

**Side Event  
by the UN Democracy Fund  
On the sidelines of  
63rd Commission on Status of Women**

**Remarks by  
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Deputy Permanent Representative Permanent Mission of India to the  
United Nations**

**Empowerment, Engagement and Leaders** 1 Tf0.008Tw 14.04 0 0 C0 0 po 31.58TEM

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

- 1. I am happy to be here today with you in this very important event which provides us the opportunity to discuss our partnership with UN Democracy Fund and also to learn from the civil society groups about their work done in partnership with the UN Democracy Fund on women empowerment and how all of this feed into supporting democracy.**
- 2. A fair and independent electoral process, an independent judiciary, a Parliament with a vibrant opposition, a boisterous media, and thriving civil society have defined India since it adopted its Constitution in 1950.**
- 3. Talking about elections, 2,300 political parties will soon begin. However, t**

**is that we use over 2 million electronic voting machines, which helps**

us in saving close to 10,000 tons of paper or cutting down over 1.2 million fully grown trees.

4. While democracies are not perfect, they are not imperfect either. It is this co-existence of the perfect and imperfect that make democracies relatable and, in some sense, glorious. Democracy is central to the idea of India. Managing the ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural diversity and complexity of disorder in India is only possible through a democratic system, where everyone – woman or man, has a say.
5. The role of free and active civil society is central to sustaining the vibrancy of democracy. India has roughly 3.5 million NGOs. These NGOs represent those without a voice; mobilize citizens into movements; build support across stakeholders; and bring credibility to the political system by promoting transparency and accountability.
6. India is a founding partner of the UN Democracy Fund. During the last decade, we hav(,)5.1 (.b2.001 Tc -0.012 Tw 8 (f)-5 ( )9n.6 (ec)-5.3 (a)-0.6 ()11

newspaper is a shining example that a functioning democracy is

15. Government of India has initiated a Capacity Building Programme for Elected Women Representatives at the grassroots level with an objective of empowering them by developing leadership capacities so that they serve as catalysts for social change and function as peer facilitators in the field, become vocal for their rights and participate effectively in the governance processes. In Phase-I of the programme (2017-18), a total 18,578 Elected Women Representatives in 14 States were trained. In Phase-II, 18 we propose to train 15,030 elected women representatives in 18 states.

16. In 2011, UNDEF funded a project in the ~~an~~ ~~act~~ ~~ih~~6 (u)0.5 (i)n (h6 (u)0.5 (i)(c)-5.2