

## QUESTIONS FROM THE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS OF INDIA

Considering the impacts of actions by India on the overall achievement of the SDGs globally, it is important for the VNR to provide a clear, correct and concise picture of achievements, failures and experiences by India at the High Level Political Forum. The following are some key additional information the MGoS would like to seek from India to help other governments and stakeholders plan better to achieve the SDGs, both within India and outside.

- Given the current pandemic and economic stress the country is going through, what are the plans to strengthen cooperative federalism in the country to ensure all the States (provinces) in India collaborate to achieving national targets?
- With its strong rural and local governance structures in place (the *Panchayats*), the Ministry of *Panchayat Raj* revised the guidelines for Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs) recently. One of the key components of this is to identify options and actions for localizing actions for achieving the SDGs. What are the concrete steps being taken by the Government to localize SDGs and the role of civil society in the same?
- One of the concerns stakeholder groups had, while reviewing the first VNR prepared by India, was the weak review and reporting on the environmental dimension of SDGs. How does the second VNR address the role and relevance of environment in achieving SDGs in the country?
- The 'voice' of local communities in processes that prepared the VNRs and planning for achieving the SDGs need to be further strengthened in the country. What are the concrete and measurable steps that the Government of India is taking for an inclusive approach to achieving the SDGs?

### On the issue of manual scavenging

Despite a legislative act and judicial directives, the inhuman practice of manual scavenging is prevalent across India. One of the most indignified form of this is emptying and cleaning human faeces from dry/insanitary latrines by women manual scavengers. While the Swachh Bharat (Clean India) Mission has brought down the number of dry latrines, questions related to the lives, livelihoods, dignity and safety remain that the Government of India may seek to address.

- It was [reported by the media](#) that the Government of India (GoI) has constituted a Group of Ministers towards finalizing an action plan for elimination of all forms of manual scavenging. Would the GoI inform the salient features, measures proposed and timelines of this? How does it address the gender and caste discrimination as well as the systemic exclusion of these workers, especially women manual scavengers?
- A [Parliament response](#) by the GoI stated that 54,130 manual scavengers from 170 districts have been identified till July 2019. Would the GoI inform about the progress of this enumeration and the latest numbers?
- Would the GoI inform about the status of rehabilitation of manual scavengers as provisioned by the PEMSR Act (2013) and Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers? What is the budget allocated and total expenditure for this, and the number of manual scavengers benefitted, during the last 5 years?
- World Toilet Day 2019 [statement of UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights](#) had highlighted some of the key challenges faced by Manual Scavengers. Have the GoI taken cognisance of those issues and addressed them?

- In the COVID-19 context, manual scavengers and sanitation workers are facing severe health, social security and livelihood concerns as widely reported by the media. Would the GoI inform about special measures to address these?