



*Prof. Arvind Panagariya, Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog addressing the Valedictory Session. Also seen in picture (from left to right) are Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS; Amb. Shyam Saran, Chairman, RIS; Prof. T.C.A. Anant, Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation; and Mr. Yuri Afanasiev, UN Resident Coordinator, India*

Prof. Arvind Panagariya, Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog addressing the valedictory session of the two day consultation focussing on Industrialisation and Employment for Sustainable Growth in India relating to SDGs 8 and 9 on 2-3 August 2016 in New Delhi, underscored India had a huge influence on framing of SDGs. He emphasised that Prime Minister during his recent visit to NITI Aayog categorically mentioned that our vision document should have the clear goal of elimination of poverty. In this context the SDGs 8 & 9 would be the guiding principles.

Thus, many of the national objectives are covered in these which saves us from conflict that arise between national objectives and super-national objectives coming from international agencies.” He also emphasised that poverty elevation is the major objective of the government and all other objectives like health, education, growth, etc., can be achieved only when poverty is addressed. People with income have more capacity to use public services. He said “SDGs are objectives and not goals, objective 8 decent work is a goal and we have to look at how to provide decent work to the large unskilled labour we have.” We have a huge work force which is an asset and needs to be explored and used to maximum.

Prof. Bibek Debroy, Member, NITI Aayog in his address highlighted that the present government’s focus has been on infrastructure especially physical infrastructure for

improved connectivity. It was emphasised that if infrastructure is to be truly sustainable, we need to understand what resilient infrastructure looks like, and there is need to compare infrastructure designs and systems to achieve the most resilient outcome. It was felt that infrastructure projects need huge investment and thus policies should be formulated to attract private investors in these projects and PPP is a successful model for this. It was also felt that if infrastructure would improve the connectivity would improve thereby bringing in increase in trade which will eventually help in better incomes and higher GDP and thus will help in poverty elevation which is at the heart of the SDGs.

Prof. T.C.A. Anant, Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said “SDGs are enormous opportunity for us. It is comprehensive articulation of growth and development and this articulation represents global consensus.” We have fairly complex and interconnected challenges. The need is to devise the right sort of policy to meet challenges that we have in India. Policy need to have clearly measurable outcomes. He ended by saying that these discussions are beginning of a process of as to what we are going to do in next 15 years.

Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS, Amb. Shyam Saran, Chairman, RIS; Prof. T.C.A. Anant, Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation and Mr. Yuri Afanasiev, UN Resident Coordinator, India also addressed the Valedictory Session. The National Consultation on SDGs: Industrialisation and Employment for Sustainable Growth in India, focusing on SDGs 8 & 9, had been organised by RIS with NITI Aayog and UN.

The discussions also looked upon the green financing and green accounting. There is need for recurrent system to develop certain key indicators as in OECD. Developing a green accounting framework is not easy. However, the system of national accounting is changing and the problem is more technical as to how social cost can be calculated. For example, it is easy to value fish but not pond. There are issues like ground water level depletion and lack of rain water harvesting which have to be kept in mind while developing infrastructure. Green accounting surely can offer valuable policy input.

The discussions also highlighted the need for innovation for sustainable development. There is need to find innovative solutions that can be used by society as a whole. There are examples of innovation which are very basic and can be used by poor. There is need to promote such innovations and also to look how these new products can be promoted.