Child Cash-Plus, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, and the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. The findings were disseminated through policy dialogues and advocacy roundtables to national and subnational government bodies, as well as development partners.

With UNICEF support, ***social policy data and management information systems*** saw significant progress at the national and state levels. UNICEF facilitated India's participation in the South Asia Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) professional platform (CR8) in Dhaka, Bangladesh. With UN support, Assam improved maternity transfer enrolment by 28 per cent, while Gujarat enhanced its Chief Minister's Office Dashboard for better decision-making. Other states such as Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Chhattisgarh developed roadmaps for universal birth registration, with Jharkhand registering 1.2 million new persons through catch-up campaigns. Odisha launched

Aadhaar Linked Birth Registration (ALBR), and Uttar Pradesh saw an increase in birth registration within 30 days due to interoperability with government hospitals, with over 236,000 children linked to ALBR in various facilities.

UNHCR supported the Tamil Nadu Government in its data updation and verification exercise for Sri Lankan refugees to ensure the facilitation of better protection and assistance, including access to different social protection schemes and local solutions.

RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY ON INDIA'S AGEING POPULATION

The India Ageing Report 2023, a joint effort of UNFPA, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, and International Institute for Population Science Mumbai, addressed the challenges and opportunities of India's growing elderly population. Released on September 27, 2023, it garnered widespread media attention and sparked discussions in the Indian Parliament, emphasizing the need for strategic responses to elder care amidst demographic shifts.

STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

UNDP assisted the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in effectively implementing the ***Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana*** by facilitating decentralized planning for over 14,000 villages. This resulted in the disbursement of USD 260 million to the states for village development, benefitting 16 million people, with 49 per cent being women from tribal populations. Additionally, UNDP provided technical support to the government in digitizing the Forest Rights Act (FRA) portal. In Chhattisgarh, UNDP supported the Government in successfully recognizing the habitat rights of the Kamar and Baiga tribes, benefitting over 6,000 men and women. This model led the state Government to proactively recognize similar rights of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) communities in other districts as well.

FACILITATING SAFE, ORDERLY, AND REGULAR MIGRATION

IOM worked to provide migrant workers with services including accommodation, counselling, identity documentation, health-care links, employer networking, and grievance redressal. This included a ***Migrant Support Centre in Bangalore,*** which IOM developed together with Shahi Exports. Additionally, as part of the Governance of Labour Migration in South and South-East Asia (GOALS) project, IOM also established a Migrant Resource Centres (MRC) in Telangana to enable one-stop service delivery for sustainable reintegration. Since being established, the MRCs have directly assisted 792 returnees, providing them with information on government services, skill training, and entrepreneurship courses.

To enhance access to labour migration opportunities for Indian migrants, IOM collaborated with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the India Centre for Migration (ICM) and the Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) to produce a comprehensive and gender-sensitive ***Migration Data Management Strategy*** (MDMS).

HELPING TRIBAL COMM UNITIES CLAIM THEIR RIGHTS

Somari Bai, a member of the Gond tribe in Chhattisgarh, faced adversity early in life, losing her husband and family members, leaving her to support her children alone. Initially, she relied on collecting forest produce but struggled to make ends meet. Climate change and development further exacerbated the challenges faced by tribal communities, leading to decreased forest coverage and reduced income opportunities.

However, the implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights Act) has been a transformative force for tribal empowerment. UNDP has played a crucial role in supporting the implementation of this act, resulting in the recognition of millions of forest titles for tribal communities across India.

Somari Bai was among those who benefitted from this act, receiving legal ownership of over 2.5 acres of forest land. With this land, she initiated farming activities, substantially improving her household income and demonstrating the transformative impact of land ownership on tribal livelihoods.

2.3: Support to Partnerships

In 2023, the UN in India continued to work through strategic partnerships with the government and non-government stakeholders to implement the Cooperation Framework and 2030 Agenda. We continued to strengthen partnerships with government ministries and state-level departments through operational and implementation research and pilot programmes. Our ongoing work to strengthen partnerships with the private sector — including with the millions of Indian MSMEs — will be key to adopting responsible and sustainable business practices and mobilizing private sources of finance to accelerate SDG progress. To support these efforts, a UN Partnerships Group with representation from across agencies was created as a platform for creating synergies and driving further engagement.

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PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

In an economy as large and diverse as India, private investment and the corporate sector have an important role to play in driving sustainability and bridging the SDG financing gap. UNFPA joined hands with Bayer AG for a campaign expanding awareness and access to ***sexual and reproductive health*** information and services in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, including the AI-powered 'JustAsk' Chatbot.

Together with INDITEX, ILO promoted decent work in the ***cotton supply chain*** by supporting the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW). By mapping practices in the cotton supply chain and encouraging dialogue, the project enabled policy makers to address gaps and to ensure the fundamental rights of informal workers in the sector were respected.

Together with NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, FAO launched the ***Investment Forum for Advancing Climate Resilient Agrifood Systems*** in India. The platform brings together government, the private sector, farmers' organizations and financial institutions to advance investments in climate-resilient agrifood systems.

In October 2023, UNICEF and the ***Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation*** entered into a multi-year partnership to expand coverage of evidence-based interventions to improve child nutrition and reduce neonatal mortality in select states in India. This project is part of UNICEF India's support to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and will involve providing technical support to the government at national and state levels.

To enhance the skilling of young people, the YuWaah at UNICEF e-skilling platform, ***Passport To Earning,*** was rolled-out with the support of government actors, including the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and Common Service Centres. The roll-out was supported by private sector partners including Capgemini, HUL, and Accenture, among others. The platform has already equipped more than 1.5 million young people across the country with 21st century skills.

To reduce the impact of ***plastic waste*** on the environment in India, UNDP and Hindustan Unilever Limited's 'Inclusive Circular Economy' partnership is promoting the collection, segregation and recycling of plastics. The social inclusion of Safai Saathis, or waste pickers, is a key focus of the project. It is set to help 20,000 Safai Saathis across the country access social protection systems.

To document and safeguard the ***Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Himalayas,*** UNESCO teamed up with Royal Enfield for the second chapter of the Great Himalayan Exploration. Following the success of the inaugural edition, the second chapter will see 60 rider-researchers embarking on a series of consecutive rides to remote Himalayan communities to document more than 50 Intangible Cultural Heritage practices.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENT

To combat the critical challenge of Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in agriculture and fisheries, FAO collaborated with the ***Indian Council of Agricultural Research*** (ICAR) to form a national network of laboratories called the Indian Network of Fisheries and Animal Antimicrobial Resistance (INFAAR) AMR. INFAAR is the first network of laboratories in the animal health sector for the surveillance of AMR in India.

The UN in India, Reliance Foundation (RF), Observer Research Foundation (ORF), and the Permanent Mission of India to the UN joined hands for two high-level discussions organised on the sidelines of the ***78th session of the UN General Assembly.*** This included the launch of the publication ***'Ideas, Innovation, Implementation: India's Journey Towards the SDGs',*** a joint initiative of the UN in India, RF, and ORF, which shares best practices from India's SDG journey.

To support smallholder farmers through data-driven innovations in ***agriculture and food systems***, UNDP India signed a memorandum of understanding with NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development), the apex rural bank regulator. The first project is the Data in Climate Resilient Agriculture (DiCRA) digital tool, which allows farmers to use satellite data and analytics on soil and crop health to make better decisions, launched in seven states. DiCRA was jointly developed by UNDP in partnership with state governments, the Government of Japan, the Rockefeller Foundation, ICRISAT and more than 100 volunteer data scientists.

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UNICEF and the International Cricket Council (ICC) joined hands to promote gender equality through several cricketing initiatives during the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023. The One Day for Children event saw UNICEF South Asia Regional Ambassador and cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar call for gender equality at the iconic Wankhede Stadium, which was lit in UNICEF colours. At the semi-final in Mumbai, Sachin Tendulkar was joined by UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador David Beckham to speak on behalf of children and their equal participation.

The Circular Design Challenge (CDC) is an initiative of R|Elan, a textile innovation brand under Reliance Industries Limited, in partnership with the UN in India, Lakmé Fashion Week, and the Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI). Launched in 2018 with the goal of making the country a sustainable fashion hub, CDC is India's largest award for sustainable fashion, providing a platform for designers who embrace circularity. For the first time, the finale of the fifth edition of CDC was hosted by the UN at the heritage UN House in New Delhi.

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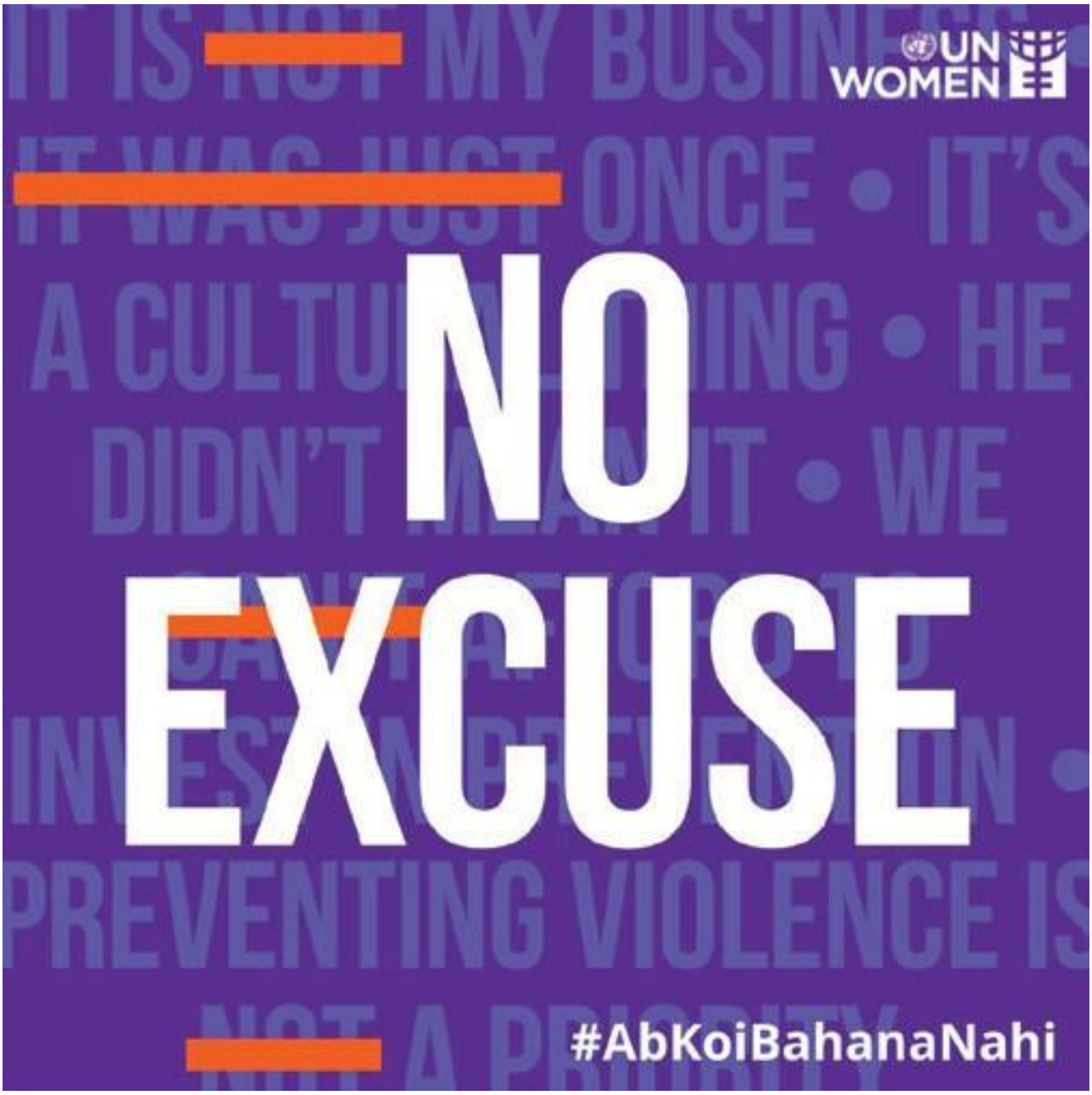
2.4: Results of the UN working more and better together



2023 saw the launch of the first new-generation Government of India - UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-27 (SDCF), a strategic articulation of the overall India-UN country partnership, and the guiding instrument for UN system support to India's SDG achievement, delivered jointly through individual UN agency country programmes. The SDCF was the product of an extensive and inclusive multi-agency and multi-ministry collaborative effort.

The CF includes the application of new standards for UN coherence, an emphasis on partnerships and policy support, and a focus on South-South and Triangular Cooperation, with renewed commitments on gender equality, youth empowerment, human rights, and leaving no one behind. Six thematic results groups were formed to ensure the effective implementation of the CF, along with joint work plans.

DATA FORDEVELOPMENT FORUM ON SDGs

The Data for Development Coordination Forum on SDGs remains one of the UN in India's most important partnerships. A tripartite agreement between the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI), NITI Aayog and the UN, the forum supports the government's efforts to strengthen statistical capacity at the national and sub-national levels. The forum has been instrumental in revising and refining India's National Indicator Framework, as data sources have improved and as best practices from around the UN system have led to improvements in the Global Indicator Framework.

COMMUNICATING COLLECTIVELY

The UN Communications Group worked to ensure effective, coordinated, and coherent communication and visibility of CF results, as well as the implementation of joint communication plans to support the 2030 Agenda. Through the UNCG, the UN increased its media presence, and promoted positive behaviour change and social and gender norms.

The collaboration of several UN agencies, including UN Women, UNDP, UNHCR, UNESCO, and UNV, during the 16 Days of Activism campaign against gender-based violence showcased the power of collective action. The campaign, launched with the hashtag #AbKoiBahanaNahi, reached more than 19.3 million online users and engaged various stakeholders, including corporates, celebrities, and civil society organizations. Additionally, medical camps in Assam and Kerala and sports events in multiple states underscored the commitment to reaching vulnerable groups through accessible formats, ensuring that the message of zero tolerance for gender-based violence resonates across different communities.

STRENGTHENING DISABILITY INCLUSION

To implement the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy, the UN Country Team came together under the coordination support of the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) to strengthen disability inclusion across all pillars of our work. To ensure disability inclusion through all UN entities, an inter-agency Disability Working Group (DWG), chaired by the Resident Coordinator, was formed. The DWG works in close consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities to strengthen disability inclusion efforts.

To capture the full picture on disability in India, making sure programmes for strengthening the rights of persons with disabilities are targeted and effective, the DWG is working towards ensuring that persons with disabilities are captured in India's National Indicator Framework (NIF). In consultation with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) led by Sightsavers India, DWG has recommended a set of critical indicators on disability. The UN has been advocating for the inclusion of these indicators in the NIF.

In line with its commitment to advocate for improved data on persons with disabilities, the DWG organized a targeted session on Disability Disaggregated Data within the framework of the UNESCAP's training on the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) analytical tool. This session, aimed at National Statistics Officers (NSOs) and the United Nations system, focused on data and statistics to identify groups left furthest behind and factors impeding their progress. Further, led by the RCO, a dedicated session on Citizen Generated Data was organized, in partnership with the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), and supported by the UN Statistical Division and the Danish Institute of Human Rights.

Drawing on insights from NSOs in Ghana and Kenya, the International Civil Society Centre, and UNICEF India, this session also highlighted the Disability Data Advocacy toolkit presented by the Pacific Disability Forum.

Advocating for digital accessibility, the DWG marked the Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD) by launching an online campaign addressing social media accessibility, in collaboration with Saksham, an Organization of Persons with Disabilities (OPD). Additionally, aligning with the overarching theme of the 16th session of the Conference of State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 'Harmonizing national policies and strategies with the CRPD,' the DWG with UN Habitat is a virtual side-event on 'Inclusive Urban Development' with the Global Disability Innovation (GDI) Hub. The side-event focused on the sub-theme of 'reaching the under-represented groups of persons with disabilities'.

Further, in efforts to raise awareness about the challenges, rights, and abilities of persons with disabilities while combatting stereotypes, misconceptions, and discrimination, the DWG curated a photo exhibition titled "Ability in Disability" to commemorate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) 2023. This exhibition, derived from the 'Everyone is Good at Something Campaign' and developed in collaboration with the India Inclusion Foundation, Street Dreams Trust, and WE Photo, showcased 21 narratives from across India highlighting the challenges and achievements of persons with disabilities, including young people, Each story represented one of the 21 disabilities recognized under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act 2016. The exhibition's unveiling coincided with the International Volunteer Day celebrations, conducted in partnership with UN Volunteers, UNDP, and UN-Habitat, and was officially inaugurated by the Secretary of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

Continuing advocacy for 'Inclusive Urban Development,' the DWG partnered with the National Institute of Urban Affairs, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to host a series of policy dialogues on 'Mainstreaming Disability Inclusion in the Implementation of SDGs 6 & 11' in conjunction with International Day of Persons with Disabilities. With technical support from UN-Habitat and UNICEF, these dialogues examined strategies for fostering pathways for inclusive urban development and sanitation.

PREVENTING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE (PSEA)

The Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) is part of the UN's 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 an Interagency PSEA coordinator, to steer the network of 20 UN agencies. PSEA focal points in all UN agencies have been appointed, to better prevent, detect, report, and take action against personnel who commit abuse.

In 2023, mandatory online PSEA courses were completed by over 90 per cent of UN personnel. PSEA has become an integral part of the UN Department of Safety and Security induction training for all UN personnel. Regular network meetings were held to discuss PSEA and develop protocols, to share tools and best practices. Focus group discussions were also held specifically on workplace sexual harassment. A mapping of existing reporting channels was conducted, and training on reporting procedures was given to over 650 UN staff and 150 CSO partners. There were no reported SEA cases in 2023.

IMPROVED EFFICIENCY OF OPERATIONS

The Operations Management Team (OMT) developed the Business Operations Strategy for 2023-27, to enhance operational efficiencies, leveraging joint operations and eliminating duplication, strengthening bargaining power, and implementing economies of scale.

In 2023, thanks to the longstanding commitment of the operations team. The UN compound was awarded the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Platinum Certification, marking it as exemplary in energy efficiency, health, and sustainability.

Over the coming year, OMT will fully implement the results of the accessibility audit of the UN Common Premises, ensuring our own facilities are fully accessible.

2.5: UN partnership with India's G20 Presidency

India assumed the rotating one-year presidency of the Group of Twenty (G20) in December 2022 with the SDGs at the critical halfway point. India's ambitious Presidency refocused the G20 on taking greater responsibility for putting the 2030 Agenda's time-bound targets back on track and putting the voice of the Global South centre stage.

India's G20 featured stronger coordination and alignment between the UN and the Presidency than perhaps any G20 to date. In response to Government invitation, the Resident Coordinator's Office served as a central hub, helping coordinate the UN system's technical support and contributions to G20 on the ground, including those of non-resident agencies, under the overall guidance of the UN G20 Sherpa.

A number of UN agencies directly supported different Working Groups through partnerships with leading line Ministries. UNESCO and UNICEF were key knowledge partners of the G20 Education Working Group and used the platform to advocate for enhanced focus on foundational literacy and numeracy. UNFPA led a major G20 side event on youth health, and conducted consultations with young people, leading to recommendations to G20 on improving adolescent health programmes.

The UN Women supported the key cross-cutting G20 theme of "Women-Led Development". The agency provided technical assistance and human resources, including playing a key role in the establishment of the landmark G20 Working Group on Women's Empowerment, and the launch of the Empower Care Fund to address care economy challenges.

Following its global role, UNDP served as the Secretariat for the G20 Sustainable Finance Working Group and provided expertise on mobilizing financial resources for the SDGs. The agency also served as a key knowledge partner in the Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group. The Chennai High-Level Principles for a Sustainable and Resilient Blue Economy, developed with UNDP's technical assistance, were unanimously adopted by the G20.

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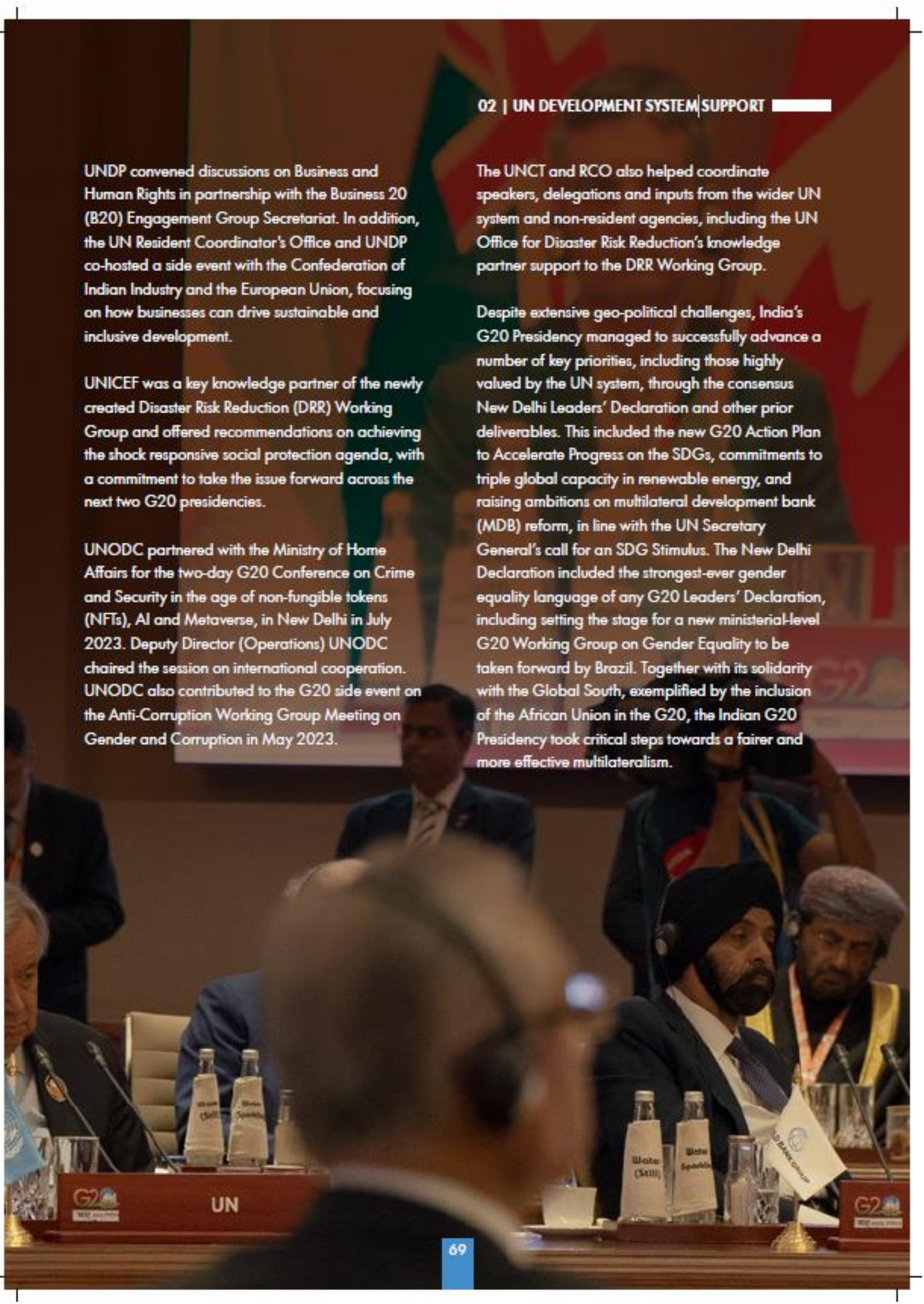
UNDP convened discussions on Business and Human Rights in partnership with the Business 20 (B20) Engagement Group Secretariat. In addition, the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and UNDP co-hosted a side event with the Confederation of Indian Industry and the European Union, focusing on how businesses can drive sustainable and inclusive development.

UNICEF was a key knowledge partner of the newly created Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Working Group and offered recommendations on achieving the shock responsive social protection agenda, with a commitment to take the issue forward across the next two G20 presidencies.

UNODC partnered with the Ministry of Home Affairs for the two-day G20 Conference on Crime and Security in the age of non-fungible tokens (NFTs), AI and Metaverse, in New Delhi in July 2023. Deputy Director (Operations) UNODC chaired the session on international cooperation. UNODC also contributed to the G20 side event on the Anti-Corruption Working Group Meeting on Gender and Corruption in May 2023.

The UNCT and RCO also helped coordinate speakers, delegations and inputs from the wider UN system and non-resident agencies, including the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction's knowledge partner support to the DRR Working Group.

Despite extensive geo-political challenges, India's G20 Presidency managed to successfully advance a number of key priorities, including those highly valued by the UN system, through the consensus New Delhi Leaders' Declaration and other prior deliverables. This included the new G20 Action Plan to Accelerate Progress on the SDGs, commitments to triple global capacity in renewable energy, and raising ambitions on multilateral development bank (MDB) reform, in line with the UN Secretary General's call for an SDG Stimulus. The New Delhi Declaration included the strongest-ever gender equality language of any G20 Leaders' Declaration, including setting the stage for a new ministerial-level G20 Working Group on Gender Equality to be taken forward by Brazil. Together with its solidarity with the Global South, exemplified by the inclusion of the African Union in the G20, the Indian G20 Presidency took critical steps towards a fairer and more effective multilateralism.



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03

UNCT KEY FOCUS FOR 2024

UNCT KEY FOCUS FOR 2024.....

Building on the strong foundations laid in 2023, the UN's partnership with India in 2024 will continue to focus on implementing and delivering on the four strategic pillars of the Government of India - UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023 – 2027 (CF) consolidating progress on SDG achievement and navigating emerging challenges.

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PEOPLE

The UN will continue to prioritize and support health initiatives in India, aligned with the goal of achieving inclusive, universal, affordable, accessible, accountable, and quality health-care services, especially for disadvantaged communities. UN agencies will sustain support for the expansion of maternal and child health services, including labour room certification and midwifery. Efforts will also focus on improving immunization coverage, including sustained support for digital platforms such as U-WIN. Support will also be directed towards preventing and controlling communicable and non-communicable diseases and neglected tropical diseases.

UN advocacy, policy support and evidence generation will continue to support the Government's leadership push for better nutrition outcomes in 2024. Key focus areas will include strengthening food-based protection systems through further mainstreaming fortified rice distribution and nutritious take-home rations. Expanding the coverage of nutrition services for children, and supporting the delivery of adolescent and maternal nutrition services will address the ongoing challenge of anaemia.

In 2024, the UN will 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 children at risk of falling furthest behind. Support to the flagship Ayushman Bharat School Health and Wellness Programme (SHWP) will remain a focus.

PROSPERITY

In 2024, the UN will continue to build on its efforts to advance sustainable and inclusive growth in India, focusing on empowering the workforce with skills aligned to industry demands and leveraging the country's innovative ecosystem. The UN will support further skilling of youth to meet evolving job market demands. This includes bridging the digital divide and targeting emerging sectors such as green technologies.

The UN will continue to work to enhance MSME competitiveness, collaborating with stakeholders to share knowledge on best practices for improved productivity, environmental sustainability, and worker safety. Supporting women-led MSMEs will be a particular focus, with targeted schemes to support women entrepreneurs.

The UN will also continue to advocate for ratification of key international labour standards and strengthen grievance redressal mechanisms for workers through collaboration with stakeholders such as the government, employers' organizations, and worker unions.

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PLANET

The UN will continue supporting India's transition to resource-efficient and clean economic growth, aiming to reduce CO_2 emissions and tackle pollution and waste generation. UN agencies will contribute to ecosystem restoration and biodiversity protection efforts across India, and promote climate-resilient agri-food systems, empowering farmers with sustainable practices and technologies.

We will work to strengthen resilience by supporting the development of national and state-level disaster management plans, and provide support for post-disaster needs assessments and resilient, child-responsive recovery actions.

The UN will also focus on supporting the government's flagship Jal Jeevan and Swachh Bharat missions to provide safe drinking water and sanitation facilities to all citizens. Technical assistance, wide-ranging capacity building, and promotion of safe practices will help improve Water and Sanitation (WASH) services.

PARTICIPATION

The UN will support efforts to empower all people, especially the marginalized and vulnerable, to lead lives with respect and dignity, ensuring human rights and social justice. We will work with the Government and stakeholders to establish a more coordinated, inclusive, and accountable governance system at national and local levels.

The UN will focus on supporting gender-transformative, shock-responsive, and disability-inclusive social protection programmes and policies, and continue to advocate for child and gender-responsive budgeting initiatives.

Achieving gender equality will remain a critical priority. The UN will work with partners to prevent and respond to GBV, particularly among marginalized communities, through multi-sectoral approaches. The UN will collaborate with the Government and civil society to address remaining gender gaps, particularly in areas like political participation, economic opportunities, and access to education

We will continue to support youth empowerment by engaging adolescents and youth in civic issues, and social impact initiatives, and promoting youth leadership, entrepreneurship, and skills development aligned with the evolving job market.

ABBREVIATIONS

AMR	Antimicrobial Resistance
APCTT	Asia-Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology
BTCA	Better Than Cash Alliance
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
CCA	Common Country Analysis
CF	Cooperation Framework
Co-WIN	Winning over Covid-19 (Vaccine Intelligence Network)
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DEA	Department of Economic Affairs
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DGT	Directorate General of Training
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FLFPR	Female Labour Force Participation Rate
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GoI	Government of India
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
IGN	Indira Gandhi National Open University
LiFE	Lifestyles for Environment Initiative
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
MoHFW	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
MOSPI	Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises
NACP	National AIDS Control Programme
NAPCC	National Action Plan on Climate Change
NCD	Non-Communicable Diseases
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NCVET	National Council for Vocational Education and Training
NEP	National Education Policy
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
NFSA	National Food Security Act
NFSM	National Food Security Mission
NGO	Non-Government Organization

NIOS	National Institute of Open Schooling
NSDC	National Skill Development Corporation
OBC	Other Backward Class
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OMT	Operations Management Team
PDS	Public Distribution System
PLFS	Periodic Labour Force Survey
PSEA	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office
RMNCAH+N	Reproductive Maternal Newborn Child Adolescent Health Plus Nutrition
SBCC	Social and Behaviour Change Communication
SBM	Swachh Bharat Mission
SC	Scheduled Caste
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SSTC	South-South and Triangular Cooperation
ST	Scheduled Tribe
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
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
UNV	United Nations Volunteers Programme
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
UT	Union Territory
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WFP	World Food Programme

UNITED NATIONS
INDIA

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