### 112TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION H.R. 3300

To establish the Federal Interagency Working Group on Reducing Poverty which will create and carry out a national plan to cut poverty in America in half in ten years.

#### IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

#### NOVEMBER 1, 2011

Ms. LEE of California (for herself, Mr. STARK, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. BACA, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. BROWN of Florida, and Mr. KUCI-NICH) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

### A BILL

- To establish the Federal Interagency Working Group on Reducing Poverty which will create and carry out a national plan to cut poverty in America in half in ten years.
  - 1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
  - 2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

#### **3** SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

4 This Act may be cited as the "Half in Ten Act of 5 2011".

#### 6 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Poverty can be seen as a deep, structural 2 problem that implicates our value system and our educational and economic institutions. 3 4 (2) Poverty may be defined as the lack of basic 5 necessities of life such as food, shelter, clothing, 6 health care, education, economic security, and eco-7 nomic opportunity. 8 (3) Policy initiatives and many safety net pro-9 grams addressing poverty have not kept pace with 10 the needs of millions of Americans. 11 (4) The lack of an equitable distribution of 12 housing choices across the country leads to isolation 13 and concentrated poverty. 14 (5) The number of Americans living in poverty 15 rose by over 2.6 million from 2009 to 2010 (U.S. 16 Census Bureau, September 2011). 17 (6) There were 46.2 million Americans living in 18 poverty in 2010, consisting of 15.1 percent of the 19 American people (U.S. Census Bureau, September 20 2011). 21 (7) Poverty has a disproportionate impact on 22 minority communities in America with 27.4 percent 23 of African-Americans, 26.6 percent of Hispanics, 24 12.1 percent of Asian Americans, and 9.9 percent of

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1	Whites living in poverty in the United States in
2	2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, September 2011).
3	(8) In 2010 a family of 4 was considered poor
4	under the U.S. Census Bureau's official measure if
5	the family's income was below \$22,314.
6	(9) The economic consequences of poverty in
7	the United States are estimated to be at least \$500
8	billion per year (Center for American Progress,
9	2007).
10	(10) Children who grow up in poverty experi-
11	ence higher crime rates, decreased productivity, and
12	higher health costs over their lives (Center for Amer-
13	ican Progress, 2007).
14	(11) 3,500,000 seniors lived in poverty in 2010
15	(U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).
16	(12) Young Americans, ages 18–24, experience
17	a higher poverty rate than the national average
18	(U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).
19	(13) 16,400,000 children lived in poverty in
20	2010—more than one in every five American chil-
21	dren (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).
22	(14) Almost 35 percent of African-American
23	children and over 30 percent of Hispanic children
24	lived in poverty in 2009 (U.S. Census Bureau,
25	2011).

(15) The 46,180,000 of Americans in poverty
 in 2010 was the largest number yet recorded in the
 52 years for which poverty estimates are available
 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

5 (16) Children who live in families who fall into
6 poverty for even short periods of time are at greater
7 risk of a lifetime of lower earnings, lower edu8 cational attainment, and increased reliance on public
9 services and increased rates of incarceration (First
10 Focus, 2008).

(17) It is estimated that the additional 3 million children who were forced into poverty due to the
recession of 2008, resulted in \$35 billion in economic losses annually, and will cause at least \$1.7
trillion in economic losses to the United States during their lifetimes (First Focus, 2008).

(18) Reducing poverty, especially child poverty,
not only reduces costs for Federal, State, and local
social services and benefits programs, but also increases tax revenue at all levels of government (Children's Defense Fund, 2009).

(19) The House of Representatives, on January
22, 2008, has resolved that it is the sense of Congress that the United States should set a national

goal of cutting poverty in half over the next 10
 years.

#### **3** SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

4 In this Act:

5 (1) FEDERAL AGENCY.—The term "Federal 6 agency" means any executive department, Govern-7 ment corporation, Government-controlled corpora-8 tion, or other establishment in the executive branch 9 of the Government (including the Executive Office of 10 the President), or any independent regulatory agen-11 cy.

(2) POVERTY.—The term "poverty" means an
income level and living standard associated with and
based on the official poverty measure as established
and updated by the U.S. Census Bureau which establishes a threshold of minimum income necessary
to achieve a standard of living free from deprivation
of basic needs.

19 (3) EXTREME POVERTY.—The term "extreme
20 poverty" means having an income level or living
21 standard at a level of extreme deprivation based on
22 living with income below 50 percent of the Federal
23 poverty line as established by the U.S. Census.

(4) NEAR POVERTY.—The term "near poverty" 1 2 means having a level of household income below 200 3 percent of the Federal poverty line. (5) CHILD POVERTY.—The term "child pov-4 erty" means poverty which impacts those persons 5 6 under 18 years of age. (6) DEPRIVATION.—The term "deprivation" 7 8 means lacking some or all basic human needs. 9 (7) DECENT LIVING STANDARD.—The term "decent living standard" means the amount of an-10 11 nual income that would allow an individual to live 12 beyond deprivation at a safe and decent, but modest, 13 standard of living. 14 (8) ALTERNATIVE POVERTY MEASURES.—The term "alternative poverty measures" means meas-15 16 ures and indicators, other than the traditional in-17 come based measure of poverty, which can provide a 18 more detailed picture of the low-income and poverty 19 stricken populations, such as the number of people 20 who were kept above poverty by Government sup-21 ports, the number of people who are poor due to 22 medical expenses, child care, and work expenses, the 23 rates of food insecurity, the number of people who 24 are asset poor (with less than three months of in-25 come saved), the number of disconnected youth, teen

birth rates, participation rates in Federal anti-pov erty programs for all eligible populations, and the
 number of people who are unbanked.

4 (9) REGIONAL COSTS OF LIVING.—The term 5 "regional costs of living" means a measure of the 6 differing costs of maintaining a given living standard 7 in varying regional, geographic, urban or rural re-8 gions.

9 (10) ECONOMIC INSECURITY.—The term "eco-10 nomic insecurity" means the inability of individuals 11 and households to cope with routine adverse or cost-12 ly life events and the lack of means to maintain a 13 decent standard of living and to recover from the 14 costly consequences of those events.

15 (11) ECONOMIC STABILITY.—The term "economic stability" means individuals and households 16 17 have access to the means and support systems nec-18 essary to effectively cope with adverse or costly life 19 events and have the ability to effectively recover 20 from the consequences of those events while main-21 taining their standard of living or maintaining a de-22 cent standard of living.

(12) DIGITAL DIVIDE.—The term "digital divide" means the gap between individuals, households, businesses and geographic areas at different

socio-economic levels with regard to both their access
 information and communications technologies and
 including the imbalance both in physical access to
 technology and the resources, education and skills
 needed to effectively use computer technology and
 the Internet for a wide variety of activities.

(13) OUTCOMES.—The term "outcomes" means 7 8 change in the economic status, economic instability 9 or economic security of an individual, household or 10 other population which is attributable to a planned 11 intervention, benefit, or service or series of interven-12 tions, benefits, and services, regardless of whether 13 such an intervention was intended to change such 14 economic status.

15 (14) DISPARATE IMPACT.—The term "disparate 16 impact" refers to the historic and ongoing impacts 17 of the pattern and practice of discrimination in em-18 ployment, education, housing, banking and nearly 19 every other aspect of American life in the economy, 20 society or culture that have an adverse impact on minorities, women, or other protected groups, re-21 22 gardless of whether such practices were motivated by 23 discriminatory intent.

## 1SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FEDERAL INTERAGENCY2WORKING GROUP ON REDUCING POVERTY.

3 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF FEDERAL INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP ON REDUCING POVERTY.—There is es-4 5 tablished within the Department of Health and Human Services, a Federal Interagency Working Group on Reduc-6 7 ing Poverty, which shall be chaired by the Secretary of 8 Health and Human Services, and whose members shall be 9 selected by their respective agency heads from the senior ranks of their agencies, which shall— 10

(1) develop, within 180 days of enactment, a
National Plan or Strategy to reduce the number of
persons living in poverty in America in half within
10 years of the release of the 2011 Census report
on Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage
in the United States: 2010, that includes goals and
objectives relating to—

(A) reducing in half the number of Americans living in poverty as reported by the 2011
Census report on Income, Poverty and Health
Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2010;
(B) eliminating child poverty in America;
(C) eliminating extreme poverty in America;
(D) improving the effectiveness and out-

(D) improving the effectiveness and outcomes of poverty related programs by improving

our understanding of the root causes of poverty, the social, economic, and the cultural contributors to persistent intergenerational poverty;

4 (E) improving the measure of poverty to 5 include more indicators and measures that can 6 meaningfully account for other aspects relating 7 to the measure of poverty, such as regional dif-8 ferences in costs of living, the impact of rising 9 income inequality, the impact of the persistent 10 "digital divide", expanding the understanding 11 of poverty by distinguishing a standard that 12 measures a level of freedom from deprivation 13 versus a standard that measures a standard of 14 economic adequacy provided by a living wage 15 and access to a decent living standard, and the 16 impact of poverty on other measures of eco-17 nomic stability and economic outcomes, such as 18 educational attainment, rates of incarceration, 19 lifetime healthcare, earnings, access to 20 healthcare outcomes, access to housing, and in-21 cluding other measures as necessary to improve 22 our understanding of why poverty persists in 23 America;

24 (F) eliminating the disparate rates of pov-25 erty based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, or

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sexual orientation and identity, especially among children in those households so impacted;

4 (G) measuring effectiveness of poverty re-5 lated programs on the basis of long term out-6 comes, including the long term savings and 7 value of preventive practice and policy, and em-8 ploying fact based measures of programs to 9 make improvements;

10 (H) improving the accessibility of benefit 11 and social services programs, reducing the complexity and difficulty of enrollment, and improv-12 13 ing the rates of enrollment in need based pro-14 grams for all eligible recipients to maximize the 15 impact of benefits and social services programs 16 on reducing the impacts of poverty and improv-17 ing economic outcomes;

(I) expanding eligibility to improve the coordination of service delivery, reduce gaps in eligibility, and improve outcomes of programs addressing poverty in the Federal Government;

(J) reducing the negative impact of asset limits on eligibility for Federal programs on the effectiveness of programs where limited eligibility creates gaps in necessary service and ben-

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1	efit delivery, and in access which prevents needy
2	beneficiaries from improving long term out-
3	comes and achieving long term economic inde-
4	pendence from need based programs;
5	(K) improving the access of poor, low-in-
6	come, and the unemployed to good jobs with
7	adequate wages and benefits;
8	(L) expanding and stabilizing poor and low
9	income persons connection to work;
10	(M) developing a comprehensive strategy to
11	connect low-income young people and to re-con-
12	nect currently disconnected youth to education,
13	work, and their community; and
14	(N) shifting the focus of poverty and
15	human needs programs across the Federal Gov-
16	ernment beyond the relief of deprivation to in-
17	stead setting goals, measures, and outcomes re-
18	lated to helping individuals and families rise up
19	and out of poverty and achieving long term eco-
20	nomic stability which will reduce long term
21	costs in domestic social needs programs, reduce
22	long term healthcare costs due to the improved
23	health of formerly poverty stricken households,
24	increase the number of tax paying individuals
25	which will increase revenue, and lower the en-

rollment and costs in need based benefits and services programs, thus improving the economy and reducing long term deficits for Federal, State, and local governments;

(2) oversee, coordinate, and integrate all poli-5 6 cies and activities of the Federal Government, in co-7 ordination and consultation with the Domestic Pol-8 icy Council and the National Economic Council, 9 across all agencies relating to reducing the number 10 of individuals, families, and children living below the 11 Federal poverty line, in extreme poverty or near pov-12 erty and increasing the number of households able 13 to achieve long-term economic stability with assets 14 sufficient to maintain a decent living standard with-15 out relying on public supports—

16  $(\mathbf{A})$ economic, commercial, and pro-17 grammatic policies that can effect or relieve the 18 effects of poverty through job creation, and eco-19 nomic development targeted to low income, mi-20 nority, rural, urban and other populations who 21 suffer disparate rates of poverty, among Fed-22 eral agencies; and

23 (B) services and benefits including emer24 gency programs, discretionary economic pro25 grams, and other policies and activities nec-

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1 essary to ensure that the Federal Government 2 is able to mount effective responses to economic 3 downturns and increases in the rates of poverty; 4 (3) ensure that all relevant Federal agencies 5 and congressional committees comply with appro-6 priate guidelines, policies, and directives from the 7 Federal Interagency Working Group on Reducing 8 Poverty and the Department of Health and Human 9 Services and other Federal agencies with responsibil-10 ities relating to poverty reduction or improving eco-11 nomic stability and independence;

12 (4) ensure that Federal agencies have access to, 13 receive, and appropriately disseminate best practices 14 in the administration of programs, have adequate re-15 sources to maximize the public awareness of pro-16 grams, increase the reach of those programs, espe-17 cially into historically disenfranchised communities, 18 maximize enrollment for all eligible Americans, share 19 relevant data, and issue relevant guidance in con-20 sultation with non-government organizations and 21 policy experts in the field and State and local gov-22 ernment officials who administer or direct policy for 23 anti-poverty programs in increasing and maximizing 24 the enrollment into and administration of programs 25 and services designed to alleviate poverty; and

1	(5) enact best practices for improved data col-
2	lection, relevant to—
3	(A) reducing poverty;
4	(B) reducing the racial, ethnic, age, gen-
5	der, and sexual orientation or sexual identity
6	based disparities in the rates of poverty;
7	(C) the effectiveness and efficiency of pro-
8	grams;
9	(D) streamlining enrollment and eligibility
10	for programs;
11	(E) improving long term outcomes for pro-
12	grams;
13	(F) reducing reliance on public programs;
14	(G) improving connections to work;
15	(H) improving economic stability;
16	(I) improving savings and investment, ac-
17	cess to capital, increasing rates of entrepreneur-
18	ship;
19	(J) improving access to living wage em-
20	ployment; and
21	(K) improving access to employment based
22	benefits.
23	(b) Director of National Poverty Policy
24	There shall be a Staff Director of National Poverty Policy,

who shall be the head of the Federal Interagency Working
 Group on Reducing Poverty.

# 3 SEC. 5. APPOINTMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DI4 RECTOR.

5 (a) APPOINTMENT.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Staff Director shall be
7 appointed by the Secretary of Health and Human
8 Services.

9 (2) QUALIFICATIONS.—The Secretary shall ap-10 point the Staff Director from among individuals who 11 have demonstrated ability and knowledge in social 12 policy, improving outcome based management, issues 13 of equity and equal opportunity and access to serv-14 ices and economic opportunity.

15 (b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Staff Director shall—

16 (1) advise the Secretary and all relevant cabinet 17 secretaries, and agency officials regarding the estab-18 lishment of policies, goals, objectives, and priorities 19 for reducing poverty in America in half in ten years, 20 ending child poverty, ending extreme poverty and 21 eliminating racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual iden-22 tity and orientation based disparities in the rates of 23 poverty;

24 (2) advise the Secretary, relevant cabinet secre-25 taries, heads of independent Federal agencies and

other entities within the Executive Office of the
 President regarding mechanisms to improve the ef fectiveness, coordination, impact, and outcomes of
 social services, benefits, and other poverty reduction
 and economic opportunity programs, in collaboration
 with experts in the field, non-governmental organiza tions, and other governments;

8 (3) work with Federal agencies to oversee, co-9 ordinate, and integrate the implementation of the 10 National Plan or Strategy, including consultation 11 with independent non-governmental policy experts 12 and service provider groups engaged in serving low-13 income persons, children and households, State and 14 local government officials who administer or direct 15 policy for anti-poverty programs, and with as many 16 groups that directly represent low-income people, 17 such as public housing tenants' associations, or 18 other similar groups; and

(4) resolve any disputes that arise between Federal agencies relating to the National Plan to reduce
poverty in half in ten years or other matters within
the responsibility of the Office.

#### 23 SEC. 6. CONSULTATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Director may consult and ob-tain recommendations from, as needed, such Presidential

1	and other advisory entities such as consultation with inde-
2	pendent non-governmental policy experts and service pro-
3	vider groups engaged in serving low-income persons, chil-
4	dren, and households; State and local government officials
5	who administer or direct policy for anti-poverty programs,
6	and groups made up of low-income people, such as public
7	housing tenants' associations, or other similar groups as
8	the Director determines will assist in carrying out the mis-
9	sion of the Office, including—
10	(1) the Administration for Children and Fami-
11	lies (ACF);
12	(2) the Administration on Aging (AoA);
13	(3) the Department of Agriculture (USDA);
14	(4) the Bankruptcy Courts;
15	(5) the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protec-
16	tion;
17	(6) the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA);
18	(7) the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA);
19	(8) the Bureau of the Census;
20	(9) the Center for Nutrition Policy and Pro-
21	motion;
22	(10) the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Serv-
23	ices (formerly the Health Care Financing Adminis-
24	tration);
25	(11) the Commission on Civil Rights;

1	(12) the Office of Community Planning and
2	Development;
3	(13) the Consumer Financial Protection Bu-
4	reau;
5	(14) the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Jus-
6	tice and Delinquency Prevention;
7	(15) the Corporation for National and Commu-
8	nity Service;
9	(16) the Council of Economic Advisers;
10	(17) the Department of Agriculture (USDA);
11	(18) the Department of Commerce (DOC);
12	(19) the Department of Defense (DOD);
13	(20) the Department of Education (ED);
14	(21) the Department of Health and Human
15	Services (HHS);
16	(22) the Department of Housing and Urban
17	Development (HUD);
18	(23) the Department of Justice (DOJ);
19	(24) the Department of Labor (DOL);
20	(25) the Department of the Treasury;
21	(26) the Department of Transportation (DOT);
22	(27) the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA);
23	(28) the Disability Employment Policy Office;
24	(29) the Domestic Policy Council;

1	(30) the Drug Enforcement Administration
2	(DEA);
3	(31) the Economic Development Administra-
4	tion;
5	(32) the Economic Research Service;
6	(33) the English Language Acquisition Office;
7	(34) the Equal Employment Opportunity Com-
8	mission (EEOC);
9	(35) the Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity;
10	(36) the Federal Bureau of Prisons;
11	(37) the Federal Housing Finance Board;
12	(38) the Federal Labor Relations Authority;
13	(39) the Federal Trade Commission (FTC);
14	(40) the Food and Nutrition Service;
15	(41) the Indian Health Service;
16	(42) the Interagency Council on Homelessness;
17	(43) the Internal Revenue Service (IRS);
18	(44) the Legal Services Corporation;
19	(45) the National AIDS Policy Office;
20	(46) the National Credit Union Administration;
21	(47) the National Economic Council;
22	(48) the National Institutes of Health (NIH);
23	(49) the National Labor Relations Board;
24	(50) the Occupational Safety & Health Admin-
25	istration (OSHA);

1	(51) the Office of Management and Budget
2	(OMB);
3	(52) the Office of Refugee Resettlement;
4	(53) the Office of Policy Development and Re-
5	search (Housing and Urban Development Depart-
6	ment);
7	(54) the Small Business Administration (SBA);
8	(55) the Social Security Administration (SSA);
9	(56) the Substance Abuse and Mental Health
10	Services Administration;
11	(57) the Veterans' Employment and Training
12	Service; and
13	(58) the Women's Bureau (Labor Department).
14	(b) NATIONAL STRATEGY.—In developing and updat-
15	ing the National Strategy the Executive Director shall
16	consult with the Domestic Policy Council, the National
17	Economic Council, and, as appropriate, hold regional pub-
18	lic hearings around the country to collect information and
19	feedback from the public on their efforts and experience
20	for the development and updating of the National Strategy
21	and make this information available to the public.
22	SEC. 7. REPORTS TO CONGRESS AND THE PUBLIC.
23	(a) IN GENERAL.—The Chair of the Federal Inter-
24	agency Working Group on Reducing Poverty shall submit
25	an annual report to the appropriate congressional commit-

tees describing the activities, ongoing projects, and plans 1 2 of the Federal Government designed to meet the goals and 3 objectives of the National Strategy on Poverty. The report 4 shall include an accounting of the savings to the Govern-5 ment from any increased efficiencies in the delivery of services, any savings from reducing the numbers of Ameri-6 7 cans living in poverty and reductions in the demand for 8 need based services and benefits for which persons living 9 in and near poverty are eligible, as well as an accounting 10 of any increase in revenue collections due to the numbers of persons who become gainfully employed and pay taxes 11 into the Treasury instead of drawing benefits and services 12 13 from it.

14 (b) NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES WORK-15 SHOP.—Within 90 days after funds are made available to carry out this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human 16 17 Services shall contract with the National Academy of 18 Sciences (hereinafter in this subsection referred to as the 19 "NAS") to initiate a workshop series to provide necessary 20background information to enable the Working Group on 21 Reducing Poverty to develop and finalize its plan.

(1) The NAS shall convene a steering committee to organize, plan, and conduct a public workshop on what is known about the economic and so-

1	cial costs of poverty, including, but not limited to
2	the following:
3	(A) Macroeconomic costs (effects on pro-
4	ductivity and economic output).
5	(B) Health costs (effects on health expend-
6	itures and health status).
7	(C) Crime and other social costs.
8	(D) Direct federal budget effects (e.g., out-
9	lays for income support and other poverty re-
10	duction programs).
11	(E) The workshop shall also consider pov-
12	erty metrics (e.g., income poverty, food insecu-
13	rity, and other measures of deprivation), and
14	their role in assessing the effects of poverty and
15	the performance of anti-poverty programs.
16	The NAS shall commission experts to prepare pa-
17	pers that summarize and critique the relevant lit-
18	erature estimating monetary and non-monetary eco-
19	nomic and social impacts of poverty. A workshop
20	summary shall be produced that, along with the pa-
21	pers, shall be available electronically on the NAS
22	website. This workshop shall be convened within 6
23	months of receipt of a contract, the papers posted
24	immediately, and the summary released by the end
25	of month.

1	(2) The NAS steering committee shall organize,
2	plan, and conduct a second public workshop on what
3	is known about the economic and social costs and
4	benefits of a variety of programs and strategies to
5	reduce and prevent poverty. It shall take account of
6	such issues as the following:
7	(A) Short-term versus long-term effects,
8	including budget implications.
9	(B) Effects for different population
10	groups, such as children, the elderly, immi-
11	grants, long-term single-parent families, dis-
12	placed older workers, young people with large
13	loans, people in areas of concentrated poverty
14	and other social ills (e.g., Indian reservations,
15	some inner city areas, some rural areas).
16	(C) Effects by depth of poverty and near-
17	poverty (e.g., income to poverty ratios of less
18	than 50 percent, less than $100$ percent, less
19	than 200 percent).
20	This second workshop shall be convened within 9
21	months of receipt of a contract, the papers posted
22	immediately, and a summary released by the end of
23	month 12.

(c) REPORT.—The relevant sections of the report
 shall be posted on each agency's website on the plans and
 impacts specific to their agency.

4 (d) PUBLIC REPORT.—A version of each report sub5 mitted under this section shall be made available to the
6 public.

7 (e) LEGISLATIVE LANGUAGE.—The Working Group
8 on Reducing Poverty shall submit, as necessary, legislative
9 language, including specific legislative recommendations to
10 the Congress of the United States towards achieving the
11 national goals.