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# Starting Strong on the SDGs in Asia: Readiness in India

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## Key Messages

- India has learned important lessons on institutional coherence and policy integration from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These lessons are particularly relevant as India has a quasi-federal, multi-level government where considerable time and effort is often required to assign roles, share authority, and broker compromise on initiatives like the sustainable development goals (SDGs).
- Several examples suggest room for optimism that India can successfully handle the institutional reorganisation required for the SDGs, including:
  - India has held several rounds of consultations with government ministries and other stakeholders on the SDGs.
  - NITI Aayog – the successor of the Planning Commission of India – has been given the overall coordinating responsibility for the SDGs, and has undertaken a mapping of the SDGs, identifying a nodal ministry for each goal.
  - Similarly targeted attempts have been initiated to link the SDGs with centrally sponsored schemes (key mechanisms for the Indian central government to support and influence development initiatives at state level).
  - The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MIPI) has also been given an important role, mainly with regards to indicators and monitoring; the process to identify relevant and feasible indicators is ongoing.
  - An official committee of parliamentarians has been formed to raise awareness on the SDGs among legislators. Also some state governments—such as Assam—have actively embraced the SDGs by, for example, setting up a nodal cell for coordination and establishing working groups to draw up action plans.
- While the Government of India is actively preparing for the successful implementation of the SDGs, the transition may present some of the following challenges:
  - Projects with insufficient financial resources will be an overriding concern; public funding will be far from sufficient and the best way to mobilise alternative kinds of resources is unclear.
  - The lack of data for many of the SDGs targets is seen as a major obstacle to effective monitoring. Access to technology is also a longstanding concern—one that will require further definition and deliberation over an international technology facilitation mechanism.
  - The need for awareness raising, both within the government administration and among stakeholders, is another emerging area, especially given the importance attached to free flows of information in India's democratic system of government.
  - Finally, the great diversity of India, and the fact that different regions are facing different development challenges, appears likely to affect the ability of the central government to achieve the SDGs.

# 1. Introduction

As one of the world's oldest civilisations, the Indian sub-continent is recognised for its diversity of cultures, languages, religions and ethnic groups. At the same time, the modern nation state of India stands out as the world's largest democracy and second most populous country. These are not the only reasons that India is often depicted as being a study in contrasts. Current projections of 7.6% economic growth for 2015-16 have led some to hail India as 'bright spot' amidst a stagnating global economy (MoF, 2016). Meanwhile, persistent pockets of poverty and deprivation conjure up precisely the opposite images, leading to calls for more inclusive forms of development. Since market liberalisation policies began in the early 1990s, India has indeed made considerable socioeconomic progress. These forward strides were aided by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)—and the much-needed clarity of purpose they brought to India's developmental planning from 2000-2015. However, as India edges closer to celebrating 75 years of independence in 2022, it is looking more and more at transitioning from measuring success not by the rate of development, but rather by how sustainable that development turns out to be.

The sustainable development goals (SDGs) are therefore well-timed to capitalise on an ongoing shift in India's development priorities and planning. This paper describes some of the initial efforts the country is making to prepare for the SDGs. It shows that, while India has done well on some MDGs (especially extreme poverty and women's empowerment), work remains on others (notably HIV/AIDS, water and sanitation, nutrition, and maternal health). It also demonstrates that it has learned important lessons on institutional coherence and policy integration from the MDGs. These lessons are particularly relevant as India has a quasi-federal, multi-level government where considerable time and effort is often required to assign roles, share authority, and broker compromise on inherently cross-cutting undertakings like the SDGs.

There is room for optimism that India can successfully navigate these institutional challenges. For example, India has held several rounds of consultations with government ministries and other stakeholders on the SDGs. Further, NITI Aayog – the successor of the Planning Commission of India – has been given the overall coordinating responsibility for the SDGs, and has undertaken a mapping of the SDGs, identifying a nodal ministry for each goal. These efforts to delegate authority have been accompanied by similarly targeted attempts to link the SDGs with centrally sponsored schemes (CSS)—key mechanisms for the Indian central government to support and influence development initiatives at state level). The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MIPPI) has also been given a key role, mainly with regards to indicators and monitoring; the process to identify relevant and feasible indicators is ongoing. An official committee of parliamentarians has been formed with the purpose of raising awareness on the SDGs among legislators. Also some state governments—such as Assam—have actively embraced the SDGs by, for example, setting up a nodal cell for coordination and establishing working groups to draw up action plans.



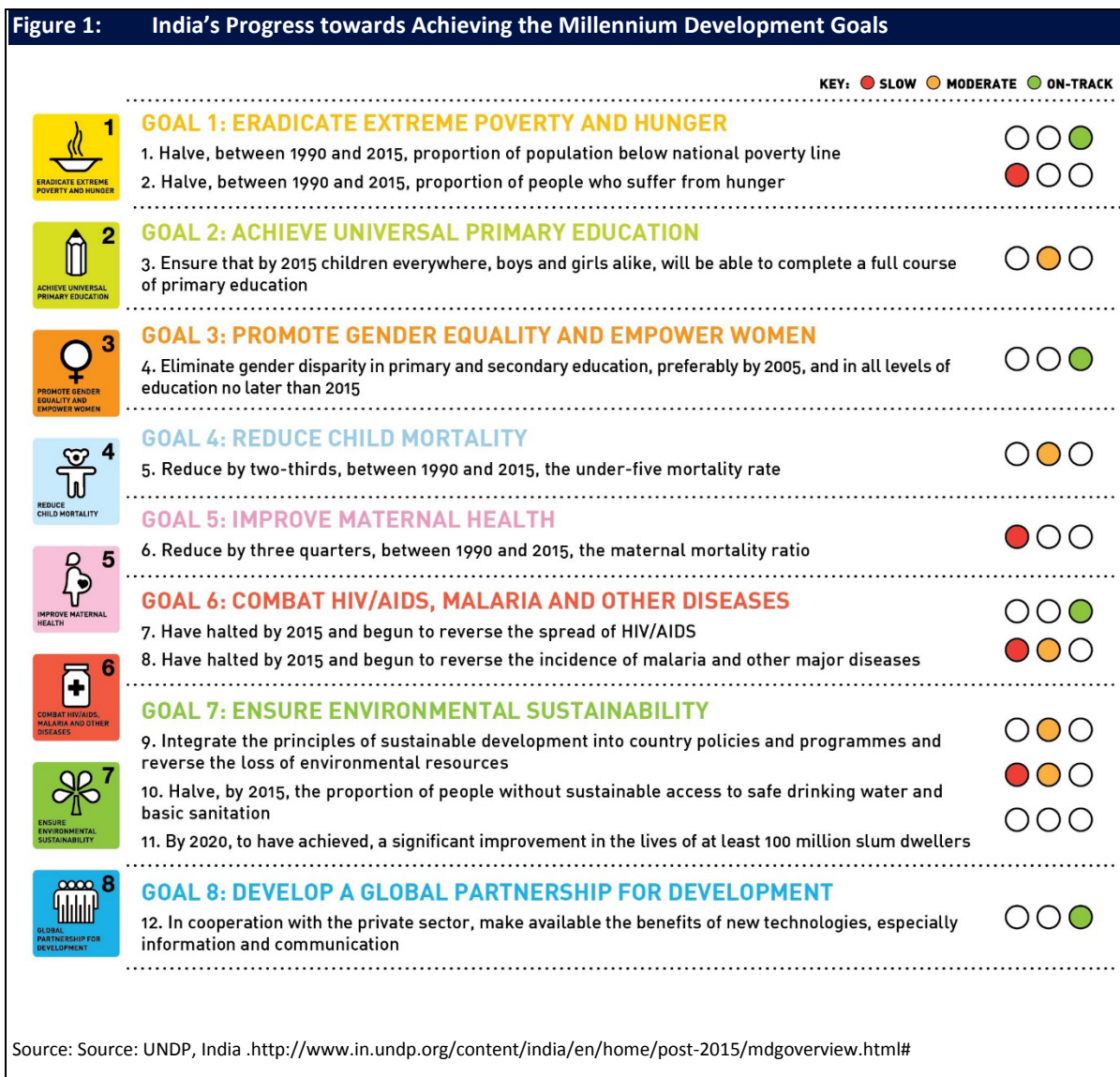
While the Government of India is actively preparing for a successful implementation of the SDGs, the transition is unlikely to be seamless. Insufficient financial resources are likely to be an overriding concern; public funding will be far from sufficient and there is no clear way to mobilise alternative kinds of resources. The lack of data for many of the SDG targets is seen as a major obstacle to effective monitoring. Access to technology is also a longstanding concern, which will require further definition and deliberation over an international technology facilitation mechanism. There is also an emerging need for awareness-raising, both within the government and among stakeholders, especially given the tradition of democracy. Finally, the great diversity of India, and the fact that different regions are facing different development challenges, appear likely to affect the ability of the central government to achieve the SDGs.

The remainder of the paper is divided into six sections. The next section outlines India's performance on the MDGs. Section 3 discusses stakeholder consultations on the SDGs. Section 4 describes India's SDG implementation framework. Section 5 provides an overview of subnational action. Section 6 describes challenges and presents conclusions.

## 2. India and the Millennium Development

### Goals (MDGs)

India has made significant progress on the MDGs (Figure 1). Figure 1 demonstrates that India was on track to reach targets on extreme poverty, gender equality, HIV/AIDS, and information and communication technology (ICT). This achievement, however, has been accompanied by slower progress in improving maternal mortality and lagging "targets for achieving universal primary school enrolment, reducing child and infant mortality, and improving access to adequate sanitation" (UN, 2015(b)).




Both national government agencies (MoSPI, 2015) and international organisations have observed these mixed results. For instance, the domestic media reported that 'India made "notable progress" towards reaching the MDGs, but is still home to "one quarter of the world's under-nourished population, over a third of the world's underweight children and nearly a third of the world's food-insecure people" (BusinessLine, 2015). The lessons learnt from the MDGs, especially the implementation challenges, will enable the government and other organisations to improve their performance on the SDGs. Four key areas that deserves attention in this connection are as follows:

1. Increasing financial resources: To a large extent the MDG experience has been similar to other developing economies. There was a lack of sufficient financial resources during the MDG period, both from the domestic government as well as other public funding. As the country has now embarked on the implementation of the SDGs, innovative funding solutions need to be a priority.

2. Improving statistical data and monitoring mechanisms: The lack of statistical data and monitoring is a major problem for tracking the performance of national and local policies. A high-profile initiative is needed to help address this critical challenge.
3. Enhancing centre-state relations: With a quasi-federal political system centre, state governments often have overlapping roles and responsibilities with the central government. State level governments have often failed to effectively implement central government policies that conflict with their own political economic interests. Against the background of an intensifying debate on increasing the powers of state governments, centre–state relations need to be improved to strengthen the implementation of SDGs.
4. Strengthening institutional mechanisms: Institutional mechanisms that are in charge of the goals face a number of inherent challenges, especially due to the above factors. SDG planning and implementation at the central level will be coordinated by NITI Aayog (the successor of the Planning Commission of India), which is gradually overseeing many existing relevant programmes and schemes. Hence strengthening institutional mechanisms is of critical importance to successfully implement the SDGs.

## Pre-2015 Domestic Actions towards Inclusive Growth

The vision 2020 document (Commission, 2002), released by the Government of India in 2002, was an important policy statement aimed at ensuring inclusive growth, taking into account the development of all sections of society. Although the vision document was originally aimed at catalysing technology and innovation, the report covered a wide range of themes and issues relevant for India in the 21st century. Other policy documents that were released after the turn of the century paid specific attention to the developmental needs of the country, including the MDGs. The National Human Development Report (2001), Skill Development and Training Programmes of Central Government (2009) as well as various expert committee reports reflected the MDGs to some extent. However, steps taken by the government were largely fragmented initiatives and did not reflect interlinkages among the major goals. This is visible if one examines some of the policy initiatives proposed by the government for a particular sector and how far those policies contributed to other related issues. A notable change was visible in the Integrated Energy Policy Document of 2006 and the National Action Plan for Climate Change (NAPCC) document, which were published by the Prime Minister’s Council on Climate Change in 2008. The NAPCC document specifically attempted to integrate the developmental objectives of the country with the environmental and climate-related targets, and proposed plans consisting of eight major missions. The success of NAPCC policy initiative and its linkages with the other national plans were facilitated by two international factors: 1) the push to achieve the MDGs; and 2) commitments from developing economies for voluntary climate mitigation actions. The NAPCC was also successful in



engaging sub-national governments in India as the initiative demanded greater participation from national as well as subnational governments in addressing environmental and development goals. The State Action Plan for Climate Change (SAPCC) also gained momentum toward the end of the last decade with about 28 states developing similar action plans. The experiences gained in this process could inform how the central government prepares for the SDGs.

### 3. Stakeholder Consultations on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

It is widely believed that the principle of *Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas* (“Together with All, Development for All”), adopted by the Government of India in 2014, is compatible with the spirit of the SDGs. The current government’s stance that the “first claim on development belongs to the poor” is another indication that India is strongly committed to the principles underpinning the SDGs. Hence, it is foreseen that India will be proactive in its approach to the SDGs and leverage the new goals to reduce poverty and inequality, ensure healthy living, rectify gender imbalances and promote sustainable living. Moreover, it is observed that “If MDGs were minimum standards, the SDGs—integrating environment, social and economic dimensions—are one the most comprehensive list of global goals the world has ever committed to (Kapur, 2015).” This challenge, however, demands greater coordination by the government as well as other stakeholders.


Fortunately, India’s government has gone through a series of consultations at various levels to help improve coordination. This has included several rounds of consultations with research organisations and other agencies prior to the adoption of SDGs in India. The first round of national level SDGs consultation (UN, 2015), brought together a range of stakeholders and all line ministries to deliberate on implementation arrangements. Issues in the areas of health and education featured prominently in the discussion, including the need for disaggregated data. It was also observed that appropriate indicators to track and report progress require a robust framework for data collection.

In the third round of stakeholder consultations<sup>1</sup> organised by NITI Aayog and related institutions, an important theme was the lack of an international agreement on a technology facilitation mechanism; such a mechanism was considered a priority for achieving the SDGs as well as climate goals (UN, 2016). This type of mechanism could help deal with issues around proprietary knowledge for access to technologies and potentially unlock flows of environment-friendly and the related capacity needed to achieve many of the SDGs. (UN, 2015(b)).

In May 2016, The World Health Organisation (WHO) held a two-day national level consultation (WHO, 2016) on the need for collaboration to achieve the SDGs, especially SDG 3: (Ensure healthy

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<sup>1</sup> This included multiple stakeholders as mentioned in the press release of UN. Accessed: [http://in.one.un.org/img/uploads/SDGs\\_PressRelease\\_September\\_2015.pdf](http://in.one.un.org/img/uploads/SDGs_PressRelease_September_2015.pdf)



lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages). The consultation with all stakeholders, including India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and other related departments, NITI Aayog, and Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), reached a "broad consensus that a national framework for implementation and monitoring and evaluation of health goal needs to be developed in India, taking into consideration the lagging health targets under the MDGs. The States have to adopt and adapt these frameworks for effective rollout and implementation of strategies to achieve the SDG-3 targets." The Delhi Commitment on Sustainable Development Goal for Health was also released to affirm the commitment towards SDG 3 (WHO, 2016).

## 4. National Implementation Framework

The institutional framework for coordinating initiatives on the SDGs, and for tracking progress, consists of several organisations. NITI Aayog is the nodal agency responsible for coordinating the 2030 Agenda. In this position, it has already mapped the goals and indicators against the current government structure and allocated roles to various ministries. Almost 50 Ministries/Departments (see Annex) have been entrusted with various schemes linked to the SDGs. The NITI Aayog itself has been given the following roles with regard to the SDGs:

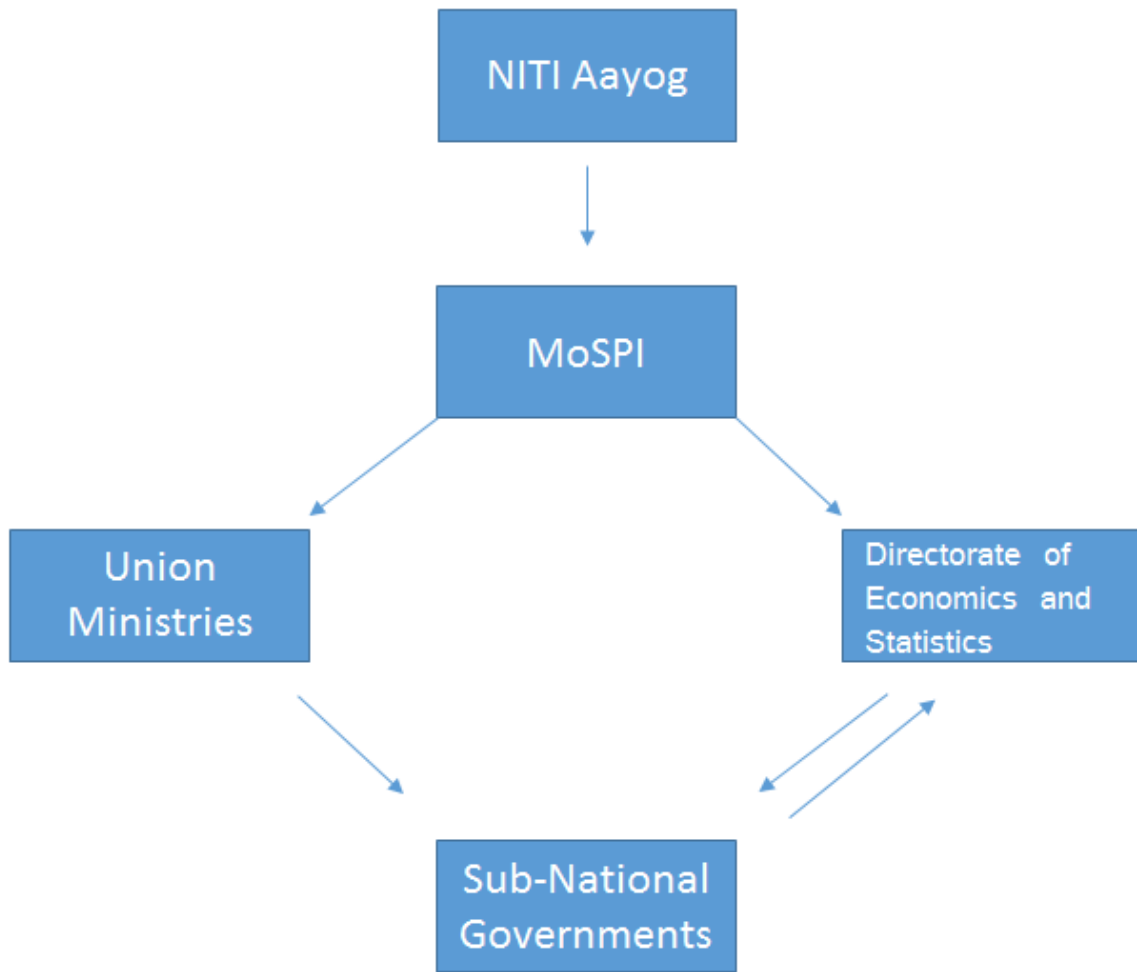
- National level co-ordination of the 2030 Development Agenda
- Identification of national targets
- Assigning Ministries/Departments for implementation of targets
- Consulting with the MoSPI and the Ministry of External Affairs for assigning roles to various Ministries

The MoSPI is entrusted with tracking and reporting the progress of implementation and is expected to play the following roles:

- Undertaking work related to develop indicators reflecting the SDG goals and targets
- Working in close coordination with NITI Aayog and other ministries/departments
- Creating mechanisms to monitor and track the progress on SDGs



Figure 2: SDG Implementation: Institutional Structure



Source: Source: UNDP, India .<http://www.in.undp.org/content/india/en/home/post-2015/mdgoverview.html#>

MoSPI: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

# Mapping of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs) with the SDGs<sup>2</sup>

India's CSS—one of the key mechanisms for supporting state level initiatives—has already incorporated many of the SDG targets (GoI, 2016 (a)). The CSS, many of which promote socioeconomic development, are partly funded by the central government and implemented by state governments. Following the adoption of the SDGs, India engaged in a mapping exercise that compared the CSS against the SDGs (GoI, 2016 (b)). Among the 17 SDGs, four goals were seen as central to achieving inclusive development that would uplift the poor and downtrodden. SDGs 1 to 4 have been mapped against the CSS that were already instituted to address the challenges of poverty, health and education. For instance, SDG 1 to 'End Poverty in all its forms everywhere', is closely linked with schemes that target poverty alleviation, such as the National Urban Livelihood Mission<sup>3</sup>, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA)<sup>4</sup>, National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)<sup>5</sup>, National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)<sup>6</sup>, National Land Record Management Programme (NLRMP)<sup>7</sup>.

The nodal ministries identified for each of the SDGs, and the related national schemes are shown in Table 1.

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<sup>2</sup> The detailed mapping chart of Sustainable Development Goals, targets, CSS, Interventions, Nodal and other Ministries as on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2016 is available at: [http://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/SDGsV20-Mapping080616-DG\\_0.pdf](http://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/SDGsV20-Mapping080616-DG_0.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM) was launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MHUPA), Government of India in 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2013 to focus on organizing urban poor in grassroots level institutions, creating opportunities for skill development leading to market-based employment and helping to set up self-employment venture by ensuring easy access to credit, [http://mhupa.gov.in/User\\_Panel/UserView.aspx?TypeID=1281](http://mhupa.gov.in/User_Panel/UserView.aspx?TypeID=1281)

<sup>4</sup> Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act" (or, MGNREGA), is a social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work'.

<sup>5</sup> Mission aims at creating efficient and effective institutional platforms of the rural poor enabling them to increase household income through sustainable livelihood enhancements and improved access to financial services. <http://aajeevika.gov.in/>

<sup>6</sup> The programme introduced a National Policy for Social Assistance for the poor and aims at ensuring minimum national standard for social assistance in addition to the benefits that states are currently providing or might provide in future. <http://nsap.nic.in/#>

<sup>7</sup> The programme aims to merge the two existing Centrally-sponsored schemes of Computerization of Land Records (CLR) and Strengthening of Revenue Administration & Updating of Land Records (SRA&ULR) and to replace them with a modified Centrally-sponsored scheme in the shape of the National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP), with the ultimate goal of ushering in the system of conclusive titles with title guarantee in the country. <http://dolr.nic.in/nlrmp-2008.pdf>

<b>Table 1: SDG, Nodal Ministries and linked national schemes</b>	
<b>Goals and Nodal Ministry</b>	<b>Linked National Schemes</b>
1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere (Ministry of Rural Development)	1) National Urban Livelihood Mission <b>(Core)</b> 2) National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA) <b>(Core of the Core)</b> 3) National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)
2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture (Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare)	6) National Food Security Mission <b>(Core)</b> 7) Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture 8) National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture 9) National Oilseed and Oil Palm Mission 10) National Mission on Agriculture Extension and Technology 11) Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) (ACA) <b>(Core)</b> 12) National Livestock Mission <b>(Core)</b> 13) Livestock Health and Disease Control <b>(Core)</b> 14) National Programme for Bovine Breeding and Dairy Development
3: Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages (Ministry of Health & Family Welfare)	15) National Health Mission including NRHM <b>(Core)</b> 16) Human Resource in Health and Medical Education <b>(Core)</b> 17) National Mission on Ayush including Mission on Medical Plants <b>(Core)</b> 18) National AIDS & STD Control Programme 19) Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) <b>(Core)</b>
4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (Ministry of Human Resource Development)	20) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan <b>(Core)</b> 21) National Programme Nutritional Support to Primary Education (MDM) <b>(Core)</b> 22) Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) <b>(Core)</b> 23) Support for Educational Development including Teachers Training & Adult Education <b>(Core)</b> 24) Scheme for providing education to Madrasas, Minorities and Disabled <b>(Core of the Core)</b> 25) Rashtriya Uchhtar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) <b>(Core)</b> 26) Umbrella scheme for Education of ST students <b>(Core of the Core)</b>
5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Ministry of Women and Child Development)	27) National Mission for Empowerment of Women including Indira Gandhi Matritiv Sahyog Yojana <b>(Core)</b> 28) Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (SABLA) <b>(Core)</b>
6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation)	29) National Rural Drinking water Programme (Core) 30) Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan (Core) 31) Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana 32) National River Conservation Programme (NRCP) 1) Namami Gange - Integrated Ganga Conservation Mission 2) Inter-linking of rivers
7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (Ministry of Power)	N.A.
8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable Economic growth, full and productive employment	33) National Service Scheme (NSS) 34) Skill Development Mission 35) Social Security for

and decent work for all (Ministry of Labour & Employment)	Unorganised Workers including Rashtriya Swastya Bima Yojana <b>(Core)</b>
9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation (Ministry of Commerce & Industry)	36) Border Area Development Programme (BADP) (ACA) (MHA/M/o Finance) 37) National Handloom Development Programme 38) Catalytic Development Programme under Sericulture 39) Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) <b>(Core)</b>
10: Reduce inequality within and among countries (Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment)	40) Multi Sectoral Development Programme for Minorities 41) Backward Regions Grant Fund (District Component) (ACA) 42) Scheme for Development of Scheduled Castes <b>(Core of the Core)</b> , 43) Scheme for Development of Other Backward Classes and Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Tribes. (Core of the Core), 44) Scheme for development of Economically Backward Classes (EBCs), 45) Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) (State Component) (ACA)
11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (Ministry of Urban Development)	46) Rajiv Awas Yojana (including BSUP & IHSDP) 47) Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) 48) Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY) 49) National Programme for Persons with Disabilities 50) Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) (ACA)
12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production Patterns (Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change)	N.A
13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change)	N.A
14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (Ministry of Earth Sciences)	51) Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems
15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss (Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change)	52) National Afforestation Programme (National Mission for a Green India) <b>(Core)</b> 53) Integrated Development of Wild Life Habitats <b>(Core)</b> 54) Project Tiger <b>(Core)</b>
16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (Ministry of Home Affairs)	55) Panchayat Yuva Krida aur Khel Abhiyan (PYKKA) 56) Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary including Gram Nyayalayas <b>(Core)</b> 57) Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) <b>(Core)</b>
17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable Development (Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Ministry of Science & Technology, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Ministry	58) Support for Statistical Strengthening

of Finance, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change)

Indira Gandhi Matritav Sahyog Yojana = Maternity Benefit Programme, Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan = Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC), Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana = PM's programme on Agricultural Irrigation, Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana = government-run health insurance scheme for the Indian poor, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana = nationwide plan in India to provide good all-weather road connectivity, Rajiv Awas Yojana = Indian government program that attempts to help slum dwellers gain appropriate housing, Indira Awas Yojana = a social welfare flagship programme, Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana = rural development programme, Panchayat Yuva Krida aur Khel Abhiyan = rural sports initiative, Gram Nyayalayas = Act of Parliament of India enacted for establishment of village courts


Source: [http://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/SDGsV20-Mapping080616-DG\\_0.pdf](http://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/SDGsV20-Mapping080616-DG_0.pdf)

## Selecting Indicators and Managing Data

MoSPI and NITI Aayog are overseeing a consultative process with many other agencies to select indicators and collect data for the SDGs. The need for quality data provided on a regular and timely basis presents a formidable challenge. It requires close collaboration with more than 50 ministries and departments and a robust monitoring framework. The proposed framework will be determined based on targets deemed relevant for India and the ministries implementing the targets. The source of data, periodicity, method of data collection and disaggregation levels are to be decided through the above consultative process. According to MoSPI, "the indicator selection should also consider relevancy with the target, feasibility in relation with official data and estimation, measurability... accessibility in terms of easy communication and easy understanding and transparency..." (MoSPI, 2015).

## Data Management and role of Directorate of Economics and Statistics

It has been decided that the Indian Official Statistical System will be employed to monitor the SDGs since no other data sources could cover the SDGs and targets. The data for monitoring the national level targets need to originate from the state level governments. Therefore, the National Statistical Office and the Directorate of Economics and Statistics (DES) at the state levels have to coordinate and compile the data in a timely manner. Reliable, nationally comparable indicator data need to be developed through efficient data collection systems. The State Statistics Office (DES) will have a central role to play in monitoring the SDGs (See Annex for illustration of DES of the State Government of Delhi). Further, each state can, at its own initiative, publish reports on the status and progress on the implementation of SDGs at regular intervals.



To ensure comparability across the data sets emanating from various states, the concepts, definitions, classifications, design and methodology used need to be uniform and standardised. Towards this end, there has to be coordination across State Governments and their respective DES. This process is currently ongoing.

## Lawmakers platform for Development Goals

### (MP-MDGs and LG-SDGs)

Parliamentarians not only play a key role in formulating policy but in drawing upon information from civil society and experts to shape the policy agenda. As such, Parliamentarians' Group on Millennium Development Goals (PG-MDGs) were formed in 2008, which gave impetus to policymaking for successful MDGs implementation. The PG-MDGs included a team of 20 Parliamentarians drawn from multiple political parties. The original idea behind the formation of these PG-MDGs was to create a government platform that could make their region's needs and challenges more visible as the MDG goals were being implemented.

A similar group of elected legislators was set up to support the SDGs. Unlike the PG-MDGs, the new group was called Legislators Group on Sustainable Development Goals (LG-SDG). While the former MDGs platform was limited to national level legislators, the latter aims to include local legislators to improve performance at both levels. As the functioning of LG-SDGs would be similar in nature to the PG-MDGs, the expected outcome of this new platform will similarly aim to raise public awareness, encourage debate, and increase state level funding for the SDGs

## 5. Subnational Action

Apart from the need for improved data management for monitoring, there is also a need for enhanced institutional capacities at subnational levels. The SAPCC have prompted such capacity building activities, especially related to climate change, but these need to be enhanced and broadened to encompass the SDGs. State Action Plans cover sectors such as water, agriculture, tourism, forestry, transport, habitat and energy (with a focus on climate adaptation and mitigation). As of this writing, 28 States and five Union Territories have submitted SAPCCs to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC). The National Steering Committee on Climate Change (NSCCC) at the MoEF & CC have endorsed the same set of policies.

Initiatives are also taken directly at subnational levels. During the first round of national SDG consultations, eight states expressed an interest in using the SDGs as a tool to better understand their current levels of development (UN, 2014). The State of Assam was the first in India to come

up with a vision statement following the adoption of the SDGs ('Everything for Everyone – Achieving Inclusive and Sustainable Development'- Vision 2030) (GoI, 2016 (c)). The state of Assam officially adopted the SDGs and the 2030 Development Agenda. The Government of Assam then created eight working groups to prepare action plans and roadmaps to achieve the SDGs. A 'Centre for SDGs' was also established along with a nodal cell in Guwahati to ensure successful implementation of the goals. All the departments in the State dealing with social and economic issues have been directed to create exclusive cells for the SDGs and develop a charter of activities. To contextualise the goals in the State and to prepare a roadmap on the process of implementing the SDGs, a two-day "Partnership Conference" was also held, resulting in a draft vision document. The Government of Assam has partnered with the Colombia University's Earth Institute on implementing the SDGs.

## 6. Key Challenges to SDG Implementation

The SDGs face a multitude of challenges at various stages in India, ranging from indicator identification to actual implementation. Ensuring the statistical and institutional capacity to keep track of the 169 SDGs targets will not be easy. Some feel that the government already struggled with monitoring the 25 indicators associated with the 12th Five Year Plan, so tracking SDG could pose an even greater challenge (Sidhu, 2015).

### Financing

Financing will be one of the foremost hurdles. One estimate indicates that there might be a financial shortfall of about 533 Lakh Crore (\$8.5 trillion) (Anshul Bhamra, 2015). This clearly shows that public finance alone cannot support the SDG in India; there is a strong need for greater cooperation among various sectors and sources of funds.

### Technology

Access to technology is another significant impediment to achieving the goals. Experts argue that there is a need to facilitate the transfer and diffusion of technologies to achieve the SDGs in India (Shilpi Kapur Bakshi, 2013). For example, the many existing programmes and newly proposed programmes on green energy technologies (including Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission), Enhanced Energy Efficiency Mission, Emission Intensity Reduction Targets, and others) would make significantly more progress with easier access to technology. The United Nations has made similarly underlined that "steps need to be taken to facilitate access of developing countries like India to sustainable technologies through the strengthening of Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) agreement provisions for transfer of technology (UNESCAP,

2015).“ The limits in access to technology will be a critical sticking point to reaching the SDGs and therefore necessitates greater attention from policymakers.

## Awareness

Increasing awareness of the SDGs among policymakers as well as various other national level and sub-national stakeholders is a prerequisite for successful implementation. National programmes and initiatives like NAPCC have encountered numerous stumbling blocks due to lack of awareness, especially at the sub-national level. A similarly complex structure for the SDGs suggests comparable difficulties may arise. National statistical office and state DESs need to work together to gather reliable and internationally comparable data. This will, in turn, necessitate strengthening the capacities and data collection systems (MoSPI, 2015(b)). Greater cooperation between agencies at national and sub-national level will also be critical. Centre-state politics and conflicts of interests may also slow progress on the SDGs. Even within NITI Aayog, some of the members (DNA, 2015) have articulated concerns over the SDGs and their targets that may dilute the agenda.


## Follow-up and Review

Follow-up and review mechanisms are often highlighted as being critical to SDG implementation. The institutional structure for SDG programme in Figure 2 demonstrates that NITI Aayog and MoSPI will play the role of lead organisations. However, whether these organisations can effectively coordinate implementation efforts, and then monitor and review at the sub-national level, remains an open question. NITI Aayog and MoSPI tend to have less influence in the states than other ministries; they may hence struggle to get much traction with the states. This will be especially important when ensuring data availability at sub-national levels and shoring up capacities for conducting monitoring and evaluation (Kapur, 2015). Consultation meetings on the SDGs held by NITI Aayog also concluded that there are critical data gaps. It “recognizes that baseline data for several of the targets remains unavailable, and...increased support for strengthening data collection and capacity-building [is needed] in Member States, to develop national and global baselines where they do not yet exist” (NITI-Aayog, 2015). However, NITI Aayog highlights that it is committed to addressing these data gaps progressively, in particular for areas without clear numerical targets (NITI-Aayog, 2015).

## 7. Conclusion

Considering India’s uneven progress on the MDGs, there is reason to believe that the country will face challenges in achieving the SDGs. In order to overcome these challenges, quick and decisive efforts are needed.





Policymaking in India is to a significant degree influenced by public debates. Although public debate is not the only benchmark, for a democratic country that has had coalition cabinets for several decades, public opinion factors heavily into policy decisions. Interestingly, the MDGs never garnered much public attention, and until now public discussion over the SDGs has also been quite limited. This suggests the need to stimulate more active communication among policymakers, the general public and other stakeholders. The role of the LG-SDGs (the aforementioned official committee comprised of three parliamentarians and leading civil society organisations) could be important in this regard.

India's diversity creates both opportunities and challenges. The variation across regions and social groups differ with regards to their current development status and particular needs. For example, Kerala—a southern state that has already achieved 100 percent literacy and also boasts remarkable socioeconomic progress in other areas—may be better positioned to achieve the SDGs than the northern states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa.

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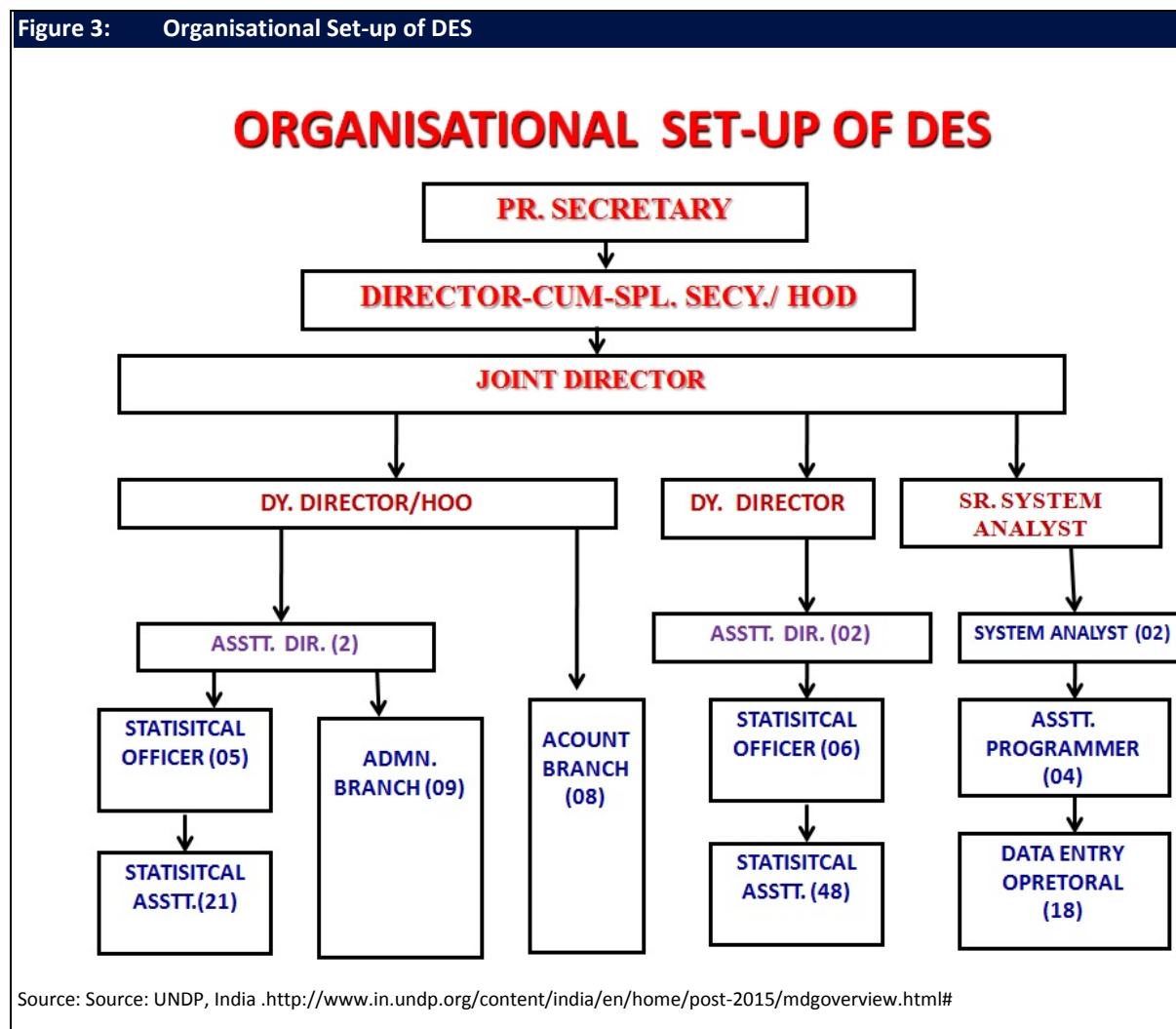
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## 9. Annex


### a. Organisational Structure of Directorate of Economics and Statistics (DES) of the State Government of Delhi



## b. List of Ministries Involved in SDGs

Table 2: List of Ministries involved in SDG	
Sr. No.	Name of the Ministry
1	Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
2	Ministry of AYUSH
3	Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers
4	Ministry of Civil Aviation
5	Ministry of Coal
6	Ministry of Commerce and Industry -Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion
7	Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
8	Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
9	Ministry of Corporate Affairs
10	Ministry of Culture
11	Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region
12	Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation
13	Ministry of Earth Sciences
14	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
15	Ministry of External Affairs
16	Ministry of Finance
17	Ministry of Food Processing Industries
18	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
19	Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises
20	Ministry of Home Affairs
21	Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation
22	Ministry of Human Resource Development
23	Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
24	Ministry of Labour and Employment
25	Ministry of Law and Justice
26	Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
27	Ministry of Mines
28	Ministry of Minority Affairs
29	Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
30	Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs
31	Ministry of Panchayati Raj
32	Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions
33	Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas
34	Ministry of Power
35	Ministry of Railway
36	Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
37	Ministry of Rural Development
38	Ministry of Science and Technology

39	Ministry of Shipping
40	Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship
41	Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
42	Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation
43	Ministry of Steel
44	Ministry of Textiles
45	Ministry of Tourism
46	Ministry of Tribal Affairs
47	Ministry of Urban Development
48	Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation
49	Ministry of Women and Child Development
50	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
Source: <a href="http://niti.gov.in/mgov_file/sdg/Mapping-SDGs%20V19-Ministries%20Feedback%20060416.pdf">http://niti.gov.in/mgov_file/sdg/Mapping-SDGs%20V19-Ministries%20Feedback%20060416.pdf</a>	



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