



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Reliance Foundation Announces New Partnership with W-GDP and USAID to Bridge the Gender Digital Divide in India**

**Mumbai, August 12, 2020:** Under the Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) Initiative, a new partnership between the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and Reliance Foundation will bridge the gender digital divide in India. The partnership was announced at a W-GDP event yesterday, hosted by Deputy Secretary of State of the United States Stephen Biegun and with special guest, Ivanka Trump, Advisor to the President of the United States, and Deputy USAID Administrator Bonnie Glick. The event was live streamed at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

**Ivanka Trump, Advisor to the President, said:** "The W-GDP Fund was created to source and scale the most innovative programs to advance women's economic empowerment. We are leveraging the resources and expertise of the U.S. government and the private sector so that activities have enduring, deep effects on the communities they reach."

**John Barsa, Acting Administrator, USAID, said:** "Global prosperity will remain out of reach if we exclude half the population. At the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), we believe investment in women is key to unlocking human potential on a transformational scale. The W-GDP Fund at USAID is financing innovative solutions to close the economic gap between women and men and help our partners advance on their Journeys to Self-Reliance."

**At the event, through a virtual video message, Smt Nita. M Ambani, Founder and Chairperson, Reliance Foundation, said:** "I am delighted and proud to announce that Reliance Foundation is joining forces with W-GDP, through our partnership with USAID. Together, we shall launch the W-GDP WomenConnect Challenge across India, in the fall of 2020. At the heart of this partnership, is our shared goal to help bridge both the gender divide and the digital divide in India."

The W-GDP Women's Connect Challenge (WCC) supports private sector-led approaches that close the gender digital divide, expands business opportunities, and empowers women. As part of programme, W-GDP will partner with the Reliance Foundation to create an India-specific expression of the WCC and incorporate the lessons of previous W-GDP WCC Rounds.

In 2016 Reliance launched Jio – a tech ecosystem that has ushered in digital life for 1.3 billion Indians and delivered first-hand a pan-India digital revolution that has transformed lives in ways unimaginable before. Today, Jio is the largest digital services company in India, and the second largest in the world. As many as 120 million Jio users are women, and the number is growing rapidly. This year Reliance Foundation is celebrating its 10-year anniversary, and over the last decade has impacted the lives of 36 million Indians. Together, Jio and Reliance Foundation will make a tremendous contribution to the W-GDP Initiative in India to help bridge the gender digital divide.

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**Website:**

[www.reliancefoundation.org](http://www.reliancefoundation.org)



### **About The W-GDP Initiative**

In February 2019, the White House established the Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) Initiative, the first whole-of-government approach to women's economic empowerment. W-GDP seeks to reach 50 million women in the developing world by 2025 by focusing on three pillars – Women Prospering in the Workforce, Women Succeeding as Entrepreneurs and Women Enabled in the Economy. W-GDP leverages a new innovative fund, scaling private-public partnerships which address the three pillars. In its first year alone, W-GDP programs reached 12 million women across the globe.

### **About Reliance Foundation**

Reliance Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Reliance Industries Limited, aims to play a catalytic role in addressing the nation's development challenges through innovative and sustainable solutions. Led by Founder and Chairperson Smt. Nita Ambani, RF is relentlessly working towards facilitating transformative changes to ensure overall well-being and higher quality of life for all. Among India's largest social initiatives, Reliance Foundation is focused on addressing the nation's development challenges in areas of Rural Transformation, Health, Education, Sports for Development, Disaster Response, Urban Renewal, and Arts, Culture and Heritage. Reliance Foundation has touched the lives of more than 36 million people across India, in more than 37,000 villages and several urban locations.

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