

# Tackling 'curse of poverty' tops Indian Government's agenda, UN General Assembly told

23 September 2017 – The complete eradication of poverty is the most important priority for the Government of India, its Minister for External Affairs told the United Nations General Assembly today, as she outlined some of the measures taken to advance this goal.

“There are two ways of addressing the curse of poverty,” Sushma Swaraj said in her address to the Assembly’s annual high-level debate.

“The traditional method is through incremental levels of aid and hand-holding. But our Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has chosen the more radical route, through economic empowerment,” she noted.

“The poor are not helpless: we have merely denied them opportunity. We are eliminating poverty by investing in the poor. We are turning them from job-seekers into job-providers.”

Among the Government’s initiatives, Ms. Swaraj cited the Jan Dhan plan, by which some 300 million Indians – roughly equivalent to the population of the United States – who had never crossed the doors of a bank today have bank accounts.

She also highlighted programmes to provide bank credit to those who want to start small businesses; to train poor and middle-class youth for employment; to provide free gas cylinders to the poor so that women do not have to suffer the dangerous consequences of wood-fired kitchens; and remove “black money” from circulation.

She noted that nations with rising capabilities will be able to generate such change, but the developed world must become an active partner in helping those vulnerable countries still mired in poverty to reach the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) by the target date of 2030.

Agreed by world leaders in 2015, the [SDGs](#), also known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

[Full statement available here](#)