Side Event
SDG Acceleration: India's Subnational Insights for Global Progress
at the Eighth SSWA Subregional Forum on Sustainable Development
Venue: 15 (L1), Bharat Mandapam
Date: 14th November 2024 |Time: 14:00 to 16:00

Background

India will play a leading role in determining the relative success or failure of the SDGs, with a population exceeding 1.4 billion. Pro-poor policies have yielded significant results with India lifting 415 million people from multidimensional poverty in the last 15 years, a testament to the country's progress and potential in achieving the SDGs. In light of the scale and complexity of the national context, the government at central, state and local levels has driven an ambitious agenda of SDG localization. The fourth iteration of the SDG India Index was released earlier this year highlighting overall progress but recorded slow progress on goals related to gender and nutrition.

The Government of India has clearly assigned responsibilities for delivering on the SDGs, following a 'whole-of-the-government' approach. At the centre, NITI Aayog, which replaced the National Planning Commission in 2015, is the government's apex body for designing long-term policies, programmes and strategies, and plays a pivotal role in localizing the SDGs. It fosters cooperative federalism and healthy competition among states through collaborative efforts and comparative rankings, among sub-national governments. This model of 'collaborative competition', supported by regularly publishing comparative rankings on SDG progress – the SDG India Index -, has generated momentum among sub-national governments. The National Statistics Office is responsible for preparing the SDG National Indicator Framework and supporting state governments in aligning it with their specific realities. More recently, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (local government) has also adopted the SDG framework and prepared guidelines to ensure that local-level plans are aligned with the SDGs. The Comptroller and Auditor General plays the oversight role on the institutional capacities for SDG implementation.

Sub-national governments (36 States and Union Territories) have a vital role in the localization of the SDGs, particularly in critical sectors like public health and sanitation, agriculture and industry. Operating under the oversight of state legislatures, they facilitate the varied and targeted approaches to public service delivery demanded by India's diverse characteristics across the country. State governments spearheaded the full integration of the SDGs in the state development planning process by preparing SDG vision documents, extending the SDG indicator framework to district and block levels and aligning their budgets with the SDGs. This approach of multi-layered integration of the global goal from sub-national to national level is known as the Indian Model of SDG Localization.

Scope of the Event

India has chosen to prioritize and accelerate the SDGs through setting up specific institutions providing states with a unified framework to align their long-term visions, strategies, and budgets with SDGs. State senior leadership has recognised the value add of the SDGs to foster collaboration among different departments for effective development planning. UNDP has partnered with nine State governments to establish SDG Coordination Centres (SDGCCs)

aimed at aligning planning and monitoring processes with the SDGs. The experience of SDGCCs over the past 6 years demonstrates the importance of an empowered anchor entity responsible for convening, coordinating, and advising at subnational level. This entity has a comprehensive view of the current situation across all dimensions of SDGs and strategic foresight to identify avenues and opportunities for future development gains. Building on the successful experience of SDGCCs, NITI Aayog and UNDP have refined the model and designed a new generation of SDGCC known as SDG Coordination and Acceleration Centre (SDGCAC). This represents a strategic evolution in India's SDG localization efforts, focusing on developing tailored SDG Accelerator plans and evolving monitoring frameworks to yield tangible outcomes at the local level. Key to this will be going beyond traditional planning approaches by integrating all departments, investing in multi-stakeholder capacities, and formulating cohesive strategies to effectively address interlinked development challenges. Additionally, SDGCACs will play a crucial role in aligning state budgets with SDG priorities and exploring avenues for innovative financing mechanisms at the subnational level.

The Indian experience attempts to bridge the gap between global sustainability goals and local development conditions. With only 6 years left until the 2030 deadline, it's crucial that all countries align their national and subnational strategies to accelerate the SDGs. The side event is designed to showcase India's approach to the SDGs focusing on localized implementation, leveraging technology, engaging the private sector, and maintaining a strong focus on inclusivity for advancing sustainable development. Other countries will benefit from India's experience and can adapt the India SDG localization model to their specific contexts to further their progress toward the SDGs.

Agenda (120 mins)

14:00	Welcome and Opening Remarks by Angela Lusigi, Resident Representative, UNDP
14:10	Keynote Address: *Global to National and Subnational: India's SDG model* by Rajib Kumar Sen, Senior Adviser (SDGs), NITI Aayog, Government of India
14:25	Special Address: *SDG Localisation in Villages: Panchayat Development Index* by Vikas Anand, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India
14:35	Spotlight: *Financial inclusion as an SDG accelerator- India's technology driven experience* by Chanchal C. Sarkar, Adviser (IER), Department of Economic Affairs, Government of India
14:45	*Measuring SDG Progress* • Experience from the North Eastern Region (NER) of India: Initiatives at the NER level, Mizoram and Nagaland
15:00	*SDG Financing and Budgeting* • Haryana: Integrating SDGs in budgets • Karnataka: Leveraging private sector and CSR for SDGs • Tamil Nadu: Pooled financing mechanisms for SDG acceleration
15:45	Question and Answer Session
16:00	Concluding Remarks by Isabelle Tschan, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP