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NITI Aayog launched the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP), on the occasion of International Women's Day today. The initiative is aimed at building an ecosystem for women across India to realize their entrepreneurial aspirations, scale-up innovative initiatives and chalk-out sustainable, long-term strategies for their businesses.

CEO, NITI Aayog, Amitabh Kant, launched the WEP platform at NITI Aayog premises in the capital today in presence of UN Resident Coordinator in India Yuri Afanasiev, Kailash Kher, industry leaders and supporting partners. The WEP theme song "*Naari Shakti*" composed and sung by Shri Kailash Kher was released on this occasion.

Nominations for the Women Transforming India Awards, 2018 were also opened by Amitabh Kant and Yuri Afanasiev.

WEP was envisaged by the CEO NITI Aayog during Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) last year in Hyderabad. It aims to power a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem through an enabling network of industry collaborations, partnerships, mentors and peer-to-peer connect.

Established under the leadership of Ms Anna Roy, Adviser (Industry) of NITI Aayog, the platform aspires to substantially increase the number of women entrepreneurs who will create and empower a dynamic New India. These aspirations are manifest in the three pillars on which WEP is built: *Ichha Shakti* (motivating aspiring entrepreneurs to start their enterprise), *Gyaan Shakti* (providing knowledge and ecosystem support to women entrepreneurs to help them foster entrepreneurship) & *Karma Shakti* (providing hands-on support to entrepreneurs in setting-up and scaling up businesses).

With an informative, interactive website to act as a dedicated resource and knowledge base, WEP aims to address the bottlenecks faced by both aspiring and established women entrepreneurs by streamlining information across government and private sector schemes and initiatives.

WEP is to operate within a broader framework of industry collaborations and partnerships, which cut across sectors in the economy. From providing unique services such as credit evaluation of women-led startups by CRISIL and potential equity investments through an INR 10 crore fund

established by DICE Districts, the WEP opens up avenues of growth and opportunity for women entrepreneurs.

Other partner commitments include ShopClues.com, which has offered to provide internship and dedicated mentorship and Mann Deshi Foundation to provide digital and financial literacy to aspiring women entrepreneurs. Several other leading corporates and industry bodies viz. NASSCOM, CII, FICCI, SIDBI and Facebook have partnered with WEP to provide business acceleration, mentorship and other start-up support for women entrepreneurs, details of which can be accessed on <https://wep.gov.in>.

Women entrepreneurs are encouraged to visit wep.gov.in for more information about the platform, its vision and initiatives.

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