

## UN commits \$15 mn to help India achieve MDGs

The United Nations (UN) Friday signed an agreement with India and committed \$15 million for improving the Human Development Indices (HDI) in seven states.

The agreement signed by the UN and the Planning Commission aims at equipping backward districts in seven states including Bihar and Orissa achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through better utilisation of government resources.

Bhaskar Chatterjee, principal adviser, Planning Commission and Maxine Olson, the UN resident coordinator signed the programme document, the world body said in a statement.

The programme will supplement the government scheme at the national, state and district levels under which infrastructure and expertise will be provided to state governments and district planning committees. It will try to make planning at the grassroots 'more participatory'.

India is way behind over 125 countries in human development indices.

The programme will bridge gap between planning, budgeting, implementing and monitoring processes.

The statement said that currently, each district receives approximately \$75 million per year from a large number of government schemes. However, the absence of convergence leads to poor utilisation and results.

'The programme aims to address this lacuna through improved district planning, better budgeting and collaborative implementation where departments do not duplicate efforts. The programme also provides for better monitoring of outcomes from government programmes. State governments and district administrations are the key partners in this exercise,' the UN said.

While Olson stressed on the proper monitoring of the programme, Chatterjee said the project would serve as a catalyst in the process of inclusive development as spelt out in the 11th five year plan by developing replicable approaches to participatory planning and monitoring.

The MDGs are eight goals to be achieved by 2015 that respond to the world's main development challenges.

The goals commit rich and poor countries to work together to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, ensure that all girls and boys complete primary school, promote gender equality, improve the health of mothers and children, reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, protect the environment, and create a global partnership for development by ensuring rich countries give more and better aid, debt relief and trade opportunities to poorer countries.

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