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## India's G20 Presidency - Working Collectively, Purposefully for an Inclusive, Equitable & Greener Tomorrow

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As the largest democracy India's G20 presidency, which began in December 2022, has been a singular effort to showcase New Delhi's steadfast commitment to multilateralism and people-centred development. *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* or "One Earth, One Family, One Future", is emblematic of India's historical and continued emphasis on the interconnectedness of all people across the globe and resonates with our own heritage of striving for universal brotherhood, peace and harmony.

While the G20 represents the concerns and ideas of a global landscape, every host country brings to the fore some unique contributions. Last year in Bali at the G20 Summit, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi promised that India's G20 presidency would be "decisive, inclusive, ambitious and action oriented." Indeed,

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since India took on the G20 Presidency, we have spared no effort to make the process action oriented. Our call to action has been a resounding one for worldwide collaboration. We have constantly emphasized the need to address challenges collectively, highlight the interests of the Global South, harness the power of technology for the benefit of humanity, promote sustainable lifestyles, and de-politicise the global supply of essential goods. In this process, India has relentlessly pushed the envelope on all that needs to get done to bring these goals to fruition.

This reflects India's steadfast commitment to sustainable, comprehensive, responsible and inclusive development, embodying our vision of an inclusive future built on trust and harmony. Our proficiency in using technology to accelerate social welfare as well as our social, political and cultural ethos, are giving shape to a progressive global discourse. Guided by values of universality, India convened the Voice of the Global South Summit with 125 developing countries in January 2023 and has been piloting the G20 platform to resonate the Global South's perspective, pushing for systems that ensure energy security and equity for the developing world. As part of Prime Minister Modi's vision to ensure fair and inclusive representation within the forum, India advocated for the inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member of the G20 well in advance, which materialised during the New Delhi Summit held on 9-10 September 2023.

This fits in well with current day realities. According to a recent International Monetary Fund report, most of the global growth – 80 per cent of the total -- is expected to come from the developing and emerging economies. The share of growth of the developed world is coming down. In view of this the emerging and developing countries get a bigger voice in setting the global agenda and benefit from a greater share of resources and funds available to tackle pressing problems like climate change. The world also needs a financial architecture that is designed to take care of the developing

and emerging economies. This is why India's G20 Presidency has, as one of its objectives, focused on reformation of global multilateral financial institutions.

During its G20 Presidency, India has emerged as a global leader in driving equity, transparency and accessibility by strengthening its digital public infrastructure (DPI). India serves as an example of how a convergent approach by the public and private sectors towards digital transformation can drive a significant impact on the lives of citizens. Today, in spite of considerable advances in digital technologies, a large swathe of the global population is not part of the formal financial system (about 1.4 billion people still remain unbanked); they are unable to reach the national marketplace quickly. This is because less than one-third of countries globally have a fast payment system, in spite of widespread international efforts to jump start the process; and are unable to make tangible gains in finance, health and commerce through data empowerment as consumers have poor access to their data, no control over where it is stored, or how it is processed or sold.

India's experience has shown that effective and inclusive DPIS -- interoperable digital platforms that address a specific need such as identity, digital payments, and trusted data sharing but when put together, create a powerful stack ("India Stack") of integrated applications—can help countries shorten the learning and adoption curve of the evolutionary processes. One rough estimate suggests that a well thought out DPI framework allowed India to achieve in a decade what it would have otherwise taken nearly 50 years had India relied on traditional growth processes.

The scale of challenge (and achievement) in India cannot be understated. In just a decade, over 800 million people acquired a verifiable identity; over 80 per cent of the population (600 million) had access to financial services with the single most massive jump in financial inclusion ever measured. India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is an example of how the regulator (e.g. the central bank) and

the regulated (e.g. commercial banks) can together run a payment system that is voluntary, instant, costless, operates around the clock in a modular, interoperable fashion that enables participation by a variety of firms ranging from banks to boutique fintechs and BigTech. It provides all the network benefits that BigTech systems usually provide, but without the monopolistic outcomes. Today, the UPI is running at nearly 8 billion transactions a month.

More recently, the COVID pandemic demonstrated the power of DPIs. Countries with effective DPIs could provide emergency fiscal transfers to hundreds of millions of people; their health systems could support and coordinate vaccine deployment across large populations; their education systems could offer platforms for learning during lockdowns; and, their digital commerce platforms augmented by digital payment systems could blunt the worst ravages of the lockdowns. The Digital Public Infrastructure Summit was a symbol of India's efforts to showcase its vision for harnessing the power of DPI as a transformative tool in policy governance. Under the Digital Economy Working Group, all G20 countries endorsed the New Delhi Digital Agenda (NDDA) for the development of a common framework for DPIs. The creation of a global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository (GDPIR) for the G20 is a pathbreaking step towards this goal.

Technological developments over the last two decades have led to an explosion in the availability of data and the collection of large amounts of valuable consumer data – often referred to as “big data”. In such a setting, it is important to be clear about who has control over these data, where they are stored, with whom and under what conditions they are shared. The privacy laws of most countries describe the set of principles that define how personal data are handled. However, despite these legal measures, consumers rarely know the benefits of the data that pertain to them and are usually unable to access their data stored in proprietary silos in incompatible formats. Individuals need a way to take back

control of their data. Given the enormity of data involved, the need to keep it secure, and with low transaction costs, any system that gives individuals control of their data will need to be digital. India's Data Empowerment and Privacy Architecture offers a techno-legal solution that allows individuals to determine what can be done with their data by using a consent-based data-sharing system.

On climate change, India has sought global cooperation in sharing best practices for strategies to combat the climate crisis. The potential of citizen-led action to live in harmony with the environment, right from the grassroots level, can be seen from the traditional Indian way of life. Taking this pro-planet approach, India has been urging global citizens to actively engage in the mass movement towards Lifestyle for Environment. The Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Working Group and the G20 Chief Scientific Advisors' Roundtable (CSAR) have also been pioneered by India.

There is also a strong case for a new development model being felt, one that accelerates decarbonisation and a just energy transition, while accelerating economic growth and job creation. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the global energy transition has the potential to create millions of new green jobs. The Global South is expected to account for two-thirds of global infrastructure investments, offering a great opportunity to leapfrog over the carbonised industrialisation system of the past and adopt decarbonised industrialisation and economic development in the form of Green Development. This is an opportunity that the G20 must seize and act upon collectively. Climate change and acceleration towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals are two key priorities of the Indian presidency; two sides of the same coin. The effects of climate change, if not managed properly, will push vulnerable nations back on their SDGs.

The Indian G20 presidency has come at the midpoint of implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and

provided an opportunity to recalibrate, steer and deliver progress on SDGs. It is now well-recognised that the impacts of a crisis are very often gendered, exacting their highest price on women and girls, affecting their safety, livelihoods and health. India's Presidency of G20 brought an enormous focus on the role of women and gender equality. Prime Minister Modi has very often highlighted the imperative need for tackling critical issues of women's access to finance, entrepreneurship, and labor force participation.

Prime Minister Modi's vision of women-led development has been actively spearheaded by the Development Working Group, the W20 engagement group and the recently constituted EMPOWER 20 alliance. India is championing the cause of women as equal stakeholders in initiating and leading sustainable development across the world. W20 India has agreed upon some radical suggestions such as a minimum 15 per cent tax break, or other equivalent incentives for women-led technology and tech-enabled start-ups. There is also a consensus that by 2030, the digital gender gap (including mobile phone ownership) must be halved by addressing barriers around affordability, literacy and digital skills, accessibility, online safety and others. Addressing the G20 Ministerial Conference on Women Empowerment in August, Prime Minister Modi said: "When women prosper, the world prospers. Their economic empowerment fuels growth. Their access to education drives global progress. Their leadership fosters inclusivity and their voices inspire positive change. The most effective way to empower women is through a women-led development approach. India is making strides in this direction."

Despite education being wholly acknowledged as the cornerstone of empowerment, globally only 49 per cent have achieved gender parity in primary education, 42 per cent in lower secondary education, and 24 per cent in upper secondary education. World over, around 1.1 billion women and girls remain outside the formal financial system, many of whom have limited access

to digital technologies. Similarly, in countries across the world, women perform significantly higher unpaid care work. Therefore, it is crucial that the G20 works together and drives consensus and actions around dismantling these long-term structural barriers that women face and their lives at work.

For a world that is becoming increasingly vulnerable to climate change and scarcity of water, millets, now a modern diet superfood, can become the answer. Millets hold long-standing significance in India's agricultural and culinary history. They are a phenomenally sustainable home-grown resource which we have offered to the world during the G20 proceedings. Global attendees have greatly appreciated the multi-cuisine millet-based food options offered at G20 meetings across India. Millets can address global food crises and fortify nutritional security. At the G20 Agriculture Ministers meeting, a historic consensus was achieved on the International Millets and Other Ancient Grains Research Initiative. The Deccan High-Level Principles adopted by the Agriculture Working Group also showcased the G20's shared responsibility in addressing global food security crises.

As the undisputed start-up capital of the world, a Startup20 Engagement Group to build global discourse on new-age entrepreneurship and provide resources and support to startups from G20 member countries was established by the Indian G20 Presidency. With a staggering number of over 98,000 start-ups, 400+ incubators, and 108+ unicorns, India has firmly established itself as the global start-up capital. These cutting-edge innovative ventures are not only transforming the socio-economic landscape of India but are also attracting the interest of international investors and governments. The Startup20 Engagement Group has recommended a Startup Governance Maturity Level Framework, addressing each stage of the startup journey.

During India's G20 presidency, various working groups have made significant progress in addressing critical global priorities. The

anti-corruption working group has seen strong participation from member-countries, with India set to host the first-ever in-person anti-corruption ministerial meeting. India's trade and investment working group has focused on trade digitization, developing hinterland logistics, financing needs of micro, small and medium enterprises, building resilient global value chains, and reforming global financial institutions such as the World Trade Organization. It has taken up women economic empowerment and promotion of sustainable trade as well. In parallel, all working groups under the finance track have also met, prioritizing global macroeconomic concerns, such as addressing debt distress, monitoring global economic risks, reforming international financial architecture, international taxation, financing quality infrastructure, sustainable finance, financial inclusion, and preparedness for global health emergencies. The tourism and culture working groups too worked hard to boost green tourism as a driver of growth and preserve and promote traditional cultures.

A unique aspect of India's G20 Presidency was its engagement with the length and breadth of India. In the run up to the 2023 G20 Summit, India has hosted 220 meetings across a staggering 60 cities, covering all provinces and centrally administered union territories. This feat sets a new benchmark for any G20 presidency, as the broadest geographical expanse of meeting locations ever observed in a single country. India has already successfully welcomed 18,000 delegates hailing from over 115 different nationalities to G20 meetings and associated events. Through various G20-related *Jan Bhagidari* (People's Participation) activities, we have also had the enthusiastic participation of more than 15 million citizens from every segment of society.

The New Delhi 2023 Summit had put together an exemplary display of global cooperation. With multiple intertwined crises, the world is on the edge of a precipice. India's presidency of the G20 has been instrumental in showing the world how unlocking holistic



solutions to solve the most pressing challenges of our times is possible. This, in turn, propels inclusive growth and development. As one of the world's fastest-growing economies and a representative of diverse voices, India aims to influence policies that will advance the collective well-being of the global family towards a sustainable future. The New Delhi G20 summit brought together the largest-ever contingent of delegations, including from six African countries – indicative of India keeping the promises it had outlined at the start of its presidency. The foundations built by India will go a long way in developing a more equitable, prosperous, cleaner, greener world for all.





*“I have continuously drawn your attention to Human Centric Vision instead of GDP Centric Approach. India has talked about sharing the data of Chandrayaan Mission with everyone in the interest of humanity. This also a proof of our commitment towards Human Centric Growth.”*

*— Shri Narendra Modi  
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India*