

CAG Report on Preparedness for Implementation of SDGs tabled in Parliament

Report No 8 of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India on Audit of Preparedness for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal was tabled in the Parliament today. CAG audited preparedness activities of selected **17 Central Ministries** including, NITI Aayog, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW) and **seven States** - Assam, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Kerala, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. **Goal 3 –‘Good Health and Well-Being’** was selected for detailed examination.

INTORUDCTION - NITI Aayog, which is responsible for overseeing implementation of SDGs, periodically reviews and monitors the preparedness of States, UTs and Central Ministries in achieving the SDG targets. Additionally, it had constituted a multi-disciplinary Task Force to monitor the implementation of SDGs. It has also developed the SDG India Index and Dashboard in 2018 based on 62 priority indicators for rapid assessment of SDG implementation in the States and UTs. MoSPI has prepared a National Indicator Framework (NIF) in consultation with the Ministries and States. Linked with these initiatives, States have also taken initial steps for creating monitoring and reporting frameworks.

The UN General Assembly in September 2015, adopted resolution titled *‘Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’* consisting of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 associated targets. The Agenda allows each Government to set its own national targets based on national circumstances and decide how global targets would be incorporated into national planning processes, policies and strategies.

Main findings

(A) Adapting the 2030 Agenda

- i.* A road map is yet to be aligned with defined milestones for SDG targets to be achieved in the year 2020, 2025 and 2030.

(Para 2.2)

- ii.* Vision document is still under preparation. States are yet to prepare policy documents. Mapping of Goals/Targets undertaken by NITI Aayog and selected States is still ongoing.

(Para 2.3)

- iii.* Efforts to raise public awareness about SDGs and initiatives undertaken in the selected States were not comprehensive, focussed or sustained.

(Para 2.4)

- iv.* States may need to strengthen institutional arrangements by identifying support departments and defining roles and responsibilities.

(Para 2.5)

(B) Resource Mobilisation for the 2030 Agenda

- i.* The Strategy document did not project the financing and budgeting requirements. While it is recognised that projecting financial resources for achieving the Targets by 2030 is a challenging task, Ministry of Finance and State Governments are yet to integrate SDG related financial resources in national budgeting for implementing SDGs.

(Para 3.2)

(C) Monitoring and Reporting

- i.* Delay in approval of NIF held up finalisation of monitoring and reporting framework on implementation of SDGs. Initiatives undertaken in selected States were still in progress.

(Para 4.2)

- ii.* There was no proposal to identify milestones for the national indicators. Out of 306 indicators included in NIF, data for 137 indicators were not yet available.

(Para 4.3)

(D) Goal 3: Good Health and Well Being

i. Mapping in respect of Goal 3 was not comprehensive in selected States.

(Para 5.2)

ii. Though States had indicated actions to formulate plans and policies in line with Goal 3, delays and absence of a holistic approach were noted.

(Para 5.3)

iii. Three Ministries¹ linked with Goal 3, were not involved in national consultation. Specific and sustained measures for promoting awareness and stakeholder involvement with Goal 3 were not seen in the States.

(Para 5.4)

iv. Ministries associated with Goal 3 were not represented in Task Force and working groups/sub-groups. Policy coherence initiatives undertaken were either absent or inadequate in States.

(Para 5.5)

v. There is still a long way to go before the target of public health expenditure is achieved and the central allocation for health for 2019-20 was far short of target. In States, health spending as a percentage of total States expenditure, ranged from 3.29 to 5.32 *per cent* which shows that this need considerable augmentation.

(Para 5.6)

vi. Data for certain health indicators were not regularly or uniformly available.

(Para 5.7)

Recommendations:

- A comprehensive charter and action plan with well-defined milestones for implementing SDGs, should be formulated after due consultations.
- Finalisation of Vision document should be expedited.
- Initiatives for enhancing public awareness and sensitisation about SDGs must be stepped up so that the process of implementation becomes participatory and inclusive.

- NITI Aayog in association with the Ministry of Finance must make an assessment of requirement and availability of financial resources for implementing SDGs for different time frames. States should also take up similar exercise. In addition, urgent steps may be taken to integrate SDGs into the accounting and budgeting framework both at the Centre and the States.
- Use of ‘Direct Benefit Transfers’ should be expanded and strengthened to avoid leakages and to improve efficiency in usage of financial resources.
- Following the publication of the NIF, tasks critical for monitoring and reporting on implementation of SDGs such as identifying baseline data for remaining 137 indicators, assessing availability of data and creation of a monitoring and reporting framework should be expedited.

BSC/RSJ/SS/TT