



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by India Water Foundation, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 May 2024]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



## **Women Led Development to Ensure that No One is Left Behind**

India is one of the fastest growing economies of the world and is poised to continue on this path, with aspirations to reach high middle income status by 2047, the centenary of Indian independence. It is also committed to ensuring that its continued growth path is equipped to deal with the challenges of climate change, and achieving net-zero emissions by 2070. Despite the shocks of COVID-19, the Russian Federation-Ukraine conflict etc. agencies worldwide continue to project India as the fastest-growing major economy at 6.5-7.0 per cent in FY23. India is experiencing a blitzkrieg upgrade in its infrastructure, driven by increased government investment and development initiatives. There are significant advancements in India's transportation, health, education, water and technology sector which is women led as well and their impact on the country's economic growth is significant. These infrastructure developments aim to enhance connectivity, reduce logistics costs, and position India as a global economic powerhouse

### **Revitalizing Transport Infrastructure**

India boasts of the world's second-largest road network, with over 6.37 million km. The total length of highways has expanded from 97,830 km in 2014 to 145,155 km today. Moreover, in the last nine years, more than 3.5 lakh km of rural roads have been constructed under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana giving all-weather roads connectivity to villages of India. India's railways have undergone substantial modernization and expansion. Capital expenditure on railway infrastructure has steadily increased over the past four years, with a budget of ₹2.5 lakh crore allocated in FY22-23, representing a 29% rise compared to the previous year. Electrification of railway tracks has witnessed significant progress, reaching 37,011 route kilometres in the last nine years. Further, on 4 March 2022, the successful trial of KAVACH, a state-of-the-art electronic system designed to help the Indian Railways achieve Zero Accidents was conducted.

### **Health Care**

The pandemic has made it clear that prioritising healthcare is necessary. Under the National Health Mission, the government has launched several schemes like: Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A) programme essentially looks to address the major causes of mortality among women and children as well as the delays in accessing and utilizing health care and services. It also introduces new initiatives like the use of Score Card to track health performance, National Iron + Initiative to address the issue of anemia across all age groups and the Comprehensive Screening and Early interventions for defects at birth, diseases, and deficiencies among children and adolescents. Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) is an important initiative aiming at early identification and early intervention for children from birth to 18 years to cover 4 'D's viz. Defects at birth, Deficiencies, Diseases, Development delays including disability. Since there are huge income disparities, therefore, the government has launched several programmes in order to support the financially backward class of the country. As about 3.2 crore people in India fall under the National Poverty line by spending on healthcare from their own pockets in a single year. The most important programme launched by the government is Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi which provides financial assistance to the patients that are below poverty line and are suffering from life-threatening diseases, to receive medical treatment at any government run super specialty hospital/ institution. Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana is a government-run health insurance programme for the Indian poor. It aims to provide health insurance coverage to the unrecognized sector workers belonging to the below poverty line and their family members shall be beneficiaries under this scheme.

## For Malnutrition

The three key nutrition-related programmes of the reorganised Umbrella Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) are the Anganwadi Services Scheme, POSHAN Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission), and the Scheme for Adolescent Girls. These programmes guarantee that three demographic groups—children aged 0 to 6 years, adolescent girls, and pregnant and nursing women—will get direct dietary interventions. The marginal increase from the budget estimates for the previous year is grossly inadequate considering funding trends over the past years and the need for additional human resources for service delivery. Malnutrition is a complex issue with roots in a number of dietary, health, and care-related variables that are in turn influenced by social, economic, and political variables.

## Education

The Government of India launched the new education policy on July 29th, 2020, which mainly focuses on the early childhood education of children in India and improving the quality of education in government schools. The new education policy was launched at the time of the pandemic of COVID-19 and was very needful at that time, as the whole education system collapsed due to lockdowns. The new education policy 2022 worked on decreasing the school dropout rates, holistic and enjoyable learning, improving the skills of teachers, etc. SWAYAM is an e-learning platform available for students across India, funded by the central government of India. This online learning platform was launched by the GOI in 2017 that turned out to be very useful during a pandemic. The Balika Samridhi Yojana offers limited opportunity for saving to the parents of a girl child (newborns only). One can easily open an account at a bank near them. The scheme can be availed for two daughters in a family that must be classified as Below Poverty Line. At the time of birth of a girl child, Rs. 500 is offered under the scheme to the parents. When the child starts attending school, an amount ranging between Rs. 300 and Rs. 1000 is offered as scholarship annually till the child reaches class X.

## Women-led Schemes and Development

To address the gaps in the erstwhile rural housing schemes and in view of the Government's commitment to providing "Housing for All" by 2022, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Gramin (PMAYG) was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 20, 2016, with the objective of constructing 2.95 crore houses. As on February, 2023, over 2.16 crore houses have been constructed out of the 2.85 crore sanctioned houses. It is also heartening to know that over 69% of houses are either solely or jointly owned by women. To safeguard the health of women and children and provide them with clean cooking fuel, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) was launched by Prime Minister in May 2016. Its goal is to make clean cooking fuel, such as LPG, accessible to rural and underprivileged households. As on January 30, 2023, over 9.58 crore LPG connections have been released under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana. LPG coverage in India has improved to 105.4 per cent in 2022, as compared to 61.9 per cent in April, 2016. The scheme has also received global recognition from the International Energy Agency (IEA) which has described it as a major achievement in improving the environment and health of women. By empowering women, PMUY has been able to bridge gender inequality with respect to rights, access and economic empowerment.

## Drinking Water and Sanitation

Realising the problems faced by women and children on account of the lack of toilets, the government launched the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) on October 02, 2014 for providing toilets to all households in the country over a time period of five years. Under SBM Urban, over 70 lakh household, community and public toilets have been built. As a result of the accessibility of sanitation facilities for every household and their regular usage, almost 100% rural sanitation coverage was achieved.

SBM has brought about an irreversible improvement in the quality of life of women in the rural and urban areas, by promoting cleanliness, and hygiene, and eliminating open defecation. Water is the basis of life. No human activity is possible without water. Drinking water supply is, therefore, an essential and crucial component for the well-being of a community. Launched by the government, on August 15, 2019, the core objective of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) is to improve the lives of people, especially women and children, by ensuring clean tap water supply to every rural household and public institutions in villages by 2024. In a short span of just 42 months, over 8.12 crore rural households have been provided with tap water connections under JJM. By involving women in the planning, decision-making, implementation and monitoring of JJM, the mission is playing an important role in women's empowerment.

### **Financial Inclusion**

Understanding the potential of rising women entrepreneurs in driving economic growth and removing any bottlenecks in getting institutional credit, the Government of India has launched two major schemes - Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) and Stand-Up India. Stand-Up India aims to promote entrepreneurship amongst Women, Scheduled Castes (SC) & Scheduled Tribes (ST) categories and help them in starting a greenfield enterprise. PMMY was launched for providing loans up to Rs. 10 Lakhs to non-corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises. Both these schemes have promoted the entrepreneurship culture at the grassroot-level focusing on economic empowerment and job creation. Women, in particular, have benefitted tremendously from these two schemes. Around 70% of the loans have been sanctioned to women entrepreneurs under PMMY and 80% of the beneficiaries under Stand-Up India are women.

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