

Report on the field visit of the UN-Women Executive Board Bureau to India

1. Introduction

A delegation comprising the President, three Vice-Presidents of the UN-Women Executive Board and one Representative of Western Europe & Other Countries conducted a field visit to India from 22 to 26 April 2017.

The Executive Board's field visit aimed to gain a first-hand understanding of UN-Women's work at the country level and its cooperation with the Government of India. The visit strived to gather insights into the extent and modes of cooperation amongst development partners collaborating with UN-Women in India, including inter-agency collaboration as well as cooperation with civil society organizations (CSOs) and other stakeholders.

The delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Government of India for its kind hospitality, and for providing the opportunity to discuss gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls with ministers and senior representatives at national and state levels.

The delegation would like to express its gratitude to UN-Women India for its warm welcome, and to the UN-Women Executive Board Secretariat team for the well-prepared agenda and the successful implementation of the field visit. Furthermore, the delegation highly appreciated the presence of UN-Women's Regional Director, who joined the mission from UN-Women's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, and the Secretary of UN-Women's Executive Board, who joined the team from New York. Thematic briefs shared with the delegation at the beginning of the field visit provided useful insights and background to UN-Women's work with development partners in India.

The delegation's agenda included meetings in the capital, New Delhi, with government officials, UN agency representatives, UN-Women's programme partners and representatives from civil society organizations and media houses at the national level. The delegates also undertook a field visit to Bhopal, the capital of the state of Madhya Pradesh, a priority state for UN-Women in India.

(a) In New Delhi, the delegation met the Minister of External Affairs; the Minister of Women and Child Development; the Chairperson of the National Commission of Women; the Chief Executive Officer of NITI Aayog¹; the Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj (Local Governance); the Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development; and representatives from the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK) and the Central Reserve Police Force - Rapid Action Force (CRPF-RAF). The delegation also met the UN-Women Country Representative and the country office team in India, the UN-Women Regional Director and the UN Country Team in India, and representatives of civil society, and the media.

(b) In Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh the delegation met the Chief Secretary and senior officials from the Department of Women and Child Development, the Department of Technical Education, the Additional Director General of Police and the Chief Executive Officer of the State Rural Livelihoods Mission².

In Bhopal, the delegation participated in two roundtable discussions. The first roundtable was an opportunity to interact with key stakeholders of UN-Women's Flagship Programme Initiative on Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces in India. It highlighted the programme's twin strategy of community action (mobilizing, organizing and building capacities of the rights holders); and state accountability. Good practices of locally

¹ The Government of India, in keeping with its reform agenda, constituted NITI Aayog (the National Institution for Transforming India) to replace the Planning Commission instituted in 1950. This was done in order to better serve the needs and aspirations of the people of India. An important evolutionary change from the past, NITI Aayog acts as the quintessential platform of the Government of India to unite states to act together in national interest, and thereby fosters Cooperative Federalism. NITI Aayog was formed via a resolution of the Union Cabinet on 1 January 2015.

² The National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) was launched by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India, in June 2011. It also has state chapters, known as the State Rural Livelihoods Mission .

identified and community driven interventions that are responsive to women's safety concerns were also shared.

The roundtable was preceded by a 'safety audit walk' in an urban slum, where the Executive Board learned about community-level interventions to improve women's safety and access to public services.

The second roundtable entitled '*Leave No One Behind: Addressing Inequality, Vulnerability and Building Resilience*', showcased UN-Women's ongoing efforts to strengthen women's institutions, their leadership and strategic interventions, to ensure that the voices of Dalits (Scheduled Castes), Tribals (Scheduled Tribes)³ and religious minorities are heard and reflected in policy making.

2. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in India

2.1 Current situation and key challenges

With 1.2 billion people, the world's largest democracy and seventh largest economy in the world with respect to Gross Domestic Product⁴, India's recent economic growth is a significant achievement. India is the second most populous country in the world after China. The population comprises 51.5 per cent males and 48.5 per cent females. India's burgeoning young workforce is the largest and youngest the world has ever seen. Around 243 million people (approximately 23 per cent of the total population) are estimated to be in the age range of 10-19 years. This, coupled with increasing literacy levels, up from 65 per cent in 2001 to 74 per cent in 2015 (literacy rate for males is 82 per cent, compared to 65 per cent for females), positions India favourably to reap demographic dividends.

India's GDP grew by 7.4 per cent in 2015, making it the 9th fastest growing nation in the world. India's share in the world GDP has increased from an average of 4.8 per cent during 2001-07 to 7 per cent during 2015. India is also faced with the challenge of urbanization, with over 700 million people estimated to be living in urban areas by 2050⁵.

India has made strong normative progress towards the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women. As one of the first countries in Asia to adopt special measures for a 33 per cent quota for women at the local governance level in 1993 – and to have done so prior to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing – India has helped set the global standard in this regard. Many states have achieved 50 per cent representation of women in local governments including in village panchayats (village assemblies) and municipal bodies. More recently, the Government has been pushing a Constitutional amendment to increase reservation for women in panchayats from 33 per cent to 50 per cent. However, the bill for reservation for women in the lower house of parliament is pending since 1996.⁶ India was one of the first countries to start producing a Gender Budget Statement in 2005-06 and has since continued to produce these statements annually. This has been a major step towards greater transparency and accountability to gender equality.

Since coming to power in 2014, the NDA Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has introduced several noteworthy policy measures to further its gender equality commitments. These include the flagship programme, '*Beti Bachao Beti Padhao*' [Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child] to ensure the survival, protection and education of girls; *Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana* [Prime Minister's Finance Scheme] which provides loans to women to start new ventures; *Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana* [Prime Minister's Energy Scheme] aimed at safeguarding the health of women and children by providing access to

³ The Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) are various officially designated groups of historically disadvantaged indigenous people in India. The terms are recognised in the Constitution of India and the various groups are designated in one or other of the categories.

⁴ International Monetary Fund. 2016. World Economic Outlook

⁵ McKinsey Global Institute. 2010. India's Urban Awakening: Building Inclusive Cities, Sustaining Economic Growth

⁶ According to the Inter Parliamentary Union (2017), India ranks 148th in representation of women in government out of 193 countries classified by order of percentage of women in the lower and upper house of parliament. Women make up only 11 per cent of the Upper House and 12 per cent of the Lower House of the Parliament in India.

LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) clean cooking fuel; *Swacch Bharat Abhiyaan* [Clean India Campaign] to accelerate efforts towards achieving universal sanitation coverage in the country; *Mahila E-Haat* [Women's E-Market], a unique direct online marketing platform to support women entrepreneurs; and *Startup India: Stand up India*, which promotes entrepreneurship at the grassroots level for economic empowerment and job creation.⁷

The Government of India recognizes the importance of women empowerment and gender equality for to prosperity and inclusive development⁸. Several legislative measures reflect this understanding, for example:

- The draft of Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2016, proposes anti trafficking bodies to prevent trafficking, rehabilitate victims and create penalties for non-compliance with the Act;
- The Maternity Benefit Amendment Bill 2016, passed by the Upper House of Parliament and awaiting consideration in the Lower House, increases maternity leave from 12 to 26 weeks;
- A draft Crèche Policy aims to develop comprehensive guidelines for crèche facilities for children up to six years of age;
- Two major policy shifts in 2016 to promote gender equality include the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill and the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2016. These measures are intended to protect diverse gender identities and sexual and reproductive freedoms and choice.
- In another recent policy development, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) released the draft National Policy for Women, 2016, articulating a vision for the empowerment of women. The draft Policy, which has been submitted for cabinet approval, proposes a 'transformative' shift echoing the vision of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.

Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has also gained momentum with the appointment of the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog)⁹ as the nodal agency for monitoring the implementation of SDGs at the national level as well as State Vision Documents formulated by several state governments aligning their policies and programmes with the SDGs.

2.2 Collaboration between the Government of India and UN-Women

Within the overarching United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2013-17 in line with the Government of India's priorities UN-Women works in six core areas (Strategic Plan 2014-17):

- Promoting women's leadership and gender responsive governance
- Women's economic empowerment
- Ending violence against women
- Promoting women's leadership and participation in peace and humanitarian action
- Strengthening gender responsive planning and budgeting
- Inter-governmental processes

UN-Women has established strategic partnerships with six Central Ministries – the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD); Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD); Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), Ministry of Defence, Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

UN-Women works closely with MWCD, which is its nodal ministry. Through its technical experts embedded in the Ministry, UN-Women supports MWCD in the implementation of normative commitments, gender responsive budgeting and in initiatives to end violence against women. In 2016, UN-Women coordinated the

⁷ These initiatives were mentioned by Ministers of External Affairs, WCD and senior government officials at the national level.

⁸ Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs, Mr. MJ Akbar, noted that economic and social empowerment of women is critical to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's construct of a New Transforming India.

⁹ NITI Aayog will be responsible for not only collecting data on a periodic basis, but will closely engage in the achievement of the 17 goals and corresponding targets. Towards this, a draft mapping of goals and targets with the proposed nodal and relevant Ministries has been carried out in consultation with Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

UN response on the draft National Policy for Women and the draft of Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2016, released in May 2016.

UN-Women has supported the Ministry of Rural Development for over four years on issues of rural livelihoods, with an emphasis on creating opportunities for rural women for their effective participation and leadership at all levels of decision-making, undertaking reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources and stepping up measures for women's unpaid work to be recognized, reduced and redistributed. UN-Women is currently conducting action research on women's participation in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme¹⁰ in seven states, followed by a robust capacity building of front line officials on drivers of low participation and corrective measures.

MoPR is one of the principal stakeholders of UN-Women's programme on Gender Responsive Governance, currently being implemented across six states of India. MoPR is the only Central Ministry with which UN-Women has entered a formal partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU delineates three priority areas of action: (i) Strengthening capacities of key trainings institutions on gender responsive governance through training, technical support and mentoring; (ii) Conducting evidence based advocacy to enhance women's political participation and leadership in local governance; (iii) Demonstration of Gender Sensitive Model Panchayats in line with the Government of India's priority to promote costless development and poverty free Gram Panchayats (village assemblies). Additionally, UN-Women provides direct support to the Ministry in relation to gender mainstreaming through a technical expert; and has commissioned an assessment of Elected Women Representatives upon request by the Ministry.

UN-Women has forged a partnership with the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) in a large-scale, global programme on Women's Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Energy. The programme will be co-financed by the Ministry for USD 5 million and will be implemented in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Nagaland. UN-Women works closely with the Ministry of Defence's Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK). In 2015, UN-Women and CUNPK piloted the Female Military Officers Course (FMOC), which prepares military women from major troop contributing countries for deployment to UN peacekeeping operations and equips them with technical skills and knowledge demanded by commanders on the ground. UN-Women and CUNPK in a tripartite partnership with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations have also piloted specialized training material on conflict related sexual violence for national and international UN peacekeepers.

UN-Women promotes decent work for women migrant domestic workers through a strengthened partnership with the India Centre for Migration (ICM), located within the division of Overseas Indian Affairs – I, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), approved through a joint Letter of Intent. A detailed methodology for the project, '*Migration of Women Domestic Workers from India: Building Capacities for Safe Mobility*', was approved by the Ministry in June 2016. The proposed project builds awareness among women domestic workers and enhances their decision-making ability to ensure that they migrate using safe, regular, and legal channels.

In addition to the six Central Ministries, UN-Women has established formal partnerships (through MoUs) with nine state governments– Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland, the National Capital Territory of Delhi, Odisha, Rajasthan and Telangana.

Within the UN Country Team (UNCT) in India, UN-Women leads the UNCT Gender Equality and Youth Development Results Group and is also a member of Results Groups on poverty and urbanization; good health, water and sanitation; nutrition and food security; natural resource management, community resilience, and energy efficiency; and skilling, entrepreneurship, and job creation.

¹⁰ The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (NREGA) was later renamed as the "Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act" (MGNREGA); it is an Indian labour law and social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work'. It aims to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

Recently, UN-Women worked closely with the UNCT and UN system agencies to prioritize gender equality within the forthcoming UN Sustainable Development Framework in India (2018-22); pilot the UN System Wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) at the national level; and ensure the gender responsive implementation of the sustainable development framework as part of the UNCT SDG Implementation Facility, which provides support to state governments and other stakeholders in developing planning frameworks for the SDGs.

The UN-Women India country office is operating with a budget of approximately USD 9.2 million in 2017. Programmatic focus is set on policy advocacy, technical support and capacity development of government partners and CSOs. High level policy advice and technical support for gender mainstreaming is provided to the six Central Ministries. Capacity development training/workshops and demonstration of pilots are further rolled out at the sub-national level, targeting government officials, CSO-representatives, and women at the community level across 18 states; with direct technical and policy advisory support being provided to the nine State Governments by UN-Women as mentioned above.

In addition to the main budget, the India country office provides technical and monitoring support for the UN-Women Fund for Gender Equality grant to the ‘*National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights*’, an NGO consortium for USD 300,000 (2016-2018) and implementation as well as monitoring support for the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women grant to two agencies – Pragya for USD 750,000 (2016-2018) and Sahayog (2017-2020) for USD 530,000.

3. Observations and recommendations for UN-Women

The field visit demonstrated the unique and effective triple mandate of UN-Women – delivering on normative commitments, operational response at country and regional levels, and coordination of the UN System on gender equality. The delegation witnessed first-hand how UN-Women’s normative intergovernmental work at the global level is taken to an operational level at country level, ensuring that the cycle of norms development, policy-operational response and lessons learned from implementation is closed and entirely processed by one single agency.

In India, UN-Women is playing an important role in training, implementing programmes, and providing technical expertise on gender equality to the Government of India to realize these goals.

The delegation noted that the Head of the multi-country office was assigned at the same time to cover the position of Head ad interim of the UN-Women Office in Afghanistan. Although the delegation acknowledges the high competence and tremendous engagement of the Head of Office, the delegation strongly encourages UN-Women to find a sustainable approach to avoid the vacancy of such high responsibility posts.

3.1 Partnership with the Government

The technical and policy advisory support provided by UN-Women at the national and sub-national level is valued by the Government partners¹¹. Further, line ministries acknowledged the valuable role played by UN-Women in research and documentation on issues such as women’s sustainable livelihoods (including agriculture), recognition of women’s unpaid work, safe mobility, declining child sex ratio, anti-human trafficking and women’s transformative leadership and political participation).¹² UN-Women’s innovative communication and outreach support to ongoing Government campaigns (for instance the *Women Transforming India* campaign hosted by the Government’s public outreach online platform MyGov) was also

¹¹ UN-Women has embedded technical experts in three Central Ministries – the Ministry of Women & Child Development, Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Panchayati Raj (Local Governance). Technical support is also provided to nine state governments (National Capital Territory of Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Karnataka and Telangana) on Gender Responsive Governance, Gender Budgeting and Ending Violence Against Women.

¹² Meetings with MoRD, MoPR, NCW

appreciated¹³. The delegation also noted the strategic partnership between UN-Women and the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping and the Central Reserve Police Force - Rapid Action Force on mainstreaming gender in peacekeeping operations; and the pioneering initiative to prepare Female Military Officers for deployment, which was first piloted in India, and subsequently replicated in three countries.

At the state level, UN-Women's advocacy and technical support to the Government to institutionalize coordination and monitoring mechanisms (for instance the Inter Departmental Committees on Gender Responsive Budgeting and Ending Violence Against Women in Madhya Pradesh) was acknowledged. Through its ongoing flagship initiative on Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces, UN-Women has successfully demonstrated a model where community led interventions, have been adopted and scaled up by the Government, signalling **national ownership of the agenda**.

High-level government representatives at national and state levels in India noted that the Government of India intends to take additional measures for increased implementation of the sustainable development agenda for leaving no one behind, which is in line with the Government of India's vision of '*Sab ka Saath, Sab ka Vikaas*' (Collective Efforts for Inclusive Development).

Government representatives identified the need for support on strengthening gender statistics and collection of sex-disaggregated data¹⁴; advocacy and capacity building towards effective implementation of programmes (for instance on women's mobility and workplace safety¹⁵; women's entrepreneurship and financial inclusion including through on-line/digital platforms¹⁶); research and documentation of good practices on various aspects of gender equality and empowerment of women (for instance, strategies to address cybercrime; protecting rights of women in distress including Non-Resident Indians¹⁷; promoting women's leadership in governance¹⁸).

UN-Women's technical support to line ministries should specifically target traditional attitudes towards women and girls to ensure that development projects deliver more sustainable results. Limited financing and inadequate coordination and implementation capacity¹⁹ restrain the effective realization of laws and policies. To meet the demand for strengthened policy and implementation capacity formulated by the Government of India, UN-Women will need to continue to provide high-level policy advice to ensure the sustainable integration of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in national development frameworks.

UN-Women should continue to support the line ministries as well as state governments with their ongoing efforts to mainstream gender in the planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring of Government programmes and legislations, with a focus on promoting the rights and entitlements of women from the marginalized sections. The delegation recommends that UN-Women facilitate exchange of lessons learned and best practices, and leverage the regional and global expertise in this area through South-South cooperation to the further implementation of its strategies and approaches towards gender equality.

3.2 Partnership with civil society and women's rights organizations

Greater representation of civil society in policy dialogues and decision making processes is recognized as critical to promote the voice of women and girls, including the most vulnerable and marginalized. In India, UN-Women has fostered broad based partnerships with civil society organizations and women's rights organizations across thematic areas.

¹³ Meeting with NITI Aayog

¹⁴ Recommended by CEO, NITI Aayog

¹⁵ Recommended by Additional Secretary, MoRD

¹⁶ Recommended by Minister, MWCD

¹⁷ Recommended by Minister, MWCD

¹⁸ Recommended by Secretary, MOPR

¹⁹ These issues were highlighted by CSO representatives in the three roundtables.

Support provided to civil society organizations through the Fund for Gender Equality was widely acknowledged, especially for highlighting issues of women from the most marginalized communities in policy making, strengthening women's institutions and networks. During the field visit, the delegation saw first-hand how empowered women's organizations have a multiplier effect, empowering more women and advancing gender equality in the communities they serve.

UN-Women's role in facilitating dialogue between government and civil society was appreciated by different stakeholders. Some of the initiatives cited were: the collaboration between the National Commission for Women and the National Forum for Rights of Women Farmers²⁰; and on gender transformative livelihoods between the National and State Rural Livelihoods Missions and women's rights organizations on the development of Gender Action Plans.

The delegation recommends that UN-Women continue to serve as a **facilitator of substantive dialogues between the Government of India and civil society organizations (CSOs)** and strengthen/create dialogue platforms for integrating CSO perspectives in planning processes of national policies and laws. UN-Women should invest in effective pilots leading to demonstrable evidence, followed by the creation of appropriate platforms and policy advocacy to bring about sustainable change at the grassroots level, as well as policy outcomes. UN-Women should continue to strengthen its role in creating these platforms, undertaking policy advocacy and providing technical, financial and capacity enhancement support to women's networks and their organizations. Further work with **marginalized constituencies** should intensify, including support to Dalits, Tribals, religious minorities, widows and single women – **and with their collectives**.

3.3 Partnership with UN agencies

During the field visit, the delegation observed the significant role played by UN-Women in coordinating the UN system's work on gender equality²¹, and ensuring accountability for commitments to women through regular monitoring of system-wide progress in India. This was illustrated by the ongoing pilot of the UNCT towards implementation of the country-level UN System Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality (UN-SWAP). In December 2016, the UNCT undertook the UN-SWAP Scorecard Assessment, a good example of inter-agency work to mainstream gender equality in the UN System. This was a collaborative effort between multiple agencies including UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCAP, and UN-Women. UN-Women was recognized for the advisory role it plays to support UN agencies in their own programme design and implementation²². It was evident that UN-Women serves as an effective catalyst to ensure that gender equality is effectively mainstreamed in the work of the other UN agencies.

The delegation recognizes the important coordination role played by UN-Women in India. This role assumes special significance at a time when, the UN System is moving at a rapid pace towards *Delivering as One*, given the expectation of national governments for more effective and coordinated response from the UN System in meeting the sustainable development agenda. It is recommended that UN-Women continue to strengthen its normative and coordination role at the country level, as it the only UN entity formally and explicitly mandated to carry out specific normative and intergovernmental work on gender equality and women's empowerment, such as the formulation and follow-up on the SDGs, ensuring that gender is truly cross-cutting throughout all the Goals.

20 UN-Women played an important role in establishing Mahila Kisan Adhikar Manch (MAKAAM) - Forum for Rights of Women Farmers. UN-Women's catalytic support for the forum led to its expansion and outreach in 24 states of the country, within a span of 3 years. Currently, UN-Women, in collaboration with the National Commission for Women and MAKAAM is organizing regional consultations with women farmers and their organizations for reviewing law and policies, and to advocate for removing barriers which deter sustainable development for women farmers.

21 Under the current UN Development Action Framework (UNDAF 2013-17), UN-Women leads the outcome area on Gender Equality. Through the UN-Women-led Results Group under the UNDAF, UN agencies have undertaken joint advocacy and communications campaigns each year in March (International Women's Day) and November (UNiTE/16 Days of Activism). The Results Group has partnered on addressing gender biased sex selection, provided UN wide policy responses to the government's proposed actions like the Draft National Policy for Women 2016 and the Draft Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill 2016, and is working with the Government to address data gaps in gender statistics.

22 Meeting with UNCT; comments made by the Heads of WFP, ILO, UNFPA, RCO.

3.4 Other issues

During the field visit, the delegation also learnt about UN-Women's successful efforts in **diversifying its partnership portfolio to include non-traditional allies, such as the private sector** to secure support towards its interventions. This includes the ability of the India office to effectively leverage its operational mandate to secure support, financial and non-financial, for its normative and coordination mandate.

Further, UN-Women's partnership with the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy on the Energy Flagship was highlighted as the first model of co-financing by the Government of India for a UN-Women Programme. The India Office has secured USD 5 million from the Government and additionally generated resources worth USD 0.5 million from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) for developing a national roadmap on Women's Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Energy. This is a good example of how UN-Women Country Offices are using the Flagship Programme Initiatives architecture to secure national ownership and diversify UN-Women's partnership portfolio. The delegation takes note of the start of the flagship programme on women's entrepreneurship for sustainable energy, a joint programme with UNEP. The delegation will be keen to see the development of this Flagship Programme in terms of increased mobilization of partnerships and resources.

The UN-Women Office in India will need greater resources to continue working on issues of gender equality and empowerment of women in a country as diverse and large as this, especially where despite sustained economic growth, social inequalities persist. The field visits further showcased good examples of how support for monitoring of normative commitments with multiple stakeholders – government, civil society and UNCT – can contribute to strengthening the implementation of national laws, policies and programmes for gender equality and women's empowerment.

4. Conclusion

This field visit to India provided an excellent opportunity for direct dialogue with the Government of India and all the associated development partners. The objective of the field visit, gaining a first-hand understanding of UN-Women's cooperation with the Government of India and its work at the country level, has been fulfilled beyond expectations. The good collaboration between the Government of India and UN-Women, the specific strategic considerations of the UN's efforts in India to support policy making and the realization of national development priorities, aided greatly in meeting the objectives of the field visit. The insights and understanding gathered by the delegation during the field visit will allow UN-Women to refine its collaboration with the Government of India and for the delegation to incorporate this experience into future discussions of the Executive Board.

The delegation is confident that the meaningful cooperation between the Government of India and UN-Women will continue to strengthen the capacity of the Government of India to implement its international and domestic commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, including the most vulnerable.

The delegation believes that this strategic cooperation will: enhance the formulation and implementation of legislation, policies and strategies designed to further strengthen women's economic empowerment; work to end gender based violence; promote gender responsive planning and budgeting and; promote leadership and participation of women in decision making processes at all levels.