NEW YORK, NY- Indian-American television personality and food expert Padma Lakshmi has been appointed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as its newest Goodwill Ambassador, supporting the agency’s fight against inequality and discrimination around the world.

UNDP announced Lakshmi’s appointment, on the eve of International Women’s Day. In her new role, the Emmy-nominated television personality and award-winning author will mobilise support for the Sustainable Development Goals with a focus on fighting inequality, discrimination and empowering the disenfranchised.

Lakshmi was named the Goodwill Ambassador by UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner in a ceremony at the UNDP headquarters in the city.

“As we celebrate International Women’s Day... let’s remember that women and girls face some of the worst discrimination and hardships in the world,” Ms. Lakshmi said at a press conference held at UNDP headquarters. She said her main focus as UNDP Goodwill Ambassador will be to shine a spotlight on the fact that inequality can affect people in rich and poor countries alike.

“Many nations have greatly reduced poverty, but inequality had proved more stubborn,” she said.

“Inequality is further compounded by gender, age, ethnicity and race. It especially affects women, minorities and others who face unimaginable discrimination in the societies in which they live."

Steiner said Lakshmi has a strong record of speaking out for those who have been left behind and of fighting discrimination.

“We need more voices like hers to ensure we can meet the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals – our shared roadmap for peace and prosperity for people and the planet,” he added. Lakshmi has been a judge and host, as well as executive producer, of Bravo TV’s Emmy award-winning series Top Chef. She is also a New York Times bestselling author.

MUMBAI- National Award winning actress Tabu will be honored at the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles in April. Announcing the lineup of films and the other activities of the festival, Christina Marouda,IFFLA's Executive Director, said in a statement: “We have been discussing honouring Tabu for a long time, and this year felt like the right time. Her work and personality embody everything that IFFLA is about – being fearless, versatile, independent in spirit, unwilling to compromise, brilliant in the range of her performances, and simply beautiful." With half of the festival’s 2019 lineup directed by female filmmakers, this couldn’t be a stronger celebration of women in Indian cinema," he said.

While Tabu’s recently released film “Andhadhun” will be the opening film of the festival, other female filmmakers’ work will also be showcased on the occasion. With several feature, shorts and documentaries – films will be shown in nine languages, “Taking The Horse To Eat Jalabas’ by Anamika Haksar; “Sedna” by Phuntsho-Dawa gupta featuring veteran Bengali actressaktress Rakhee Tsering; “Nim- dey Bhau In Search Of Silence” by Dar Gai; ‘The Sweet Requiem’ by Ritu Sarin and Penning Seom among others. The short film “Maya” featuring Kirti Kulhari and Aiza Khan will also be screened at the festival.

UCSF Prof. Finds Nuts Can Keep Diabetics’ Heart Healthy

NEW YORK, NY- Eating a handful of nuts daily, particularly tree nuts, may reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease among people with Type-2 diabetes, associated with an increased risk for high cholesterol, heart disease and stroke, say researchers, including an Indian American.

Tree nuts such as walnuts, almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, pistachios, pecans, macadamias, hazelnuts and pine nuts were strongly associated with a lower risk of coronary events, cardiac death and total mortality compared with peanuts.

The results showed that eating even a small amount of nuts had an effect.

While the exact biological mechanisms of nuts and vascular health are unclear, researchers noted that nuts appear to improve blood sugar control, blood pressure, metabolism of fats, inflammation and blood vessel wall function.

“Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death and a major cause of heart attacks, strokes and disability for people living with Type-2 diabetes,” said Prakash Deedwania, professor at the University of California-San Francisco.

“Efforts to understand the link between the two conditions are important to prevent cardiovascular complications of Type-2 diabetes and help people make informed choices about their health," Deedwania added.

In this study, reported in the Circulation Research journal, the team used data from 16,217 men and women before and after they were diagnosed with Type-2 diabetes.

People who increased their intake of nuts after being diagnosed with diabetes had an 11 per cent lower risk of cardiovascular disease, a 15 per cent lower risk of coronary heart disease, a 25 per cent lower risk of cardiovascular disease death, and a 27 per cent lower risk of all-cause premature death.

Each additional serving per week of total nuts was associated with a three per cent lower risk of heart disease and six per cent lower risk of heart disease death.