

MEDIA RELEASE

India's women, digital prowess & green growth power SDG discussions in New York

- *Eminent speakers spotlight India in Reliance Foundation-Observer Research Foundation-UN in India events during UNGA week*
- *New book shares stories of women from rural India using digital technology to transform their communities and provides valuable lessons to others*
- *Thought leaders discuss 'green growth', call for increased financial commitment towards sustainable development*

New York, September 27, 2022: Women in India transforming communities with digital technologies could show ways to accelerate progress towards the SDGs said thought leaders here on Friday, at high-level discussions organised by [Reliance Foundation](#), [Observer Research Foundation](#) and [United Nations in India](#) to complement the 77th UNGA discussions.

The events included launch of [Aspirations, Access and Agency: Women Transforming Lives with Technology](#), a publication by Reliance Foundation and Observer Research Foundation that narrates inspirational stories of women using digital technologies to bring entitlements, financial services, healthcare, sanitation and more to India's remotest corners. **Amandeep Singh Gill, Under Secretary General, Envoy on Technology, United Nations**, said the publication shows that "It's really inspiring how when you bring people, the right process and technology together, magic happens."

During a discussion on '[Women Technology and the SDGs](#)', **Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator, India**, said women are at the frontlines of both long-term development and short-term crisis response.

India is expected to have [1 billion smartphone users](#) in the next four years with demand rising dramatically in rural areas. Today, 54% women in India have a mobile phone, up from 45.9% four years ago while women operating bank accounts independently increased from 53% to nearly 80% in this time, with over 22.5% of Indian women using mobile phones for financial transactions.

"Reliance's commitment to development is rooted in our philosophy of 'We Care'. We are focusing on enabling platforms across sectors to achieve SDGs in India; from women empowerment to green growth and equitable development of all," said **Jagannatha Kumar, CEO, Reliance Foundation**.

"Real progress is possible only if our efforts are inclusive, green, led by communities, and catalysed by agile policies and leadership—all attributes of the emerging yet distinct India story," said **Samir Saran, President, Observer Research Foundation**.

The discussions offered lessons from international collaboration during the pandemic and led to calls for more intersectional approaches to tackle gender inequality while highlighting pathways for investment, particularly in initiatives for women. **Auxillia Mngagagwa, First Lady of Zimbabwe**, in her Valedictory Address emphasised that real change is a product of empowering women and girls.

Former Prime Minister of New Zealand and former Administrator of UNDP, Helen Clark, lauded India for having embraced and championed the human development agenda. She also highlighted the importance of ensuring that women have equal access to connectivity so that they are able to fully participate in the society to access health information, use it for education, government services, financial services and more.

In the context of India's imminent G20 presidency, **S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister, India**, emphasized at '[The G20 Imperative-Green Growth and Development for All](#)' that the G20 forum was an ideal body to listen to concerns of developing countries. India has invited many nations to participate during its presidency so that more voices get to talk about the real problems of the world which may not necessarily be getting the awareness or recognition that they deserve. He also emphasized the need for multilateralism and the importance of its reform.

Vicky Ford, Minister of State for Development, Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), UK, said development efforts must keep climate change in view and innovative financing mechanisms must be deployed to meet the funding needs around the world. She also emphasized the need for educating girls and empowering women.

Borge Brende, President, World Economic Forum, said the private sector should be an important part of G20 agenda and could help finance climate change adaptation, an area that needs more attention. He pointed to the important role of multilateral development banks in catalysing green transitions.

Watch the G20 Imperative discussions [here](#).

About Reliance Foundation

Reliance Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Reliance Industries Limited, aims to play a catalytic role in addressing the India's development challenges through innovative and sustainable solutions. Led by Founder and Chairperson Smt. Nita Ambani, Reliance Foundation is relentlessly working to facilitate transformative changes for the overall wellbeing and higher quality of life for all. Reliance Foundation is focused on addressing the nation's development challenges in rural transformation, education, health, sports for development, disaster management, women empowerment urban renewal and arts, culture and heritage, and has touched the lives of more than 63 million people across India, in more than 50,800 villages and several urban locations.

For more information, please visit <https://www.reliancefoundation.org/>

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About Observer Research Foundation

ORF is a leading multidisciplinary think tank with centres in New Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata and an overseas affiliate in Washington DC. It helps discover and inform India's choices and carries Indian voices and ideas to forums shaping global debates. It provides non-partisan, independent, well-researched analyses and inputs to diverse decision-makers in governments, business communities, and academia and to civil society around the world.

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About UN in India

The United Nations Country Team comprises 26 entities delivering together with government, civil society, community, business, and other partners on the SDGs in India. The Resident Coordinator, the designated country level representative of the UN Secretary- General, leads Team UN India in advocating the mandate of the United Nations in support of national priorities under the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

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