

**Statement during the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of India in the 41st session of the UPR Working Group (7-18 November 2022) delivered by Ms. Nivedita Prasad, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development**

**[Geneva, 10th November 2022]**

**Mr. President,**

I am Nivedita Prasad and I speak on behalf of the Ministry of Rural Development. India is strongly committed to holistic, inclusive and sustainable development for all its citizens including the poor and the marginalised.

2. India, with more than 65 percent of the population in rural areas, has adopted multi-pronged strategy to address multiple dimensions of poverty and improve the people's well-being.

3. The enactment of the National Food Security Act, 2013 marked a paradigm shift from welfare to rights-based approach as it legally entitled two-thirds of the Indian population to receive subsidized foodgrains under the world’s largest Targeted Public Distribution System. The “One Nation One Ration Card Plan” empowers about 810 million beneficiaries under the Act, including migrant workers.

4. In addition, the Government has taken several initiatives aimed at reducing poverty and providing basic amenities to people:

• The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act provides guaranteed employment of one hundred days to rural poor households to improve their livelihood base.

• Under the National Rural Livelihood Mission, more than 80 million rural household have been mobilised into 7.6 million self-help groups and have been provided financial and technical assistance for livelihood promotion.

• Under the Housing for All scheme, construction of 20.5 million houses in rural areas and 6.4 million houses in urban areas have been completed.

• The rural sanitation coverage stands at 100% under the Clean India Campaign. More than 94% of the population have access to clean drinking water sources.

• The rural road connectivity scheme has improved the transportation network, reduced travel time, and improved access to schools, hospitals and markets.

• The National Social Assistance Programme provides financial assistance for elderly persons, widows, persons with disabilities, and families who have lost their primary bread winner.

• Representation of women and marginalised communities in decision making bodies at the district, block, village level and other urban local bodies has been ensured through the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts of 1992.

5. Good governance measures like Direct Benefit Transfers and Aadhar Payment System have ensured transparency and accurate targeting of the beneficiaries. For instance, 61.6 million workers under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme have been linked to Aadhaar based payments.

6. We remain resolute to end poverty in all forms and dimensions and empower communities.

**I thank you.**