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INDIA STATEMENT
Minister of State for External Affairs
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Mr. President,

We commemorate today the 30th Anniversary of the adoption of the landmark Declaration of the Right to Development. This commitment was, in a very fundamental sense, another major stride in the journey we began in 1945 with the adoption of the United Nations Charter, and carried forward with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Covenants of 1966, the 1986 Declaration on the Right to Development, the 1993 Vienna Declaration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Our history is a litany of good intentions, and it has worked, to a point. An estimated 200 million fewer people are living in extreme poverty than in 2012.

But while we may be missing the real point: the pace of aspiration has quickened in the 21st century to an unprecedented degree. Those still trapped in dire poverty want development now. They cannot eat statistics.

The poor will not wait. Why should they? They know that 1% of the world's population now owns 50% of its total wealth. While the poor have a little more bread; the rich have acquired castles.

The Right to Development is a noble and necessary objective. The people's right is a government's duty. This duty is simple: economic progress must have a human face, and that is the face of the poor. The first and largest share of development must go to those who need it most. Our iconic leader Mahatma Gandhi made this his creed and his catechism: hunger, he said, is the worst form of cruelty

. PM Modi has launched a radical programme to eliminate the curse of poverty. Prime Minister Narendra Modi set the bar with his first speech in Parliament after he took office a little more than two years ago when he said that the era of poverty alleviation was over and the age of poverty elimination had begun. His projects seek to improve quality of life and economic empowerment, with women as a primary focus, now. Over the last two years Rs. 200,000 crores is being disbursed as small loans to the poor for sustainable small-scale, home-based or micro-level businesses. There is a nationwide toilet programme. Gas cylinders are being supplied to the kitchens of the poor to save women and children from the toxic effects of smoke. History's largest bank enrolment programme has given bank accounts to 200 million Indians who were, not so long ago, psychologically unable to enter a bank. Corruption is surely the biggest enemy of positive discrimination schemes: these bank accounts have enabled a direct transfer of funds from government to beneficiary without passing through one or more middlemen. This is only a glimpse of what India is doing.

The World must compete in development.

Sometimes we get lost in debate over civil, political, economic and social rights. Debate is important in order to find clarity, and to learn from one another in this "global village", but debate must not impede delivery. A world with islands of prosperity amidst a sea of want is not only morally untenable, it is also politically unsustainable. Development is the only guarantee of stability.

Education is the cornerstone of development: we must maximize investment in the child, expand knowledge to fight superstition, prejudice and ignorance. The child, as has been said, is the father of man.

While at one level, there has been only limited success for efforts to achieve a more equitable and just trading regime, one that assists the most vulnerable economies such as the LDCs, LLDCs and the SIDs, there are positive signs also.

The adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the more comprehensive SDGs represent our collective obligation to improve lives of people.

The debate around Financing for Development and the democratic reforms of the Bretton Woods institutions also represent the continuing struggle for a fairer global system that can assist accelerated development to benefit those who need it most.

In this context, the significance of the establishment of the New Development Bank by the BRICS as also south-south cooperation is being widely recognized.

While nation states must do all within their powers to bring education, healthcare, sanitation, housing, employment to their peoples, the international community, especially the developed world must help make global governance more democratic and equitable.

Mr. President,

With a view to strengthening international cooperation on this issue and to support efforts to mainstream the right to development among various UN bodies and development agencies, there is a need for new mechanisms such as a Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development to strengthen the work of the Human Rights Council on the Right to Development particularly in the context of 2030 Agenda.

We cannot have prosperity without peace, and the principal threat to peace now is terrorism. The poor are most vulnerable to terrorism, not least because conflict abort economic development.

The challenge of the 21st century is to seek peace in all its dimensions, but there is no peace greater than peace of mind. Food, shelter and an economic future are fundamental human rights. They must become the new normal in every corner of the globe.

I Thank You.