

**ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN SOUTH
ASIA AND
CAPACITY-BUILDING IN COUNTRIES
OF THE SOUTH ASIAN REGION**

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Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, comprising 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by world leaders at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015, is especially relevant for the eight South Asian countries, namely, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka which, despite their economic dynamism and remarkable Millennium Development Goal (MDG) achievements, account for 37% of the world's poor and suffer from a number of development and infrastructure gaps. Given South Asia's weight as one-fifth of the world's population, the sub-region has a crucial role to play in the global achievement of SDGs.

Relevance of SDGs for South Asia (1/2)

The 2030 Agenda encompasses three core dimensions of economic, social and environmental development and offers to South Asian countries, a unique pathway to eradicate poverty and hunger and to provide a life of dignity for all while paying attention to environmental sustainability. More than 80% of the workforce in South Asia is engaged in informal sector jobs with little or no social protection. Growth has not been able to harness the younger generation and demographic dividend in South Asia by creating decent and productive job opportunities. Structural transformation in South Asia has moved from agriculture towards services, bypassing industry, which has seen its share in GDP.

Relevance of SDGs for South Asia (2/2)

Land degradation and inability to harness sustainable agricultural practices to enhance agricultural productivity, poverty and distributional issues have made South Asia the largest food-deficient part in the world. Not being able to harness renewable energy resources and inadequate attention to energy efficiency have led to rising imports of hydrocarbons, thereby straining the current account balances and resulting in energy scarcities. The inability to manage the effects of climate change has exposed the sub-region to the rising incidence of natural disasters.

Key Priorities for Achieving SDGs in South Asia (1/3)

For addressing the key development challenges faced by South Asian countries as highlighted, the unfinished MDG agenda and taking cognizance of inter-relationships and synergies between 17 SDGs and 169 targets, the Report identifies below seven key strategic policy priorities for operationalizing integrated SDG achievement in South Asian context.

Key Priorities for Achieving SDGs in South Asia (2/3)

Industrialization (SDG-9) and economic growth (SDG-8) are critical for poverty alleviation (SDG-1) and other SDGs. South Asia has emerged as the fastest growing subregion but its growth has not been creating adequate jobs for its youthful population and 80% of the workforce is stuck in the informal sector. A regionally coordinated industrialization strategy could leverage spillovers of manufacturing across borders, creating productive capacities across South Asia through regional value chains.

Key Priorities for Achieving SDGs in South Asia (3/3)

South Asian countries are characterized by wide infrastructure gaps in transport infrastructure (SDG-9), basic infrastructure such as access to drinking water and sanitation (SDG-6), electricity (SDG-7) and ICT costing the sub-region 3-4% of GDP besides affecting achievement of other SDGs. Investing in human development through universal health coverage (SDG-3) and quality education and vocational training opportunity to all (SDG-4), will enable South Asia to reap a demographic dividend from its youthful population.

Addressing SDGs: Indian Context (1/3)

India has played an important role in shaping the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and that is why the country's national development goals are mirrored in the SDGs. As such, India has been effectively committed to achieve the SDGs even before they were fully crystallized.

Addressing SDGs: Indian Context (2/3)

The expression “Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas,” (Collective Effort, Inclusive Growth) has been popularized by the Honourable Prime Minister of India, Mr Narendra Modi and forms the cornerstone of India’s national development agenda. To fast track this agenda, the Government of India has released a draft Three-Year Action Agenda covering years 2017-18 to 2019-20. In parallel, work is in advance stages on a 15-Year Vision, which will also include a 7-year Strategy.

Addressing SDGs: Indian Context (3/3)

For implementing the SDG agenda, the Government of India has launched several ambitious programmes, some of which are highlighted here. A noteworthy example of a crosscutting initiative is the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) [Prime Minister Peoples Wealth Plan] which is the world's largest financial inclusion programme. India's bold Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), communicated to the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, form a significant part of its SDG strategy. These include substantially reducing the emission intensity of GDP, tapping non-fossil fuel energy sources and creating additional carbon sink.

SDG: Implementation Framework (1/3)

The responsibility for overseeing SDG implementation has been assigned to the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog, formed on January 1, 2015), which is chaired by the Prime Minister of India. NITI Aayog is the premier policy ‘Think Tank’ of the Government of India, providing both directional and policy inputs. NITI Aayog has been entrusted with the role to co-ordinate ‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ (called as SDGs). Moving ahead from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), SDGs have been evolved through a long inclusive process for achievement during 2016-2030.

SDG: Implementation Framework (2/3)

The task at hand for NITI Aayog is not merely to periodically collect data on SDGs but to act proactively to fructify the goals and targets not only quantitatively but also maintaining high standards of quality. To achieve these tasks, the draft mapping of the goals and targets as an initial step on proposed Nodal and other Ministries has been carried out in consultation with Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI). Ministries are implementing Central Sector Schemes and States are also implementing various State Schemes aligned with one or more SDGs.

SDG: Implementation Framework (3/3)

The main messages for India's Voluntary National Review of SDG implementation encapsulate the progress made with respect to poverty, hunger, health, gender equality, industrialization, life below water and global partnership (Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14 and 17). Interconnections across the 17 SDGs are so strong that the pursuit of the goals explicitly discussed here necessarily involves the promotion of other goals as well.

End Poverty in All its Forms Everywhere (1/4)

Rapid growth (SDG 8) is the key weapon in any country's arsenal for combating poverty. It creates well-paid jobs that empower households by giving them necessary purchasing power to access food, clothing, housing, education and health. An important strategy for achieving this goal is focused on generating meaningful employment by developing agricultural infrastructure, productive assets and entrepreneurship-based livelihood opportunities.

End Poverty in All its Forms Everywhere (2/4)

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), has generated over 2 billion person-days' of employment (SDG 8) during last year. It has helped reducing extreme poverty as well as enhancing the infrastructure and purchasing power in rural areas. The benefits have largely been reaped by women (SDG 5) and disadvantaged sections of society (SDG 10). Further, two major programmes, the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana [Prime Minister Life Insurance Plan] and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana [Prime Minister Security Insurance Plan] provide access to life and accident insurance for 130 million subscribers for nominal annual premiums.

End Poverty in All its Forms Everywhere (3/4)

For fulfilling the cooking fuel requirements of the population in an environment-friendly manner, the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana [Prime Minister Cooking Fuel Plan] launched in 2016, aims to provide Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) to poor families with initial financial support for accessing a connection.

End Poverty in All its Forms Everywhere (4/4)

India is committed to ensuring housing for all by 2022. To enable the achievement of this objective, the Prime Minister's Housing Scheme provides direct financial assistance to poor households. At the same time, India has launched Smart City Mission, which is an urban renewal and retrofitting program by the Government of India with the mission to develop 100 cities across the country making them citizen-friendly and sustainable.

End Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition and Promote Sustainable Agriculture

Programmes under the National Food Security Act cover more than 800 million people in the country. In recognition of empirical evidence that women pay greater attention to household security, the Government has chosen to issue ration cards in the name of the senior most female member of the household. Other initiatives that contribute to this goal are the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and the Mid-Day Meal Programme.

Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls

Several important initiatives have been taken during the last few years for promoting gender equality. A flagship initiative is Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child), under which State Governments are implementing various measures to elevate the status of the girl child. Additionally, a Maternity Benefit Programme has been launched for all pregnant and lactating mothers. For raising the levels of female workforce's participation, a number of initiatives are being implemented including Stand-up India and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). Further, Women Empowerment Centres are being established for providing comprehensive services at the village-level. In addition, a Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), meaning "service" in several Indian languages, based in Ahmedabad, India, promotes the rights of low-income, independently-employed female workers.

Build Resilient Infrastructure, Promote Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialization and Foster Innovation

All forms of transportation -- roads, railways, civil aviation and waterways -- are being rapidly expanded. Road connectivity and electricity are being brought to all villages. The objective of the Digital India initiative is to build a digitally empowered society by focusing on broadband highways, mobile connectivity and Internet as well as e-Governance. Another priority area is manufacturing. India is developing into a high-tech and global manufacturing hub because of the emphasis on 'Make in India' and a substantial increase in FDI inflows. For promoting entrepreneurship and enhancing economic growth, the Government has launched the Start-up India programme. Innovation and entrepreneurship is also being encouraged through initiatives like the Atal Innovation Mission.

Make in India Paradigm (1/2)

Prime Minister of India, Mr Narendra Modi launched the Make in India initiative on September 25, 2014, with the primary goal of making India a global manufacturing hub, by encouraging both multinational as well as domestic companies to manufacture their products within the country. The “Make in India” initiative is based on four pillars, namely, New Processes, New Infrastructure, New Sectors and New Mindset which have been identified to give boost to entrepreneurship in India, not only in manufacturing but also other sectors.

Make in India Paradigm (2/2)

An array of measures focused on the ease of doing business in India has also been launched under the Make in India program. Brand new, IT-driven application and tracking processes are replacing old files. A number of new initiatives have been launched in order to streamline and rationalise licensing rules at the state government level. From amendments in Labour Law to online filing of returns & from rationalization of the regulatory environment to increasing the validity of industrial licenses, a lot of changes have been ushered in to make 'Make in India' a reality.

Global Mobility of Engineers

By virtue of being a full member of the International Professional Engineers Agreement (IPEA) since 2009, The Institution of Engineers (India) represents India and has been empowered to establish and maintain the India section of the International Professional Engineers (IntPE) Register. The International Professional Engineers Agreement (IPEA) (previously known as the Engineers Mobility Forum (EMF)), is a multi-national agreement between engineering organisations in the member jurisdictions which creates the framework for the establishment of an international standard of competence for professional engineering.

Conclusion

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are in consonance with India's longstanding tradition and heritage and India is committed to fulfil its objective in this direction. Indeed, the goals substantially reflect the development agenda of India. The Institution of Engineers (India) is contributing in its own way in achieving the SDGs by way of spreading awareness and policy advocacy through its 122 Centres situated all over the country.

Thank you