

India – 2018

Ms. Ann Haokip

UN Youth Delegate Programme

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Youth Delegate Search: <https://youthdelegatesearch.org/india-2018/>

85. **Ms. Haokip** (India), speaking as a youth delegate, said that sustained economic development in India had lifted millions of people out of poverty. Financial inclusion and decent employment opportunities for all were at the heart of the country's development strategy. Digital empowerment played a key role in that regard, and a biometric system now covered more than 90 per cent of the population, enhancing access to vital services. As a result of the Government's financial inclusion programme, 320 million people now had bank accounts. The Government had disbursed more than [*13*] \$25 billion through direct benefit transfers to more than 300 million beneficiaries and enhanced the efficiency of social security schemes. Under a loans programme for micro- and small businesses, more than 140 million loans had been granted.

86. As a step towards universal health coverage, the Prime Minister had launched a programme offering social security to 100 million vulnerable families. Given the importance of the welfare of families for sustainable development, women in India were entitled to 26 weeks of paid maternity leave, and it was mandatory for organizations with 50 or more employees to provide crèche facilities. Pension schemes, free legal aid services, targeted insurance coverage, higher interest rates on savings, tax rebates, travel discounts and preferential banking services contributed to ensuring a dignified life for older persons. The Accessible India Campaign promoted barrier-free access for persons with disabilities in public spaces and in virtual environments.

87. With half the population under the age of 25 years and two thirds under the age of 35, India was harnessing the demographic dividend by creating opportunities for the development of skills and entrepreneurship and by using digital technologies to improve access to information and knowledge. Programmes under the national youth policy focused on the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, social values and engagement in community affairs, politics, governance and voluntary social work.

