



**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

**AMONG**

**MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION,  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

**THE UNITED NATIONS INDIA**

**NATIONAL INSTITUTION FOR TRANSFORMING INDIA (NITI) AAYOG,  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

**CONCERNING**

**SUPPORT FOR DATA, INDICATORS AND STATISTICS FOR  
MONITORING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN INDIA**

## TRIPARTITE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding ("MoU") is entered into by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Government of India; the United Nations intergovernmental organization, established by its Member States; and the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog, Government of India. MoSPI, UN and NITI Aayog are hereinafter referred to individually as "Party" and jointly as "Parties".

**WHEREAS**, UN works with partners in numerous countries to promote *inter-alia* sustainable development, eradication of poverty, advancement of women, good governance and the rule of law;

**WHEREAS**, UN represented by United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO), New Delhi is interested in enhancing its development activities in collaboration with the MoSPI and NITI Aayog to contribute to national efforts in localizing the SDG indicators, including partnering for capacity development for statistics on SDGs;

**WHEREAS**, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation is the nodal agency for the planned and organized development of the statistical system in the country and coordination of statistical activities among statistical agencies in the Government of India, State Governments as well as meeting requirements of the International Agencies like UN, World Bank, IMF, OECD, etc. and has been entrusted with the responsibility of development of indicators and data protocols of SDGs National Monitoring Framework;

**WHEREAS**, NITI Aayog is responsible for identification of national targets and assigning them to the Ministries/Departments concerned for implementation in consultation with MoSPI and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and sharing the details of the commitments undertaken by India under the Post-2015 Development Agenda with the State Governments and seeking their participation in implementation and monitoring of these goals and targets by respective States;

**WHEREAS**, the Parties share similar missions and wish to cooperate in areas of mutual concern to enhance the effectiveness of their development efforts in respect of implementation of SDGs;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, the Parties wish to express their intention to cooperate as follows:

### Article I Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this MoU is to provide a framework of cooperation and facilitate and strengthen collaboration between the Parties, on a non-exclusive basis, in areas of common interest. The overall purpose of the MoU is to collaborate on issues related to Statistical monitoring of Goals and Targets of SDGs, including the use of new technologies for monitoring, capacity development to track SDG



related outcomes and any other emerging requirement(s), articulated by MoSPI and NITI Aayog.

## **Article II Areas of Cooperation**

The Parties agree to cooperate in the following areas:

- (a) Support monitoring and reporting of SDGs at national and sub-national levels within the framework of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;
- (b) Support capacity-building, partnership and coordination for tracking of SDGs, especially promoting availability of disaggregated data;
- (c) Development of SDG Data Intelligence Platform including dashboard for SDG indicators for unifying SDG data at national and sub-national levels;
- (d) Facilitate standardization, modernization and harmonization of data infrastructures and identify ways to leverage the resources of the private sector;
- (e) Promote engagement between the statistical community and other stakeholders working on the implementation and monitoring of SDG indicators.
- (f) Promote awareness about SDGs among community and stakeholders by developing awareness strategies and creatives.
- (g) Institution of a Data for Development Coordination Forum on SDGs with key stakeholders co-chaired by UN Resident Coordinator and DG, NSO, MoSPI; (Annex)

## **Article III Consultation and Exchange of Information**

3.1 The Parties shall, on a regular basis, keep each other informed of and consult on matters of common interest, which in their opinion are likely to lead to mutual collaboration.

3.2 Consultation and exchange of information and documents under this MoU shall be without prejudice to arrangements, which may be required to safeguard the confidential and restricted character of certain information and documents. Such arrangements will survive the termination of this MoU and of any agreements signed by the Parties within the scope of this collaboration.

3.3 The Parties shall, at such intervals as deemed appropriate, convene meetings to review the progress of activities being carried out under the present MoU and to plan future activities.



3.4 The Parties may invite each other to send observers to meetings or conferences convened by them or under their auspices in which, in the opinion of each Party, the other may have an interest. Invitations shall be subject to the procedures applicable to such meetings or conferences.

**Article IV  
Implementation of the MoU**

4.1 NITI Aayog or MoSPI, Government of India will not receive funds from UN for any activity directly.

4.2 It is understood that all activities will be carried out on the basis of project documents agreed between the Parties and in accordance with the applicable Government of India and UN regulations, rules, policies and procedures.

4.3 Each Party shall be responsible for its acts and omissions in connection with this MoU and its implementation.

**Article V  
Visibility**

5.1 The Parties recognize that the cooperative arrangements should be publicized and therefore agree to acknowledge the role and contribution of each organization in all public information documentation relating to instances of such cooperation and use each organization's name and emblem in documentation related to the cooperation in accordance with the current policies of each organization and subject to prior written agreement of each Party.

**Article VI  
Term, Termination, Renewal and Amendment**

6.1 The proposed cooperation under this MoU is non-exclusive and shall have an initial term of two years from the Effective Date, as defined in Article X, unless terminated earlier by any Party in writing to the other Parties. The Parties may agree to extend this MoU in writing for subsequent periods based on discussions.

6.2 In the event of termination of the MoU, any project cooperation agreements, and any project document(s) concluded pursuant to this MoU, may also be terminated in accordance with the termination provision contained in such agreements. In such case, the Parties shall take the necessary steps to ensure that the activities carried out under the MoU, and project documents are brought to a prompt and orderly conclusion.

6.3 This MoU may be amended partly or wholly only by mutual written agreement of the Parties.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Shama' followed by a stylized name, possibly 'Renuka'.

**Article VII  
Notices and Addresses**

7.1 Any notice or request required or permitted to be given or made under this MoU shall be in writing. Such notice or request shall be deemed to have been duly given or made when it shall have been delivered by hand, certified mail, overnight courier, telex, or cable to the Party (parties) to which it is required to be given or made at the address(es) specified below or such other address(es) as shall be hereafter notified.

**Article VIII  
Miscellaneous**

8.1 This MoU and project documents comprise the complete understanding of the Parties in respect of the subject matter in this MoU and supersede all prior agreements relating to the same subject matter. Failure by either Party to enforce a provision of this MoU shall not constitute a waiver of that or any other provision of this MoU. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this MoU shall not affect the validity or enforceability of any other provision of the MoU.

8.2 Nothing in this MoU shall be construed as creating a joint venture or any other form of legally binding commitment among the Parties.

**Article IX  
Privileges and Immunities**

9.1 Nothing in or relating to this MoU shall be deemed a waiver, expressed or implied, of any of the privileges and immunities of the United Nations, including its subsidiary organs.

**Article X  
Effectiveness**

10.1 This MoU may be signed in three originals and shall enter into effect on the date in which it is duly signed by all the Parties.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, the duly authorized representatives of the Parties affix their signatures below.

**FOR MoSPI**

**FOR UNITED NATIONS**

**FOR NITI Aayog**

**Dr. Shailja Sharma**  
Director General,  
NSO, MoSPI,  
Govt. of India

**Ms. Renata Lok-Dessallien**  
UN Resident Coordinator  
in India

**Ms. Sanyukta Samaddar**  
Adviser (SDG),  
NITI Aayog,  
Govt. of India

Date: 27.07.20

Date:

Date:

## **Annexure to MoU on Data for Development Coordination Forum on SDGs**

It is widely acknowledged that official statistics is a crucial element in the SDG information system and that National Statistical Offices (NSOs) are important providers of accurate, reliable and objective data.

The National Indicator Framework (NIF), developed by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), for tracking/monitoring the progress of the SDGs, is a pertinent and timely effort to streamline the SDG measurement process in India; and includes many global indicators recommended by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group for Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDG). Ensuring alignment with the global framework and contextualization at country level is a challenging task and the effort that has gone into it by the stakeholders is commendable.

NITI Aayog has developed a statistical tool, the SDG India Index, to measure and rank the performance of States and Union Territories on each as well as all SDGs in a composite manner. Indicators from the NIF are used to compute the Index. The SDG India Index Report, released annually since 2018, provides a comparative perspective on progress on SDGs and builds up a competitive ethos among the States and UTs for better performance as well as wider generation of data along an increasing number of indicators.

Thus, as the implementation of the SDGs deepens, it is expected that even larger set of data will need to be produced and disaggregated in several new areas/sectors /SDG Goals and targets and analysed. It is evident that this could pose challenge for statistical systems at the national and state levels. On the other hand, there are certain allied factors at national, State and local levels that are driving the increased demand for data:

*At National level:* With the implementation of several nation-wide programmes on sanitation, housing, employment generation, etc., all of which are part of the SDG framework, there is a growing emphasis on outcome based monitoring and achievement of results in a time-bound manner.

*At State and District level:* With the increased fund flow to States, the responsibility of assessing the impact of implementation of schemes is increasingly on the States. Further, more and more States are now developing State/District Indicator Frameworks for SDGs, which would lead to more extensive data collection and reporting. The data collected at the district level will be extremely significant and the statistical system will need to be strengthened for coping with rising complexity and better monitoring of SDGs and associated targets.

*At local levels:* Academicians, Researchers and CSOs have been highlighting the need to have disaggregated quality data on development parameters pertaining to vulnerable groups including children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV, transgender, older persons, tribals, dalits, refugees, internally displaced persons and so on, which are essential to the monitoring of progress under the SDG framework.

Considering its vast population, It is widely agreed that India's performance will greatly influence world's progress in achieving the SDGs. As the 'Decade of Action' hots up, the need for information and data on SDG targets and indicators will be more acutely felt by a wide array of institutions at every level. Therefore, the imperative of building a versatile data system ranging from local to national level has never been greater.

### **Coordination mechanism for SDG Monitoring:**

#### Mandate

UN agencies in India are committed to work to support the Government for the successful implementation of the SDGs in India. The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) has already provided inputs in course of the preparation of the NIF and development of SDG Dashboard to streamline the entire decision making process of the country.

MoSPI is committed to collaborate with other data producers and partner with the UNCT, academia, civil society organizations and the private sector, to develop and enhance statistical capacities on SDGs. In this context, MoSPI has constituted six Sectoral Committee viz., "Poverty, Agriculture & Food Security", "Labour & Employment & Education", "Health & Gender related issues", "Environment and Climate Change", "Good Governance and Capacity Development" and "Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, Block Chain, Machine Learning for SDGs", comprising members from central Ministries/ Departments, Representatives from UN Agencies in India, experts from research institutions and other stakeholders. The terms of reference of these committees include but not limited to examine and deliberate on the methodology of global indicators and their possible adoption in Indian context, suggest to conduct study or pilot testing for the indicators, assessment of data gaps in respect of SDGs indicators and suggesting on bridging of data gaps and so on.

MoSPI, in compliance to Terms of Reference of High Level Steering Committee (HLSC), has constituted a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) under chairpersonship of Director General, National Statistical Office, MoSPI with members from central Ministries and representatives from UN Agencies in India. The terms of reference of TAC include but not limited to examination and review the proposal on refinement of National Indicator Framework as well as global SDG Indicators including recommendation of methodological studies *inter-alia* pilot studies and pilot surveys on SDG indicators, State Indicator Framework,

recommend new surveys to collect data for the indicators where data is not available, recommend suitable measures on SDG awareness and publicity programmes and capacity development and so on.

NITI Aayog is coordinating the efforts towards achieving the SDGs at the national level while working with States and UTs in their efforts at SDG localization, implementation and monitoring. As mentioned above, the SDG India Index ranking and reporting based on select NIF indicators has created new benchmarks as well as vast possibilities for comparative analytics on SDGs. Going forward, the scope and compass of the Index is expected to significantly expand. UN has supported NITI Aayog in this process and will continue to do so.

In the above context, the earlier proposed Data for Development Coordination Committee will now be termed as 'Data for Development Coordination Forum on SDGs'. The Forum is proposed with the mandate of developing a data plan, assisting in the development of a sound measurement; improving the indicator framework after a thorough review with all stakeholders and assisting TAC and HLSC. This Forum will also have the mandate of developing new data sources, methods and tools to strengthen the data system on the SDGs.

#### Scope of Activities

The proposed areas of activity of the Forum on SDGs are as follows:

1. Support statistical monitoring and reporting of SDGs within the framework of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;
2. Support capacity-building, partnership and coordination for tracking of SDGs, especially at disaggregated levels;
3. Development of SDG Data Intelligence Platform including SDG Dashboard for SDG indicators;
4. Facilitate standardization, modernization and harmonization of data infrastructures and identify ways to leverage the resources of the private sector;
5. Promote engagement between the statistical community and other stakeholders working on the implementation and monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal indicators; and
6. Promote awareness about SDGs among community and stakeholders by developing awareness strategies and creatives;

#### Composition and Structure

The Data for Development Coordination Forum on SDGs will be co-chaired by Director-General, NSO, MoSPI and the Resident Coordinator, United Nations. It will be composed of Adviser (SDG) - NITI Aayog, senior statistical officers /SDG nodal officers from other line Ministries, other officers from MoSPI, and representatives from UN agencies and will meet once a quarter. This Forum shall be responsible to provide overall guidance to deliver as per the scope of activities,

as identified above. The Coordination Forum may invite other experts from State governments and Line Ministries, including institutions like International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), among others. Further, private entities working on data intelligence platforms, big data etc. may also be invited.

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## ANNEXURE-I

Details of MoU signed between MoSPI, United Nations India and NITI Aayog

Sr. No	Signatory Parties	Date of Signing	Validity Period	Broad Purpose
1	MoSPI, United Nations India and NITI Aayog	27.07.2020	27.07.2022 (Two years from the date of signing)	Through this MoU, the concerned parties aim to create a framework of cooperation and strengthen collaboration among them. The overall purpose of the MoU is to collaborate on issues related to Statistical monitoring of Goals and Targets of SDGs, including the use of new technologies for monitoring, capacity development to track SDG related outcomes and any other emerging requirements, articulated by MoSPI and NITI Aayog.