Statement of Republic of India
Agenda 4 (b): Social Development
80th Session of UNESCAP

Thank you, Madam Chair,

Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

We thank the Secretariat for the reports and briefings that have guided our deliberations on this important agenda item.

Global community is grappling with multiple challenges that are limiting our progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The need of the hour is to redouble our efforts to sustain socio-economic progress, keeping the needs of people and their wellbeing at the centre of all our efforts.

India's social development strategies encompass a range of initiatives, targeted at poverty alleviation and ensuring livelihood, improved access to affordable and quality healthcare, education and skill development. Digital technologies are being used for expedited government service delivery through deployment of citizen-centric technologies.

India has followed a model of SDG implementation based on localisation, has successfully integrated the 2030 Agenda from national to local governance, all the way to individual households.

The evidence of the success of our localisation efforts lies in achievements and outcomes in the past nine years. 248 million people have escaped multidimensional poverty in India during the last decade. A Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), our food security initiative supplies food over 800 million beneficiaries.

Poverty is a multidimensional issue. A range of tailored schemes address various dimensions of poverty:

- The Clean Water Mission has facilitated tap water connections for 142 million households.
- The National Housing Scheme has overseen the construction of 40 million affordable houses in urban and rural areas.
- Through the Smoke-Free India Mission, more than 101 million connections to clean cooking fuel (LPG) have been distributed.
- The National Mission on Financial Inclusion has led to the opening of 510 million bank accounts, promoting access to financial services.
- There are also targeted programmes to empower persons with disabilities and to facilitate their participation in all aspects of society and economy.

India's biometric-based unique identification system - 'Aadhaar', now covers more than 95% of the country's population, facilitating access to a range of social protection services.

India has also launched the world's largest digitally operated, cashless, and paperless healthcare initiative, known as the 'National Health Protection Scheme' or Ayushman Bharat.

We recognize that transformational role that Artificial Intelligence can play in achieving sustainable development goals and we remain committed to responsible and ethical use of these technologies.

As India endeavors to build a more prosperous and inclusive society, we remain committed to engage with Member States and the ESCAP for achievement of the SDGs by 2030.

Thank you Chair.