

Standing Committee Report Summary

Preparedness for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals

- The Public Accounts Committee (Chair: Mr. Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury) submitted its report on the subject 'Preparedness for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)'. In 2015, the United Nations adopted 17 SDGs as targets to be achieved by 2030. These include: (i) no poverty, (ii) zero hunger, and (iii) quality education. The Committee report is based on a 2019 audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) on NITI Aayog, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), and the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI). Key observations and recommendations include:
 - **Implementation of SDGs:** NITI Aayog is responsible for coordinating and overseeing overall implementation of the SDGs, which includes identifying national targets and assigning them to Ministries and Departments. The Committee highlighted certain deficiencies in preparedness for implementation of SDGs. These include: (i) absence of a defined roadmap with milestones to achieve SDG targets in the time of audit, (ii) failure to release a 15-year vision document on strategy and action agenda, and (iii) absence of mapping of key schemes for implementation by five of the seven states audited. The Committee directed the central government to bring more clarity in the role of NITI Aayog in the implementation of SDGs.
 - **Awareness:** The Committee noted that the United Nations highlighted raising awareness as a tool to raise awareness. It recommended extending awareness programmes on SDGs to educational institutions, and youth organisations. In case of SDGs related to health, the Committee recommended including members of Parliament, legislative assemblies, and local government to raise awareness and increase participation of people.
 - **Budgeting:** The Committee highlighted that no exercise to assess and identify financial resources required to implement SDGs has been undertaken by the audited state governments and the central Ministry of Finance. The Committee recommended taking steps to integrate SDGs in national budgeting.
 - **National Indicator Framework:** MOSPI is responsible for developing the National Indicator Framework (NIF) to measure the progress of SDGs and ensuring that state governments have adequate capacity to monitor and implement SDGs. The Committee highlighted that the NIF was finalised in 2018, leading to delays in preparing baseline data and aligning timelines. The Committee also noted that data for key indicators was not collected, which may lead to delays in preparing a roadmap for achieving timelines.
- **Integration of framework for health targets:** The MoHFW is responsible for fulfilling the SDG of 'Good Health and Well Being'. The Committee observed that a working group set up by the MoHFW to ensure coordination with state governments had not had any meetings. It recommended undertaking efforts to ensure coordination between ministries, and between central and state governments.
- **Public health expenditure:** The Committee observed that allocation towards public health in India is lesser than the 2.5% of the GDP recommended by the National Health Mission. It recommended increasing spending on public health ensure that SDGs linked to health are fulfilled.
- **Public healthcare facilities:** The Committee observed that India has a low number of public health centres. It noted that the government plans to transform 1.5 lakh sub, primary and urban primary health centres and wellness centres by 2022 under the Ayushman Bharat scheme. It recommended posting at least one allopathic doctor with paramedical staff in each wellness centre to enhance healthcare services in remote areas.
- **Participation of private sector:** NITI Aayog holds stakeholder meetings to ensure the implementation is sustainable and inclusive. The Committee observed: (i) repeated delays in finalising outcomes and placing reports in public domains, (ii) a failure to identify outcomes and recommendations for time-bound action, and (iii) absence of mechanisms to seek feedback from stakeholders. It also noted that the private sector can become a key stakeholder in implementing SDGs. The Committee particularly highlighted its role in transfer of technology, creation of public goods and effective implementation of policies. The Committee has recommended framing detailed guidelines for participation of businesses in the implementation of SDGs.

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