

The Republic of India

Positions for The Economic and Social Council

I. Facilitating Economic and Social Protections for Vulnerable Populations

Vulnerable populations have been a specific focus of the United Nations and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since their inception 75 years. In the same interest, the Republic of India is committed to protecting and elevating these populations to reduce the number of deaths and economic losses by people in vulnerable situations, as stated in the UN Development Programme's (UNDP) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) target 11.5.¹ General Assembly Resolution 72/139 lists vulnerable populations (VPs) as including “all children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees, and internally displaced persons and migrants.” There are a wide array of peoples included in this population that face workplace and housing discrimination, legislature exclusion, and barriers to medical assistance, therefore facilitating their socio-economic protection is extremely important to securing their rights as listed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.²

The World Health Organization estimates that 15 percent of the world, or one billion people, live with a disability. While all issues related to VPs are essential to India, one of the most relevant communities is people with disabilities. In 2011, the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) reported that 5.4 million people in India live with a disability that impaired their ability to move, while 5 million struggled with seeing impairments, and 5.1 million more citizens live with a hearing disability.³ These statistics led India to pass the Rights of Persons with Disability Act (RPWD) in 2016, which is a more inclusive addition to the original 1995 bill. The new bill stressed nondiscrimination, equal opportunity, accessibility, and several other important factors to include when considering persons with disabilities. In addition to this, the development of Smart Cities in India creates aids to hard of hearing and seeing people, infrastructure for wheelchair users, and barrier-free urban infrastructure.⁴

India believes that a person becomes disabled when they are excluded from policymaking and infrastructure planning. In order to achieve SDG 10.2, promoting universal social, economic, and political inclusion, the international community must ensure that VPs are not excluded from policymaking and legislature. India proposes a list of Best Practices that Member States would use when creating legislature on VPs, which would include crisis preparedness for the vulnerable, accessible infrastructure, equal education and employment opportunities, and access to adequate healthcare. When all vulnerable populations are included in socio-economic protections, everyone will prosper.

¹ “The Sustainable Development Goals.” UNDP, 2015.

² A/RES/72/139.

³ “World Report on Disability.” World Health Organization, 2011.

⁴ “Making Disabled Friendly Smart Cities.” National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People.

II. Promoting Economic Growth in Post-Conflict Societies

The Republic of India has an extensive and proud history of peacebuilding, historically providing over 200,000 troops to 49 different United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.⁵ Because of this experience, India is acutely aware of many shortcomings in post-conflict societies. While ECOSOC works closely with the Peacebuilding Commission on many of these operations, there are still areas in dire need of improvement because post-conflict societies suffer greatly from weakened state capacity, distorted economic incentives, and high poverty and unemployment rates, while also mitigating conflict recurrence and issues that arise thereof.⁶ The SDGs are sure to include people affected by the effects of violent conflict, specifically focused on promoting peace and justice for all by strengthening capacity in developing Member States in order to prevent violence and conflict recurrence as clearly stated in target 16.a. Many post-conflict societies are within developing Member States, and India intends to ensure this fact is remembered when creating solutions for promoting economic growth.

India finds that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are imperative to developing Member States and post-conflict societies. With over 503 million total internet users and 227 million internet users in rural areas, India has one of the highest rates of rural internet users in the world.⁷ Because of a 10 percent increase in internet traffic over the course of 2013-2016, a 3.1 percent increase in gross domestic product per capita was noticed.⁸ India has also invested in several forms of e-governance so that citizens may use features such as transferring and exchanging money digitally, submitting important forms without having to appear physically, and engaging in government.⁹ The convenience of online governance means that citizens no longer have to travel to take care of such things, and do not have to take time off work.

India finds that in order to properly address economic growth in post-conflict societies, the communication needs of people living in these situations must be met so that they might be made aware of changes to local government, updated on international crises that may affect them, and ease of applying for employment or government assistance. Working closely with both the United Nations Office of Information and Communication Technology and the Peacebuilding Commission would be imperative to success in disseminating ICTs to developing post-conflict societies. India recognizes that every community has different needs, therefore the distribution of ICTs in each community should reflect them, so that no citizen is left behind.

⁵ "UN Peacekeeping: India's Contributions." Ambassador Asoke Kumar Mukerji, 2019.

⁶ "Crisis Prevention and Recovery Report 2008: Post-Conflict Economic Recovery - Enabling Local Ingenuity." UNDP, 2008.

⁷ "For the first time, India has more rural net users than urban." Digbijay Mishra & Madhav Chanchani, 2020.

⁸ "Growth Dividends of Digital Communications." Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, 2018.

⁹ "Information and Communication Technologies: Key to Transform India." Lt General Davinder Kumar, 2016.