

05 to 29.8 per cent in 2009-10. Even in absolute terms, the number of poor people declined by 52.4 million during this period. Of this, 48.1 million are rural poor and 4.3 million urban poor. Thus poverty has declined on an average by 1.5 percentage points per year between 2004-05 and 2009-10. The annual average rate of decline during the period 2004-05 to 2009-10 is twice the rate of decline during the period 1993-94 to 2004-05.

1.100 In the last few years public expenditure on social programmes increased dramatically. In the Eleventh Plan period nearly ₹ 7 lakh crore has been spent on the 15 major flagship programmes. A number of legislative steps have also been taken to secure the rights of people, like the Right to Information Act, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the Forest Rights Act, and the Right to Education (RTE). However, there are also pressing governance issues like programme leakages and funds not reaching the targeted beneficiaries that need to be addressed. Direct benefit transfer (DBT) with the help of the Unique Identification (UID) number can help plug some of these leakages.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

1.101 Though multilateral efforts on sustainable development and climate change have led to several positive outcomes, there are still areas of concern

where further work is needed to safeguard the interests of developing countries. The key question to be addressed is equity in the evolving arrangements. It has to be ensured that domestic goals continue to be nationally determined even as we contribute to the global efforts according to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR). More importantly, equity, fair burden sharing, and equitable access to global atmospheric resources have to be protected and addressed more adequately.

1.102 With the Twelfth Plan's focus on 'environmental sustainability', India is on the right track. However, the challenge for India is to make the key drivers and enablers of growth – be it infrastructure, the transportation sector, housing, or sustainable agriculture – grow sustainably. This leads us to the most vital issue: of raising additional resources for meeting the need for economic growth with greater environmental sustainability. More often, it is the resource crunch which is the stumbling block for developing countries like India. While it makes efforts to efficiently and expeditiously bring price signals and other policy instruments into play, India could do much more if new and additional finance and technology were made available through the multilateral processes. There is a case for greater cooperation, action, and innovation, provision of finance and technology for developing countries, and institutions and mechanisms for capacity building.