



Voluntary Peoples Review of SDGs in Nepal

Amplifying Voices of the People: Closing the Gaps of SDGs

Civil Society Spotlight Report 2020



SDGs National Network Nepal

(A common platform of independent Civil Society Major Groups and Stakeholders)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development (SDGs) is the plan of action for people, planet and prosperity and to transform the world. All the member states of the UN have pledged to implement this agenda, which is integrated, indivisible and balanced in three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership are identified as its critical areas. The 2030 Agenda aims to resolve poverty, hunger and inequalities; build peaceful, just and inclusive societies; protect human rights; promote gender equality; and to protect the planet and its natural resources. All the world leaders of member states including Nepal pledged "No one will be left behind".

The SDGs National Network Nepal is an open and independent platform of civil society major groups, stakeholders and individuals that pursued the Voluntary Peoples Review of SDGs (VPR 2020). The theme of the VPR 2020 was "Amplifying Voices of the People: Closing the Gaps of SDGs". The main objective of the VPR 2020 was to review the progresses and achievements made by the country on the 2030 Agenda, through peoples' perspectives. Moreover, VPR 2020 aimed to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The Voluntary National Review of SDGs (VPR 2020) is not merely preparing a progress report, it is a decent opportunity for poor, marginalized, vulnerable people and CSOs to raise their voices for inclusive, equitable, just and resilient development and to raise their concerns.

We are proud to say that VPR 2020 was purely a voluntary effort and it was carried out without taking any financial supports from any national and international organization.

The VPR 2020 process received support and guidance from civil society leaders, human rights activists, environmentalists, sustainable development campaigners, which were overwhelmingly inspiring and motivating. The VPR process intensively reached to poor, marginalized, vulnerable and people living in risks. Further, the process could receive full cooperation from Governments, Parliament, Constitutional Bodies, UN Agencies, Multinational Development Banks, INGOs, Local Government Associations, Think-Tanks, Academic Society, Business Society, Development Activists, prominent human rights activists. We would like to thank all of them for their valuable support and professional guidance.

The National Planning Commission (NPC) was present in the meetings and consultation process and shared the country's progress. We had reached out to many development professionals, experts and civil society activists in the field to add relevant suggestions and create a system to carry out our findings methodology systematically. We believe that our voices have a right to be heard and taken into action plans by the government. We have worked effortlessly to improve the quality of reports so that they become a suitable material for all of the readers and understand the stance of SDGs happening throughout Nepal.

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The SDGs National Network Nepal is eager to keep its momentum to its contribution in achieving SDGs by advocating for sustainable development in the country with support and solidarity of people's movements for human rights, environment protection and development justice.

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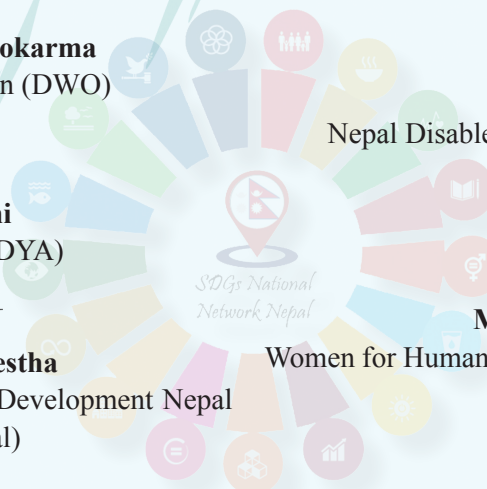
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ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

ADB	: Asian Development Bank
AYON	: Association of Youth Organizations Nepal
BBC	: British Broadcasting Corporation
BCM	: Billion Cubic Metres
CA	: Constituent Assembly
CEDAW	: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination
CFLG	: Child Friendly Local Governance
CIAA	: Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority
CIEDP	: Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons
CIJN	: Centre for Investigative Journalists
CIVICUS	: World Alliance for Citizens Participation
COVID-19	: Corona Virus Disease 2019
CPI	: Corruption Perceptions Index
CREEs	: Community Rural Electrification Entities
CRI	: Climate Risk Index
CRI	: Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index
CSOs	: Civil Society Organizations
CTEVT	: Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training
DDC	: District Development Committee
Dr.	: Doctor
ECD	: Early Childhood Development
ECE	: Early Childhood Education
EIA	: Environmental Impact Assessment
EMIS	: Education Management Information System
FATF	: Financial Action Task Force
FDI	: Foreign Direct Investment
FNCCI	: Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries
FNJ	: Federation of Nepalese Journalists
FY	: Fiscal Year
GBV	: Gender Based Violence
GDP	: Gross Domestic Production
GESI	: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

GHI	: Global Hunger Index
GJ	: Gap Junction
GO	: Government Organization
GON	: Government of Nepal
GSDR	: Global Sustainable Development Report
HCCH	: Hague Conference on Private International Law
HIV	: Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HLPF	: High Level Political Forum
Hon.	: Honorable
ICIMOD	: International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
ICT	: Information Communication Technology
ECD	: Early Childhood Development
IEE	: Initial Environmental Evaluation
IFFs	: Illicit Financial Flows
IIDS	: Institute for Integrated Development Studies
ILO	: International Labour Law
INGOs	: International Non-Governmental Organizations
IT	: Information Technology
JMP	: Joint Monitoring Programme
K-12	: Kindergarten to 12th grade
LAPA	: Local Adaptation plans of Action
LDC	: Least Developed Country
LDN	: Land Degradation Neutrality
LDTA	: Local Development Training Academy
LGBTIQ	: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Questioning
LPG	: Liquid Petroleum Gas
MDBs	: Multilateral Development Banks
MDGs	: Millennium Development Goals
MHM	: Menstrual Health Management
MMR	: Maternal Mortality Ratio
MoAD	: Ministry of Agricultural Development
MOE	: Ministry of Education
MoF	: Ministry of Finance
MoFSC	: Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation
MOFAGA	: Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration

MOFE	: Ministry of Forest and Environment
MOHA	: Ministry of Health Affairs
MSMEs	: Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises
MSNP	: Multi-stakeholder Nutrition Plan
MW	: Mega Watt
NASA	: National Assessment of Student Achievement
NCE	: National Campaign for Education
NDC	: Nationally Determined Commitments
NDHS	: Nepal Demographic and Health Survey
NEFIN	: Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities
NEOC	: National Emergency Operation Center
NER	: Net Enrollment Rates
NHRC	: National Human Rights Commission
NIC	: National Information Commission
NIDMC	: National ID Card Management Centre
NIRT	: National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis
NMT	: Non-Motorized Transports
NPC	: National Planning Commission
NPI	: Nepal Policy Institute
ODA	: Official Development Assistance
ODF	: Open Defecation Free
OHCHR	: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PCTMCD	: President Chure-Tarai Madesh Conservation Development
PFM	: Public Financial Management
PHC	: Public Health Centre
PIL	: Public Interest Litigation
PIOs	: Public Information Officer
PJ	: Petajoule
PPP	: Public Private Partnership
PWDs	: Persons with Disabilities
RTI	: Right to Information Act
SAARC	: South Asia Association of Regional Cooperation
SAFTA	: South Asia Free Trade Agreement
SDGs	: Sustainable Development Goals
SDP	: Sectoral Development Plan

SHMP : Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan
SOGIE : Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression
SPIS : Solar Powered Irrigation Systems
SRHR : Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STEM : Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
STI : Science, Technology and Innovation
TI : Transparency International
TRC : Truth and Reconciliation Committee
VET : Vocational Education and Training
UHC : Universal Health Coverage
UN : United Nations
UNCAC : United Nations Convention Against Corruption
UN-CERD : United Nations Convention on Elimination of Racial Discrimination
UNCT : United Nations Country Team
UNDP : United Nations Development Programme
UN-DRIP : United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNESCO : United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF : United Nations Children's Fund
UPR : Universal Periodic Review
USD : US Dollar
VAT : Value Added Tax
VAWG : Violence Against Women and Girls
VDC : Village Development Committee
VIPs : Very Important Persons
VNR : Voluntary National Review
WASH : Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WASHCC : WASH Coordination Committee
WB : World Bank
WECS : Water and Energy Commission Secretariat
WHO : World Health Organization
YFEED : Youth For Environment Education And Development

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

As the successor of MDGs, the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development/SDGs was adopted by all member states of the UN in September 2015, which is a universal, integrated and transformative agenda for sustainable development. It has tried to remedy the shortcomings and gaps of the MDGs. Agenda 2030 is integrated, indivisible and balanced in three dimensions of sustainable development: *economic, social and environmental*. Poverty eradication is stated as the overarching goal. The UN 2030 agenda has proposed 17 goals and 169 targets and they are integrated and indivisible, global in nature and universally applicable.

Nepal is a small landlocked sovereign state located in South Asia. It lies in the Himalayas and is bordered between two giant neighbors — China in the North and India in the other three directions. The total area of the country consists of 83 percent mountains and hills and 17 percent the flat terrain of Terai. Nepal is rich in natural resources and biodiversity with plenty of flora and fauna. High snow-capped mountains in the North, green terrace farms in the mid hills and fertile plains in the South provide untapped opportunity. Total population of the country is 29 million plus. It is also rich in cultural diversity, language, ethnicity, and is home to some of the best World Heritage sites. Still, Nepal is one of the least developed countries (LDC) and its human development is 0.579, is ranked 147th.

Year 2015 remained very important for Nepal because in that year the world came up with three historical global instruments: first, the 2030 Agenda/SDGs; second, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; and third, Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development. In the same year, Nepal experienced a devastating earthquake and the country promulgated the new constitution.

The High-level Political Forum (HLPF) is the United Nations' global platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that provides for the full and effective participation of all States Members of the United Nations and States members of specialized agencies. This year HLPF is taking place from 7 to 16 July 2020 in New York (in virtual mode due to COVID-19 pandemic). The theme of this year is '*Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*'.

As part of its follow-up and review mechanisms, the 2030 Agenda encourages member states to “conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels. This process is called National Voluntary Review (VNR). Follow-up and review processes are guided by some principles such as: voluntary and country-led, take into account different national realities, track progress in universal Goals and targets, maintain a longer-term orientation, identify achievements, challenges, gaps and critical success factors and support countries in making informed policy choices. Further it is open, inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people. It is people-centered, gender-sensitive, respects human rights and has a particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and those furthest behind. Moreover, it is rigorous and based on evidence, informed by high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable data disaggregated. Nepal had participated in VNR in 2017 and it is also taking part in this year 2020.

SDGs National Network Nepal (SDGs Network), the common platform of civil society Major Groups and Stakeholders, has been coordinating the civil society process on the sustainable development agenda. The SDGs Network has been promoting engagement of the civil society Major Groups including youth, women, children, Dalits, Indigenous Peoples, PWDs, workers, LGBTIQ etc. on the 2030 Agenda. This network is directly engaging with the government, parliament, local authorities, UN Agencies, INGOs and other international agencies. Actually, this network originated at the First Nepal Peoples Forum on Sustainable Development, which was successfully hosted on 21-22 August 2019 in Kathmandu.

The consultation meeting of civil society Major Groups and stakeholders, held on 25 November 2019 in Kathmandu, decided to conduct the Voluntary Peoples Review of SDGs in Nepal (VPR 2020). The theme of the VPR 2020 is *Amplifying Voices of the People: Closing the Gaps of SDGs*. This report is collectively prepared by civil society Major Groups and Stakeholders of Nepal through the VPR process. This report represents the voices of peoples, especially those who are poor, marginalized and vulnerable.



1.2 Objective

The main objective of the Volunteer Peoples Review 2020 (VPR) was to review the progresses and achievements made by the country on the UN 2030 Agenda (SDGs) through peoples' perspectives, and to critically review its implementation process, institutional arrangements, and to produce a report. The review process tried to assess the progress status of each goal, but Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) was considered as the main cross-cutting agenda of all the goals. Moreover, VPR 2020 aimed to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Key Activities of VPR

Broader Discussion Among Civil Society Major Groups and Stakeholders: A Broader Discussion Programme on the VPR was held on 31 January 2020 in Kathmandu. Main objective of the programme was to discuss the VPR 2020 roadmap and to kick-off the review process of SDGs on behalf of civil society major groups and stakeholders. The programme decided to review all the goals of the 2030 Agenda and to contribute by organizations working in particular goals or themes. This event identified the organizations, who could coordinate the review of particular goals and cross-cutting agenda.

Thematic Meeting Among Thematic Focal Organizations: SDGs National Network Nepal organized a Thematic Meeting of CSOs on 25 February 2020 to accelerate the process of VPR 2020. First, the meeting has agreed on the VPR 2020 roadmap that elaborates the key activities to be undertaken in the process including collection of data/information in the country so far. The meeting also decided to organize consultations at local and province level. It has also decided to organize a National Youth Forum and Nepal Peoples Forum on SDGs. Further, it decided to distribute responsibilities to coordinate the review of each goal, themes and sub-themes laying on each goal. The meeting also outlined the structure of the report.

Consultation at local and province level: SDGs National Network Nepal organized consultations and discussions programmes with representatives of local CSOs and social workers in Janakapur, Birganj, Surkhet, Nepalganj, Gorkha, and Dhangadi on different dates. These local events remained very useful to review the situation of implementation and progress of SDGs in their areas. These local events were coordinated by Association of Youth Organizations Nepal (AYON).

Preparation of Draft Review Papers: Thematic lead organizations have assessed progress of SDGs through desk reviews. They reviewed several related documents including reports, data, policy documents, laws and newspapers and they drafted review papers of each goal. Documents and data published by both national and international organizations were used in the review process. They further discussed with related organizations and key informants to get more information. Based on the desk reviews and formal and informal consultations, they prepared draft review papers.

Youth Forum on SDGs: SDGs National Network Nepal jointly with AYON organized a National Youth Forum on 4 May 2020. This event was virtually organized, where representatives of more than 90 youth organizations participated and gave their inputs and comments on the draft review papers, which were widely shared in advance among the youth organizations. Inputs and comments were incorporated in the draft papers. In the youth forum, there was also a presence of high level officers from the Ministry of Youth and Sports and National Youth Council.

Nepal Peoples Forum on SDGs: SDGs National Network Nepal organized Nepal Peoples Forum on SDGs on 6 May 2020. Even, it was virtually organized there was participation from more than hundred organizations including networks, associations, alliances and federations. Thematic leads shared the draft review papers of each goal and participants gave their inputs and comments, which were incorporated in the draft review papers. Officers of NPC also participated in the event.

Professional Inputs from Nepal Policy Institute: Nepali Policy Institute (NPI), a think tank organization of Nepalese diaspora, reviewed all the review papers prepared by thematic focal organizations. The NPI provided professional and technical inputs, that helped to improve the quality of the VPR report. In addition, participation, contribution and advice of NPI in all the consultative processes and virtual events remained supportive in the entire VPR process.

Review of Main Message of VNR: SDGs National Network Nepal organized a virtual discussion programme on Main Message of VNR on 26 May 2020 and analyzed the document through civil society perspective. This



programme was held in presence of high level officials of NPC. The conclusions of the discussion were shared with the NPC, CSOs and development agencies.

Consultation with marginalized communities: The improved draft papers were further shared with marginalized and vulnerable communities including Indigenous Peoples (Adhivasi Janajati), Dalits, Madhesi, Muslims, PWD, Senior citizens, landless peoples, workers, LGBTIQ etc. SDGs Network was able to collect their views and inputs, which remained very helpful to improve the review papers. Meanwhile, SDGs Network and Nepal Disable Women Association jointly organized a discussion programme among the PWD community and their organizations on 22 May 2020. Similarly, a discussion programme was organized by umbrella organization of Indigenous Peoples (Janajati), Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) on 30 May 2020, that gave very important inputs in the draft review papers. Perspective of IPs were very valid in the context of development of Nepal. Furthermore, a National Level Dialogue was organized by Dalit Welfare Organization in partnership with SDGs Network on 9 June 2020, that was remained helpful to collect information about the perspectives of Dalits community.

Review of SDGs' Implementation Process: The 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development itself is a collective journey and it expects participation and inclusion of poor, women, marginalized peoples in its entire implementation process. In this light, SDGs National Network Nepal organized a virtual programme on 31 May 2020 to review the SDGs' Country Process and participation, but the focus of the discussion was to collect the opinions of key actors of development including different level of Federal Government, national parliament, local and provincial governments, private sector, media, think-tanks, constitutional bodies etc. The event also collected the views from key stakeholders and marginalized communities including youth, PWDs, Indigenous People, senior citizens, Dalits, Madhesi, LGBTIQ, Women, workers, farmers etc. Hon. Mr. Min Bahadur Shahi, a member of NPC, was present in the event.

Thematic discussion on environment and sustainable consumption and production: Environment is one of the key dimensions of sustainable development. Responsible consumption and production has become a serious issue in the world. Therefore, SDGs Network jointly with YFEED organized a virtual High Level Discussion Environment and SDG 12 on 3 June 2020, in the context of 5 June, World Environment Day. This event was able to review challenges related with the environment, and sustainable consumption and production. Some selected experts were invited to the event to put the thoughts on the issues of SDG 12.

Handover of VPR Draft Report to the NPC: SDGs National Network Nepal organized a virtual programme on 9 June 2020, and submitted the draft report of Voluntary Peoples Review. In the programme, Hon. Vice-Chair of NPC, Mr. Pushpa Raj Kadel was present. Draft report was shared among the civil society major groups, stakeholders, development experts and scholars. Inputs and comments received are included in the report.

Organize a VNR Sharing Programme: SDGs National Network Nepal in coordination with National Planning Commission organized a sharing programme on 24 June 2020 in virtual mode. During this event Dr. Narayn Raj Poudel, Programme Director, shared the VNR report prepared by the Government. Presentation was followed by the question and answer from the participants and the chief guest Hon. Mr. Min Bahadur Shahi, the member of NPC, has responded to the questions raised by the participants. This event was also very helpful to get additional information for the VPR process.

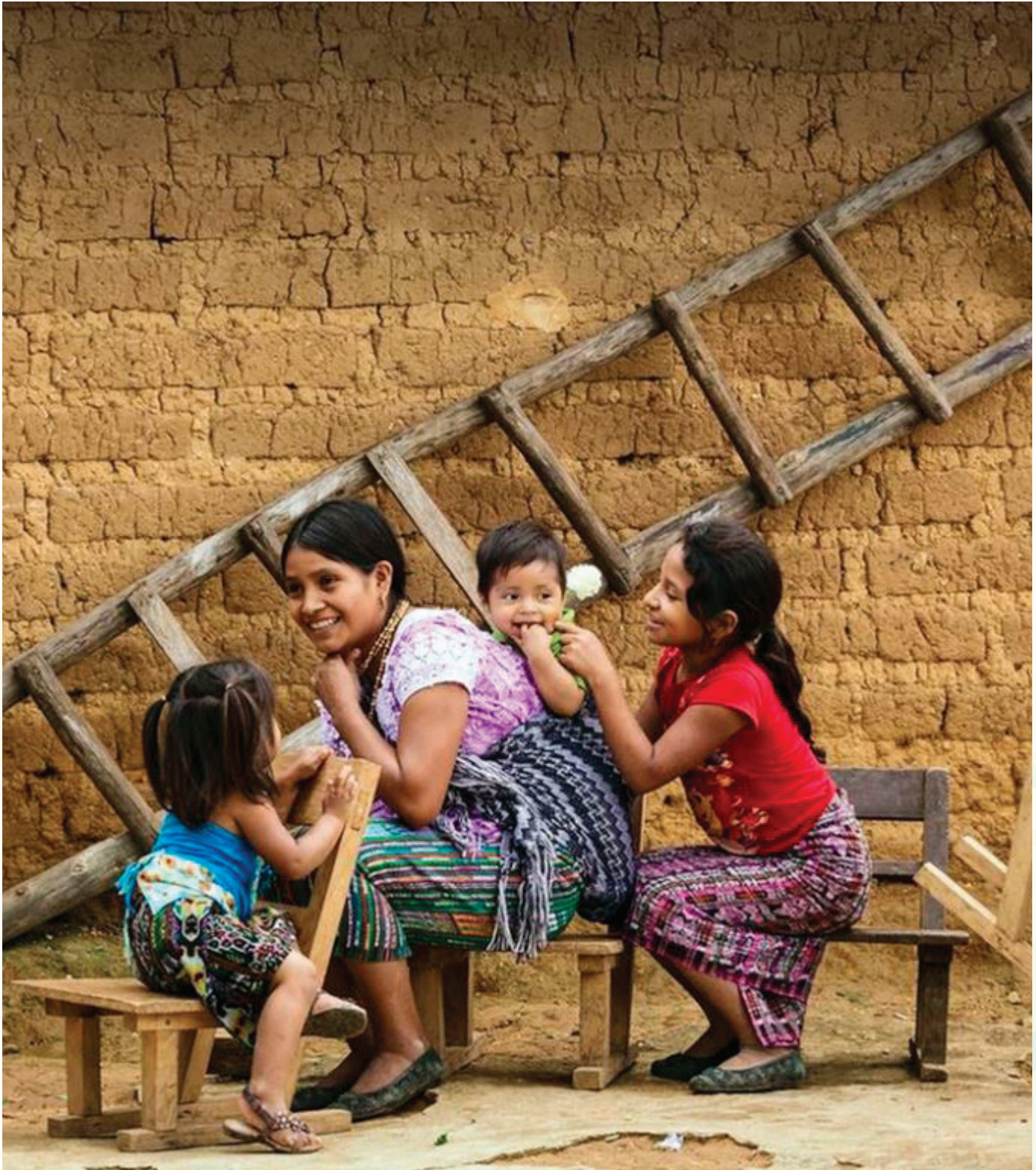
1.3.2 Scope and Limitation

The VPR 2020 was explicitly a voluntary and collective initiative of civil society Major Groups and Stakeholders of Nepal, despite it being coordinated by SDGs National Network Nepal. This report tried to explore the current trends and status of development in the country. Most importantly, this report represents the voices of marginalized and vulnerable people, who have been continuously left behind and some of them are forcefully left behind historically due to structural and systemic barriers.

The process of review started from January and it takes about six months until it is published. A roadmap was prescribed to carry out this review exercise. But, due to the unprecedented situation created by COVID-19 pandemic, most of the discussions and consultations with the key actors happened virtually. Desk review was the preliminary step to begin the review process, but data were collected from government websites, reports, policies, laws, research papers etc. Number of verbal meetings with key informants including high level government officers and experts were done for the purpose to collect reliable information.



The VPR 2020 process could not receive data on the SDGs indicators from the NPC. So, this review exercise was heavily dependent on secondary data and secondary sources. We relied on qualitative data for the review process. Despite, SDGs National Network identified five cross-cutting agendas of sustainable development, the review process could keep eyes on GESI and civic space only.



CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF PROGRESSES

2.1 Institutional Mechanisms

In order to mainstream the 2030 Agenda, the Government of Nepal had formed two High Level Committees and nine Thematic Working Groups in 2017 to roll out and implement the SDGs by 2030. The National Steering Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister is the apex body. The second mechanism is the Implementation Coordination and Monitoring Committee, chaired by Vice Chairperson of the National Planning Commission. The two committees above were supported by nine Thematic Working Groups, chaired by NPC Members. These Committees were also mandated to invite representatives of civil society and other stakeholders as 'Invited Members'. Private sector was formally included in high-level official committees responsible for the implementation of SDGs.

Meanwhile, the Chief Ministers of seven provinces and chairpersons of association of local governments have been included in the National Steering Committee. And, chairpersons of the federation of NGOs and cooperatives have been also included in the Implementation, Coordination and Monitoring Committee. The membership of the coordination and working committees is broadly representative of the public sector, private sector, NGOs and development partners. This means, the Government has tried to make its national level mechanism representative.

Similarly, the thematic working groups have been reorganized into seven groups including (i) Economic Development, (ii) Social Development, (iii) Agriculture Development & Drinking Water, (iv) Energy Development and Climate Change, (v) Infrastructure Development, (vi) Good Governance and Gender Empowerment, (vii) and Coordination. These thematic groups are members from concerned ministries, private sector, civil society and senior officers of NPC Secretariat. Importantly, these high level mechanisms have not been able to represent representatives from women, Dalits, Workers, Youth, Indigenous Peoples, PWDs, LGBTIQ, Madhesi, Muslims and other marginalized communities.

Despite formation of various institutional mechanisms at national level, their functional status is questionable. It is not clear how many times they held the meetings and what they decided. NPC members are politically appointed and they are not stable, because when a new Government comes in power, they are also changed. So, instability of NPC board members is directly affecting the entire development works in the country.

Sustainable Development and Good Governance Committee under the National Assembly (upper house), which is the parliament committee that looks after SDGs affairs in the Federal Parliament. On the other hand, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has started to work on SDGs according to the spirit of Merida Declaration 2015. A book published by it "SDGs and Human Rights" in Nepali language is very useful. The UN Resident Coordinator Office in Nepal is coordinating UN processes to support SDGs and UNDP Nepal has been working as a focal point of UNCT. UNDP published a book "Advocate: Nepal & Agenda 2030 on the Road to the SDGs" is a resourceful book. UNDP is also supporting the NPC through "Facilitating the Pursuit of SDGs in Nepal" project.

The country has been shifted from unitary to federal system after the promulgation of the new Constitution in 2015. Nepal has now seven provinces and the Constitution has specified power and authorities of the province level governments. At province level, all the province governments have formed Policy and Planning Commissions in order to manage its planning and policy works. Policy and Planning Commissions are headed by Chief Ministers themselves. These commissions are supporting the province governments in making annual plans and budgets and they are supporting in the preparation of periodic development plans. Also, Gandaki Province has formed a province level Steering Committee and Implementation, Coordination and Monitoring Committee to implement the SDGs in the province.

The local level restructuring, following the promulgation of Constitution of Nepal in 2015 led to the formation of 753 local governments (consisting of 460 rural municipalities, 276 municipalities, 11 sub-metropolitan cities and 6 metropolitan cities). Elections were held and the local Governments started to function from September 2017. They first sorted out the organization structure appropriate to command and service the functions authorized by the Constitution, and enacted laws necessary for the governance. Despite local governments having elected representatives for the last three years, there is no information about the formation of any dedicated institutional mechanisms for the implementation of SDGs.



2.2 Implementation Status

Federal Level

Nepal has completed most of the ground works for implementation of SDGs at federal level. Various initiatives have been moved forward by the Federal Government in order to adapt SDGs. As mentioned earlier, NPC is an apex body to coordinate the entire SDGs process in the country. The idea of leaving no one behind is in line with the agenda of the new Constitution of Nepal which aims to build a prosperous, egalitarian and pluralistic society with its overarching guidance to all development policies, plans and programmes. The government started to mainstream SDGs in national planning and budgeting systems from the 14th National Plan (2016/17-2018/19), and in other sectoral plans, policies, and their targets are being aligned with SDGs. Specific SDG codes are assigned for all national programmes in the national budget. The Government of Nepal has grouped SDGs in social, economic and environmental categories. Goal 5, 16 and 17 are categorized as cross-cutting goals. Nepal has embarked its 15th National Periodic Plan 2019/2020 to 2023/2024 since last year. Also, it has formulated a 25-year visionary plan with a roadmap and slogan “Prosperous Nepal: Happy Nepali”. The 15th National Plan has tried to mainstream SDGs.

NPC produced SDGs Status and Road Map 2016-2030 that identified 479 national indicators, set milestones and targets to achieve SDGs by 2030. Similarly, the NPC has developed SDG data portal where province wise data are available and a separate webpage (<http://sdg.npc.gov.np>) on SDGs has been launched. Government wants to develop partnerships with province and local governments, private sector, cooperative, civil society and NGOs, international development organizations, regional cooperation organizations, and stakeholders. Government has developed strategies to mobilize internal resources, local and province revenues, private and cooperative investments, as well as development cooperation. Moreover, the Government has estimated the budget required to achieve the SDGs for three fiscal years 2018/19-2020/21.

SDG Need Assessment, Costing and Financing Strategy 2018, formulation of planning and monitoring guidelines to local and federal governments, and review of sectoral plans and strategies in order to align with SDGs are some important steps taken by the Government. Further, the Government has promulgated a number of new laws to implement the fundamental rights. Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines for Federal/Provincial/Local level have also been prepared. Initiatives for localization of SDGs have also been taken through preparation of guidelines, capacity development, assisting in preparing results framework at sub-national levels. Baseline indicators for provinces and manuals for localization has been prepared. Ministries have been made responsible to implement the SDGs through their programmes and budgets. Main issue of SDGs’ implementation is, annual policy, programmes and budgets of the Government are not in line with SDGs national targets as stated in SDGs Roadmap. Absence of a sense of ownership of the agenda with high level political leadership is another challenge to implement the SDGs in the country. Ministries and its departments should be very serious to work on the SDGs since they are mainly responsible for implementation. Inter-ministerial coordination and cooperation are very important.

Implementing SDGs is a very tough job in Nepalese context because geo-politics and domestic political environment determine the entire development process. The country is now extremely suffering from COVID-19 crisis. All the development works have been disrupted and economic activities have been almost stopped. They have directly impacted almost all goals of the 2030 Agenda, but in the context of Nepal Goal 1, 2, 3, 4, and 8 have been highly affected. Most likely, Nepal’s plan to graduate from LDC in 2021, will be difficult in reality.

Local Development Training Academy (LDTA), a wing of the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MOFAGA), is in process to enhance the capacity of local governments to mainstream SDGs in their local development process. Administrative Staff College of Federal Government is also involved in human resource development in the SDGs sector.

Federal Parliament

The Sustainable Development and Good Governance Committee of the National Assembly has established a resource center in Kathmandu targeting the members of parliament. Development of a separate website (<https://digobikas.gov.np>) is another important work done by this committee. Further, it has organized training for some members of Province Assemblies and tried to develop them as SDGs champions. Furthermore, this committee has developed a **Parliamentary Checklist** that will help to make every national laws, policies and programmes SDGs oriented. This committee is also monitoring the progress and process of SDGs on behalf of the federal parliament.



Province Level

Federal government has organized workshops in all provinces on SDGs intending to mainstream SDGs. It is yet to align SDGs at province level planning and budgeting processes. However, Gandaki Province and Province No. 5 have prepared a baseline report of SDGs. Gandaki Province has formulated 5-Year Province Level Periodic Plan 2019/2020-2023/2024 and also it has set province level development targets aligned with province level SDGs targets (SDGs Baseline Report of Gandaki Province 2019), which are good examples of localization process. SDGs Report has set province level targets and milestones by 2030. Province on 2, Bagmati Province and Karnali Province are in process to prepare SDGs Baseline Report.

Federal government developed a national and provincial monitoring and evaluation framework and most recently identified 117 SDGs indicators for the provinces and also interacted with province level planning commissions. NPC has almost readied SDGs localization manual for provincial and local governments to facilitate their specific SDGs plan of action/budget aligned to national periodic/SDGs plan, that still remains to be rolled out. Province governments have not codified their budgets in line with SDGs. In reality, province level governments need to work hard to align SDGs in their development process. All province governments must prepare SDGs Baseline Report, and to formulate 5-year periodic plans by integrating SDG goals and targets. On the other hand, civil society Major Groups and Stakeholders should be active to work on SDGs in provinces. Mass awareness is still a challenge at province level. Province governments must review their development policies and plans in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Local Level

Role of local governments is very important to implement the SDGs. But, most of the local governments are still not aware about the 2030 Agenda. Local people are also not aware about the SDGs. But, local government associations (Association of District Coordination Committees, National Association of Rural Municipalities and Municipal Association Nepal) are trying to support local governments to mainstream SDGs in the local development process. Local governments have realized the imperative of having SDGs interlinked development thrust and accordingly many of them are already in the process of formulating it.

National Planning Commission and Administrative Staff College are facilitating the process through training on SDGs localization and deployment of trained facilitators in 11 municipalities on a pilot basis. The Policy and Planning Commission of Gandaki Province is quite pro-active to supporting local governments to integrate SDGs through formulating local level 5-year development plans.

So far, all three local government associations are providing support to local governments that include deliberating on SDGs as well. Further, capacity development training is needed from national and provincial governments to help the local governments to develop SDGs framework therein. The strengthening of local capacity could be visualized as a three step process: fully functional and adequately staffed organizational setup, formulation of SDGs framework.

Realizing SDGs at local level needs awareness, full political ownership, capacity development, development of frameworks and clear guidance from federal and provincial governments. Of course local governments need more financial resources to implement the SDGs in their territories, which is very challenging. Local governments are not codifying local budgets in line with SDGs. Local governments should not take SDGs as a burden or separate programme.

Most importantly, the development is still not taken as human rights of the people. Political society, policy makers and government officials should change their mind set and to adopt human rights based approach in planning, policy making, programming and budgeting. It is equally important to increase the capacity of CSOs and communities locally.





CHAPTER III: PROGRESS IN GOALS

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Progress and Achievements

While globally, poverty was taking a drop by half in 2015 the brighter promises of eradicating it in all its form and dimension was on top of the global challenges (SDG: Goal no 1). Poverty reduction has been one of the major priorities of the country. The Federal Government introduced a Poverty Alleviation Policy in 2019 and Social Security Act 2017.

Nepal in the last 5 years has faced three massive socio-economic tragedies. First a devastating earthquake on 25 April 2015 increased the poverty rate by 2.5 to 3.5 percent, adding another 700,000-982,000 to the list of the population below the poverty line (ADB report, 2015). The second tragedy began on 23 September 2015, when India imposed an undeclared economic blockade on Nepal, creating a massive shortage of basic amenities like fuel, food supply and even medicine. The blockade hit major hospitals running short of life-saving medicine; the education sector was hit by government rationing diesel to schools. Overall, it contributed to a greater economic loss than the devastating Earthquake (12 Dec, BBC). The blockade pushed an additional million people into poverty, throwing 220,000 workers out of work. It further hit the tourism industry with a loss of more than 800,000 tourists. However, incidence of poverty is reduced to 18.7 percent by FY 2017/18. Increasing GDP in all sectors, inflow of remittance, and political stability helped to reduce poverty. Community forestry alone contributed to reduce 4.3 percent poverty in the country¹.



Latest and the worst ongoing global tragedy is the virus COVID19. It will have an unrelenting damage on the developing economies like Nepal with amplified effects on vulnerable groups which will create more inequality. According to The World Bank, Nepal's economic growth is expected to fall to a range between 1.5 and 2.8 percent this year; six months ago it was projected at 6.3 percent. It is estimated that poverty will increase by 1 percent and about more than 29 thousand people will be pushed to poverty including many lower middle class people. Even after lifting lockdown, they will not get a chance to get jobs. Increasing poverty and unemployment will most likely lead the country into a humanitarian crisis. As the COVID-19 lockdowns create demand for food and other basic subsistence with the return of migrant workers and shut down of all labor activities, Nepal will require an unprecedented *mutatis mutandis* shift in economic policy.

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

Nepal's nearly 28.6 percent (34%, UNDP 2019) of the population still faces multidimensional poverty (NPC,2018). Addressing these cross sector vulnerabilities that suffer improvised life due to systematic disadvantage or deprivation like poor health facilities, malnutrition, deprivation from education or formal training will be one of the key challenges. Loss in GDP will most likely increase poverty in the country. It is sure that workers, Dalits, Madeshi, women and other vulnerable people will be pushed towards poverty. Poverty with Dalits is higher in comparison to other communities and one can guess, level poverty will not be progressed due to the impact of COVID-19.

In Nepal 7 percent population (NPI 2018) is urban poor, which is multidimensional. It is estimated that 2.8 million people live in slum areas. Most of the urban poor work in unorganized and informal sectors. Being poor, they have poor access to health care service, suffer from malnutrition, diseases, and indebtedness, which cause them to live in a vicious cycle of poverty.

The human right based approach to addressing poverty has challenges more on an accountability framework for pursuing social justice. Referred to explicit human rights norms rather than a broad appeal to the notion of redistributive and egalitarian justice (Stephen p marks, 2018) meaning that poverty cannot just be defined by readdressing material resources but a rather grave violation of Human dignity and such violation need legal accountability. Poverty has

¹ Contribution of Community Forestry in SDGs, FECOFUN 2019 Nepal



eroded or nullified economic and social rights such as access to health, education, housing and safe drinking water.

In Nepal 4.8 million people are in the job market. The average wage of a male is NRs. 19,464 and that of a woman is NRs. 13,630, making almost 30 percent income disparity between men and women. Even poverty rate is reduced; its qualitative aspect is not satisfactory. Additionally, Nepal has 908,000 people jobless and more than 56 percent people are dependent. Dalits, sex workers, Muslims, daily wage earners, migrant workers, Indigenous People, PWDs and minorities including LGBTIQ have very limited access to employment opportunities. PWDs community has concerns about the uncertainty of social security services.

In Nepal less than 10 percent of the population can actually afford the medical expenses and others are dependent on that same 10 percent for their medical and other expenses like education and daily expenses. Additionally, marginalized and vulnerable communities are suffering from marginalization from socio-economic and political spheres. Consistent poverty traps caused by deprivation are key challenges in addressing poverty.

Poor work opportunities, especially for PWDs, lack of innovative sustainable industrial growth, cross sector discrimination and violence, climate change as a cause of cyclical poverty amongst farmers, Medical Poverty Trap (Poverty induced by Out of Pocket medical expenses), high level of dependency ratio on each household, lack of adequate social security for senior citizens and PWDs are some challenges. Further, the state is unable to analyze the situation of poverty of different segments of the society.

Though remittance is contributing to alleviate poverty, improve nutritional outcomes, and are linked with higher spending on education, a decline in remittances impacts families' ability to spend on these areas as more of their money will be aimed at solving food shortages and immediate livelihoods needs.

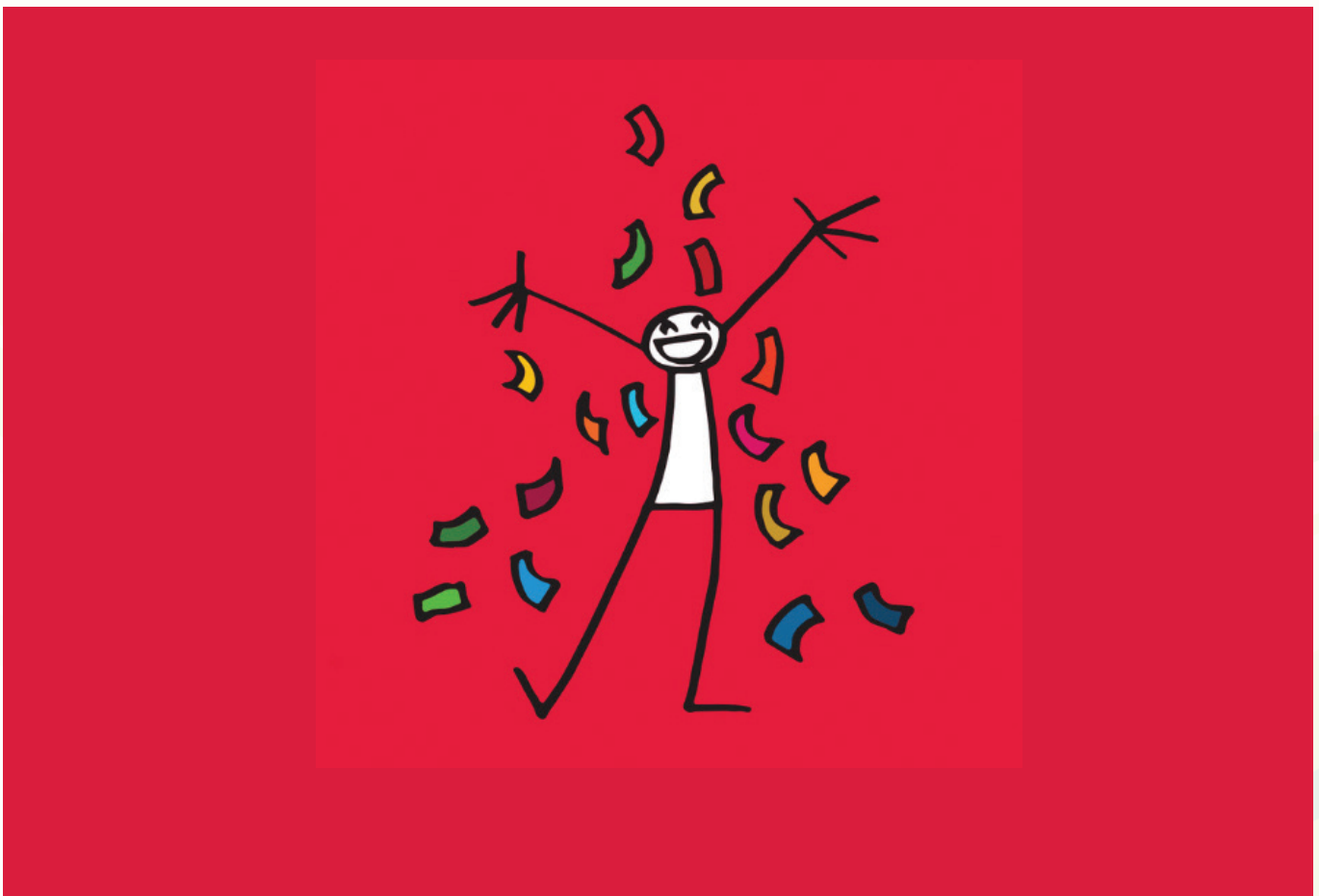
Nepal is a disaster prone country in terms of earthquake, flood, landslide, drought etc. Such disasters exacerbate and compound existing inequalities and vulnerabilities: the poorest people are more likely to suffer death, injury and damage to property, as they live in more hazard-exposed areas and are less able to invest in risk-reducing measures. Women and children are 14 times more likely to die than men during a disaster.

Call for Actions

- One of the great challenges of eradicating poverty is to ensure equitable distribution of economic opportunities and resources nationally and globally. As far as promises in official documents are concerned, we have made a big leap in these five years. However, we have made very little progress in reducing poverty in practice. The vulnerable and marginalized groups should be at the center of all development policies. Nepal needs to review the definition of poverty. Multidimensional poverty could be a good indicator to measure poverty. The joint efforts of the government, business sector and CSOs can certainly be the key to eradicating poverty and improving the economic situation in the country.
- For poverty reduction, the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation should be strengthened, which is seen as a sidelined ministry. Distribution of Poor ID cards should not be limited to distribution of ID cards.
- Poverty reduction interventions of the country should concentrate on Province no. 2 (48%), Karnali Province (51%) and Sudurpaschim Province (33.56%) as they are left behind than other provinces in terms of multi-dimensional poverty. Governments should earmark adequate development budgets for marginalized communities.
- Massive targeted programmes should be implemented for poor, marginalized and vulnerable communities. Governments should follow the principle of Positive Discrimination to uplift them from poverty. Historically excluded communities like Dalits need focused programmes and their access to basic needs such as food, education, health, housing, and land should be protected.
- Federal government should use Social Security Fund targeting to poor, marginalized and vulnerable people. It is very unfortunate that the Government is not able to use 60 Arba Nepali Rupees (approx. 50 million USD) this fund for the benefits of workers even in this crisis time.
- Development cannot be seen only as numeric games of economics rather has to be a matter concerning fundamental human rights based on granting equitable access to the market. Two percent of the people in Nepal have some form of disability. But this two percent of the population has been systematically deprived of adequate transportation and disabled-friendly workplace infrastructure, even though reducing such hurdles will add more to the work force and eventually will contribute to poverty reduction.



- The fundamental action needed for poverty reduction has to be reforming the quality of education and health by making it more accessible to all disadvantaged clusters by providing free schooling and healthcare. Right to food, health, housing, social security should be looked at through the perspective of social security. Measures for the formalization of the informal economy are urgent in order to tackle the strong prevalence of informality and its consequences in terms of poverty and vulnerability.
- Protecting food security and curbing poverty should be the priority action of the economic recovery plan. Countries will need to fight against both health crises and economic crises side-by-side. Also, the country will need to address cyber poverty during recovery.
- Since Nepal has high potentiality of agriculture and tourism development, climate action is the biggest cross cutting issue that the economy rests upon. The unpredictable nature of climate change causes poverty traps amongst farmers and hence is subject to call for action.
- In order to reduce the burden on working men and women, the government should come up with plans for providing free daycare services to children of these working people. And more importantly, enforcing adequate reservation policy in all job sectors (private and public) can uplift the poor and marginalized communities from poverty.
- Governments should bring policy to provide social security facilities and soft loan services to poor, workers and marginalized communities, minorities (including LGBTIQ community), and vulnerable communities as they are deprived by multiple ways. Further, PWDs need special public infrastructure facilities to ease their access to public services.



Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Progresses and Achievements

Main aim of the SDG 2 is to end hunger and ensure that all the citizens of the country have enough food for the whole year by 2030. Also, this goal aims to increase the agriculture practices and create maximum investment opportunities and markets, ensuring the quality, ownerships and development of the agriculture uses as well as improving different factors to alleviate possible threats from climate changes. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/hunger/>.

Agricultural Development Strategy (2015-2035), Food and Nutrition Security Plan of Action (2013-2022), Nepal Zero Hunger Challenge (2016-2025), Nepal Health Sector Strategy (2016-2021), and Multi Sector Nutrition Plan 2018-2022, are the major policy documents in the country to achieve SDG2. Further, Nepal promulgated Food security and Food Sovereignty Act in 2018. Related ministries are responsible to implement the policies.

Contribution of agriculture in GDP is decreasing, but fluctuating as well (21.2% in FY 2018/19). Agriculture provides work to 68 percent of Nepal's population and accounts for 34 percent of the country's GDP, yet food is in low supply for Nepali citizens. The role of women in the sector is crucial given that over 80 percent of women are employed in agriculture. In the 2019 Global Hunger Index, Nepal ranks 73rd out of 117 qualifying countries. With a score of 20.8, Nepal suffers from a level of hunger that is serious. According to The World Health Organization (WHO), stunting is defined as "the impaired growth and development that children experience from poor nutrition, repeated infection, and inadequate psychosocial stimulation." 36 percent of children under 5 are stunted, according to the research done in accordance with SDGs.

Domestic agricultural production is the main source of food availability in Nepal, although a small proportion is imported. Of Nepal's three regions, the Terai is considered to be the food basket of Nepal in which 57 percent of major cereal crops (rice, wheat, and maize) are produced. In recent years, Nepal's agricultural sector has been diversifying towards high value crops and products such as fruits and vegetables, spices and condiments, and livestock.

The availability of diverse genetic resources is a fundamental requirement for achieving food and nutrition security. Presently, landraces of major food crops (rice, wheat, and maize) provide limited nutrition sources at the national level even though landraces of underutilized crops provide major sources of food and nutrition security, particularly in remote regions of the Hills and Mountains.

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

The Zero Hunger consists of five main challenges: i) All food systems should be sustainable, from production to consumption; ii) Need to end to rural poverty by doubling incomes and productivity of small-scale producers; iii) Adapt all food systems to eliminate loss or waste of food; iv) Access adequate food and healthy diets, for all people, all year round; and v) End to malnutrition in all its forms.

The GHI 2019 report shows that, since 2000 significant progress has been made in the fight against hunger in Nepal (<https://kathmandupost.com/money/2016/10/15/ghi-rates-nepals-hunger-as-serious>). But, it found that 9.5 percent of Nepal's population was undernourished. Nepal is ranked 73 out of 117 countries in the GHI, and the report rates Nepal's hunger at 20.8, which falls into the category of serious. However, these numbers are lower than they have been in past years since 2000, when GHI ranked Nepal's hunger at 36.8. According to the Nepal Population and Health Survey 2016, only 48.2 percent HHs have complete food security and 10 percent HHs do not have food insecurity.

At the constitutional level, access to land for agricultural purposes is considered a farmers' fundamental right; however, women's ownership of land is still constrained. Overall, gender equality often only exists in laws and policies, and is not adequately implemented on the ground for the benefit of rural women. The government policy is limited to meeting targets of women's participation in programmes and projects rather than addressing the root causes of gender inequalities in agriculture and the wider rural economy. About 56 percent of all women and 76 percent of Dalit women between 15 and 49 years of age had experienced food insecurity (NDHS 2016). Ethnicity is strongly related to food insecurity. Dalit women were most likely to be food insecure, even after accounting for factors such as education and wealth.





Nepal is going to face a severe problem of hunger as the impact of COVID-19. Fragmentation of land and youth migration reduced area of cultivated land. Still one third (13 lakh hectare) of the agriculture land is barren. Nepal has vast water resources and it is estimated that 67 percent of its cultivated land can be irrigated. While the national objective is to enable year-round irrigation for all irrigable land, at present, year-round irrigation is available to 25.2 percent of total irrigable land (NPC 2018). The Federal Government decided to establish land banks in 300 local governments, but it will not ensure equitable distribution and redistribution of lands (Rokka 2020).

Nepal's food security depends on foreign exchange reserves as well as international trade remaining open, because Nepal is a net food importer: it spent nearly \$2 billion on agricultural product imports in 2018-19. Amidst COVID-19, the border with India – Nepal's major trading partner – remains mostly open to food and other essentials. However, an alarming notice is about moves by some countries — including India — to restrict certain food exports. Experts with FAO warn that national-scale hoarding by governments could be “particularly damaging for low-income, food-deficit countries” like Nepal. Millions of Nepali migrants returning home from abroad could add to the problem by raising domestic demand for food (Gill 2020).

People that live under the poverty line do not have enough money to meet their basic needs like food, clothing and shelter. Farmers have not got good returns from their agriculture products. There is a tendency for a new generation not to involve in agriculture. Those who live in mountainous, more rural areas are the most likely to suffer from poverty and hunger that affects the country.

Food security, sustainable agriculture development to end hunger and mal-nutrition themselves are challenging issues. Sustainable food systems integrate sustainable food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management in order to enhance the country's environmental, economic, and public health. Improper uses of pesticides as well as increasing reliance on chemical fertilizers have negatively affected soil quality. Likewise, due to limited outreach from extension workers, proper techniques to enhance soil fertility and productivity are not properly demonstrated at the farm level. There is also limited knowledge among extension workers on ways to address the growing risks and vulnerabilities caused by climate change and related disasters.

Call for Actions

- Governments should intervene in agro-based food supply systems to end the exploitation happening with farmers and final consumers. Country needs to develop a mechanism of proper supply of agriculture production. Build the food supply channel ensuring quality, quantity and proper availability in rural areas. Local government, cooperatives and farmers should develop genuine partnership in each municipality to promote production and marketing of the agro-products.
- Pro-poor land reform is the genuine demand of the people, unfortunately it is in pending for more than 70 years. Agriculture and land reform programmes of the Governments should be limited to single-income source families and landless farmers. Government must provide lands to Dalit families to comply constitutional rights of Dalits. Inclusion of Dalits in leasehold farming, providing barren land to yield commercial farming, and management of market are some practical ways.
- Country needs to increase the investments in agriculture and ensure funds are clearly targeted to agriculture programmes, including policy implementation and subsidy programmes - that are fully gender-sensitive and disability-friendly - that directly benefit the poor as well as other marginalized farmers. This should also include funding for upgrading to a categorization of farmers and community participation with quality monitoring.
- It is recommended to addressing gaps in policy, legislation and implementation through a set of measures, including greater allocation of direct gender-responsive budgeting, concrete recognition of rural women's contribution to the agricultural sector, addressing root causes of employment inequalities and disparities in rural women's access to and control over resources, the enhancement of women's roles in decision-making positions and their competitiveness in a business environment, as well as for the supply and availability of gender-sensitive agriculture-related technologies.
- Country needs to bring radical agro-based programmes to encourage the people who have returned to villages due to COVID-19 crisis. Of course, Nepal should give high attention in Sudurpaschim and Karnali Provinces for food security. No doubt, agriculture can be a viable livelihood option for returnee migrants and vulnerable populations through well-designed targeted policy support that provides access to land, water, inputs, credits, markets and advisory services. Local governments are better placed to identify vulnerable individuals, and design and implement these programmes in their jurisdictions; and they should be supported in these efforts.



- To reduce food insecurity in Nepal, interventions should focus on improving women's education and wealth, especially among Dalit and those residing in Karnali and Sudurpaschim.
- Course design and resource allocation should be in line with innovation of indigenous knowledge of lead farmers. We need to promote the indigenous seed with proper systems and practices to promote sustainable agriculture. We need to develop and implement a mechanism to assess small farmers, landless and marginalized people on all types of agriculture skills, inputs, resources and markets. Local governments should develop the programmes to promote urban farming, including kitchen garden and roof farming to promote food security.
- CSOs have a number of opportunities to work on the SDG 2. The Nepal Government has formulated several acts and policies to secure the right to food and food sovereignty of peoples living under poverty and hunger. Likewise, concerned government line agencies of central to local levels also need to act proactively focusing on achieving the concrete results.
- Countries must implement Zero Hunger Challenge Action Plan 2016-25 effectively. More capacity should be enhanced of local level service providers to implement the multi-stakeholder nutrition plan/interventions (MSNP) including food security related laws and policies.





Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Progresses and Achievements

The restructuring of the political system of the country and post-earthquake reconstruction were aligned with the onset of SDGs, providing the country with the opportunity to localize and strengthen the health system. The new constitution demanded several new acts, policies, and directives, leading to new policy level achievements in the health sector as well. For e.g.: Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Act 2018, Health Insurance Bill, National Health Policy, Nepal adolescent health and development strategy, provincial health policies, etc. Along with the National Periodic Plan, Nepal Health Sector Strategy –NHSS, 2015-2020 was also designed in line with SDG 2. Also, the political commitment to the health sector was strengthened at the international arena with the Government's adaptation of Universal Health Coverage in 2019 and stronger commitment to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in platforms like ICPD+25 Nairobi Summit. Safe Motherhood and SRHR law address none discriminatory health service for sexual and gender minorities people as well.



At the indicator level, the SDG indicators of health are progressive for maternal mortality rate, newborn mortality rate and TT utilization by pregnant women². Composite coverage index of Essential Health Service is 64 percent. Public health service coverage shows >85 percent child vaccine coverage, >50 percent skilled birth attendance and a significant reduction in communicable diseases. Life expectancy continues to increase (69.7 years as of 2019) and the fight against neglected diseases including some infectious diseases has made significant progress. WHO has certified Nepal as a trachoma free country in July 2018.³ Moreover, the significant achievement is that the budget increased healthcare expenditure by NPR 24.64 billion (US\$ 228 million) in 2019.⁴ 56 percent of the damaged health facilities have been reconstructed and another 12 percent are under construction.⁵ Similarly, Nepal has introduced Traffic Accident Information System software in Kathmandu valley and Kathmandu-Birgunj Corridor. Also, vehicle fitness checking centres have been established in seven provinces.

Though the health sector in Nepal is still majorly owned and contributed by the government, the CSOs and private sector have also been playing a major role in imparting health related information and behavior change communication. Some cooperatives can be found running health centers and hospitals in more remote areas of the country⁶, and this partnership will enable communities otherwise cut off from health services to access necessary medical treatment at affordable rates, and support to leave no one behind.

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

71 percent of the indicators for Goal 3 has publicly available national data to track the commitments and progress on SDG, making it the goal with most data available⁷, and depicting that the health management information system is in place. However, several indicators do not have a baseline, making tracking still difficult. This highlights the need for segregated data for evidence-based decision making in the health sector. Marginalized and vulnerable people do not have easy access to public health services. Poor, PWDs and senior citizens are suffering in many ways.

Data shows five indicators are regressive for Goal 3. Nepal needs to reduce the maternal mortality rate, which stands at 239 per 100,000 live births, to 70 by 2030, while the country needs to bring neonatal deaths to 12 per 1,000 from the existing 21 and under-five mortality to 25 per 1,000 from the existing 39 to meet the targets.

Recent global fight for Covid-19 was an eye opener to the current health system of Nepal and indicates two main reasons (i) people are not able to access services they need especially in public health facilities – and (ii) weak preparedness for public health emergencies. The cases have yet not reached epidemic as of today, and the reasons are yet to be explored. However, the expertise in the health sector and timely decision for prevention and control has

² Presentation by national planning commission

³ www.ngofederation.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Civil%20Societies%27%20Perspectives%20Report%20on%20SDGs%20Implementation_September%202019.pdf

⁴ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259650182_State_of_non-communicable_disease_in_Nepal

⁵ Rebuilding Nepal, a National Reconstruction Authority publication, Jan-Feb 2020

⁶ https://www.undp.org/content/dam/nepal/docs/project-documents--2019/Development_Advocate_2019.pdf

⁷ https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Nepal_15.pdf



been attributed as quoted by various sources worldwide. While prevention is always the key, COVID-19 pandemic also opened up the question regarding health infrastructure in case pandemics like this occur. There were lack of testing and treatment facilities, that strongly recommends building the capacity and number of health workforce⁸, and tertiary level health care facilities throughout the country.

The trust of public on health system is degrading due to no medicines, no doctors, and no proper health response to patients by health providers, when 80 percent of the service seekers go to public health facilities⁹. Privatization of health care facilities has increased tertiary level hospitals, but they are limited only to the country's capital and there is lack of regulation on the cost of care they charge. Free health care services are available through different tiers of the health system in Nepal; however, the quality of the service is questionable. The people still face challenges such as lack of essential medicines in the health institutions, absence of health workers, lack of information or counselling on free health care services. The marginalized people such as people with disability, sexual and gender minorities, rural people, Dalit, women and girls, young people are not able to access and afford the health system adequately, questioning the leaving no one behind theme of SDGs. Persons with homophobia is badly suffering these days. LGBTIQ community are facing health sector stigma because of their gender identity and sexual orientation and sex characteristics.

Sustaining finance for the health sector is another challenge. The proportion of current health funding is significantly lower than the government's own target to attain 8 percent of the national budget for health expenditure, and the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommendation of general government health expenditure of at least 5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP).¹⁰ Health budget is increased slightly but varies annually and is spent mostly on infrastructure and not on services and medicines. As a result, 2/3 of health expenditures comes out of pocket which pushes people especially poor into poverty when people face catastrophic expenditure. It is very difficult to access special health facilities/subsidies for ordinary people and most of the people are not aware about those facilities.

All commitments look good in paper, but real implementation has been a challenge. Currently there is no clarity on the role of provincial health departments as well as district health and health centers— a lot of ambiguity exists which might hamper smooth implementation. Lessons need to be learned from other countries like Indonesia and the Philippines which are still struggling. Thailand is a good case of success, including regarding involvement of civil society. They have created a people's assembly which is organized annually.

Although antiretroviral medicines are available to everyone living with HIV in Nepal, a survey conducted in 2018 reveals that more than 30 percent of transgender people avoid seeking health care because of fear of stigma and discrimination.

Road crash deaths and injuries have been on a sharp upward trajectory in the country since the early 2000s— especially for more vulnerable road users. In 2016, pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists accounted for around 72 percent of all road fatality victims in Nepal, among the highest levels in the region. About 40 percent of people killed on Nepal's roads in 2017-18 were younger than 26. As per last five years' data, every year about 10,000 Road Accidents occur in Nepal. Because of this, about 1,889 people lose their life whereas 13,000 get injured every year. Analysis of these data shows that per day 27 accidents and death of more than 5 people occur in Nepal. Due to Road Accidents only, about 0.8 percent of the total GDP is lost every year. (MOHA 2018) Road safety action plan developed by the Government is a positive effort.

Call for Actions

- Increase political commitment, resources at least 10-12 percent of annual budget, and governance in the health system. Ensure the fundamental rights to health of every citizen by reaffirming constitutional commitments and international commitments such as UHC. Ensure easy access and none discrimination health service for poor, marginalized and vulnerable people such as PWDs, senior citizens and LGBTIQ people. Nepal needs paradigm shifts in the Health Care System.
- Public health service needs to give more attention to Sexual and Reproductive Rights of the young people. Nepal may need to give more attention to prevention and treatment of mental health patients, since mental health problems are growing rapidly after COVID-19 crisis. Many agencies are tirelessly working to develop

⁸ kathmandupost.com/valley/2019/06/08/nepal-will-struggle-to-achieve-sdgs-and-universal-health-coverage-without-ensuring-quality-health-care-experts-say

⁹ www.himalkhabar.com/news/13167?fbclid=IwAR13U1p_mX5HLZt3VDDfcehRoblhPV7Uxym4qZKOyUwZBmo8mXEPUEngUe4

¹⁰ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259650182_State_of_non-communicable_disease_in_Nepal



COVID-19 vaccine, but we strongly urge, the vaccines should be easily accessible to all and they should be freely available to the people.

- Revise the existing model of predominantly disease-centric, donor-driven, and vertical programming. Since out of pocket expenditure is very high in Nepal, Nepal should adopt an integrated people centered health approach that brings preventive, promotive, curative, rehabilitative as well as preparedness for public health and humanitarian emergencies. Health insurance programmes of the Government should be more effective since families are not renewing their insurance and they have been treated as second class patients in hospitals.
- Increase investment in strengthening health facilities, including upgrading and increasing service sites and their infrastructure capacity, so that health facilities reach the last mile. Also, ensure availability of human resources, equipment, and commodities at all the primary health care centers. Government must stop haphazard distribution of financial assistance to VIPs for health treatments.
- Now, time has come to rethink the operation of private hospitals, nursing homes, private clinics etc. as they have been established to earn money and maximize their profits, rather than to provide services. Country must end the privatization of public health services to ensure the right to health.
- Promote innovation in health access through youth friendly interventions such as mhealth, telehealth, mobile clinics, youth information centers etc. so that marginalized populations who have limited access to health services are also benefited.
- Invest in capacity strengthening and monitoring of human resources for health. Strengthen national system, civil vital registration system, to collect and disseminate segregated health data and conduct robust periodic national health surveys. Where this is not possible, accept and adopt the data provided by the private sectors and CSOs, and CSOs also need to support the Government by providing data to fulfill the data gaps in SDGs.
- Strengthen primary health care with adequate medicines and skilled health workers to reduce maternal mortality. Retention of the health workforce is a challenge as half of approved health workers do not report to PHC level – this is much higher in remote areas.
- HIV sensitive social protection programmes need to be incorporated into the border social protection framework of the Government of Nepal. HIV sensitive social protection programmes need to be incorporated into the border social protection framework of the Government of Nepal.
- To end the scourge of road crash fatalities, Nepal must invest more strategically to manage road safety. The country must look at ways to design safer vehicles and roads. Road construction works must give importance to cycle lanes, Wheelchair lanes, and pedestrians. They must improve emergency response systems, share data on road crashes, and increase awareness about road fatalities and how to prevent them. Government, private and non-government institutions can promote work from home. Government must take responsibility for public transportation.







Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Progresses and Achievements

The Government's policy in education, in line with UN SDG 4, emphasizes full access to quality education for all (NPC, 2017b). This inclusive policy has potential to reduce inequalities in society, eradicate poverty, and promote economic growth.

The devolution of governance structures in federalized Nepal presents an opportunity for improved coordination of education at the local level, supporting progress towards all SDGs including SDG 4 (Daly, Parker, Sherpa & Regmi, 2020). In addition, this new structure allows for decentralized decision-making and empowers local education agencies to assume greater responsibilities ownership, accountability and authority to strengthen their capacities.

Constitutional provision provides full authority to local governments for implementation of the education programme and constitutes a big leap forward for decentralized delivery of the education services (UNESCO UIS, 2019).



Progress Assessment of SDG 4 Targets and Indicators Set by NPC for 2019

SDG 4.1. By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

Indicator Description:	2019 Target	2019 Progress
4.1.1 Net enrolment rate in primary education (%)	98.5	96.30 (1)
4.1.2 Primary completion rate (%)	90.7	83.16 (1) (2016)
4.1.3 Proportion of pupils enrolled in grade one who reach grade eight (%)	81.5	73.55 (2) (2016)
4.1.4 Ratio of girls (to boys) enrolled in grade one who reach grade eight	1.03	1.04 (1)
4.1.5 Ratio of girls to boys enrolled in grade one who reach grade twelve	1.04	n/a
4.1.6 Ratio of students to teacher in basic education (up to grade 8)	36	19.74 (2) (Primary)
4.1.7 Ratio of students to teacher in secondary education (up to grade 12)	35.3	28.26
4.1.8 Proportion of trained teachers in primary and secondary education (% of total teachers)	96.5	88.85 (2) (secondary)
4.1.9 Learning achievement / Score (Math, Nepali and English) for Grade 5	60.8	n/a
4.1.10 Gross enrolment secondary education (grade 9 to 12)	72	80.18 (2)

SDG 4.2. By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

4.2.1 Coverage of child grant for pre-primary education (number in '000)	1038	n/a
4.2.2 Day meal program coverage (%)	31	n/a
4.2.3 Attendance to early childhood education (Gross Enrollment) (%)	85.8	87.43 (1)



SDG 4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

4.3.1 Ratio of girls' enrolment in technical and vocational education	0.66	n/a
3.2 Ratio of girls' enrolment in tertiary education (graduate level)	1.04	n/a
3.3 Scholarship coverage (% of total students)	38.3	n/a

SDG 4.4. By 2030, increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

4.4.1 Youth and adults having technical and vocation skills (number in '000,)	165	n/a
4.4.2 Working age population with technical and vocational training (%)	38	n/a
4.3 Internet users (percent of adult population)	59.5	n/a

SDG 4.5. By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access

4.5.1 Gender parity index (GPI) (primary school)	1.01	1.05 (1)
4.5.2 Gender Parity Index (GPI) (secondary school)	1	1.04 (1) (<i>Lower Sec.</i>)
4.5.3 Gender Parity Index (GPI) based on literacy (above 15 years)	0.72	n/a

SDG 4.6. By 2030, ensure that all youth and at least 95 per cent of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

4.6.1 Literacy rate of 15-24 years old (%)	91.37	92.39 (1) (2018)
4.6.2 Literacy rate of 15-24 years old (women) (%)	90.5	90.88 (1) (2018)
4.6.3 Numeracy rate of 15 years and older (%)	71.7	n/a
4.6.4 Numeracy rate of females of 15 years and older (%)	63.4	n/a
4.6.5 Public spending per student (Basic education in '000)	19	17 (3) (2017)

SDG 4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

4.7.1 Human assets index	68.85	n/a
4.7.2 Gender development index	0.58	n/a
4.7.3 Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in: (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment (In scale of 0 to 5: Where "0" is none)	-	n/a





SDG 4.a. Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non- violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

4.a.1 Schools with access to electricity (%)	-	n/a
4.a.2 Schools with access to internet (%)	28.6	n/a
4.a.3 Schools with “WASH” facilities (%)	53.0	n/a
4.a.4 Disability friendly schools (%)	-	n/a

SDG 4.b. By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries

4.b.1 ---	-	n/a
4.b.2 ---	-	n/a

SDG 4.c. By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States

4.c.1 Proportion of teachers in primary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (%)	100	97.29 (1)
4.c.2 Proportion of teachers in basic education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (%)	100	85.40 (1)

(Cells marked 'n/a' refers to data not available while '-' indicates no indicators set by Nepal)

(1) UIS Update (2020). UIS Database. <http://data.uis.unesco.org/>

(2) UNESCO UIS (2019). UNESCO Institute for Statistics Report of Nepal

(3) NCE Nepal (2018b). Research on Education Financing GAP Analysis

Government plans to establish at least one Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institute in all 753 local levels in the country as of May 2019, Nepal has seen an increase of TVET institutes from 332 to 507 (UNDP Nepal, 2019).

Nepal promulgated Compulsory and Free Education Act in 2018. New National Education Policy-2019 was approved by the Government that sets ambitious goal of achieving major structural overhaul in education sector¹¹. Nepal’s Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has linked Covid-19 to education by making public service announcements on the guidelines and providing the relevant materials for the students to learn from home (MOE, 2020).

Nepal has fared well in increasing its net enrolment rate for Grade 1 in Karnali Province, which was noted at 97.3 percent in 2017 (MOE, 2017). Showing that Nepal has the capacity to achieve certain education indicators in its least developed province.

Nepal has seen consistent success in reaching education indicators. Whereas, in 2019, 87.43 percent of pre-primary children attended school, higher than the government target of 85.8 percent (UNESCO UIS, 2019). Additionally, the literacy rate for 15-24 years old was 92.39 percent in 2018, higher than the Government of Nepal’s target of 91.37 percent in 2019 (NPC, 2017a).

In regard to 4.1.6 and 4.1.7, it’s important to note that the teacher to pupil ratio is greatly varied throughout the country. Ranging from, 1:60 in some remote schools to 1:15 in schools in urban areas.

In regard to SDG 4.6, in 2018, the adult literacy rate of Nepal was 65.9 percent (Dhakal, 2018), an increase from 59.6 percent in 2011 – 75.1 percent were male and 57.4 percent female (MOE, 2017). Despite the increase in literacy rate, gender inequality and inequitable accessibility persisted across different regions of the country. With the far and mid-western regions still experiencing the lowest literacy rates.

¹¹ <https://thehimalayantimes.com/kathmandu/new-education-policy-envisions-nepal-as-hub-for-students/>



Despite progress in addressing the targets of its education goal, Nepal continues to confront deeply entrenched issues of educational access, gender inequity, student retention at all levels of schooling, overt unionizations in the learning institutions, undue political influence, poor quality of learning, poorly trained and motivated teachers and lack or inadequate teaching resources. Some of these interlinked and complex sets of institutional, political, and educational challenges are described hereunder.

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

Prioritization and investment

The national budget allocation on education has declined from 17.1 percent in 2011/2012 to 10.20 percent in FY 2018/2019 (NCE Nepal (2018a) that makes around 4 percent share of GDP.

Government's lack of high priority in quality education has undermined the human capacity development of the population especially impacted by the Maoist conflict (Pherali, 2016) and other factors including natural disasters and health concerns.

Many public schools in poor rural areas and urban slums lack essential and adequate infrastructure and resources like toilets (separate for boys and girls), safe drinking water supply (NIRT, 2016) and earthquake resistant schools which is only 11 percent of total schools (UNICEF, 2019).

Inclusiveness and equity in education

Contrary to the aim of the Government's 'Nepal School Sector Reform Plan 2016–2023', the education system in Nepal remains neither inclusive nor equitable (Ezaki, 2018).

Although enrollment of girls in primary school is increasing (UNESCO UIS, 2019) retention of these female students, especially in secondary schools, remains a challenge given the societal pressure to withdraw early from school due to patriarchal expectations as well as early marriage. This trend is higher among Dalit communities especially and along the Nepal-India border, and lower in hill communities (LeVine, 2019). Traditional taboos, socio-cultural factors, and the patriarchal system continue to limit women and girls from reaching their full potential in formal learning including their access to higher education (Karki, 2019).

The gap between educational outcomes of public and private schools is significantly wide indicating growing educational inequality, contradicting the 'School Sector Reform Plan 2016–2023', of an inclusive and equitable education system for all. The analysis of the differential educational outcomes of public versus private schools is largely absent from national planning (Ezaki, 2018).

There is inequity in the education sector, as only 12 percent of children from the lowest wealth quintile are developmentally on track in literacy and numeracy compared to 65 percent from the highest wealth quintile (UNICEF, 2019). Challenges to access of quality, among females and marginalized communities, continues to be a bottleneck in improving participation of these groups in various sectors of the country.

Enrolment and completion

Despite progress, primary school enrolment targets remain unmet. In 2019, Primary School Net enrolment rate was 96.3 percent falling short of the government target of 98.5 percent. This difference resulted in 103,384 children and 46,598 adults unable to access learning and education (UNESCO UIS, 2019).

Enrolment rates of 6-10-year-olds have increased at the primary level, but access to schools remains a problem for marginalized and underprivileged groups like the Dalits and Janajati, and those with special needs such as physical disabilities. Access to school is further complicated due to the terrain of the country with physical distance to schools remaining a challenge especially for children from poor households (Uprety, 2019).

A significant proportion of students do not complete primary schooling whereas only 73.55 percent made it to the last grade of primary school (UNESCO UIS, 2019). 770,000 children aged 5-12 years are still out of school and over 80,000 children with disabilities or from indigenous minorities are currently not able to stay in school (UNICEF, 2019).



Early childhood development and protection

The Early Childhood Development (ECD) is a key policy of the government that has had positive outcomes. However, services provided under ECD are not integrated and do not ensure protection of children under five (UNICEF, 2018) and, ECD has been mistakenly understood to be privately run Early Childhood Education (ECE) centers such as nursery/kindergarten.

Attendance rate at ECE is still low at 51 percent (UNICEF, 2019) and the cause for the low attendance rate is not well understood. Additionally, the detailed data on coverage of child grant for pre-primary education is not publicly available.

Quality education

Nepal has improved access to schooling significantly, including access across all groups. However, the disparity across regions, gender and type of schools (public/private/others) remains very high. Very few schools in Nepal meet child-friendly school standards to date (UNICEF, 2019).

National Assessment of Student Achievement (NASA) indicates that half of students in grades 3, 5 and 8 do not meet the academic achievement criteria for Nepali and mathematics (UNICEF, 2019). Additionally, NASA fails to report on achievement in English and also on how achievement indicators have been used to monitor and improve the progress on SDG 4.

According to the World Bank, 80 percent of the children in poor countries cannot read or understand a story by the end of primary school (World Bank, 2019). This underlines the profound weakness in Nepal's education as well as a poor developing country, due to lack of quality focus on education (government focus on quantitative aspects of the goal). It is, thus, recommended that the currently used definition of literacy should be redefined to include "functional literacy" otherwise the real picture is lost in political orchestration.

Teacher quality is an important factor impacting the quality of education in Nepal. However, Nepal lacks adequate data on teacher quality and performance.

Per new provisions, the power to manage and award the School Leaving Certificate will be devolved to local and provincial governments. However, currently the government does not have the resources nor the expertise to effectively execute these powers.

Enhancing the quality of public schools and managing private schools are challenges affecting the provision of quality education. Given the better educational performances of private schools, it is not surprising that they are increasingly associated with that 'quality education', resulting in a large shift of students moving from public to private schools (Ezaki, 2018). Under these circumstances, concerns have been raised about the 'pauperization' of public schools and how it would disproportionately affect children from lower economic strata as well as the loss of respect and trust in the quality of education of public schools (Ezaki, 2018; Mathema, 2007; Dhakal, 2019).

Digital exclusion

In 2017, 58.72 percent of the population were internet users indicating that almost half of the population still lacked access to the internet (Rana, 2018). In the age of digital learning and communication, the lack of ICT literate teachers, costly internet facilities, and low level of ICT literacy is worrisome. Moreover, the infrastructure needed to extend the internet to rural areas is not adequate (Dawadi and Shakya, 2016; Rana, 2018).

Technical and Vocational Education Training

In 2019, the total enrolment in TVET for students in secondary education was 2.65 percent (UNESCO UIS, 2019). Low enrolment rates have been attributed to unskilled adults being in hazardous and dangerous occupations in and outside the country, without the appropriate training to ensure their safety and well-being.

TVET sustainability and relevance of curriculum as well as quality of teaching remains unmonitored and thus standards are questionable.

Appropriate and reliable data availability

The target and indicators NPC have set are not uniform with global standards. Resulting in the absence of important indicators in the UNESCO global database.



NPC fails to consider important factors – income distribution, geography, demographics – in setting targets and indicators. Resulting in the review of SDGs is difficult and unrealistic.

Nepal has an Education Management Information System (EMIS) in place but it draws mostly administrative data. Student performance data is missing in EMIS.

Nepal's NASA covers students in grades 3, 5 and 8, on an intermittent basis (Education Review Office, 2016) but how these are used to target SDG 4 indicators is not clear.

Five years after the adoption of SDGs, there is no updated data for indicators that Nepal set such as: tertiary education, learners' relevant skills, TVET, ICT, ECD and educational facilities. This data gap may signal that Nepal is mainly focusing on access and participation of the children and neglecting quality and equity.

There is no data on gross enrollment data on ECD, the data only covers the enrollment for ECE.

Call for Actions

Nepal's education system is facing challenges requiring remedial action by the government. Below are suggested actions.

Investment

Increase public investments and ensure funds are clearly targeted for education policies, infrastructure development, and programmes that are: (i) fully gender-sensitive and disability-friendly, (ii) directly benefit poor and marginalized groups, and (iii) promote higher standards, quality, sustainability, community participation, and effective supervision.

Inclusiveness and equity in education

Provide free school uniforms, nutritional meals, stationery, and first aid at schools to promote a student centric approach – to foster high enrolment and high retention.

Prioritize the provision of subsistence grants and scholarships for students from poor, under-privileged and marginalized families; including Dalit, Janajati and students with disabilities.

Provide free education as the fundamental rights enshrined in Article 31 of the Constitution of Nepal (2015). National government must ensure that private schools provide free education to marginalized students which will represent no less than 15 percent of the total student population.

Enact legislation to implement Article 38 of the Constitution, on special measures for women's education especially addressing the needs of those from lower socio-economic status and remote and rural geographical locations. Government must spearhead a programme to bring fundamental changes to entrenched patriarchal practices, taboos and stigmas that affect Nepalese societies, which greatly restrict students.

Governments need to provide day-meal facility to Dalit children in hilly areas and government should increase scholarship for Dalit children. It will be easy to enroll total children of Dalit communities. Public schools should totally close collection of money from Dalit students in the name of infrastructure, teacher salary etc.

PWDs need special communication means to ease their access to education services. There should be special facilities to disable children and LGBTIQ to admit in the schools and continue their education in the school.

The curricula should be LGBTI-Inclusive that also includes the detail terminology of LGBTIQ people. Government should ensure LGBTIQ friendly education institute. It is necessary to incorporate this in teacher's training curriculum as well. Better understanding of SOGIE will facilitate them to teach students in an effective and non-discriminatory way.

Quality Education

Include student performance component in school EMIS data with the capability to assess school performance.

Review SDG4 indicators in terms of quality education, linking them with global indicators. NASA assessments and other national efforts in quality education should be streamlined with national and global indicators of SDG4.

Replace the current narrow "literacy" definition with "functional literacy". New definition of literacy should include reading, numerical skills with proficiency indicators.



Reform teacher colleges to ensure all schools have well trained and qualified teachers with current subject related knowledge. The past glory and image of the College of Education under Tribhuvan University (established in 1956) should be regained to produce quality teachers needed for the nation.

Conduct curriculum reforms on a 5-year rotation which consider international and local contexts. Incorporating curriculum that encourages empathy and develops critical and creative thinking skills required for rigorous challenges of advanced learning capabilities and problem solving.

Integrate climate, health (Including hygiene and sexual and reproductive health) and other crisis preparedness, response and resilience in school curriculum.

Make in-service teacher training and knowledge sharing activities mandatory in schools. Draw upon diaspora resources for training and knowledge sharing to enhance quality of education.

Decentralization and devolution

Provide sufficient and qualified human resources to create a dedicated governance structure for education at the local level. Ensure tasks are delegated and decision making devolved to local levels to alleviate persisting educational challenges, as well as address lack of accountability. Ultimately, guaranteeing the required actors are in place to properly and efficiently carry out all tasks that are required at each level of governance.

Ensure that provincial and local institutions responsible for provisioning resources and teachers, are making informed and nonpartisan decisions.

Management and accountability

Make administrators, bureaucrats and school headmasters accountable for delivery of quality education and for school's overall performance.

Stakeholders must plan and operationalize budgets in a timely and transparent manner (effective delivery) to garner public support for increasing future budget allocation in the education sector.

Hold educators and teachers accountable for students reaching a high-quality of standard in every grade. Provide supervision and support for ensuring improvement takes place.

Incentivize schools to create a multi-cultural and children-friendly learning environment. Provide both incentives and sanctions to ensure that quality standards of education and learning are met.

Conduct regular stakeholder meetings with parents, local CSO representatives and marginalized communities, to promote ownership and accountability of groups in the shared future of the community.

Address capacity gaps of government planners and policy makers at all levels by leveraging the NPC authority and Provincial Planning Commissions and enhance capacity building of federal and local governments to meet the requirements of delivering quality and efficient education management systems which contribute towards achieving SDGs.

Early childhood development

Require local governments to deliver ECD services to children in a holistic manner through community run centers, with special focus on marginalized and disabled children.

Government to establish regulatory and monitoring mechanisms for commercially run day care/nurseries/ kindergartens.

Ensure that: resources required for the proper training of teachers and the tools needed to provision quality education, are properly provisioned and accessible to ECE teachers.

Digital and STEM

Build adequate ICT facilities at schools to allow for teachers to implement and facilitate ICT classes.

Teachers undergo training to become ICT literate. Mandate basic computer literacy and competency for all teachers.

Prioritize STEM education. Require schools to have a minimum of one science laboratory with a trained teacher.



Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Set up a national TVET qualification and certification system and accredit it with a well-established framework. Require it to regulate TVET institutes to ensure that the courses offered are (i) responsive to the demands of the existing and emerging industries, (ii) trained qualified teachers are available in sufficient numbers, and, (iii) quality of practical training meets a minimum standard.

Implement an incentive scheme for students who choose to study vocational courses. Governments should provide more support to Dalit communities in TVET sector.

Government provides vocational courses from Grade 10 onwards, both at the local and national levels, to meet the demand for skilled workers.

Other Important Action Needed

Adopt a staggered approach to implement trilingual (English, Nepali and mother tongue) education, beginning at the primary level with bilingual education of Nepali and mother-tongue language and English as an elective course.

Establish mechanisms to gather evidence of best teaching and learning practice provisioned by schools and disseminate findings to schools.

Prepare all learning institutions to offer blended teaching (Face-to-face Distance) as a new dimension of education and also to cope with crises like earthquakes, pandemic and so on.

Declare schools and institutions of learning into zones of peace; restrict partisan politics by students and school staff, as well as political unionization of students' unions at all levels of learning institutions.





Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Progresses and Achievements

The Government of Nepal is committed to gender equality, women's rights and the empowerment of women under its Constitution 2015. The Constitution guarantees fundamental rights to Nepalese women, including the right to freedom, equality and social justice, presented a particularly important milestone and¹²provided for women's right to equal pay and social security, established daughters' right to ancestral property, and encouraged special provisions for women's education, health, and employment for increased participation of women in national development. Affirmative action policies have been adopted to ensure women's representation, voice and agency in politics, governance, and in the society more generally. Nepal first ever have had women as Head of the State, Speaker of Legislative Parliament, Chief Justice, and women as head in Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce



and Industries (FNCCI), Minimum 33 percent women candidates in the Constituent Assembly (CA) elections, a minimum representation of women in the Cabinet, constitutional bodies, public institutions, the civil service, the police, and the army is appreciable.¹³There are also provisions for economic and social benefits of women from 2015 to 2019 along with various policies and funds for the enhancement of women. According to the Global Gender Gap Index 2020, Nepal is ranked 101st (0.680) from the top. The value of index is increased from 2019. Similarly, Nepal is ranked 115th (0.476) by Gender Inequality Index (UNDP).

The decade-long conflict in the past and other political challenges, Nepal has made remarkable progress expanding learning opportunities for children and adults. Net Enrollment Rates (NER) in elementary education, for instance, increased from 66.3 percent in 1999 to 97 percent in 2016. According to UNICEF "Status of women and Children" Nepal achieved an overall adult literacy rate of 65.9 percent (75.1 percent Male and 57.4 percent Female) through varied literacy campaigns, by implementing adult and functional literacy, along with income generating activities. The Government of Nepal has also passed an Inclusive Education Policy with the aim of ensuring quality education and improving all education systems.

If we talk about women and health, historically, Nepal has had one of the highest rates of maternal morbidity and mortality in South Asia. ¹⁴The maternal mortality ratio (MMR) in Nepal decreased from 539 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births to 239 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births between 1996 and 2016. The Federal Parliament has passed the Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Right Act. Procedure Guidelines on Safe Abortion Services Programme was revised to implement free abortion services in 2016. Safe abortion services are available free of cost as basic reproductive health care package services in Nepal. The maternal and reproductive health of women and girls has also been improved by implementing the National Safe Motherhood Programme through preventive and promotional activities.

Women's economic empowerment is a fundamental prerequisite for every aspect of development. The Constitution of Nepal, 2015 expresses its determination to create an egalitarian society based on the principles of proportional inclusion and participation, to ensure equitable economy, prosperity and social justice. Likewise, at present, numerous new initiatives have been launched by the Government of Nepal such as the Prime Minister's Agricultural Programmes and the President's Women Empowerment Programme which demonstrate government's commitment to invest in the economic development of women. The continued practice of gender- responsive budgeting in its financial planning and programming has contributed positively to increase resource allocation to women.

Constitution of Nepal (2015) protects women from physical, mental, sexual, psychological or other forms of violence or exploitation based on religion, social, cultural tradition, or on any other grounds; makes all acts of VAWG punishable by law; and empowers the victim with the right to obtain compensation. Similarly, government enacted Sexual Harassment at Work Place (Prevention) Act in 2014 and Witchcraft-related Accusation (Crime and Punishment) Act, in 2015. The Country Criminal Code 2017 has an elaborate legal framework to address the issue of VAWG. The Act criminalizes all forms of discrimination based on caste, gender, religion, disability and ideology inter alia. It also criminalizes the practice of forced labor, bonded labor and enslavement and makes such practices

¹² Civil Society Report on Beijing+25

¹³ Single women security fund guideline 2013

¹⁴ National Demographic Survey



punishable. Witch-hunting, socially exclusionary and degrading practices like Chaupadis also criminalized along with child marriage, forced marriage and polygamy. The constitution has partially addressed recognition of gender minorities (LGBTIQ) and they can get citizenship ID and passport by their gender identity.

The Local Government Operation Act 2017 has provisioned for the representation of women in self-governing local units either as Mayors or Deputy Mayors which as a result has reflected on the local elections held where the representation of women has been ensured in 700 local units out of 753 as Deputy Mayors. Around 6567 Dalit female members were able to win in local level election. Out of 753 local bodies, only 18 (3 percent) are headed by women (Chairperson/Mayor and only 23.54 percent are in civil service sector). Currently, women representatives in the local level governments are about 41 percent.

The Government also passed the Gender Equality Act, in 2006 and amended almost 56 discriminatory provisions from various laws and policies to end gender violence. Government of Nepal has adopted Zero Tolerance policy on violence against women and declared 2010 as gender violence free year and an inter-ministerial committee formulated to deal with GBV. The government has formulated a national response for prevention of Gender Based Violence (GBV) with special focus on its prevention and the protection of women and girls and has established a gender violence prevention fund.

Mentioning about the land holding over the years, the Government of Nepal has been introducing several proactive measures to promote women’s access, ownership, and control over land and property.¹⁵ These measures, depending on the geographical location, include a 25 percent to 50 percent tax exemption on registration when land is owned by a woman; a 35 per cent tax exemption for single women (Financial Bill 2072, Ministry of Finance); and joint registration of land in the names of husbands and wives with a fee of Rs. 100.

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

Nepal is a country with a strong patriarchal value and system, where women are considered as subordinated to men. The impact of the existing patriarchal society reflects on the limited participation of women at all levels despite the reservation policy. Amid representation is increased in legislative bodies at three levels, representation of women is still low in executive bodies, higher positions of political parties, and high level government officers.

In Nepal, most of the women are home based workers and are engaged in the informal sector with low wages, where they face harassment and abuses. Although the constitution of Nepal promulgated on 20 September 2015 has brought significant changes to the women with 33 percent reservation as well as Gender Equality Bill to address the inequality through legal frameworks. However, a number of factors still exclude women from meaningful participation, access to justice and from the leadership roles.

Goal5 mentions achieving gender equality and how women and girls can be empowered. Nepal has made remarkable progress in ensuring equal access to education for females, with gender parity in primary and secondary level school enrolment. Several national laws and policies have been amended and enacted to reduce gender based violence. Nepal has also set target to eliminating gender disparity in all levels of education, wage discrimination at similar work, physical and sexual violence, and all harmful practices, and raising the presence of women in the national parliament and public service decision-making positions.

22 percent women in 15-49 age groups have experienced physical violence since age 15. Every married woman reported current husband (84 percent), Ex-husband (11 percent) as perpetrators. Experience of physical or sexual violence increased with age; from 12 percent sexual violence of women with disabilities is high in Nepal, though there is lack of evidence.

VAW cases registered in Nepal Police in Nepal

Year	Rape	Domestic violence	Witchcraft	Child Marriage
2016	1089	9398	28	20
2017	1131	11629	24	26
2018	1480	12225	48	59

Source: According to National Demographic Survey (NDHS) 2016

¹⁵ IOM UN migration Securing Women’s Land and Property Rights in Nepal





To implement the Constitution, new Acts need to be formulated to address discrimination and violence against women and girls remain, despite significant and continuous improvement. More than one fourth (26 percent) of women aged 15-49 year 35 experience physical or sexual violence.¹⁶ Among the different forms of violence, domestic violence is predominant followed by girls trafficking, physical/sexual abuse, social abuses and malpractices such as allegation of witchcraft, Chhaupadi (exclusion from family during menstruation), dowry, early marriage (before the age of 18 years) etc. Building and transferring knowledge at the provincial and local level, creating GESI systems, drafting GESI policies, collecting data, are also macro level challenges.

If we talk about the women and economy sector many programmes implemented for financial empowerment of women have failed to meet the intended goals this has created acute challenges for women with regards to access and usage of resources. On the women and education sector persisting challenges are the scholarship programmes for girls initiated by the State are not effective due to lack of monitoring, follow up, learning and programmes development mechanism. One of the main persistent challenges is related to existing infrastructure; a majority of the school buildings are not gender and disabled-friendly, environments in terms of infrastructure such as access to classroom, library and toilets. Although the state has reaffirmed the provision of the highest attainable standard of Reproductive Health Rights through safe motherhood and reproductive rights act 2018, state's inability and gaps to formulate regulation and necessary procedural guidelines has hindered its full and effective implementation.

Gender equality is when people of all genders have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities.¹⁷ Everyone is affected by gender inequality - women, men, LGBTIQ, children and families. It impacts people of all ages and backgrounds. We need gender equality at all levels. Gender equality prevents violence against women and girls. It's essential for economic prosperity. Societies that value women and men as equal are safer and healthier. Gender equality is a human right and it not only benefits the women but society as a whole.

Women have unique experiences because of their race, class, religion, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity. Issues of gender equality and women's political participation cut across all segments of the very diverse Nepali society, where gender, caste, geography, disability, age and ethnicity impact an individual's standing. Whether they are Madhesi from the Terai region or Dalit from anywhere in Nepal, women face gender discrimination and inequality. Dalit women and women from lower castes clearly suffer extraordinary challenges based on the continued weight placed on caste in Nepali society. Muslim women are compelled to balance conservative religious practice in their homes and communities with civic engagement.

Any public policies and actions must seriously consider the issue of intersectionality. Diversity within women should not be overlooked. Issue regarding gender equality is exclusion of sexual and gender minorities & intersex community (LGBTIQ), even though constitution talks about the equal rights. They often face security threats and sexual violence. There are a number of laws they do not recognize LGBTIQ and state is unable to protect them. Transgender people cannot amend citizenship ID as per their preferred name. They can choose only the "other" category in the gender marker. There is no representation in state structure from the sexual and gender minorities community. Definitions of minorities fail to include sexual and gender minorities, so that this community is left behind to represent in state structure and equal opportunity in employment.

Women with disabilities are confronted by social stigma, discrimination, physical barriers and lack of accessible information and services. Their double marginalization (or multiple marginalization if they are from an ethnic or religious minority or lower caste) places enormous burdens on their everyday life. The rural/urban divide in Nepal places distinct demands on women's experiences in society, especially when the nature of their work may make it more challenging, such as migrant, domestic and factory workers. There is no voice of the rural woman. Women who are single, widowed or divorced navigate these challenges in a patriarchal society that demands male family members in decision-making roles, which makes carrying out even ordinary tasks more difficult. The gender quota with the Dalit women inclusion measure was mandated to improve the representation of one of the most invisible groups of women in Nepali society, but their role is undermined and some of them experience caste-based discrimination even today.

Call for Actions

The decision making role of women in regards to her bodily autonomy, her family community and indifferent state machineries should be considered for the meaningful decision making process. Quality of participation should be improved. Government must implement the recommendations given by the periodic review of CEDAW. Government

¹⁶ Civil society report Beijing+25

¹⁷ Civil Society Report on Beijing+25



agencies should take concrete actions, at least to achieve the 50:50 target of representations in public bodies by 2030. Promoting gender equality in the judiciary system is very important. It is recommended to bring Gender Equality Law in the country.

Ensure equal and equal representation of women at local government by ensuring quality in education and capacity development of rural women and likely giving technical support to the women who are capable to hold the leadership position. State should ensure equal access to all women in internet service to prevent the digital divide.

The policies, law, social welfare programme activities implemented by the state have to be implemented effectively/sustainably in a targeted manner Effective community awareness programme must be run robustly by the state, local governments, private sector and the civic society actors.

Increased accountability of law enforcement is urgently needed in the country. Interim reliefs must be provided immediately after commission of the crime; no matter whether defendants are arrested or not.

Promote an integrated approach to eliminate violence against women by focusing on gender mainstreaming and a zero tolerance to VAW policy at all levels of society to eliminate all forms of violence against women through policies and programmes as well as systems, procedures and processes. The Country Criminal Code 2017 which was passed by the Parliament on 17th August 2018 criminalizes Chaupadi and discrimination and exclusion based on menstruation period. The “chaugoth” were destroyed but that didn’t stop them from continuing the practice. The main reason they are following this is because they feel impure and it’s obvious from them to feel this way because of their menstrual hygiene. They don’t have access to sanitary pads, and the ones they get in subsidy is not enough. Though the government has been running training and awareness on Menstrual Health Management (MHM), it is not widely practiced and has been limited to few districts. Therefore, before carrying further steps MHM should be widely spread.

Intersectionality issues should be seriously considered when taking decisions, and making plans and programmes for women and gender equality. Perhaps most critically, efforts should be made to regularly convene women’s rights activists from various backgrounds, including substantial representation and engagement from Dalit women and other historically marginalized communities including Madhesi, Muslim and indigenous women, women with disabilities and LGBTIQ. Convening women with a breadth of priorities and experiences will generate familiarity and respect among them, as well as mutually beneficial strategies for achieving gender equality, including the successful implementation of gender quotas.

Amend of definition of “Minorities” and open the opportunity for LGBTIQ to participate in state structure and employment. Citizenship bill should not mention “Need of medical proof” to access citizenship certificate for gender minority peoples. Government must ensure to provide information of LGBTIQ community in each provinces to end the deep rooted violence and aware the people with the awareness and sensitization of different forms of violence and ways to prevent and address them.

As with Nepal, diversity among women should be acknowledged and incorporated into the adoption of gender quotas and other affirmative action strategies around the world. This effort cannot be a one-off gesture, however. Rather, policymakers and women leaders must carry out a series of deliberate and inclusive efforts to diversify political participation over time.

Efforts to address gender based violence must be multi-sectorial, including health, education and justice with holistic services such as shelters, helplines, and psycho-social support.

Women’s responsibility for unpaid care work has to be recognized and redistributed within households so that women and girls will have access to education, income generating opportunities and participation in public life. Social Protection for all who are in unpaid care work, informal work.

The commitment to “Leave No One Behind” is to be incorporated effectively to government policy, programmes and budgets, that needs to address the most marginalized women who have experienced marginalization, extreme poverty, violence and exploitation. Invest on building knowledge and capacity to implement measure normative frameworks i.e. Constitution. GESI issues should be seriously included into the periodic/annual plans. Financing for GESI and investment on social norm change and mindset is crucial.

Revisit SDG5 national targets and indicators with thorough consultation with women rights groups. It is recommended to adopt and establish GESI data collection, GESI Budget, and track the progress through a robust monitoring system.



Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Progresses and Achievements

SDG6 aims to ensure water and sanitation for all, and to stop open defecation by 2030. There are six targets within the SDG6 prepared by the Government of Nepal.

As per the national goal, it is aimed that the basic water supply coverage will become 99 percent whereas improved sanitation facility is aimed to reach to 95 percent by 2030 (SDP, 2030) in Nepal.

However, water coverage has modest growth reaching to 89 percent only while basic sanitation coverage leaped forward with toilet coverage 99 percent through the nationwide Open Defecation Free Campaign. Nepal has been declared as ODF on 30 September 2019 where Total Sanitation Guideline 2015 as the base beyond ODF though SHMP itself also holds the mandate beyond ODF. If functionality is considered water coverage drops down below 50 percent.



The National Budget over the last four years indicates that the budget for sanitation is increasing, but that for wastewater and solid waste management is fluctuating. Stand-alone sanitation budget found encouraging.

The Water Sector Ministry has drafted the WASH Sector Development Plan (SDP) and is waiting for endorsement by the government of Nepal. Recently the sector ministry has also published WASH status report of Nepal. Various activities are planned and proposed in draft WASH Sectoral Development Plan to contribute to meet WASH SDG targets by 2030.

All seven Provincial governments and 753 Local governments (Rural/Municipalities) are also well resourced in the federal context with WASH mandates and resources are dedicated to WASH services. As per the federal constitution, WASH plans and programmes are developed at municipal level integrating with other development agenda. Municipalities' sanitation investment also includes solid waste and drainage management as it is on high public demand.

Despite the abundant water resources available, Nepal has not been able to achieve self-sustenance in food and energy supply and, thus, depends mainly on imports. Out of the total 225 BCM annually available surface water, only 15 BCM is in use (WECS, 2005). Around 95.9 percent of this 15 BCM is being used for agriculture, 3.8 percent for domestic purpose and only about 0.3 percent for industrial purpose (WECS, 2011). Per capita water consumption is far below per capita water availability. The Nepalese people are now the shareholders of many hydroelectric projects and half of the royalty generated from these projects return back to local levels. These are some key steps towards development of hydropower, irrespective of persistent myths and uncomfortable realities (*Upadhyay and Gaudel 2018*).

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

In recent years, Nepal has made impressive progress in its WASH development, yet there are still 2.3 million people living without access to safe water and 15 million people with no access to sanitation facilities. Water and sanitation-related diseases are among the top ten most serious public health issues and the top five reasons for death in children under five. Hygiene behavior change continues to be overlooked as a critical element of many basic WASH, health and education programmes, and there is no proper data available to reasonably assess the hygiene situation. (WaterAid Nepal).

Basic water supply coverage reached 90 percent, however, less than half of the households have access to piped water supply and it is varying across social groups and place of residence. It will drop down below 50 percent if considered the functionality. Providing safe water is challenging, only 20 percent of the population are provided with safe and treated water whereas 80 percent households are using contaminated water with E. coli.

Nepal has declared the ODF and achieved basic sanitation coverage, it is a challenge to sustain the sanitation progress and achieve a total sanitation environment. Although two-thirds of the population is using latrine, only 30 percent urban households are connected to sewer systems. However, there is still a challenge to close the sanitation gap and treatment and safe disposal of the wastewater. Transgender and gender diverse people could not access public toilets.



Nepal is vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters such as floods, landslides and earthquakes. In 2015 the country was devastated by two huge earthquakes, which damaged thousands of homes and buildings, and heavily affected WASH facilities.

Inadequate water supply and sanitation deprive communities of the most basic hygiene measure that helps prevent the spread of disease: handwashing. As a result, Covid-19 is shining an unforgiving spotlight on the inequalities, hardships and health risks that stem from our failure to uphold the human right to water and sanitation.

There is an established monitoring and evaluation system. National Management of Information Programme (NMIP) which followed a conventional and manual format system about collecting programme data. It could be linked with the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) integrating Water and Sanitation component indicators such as use of improved water sources, use of improved sanitation, hand washing and water quality etc.

The sector should focus on water quality and functionality of the infrastructures, safe, hygienic, and functional toilet facilities to move beyond toilet coverage. All WASH sector agencies and partners need to continue to support in sustaining and upgrading WASH facilities and activities.

There is a wider opportunity for Nepal to move forward to implement SDG6. The policies need to revise to align with SDGs and to be translated in annual plans with appropriate budget allocations.

The national periodic plans need to be translated into actions, work plans with budget and time-frame should be continued to follow periodic plans. It is also equally important to clarify roles of different stakeholders and build capacity of human resources at all levels to effectively implement SDGs. The nation should plan and move forward to achieve SDG6 target with appropriate indicators and plans beyond coverage of water and sanitation.

Lack of implementation strategy and plan for all SDG6 targets, lack of plans for implementation of goals at provincial and local government levels for enhancing operational activities, lack of a clear data, knowledge-base and monitoring systems to track SDG targets, limited functional secretariat to address SDG6 at local and provincial levels, capacity gaps of CSOs in line with implementation of SDG6 and absence of community stakeholders' participation in the process, lack of consolidated effort and defined advocacy agenda and contextual analyses of micro level issues, and engagement of CSOs in the federal, limited engagement in provincial and local level are some challenges to be addressed.

The poor water resources development and management has resulted in poor socio-economic development of the country and the popular saying 'Nepal is rich in water resources' has remained a myth. Even though Nepal is endowed with such large techno-economically feasible hydropower potential, no substantial progress has been made in the hydropower sector. Instead of analyzing the success or failure of these plans prepared by the task forces, the Ministry of Energy has again come up with another plan of 10,000 MW in 10-year Electricity Development Decade from 2016 to 2026. The hydropower related policies are, regrettably, focusing on large scale projects; selling hydroelectricity would not necessarily lead to prosperity; and regional market for the electricity in South Asia is not as easy as depicted in national policies (*Upadhyay and Gaudel 2018*). Due to the impact of climate change on receding glaciers, the Himalayan transboundary river systems are at great risk.

In the hills and mountains, the main problems are geophysical, with water mostly accessible in the valleys below the steep slopes, and rocky subsoil limiting the possibility of storage. Thus, rainfed agriculture is still the method of choice in most of this area. The plains areas of the Terai are mostly suitable for irrigation, but irrigation use remains low.

Call for Actions

- Government should focus on the quality of potable water and functional services and facilities adapting to local context and needs. Nepal needs to give priority to personal hygiene. All gender toilets within disabled friendly toilets for easy access of toilets for trans and gender diverse people. Governments can provide subsidies on toilet sets and sanitation package for Dalit communities since majority of Dalits living in rural areas do not have access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. Government should design gender neutral toilets in public places.
- Re-assess a set of data and knowledge to define accurate baseline and develop a platform for data analysts, preferably employing AI (artificial intelligence) enabled systems, which would allow continued monitoring and



analysis of information and facilitate a robust and objective decision making process. Accordingly, plan and set realistic and achievable indicators for all the SDG6 targets, which are also cross-verifiable with SDG3 indicators for ensuring impacts. Make the national estimate comparable with Joint Monitoring Programme.

- Revisit the strategy by separately addressing the issues around urban and rural areas, as they present entirely different setups in terms of challenges, opportunities, resources/capacity, as well as regulatory provisions. Country needs to ensure access to safe and affordable drinking water and adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all women and girls, as well as for menstrual hygiene management.
- Government needs to plan to re-activate all Federal, Provincial and Municipal level existing structures of WASHCC and must give them business for functioning and wider actors' engagement. WASHCC at all levels should start comprehensive discussion among sector actors about the strategies and plans for localizing SDG targets and enhancing operational action.
- Government and development partners shall plan and budget for institutional capacity building and sustaining of CSOs. CSOs need to develop clear and common strategies to make governments accountable for sector progress in line with SDG6. CSOs should have their consolidated effort and defined advocacy agenda, own functional roles and contextual analyses of SDG targets to advocate government and sector partners. CSOs should be engaged in the federal, provincial and local level to support sector actors and educate and instill knowledge and skills to local community stakeholders for managing the WASH infrastructures and services.
- The overall development of the nation needs to be based on the foundation of water resources development and its sustainable management. This can be achieved through sustainable development of different sectors of water which include domestic water supply, irrigation, industrial water supply, hydropower, flood control, navigation, fisheries and environment. For achieving such sectoral development, planning needs to be done in an integrated manner; not in isolation. In the context of the new federal structure of Nepal, attempts should be made to internalize the integrated development of water resources (*Upadhyay and Gaudel 2018*). Water security is still a key issue for many people in Nepal, in spite of the theoretically high physical availability of water. Moving towards integrated management of water resources and approaches to water governance will also play an important role in achieving water security (*Nepal, Neupane, Belbase, Pandey & Mukherji 2019*).
- The concept of 'resilience dividend' promotes an integrated and inclusive approach to development which reduces disaster risks, fosters development and triggers multiple social, environmental and economic benefits in the long term. Such a resilience dividend approach at the basin level will also help address the targets under the Target 6.5 on integrated water resource management at all levels, Target 6.6 to protect and restore water-related ecosystems and Target 6.B to support and strengthen the participation of local communities.



Goal 7 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Progresses and Achievements

Nepal is rich in hydropower resources, which are the major source of energy. Yet, the huge potential for generating hydro energy is still untapped. Therefore, the country suffers from an acute energy shortage adding an extra burden to the poverty-stricken country. In case of SDG7, it has 3 major indicators and they are further divided into 11 different sub-indicators. As per the baseline conducted in 2015, the progress is presented in the table below:

In order to achieve the figures presented in the table presented above, the government and private sectors contributed lots of efforts. The efforts made by the government side are from policy level and implementation level both. The policy efforts were realized from facilitation of conducive environment for investment and business ecosystem by the proclamation of various policy documents such as “Rural Energy Policy 2006”, “Climate Change Policy 2011”, “Renewable Energy Subsidy Policy 2016”, “Biomass Energy Strategy - 2017” and mentioning “Electric Stoves in each house” in “White Paper 2018”.



Indicators	2015 (Baseline)	2020 March (Achievement)	2030 (Target)
Proportion of population with access to electricity	74%	85.69%	99%
Per capita energy consumption (in gigajoule)	16	19.3	24
Households using solid fuel as primary source of energy for cooking	74.7%	62.5%	30%
People using liquid petroleum gas (LPG) for cooking and heating	18%	22.5%	39%
Electricity consumption (kWh per capita)	80	245	1500
Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption	11.9%	17.64%	50%
Installed capacity of hydropower (MW)	782	1167	15000
Commercial energy use per unit of GDP (ToE/mRs)	3.2		3.14

The government also made favorable environment by reduction and exemption of custom duty and VAT for promotion of electricity, renewable energy, clean cooking and biomass energy-based technologies etc. As a result of a conducive and favorable environment, a tangible number of private sectors have been able to achieve a generation license of hydro-electricity of more than 6500 MW and installed capacity reached to 1167 MW.

The electricity access has reached to more than 85.69 percent of total population whereas the penetration of renewable energy technology reached to 17.64 percent. Nepal has been freed from load shedding problems in this period. Similarly, the access to clean cooking has been reached to 22.5 percent while the consumption of traditional solid fuel has been reduced to 62.5 percent. The per capita electricity consumption has been remarkably increased to 245 kWh and per capita energy consumption reached to 19.3 GJ which are the major indices of overall development of the country. Total final renewable energy is reached to 560.8 PJ and Energy intensity reached to 7.8 MJ/USD 2011 PPP (WB2020).

Similarly, the financial institutions (banks) and private sectors have made a huge investment for development of hydroelectricity through various projects running in the country. In partnership with the government, I/NGOs and private sectors, the “National Electric Cooking Campaign” initiated electric cooking in various districts of the country. With support from the government, more than 300 Community Rural Electrification Entities (CREEs) have been able to extend basic electricity access to more than 5,50,000 rural households in 53 districts of the country.

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

However, with the contribution and joint effort of government and private sectors all, most of the indicators of SDG7 has been able to get some positive achievement towards its target, still this sector has some issues that may act as an obstacle to reach the target within set time.



- Goal 7 is not being considered as a cross cutting issue to achieve the target of other Goals.
- Substantial reduction on consumption of electricity due to shut down of entire business, commercial and industrial activities during worldwide COVID-19 pandemic situation.
- Inequitable distribution of energy access between haves and have not groups.
- Total access to clean fuels and technology for cooking is 60 percent for urban area and 18 percent for rural area. This clearly indicates inequality in access to clean energy. (WB2020)
- There may be chance of discrimination in distribution of access of energy to different constituencies like marginalized and pro-poor groups, people living in remote areas and other deprived groups etc.
- There is no diversification of use of clean and green energy for different sectors which could achieve the target in a faster way.
- Lack of skilled and specialized human resources such as energy efficiency and energy audit experts.
- Continuation of subsidy on LPG rather than promotion of carbon neutral and clean and green energy to develop climate resilient society.
- No concrete projects on clean cooking technologies.

Call for Actions

- Government and private sectors should realize that the energy sector is only one component which would recover the country from COVID-19 pandemic situation in a faster way than others in terms of revival of agriculture, education, technology, business, industry, employment etc.
- Government should adopt necessary policy to increase the access of decentralized clean and green energy to the marginalized and deprived groups without any discrimination. For instance, PWDs also need energy to ease their life and mobility.
- It's the right time to bring policy to increase the consumption of electricity per capita and energy efficiency rather than access to energy to develop and maintain the quality of life of citizens.
- Priority to diversification of energy into different applications such as clean cooking, irrigation, modernization of agriculture, electric transport, rural and cottage industries and other productive applications etc.
- For the development of a carbon neutral and climate resilient society, the existing subsidy on LPG must be transferred to electricity and other renewable energy based clean cooking technologies. The custom duty, excise duty and VAT on electric vehicles must be eliminated for tangible replacement of fossil fuel-based transportation systems.
- National and provincial planning commissions should be able to realize that the energy as a core and cross cutting component of development and it must be integrated to other sectors such as agriculture, education, health, business, industry, technology and so on.
- There must be a good coordination among all three tier government bodies for planning and execution of their activities in line with SDG targets.
- Provision of department/desk of energy in all (rural) municipalities for increasing wider and diversified access of energy to the people of the country.



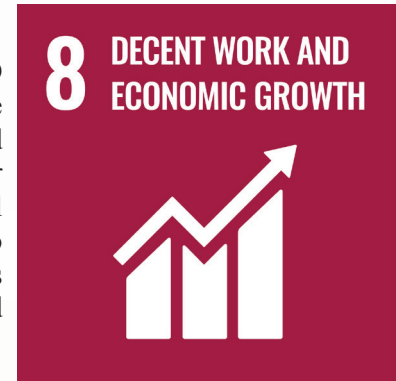




Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Progresses and Achievements

By the end of 2019, Nepal's GDP per capita showed a rising trend, reaching USD 1034 as compared to USD 998 in the previous year. Average economic growth rate in the last three years was 7.3 percent. While this progress is in line with the targeted growth rate of 4.5 by 2022, slower than anticipated growth might be the norm for the next few years since agricultural yield, industry, services and remittances will likely be hard-hit by the outbreak of COVID-19. Economic growth rate is likely to go down even further due to loss of productivity in the coming years. These factors combine to work against Nepal's aims of achieving its target of per employed person real GDP growth rate of 5.5 by 2022.



Nepal has promulgated Right to Employment Act in 2018, Occupational Safety and Health Policy 2019, and Labour Act has been also amended, which are the progressive steps of the Federal Government. The present unemployment rate in the country stands at 11.4 percent, while the underutilization rate of labor is at 39.2 percent. In this respect, the targeted underemployment rate of 19.5 percent by 2022 seems very daunting. Nepal therefore has a lot of ground to cover if it is to achieve its targeted underemployment rate of 10 percent by 2030. The country is also supposed to promote development-oriented policies to decrease informal employment and encourage the growth of small and medium enterprises. As of FY 2019, 41 percent of labor is employed in the informal sector, against the target of 10 percent in 2030.

There is no exact data, but more than 4.3 million Nepalese are working in foreign countries including Malaysia, Arab countries, India, Europe and North America. In the past, remittances had been counter-cyclical, where workers dispatched more money back home in periods of crisis. For instance, the compensatory response of remittances was a valuable mechanism for disaster relief in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in April 2015. However, this is not true in the present context. In the ninth month of FY 2019/20, Nepal's remittance income dropped sharply by 51.4 per cent to Rs. 34.5 billion as compared to Rs. 71 billion in the same month of FY 2018/19. Because of this, the country's inflow of remittances fell by 4 per cent to Rs. 626.9 billion in the first nine months of FY 2019/20 in comparison to Rs. 653.2 billion in the corresponding period of the previous year. Moreover, according to the World Bank, remittances to Nepal are expected to fall by 14 percent in 2020.

It should be recalled that remittances contributed 27.3 percent to the country's GDP in 2019. Currently, most of the destination countries attractive for the Nepali workers have announced a lockdown. In this situation, the effect of COVID-19 on remittances could be very damaging, and Nepal will have to forego the crucial contribution to its GDP that the country gains from remittances. For workers, no income means no food, no security and no future. As the pandemic and the jobs crisis evolve, they need to be protected.

Nepal has high potentiality of eco and cultural tourism. Number of tourists arriving in Nepal has gradually increased in the past few years. Number of star and non-star hotels has increased in the country. Tourism in Nepal is a source of both direct and indirect employment and is a major foreign exchange earner. It is one of the largest industries which has contributed 8 percent to Nepal's economy. Nepal announced Nepal Visit Year 2020, but it has been postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

Excluding the winding-down period, Nepal has just a little over five years to achieve its stipulated goals. For the country to make the most of this time, there are several key issues that need to be focused on. COVID-19 has badly affected the economy of the country. Economic growth is expected to decrease to 2.5 percent in 2020. The Federal Government proposed 7 percent economic growth rate for FY 2020/21, which is most likely impossible. Moreover, emergence of COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on lives and livelihood of the people posed the question on growth-model development. Neo-liberal economy will not serve the people.

Reduced domestic demand and the adverse long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to decrease industrial output. Major industries like iron, cement, and brick have for the past few years already been operating below their full capacity, and this is likely to continue. In addition, the government policies on real estate lending have also contributed to the sluggish growth in this sector. Therefore, for employment and output in this sector to increase



to targeted levels, judicious restructuring of the economy and reformulation of financial policies are required.

Growth of private consumption in the country is expected to take a significant hit. This was already the case before the pandemic, since Nepali currency has recently been depreciating, thus eroding purchasing power. The post-pandemic situation looks worse, given that the volume of remittance is likely to stumble.

Natural hazards frequently tend to decrease farm outputs and damage the infrastructure in the poverty-stricken areas of Nepal. The Twenty-Year Agricultural Development Strategy was announced in FY2017, but in the absence of implementation of such announced policies, and lack of support for use of advanced technology, entrepreneurship, innovation, and development of commercial agriculture with access to better technology and financial services, such problems are likely to persist.

A task force formed by the Federal Government to study the impact of Covid-19 on foreign employment sector and the economy has said that the country needs to create 1.5 million jobs, more than double the target set by the government, to avoid an imminent unemployment crisis. With the Covid-19 pandemic affecting the global workforce, tens of thousands of Nepali migrant workers based in various labour destination countries are expected to return home while many people within the country are also likely to be put out of their jobs.

Because of discrimination for equal opportunity in employment, many transgender people are involved in sex work. No law of employment addresses quota, reservation and equal opportunity in employment for LGBTIQ people. PWDs do not get opportunity for nurse training.

Although the population of working-age females in the country is higher than that of males, females still lag far behind when it comes to employment—and the pay gap between the genders is also huge. In the labour market of Nepal 22 percent are women. For every 100 employed males, there are only 59 employed females.

With the majority of women involved in non-profit making and non-wage earning works, the employment ratio of women is very low (CBS 2019). Most of the jobs have been created in the informal sector where the majority of men and women are employed. For example, 66.5 percent of employed women and 59.7 percent of employed men are in the informal sector (Nepal Labour Force Survey 2018). In the informal sector, there is a lack of social security and the workers are underpaid.

Women are also facing numerous other challenges in the world of work, including violence and harassment at work as well as an overburden of care responsibilities. Women are forced to leave their jobs in case of delivery. The survey results indicated that 28 percent of men lost their jobs during the lockdown, compared to 41 percent of females. Like in politics, there is male bias in the business sector too.

Not much progress has been made in Nepal regarding decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation. Hence, promotion of sustainable consumption and production, which requires decrease in material footprint per capita, needs to be seen as an urgent issue, if the targeted rate of 60 percent material intensity in total manufacturing is to be achieved by 2030.

Nepal faces capacity deficiencies not only regarding execution of announced policies, but also regarding collection of data to support evidence-based reforms in the economy. Together with these dual problems, lack of fiscal prudence and accountability are likely to undermine Nepal's aspiration of high economic growth and poverty reduction. To further exacerbate the problem, exogenous shocks such as COVID-19 will weaken global demand, affecting out-migration for foreign employment and putting pressure on Nepal's economic targets for 2030.

Three in every five employees of both formal and informal micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Nepal have lost their jobs as a result of COVID-19 pandemic (UNDP 2020). A number of Nepali migrants have already lost their jobs due to the crisis. As uncertainties of the pandemic unfolded in February and early March 2020, a large number of workers had returned to their hometowns and villages in Nepal. Still, many migrants are returning even after the declaration of a nationwide lockdown by the government on 24 March 2020. All in all, the coming back of overseas workers is a misfortune for Nepal as the country will lose the desperately needed hard currency. Moreover, there will be many more to the already unemployed figure. This could lead to many households gradually falling below the poverty line. It is very serious that those who are already marginalized and vulnerable, especially youth, are losing their employment. Many returnees from Gulf countries, Malaysia and India are Dalits, Madhesis and Indigenous People.



Though a few view that remittances could recover relatively quickly, as was the case in the aftermath of the global financial crisis of 2008, it will be different this time around. In the first place, COVID-19 is truly global. Secondly, with oil prices at extraordinarily low levels, employment opportunities in the oil-rich Gulf nations could come to a standstill. Thirdly, India, a popular choice for Nepal's poor migrants, is also encountering a prolonged slowdown. Government introduced the Prime Minister Employment Programme and its annual budget is heavily increased, but this programme seems ineffective.

Safety, security and protection of laborers are always being a serious challenge in the country. The contribution-based Social Security Scheme remains one of the most ambitious programmes introduced by the Government in 2018, which is not seen as effective.

Tourism is the worst-hit sector due to this pandemic. The tourism sector is expected to bear the brunt of the adverse economic effects of COVID-19. Nepal expects to attract 3 million tourists by 2030 and create one million jobs in tourism industries. With the calling off of Visit Nepal 2020 and the long-term restrictions on global international travel, such targets do seem unreasonable at present. Tourism receipts in Nepal are likely to fall by 60 percent in 2020 (IIDS 2020). It is estimated that 1.1 million have lost jobs in travel and tourism business.

In fact, Nepal is not on track to achieve Goal 8 since economic growth alone cannot ensure the full achievement of SDG 8 ambitions.

Call for Actions

Concerted efforts from the government, private sector, and the public are required for Nepal to reach its targets for 2030. The following action points are of urgent importance:

- Nepal's industrial development strategy needs to maintain balance between high economic growth and low material footprint. This means choosing a strategy that is not based on high carbon emissions. For a country that is not sufficiently industrialized, this requires cooperation and coordination between the government, industries, and the civil society. Governments must prioritize care as being as important as all other sectors in order to build more human economies that work for everyone.
- Of course this is a very right time for the country to rethink its development practices as well as converting remittance based economy into a more sustainable, eco-friendly and home-grown economy. It can also be an opportunity for reviving Nepal's agro-based economy with the introduction of modern technology and making agriculture a prestigious occupation. Thus, it is necessary to create innovative and attractive livelihood opportunities and entrepreneurship programmes targeting people below the poverty line, returnee migrants and their family members, and aspiring migrants (Bhattarai & Senchurey, 2020).
- Achieving SDGs is directly linked to the country's economic growth, which is possible through increased production, market expansion and increase in access to financial services. As cooperatives have direct linkage to people at grassroots level unlike banks, cooperatives should partner with local people and other groups to boost country's production base.
- Effective occupational health and safety measures, with proper protective equipment and hygiene procedures at work, are essential for all. Protecting workers and their families from the risk of contracting Covid-19 must be a top priority for employers and governments. Unemployment benefits and compensation arrangements are key to ensure workers' income security. Ensure access to healthcare is equally fundamental.
- Governments must establish urgent economic stimulus and safeguard measures to support MSMEs and their workers' income. This support must be directed toward the labour-intensive sectors, such as manufacturing, retail and agriculture, and has to be tied to the protection of jobs and wages.
- It is urgent to put in place universal social protection systems covering all workers, regardless of their contractual status, such as informal, self-employed and platform economy workers. Connected to social protection systems, governments should support measures for the formalization of the informal economy in line with ILO Recommendation 204. Minimum wages should take into account the cost of living, be evidence based and regularly reviewed by social partners and adjusted for inflation.
- Government can make employment centers and develop a roster of people who are seeking jobs. Moreover, they can test their skills and go into the job market. Employment programmes must have special provisions to provide employment opportunities to poor, women, PWDs and marginalized communities. CTEVT and other public



technical institutes should develop special courses targeting PWDs for their employment. The country could use the domestic workforce to replace foreign workers involved in the construction and industry sectors.

- Government should give more priority to Dalit communities/youths in TVET. They should be given priority for employment and self-employment opportunities. Traditional occupation of Dalits should be modernized.
- Investment in technology, finance, and commercial agriculture can be a way forward for increasing employment and formalization of informal labor force. The existence of fallow lands and the loss of potential production have hampered Nepal's self-sufficiency in food and other consumable goods. To address this problem, the private sector can take a decisive step with the help of clear government policies and subsidies. Addressing this issue alone can generate high levels of employment and bring the current rate of underemployment closer towards the 2030 targets. In addition, the Government should amend existing laws for equal employment opportunities for extremely minority populations such as LGBTIQ by including provision of quota, reservation etc.
- Private sector enterprises should also come up with women-friendly policies. Like in the government jobs, there should be provisions of quota for women workers in the private sector enterprises to increase their participation.
- Policies regarding taxation, regulations, and investment have a direct consequence on unemployment, poverty, inequality, exclusion, and segregation. In order to re-orient such policies towards economic growth, substantial improvement is needed regarding fiscal prudence and accountability standards.
- The level of national compliance of labor rights needs to be further improved so as not to disadvantage women, migrants, and those in precarious employment. Policies aimed towards reduction of informal labor should be pursued in connection with recognition of basic labor rights. Cooperation between the government and CSOs is of vital importance in this regard.
- Agriculture and forestry sector can generate a huge number of employment in the country. All levels of governments should invest in agriculture to create the jobs, who lost their jobs within and outside the country.





Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Progresses and Achievements

During the past two decades, Nepal has significantly improved its infrastructure sector. The length of roads reached 34,347 km in 2019. The road density is 0.42 per sq. km in 2019. 51.4 percent of people have access to a paved road within 30 minutes' walk. The construction of railroad tracks has begun. Nepal constructed 576 bridges in the last five years. Infrastructure works contributed 7.6 percent in GDP in FY 2018/19.

Connectivity by air transport is improving with 33 airports in operation and 25 domestic private airlines and 26 international airlines operating flights in and to Nepal. The country's tourism infrastructure is also improving with 1,073 tourist standard hotels in 2020. Nepal has greatly improved its information and communication technology infrastructure as the density of telephone users reached 110 percent. Nepal's investment needs average 10-15 percent of GDP annually over the next decade as the country aspires to graduate from least developed country status by 2022 and towards a middle-income country by 2030.

Electricity is now accessible to 86 percent of total population. 78.9 percent of population has access to motorable road, 25 KM rail road open in this year and east west electricity railway 641 km DPR is ready for upcoming years. The length of railway in Nepal is now 42 km. 90 percent people are using mobile phone, 72 percent population using television and 87 percent population has access to the national radio, Internet access is available to the 55.4 percent in total population.

Government has amended the Company Act to end the syndicate of transportation entrepreneurs. In this period, the Government has passed Industrial Business Act 2019, and amended Micro-Enterprise Development Programme Directive and Special Economic Act. Nepal organized an Infrastructure Summit in 2019 to attract investment. According to the Government, the total number of industries is 8212 including big, medium and small scale industries and they are providing employment to 615 thousand people. According to the World Bank, the Doing Business Environment Index has improved, its rank is reached to 94 in 2019, which was 107 in 2017. Nepal is third position after India and Bhutan in South Asian countries. Number of registration of companies has increased to 25 thousand. In 10 industrial areas, 637 industries are running. In FY 2018/19, the share of manufacturing industries in GDP is 5.7 percent.

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

Almost all National Pride Projects are not finished yet, which is a serious problem in the infrastructure development sector and that increases the cost of the projects. There is a question that, whether the constructed public buildings and roads are gender sensitive and disable friendly. Unfortunately, few construction companies are holding a number of construction projects, they do not complete the works as they agreed with the governments. The infrastructure construction process is running on an ad-hoc basis so far. Until and unless we have a proper system for the identification of the development project, master plan to create it, environment clearance and land acquisition system, there won't be much progress. On the other hand, large infrastructure projects have become the means of corruption.

Road construction is continuously going on in rural areas, but they are damaging the environment. Sometimes it is termed "Dodger Terrorism". In some infrastructure development projects Indigenous people have very bitter experiences. Development activities should protect habitat, culture and livelihoods of the local people, rather than displace them. It is estimated that about 150 thousand people have been displaced in Kathmandu valley in the name of expansion of roads. Fast tracks and outer ring roads are those projects, which are displacing Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Most likely, they will also be going to lose their lands, which is not justice.

Reconstruction works after the 2015 earthquake are experienced not sensitive to the cultural and indigenous architecture of indigenous nationalities. For instance, the designs prescribed by the National Reconstruction Authority undermined the Stone roofing practice of the Thami community.

Contribution of manufacturing business in industries is only 5.5 percent in the last five years. That indicates a poor presence of industries in the country. It is estimated that contribution of economic growth will be -2.3 percent in FY



2019/20. There is a huge gap between the plan to increase domestic production and reality. Existing industries are facing multiple problems. In recent years, some industries have decreased their production due to competition in the market, e.g. cement, poultry, rod, liquors etc.

Country is not able to start mining industries, but 26 cement factories are being operated in the country. Limited funding, quality and reliability of infrastructure needs improvement, lack of skilled human resource and use of appropriate technology, difficult terrain, and lack of appropriate equipment for construction and maintenance of roads and transmission lines, natural calamities prone country, political instability, and dependent mentality are some issues of infrastructure development. Investment in the private sector cannot be attracted in infrastructure development except in the hydropower and tele-communication sector. Despite this, telecommunication facilities have improved in recent years, but in the country people have to pay more than 40 percent tax.

Call for Actions

- Devise systems, mechanisms, checks and plans to complete infrastructure projects on time. Create opportunities for continuous improvement for personnel related to infrastructure by making training, manuals and support systems available.
- Improve planning for infrastructure, and improve coordination and integration of different types of infrastructure. Nepal needs a huge amount of money for infrastructure development, but the country will need to give priority to address the health crisis and food crisis in the coming few years.
- Allocate budget for scientific research related to the use of science and technologies for infrastructure. Increase funds for infrastructure development and related research and studies. We need to upgrade relevant technologies that are suitable for Nepal's conditions. Create appropriate levels of funding and capacity for the maintenance of infrastructure.
- All level government and private investors should obey the principle of Free Prior Informed Consent, when they work in those areas where people are living there for a long time. Create standards for quality infrastructure design, construction and maintenance. Designs of public infrastructures should be gender friendly and disable friendly.
- Encourage private providers of infrastructure when desirable, and promote public-private partnership in infrastructure provisions such as in transportation, energy and utilities.
- Prioritize travelers and vehicular safety in the construction of roads with an aim to achieve drastically reduced or even zero road fatality within seven-ten years.
- Create Green Infrastructure Standards and Manuals for the country, regions and local level jurisdictions that include water conservation, site water retention, water flows and retention, pavements, passive solar systems and use of local construction materials. Consider the impacts of impending climate change in the planning and design of infrastructure.
- Build enabling environment for private and community investors to open and operate industries in the country by easing legal, political and taxation hurdles. Development of Industry there should be long term plan, Patience, forward thinking people and quality standards.



Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Progresses and Achievements

Nepal is witnessing various forms of inequalities including wealth and income inequality, gender inequality, caste and ethnicity based inequality, ability based inequality, geographical inequality and inequality in terms of access to resources, opportunities, wealth and public services. Unequal access to and representation in power structures is the serious issue in the country.

Nepal does very poorly in Oxfam's and Development Finance International's Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index (CRI) 2018, which ranks countries on their policies to tackle inequality. Nepal ranks 138th out of 157 countries. Income disparities and unequal access to assets are driving greater inequality in Nepal, and gender inequality is compounding and compounded by economic inequality. The barriers to inequality-reducing policies often reflect a lack of political will to remove them.



There are two other fundamental drivers of inequality. First, Nepal's economic system is based on neoliberal policies imposed by the structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s. Neoliberal policies have also driven cuts to public spending and increased privatization in Nepal. Privatization has also aggravated unemployment in Nepal, due to the haphazard way in which thousands of people instantly lost their jobs. Public services like health and education have also seen increased privatization and commercialization in Nepal. Privatization fuels inequality, and poor women and girls, along with minorities, pay the highest price. Second, the cycle of political capture is a significant driver of inequality. When money and power are concentrated into the hands of the few, these elites can exercise excessive influence that undermines institutions and skews policy making in their favour.

Government has been emphasizing skill development of poor and marginalized groups. Local governments are prioritizing income generation and self-employment opportunities. They started distributing Identity Cards to the poor families, PWDs and farmers. Some opportunities of employment have been created through the Prime Minister Agriculture Modernization Programme and Prime Minister Employment Programme. There is provision of reservation system ensured by constitution for those caste, gender and regions who are excluded in civil service.

Constitution states proportional inclusion of women, Janajati, Madhesi, Muslim, Dalits and castes who are excluded from socially and politically. Due to this, women representation in governance system has been increased notably and Dalit women have also been gaining opportunity for the same. Through the local election, 41 percent women are elected as local representatives where 6529 Dalit women are also elected as Dalit women ward members too.

There is provision of Caste-based discrimination and Untouchability (offence and punishment) Act 2011 and constitution also declared Caste-Based Discrimination and Untouchability as Crime. Strict laws have been enforced at central level against any type of gender discrimination and women violence and such laws are progressively enforced at provincial and local levels too. The Ministry of Social Development has been established at provincial level in order to make social development even more effective. But, trend on budget allocation must ensure gender equality at the provincial and local level.

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

Poverty Gap: Today, more than 8.1 million Nepalis live in poverty. Nobody can answer, who are they and where do they live. Women and girls are more likely to be poor, despite the significant contribution they make to the economy, especially through unpaid care and household work. Without a concerted effort to tackle inequality and pursue policies that benefit the many rather than the richest few, the poorest and most marginalized Nepalis will continue to be excluded from progress.

The Palma ratio, which compares the income share of the top 10 percent and the bottom 40 percent, shows a similar trend. Today, the income of the richest 10 percent of Nepalis is more than three times that of the poorest 40 percent. In Nepal, top bank executives earn more than 100 times the salary of an average worker.

Though the Nepal government has developed positive initiatives for unemployed and poor people, these programmes have not been effective. Though there is provision of farmer identity card and poor identity card, no initiatives have been taken to bring this provision in effect. Poverty reduction programmes have not outreached effectively to poor groups. COVID-19 crisis has clearly exposed the severity of inequality of Nepalese society.



Geographical Inequalities: There are also significant geographical divides in income. Rate of poverty is higher in Karnali province and Province No. 2. Average income in urban areas was consistently more than double that of rural areas, and the Mountain and Terai regions have lower average per capita incomes than Hills region. These low-income areas have higher poverty levels, less infrastructure and services, and are home to more ethnic minorities. They are places where economic and horizontal inequalities combine to hold poor and marginalized groups further back.

Inequality of wealth: The wealth Gini is significantly higher than the income Gini at 0.74 (per capita), underlining how money is trickling upwards over time. The richest 10 percent of Nepal's population have more than 26 times the wealth of the poorest 40 percent. The scale of wealth inequality becomes even more extreme when we look at the very richest individuals. The richest person in Nepal saw his net worth rise by \$200m in 2018. This represented a 14.5 percent rise from 2017, taking his total net worth to \$1.5bn. The rise in this person's wealth could pay for more than half of Nepal's spending on social protection. It would also take a poor Nepali more than 100,000 years to earn this amount.

Land Inequality: Land inequality is the oldest and most fundamental type of wealth inequality. More than 66 percent of the population depend on land for their livelihood in Nepal, yet land is concentrated in the hands of a rich minority. The wealthiest 7 percent of households own around 31 percent of agricultural land. More than half of Nepali farmers own less than 0.5 hectares of land, and 29 percent of the population do not own any land at all. Women work long hours on agricultural land, yet 81 percent are landless. Minorities are also less likely to own land, with landlessness as high as 44 percent among Dalits in the Terai region. Despite repeated election promises, Nepal is still waiting for much needed land reform which will redistribute the country's most significant asset. Provision of land grant to landless Dalits for one time has not been clearly indicated in the Land Act of the constitution and such constitutional provision has not been implemented so far.

Poor children are deprived: Economic inequality in turn affects life chances. A poor child in Nepal is nearly three times more likely to die before they are five years old than a rich child. Half of the poorest women in Nepal have no education at all, compared with one in a hundred of the richest men. More than one-third of Nepal's children under five years are stunted, and 10 percent suffer wasting due to acute malnutrition.

Gender Inequality: Gender inequality compounds the impact of economic inequality. A rich woman is four times more likely to have gone to school than a poor woman, while a rich man is fifty times more likely to have gone to school. Women earn an average Rs. 73 in agriculture work and Rs 66 in non-agricultural work, when a man earns Rs. 100. In Nepal, patriarchal norms are deep-rooted and reinforced by laws and institutions that are skewed against women and girls.

Progressive laws are also often poorly implemented or ignored in practice. For example, there are indications that tax exemptions to incentivize land ownership among women are being abused by male relatives buying land in their name. Illegal and harmful practices are also still common in some areas of Nepal, and put the lives of women and girls at risk. There is also evidence of caste-based discrimination in public hospitals, with Dalit women receiving poor care during childbirth. A fundamental shift is needed to improve the economic, political and social status of women, or another generation of women and girls are destined to remain poor.

Inequality in opportunities: Inclusion and reservation quotas have not been completely implemented by the government. The Public Service Commission, Law Commission, and other commissions have published notice against such reservation quotas to appoint staff. This is completely against the norms of the constitution. Inequality is clearly observed in employment opportunities and representation in the state structures. Marginalized communities such as Dalits, women, minorities are deprived. PWDs are facing various forms of inequalities in the country in terms of access to services and opportunities.

The Prime Minister Employment Programme has not been able to engage youths in creative works. It seems that Nepalese who fly abroad as labor force have not been treated well and are not safe compared to immigrants of Nepal. However, some improvements have been made compared to previous years in this issue.

Though some women and Dalits are included in the government decision making structure, no meaningful participation has taken place so far. It should be emphasized in their skill and capacity development for meaningful participation in the decision making process. Dalit women have represented in wards only as ward members and they are not getting chance of meaningful role.



Safe migration: Every year five hundred thousand young people enter the labour market, but about 80 percent of young people are forced to go to foreign countries to seek employment. According to the data of 2019, on average 1018 young people went to foreign countries per day for employment and every day 3 dead bodies of migrant workers are coming into the country. This clearly indicates the migrant workers are working in a very unsafe environment. After COVID-19 pandemic, many migrants have been laid off from their jobs and are on unpaid leave, unable to even return to their home countries due to travel restrictions. In some countries migrants are working, but their safety is highly questionable.

Refugee: Nepal has not signed yet on international treaties related with refugees. Refugees are always in risk, if they do not have proper official documents. Till July 2018 there were two camps of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal. UNHCR record says there are more than 18 thousand refugees in the country. Many of them are also called urban refugees, but the Government identifies them as illegal migrants (*IOM 2019*).

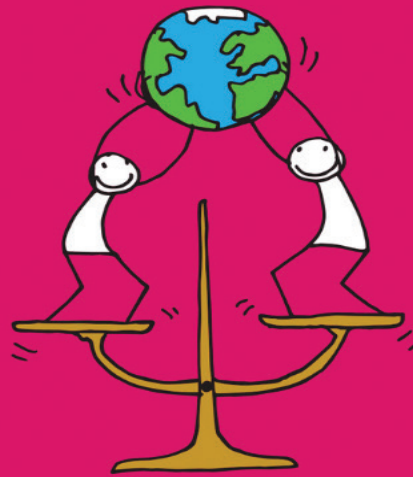
Call for Actions

- Inequality is not just about income or wealth; it is about power in the case of Nepal. Ending the caste system, patriarchy, corporatization of essential public services, and unfair distribution of power, wealth and opportunities are key entry points to end inequalities in the country. It is strongly recommended when making public policies, programmes and budgets, they should give priority to those communities and territories, who are really left behind. Political society, policy makers and government machineries must change their mindset to do so. Political parties should be more open, democratic, inclusive and participatory and they need to ensure decisive roles of women, Dalits, Janajatis and marginalized communities in every political process.
- Government needs to take action to implement progressive land reform, to achieve a more equitable distribution of land in favour of the landless and poor farmers.
- The fiscal system is one of the most important tools that governments have to tackle inequality. Progressive taxation and proper enforcement can redistribute resources and raise money to invest in inequality-busting services. Value added tax (VAT) is a regressive tax which places a disproportionate burden on the poorest in society. Spending on public services and other social programmes such as health, education, drinking water and public transportation is a key tool for the Governments in tackling both poverty and inequality.
- Paid work is the main way for the majority of people to make a living, provide for their basic needs, and improve their future life chances. Therefore, tackling inequality requires interventions to ensure sufficient safe work and decent wages for everyone. Governments should make reasonable agreements with those countries where Nepalese people go for labor works to ensure their safety and dignity and reasonable payment for their jobs. Plans should be made to create jobs within the country since foreign Jobs are never reliable. There should be implementation of a policy of minimum wages and protections for all workers, including in the informal sector. Informal sector workers and poor farmers should be protected by the Governments with adequate support programmes.
- Strong monitoring mechanism is needed to develop at all levels of the government structures for the effective monitoring of the situation of inequalities by generating adequate disaggregated data. Dalit women participation should be ensured meaningful role in decision-making and law-making position as well. There should be removal of all discriminatory legal provisions against women, Dalits, Janajatis, Madhesi, and LGBTIQ people. Government must work for policy reform and there should be equal participation of all marginalized communities, with considering and respecting intersectionality issues.
- Provisions and laws should be made on 'equal pay for equal works by the District Coordination Committee and province governments between and among men and women. Economic development programmes and formal and informal employment environments should be made by the Governments to eliminate economic disparities of poor, Dalits and excluded groups. There must be provision of ear-marked budget allocation for economic development and empowerment of target groups by new laws and provisions like previous practices of VDCs and DDCs block grant.
- Inequality of various forms is the serious problem. So, we need to raise awareness against inequality at national, provincial and local level within government entities, private business and CSOs. There should be intensive public dialogues on inequality at all levels for its appropriate implementation in the country. CSOs need to organize delegations, campaigns etc., and initiate intensive discourse for development of programmes and allocation of budget in favor of poor and marginalized communities at all levels. To prioritize development of



backward provinces and municipalities through public consultation to eliminate economic, social and cultural differences of the country.

- Government should give full attention to the safety of labour migrants who are working in foreign countries. Government should investigate the causes of their death and there should be provision of post-mortem before handing over their dead bodies to their families. Similarly, the government has to ensure safe channels of migration. Importantly, Nepal has to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant workers and Members of their families. Information about domestic informal sector workers should be properly recorded and they should be provided safety net package.
- Nepal has to ratify 1951 Refugee Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees to protect the rights of the refugees. There should be reliable an updated official records of refugees in the country.



Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Progresses and Achievements

Nepal is one of the rapidly urbanizing countries in south Asia. This trend of rapid urbanization and ongoing political change has created several challenges to the planned urban development in Nepal. In Nepal 58.4 percent live in urban areas. SDGs Status and Roadmap: 2016-2030 published by NPC in 2018 states issues of safety of buildings, emerging private sector in housing, urban slum are its issues of consideration in Goal 11. The national target aims to construct at least 60 new satellite cities. The plan targets to complete the reconstruction of houses, public buildings and heritage sites destroyed by the earthquake of 2015 by 2020 through publicly subsidized funding. The target is to make at least 50 percent of the highways safe by global standards. The proposed specific targets for 2030 include doubling the proportion of households living in safe houses to 60 percent; substantially reducing air pollution, preventing the deaths and injuries due to disaster, and increasing the budget allocation to the protection of cultural heritage from about 1.15 percent in 2015 to 2 percent by 2030. People living in safe houses reached 40 percent and 27 new cities have been established in the country.



Distribution of land to slum dwellers has been announced, but the public lack trust in the plan to be fair and doubt it could be given to people with connections, political affiliation or for corrupt purposes. Rural road construction and expansion of existing roads has happened on a rapid scale.

The government has been working on about 30 satellite cities, with 4 inside the capital city of Kathmandu valley, 5 in regions around Kathmandu, 10 in the hilly regions along the mid hill highway, and about 10 city planning in the plains. Nepal has established air pollution monitoring centres in 29 cities. Also, it has established an Air Quality Data Display Board in 7 places of the country.

Public transport improvement was visible in some cities mostly led by private sectors. Projects on electric rail connection between cities have been ongoing which is a positive step. The Bagmati Province Government has also committed to electrification of urban transport in major cities, but there is no concrete step to meet that goal.

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

The goal to complete reconstruction of homes and cultural heritage destroyed by the 2015 earthquake has not been achieved. The Government has to take the responsibility of failing to engage the community in the reconstruction of cultural heritage, causing delay in heritage reconstruction.

Road accidents and fatalities continued to grow as the government built multilane urban highways through the center of cities all around Nepal. These constructions focused on speeding vehicles through dense settlements. It did not have preventive measures to reduce coalition and no public notice or instructions were made targeting non motorist road users and the general public on how to use it while new infrastructure was being built. This increases fatal collisions and a sense of insecurity among vulnerable populations.

Government focused on multi-lane highways and overhead bridges in cities without considering accessibility for all and particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged populations. Road construction has been taking place rapidly but lack of proper environment assessment, or geographical study has caused environmental hazards in many cases. The safety of such roads built haphazardly without sufficient assessment and engineering remains questionable.

While poverty is far less in urban areas, urban poverty is becoming increasingly serious. Poverty experience is exacerbated in the urban context: unlike in the rural community settings, it provides far less of the safety nets for the poor and as most services are privatized the poor's access is limited. This provides severe limitations on how urban growth would support especially the poor and marginalized sections. (*Devkota, 2018*)

Government regulations and investment to ensure improvement in public transport and its reliability and accessibility remained nominal. The continued increase in sales of private vehicles indicates the absence of any progress in access and quality of public transport, also caused by the private vehicle centric development that the government is leading, that is rather reducing the factors of equity and accessibility to mobility for all. PWDs and senior citizens do not have full access to public spaces. Public infrastructures are not disable friendly. Roads are being built only



to operate vehicles, blind people, cyclists, wheel-chair holders are suffering a lot. The PWDs community feels that reconstruction of infrastructure facilities are not disable friendly.

Most of the new city planning is done with private vehicles in mind, and is likely to conflict with climate goals, and responsible consumption goals of SDGs. As these designs threaten agricultural lands in many sites, it is also threatening the sustainability aspect of these settlements impacting SDG goals on hunger and poverty reduction. Public participation in selection of these sites for new cities, and in the process of the design, has been limited to formality thus failing to achieve the best sustainable design for these future cities.

Some of the development projects especially the national pride project of Kathmandu-Terai fast track has threatened to impact the cultural heritage settlement of Bungamati and Khokana. The government remained insensitive on the issue, as the local communities protested the decision to exploit land used for cultural rituals against their will. Cultural heritage reconstruction was slow (43.7% completed) and the government faced protests from the local community as it did not meet the standards of heritage conservation, while lacking sufficient public participation in decision making processes.

The existing readiness of the government to foresee and manage disaster risks and address the environmental stresses, such as water shortage and air pollution, are starkly weak. The World Bank estimates 33,500 persons died because of environmental pollution.

Though some efforts have been visible at the municipal level to better manage waste, no considerable efforts to permanently reduce air pollution was recognized. Inclusion of DRR in the local development planning process is still an issue, although Governments have been able to bring Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act in 2018.

Unclear and inconsistent policy regime, rapidly growing population due to migration, provisioning of municipal services, disaster risks and environmental vulnerabilities, informal settlements and slum politicization, informal economy, air and water pollution, solid waste management etc. are key issues of urban development in the country. Vehicular emission is very serious. Public sewerage system is very weak in cities. Emerging cities and towns are also facing similar problems.

The government has failed to promote local material construction and has played a significant role in rather promoting energy intensive, industrial construction materials that are unsustainable and bad for the local economy.

Call for Actions

Basically, Nepal needs to decentralize its efforts of development of new cities. The development of new cities can go against the sustainability goals and threaten to contribute to more consumption and exploitation of natural resources like agriculture land, and water. New cities can also go against the goals of inclusivity and accessibility for all as the development can be expensive. The city design process has to be made more participatory, public transport oriented, people-centric and encouraging dense mix use urban design. Urban growth must ensure equity, economic prosperity and environmental benefits for all the residents.

Kicking off with sustainability guidelines to public infrastructure and making all the guidelines mandatory would be an ideally instrumental step. Followed by the mandatory guidelines, assessment is needed regarding the materials and methods for sustainable structural and infrastructural construction strategies. In the meantime, the multi-hazards, their plenitude is well agreed in Nepal, should be inducted in the design and constructed to assure resilience alongside sustainability.

The current vehicle-centric road expansion projects in major cities can disrupt inclusivity for all especially, for the vulnerable population. Multilane highways should be avoided through dense settlements and if needed, should include drastic measures to ensure safety and accessibility of all road users. Investment in public transport rather than road expansion should be prioritized.

Infrastructure to promote and support non-motorized transports (NMT) like walking, cycling, city rickshaw and micro-mobility equipment should be made a priority. Urban and rural road expansion programmes should follow more stringent policies to reduce the environmental impact and to ensure safety standards of the roads. Investment in better public transport, and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructures should be considered as a more achievable short-



term goal that is accessible to majority of the population, then aiming for high tech expensive long-term transport goals like Metro.

Addressing disasters would require country-wide rethinking about how cities can become resilient to disaster. Rather than concentrating on a single issue, the government should make efforts to expand disaster resilient cities through policy formation, effective implementation of such policy through the elected municipal government. In disaster management planning, issues of women, PWDs, senior citizens, Dalits and other vulnerable people should be seriously considered. Nepal should strictly follow Sendai Framework 2015 to reduce the loss and damage. Reconstruction of historical monuments and cultural heritages should be finished as soon as possible, particularly in Kathmandu valley.

We need to enhance urban planning capacities at the local level. Training and deployment of planners in all levels of government. Building codes should be strictly applied for public and private buildings. Creating planning and design standards for smaller, medium and large towns and cities is important. Improving municipal administration and management through training and education. Creation of national, regional and local standards for planning, subdivision, utilities and urban road and transportation. Integrated urban, sectoral plans should respect the issue of gender equality. Nepal needs to increase its public investment to enhance basic service to the urban people, particularly poor and marginalized. Government should ensure special protection and shelter home for those LGBTIQ who are forced to leave their home due to SOGIES.

Urban development should be guided by the objectives of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and to adapt to the impending impacts of climate change. Additionally, disasters caused by earthquakes, floods, mudslides and other disturbances. The plans and design for urban development and revitalization should include provision of open public spaces, sidewalks, gatherings spaces, parks and areas devoted for water retention and flow. Governments, especially at the local level, need to plan and strategies to deal with all hazards, including biological ones, and to address gaps in their preparedness and develop response capacity.

For an inclusive urban development in Nepal, the central and municipal government should properly account for the vulnerabilities as well as important services provided by the informal sector workers in the urban areas (Devkota 2018). There should be special protection and preventive measures for PWDs, women, children, senior citizens, workers and people living in risk areas such as river side, slums, sloppy areas.

There is a need for the civil society to call for more democratic and participatory procedures while making decisions about any single public infrastructure or while planning and making decisions about every step of major projects like city and town development. A separate policy to ensure public consultation and democratic voting procedures to take approval from the public and local community before construction of public infrastructure should be advocated by the civil society. Public housing projects for vulnerable populations at municipal level can also be considered as a safety net for poor residents.

Specific standards and targets should be devised to improve public accessibility, mobility and safety. A well-documented survey to identify the present status will also be needed to create improved plans and programmes related to urban development.



Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Progresses and Achievements

Nepal has developed Low Carbon Economic Development Strategy 2015. But, Nepal still lacks a single and coherent policy that promotes and protects Sustainable Consumption Production (SCP) practice. However, the prospect looks promising when the available policies, laws and strategies supporting sustainable development are gathered for a more synchronized implementation. Many encouraging steps have already been taken in sectors like renewable energy, agriculture (the use of organic fertilizers and reduction in the use of harmful chemicals), air quality, sustainable tourism, waste management, and forest and environment conservation. These are progresses that Nepal can build upon, while moving towards a low carbon economic development. (Chhetri 2017)



Amendment of Environment Protection Act 2019, Climate Change Policy 2019, and Nationally Determined Commitments (NDC) can positively impact on sustainable consumption and production. The Renewable Energy Subsidy policy was launched in 2016 with an aim to reduce dependency on traditional and imported energy by increasing access to renewable energy for improving the livelihood of people and creating employment opportunities in the rural areas.

Similarly, Nepal Renewable Energy Programme (NREP), a 4.5 years' programme commenced in February 2019 is to be operated in Province Number 2 and Province Number 5, and Karnali which is designed to support Government of Nepal and private sector plans and invest in renewable, sustainable energy resulting in economic growth, poverty reduction and climate smart development in communities across Nepal.

Likewise, with a view to make Nepal free from hunger and malnutrition by 2025, the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MoAD) launched the Zero Hunger Challenge Initiative on 19 December 2014. As a follow up to this activity, this National Action Plan (2016 – 2025) formulation task was undertaken to establish the necessary implementation framework. In launching the initiative as well as in formulating this plan, the MoAD has received support from various national and international development partners working for poverty reduction, food security and nutrition.

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

Despite the above mentioned achievements, there is a huge scope of improvement regarding the effective implementation of SDG12 in Nepal which is only possible through overcoming the prevailing challenges. Number of policies, laws and regulations related to the environment are in place, but they are not effective.

The Environment Council is not functional. Environment Protection Regulation is yet to come. Existing policies, laws and regulations are not effective, because they are prepared without adequate discussions with stakeholders. Government agencies have a tendency to work in silos. Environment is not applied as a cross-cutting subject in development sectors. Government allocated a very low budget in the environment sector.

Nepal's use of resources is unsustainable, produces large amounts of waste and rapidly pollutes its environment. In particular, waste generation is increasing at an alarming rate and Nepal does not have modern disposal or recycling facilities yet. Growing consumerism is a challenge for SCP. Unfortunately, the Government raised custom in electric vehicles in the budget of FY 2020/21.

In order to replace or improvise the unhealthy practices, an economic assurance to the producer level individuals is a must. Similarly, limited data availability and absence of a data consolidation platform has caused a problem in precise study of the implementation pattern. Capacity development and improvement of physical as well as statistical infrastructure can be seen as a major issue to be addressed. Hence, necessary production of qualitative data, its dissemination and proper use along with establishment of a strong physical infrastructure base is essential.

Resource availability must be ensured and collaboration with international and national institutions must be made for its sustainable utilization. Taking climate change and indigenous knowledge side by side will definitely strengthen the impact of the policy upon the society.

Of course, this goal is directly related with consumers, but 8 national indicators are related with consumers. Indicators proposed by SDGs Roadmap under Goal 12 are not relevant and even data are not available. Nepal is spending a huge



amount of money by importing petroleum products. Country is not able to control those vehicles, which are older than 20 years.

Vegetables coming from India have used a lot of pesticides, but Nepal cannot test 29 different types of chemicals being used in vegetables imported from India.

Practising mono-culture, chemical fertilizers quality of soil has been degraded in the country. Country has separated forestry, agriculture and irrigation and the gender aspect of the food system. Consumer rights are neglected. Youth and urban people have a tendency to waste food and practice of fast food is increasing food waste. Local varieties of crops are not promoted and we are promoting mono-culture practice in the name of increasing production.

After COVID-19 crisis medical wastes and plastic pollution have been increased from hospitals or health care centres. Despite, COVID-19 lockdown helping to reduce air pollution in the country, it has become a serious problem in the country.

Call for Actions

- The SCP concept is relatively new in Nepal with industrialization just taking its first steps. The industries and entrepreneurs will have to be aware of and then embrace the SCP principle seriously. Country needs to adhere to a nature based development approach. There will need to be significant international assistance in terms of awareness, skills, knowledge, access to finance and technology. However, there is also a vibrant civil society and media in the country that can advocate and promote this principle.
- The government will also have to strengthen existing policies or formulate new ones through a participatory process and then enforce them. It is suggested to establish a separate and powerful Environment Ministry in the country since it is almost cross-cutting, rather than to exist as a small department under one ministry. Every local community should have an environmental plan. Money collected in the Pollution fund should be used in environment protection.
- Government should start homework for environment tax. Also, it is suggested to establish a separate bench in Court to settle environment related crimes. Further, the Government should establish a separate Environment Service to hire and manage environment civil service.
- Lack of skilled human resources as well as low awareness of and insufficient incentives to adopt SCP practice have hindered its implementation in Nepal. The low level of policy monitoring and implementation is also a major hurdle. The government will need to ensure an effective implementation of its policies.
- It must be made mandatory to have SDG indicators at Provinces and Local level so that the policy decisions are made in accordance to them. Next, Nepal needs to revise monitoring indicators of SDG12.
- Without consumers' awareness, consciousness and feelings of ownership, it is virtually impossible to meet the targets set by SDG 12 such as implementation of the 10-year plan on sustainable consumption and production. As such, realizing sustainable development goals requires effective initiatives towards consumer education and awareness, and a fair and consumer-friendly market system.
- Local governments can play a very important role to promote sustainable practices, but they need incentives for changing their working pattern. We need to ensure direct participation of consumers in policy-making, and programmes on consumer education to make them aware of product quality standards.
- Environment protection law should be fully implemented. Implementation of mitigation plan of EIA reports should be seriously monitored by government authorities. Governments should introduce Polluters Pay principles.
- Country needs to give importance to the Ministry of Environment. There should be a separate and strong ministry to look after the environment because the environment is cross-cutting agenda of all development sectors. Environment inspectors should be appointed in all the local governments and province governments.
- The prevailing chemicals used in industries and agricultural enterprises must be graded on the basis of their persistence, bioaccumulation and effects on the environment and health. The ones with severe impacts must be banned. Plastic pollution should be strictly controlled, local governments should play an effective role to control



plastic pollution and development of effective sewage systems in their areas. Haphazard road constructions, crosser industries and extraction of sands and pebbles should be controlled.

- A sustainable market policy must be implemented where the role of middle men is minimized or taken care of by the government itself so that both producers and consumers are benefited. Fair market and responsible supply is very important in case of Nepal. Producers and consumers, both should be responsible. We should develop a new market chain system, so that producers and consumers could directly connect each other.
- Further, Nepal has to control both food loss and food waste. Farming, culture of food and nature are closely linked. Some of the production systems of indigenous people are nature friendly. Domestic wastes can be used by families for kitchen garden or roof farming. Concept of a food bank is good, but there should be storage of locally produced food. Old best practices and knowledge should be documented. Media also should be responsible about commercial advertisements, they may promote junk food and unsustainable practices. Of course, organic farming is good, but it should be developed as a whole system.
- Safer transport of the produced items from producers to consumers must be ensured for minimizing the post-harvest and transportation losses.
- Climate change adaptation should be intensified in all sectors. Monitoring of government programmes is necessary. Green behavior and green governance should be promoted. Climate friendly framework is needed in energy, water resources and the economy. New technology should be introduced/ developed to combat the challenges.
- Nepal should implement its land use policy and law for sustainable land use. Sustainable use of forest resources can create jobs in the country by agroforestry. Of course community forestry is very successful, But, Dalits and other marginalized communities should have fair access to community forests.
- Introduction of sustainable mechanization, use of technology and innovative ideas must be made in the country's agriculture sector for having optimum outcome from decent use of resources.
- Governments of all levels need to include the environment in educational curriculums. Food production system, culture and food value should be fully respected. Nepal can build on sustainable and consumption patterns by adapting indigenous culture and value systems. Every person should change their behaviour, and need to adapt to a nature based lifestyle. Role of academic society is very important for changing behaviours.
- Nepal should go to sustainable mobility, for this government should intervene in the public transportation system. Further, there should be a cycle lane in each road. Unspent electricity can be used in public transportation. Concept of sustainable public procurement should be forcefully applied by the government. Government offices should use electric vehicles.
- We need to focus on our consumer behavior and ways to consume and own fewer products. The Government should enact a strict code of conduct in the production sector for big corporations and factories to ensure minimal waste of natural resources as well as human resources.



Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Progresses and Achievements

According to the Long-Term Climate Risk Index (CRI), the 10 countries most affected from 1999 to 2018 (annual averages). Nepal is ranked in 9th position and CRI value is 31.50 (GCRI 2020).

To strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters, the Government of Nepal, in 2017, developed the National Adaptation Plan formulation process. The Government of Nepal incorporated the climate change integration in the development planning process. For example, as its commitment to building resiliency and reducing the risks from changing climate, the 2011 National Climate Change Policy has been updated to Nepal Climate Change Policy in 2019. In 2016, this major policy document of the Government Nepal was also submitted as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) as a Party to the Paris Agreement.



The Federal Government passed a long awaited Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act in 2017. In 2018, Government also formulated National Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Risk Reduction National Strategic Plan of Action 2018-2030 - in line with Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and SDGs. 217 local governments have developed local climate adaptation resilient development plans. Between 2017-18, according to the National Emergency Operation Center (NEOC), Nepal recorded 6381 small and large disaster incidents whereby 968 people killed, 3639 injured and 27256 families affected. This should be reduced to meet the target. Nepal lacks a disaster preparedness plan and is focused more on the post disaster recovery.

Nepal has prepared a National Framework on Local Adaptation plans of Action (LAPA) and has integrated them into the sectoral development plans. In the second week of November 2019, Nepal received its first ever project under the Green Climate Fund. The Project Enhancing the resilience of ecosystems and vulnerable communities by adopting climate-resilient land-use practices will receive 39.3 million USD Grant. Under GCF's Readiness Support programme, Nepal received \$1 million to strengthen the country's institutional capacities to access the Green Climate funds. Different CSO's are active at the national level advocating climate change policy issues and community level interventions. Nepal is also promoting a clean energy related programme in the country.

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

According to the Meteorological Department and ICIMOD, Nepal is losing 1.5 to 2.0 percent GDP due to the impact of Climate Change. Average rate of increase of temperature is 0.056 degree celsius and precipitation has increased by 2-6 percent to 8-12 percent. Himalayan glaciers are melting fast and there is a sharp increase in natural disasters such as landslide and flooding. Melting snow in mountains of Nepal is directly affecting to the local environment, river streams, people and livelihoods. Agriculture calendar is disturbed due to the impact of climate change.

Nepal has adopted a target to integrate climate change measures into national policies to tackle the impacts of climate change. However, capacity to implement such policies reside at the national level, provincial and local governments currently lack the capacity and expertise to successfully execute them. Nepal's Federal Government needs to plan for a nationwide capacity building programmes to empower and engage provincial and local governments.

While Nepal has prepared a guiding document for LAPA, it is not mandatory for the local governments to prepare a local adaptation plan. Most of the local governments that have prepared local and community level adaptation plans lack financial resources to implement plans and policies.

Government of Nepal intends to foster climate smart agriculture and build climate smart villages. In a number of cases, in the name of climate smart agriculture, corporate agenda are being pushed that push the vulnerable communities further towards climate-related problems. The local governments and communities should be cautious about this market approach to risk reduction. There have been efforts at the national level to develop capacity so that the Green Climate Fund can be accessed. These efforts seriously undermine the engagement of community-based organizations, grassroots groups and frontline communities. The local groups must be actively engaged in all phases of proposals, planning and implementation of climate-related initiatives and programmes. On the other hand, climate induced disasters are becoming a serious problem in Nepal, they affect women, PWDs, children and senior citizens and marginalized communities including Dalits, Janajatis and Madhesi.



Call for Actions

- Even after COVID-19 crisis, the issue of climate change will continue. Governments at provincial and local levels should be actively engaged in climate change science and policy. Nepal needs to implement its revised NDC very seriously.
- Government of Nepal should strongly advocate against global warming. Climate funds should go beyond ODA. Government can seek grants to support implementation of SDG13 and other goals. We need to increase funding in climate research activities. 80 percent of the budget of climate related programmes should be utilized at local level as provisioned in climate policy.
- There should be a coordinated effort to prepare local level climate action plans so that it aligns with the national climate plan. Simultaneously, it is important to develop local capacity to help communities secure climate related funds for offsetting carbon emissions, such as afforestation, clean energy, and green development. If carefully designed these activities can secure funds from international and bi-lateral agencies in the form of carbon credits.
- The national government can also create funds that can be awarded to the local governments and local communities to help curb greenhouse gas emission, and promote climate adaptation.
- Support local groups to design, implement and utilize clean energy programmes such as community-based solar-powered irrigation and micro-hydro programmes. Solar powered irrigation systems (SPIS) are a promising alternative to diesel pumps, widely used in Nepal for crop irrigation. Seen as a clean, low-cost alternative, SPIS is tied to addressing food insecurity by improving access to water in smallholder settings, achieving higher and more resilient agricultural yields, farm incomes and household wellbeing.
- Nepalese farmers live in heterogeneous and risk-prone settings that are further challenged by rapidly changing climatic conditions. It is important to develop a location-specific approach to climate smart agriculture.
- Most of the grassroots groups are unaware of the link between climate adaptation and SDGs. To bridge these gaps, appropriate communication materials and awareness programmes can be developed.
- CSOs working on climate change are fragmented in Nepal. This fragmented approach to dealing with climate change challenges is not going to help the collective goal of increasing resilience of vulnerable groups and communities. They should be united and work together for climate justice.
- As a part of preparing the next generation of citizens, the government should consider climate change education curriculum at K-12 level. Teachers and educators should be trained to communicate the science and impacts of climate change.
- Like Bangladesh, Nepal needs to develop an effective disaster communication system and information dissemination programme.







Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Context

The ocean has a significant part to play in worldwide development, and it can help fight poverty. Our oceans – their temperature, circulation, chemistry, and ecosystems – play a fundamental role in making Earth habitable for humankind. Our rainwater, drinking water, weather, climate, coastlines, much of our food, and even the oxygen in the air we breathe, are all ultimately provided and regulated by the sea. Throughout history, oceans and seas have been vital conduits for trade and transportation. Careful management of this essential global resource is a key feature of a sustainable future. How we manage this vital resource is essential for humanity as a whole, and to counterbalance the effects of climate change. Conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources is important for sustainable development.



According to the World Bank (2016), oceans drive economic activity, responsible for eighty percent of global trade and thirty-two percent of hydrocarbons extracted for energy needs and the contribution of the ocean economy to global value added is estimated conservatively in the order of US\$1.5 trillion annually, or roughly 3 percent of global value added.

While landlocked countries don't have direct access to the sea because of their geographical location, Part X of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) gives these countries the right of access to and from the sea and freedom of transit. In addition, UNCLOS establishes that "Landlocked States have the right to participate, on an equitable basis, in the exploitation of an appropriate part of the surplus of the living resources of the exclusive economic zones of coastal States of the same subregion or region."

Nepal has been a party of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS-III). This convention protects Right to Access and Use the ocean spaces of the landlocked countries. Further landlocked countries have the right to participate in the policy process of oceans and seas. Further, Nepal is also a part of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and Vienna Program of Action for LLDCs (2014-2024).

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

Firstly, Nepal itself is not seriously taking SDG14 as an important agenda, based on the experience of last five years. It is simply because Nepal is a landlocked country and it is commonly said "this goal is not relevant to us". Access to oceans is important for Nepal for international trade and transit. Currently Nepal has been using two ports of India and it is negotiating with India for two more ports. Nepal has already signed with China to access for four ports. But, Nepal has not been able take benefits from those facilities. It is estimate that Nepal could utilize only 24 percent benefits from available facilities. To access Bangladesh ports, Nepal has to negotiate with India to use their land.

Despite the opportunities offered by the ocean economy, participation in the ocean economy is not inclusive. The landlocked developing countries are among those marginalized from the ocean economy partly due to lack of access. The participation of LLDCs, in meetings and processes related to ocean affairs and the law of the sea has also been quite limited. Unfortunately, landlocked countries have not given opportunity to participate in SDG 14 and ocean related affairs and coastal countries are controlling the whole oceans of the world.

Effective implementation of UNCLOS and Vienna Program of Action for LLDCs (2014-2024) is the serious issue since Nepal has bitter experiences to enjoy easy access to ocean, freedom of trade and transit, access to ocean resources, and construction of infrastructure because of neighboring countries. Further, unsustainable use of ocean impacts on landlocked countries like Nepal. Climate change is greatly affecting Nepal. Particularly desertification and land degradation are becoming serious.

There are now 5.25 trillion macro and micro pieces of plastic in our ocean & 46,000 pieces in every square mile of ocean, weighing up to 269,000 tones. Every day around 8 million pieces of plastic makes their way into our oceans. Globally, 100,000 marine mammals die every year as a result of plastic pollution. This includes whales, dolphins, porpoises, seals and sea lions. There are two principle ways that encountering marine debris can be fatal for these creatures: ingestion (eating) or entanglement in plastic-based fishing gear.

Call for Action

- Naturally, ecosystems of the oceans and seas and mountain ecosystems are interlinked and interdependent. Melting of mountains and glacier lakes can affect the oceans in the south and monsoons generated from the Bangal Gulf has a direct impact on the mountainous country like us. All the rivers of Nepal are ended in the Indian Ocean and they link Nepal with the ocean in the south, that determines the health of coastal zones. So, we should not ignore the SDG 14 because of shared geography and ecology.
- Of course Goal 14 is more than life below water. So, we need to continue to sensitize and build the capacity of the country to participate in the blue economy. Sharing of successful experiences of LLDCs is critical to the implementation of UNCLOS. Nepal needs financial support, knowledge building, capacity building and technology transfer to enhance implementation of SDG 14. SDG 14.7 has explicitly raised the issue of providing economic benefits to the LDCs and LLDCs from the oceans and its resources.
- Though Nepal is not ocean adjacent, it has rights regarding oceans and it must translate landlocked into land-linked and be able to benefit greatly from oceans. These rights include but not limited to access to oceans, fishery, building of artificial installations, and scientific research.
- Nepal must maximally and efficiently use access to port facilities provided by two neighboring countries. In terms of time cost, Nepal can take more advantage from China ports. Nepal must use waterways to access to oceans as agreed with India (negotiation in final stage) and China. Those facilities should be used to promote export national products, especially produced by SMEs. Nepal must work out on comprehensive logistic facility strategy to promote export oriented trade with third countries.
- Nepal should also be aware of the corresponding obligations such as prevention of pollution and following international safety guidelines and labor standards. Nepal should involve in the group of LLDCs and raise the voice to promote policies, which are beneficial.
- Climate change is greatly affecting LLDCs including Nepal, particularly desertification and measures should be undertaken to address the issue. Climate crisis cannot be resolved without addressing issues of ocean ecosystems. It is very clear that Nationally Determined Commitment on Climate Change of Nepal is directly related with SDG 14. Nepal must raise voice for effective implementation of Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 (Protection of the oceans, all kinds of seas, including enclosed and semi-enclosed seas, and coastal areas and the protection, rational use and development of their living resources). Therefore, Nepal needs to intervene in SDG14 aggressively and intellectually by making clear country position.





Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Progresses and Achievements

In Nepal 22,415 community forest user groups managed 39 percent of Nepal's dense forests, which is reached 42.7 percent (GON). Community forestry itself is very popular in Nepal, it is also contributing to climate change adaptation.

In the context of conservation of biodiversity, 23.4 percent of total land area is declared as protected. Similarly, the country also protects 1,727 lakes, wetlands and ponds. These areas are located in various ecological zones and have helped in the conservation of the natural, biological and cultural heritage of those areas (NPC, 2015). The Government-led Scientific Forest Management Programme has covered 121,852 ha. forest land. The Federal Government amended the Forest Act in 2019. The Chure–Tarai Madhesh Conservation and Management Strategy has been developed in 2017 to stop/reduce habitat fragmentation and degradation.

A total of 118 different ecosystems have been identified in Nepal, including 112 forest ecosystems, four cultivation ecosystems, one water body ecosystem and one glacier/snow/rock ecosystem. Nepal is ranked 25th and 11th positions in biodiversity richness in the world and Asia, respectively. The diverse climatic and topographic conditions have also favoured maximum diversity of agricultural crops, their wild relatives and animal species. Biodiversity is closely linked to the livelihoods and economic well-being of most Nepalese people. The economy of Nepal is very much dependent on the use of natural resources. The country's biodiversity is also an important source of revenue. Biodiversity is a source of a range of goods and services. These are also considered low cost and locally suitable adaptation measures to moderate the negative impacts of climate change. Out of 30,000 existing estimated accessions, the national gene bank has preservation of 11,389 accessions (MOFE 2018).

Nepal prepared its Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) in 2018 and aims to achieve LDN target as key to improving land, restore ecosystem services and improve livelihoods of the communities which are primarily dependent on agriculture and vulnerable to climate change (Wagle 2019). The Government is now in process to plan for LDN implementation through the design of the programme.

More than two-thirds (67.8 percent) of the mountain ecosystem is covered by the conservation areas. Twenty of the total of 5,358 lakes found in Nepal are considered to need special protection (NPC, 2017). So far, 3346 watersheds have been conserved. Similarly, 1,675 kilometers of rivulets and riverbanks have been conserved through bio-engineering processes.

The government has put three plant species and five animal species under conservation plans. The 2030 target is to increase the number of plants and animal species with conservation plans to 15 each (NPC, 2015).

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

There are several issues and challenges in implementing SDG 15. Many development projects are being implemented without carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Initial Environmental Examination (IEE). Each and every sector is affected by the impacts of climate change.

There is a lack of sustainable management of water, forest, land, national parks, and other sectors. Air pollution, industrial pollution, lack of infrastructure, lack of technology and skilled human power stands as major challenges in the present context. The growth of haphazard human settlements and unplanned urbanization have added extra threat in implementing SDG 15. The natural resources are being exploited haphazardly and in an uncontrolled way (For instance, mining of resources).

People are using chemical fertilizers, pesticides, etc. without considering environmental and health hazards. There is improper solid waste management in almost all over Nepal that is polluting large areas of land. Lack of public awareness is another major challenge due to which people still raise questions on whether the SDG15 will be successfully achieved or not.



The main gap in government actions towards obtaining SDG 15 is lack of reliable data on climate change impacts on forests and biodiversity and dependent communities. Similarly, lack of coherence in conservation policies creating barriers to coordination, collaborative decision making and effective implementation is another loophole. There are inadequate resources (human and financial) and technologies for sustainable ecosystem management. Likewise, there are ineffective monitoring mechanisms and poor compliance with environmental and social safeguards. The degradation of natural habitats threatens the country's flora and fauna. Some species are moving towards extinction with declines in both populations and distribution. Nepal is home to 12,480 plant and 11,706 animal species, of which 60 plant species (0.48 percent) and 95 animal species (0.81 percent) are threatened. There are currently 198 tigers, 645 rhinos and 300 blackbuck deer in Nepal (MoF, 2015 and MoFSC, 2015). These and other animals need to be protected. In Nepal, ecosystem services are in decreasing trend due to overuse of natural resources like in other countries. A total of 64 critical watershed/river systems identified by Master Plan of PCTMCD (MOFE 2018).

Global biodiversity is very relevant in Nepali context, more so with continuous exploitation of Chure region for gravel mining, sand, timber and other raw materials. The entire region is under threat due to gradual surge in the mining of sand, gravel and limestone not to mention haphazard and poorly engineered construction of infrastructure such as dams and embankments along the local streams. Deforestation and environmental degradation have already increased the amount of sediment flowing through the Chure region via intermittent streams. It is believed that 104 different species are threatened in Nepal in terms of biodiversity loss.

Mountain ecosystems are threatened by natural disasters such as landslides, glacial lake outburst floods and drought. Climate change can have profound impacts in the future, particularly on mountain ecosystems.

Lack of national action plan to facilitate implementation of coordinated land-use planning has resulted in haphazard urban development and settlement across flood prone areas in Tarai. This in turn has led to increased exposure of infrastructure and communities to floods. Furthermore, there is risk of destroying the natural habitat of many wild species with the government's plan of 700,000 trees to commence construction activities at Nijgadh International Airport, a national pride project. The Scientific Forest Management Programme introduced by the Government is debatable, several discrepancies have been noticed. Illegal logging and smuggling of wood from forests is appeared in crisis time.

Call for Actions

- Forests are not only an asset for environmental protection, but also have huge potential for job creation, income generation and tourism promotion. Nepal has not fully used the potential of its forest resources. Therefore, the SDGs should consider forestry as a productive sector that enables employment, enterprises and economic growth. This should be reflected in the goals and targets.
- In Nepal, the promotion and protection of forestry, the promotion of community based natural resource management and the use of forestry as a productive sector producing timber and non-timber forest products need to be emphasized. Community-based forest management is promoting democracy, inclusion and gender equality. These need to be recognized and should be key words of the goal. There needs to be increased collaboration between state, community and private sector actors on forest protection, management and use for job creation and as a renewable source of income and subsistence for poor and forest-dependent people.
- It is important to clarify the resource, implementation and monitoring mechanism for the sub-goals agreed in the negotiations. It is also important to identify the actors and their roles based on competence and constituencies for achieving the goals. Several SDGs and their targets influence forests and biodiversity conservation and forest governance. SDG 1 on ending poverty and hunger is interlinked with forest resource use as poverty leads people to depend more on common property resources for their livelihoods resulting in encroachment and over-exploitation.
- The sustainable and productive management of forests will provide employment and incomes through forest based enterprises. Similarly, SDG 2 on ending hunger, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture is strongly related to forest sector development. SDG 5 on attaining gender equality and empowering women and girls is related to the organization of women in community forests and the development of their leadership through their participation in decision making related to forest management and use. However, adequate data is not available to see these trends.



- Women empowered through participating in forest management demonstrate leadership in other development sectors. It is a similar case with regard to SDGs 6, 11, 12, and 13. The above analysis shows that SDG 15 should not be taken in isolation, as it is crosscutting and strongly linked with livelihoods, land use, and development processes. Forest conservation and management is one area where Nepal can share best practices with the global community. Priority should be given to local and domestic products.
- Community managed forestry is contributing to all the Goals, so it is suggested to start systematic measurement and keep national account of contribution of community forestry in SDGs in the country¹⁸. Country has to promote private and family forestry as well.
- Furthermore, effective EIA and IEE should be made mandatory before implementing the projects. President Chure programme either should be qualitatively improved or dismissed.
- Land degradation has multi-sectoral and multi-level impacts. In order to address the diverse nature of impacts, the role of concerned sectoral ministries and all tiers of government i.e. national, provincial government and local government is important in achieving the LDN targets. So, clear responsibility division has to be done for LDN implementation and combating desertification. In order to achieve the LDN targets, Nepal should immediately initiate the participatory and inclusive National Action Program (NAP) on Land Degradation and Desertification formulation process (Wagle 2019).
- Nepal is a mountainous country and there is an urgent need to protect the mountain ecosystem to check the migration of mountain people and promote sustainable livelihood of people living in those areas. The practice of holding prior consultation and discussion with the local communities is necessary before making any important decision that affects the local communities' use of local resources. Biodiversity conservation without addressing the people's livelihood is impossible, so the biodiversity conservation issue should be linked to people's livelihood for sustainable conservation.
- Capacity should be improved to monitor changes in the status of forests and ecosystem health. Additional resources are required for ecosystem management and enforcement of safeguards. Inter-sectoral and inter-agency coordination is necessary. There should be inclusion of forest user groups and poor and marginalized groups in decision making and equitable benefit sharing.
- Adaptation should be integrated in the long-term vision for forests and biodiversity. The objectives for the future forest under climate change should be established. Awareness and education within the forestry community about adaptation to climate change should be increased. The vulnerability of forest ecosystems, forest communities and society should be determined. We should develop present and future cost-effective adaptive actions and manage the forest to reduce vulnerability and enhance recovery. We should monitor to determine the state of the forest and identify when critical thresholds are reached. Finally, we should manage to reduce the impact when it occurs, speed recovery and reduce vulnerability to further climate change.

¹⁸ Contribution of Community Forestry in SDGs 2019, FECOFUN







Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Target 16.1 Significantly Reduce All Forms of Violence and Related Death Rates Everywhere

Progresses and Achievements

The Global Peace Index has ranked Nepal as the 76th most peaceful country. Nepal is ranked as 31th in Criminal Level, 53th in Homicide and 89th in a Rape Rate. Government announced an anti-untouchability campaign to implement Criminal (code) Act, 2018. During campaign 1273 *Chhaupadi Goth* was demolished by the Nepal Government. Government of Nepal declared there are no conflict-related deaths in 2018/19.



Government affirmed that Nepal is a safe zone for all citizens and visitors to feel safe walking alone around where they live. And it's ranked as the top 76th safest country in the world for travel as Global Finance Magazine's Safety Index 2019.

The government's new Civil and Criminal Codes went into effect from 2018, replacing the General Code—nationally known as Muluki Ain—implemented by first Rana Prime Minister Jung Bahadur that had been guiding civil and legal proceedings for the last 165 years. Moreover, police posts have been expanded in many parts of the country, which were displaced during the time of violent conflict.

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

In the previous four fiscal years' data, the rate of crime and violence has increased. According to the police data, the country recorded 28,070 incidents of crime in the fiscal year 2014/15, which rose to 28,563 in the following fiscal year. Similarly, Nepal recorded 31,460 incidents of crime in the fiscal 2016/17; 31,315 in 2017/18; and 39,389 in 2018/19.

The Data shows increase violence and death rate in Suicide, Murder, and Violence to Women and child [The CID Nepal Data shows following data: Rape (11.59%), Attempt to Rape (4.08%), Polygamy (7.035%), Abortion (0.14%), Child Marriage (0.60%), Untouchability (0.30%), Domestic Violence (78.84%), Witchcraft (0.32%), Child Sexual Abuse (1.5%). Many domestic violence and sexual abuses are not reported. Women Disables are also becoming victims of sexual violence. People living on international border sides in south mostly do not feel safe, for instance a number of people living in border areas have been killed or disappeared (NHRC 2020). Number of people have been killed by police in the name of encounter in this period. Sadly, VAW was rapidly increased in the lockdown period. Police recorded 541 cases, including 373 rape cases.

There are so many cases of violence, rape, murder and suicide among LGBTIQ people. Rape law does not address rape against transgender woman. There is no specific mechanism established to address violence LGBTIQ community.

Various crimes including and murder, terrorism, kidnaping, rape and illegal detention has not been yet decreased.¹⁹ As reflected in Nepal Year Book, published by INSEC, the ratio of violence against women (VAW) and child rights violation is increased in compare to previous year.²⁰ Government is not able to share the progress about the progress of UPR implementation.

Suicide cases are gradually increasing (by 25 percent estimated) in Nepal and mental health problem is expanding in the country. In an average 15 persons are committing suicide in the country. COVID-19 crisis is fueling to exacerbate this situation. Psycho-social problems are becoming serious as people have lost their jobs and many poor families are not able to manage adequate food for their families. Uncertainty, fear, domestic violence etc. they lead to depression to the people.

¹⁹ *Maulik Hak karyanayanna Bidhaika ra Karyapaliko Bhumika* (The role of Legislative and Executive to Implement Fundamental Rights), National Human Rights Commission, 2076 Shrawon, p.78

²⁰ In 2018 there were altogether 1248 case registered against child rights abuse and violation but in this (2019) year 1,447 cases have been registered. Similarly in 2018 2824 VAW cases have been registered where as in this year (2019) 3,364 cases have been registered. Nepal Human Rights Year Book, 2020, Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC), (Nepali Edition), 2076 Falgun, p.5.



Even ranked in peaceful country, still there is physical, psychological and sexual violence cases are increasing in Nepal day by day; and it is the most important notice to be focused. Despite a violent conflict caused by Maoist party that officially ended in 2006, its small faction led by Mr. Netra Bikram Chand is still active in the country.

Call for Actions

Strong Implementation of Law and Policy: The implementation side of law and policy seems weak in the country. So many cases are hidden in the power of political pressure. Citizens couldn't feel the presence of governance in many violence cases to defend. It is like a crisis of governance in a country. So, the government should strictly implement the law and policy against violence and crime. Specific mechanisms should be in place to address violence against LGBTIQ people. Rape law should be amended to address rape against transgender people. Government should intensify its efforts to prevent trafficking in persons, slavery, sexual exploitation and forced labour. Nepal has to ratify International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

Strengthen Local Level Governance: Government should strengthen local level with accurate law, provisions and policy acknowledged. Government also focused the rapport building programmes between civil society and governance mechanisms to improve the function of local governance mechanisms.

Support Civil Society Programmes: Government should support the activities conducted by local civil society organizations. CSOs also could coordinate with governments for door-to-door awareness programmes. CSOs and GO can conduct creative and result based activities to reduce violence and homicide.

Youth Mobilization and Volunteerism Programme: Government could mobilize local youth and volunteerism activities to conduct campaigns for reducing violence in the community. Government should provide skills, training and practices to them to reduce violence in their community by alternative violence promoting programmes.

Conduct Social Friendship Programme: Government and CSOs could organize social harmony to promote peace and harmony in the society. Stakeholders should promote moral education, discipline, self-analysis activities to support and establish rule of law to reduce physical, psychological and sexual violence in Nepal.

Target 16.2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

Progresses and Achievements

Nepal government has adopted the new Children's Act in 2018 and tried to embrace the child rights provisions of Constitution of Nepal 2015. Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 of the Civil Code 2017 have the provisions in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Juvenile Justice Operation 2019 is another important policy document introduced in this reporting period.

The Government of Nepal has formed National Child Rights Council as per the Section 59 of Children's Act, 2018 in order to protect and promote the rights of children. Many local governments have embraced the idea of Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) in their territories.

Street Children Rescue, Protection and Management Integrated Procedure 2019, Child Search Number 104 Operational Directive 2019 and Child Helpline Number 1098 Operational Directive 2019 are some important steps taken in the country in this period. School As Zones of Peace National Directive also mentioned about SDGs 16.2. Civil Code 2074 also approved by Nepal Government.

According to the Nepal Demographic Health Surveys 2016, the child mortality rate under the age of five (per thousand) is 39, infant mortality rate (per thousand) is 32 and neo-natal mortality rate (per thousand) is 21. The survey reveals that 36 percent of children under the age of 5 are stunted, 27 percent are under weight (weight for age), and 10 percent are wasted (NCRC, 2020, p. ix).

Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens also did the programme on SDGs 16.2 as well as civil society also implementing a programme to reduce the corporal punishment to students as well as also run the hotline 1098, 104 to address the violence against children.



Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

Nepal Government has adopted the Child Act 2018, but it could not prepare and approve the children's regulation so far, which directly effects on child rights. There is no systematic mechanism to collect the data and information about children situation inline with Target 16.2.

The NHRC report on Trafficking in Persons 2019 points to a nexus between orphanages, child-care centres and foreigners wishing to adopt children. In fiscal year 2018/19, 533 child care homes are operating in 46 districts which are providing protection support to 15,045 children (boys 7,412 and girls 7,633) (NCRC, 2020) but there are cases that all children are not orphan and have one parent so it is challenges to ensure only orphan children getting the services.

According to the Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014 commissioned by Central Bureau of Statistics, 37.4 percent of the children between the age of 5 and 17 years are involved in labor. Nepal Labor Force Survey 2017/18 has reported that some 2,86,000 children under the age of 17 years are involved in economic gains, but not clearly mentioned as child labor (NCRC, 2020, p. ix)

In FY 2017/18, a total of 995 cases against rape up to 18 years' girls were registered in Nepal Police, while in this fiscal year, the registered cases of victims increased to 1,420. 7,806 (boys 3,805 and 4,100 girls) such children were provided services in FY 2018/19 (NCRC 2019). It is estimated that 47 percent victims of sexual violence are girls. In FY 2017/18, 618 number of trafficking in persons survivors rescued was recorded.

There were 382 children in the eight child correction homes in fiscal year 2017/18, whereas the number of such children increased to 821 (boys 798 and girls 23) in fiscal year 2018/19 because of the provision that till last year there were only children below the age of 16 years, and from this year children of below the age of 18 years were brought to the homes (NCRC, 2020).

Early marriage still exists despite strong evidence that it damages life chances, and men hold an overwhelming majority of positions in legal institutions, affecting women's access to justice. Rate of child marriage in the country is 26.3 percent and 26 percent girls are in high risk being trafficked (NHRC 2020). Given Nepal's record is the result of poor enforcement and implementation of laws, so passing laws are not enough. This is glaringly evident in the average age of marriage, which is stuck at 18 despite law raising the minimum marriage age to 20. Child marriage is highest in districts with low female literacy and the Tarai districts have a particularly high rate. Child marriage is dramatically increased in some parts of the country even in the lockdown time caused by COVID-19 pandemic.

There is a major discrepancy between Nepal government and foreign records of the number of Nepali children adopted in North America and Europe. The Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens has records of only 64 children from Nepal sent for adoption to ten western countries from 2010 to 2019. However, a list submitted to The Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH) by the US Department of State and the nine other countries reveals that 242 Nepali children were taken for adoption in those nine years (CIJN 2020).

Police figures show more than 1,000 children were trafficked in the past five years. The children are usually bought from willing poor parents but that some parents are tricked into sending them to shelters. The traffickers then sell them to adoption brokers who make contact with foreigners' eager to adopt children. The children who are trafficked are often from the poor and underprivileged families or are street children.

Currently, the district based Child Welfare Offices are collapsed due to new Children's Act 2018, which has created challenges to ensure the rights of the child at the local level.

Call for Actions

- Government must bring Children's Regulation to enact the Children's Act 2018. Existing laws and regulations related with child rights should be effectively implemented by law enforcement bodies.
- National indicators of SDG 16.2 should be improved. It is recommended to develop strong child related data system at all levels to monitor the child rights and child protection. Regular monitoring report need to generate inline with target 16.2.
- There should be regular policy dialogue and advocacy on government budget allocation to child protection services, including but not limited to social welfare workforce, justice, policing, social work, case management, education staff, health workers, legal aid, psycho-social support and rescue.



- Strengthening provincial and municipal level capacity to lead on prevention and reduction of child labour, child marriage, violence against children, trafficking and children living in residential care institutions is very important.
- Governments should support to integration and cross-sectoral linkages for effective referrals (e.g. health, education, social policy) including case management procedures. Governments at all levels must strengthen partnership with private sectors and CSOs for child protection and their safety.
- Prevention efforts & social change are urgently needed to reduce child marriage, child labour, and violent discipline. Unless deep-rooted, harmful social norms are addressed, children will not be free from violence, abuse, and exploitation. We need to focus on changing existing social norms to bring about collective changes through communication for development strategies and interventions, in partnership with health and education sectors, bringing in men and boys, religious and community leaders.
- Government needs to strengthen its capacity to engage in cross border collaboration with neighbouring countries as well as countries of destination to curb trafficking in persons.

Target 16.3: Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure access to justice for all.

Progresses and Achievements

Nepal has enacted several laws in 2018 to give effect to the implementation of fundamental rights as guaranteed by the constitution. Sixteen different laws²¹ directly related to fundamental rights have been enacted by the federal parliament. Similarly, the National Planning Commission also has enacted a preliminary paper for the 15th National Plan (2019/20-2024/25).²² In this plan, the government has shown its commitment to ensure a human rights and justice system. As their regular work, this year the government has drafted National Human Rights Action plan 2019/20-2024/25 and it is under finalization process. Further, the Government has prepared an Action Plan for the Implementation of Recommendations received through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

In addition to that, Local Government Operation Act 2018, is enacted by the Federal Parliament, which allows Local Judicial Committees to provide justice at local level. Most of the local governments enacted Judicial Committee Act/Rules/Procedures and functioning smoothly. Around 53 laws amended by the federal parliament through Some Nepal Act amendment Bill. Seven legislations enacted to fulfill the constitutional mandate of the other Commissions as per the part 27 of the Constitution of Nepal.

Police reform and judicial reform is being conducted regularly. A new strategic plan is introduced by the Judiciary. Coordination between Federal, Provincial and Local government Bill, Police Act amendment Bill are underway to clarify the role of three tiers of the government and arrangement of police in different tiers. Each province has chief attorney offices coordinating with the provincial government, attorney offices and judiciary. NHRC report tabled in the parliament for the first time in Nepalese history and discussed widely.

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

Though Nepal has guaranteed rule of law and access to justice through several laws and fundamental rights in the constitution, beside these constitutional and legal guarantees, access to justice is still a huge threat to ensure rule of law in the country. Many people believe that policies, laws and regulation of the country are failed to capture the spirit of constitutional provisions. Similarly, some people opine that the constitution does not reflect the demands of some marginalized communities.

Transitional justice process is still in a deadlock situation: Though Nepal has completed more than 13 years of its peace process but it has still not been able to conclude transitional justice process and government has not been able to ensure justice and reparation through concluding peace process.²³ Many issue related to forced disappearance, extra-judicial killings, rape, deaths and other incidents have not been resolved yet. Vacant position of Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) and Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP) has

²¹ These are; Right to Housing Act, 2075 BS, Consumer's Protection Act, 2075 BS, Right to food and Food Sovereignty Act, 2075 BS, Public Health Act, 2075 BS, Child Rights Act, 2075 BS, Right to Employment Protection Act, 2075 BS, Right to Privacy Protection Act, 2075 BS, Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Rights Act, 2075 BS, visited on <http://www.lawcommission.gov.np/np/category> on 7 April, 2020.

²² Fifteenth Plan (2076/77-2080/81 BS), Approach Paper, National Planning Commission, Singhdurbar, Kathmandu, Baisakh, 2076 BS.

²³ Nepal Human Rights Year Book, 2020, Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC), (Nepali Edition), 2076 Falgun, p.2.





been fulfilled recently, however concerned stakeholders have lusted their faith towards these commissions due to lack of transparency in the recruitment process and government's initiation to amend TRC Act as per the order of Supreme Court and technical note shared by OHCHR in 2014.

The incidents of torture have not been addressed: The incidents of torture that took place during the armed conflict period have not been addressed yet.²⁴

Implementation of NHRC Recommendations: Nepal government has shown its commitments to ensure rule of law and justice, but it is denying to implement several recommendations made by National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) which is mandated to oversee the implementation by the Government through human rights lens. The data shows that there is negligible progress in its recommendations, as to date out of 856 recommendations only 12.5 percent have been fully addressed and 60.8 has been partially addressed, so the government seems unaccountable towards NHRC's recommendations to ensure human rights of Nepali citizens.²⁵ The Supreme Court of Nepal has decided and ordered the GoN to implement NHRC recommendations without saying IF and BUT. The status of NHRC recommendations remains unchanged than earlier.

Prisoner's rights have been curtailed due to their limited capacity: Due to inadequate planning and showing resource limitation, the prisoners are facing many problems in the prison and they are living in a crowded situation. As per the source of Nepal Human Rights Yearbook, 2020, Jaleswor Jail of Mahottari has capacity of 135 jailbirds but this year 532 jailbirds have passed their life in the suffocated situation. This situation is found in various prisons in Nepal.

Delayed justice: Though rule of law and access to justice presupposed for speedy justice, due to various factors the ratio of court judgment is very poor. According to Judiciary's fourth five year strategic plan the ratio of court judgment in writ and case is very low.²⁶ PWDs, Dalits, LGBTIQ, people affected by crimes do not feel easy access to judiciary systems. Complaints of rape case, incidents of untouchability and caste-based discriminations are not easily registered in police offices.

Lack of access to justice and resources to ensure ESC rights: There is lack of access to justice and due to lack of allocation of state resources; there are many challenges to implement fundamental rights focusing on ESCR.²⁷ The PWDs community does not feel comfortable in courts as there is absence of interpreters and even they don't have easy access to the bench of courts. Some indigenous peoples feel uneasy access to justice due to language problems.

Weak implementation of court decisions: The progress report of the Supreme Court (FY 2075/76) shows that there is negligible progress on implementation of court decisions especially in public interest litigation (PIL) case. As per this report out of 246 PIL (Directive order -164, Mandamus -64 and others-18) only 38 judgments (Directive order 25, Mandamus -12 and others-1) have been executed in the period of one year.²⁸ For example, the supreme court order regarding citizenship rights, marriage equality and constitutional provision for equal opportunity in employment, education and representation of the state structure LGBTIQ has not been implemented so far.

Delay in Appointment of Commissioner's in Other Commissions: Though the constitution has given mandate to the Constitutional Council to appoint commissioners within a month, but to date, National Women Commission and National Dalit Commission have been vacant and other four²⁹ commissions have only one representative in each commission. These commissions are not being able to deliver their task due to unavailability of commissioners.

People's negative perception of law enforcement agencies: A survey report carried out by Nepal Administrative Staff College shows that there is still a lack of public trust on police and courts. Nepalis generally agree that if citizens report a crime, the police will take action: 77 percent partially or strongly agree with this statement while 19 percent partially or strongly disagree. More than half of Nepalis (65%) also agree that the police treat people with

²⁴ Annual Report Synopsis, 2018/19, National Human Rights Commission of Nepal, accessed on https://www.nhrcnepal.org/nhrc_new/doc/newsletter/Annual_Report_2076_English_min.pdf

²⁵ *Maulik Hak karyanayanma Bidhaika ra Karyapaliko Bhumika* (The role of Legislative and Executive to Implement Fundamental Rights), National Human Rights Commission, 2076 Shrawon, p.8

²⁶ According to this report the five years judgment ratio in Supreme Court is 20.98, High Court is 55.09 and District Court is 56.34 percent. Judiciary's Fourth Five Year Strategic Plan (2076/77-2080/82), Supreme Court of Nepal, 2076, p. 5

²⁷ *Maulik Hak Karyanayanma Bidhaika ra Karyapalika ko Bhumika*, National Human Rights Commission, 2076 Shrawon, p.56

²⁸ *Sarbochha Adalatko Barsik Pratibedan (2075/76)*, Sarbocha Adalat Nepal, 2076 accessed on <http://www.supremecourt.gov.np/web/assets/downloads/annual/An7576.pdf>

²⁹ National Inclusion Commission, Tharu Commission, Madhesi Commission and Indigenous Nationalities Commission



respect. Yet, nearly one third (29%) do not think that the police are respectful toward general citizens. People are more skeptical – and also more likely to be unsure – about the statements that the police do not take bribes and 57 percent think that the police may be taking bribes.³⁰ Restructuring of the police force is an important step to improve the security system in the country.

Similarly, the majority of people have faith in the courts, yet there are large shares of people who are skeptical and many believe the courts take bribes. While 65 percent agree that those who are guilty are declared guilty by the courts, over one in four (27%) disagree with this statement. Similarly, while 64 percent agree that no innocent people are punished, over one in four (27%) disagree. More than half of Nepalis think the courts treat citizens with respect (64%) while nearly one in five (24%) do not believe that the courts treat citizens respectfully. Half (51%) think the courts take bribes but one in three people (32%) do not think so and nearly one in five (18%) are unsure about this.

Call for Actions

- **Ensure rule of law and public accountability:** Governments must respect the constitution of the country and make laws and policies according to the spirit of provisions of the constitution. Governments must ensure rule of law and promote public accountability, law enforcement agencies (People's representatives, government officials, security forces) should be accountable and transparent towards the system and law and order should be maintained smoothly. For that, the top most leaders should commit to ensure rule of law in the state, community and society. Nepotism and political amnesties should be eradicated and due process should be followed strictly.
- **Complete Transitional Justice Process:** The Government of Nepal should be honest to conclude the peace process as soon as possible. For that, TRC legislation should be amended as per the order of the Supreme Court and technical note shared by UN-OHCHR in 2014. Both commissions should be honest to maintain international human rights standards to receive confidence from international and national human rights communities, victims and other stakeholders. Until and unless they are able to show their commitment and dedication towards victims the process will hardly be completed.
- **Implement NHRCs Recommendations:** It is expected that the government will implement NHRC recommendations by establishing a task force and reporting to NHRC on its progress periodically. To implement it effectively, GoN can develop a periodic plan and invest resources from government officials.
- **Increase Roles of Province and Local Governments:** Local and province level governments have high potential to protect, promote and fulfill human rights and justice in their areas. They should embrace and human rights and justice based approaches in policies and development processes.
- **Guarantee Prisoner's Rights:** Government should increase its resources in the infrastructure of existing prisons. The condition of prisons should be addressed through temporary measures. Human rights violations and abuses in the prison and detention center should be completely stopped. For that concern, the Ministry should take prompt action and proper planning.
- **Implementation of court decisions and ensuring speedy justice:** To build public trust in the court system, the judiciary and Nepal government should work together and the government should support the judiciary for proper implementation of court decisions.
- **Immediately appoint Commissioners in Constitutional Bodies:** Human rights related constitutional bodies are directly concerned with the rights of vulnerable people and they work as watchdog oversight agency, so constitutional bodies should not be neglected. Due to lack of members and leaders in this commission, these commissions are being ineffective. To make them effective and address issues of the minority and marginalized communities, these commissions should be fulfilled as soon as possible. In the recruitment process, a fair and transparent process needs to be adopted. Appointments should be done through a publicly verifiable competitive and merit-based system.
- **Ensure accountable law implementing agencies:** To promote ownership and public trust in the law implementing agency, the state should ensure accountability of law implementing agencies.
- **Empower Civil Societies:** State accountability is widely felt to be weak and/or pliant. Inculcate a system of moral responsibility to check on accountability and mismanagement, the government should overhaul its

³⁰ Nepal National Governance Survey, 2017/18, Nepal Administrative Staff College, 2018, p.53



regime of unaccountability and create an enabling environment for civil society to operate at all levels. Absence of space and capacity for civil society to monitor the state of governance, especially at all government levels, including provincial and local levels, and to mobilize against weaknesses and excesses. Evidence suggests that mismanagement, abuse of authority and corruption thrive when civil society remains silent. or ineffective to collect evidence and ramp up voices.

Target 16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime

Progresses and Achievements

Nepal is a state party of UN Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances 1988 and UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000. The Department of Money Laundering Investigation (DMLI) is functional as a principal entity to conduct investigation and prevent the commission of money laundering (ML) and the financing of terrorism and proliferation in Nepal. Corruption Elimination Act 2002, Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authorities Act 1991, Money Laundering Act 2006, Organized Crime Act 2006, Proceed of Crime Seizing Freezing and Confiscation Act 2013, Money Laundering Listing etc. Rules 2013, Extradition Act 2013, Organized Crime Elimination Act 2013 are some important legal instruments to control criminal activities in the country. Moreover, the Ministry of Home Affairs issued a List of Organizations or People Involved in Terrorist Activities. Nepal has developed a National Strategy and Action Plan for Fiscal Investment on Anti-money laundering and Terrorist Activities (2019-2024). On the other hand, 130,424 persons use drugs (MoHA 2020).

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

Commonly known as black money, grey economy or dirty money, their linkages to persistent intersecting inequalities, income, wealth, ethnic, age and gender inequality, make illicit financial flows one of the greatest challenges to the financing of development and human rights. Illicit financial outflow, hot money outflows, and trade invoicing are major forms of illicit financial flows in Nepal. Percentage of Illicit financial flow is 4.2559 of GDP (Global Financial Integrity 2016). Illicit Financial Flows challenge on Political and Economic Security, hampering domestic resource mobilization, low level of investment and capital stock, and impact on the governance system.

Although Nepal has officially started to work against money laundering, it has not been able to achieve good results. It is flowering day by day. In Anti Money Laundering Risk Score, Nepal is ranked 182 with score 53.417 percent and lies in very high risk group³¹. Because of powerful people and high level public officials, it has been becoming very challenging to control it. The Act is not able to clearly define what is money laundering and illicit finance. There is a lack of coordination between the Money Laundering Investigation Department and Informers. In the country Indian currency can be openly used, which is helping in money laundering. We can see a number of informal transactions such as Dhukuti and Hundi etc.

Government is not able to keep a proper record of transactions of individuals and firms and lack of proactive inspection/monitoring are absent. Investigation agencies have very limited capacity. People have a tendency to tax avoidance or tax evasion. CIAA and Government agencies are unable to keep on those, who are becoming rich overnight by illegal means. Banks have unhealthy competition to attract the clients for cash deposits in their banks. Practice of fake invoicing is rampant in the markets, public offices, and customs etc.

Some legal provisions have loopholes. The Money laundry investigation Office is not fully independent and they don't have permanent dedicated staff. Suspected persons are politically protected. On the other hand, inter-country and international cooperation and coordination are weak.

Call for Actions

- The indicator of Target 16.4 should be country-level estimates of illicit outflows related to misinvoiced trade and other sources based on currently available data, and the International Monetary Fund or another qualified international institution should conduct and publish the analysis annually (Bhusal TU).
- There should be a concrete definition of illicit finance and money laundering. Clients should clear their source of income when they open their bank accounts and for transactions of big amounts. Departments should implement all the policies and promotional functions of the existing acts. Any investigations should be carried out by

³¹ <https://countryrisk.io/app/risk-scores/aml/>



experienced, professional and dedicated officers.

- There should be a separate ombudsman body and appellate system. Governments must control informal financial transactions such as Hundi, Dhukuti etc, and unlimited transactions of Indian currency and fake currencies should be fully controlled. Courts, Central Bank, CIAA, Revenue Investigation and Money Laundering Investigation Office should be effective and efficient to check financial crimes.
- Regular staff of departments should be provided adequate training. Governments should reach in agreement with related countries to activate the acts related with extradition and mutual legal support. Governments should strictly follow the advice of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).
- Illicit financial flow is the global problem, so all the Governments, international institutions, regional bodies and the global community have to take cognizance of the urgent need to curb illicit financial flows (IFFs) for the immediate and progressive realization of human rights and the SDGs.
- The struggle to end illicit financial flows is closely linked to social justice movements which focus on the rights and livelihoods of Dalits, farmers, women, youth, the marginalized, persecuted and indigenous communities. The Declaration deeply reflects the spirit of the NSF bringing together different actors under the banner of “another world is possible”.

Target 16.5 - Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms

Corruption Control

Progresses and Achievements

National Vigilance Centre under the Office of Prime Minister and Council of Minister, Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authorities (CIAA), Anti Money Laundering Office and Office of Public Procurement Monitoring are key state bodies to control corruption in the country.

Transparency International’s Global Corruption Perceptions Index 2019 (CPI) has ranked Nepal 113th, with a score of 34. Nepal has improved its ranking (131st in 2016) in the CPI, but despite climbing a few spots, it continues to remain alongside countries with significant corruption.

Nepal’s ranking improved due to the work carried out in various sectors to curb corruption including—action by anti-corruption agencies against public office holders who abused authority, works of the judiciary, decisions on tax collection, integrity of the state security agencies, especially of the Nepal Army and civil organizations’ role in the issues of public interest.

Media is playing a proactive role to make the government involved scams or deals public, ones that smell of foul.

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

Despite Nepal’s improved ranking in the CPI 2019, it failed to make any progress on long-term issues as the government could not implement its commitment of zero tolerance against corruption. Corruption has been thriving in Nepal because of the nexus between politicians, businesspeople and bureaucrats.

In 2016, the score of CPI was 29, but it is 34 in 2019 (TI 2019). In general, the trend of corruption is increased than baseline year. It indicates, corruption is still deeply rooted in society. Studies reveal that people need to pay bribes in the Land Management Office, Local Governments, Map offices, In-land Revenue offices, District Administration Offices.

No new major policies, laws, regulations or strategies or institutional mechanism has been made to control corruption in this period. Government had made a UNCAC Implementation Action Plan, but the public was not aware of its progress.

Study on Corruption in Local Levels-2020-CIAA reveals 55.3 percent of the respondents claimed they either paid or heard about under-the-table money solicited by the responsible officers of the local levels even as they met all requirements to receive the service. Similarly, 55.2 percent respondents said there were problems of systematic/institutional corruption and 30.3 per cent complained of policy level corruption. The percentage of complaints about irregularities at the local level was 14.6 percent in the fiscal year 2013-14, which climbed to 18.02 percent in the fiscal year 2017-18.



In fact, there have been many scams or irregular procurement deals or contracts reported by the media but the government has not shown any interest in investigating them. On the contrary, it looks more interesting to protect the accused. Somehow, impunity can be observed in the country.

Corruption in public and business sectors and abuse of authority continued while citizens lacked access to information. There is a lack of seriousness from the political side, while information remained in the grip of only a specific group of people. Because of this, despite climbing few spots in the 2019 index, Nepal has remained alongside nations with significant corruption.

Some key issues that hinder good governance currently are – conflict of interests of elected and government officials, patronage to party sympathizers, kitchen cabinet influencing government, lack of transparency on government decisions, service delivery corruption, public procurement corruption by politicians and government officials, protection to accused politicians, curtailment of media rights etc. Similarly, the election process has become very expensive, that encourages the politicians to earn money through illegal means.

Some challenges are – materialization of political will, controlling election financing by business people, anti-corruption body's limited mandate, limiting policy corruption, impunity situation, government regressive attitude etc.

Some gaps are – noncompliance to mandatory provisions of UNCAC, curtailment of anti-corruption body's authority, availability of reliable data etc. Current constitution has not included “Anuchit Karya ‘ ’ word under the authority of CIAA, that gives leverage to corrupt activities who are in power.

Governments at all levels are perceived to be intolerant of freedom of speech. Criticisms of their policies and modus operandi are denied, vilified, and harassed. This attitude is counterproductive and needs correction. Without freedom of speech, governance cannot be improved and made responsive to people's needs. Fair criticisms help governments gauge public opinion about them, find areas of improvement, and enhance their delivery. A country with a checkered record of performance vis-a-vis fundamental freedoms, such as the rights to freedom of speech, association, and assembly, will have to face international criticism.

Call for Actions

- **Increase political willpower against corruption:** In order to curb corruption in Nepal, the government has to promote separation of powers, unveil unbiased budget and service access to stakeholders, decrease the impact of money in politics and address conflict of interest. Government needs to implement a Zero Tolerance policy against corruption with examples shown right from the top, the Office of Prime Minister. Nepal can also opt for the funding system to combat the ever rising political corruption in the country.
- **Increase roles of stakeholders:** Meaningful access to stakeholders in the decision-making process, ending malpractices in the election process and empowering citizens, social campaigners and journalists are also some of the recommendations. Government must guarantee freedom of expression for the people. Improvement is immediately needed in the situation related to curtailed citizen's right to access to important government decisions.
- **Eliminate policy corruption:** To eliminate policy corruption, the country requires to end the current practice of taking unnecessary cabinet approvals on government procurement deals. Country needs to revise the existing electoral system and election centric politics. That demands drastic change in the electoral system and political financing. On the other hand, Governments should be serious to comply with the reports of CIAA.
- **Strengthen anti-corruption bodies:** Country needs to strengthen anti-corruption bodies at all the 3 levels of government- federal, provincial and local in relation to public procurement. Authorities of the CIAA should not be appointed according to the political inclination and they should not be ex-bureaucrats. Appointments should be done through a publicly verifiable competitive and merit-based systematic-corruption agency should be completely neutral by act and with needed expertise and resources. Moreover, CIAA has to adopt stringent measures to control corruption at local levels. Furthermore, CIAA should be given authority to investigate cabinet decisions.
- **Improve the role of Office of the Auditor General:** The Office of the Auditor General should be more active and it needs to submit its annual report on time. It should follow-up the implementation of its recommendations provided in the annual reports. The OAG should examine the utilization of funds with objectivity, integrity and honesty to assure the parliament that appropriated budgets have been utilized for the intended purposes.



- **Improve e-governance:** Countries need to improve public service delivery systems by introducing robust e-governance tools. All levels of Governments should apply IT based tools and e-payment systems.
- **Develop a holistic and long-term strategy:** State should make a holistic and long-term anti-corruption strategy and action plan encompassing all sectors.

Target 16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels

Progresses and Achievements

Good Governance Act 2006, Good Governance Action Plan 2006 and Hello Government are some initiatives of the government to promote accountable governance in the country. Meanwhile, the Government has introduced the concept of performance contract that applied to ministers and high level officers of ministries. The National Development Problems Resolution Committee headed by the Prime Minister is holding meetings and tracking the progress of mega projects.

The 2030 Agenda demands effective, accountable and transparent public institutions at all levels for the effective implementation of SDGs strategies and plan of actions. Nepal is still in the federalization process, so establishment of new offices and rearrangement of public offices at province and local level is going on. But, the Federal Government has to work more to devolve the functions, functionaries and funds to local and province level. In the past three years, the Government has been able to establish different offices at province and local level. Number of functions and offices of federal governments have been handed over to the province and local level. It is praise worthy that Nepal has democratically elected bodies at all levels.

Nepal's budget transparency score has dropped according to the latest internationally-recognized Open Budget Survey (OBS) report. Budget transparency score of the country has decreased to 41 in 2019 from 52 in 2017. It provides a snapshot of Nepal's current practices on opportunities for public engagement in the budget cycle, and effective check and balance between the two.

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

Transferring civil servants to sub-national level is a very tough job, since many civil servants under the federal government are reluctant to go to the province and local level. So, most of the local governments say that they don't have sufficient staff to perform their functions. On the hand, the civil servants of government offices have limited exposure and capacity. Various satisfaction surveys show that the public are not satisfied with the service and behavior of public offices. Like in other countries, public offices are losing the public trusts in recent years.

Governments at all levels present their policies, budgets and programmes annually, but, in general governments are not able to implement plans and budgets on time. Many programmes announced in the public budgets are not demand driven, they are merely populist or politically motivated. Interestingly, there are gaps between annual budgets and 5th year plans and multi-year programmes are proposed without adequate consultations with stakeholders. There is weakness in selection of programmes.

Unfortunately, the practice of doing development works and spending public budgets at the end of fiscal year (Ashare Bikash) is still happening in the country. Recurrent budgets of all Governments are increasing annually. Government is unable to reduce recurrent budgets even in this crisis time, caused by COVID-19. There is a tendency to purchase luxury vehicles from development budgets.

In addition to the law making process, parliaments are responsible to approve annual programmes, policies and budgets, but they are not able to play the watchdog role effectively. Parliaments are in shadow of executive governments and political parties. They do not seem fully sovereign. Similarly, civil service, public institutions and constitutional bodies have been politicized.

Even though there are presence of majority governments at federal level and province level and domination of the same party in the three tier governments, people do not feel they are effective. Average expenditure of the development budget of the last four fiscal years remained 60.75 percent (Khanal 2019). In 10 months of this fiscal year 2019/20, the country is only able to spend 28 percent of the development budget (Rijal 2020). According to the mid-term review published by the Finance Ministry in February 2020, the average capital expenditure of all the seven provincial governments stood at 12.9 percent (<https://tkpo.st/3e8f4Xj>). So, Province Governments have also failed to spend their available budgets.



The 56th annual report of the Office of the Auditor General has shown that arrears of the government rose significantly by 36.7 percent in fiscal year 2017/18, reflecting the government's inability to resolve unsettled dues and failure of state agencies to justify spending. The report has questioned the internal control mechanism among government entities, internal accounting and budget spending³².

Call for Actions

- The legislative, executives and oversight agencies all have equal responsibility to promote good governance. There should be checks and balance and coordination among themselves.
- It is very bad practice to revise budgets in the mid time of fiscal year. Governments at all levels need to improve their delivery capacity. Frequent changes in Public-Procurement Regulation is only serving the construction companies.
- The Federal Government has introduced the concept of the Project Bank, but it should be seriously implemented. It is suggested not to scatter budgets haphazardly. It is strongly suggested to the Federal Government not to use Nepal Army in development works.
- Because of the impact of lockdown public offices have remained closed, industries and business have been closed. Revenue generation has been significantly decreased. Governments at all levels are using their money to tackle the health crisis. In this time Governments must cut-off its unnecessary recurrent budgets.
- Governments must stop the programme like election constituency based Local Infrastructure Development Partnership Programme, which is very unpopular among the people. Next, the Federal Government should immediately take action to implement the report of the Public Expenditure Review Commission. Governments need to create right synergies between the plan and budget allocation from the start that would positively contribute to delivery of the desired outputs (Neupane 2019).
- Governments at all levels need to ensure full transparency on budget allocation, public procurement and additional budget. There should be an establishment of explicit connection between policies and budgets, seek suggestions and feedback from government agencies and CSOs and engage them to monitor the implementation of programmes and budgets. Oversight functions of parliament and auditor general should be strengthened (*Sapkota 2020*).
- Media and civil society can play a very important role to hold the governments accountable. At least they can monitor implementation budgets and local plans. They should have adequate access to information of the Governments. Nepal should be a member of the Open Government Partnership to show its commitment to transparent and accountable governance.

16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

Progresses and Achievements

Local elections were held in Nepal in three phases on 14 May, 28 June and 18 September in 6 metropolitan cities, 11 sub-metropolitan cities, 276 municipalities and 460 rural municipalities. It was the first local level election to be held since the promulgation of the new Constitution in 2015. Nepalese people got a chance to give votes after 20 years. 753 chairpersons/mayors, 753 vice-chairpersons, 6742 ward chairpersons and 26,790 ward members were elected. At local level, 41 percent elected representatives' women, among them 6567 are Dalit women. There is provision of nomination from marginalized communities in local assemblies.

Legislative elections were held in Nepal in two phases on 26 November and 7 December 2017 to elect the 275 members of the House of Representatives, the lower house of the Federal Parliament of Nepal. The election was held alongside the first provincial elections for the seven provincial assemblies. In federal parliament representatives of women is 33 percent, which is guaranteed by the Constitution.

As a result of reservation policy, shares of women, Adivasi/Janajati, Madhesi, Dalit, disabled and people from backward areas are increasing in civil service.

The Federal Government is practicing pre-budget exercise to collect the suggestions from the public and related agencies/organizations. Local governments are practicing a 7 step annual planning process in their areas after

³² <https://thehimalayantimes.com/business/maintaining-budgetary-discipline-is-crucial-to-control-rising-govt-arrears/>



adoption of Local Government Operation Act 2018. Nepal has got a public participation score of 22 from among 100 countries in the year 2019, according to the OBS Survey. This assesses the formal opportunities offered to the public for meaningful participation in the different stages of the budget process.

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

The demographic make-up of Nepal's parliament does not mirror the population of Nepal. Khas Arya make up 45 percent of Parliament, while they make up 31.2 percent of the population of Nepal. On the other end, Dalits, who are 13.8 percent of Nepal's population, have 8 percent representation in Parliament. Women are roughly half of Nepal's population, while only 33 percent of Members of Parliament (MPs) are women. Dalits have the poorest representation in the House of Representatives.

Though Dalit are estimated to be 13.8 percent of Nepal's population, Dalit women had a 19.2 percent seat reservation at the local level through the Dalit woman ward member seat. Outside of this quota, Dalit representation was at 3.3 percent only. Not much consideration seems to have gone towards how Dalit men who have been active in politics for many years ended up being excluded because of election policies.³³

Among Gazetted officers in civil service only 8.64 percent are women, interestingly the percentage of women is only 5.12 percent among 1st Class Gazetted officers. In justices/Judges only 2.61 percent are women. Representation of Dalits, Muslims and Janajatis (except Newar) in civil service is very low (Inclusion Watch 2016).

Though the parliament has full authority to formulate laws and policies, generally they do not consult with concerned stakeholders to ensure a participatory law making process. The Federal, Provincial and Local legislature hardly consult with stakeholders while making laws. 16 laws were formulated to implement fundamental rights were enacted overnight and request from NHRC was neglected. Parliament argues for a limitation of time, but it is not true. As per the article 47 of the constitution Parliament had to enact necessary legislations by three years, but the government and Parliament initiated the process overnight.

Government also faced a huge criticism due to various flaws and negligence with CSOs, parties and other stakeholders while tabling the Bills related to the NHRC Act amendment Bill, Media Council Bill, IT Bill and *Guthi* Bill etc. As per the spirit of the federal system, the federal government should consult with the provincial and local government while preparing the draft on coordination between three tiers, which has concerns from all three tiers of the government. The upper house tried to consult with provincial and local level stakeholders on media council, NHRC, IT Bills and health and education policies in a limited scale, but the government never practiced in such a way while preparing the first draft.

There is always a question of meaningful participation of women, marginalized people in policy, planning and monitoring processes. The participation of marginalized people including PWDs in political level and the mechanisms of the state is almost nil.³⁴ Policies and laws are mostly guided by bureaucratic knowledge and interests. Many people believe that the lawmaking process is faulty because it is highly dominated by the executive body. Sometimes, they are influenced by political parties as they impose whips to their parliament members to pass the bills in the parliament. There is no adequate check and balance between parliament and executive government.

We can see similar pictures at the provincial and local level. Provinces and local governments have also power to make laws and regulation in their constitutional jurisdictions. They hardly discuss legislative bills with the public and stakeholders. Even there are not adequate discussions among the members of the Province Assembly and one can see the same situation in Municipal Assemblies.

Currently the National Planning Commission (NPC) is trying its best to engage civil society and other stakeholders in the planning and policy processes, but level and scope of participation depends largely on the attitude of the NPC officials. The 15th Plan document could not include a separate chapter for the development of Janajatis. At ministerial level the stakeholder participation is not satisfactory in general. At the local level, many people feel that planning and decision-making processes are not very much inclusive and participatory after local elections. It is generally found that the local projects are selected and formulated without consultation with the local citizens³⁵.

Voter turnover in Nepal is quite good and generally it is said, elections were peaceful, free and fair as well, but there

³³ <https://www.recordnepal.com/wire/features/how-quotas-provided-a-footing-but-left-inequality-unresolved-dalits-in-the-local-election/>

³⁴ Annual Report Synopsis, 2018/19, National Human Rights Commission of Nepal, accessed on https://www.nhrcnepal.org/nhrc_new/doc/newsletter/Annual_Report_2076_English_min.pdf

³⁵ Mukti Rijal, The Participatory Governance



are several issues in electoral systems and practices. It is a clearly observed violation of the election code of conduct. Election expenses are very high, so only those who have money can get a chance to be candidates from parties or win the election. So, money is becoming decisive in elections. There is a high chance of illicit financial flow and vote buying is a commonly accepted practice. Business people acknowledged that they voluntarily donated money to the leaders of political parties. There is a strong nexus between political parties/candidates and businesses.

Call for Actions

- Participatory law making process is the backbone of the system. Such a process enhances the public ownership and thus promotes accountability toward people and concerned stakeholders. Such a process also helps to implement legislation effectively once they take ownership by themselves. The process also educates concerned stakeholders including CSOs, government agencies and political parties and pushes them to act for the effective implementation in days to come. It also reduces unnecessary debates among the participants and contributes to a smooth process.
- Implementation of inclusive governance is a must in Nepal as it is a culturally and ethnically diversified country. Until and unless citizens from all spheres of society feel their presence and participation in governance mechanisms, they do not have the feeling of trust and ownership towards governance system³⁶.
- States should ensure participation of all including women, youth, PWDs and marginalized communities in all forms of state mechanisms. So, Governments should form appropriate communication mechanisms and open forums to interact with marginalized people and to redress their grievances.
- The state must implement the reservation policy in the spirit of the Civil Service Act 1993 by identifying socially and economically backward class and ethnic communities. The state must prepare data on shares of people belonging to diverse gender, ethnic communities, class and regions in civil service. The state must have a roadmap with details of which ethnic communities, gender, class and regions can be represented in civil service in proportion to their populations in how many years. Preparation classes must be conducted to empower socially and economically backward ethnic communities, gender, class and regions to join civil service.
- Although Nepal's Ministry of Finance has established a pre-budget submission process during budget formulation and e-consultations during budget implementation, to further strengthen public participation in the budget process, it should also give priority to active engagements with vulnerable and under-represented communities, directly or through CSOs representing them.³⁷
- It is suggested that citizens' participation should not be undertaken under any special circumstances, but should be a part of the everyday life of citizens. It is each citizen's right and responsibility to participate not only during the election period but also in times between elections. Citizens need time to learn about an issue and also know how they can influence the decision making process.
- The Nepal Government should initiate the process to take the membership of the Open Government Partnership that could support the country to boost transparency, integrity, accountability and participation of stakeholders in the public decision making process.
- To improve the election, the Election Commission should strongly enforce the Code of Conduct. The Election Commission should have authority to fix the date of elections. Sources of donations/funds should be made transparent. It is suggested to review the existing electoral systems.

Target 16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance

Target 16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration

District Administration Offices are responsible for providing citizenship certificates to the citizens of age 16 and above. Local governments provide service of vital registration including birth registration. Birth Registration has been improving per year because of online registration.

The prevalence of the population without citizenship certificates varies from one estimate to another ranging from 17 to 23.7 per cent. Prevalence of the population without citizenship is higher among marginalized groups than among

³⁶ Rameshwar Bhandari, *Inclusive Governance in Nepal: Problems and Challenges 2016*

³⁷ *Pathway to improving budget openness, May 24, 2020, SUBASH DAHAL*



non-marginalized groups. PAF shows that prevalence of without citizenship among females is 21 percent, which is higher by about only 5 percent than its prevalence among males. The major limitation of citizenship data is that it lacks caste and ethnicity disaggregation³⁸.

The Federal Government has started to distribute National Identity Cards in the country. National Identity Card is a federal level Identity card with a unique identity number for each person that can be obtained by citizens of Nepal, based on their biometric and demographic data. The data is collected by the National ID Card Management Centre (NIDMC), a statutory authority established in July 2011 by the government of Nepal, under the jurisdiction of the Home ministry. Upon full implementation this card will replace the current “Nepalese Citizenship Card” and it can be used for National Identity, personal identity, as Voter ID Card and as a Social Security Card through its unique number. On the first phase government, aims to distribute 110,000 cards in Panchthar district of Province no 1³⁹.

Nepal should amend relevant legislation, particularly the Birth, Death and Other Personal Event (Vital Registration) Act of 1976, the Citizenship Act 2006. And it should amend legislation on transmission of nationality by: (a) Removing the requirement for both parents to prove citizenship; (b) Making citizenship by descent accessible through proof of citizenship of one of the parents, regardless of the parent’s sex; (c) Making the acquisition of Nepalese nationality by descent accessible to children at birth.

Laws, regulations and practices should contain clear procedures for issuing citizenship certificates without distinction as to caste or gender; that applications for citizenship are registered in a timely manner; that written, reasoned decisions for rejection of such applications are provided within a reasonable time frame; and the availability and accessibility of a complaint mechanism to contest the rejection of applications for citizenship.

Nepal should amend the Birth, Death and Other Personal Incidents Registration Act to ensure the birth registration of all children born on its territory, and establish an efficient birth registration system that is free of charge at all stages. It should also continue to strengthen efforts to remove barriers, particularly for women and those living in rural areas, to access citizenship certificates and birth registrations. The country should ensure that citizenship provisions of the new Constitution guarantee the equal right of women to acquire, transfer and retain citizenship.

In Nepal currently refugees are not a big issue, but the Government is reluctant to provide refugee status to urban refugees. Also, Government gives less priority to introducing refugee law. ⁴⁰Nepal should ratify international instruments relating to the protection of refugees and adopt national legislation conforming to the standards in those instruments. It is recommended to provide identity documents to refugees in its territory. Nepal should accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Target 16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

Progresses and Achievements

There is a constitutional and statutory guarantee of Right to Information (Article 27 of Nepal Constitution-2015 AD). It has observed a steady rise in the practice of proactive disclosure of information with the enforcement of disclosure guidelines and standard websites for local levels. CSOs’ national network and campaigns for sensitization, information request, capacity building, policy dialogue and advocacy and mainstreaming RTI initiatives through national conventions/conferences. Decentralization of information request campaigns seeking justice, opportunity and rights and documentation of success stories with growing awareness on RTI at local level can be seen in the country. There is a presence of designated Public Information Officers at federal ministries and their subordinate agencies and the practice is increasing at local level. CSO-media collaboration is increasing for information request and dissemination and follow-up investigative stories.

According to the global RTI Rating carried out by Center for Law and Democracy (CLD), Canada and Access Info Europe for the 2018/19, Nepal’s assessment includes Right of access (5/6), scope (27/30), requesting procedures (19/30), exceptions and refusals (18/30), appeals (26/30), sanctions (6/8), and protection and promotional measures (12/16). Nepal scored 113 out of 150 scores, India (127), Afghanistan (139), Sri Lanka (131). The Rating provides reliable assessment of both of the overall strengths of legal frameworks and the strengths and weaknesses of the legal

³⁸ *Legal Identity in Nepal, Khatiwada and Gurung, 2015*

³⁹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Identity_Card_\(Nepal\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Identity_Card_(Nepal))

⁴⁰ Conventions into compacts, INHURED International, 2019



framework in seven categories and 61 indicators ⁴¹.

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

Level of overall implementation of RTI is not optimistic as it is still considered to be the agenda of CSO/media not that of the grassroots citizens. Sense of ownership to the RTI Act from general citizenry is also low.

Threats and harassment are still continuing against the demand for critical information in the areas of governance, opportunity and justice. However, demand for governance is weak and supply side is observed as reluctant.

Appointments of Public Information Officers have not yet been designated in all public agencies which is also challenging the implementation of RTI at all levels. Besides, there are capacity and motivation gaps among PIOs.

Haphazard information and data management is also impeding the RTI implementation since without proper management the reactive and proactive disclosure of information could not be delivered well.

No efforts are visible to strengthen the role of NIC for RTI stewardship. Though the country has already exercised the federal system, the structure of NIC is still at federal level. It has also shrunk the capacity of the adjudication body to discharge its responsibility for the protection and promotion of RTI.

The state of impunity on part of information providers is highly prevalent restricting citizens' optimism on right to information with the increasing trend of National Information Commission's order not being adhered. Likewise, follow-up for adherence and statutory action against public authorities for not abiding by the RTI laws is also weak which has limited the meager number of appeals.

There are gaps among stakeholders (government, NIC, CSOs, donors, media and advocates/activists) regarding coordination required to implement the RTI laws. The RTI mechanisms – RTI Coordination Unit at Prime Minister's Office and Monitoring Unit at Ministry of Information and Communications – are not functional. Time-taking process and constant follow-up for info (RTI request, appeal) is also another bottleneck for the implementation of RTI

Lack of political will followed by resistance from bureaucracy; cultural barriers (deep-rooted secretive culture) and limited and dedicated CSOs for continuing with the campaign are among other challenges. Review of the RTI laws and classification of information are not being carried out periodically which has also resulted in challenges in the effective implementation of RTI.

Different types of disabilities, so some PWDs do not easily access the public information because of lack of sign language and braille scripts. Nepal needs to ratify Marrakesh VIP Treaty, that allows for copyright exceptions to facilitate the creation of accessible versions of books and other copyrighted works for visually impaired persons.

Despite, the constitution guarantees fundamental freedoms such as freedom of opinion and expression; freedom of assembly, freedom to form political parties, freedom to form unions and associations, freedom to move or reside; freedom to practice profession; laws and regulations have tried to restrict these freedoms. Governments agencies have a tendency to constrain these freedoms. Use of excessive force during public protests, news provisions of laws related with media, social media and internet are regressive.

Fundamental rights law fails to address need LGBTIQ people. So, Government should develop law and policy as per Supreme Court decision and constitution through the consultation with LGBTIQ organizations regarding proper implementation of supreme court decisions and constitutional provisions. Similarly, some Indigenous people language barriers to access to information.

Despite the Constitution of Nepal guaranteeing press freedom in the country, Nepal has dropped six places on the global Press Freedom Index to rank 112th out of 180 countries for 2020. In February 2018, the Government of Nepal tried to gag journalists by getting the Parliament to pass extremely draconian legislation Media Council Bill. The new criminal code adopted in August 2018 contains several provisions that hamper investigative reporting and restrict criticism of public figures. 90 incidents of violation of press freedom were recorded by Federation of Nepalese Journalists (umbrella organization) one year (FNJ Baisakh, 2077 BS). The incidents victimized 94 journalists and 3 media houses.

The World Press Freedom Report 2020 also pointed out some major incidents of press freedom violations, including the closure of nearly 50 websites by the Press Council Nepal alleging them of spreading "false information on Covid-19". It is very serious that conservative and haphazard approaches are adopted in making laws and policies

⁴¹ <https://www.rti-rating.org/country-detail/?country=Nepal>



relating to press and information both at federal and provincial levels.

In Nepal in recent years, it seems that authorities are misusing the laws by arresting and punishing those who are expressing their opinion or criticizing the government. Nepal as the recent ordinances brought by the government, first, related to the splitting of political parties and second, amending the procedure for filling up the posts in the Constitutional Council, amid the COVID-19 pandemic was brought through the undemocratic medium. But with nationwide wide criticism, even within the ruling party, the ordinances were rescinded within a week.⁴²

Though Nepal's constitution is progressive, which has ensured various fundamental rights in its 31 articles. Nepal is party to the 41 international human rights instruments and directive principles and policies of the state and clause 9 of the Treaty Act 1990 guides to implement international treaties as the fundamental law of the land, but there is weak implementation in controlling violation of civil and political rights. State of impunity is a serious issue.

Call for Actions

Amendment of the Article 27 of the Nepal Constitution: Constitutional amendment to include the phrase 'impart' in its Article 27 ensuring the right to 'seek, receive and impart information' as per the international standards and best practice. The right has been only limited to the Nepali Citizens rather it has to be applicable for all people.

Amendment of the RTI Laws: It has to include the provisions to widely define the public agency; simplify work procedure of public information request reducing from 15 days to 7 days; include open government data provisions to remove barriers and improve access to information and addition of data protection provision to Section 5 of the Act to avoid manipulation and misuse of disclosed or published data, Incentives to Public Information Officer (provision of additional logistic support and incentives to information officers) and also include free of cost request application provisions

Formation of provincial information commission: It is suggested to form provincial information commissions for nationwide effective implementation of RTI in keeping with international practices of the countries adopting federal system when Nepal has already entered into federal structures.

Effective implementation of RTI Act: Implementation of overriding effects of RTI to strengthen RTI regime is important. There should be separate laws on privacy and whistleblower protection. Massive RTI education among citizens focusing women and marginalized and disadvantaged groups for wider civic engagement and oversight on governance at all levels. Effective enforcement of proactive disclosure by all public agencies adhering with the provision that different 20 types of information should be proactively disclosed in every three months

Build partnership among CSOs: Networking and knowledge sharing with the community of practices of Open Data, Open Government Partnership, Open Budget, Open Contracting and other CSOs working on other goals of SDGs.

Political society must respect fundamental freedom: Laws, regulations and decisions of the Government that violate the spirit of fundamental rights of the people should be scrapped and amend the laws and regulations in order to protect and promote their rights. Political society must respect the fundamental freedoms of the people.

Guarantee press freedom: Government must fully respect media freedom, which is statutory rights of the people. It is important to journalists, human rights activists and media houses for active and continuous advocacy of the freedom of expression, free press and journalists' rights. Nepal being the democratic nation, the government should guarantee fundamental individual rights. Cyber laws are important. However, authorities should not use them as a weapon to curb public opinion. In a democracy, a person should not be arrested and punished for expressing his/her personal opinion and criticizing the government.

Target 16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime

Role of NHRC and other constitutional bodies is very important to hold the government accountable and to protect the rights of the people. But, Government is yet to fulfill officials in constitutional bodies such as National Dalit Commission, National Women Commission etc., they protect the rights of marginalized people. Inclusiveness of commission is another issue, for instance there is no representative of the PWDs community in the National Inclusive Commission. Government tends to reduce the authority of the NHRC, which is not justifiable. Government should

⁴² <https://southasianmonitor.org/spotlight/democracy-nepal-under-threat>



provide sufficient funds to the constitutional bodies. Political influence in constitutional bodies should be stopped. All the Constitutional bodies should play an effective role and they need to work together with right based organizations. Dalit Development Coordination Committee and Badi Development Committee should be effective.

Political interference, bureaucratic meddling, and favoritism inside the police organization have perverted leadership succession and affected organizational integrity. A related, more strategic need for the government is to use federalism's opportunity to better explicate longstanding security sector reform issues and rationalize change management based on purpose, function, necessity, and affordability. From a public accountability perspective, Nepal Police is well placed to demonstrate these changes on behalf of law enforcement.⁴³

Nepal is a federal country, but it's judiciary system follows a unitary system. After the adoption of the new constitution in 2015, high courts have been established in seven provinces. In Nepal, minimal attention has been given to the judiciary's role in the transition. Nepal must re-examine its judiciary's unfulfilled and important role. The judiciary has an irreplaceable role in changing political culture. The rule of law requires public justification for the exercise of public power. The judiciary must salvage, nurture, and return the rule of law to public service and they need to deliver quality justice on time. It must embrace its role as the nation's constitutional guardian and provide decisive leadership. Courts and judges should not be influenced by executive government and political parties. The courts must be a national forum for legitimate and credible dispute resolution, and is crucial for constitutionally mandated cooperation between governments to materialize in real terms. Nepal's judiciary must address systemic access to justice issues⁴⁴.

16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

Government has introduced a law to control caste base discrimination and untochability practices. But, it does not prohibit discrimination based on color or national or ethnic origin, and does not prohibit direct and indirect forms of discrimination. Government must ensure that all criminal complaints of race-based discrimination are formally recorded and acts of racial discrimination are consistently investigated, prosecuted and sanctioned, and victims are provided appropriate remedies. Law enforcement bodies must monitor, investigate, prosecute and sanction incident of violence linked to intercaste marriage and caste-based discrimination.

Nepal has promulgated Persons with Disabilities Related Act in 2018 to implement the provision of the constitution. Also, the Federal government has established a mechanism to end all forms of discriminations against Persons with Disabilities, but the PWDs communities are not aware about the functions of this mechanism.

Progressive structural change is necessary to end the caste-based discrimination. Ending feudal and Hindu Religion based social-cultural structure, attitude, values and norms should be ended and strong enforcement of existing laws and regulations are necessary to check discrimination against the Dalits.

Government must make a strategic plan to address the issues of PWDs. There should be provision of focal persons or special desks in ministries and all the offices of provincial and local governments. Governments must consider the existence of diverse groups and different types of disability within the PWDs community. Government must implement the recommendation of the UN-CRPD and they must ease access of PWDs to communication and transportation services as blind people are suffering a lot.

Similarly, Governments must fully comply with international human rights instruments such as UN-DRIP, UN-CERD and ILO Convention 169. Government should provide support in case Indigenous Peoples is ready to run public schools in their communities. Government must respect the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples. Respect for diversity and intersectionality within any community is the clear demand of Indigenous Peoples.

Governments can take concrete steps to set special, protected or autonomous regions for the upliftment of particular indigenous communities (Constitution of Nepal, Article 56). Decision taken by the Civil Service Commission for recruitment of new employees is against the spirit of constitution to secure proportional and inclusive representations in public institutions. The genuine voices being raised by Dalits, Indigenous Nationalities and other marginalized should be serious heard and translate into actions through programmes and budgets by all governments.

⁴³ <https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/nepal-police-in-federalism/>

⁴⁴ <https://www.policyforum.net/nepal-judging-the-role-of-the-courts/>







Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Finance

Progresses and Achievements

Development financing is one of the major means of implementation to achieve SDGs. In the last ten years' volume of public finance has increased from 19.8 percent to 36.1 percent of GDP, which is a good sign. So, efficiency and effectiveness of public expenditure, sustainability, quality of capital budget expenditure and accumulation of capital and implementation of fiscal federalism are important areas of development financing (NPC 2019).

In this period, the Government came up with few important policy documents such as Climate Change Financing Framework 2017 and Green Climate Fund Handbook 2017 to manage climate finance.

Remarkably, the size of remittance in Nepal was equivalent to 27.3 percent of GDP in 2019. Development expenditure increased after the 2015 earthquake and implementation of the federal system in the country. The Government tried to improve, and amend old laws and broaden the tax areas taxes.

SDGs Needs Assessment, Costing and Financing Strategy 2018 is an important document that tries to analyze financial situations and estimated financial needs to achieve SDGs in the country. The country needs 2015 billion US dollar annually for achieving SDGs. Government revenues have gradually served as a major source of finance in the country. Tax revenue has continued with a rising trend. Gross Domestic Revenue has increased by 13.3 percent in the last eight months of Fiscal year 2019/20. Share of internal revenue in the annual budget is about 64 percent.

According to the Government report, revenue collection should be 27 percent of GDP by 2030, that will provide 63 percent amount for SDG Financing. And, the annual economic growth rate should be 8.67 percent. SDGs financing need assessment shows public finance should contribute 54 percent, private sector should contribute 34 percent, whereas cooperative and private HHs should contribute 4 percent each.

Nepal requires an amount of 19 billion dollars per annum to achieve the SDGs and a big gap in resources exists. In this regard, Nepal has developed the financial strategies which include reorienting investment towards SDGs by all stakeholders, formulating investment friendly laws, mobilize internal resources through tax reforms, broaden tax base, using ICT in revenue collection, reorientation of resource towards productive and employment generating sectors, attracting FDI and PPP models for SDG financing, revenue mobilization from sub-national level and get more ODA and aid.

Nepal introduced International Development Cooperation Policy 2019 to adapt the federal system of governance. In Nepal 15 bilateral development partners, 19 multilateral partners including UN Agencies and MDBs are providing ODA (MOF2018). Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank and Green Climate Fund are some prospective development partners (MOF 2018). ODA reached US\$ 1793 million in FY 2018/19. Contribution of loans was US\$ 944 million (60%), grants US\$ 424 million (27%), and technical assistance US\$ 211 million (13%). On-budget aid disbursement reached 78 percent of total aid disbursement. 78 percent of development aid was provided on budget and 46 percent was provided on treasury. ODA as a share of the national budget increased to 24 percent from 22 percent from FY 2017/18 to 2018/19 (DCR2019/MOF). The role of ODA has declined as a proportion of overall finance, indicating a positive trend towards reducing aid dependency.

Government has introduced one window service system for FDI. In Nepal, proportion of Chinese and Indian investors cover 44 and 30 percent respectively. In this period Nepal has organized two international summits on 3-4 March, 2019 and 1 April, 2019 to attract foreign investors. Similarly, Infrastructure Development Summit was held on 12 September 2019 for Infrastructure development, seeking finance from foreign investment. Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Act 2018, Public Private Partnership Investment Act 2018 and Policy 2018 aim to promote private sector investment in development finance. Foreign Investment Policy 2014 is already in place to attract FDI.



Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

According to the federal budget share of recurrent budget, development budget and fiscal management are 64.4 percent, 23.9 percent and 11.7 percent respectively (Budget 2020/21), indicates insufficient budget in development sector. Uncontrolled increasing of the recurrent budget leads to increase in size of annual budgets. Percent of recurrent expenditure in GDP is reached 20.6 percent in FY 2018/19. But, the amount of the recurrent federal budget also includes grants provided to local and provincial governments.

There is a 21 percent finance gap in total, and within the public sector financing gap is 38 percent. So, there is a huge gap of finance for SDGs. Obviously, COVID-19 has impacted on financial resource generation in public, private and international cooperation and public finance will go down.

Public sector expenditure trend shows that the internal revenue generated by the government is only sufficient to cover recurrent expenditure and fiscal management needs of the country. Annual estimated internal revenue and total budget do not seem realistic. Deficit of the annual budget is 8.6 percent on average in the last three fiscal years. Even after entering into federal forms of governance, the recurrent budget of federal government is not decreased as expected.

Weaknesses in the government's public financial management (PFM) system is a big challenge in the country. Delivery of the annual budget is poor. Share and amount of recurrent budget have been increased which is more than 60 percent. Similarly, about 11 percent of the total national budget is used for payment of loans. Amount of total public debt is increasing every year, which is about 30.2 percent. Every year Nepal is spending big amounts to pay back debts.

Distribution of the federal budget illustrates that 75 percent of the budget is handled by the federal government itself, whereas 7 percent goes to the provincial level and 18 is provided for local level governments. Although the province governments and local governments have some authorities to collect revenues, they are unable to do so. They are highly dependent on the federal government for finance. In case revenue generation or budget size of the federal government is decreased, that directly impacts on public finances of local and provincial governments.

Illicit financial flows, tax avoidance and tax evasions are becoming serious problems in the country. The NCELL tax scandal is one of the examples and verdicts of the supreme court is debatable. These issues negatively impact on domestic resource mobilization.

Inflow of remittances has emerged as the largest source of foreign exchange earnings, to 30.4 percent of GDP for FY 2014/2015. Besides, remittance to Nepal is projected to fall by 14 percent (equivalent to NRs. 145 Billion) in 2020, as per the World Bank report. Falling remittances could have knock-on effects in multiple areas of the domestic economy, harming government revenue and reducing liquidity in the banking industry.

External finance in the form of ODA for financing public expenditure has declined in the last few years. Volume of loan increased to 60 percent in last FY 2018/19 and ratio of grant is in decreasing trend, especially after 2015 Earthquake. Five years' trend of international cooperation shows that the ODA is not coming as they were expected. We find the same trend in international loans as well. Fragmentation of ODAs is another critical issue.

Amount of international cooperation in terms of grants is around 4 percent, but in contrast the share of international loans has increased. INGOs' contributions recorded in the AMP have decreased in the last year. On one hand they are closing their offices in the country and some say rules, regulations and working environments are not comfortable for them. Recently Millennium Challenge Corporation of USA Governments has become debatable in the country and 50 million USD cooperation is now in pending.

Government has tried to build partnerships with the private sector, but there is an absence of a clear strategy and plan to participate in public sector development. But, the private sector is not very much ready to invest in development projects.

Despite the Government trying to attract FDI, it is coming in the country. But, many national and international investors are not satisfied with the attitude and working approach of Civil Servants in Nepal and they also question laws and regulations and they opine they are not investment friendly. Ratio of business of FDI in production sector is only 24 percent, it means they are attracted in service sector rather than in manufacturing business.



Call for Actions

- **Reorientation of Investment towards SDGs by all stakeholders:** In order to achieve SDGs in the country, it is suggested to reorient of investment towards SDGs by all stakeholders including Governments, private sectors and development partners. Governments at all levels must track how investments are contributing to SDGs. But, Governments should come up with investment friendly law, policies and regulations. Economic recovery initiative of the country could be a good opportunity in achieving SDGs in the country.
- **Increase internal resource mobilization:** In order to fulfill the financial gaps of tax laws and policies should be improved. Tax reform, broadening the tax base, using ICT in revenue collection and building trust to the people are prerequisites for increasing internal revenues. People must know how and where their taxes are being utilized. Big chunk of public funds should be invested in the productive sector and employment generation. Governments must introduce progressive tax systems to protect the financial and tax justice.
- **Attract FDI, PPP for SDGs financing:** FDIs and PPP are sources to fulfill the gaps of SDGs funding. Government must simplify policies and procedures to attract the FDIs and public private partnership. Foreign investment should be investor friendly and less hurdle and hassle from government bureaucracy. All acts related foreign direct Investments in Nepal should be amalgamated into one codified into one set of law so that investors do not have to look for several laws to find out all the details in order to comply with investment.
- **Stop Illicit Financial Flow:** Illicit financial flows in Nepal have been higher than net ODA received. So, the government must come with tight legal measures and actions to tackle this challenge.
- **Stop tax avoidance and evasion:** Related government agencies should be proactive to stop tax avoidance and evasions. Governments should take actions to those who are involved in tax avoidance. Importantly, Governments must be able to close the loop holes.
- **Improve public finance management:** Governments can improve their financial base if they take serious actions to improve public finance management. Available resources should be fully utilized for public goods and services. Governments of all levels must improve their delivery capacity of their annual budgets. Government should include a performance audit system in government accounting audit functions to strengthen financial management and effective control systems. It is a great opportunity for the government to curtail 35 percent of the unnecessary government expenditure amounting to Rs 450 billion as proposed by the Public Expenditure Review Commission.
- **Build enabling environment for development partners:** Governments must build comfortable environments for development partners who are working in the country. Policies and operational procedures should be simple. Nepal still needs cooperation from international organizations and friendly countries including two neighboring countries. Nepal still needs support from INGOs to fulfill the financial gaps. Government should develop conducive environments for the INGOs in the country and encourage them for resource mobilization.
- **Development partners should adhere to their commitments:** Despite enormous domestic pressures, donors should immediately reverse the decline in ODA, particularly to LDCs like Nepal, who may be hard hit by both social and economic impacts of COVID-19, and for whom ODA remains essential. ODAs committed by development partners should be provided to the government on time. ODA should not be scattered and fragmented. Development partners should make their policies and procedures practical. The Ministry of Finance and other ministries should make proper plans to harmonize foreign cooperation. Development partners and the Governments should fully respect the Busan Principles. Nepal should strongly present for debt cancellation in international forums. Government offices should not buy vehicles by using ODA money.



- **Improve cooperation between three tier governments** (Federal, Province and Local): Governments need to improve coordination, cooperation and collaboration between three tier governments for effective programmes and projects implementation and independent work evaluation. Cooperation and coordination are critical in terms of financial resource mobilization for the development in the country. The Natural Resource and Fiscal Commission should play a very effective role for equitable distributions of financial resources in the country.
- **Build capacity of province and local governments:** Federal Government must support provincial and local level governments to increase their revenue generation and management capacity. Absolute need for accountability at all levels of governance which is beyond mere building capacity.

Technology

A separate ministry named as the Ministry of Science and Technology was established in 1996 and since then efforts have been made for institutional development. National Science and Technology Policy came into force in 2005. After transformation of the country’s governance system into the federal structure, responsibility of science and technology has been entrusted to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in the Federation and to the Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forest and Environment at the provincial level. The Nepal Government prepared the new Science, Technology and Innovation Policy in 2019.

A non-profit organization “Rashtriya Abiskar Kendra” was established in 2012, widely termed as National Innovation Center in English. Primary objective to establish the Innovation center is to foster research and developments for the economic development of the country. Centre worked with the government for funding of the project which did not happen and since July 2016.⁴⁵

In Nepal, novel knowledge and technology have been applied successfully in the sector of forest, agriculture, energy and health that has extended the service being provided. Banks and other institutions are using the latest technology and internet access is raised up to 55.4 percent in the country. According to Government data, internet density is reached to 65.9 percent. Similarly, the fixed internet broadband subscriptions increased from 6.09 percent to 12.22 percent in 2018. But, poor quality infrastructure and inadequate knowledge and capacity in new technology is another challenge in the country. Government tax rate in telecommunication is higher in comparison to other countries.

Despite these institutional and policy efforts have been made in the sector of science and technology, no significant achievements have been made so far as for accelerating the pace of socio-economic development of the country. Government has to introduce new technology in each and every part of public services, but public offices are not enthusiastic to do so. Governments at all levels should implement the STI Policy. As recommended by GSDR 2019, STI is one of the levers to accelerate the SDGs.

Absence of improved policy, legal and institutional infrastructures for development of science and technology and lack of investment are the major problems. There is no linkage of the research carried out by the universities and the academies with entrepreneurship and commercial production. Less disciplinary experts, competent and dedicated human resources; brain drain of available human resources abroad because they could not be utilized in the country are additional problems.

As decided by the UN, Nepal should establish a Technology Bank and Member States and other stakeholders to provide voluntary funding to the trust fund of the Technology Bank so that it can pursue its objectives in the area of science, technology and innovation for the least developed countries.

Countries must increase investment in Science, Technology and Innovation. More investments are needed to invent sustainable technologies. Universities should give more attention to research and development. Topmost priority must be given to nurturing home-grown inventors, innovators and scientists to promote this economic development. Because of the lack of such an initiative at the government and private level, a majority of newly-graduated, talented, innovative and creative Nepalis leave the country every year in search of better careers and opportunities abroad.⁴⁶

Despite increase in use of IT services in the country they should be disable friendly to increase their access. In the lockdown period use of mobile and internet is significantly increased, but people experience sharp digital divide in society since poor families do have internet access, and rural and remote areas extremely marginalized.

⁴⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahabir_Pun

⁴⁶ <https://nicnepal.org/about/>



Capacity Building

Efficient working structure and trained, motivated and committed civil servants are needed in the country to speed up plans and programmes of the country that lead to achieve SDGs in the country. UNCT, Multinational Development Banks and Bilateral Development Agencies are providing capacity development support in the country. The Federal Government should provide support to local governments and province governments to enhance their capacity.

Trade

Commerce Policy 2015, National Trade Integrated Strategy 2016, and Trade Deficit Reduction National Action Plan are in place to manage the trade in the country. Moreover, the Government introduced Safeguard, Anti-dumping and Countervailing Act 2019 last year. This act intends to capture the spirit of fair trade under WTO. Further, the Government has recently introduced a cash subsidy procedure to promote the exports and it has kicked off Trade and Investment programme to promote export of coffee and pashmina. Kolkata port and Larcha dry ports are now in operation.

Transit treaty with India has been renewed and Nepal can use rivers for trade and transit. Nepal has agreed with China to open the border in 6 places. Similarly, Nepal has agreed with Cambodia and Vietnam for beginning trade relation. India Nepal petroleum pipeline has started to operate in this period. Trade Deficit has been decreased by 5.3 percent in FY 2019/2020 as compared to FY 2018/2019, the Trade Deficit was 27.1 percent in past. But, decrease of trade deficit only due to reduction of price of petroleum products in the international market.

Joining SAFTA helped Nepal not only to expand its international trade but also to diversify exports to countries other than India. But, Nepal's contribution to intra-regional trade in the last 20 years has been minimal. Trade and investment among member countries of SAARC is so far poor compared to other regional arrangements. Deeper economic integration is a must to sustain the growth in South Asia. This integration could also create an integrated South Asian market by ensuring a free flow of goods, services and investment. South Asian countries need to create a conducive environment for trade, investment, connectivity and competitiveness. Efforts from all members while are important, more is expected from the two large economies in the region⁴⁷.

Systemic Issues

Policy and Institutional Coherence

Sectoral plans, long-term strategies and perspective plans need further aligning with the SDGs. During the revision, attention needs to be paid to disaggregating targets and indicators at sub-national level, by sex, age, social groups and disability. In addition, to inform the policy process which policies or interventions worked and which did not in achieving SDGs, evaluation-based evidence needs to be generated that again demands huge resources and capacities at various levels.

The implementation of the SDGs requires stable, participatory, visionary, development-oriented and people-centric federal, provincial and local governments. Governance needs to be strengthened at all levels. Government should give high priority on integrating SDGs into provincial and local government plans and building capacity of these new institutions.

The Government has established a Policy Research Institute, which is itself a good initiative, but to what extent they will be able to work independently, is the question. The National Planning Commission should be proactive to review the national policies and coordinate with ministries and province governments to track the progress. Inter-Province Council and Inter-Local Governments Council should be functional to advance the coordination and cooperation at national and province level. Federal government should make sure not to encroach constitutional jurisdictions of province and local level governments.

There are three tier governments in Nepal, their powers and functions are defined by the constitution. Some powers are concurrent. They can formulate their laws and regulations, but federal law can guide the local and province laws. In addition, three level governments are free to develop their own long term and short term development plans and programmes. But, unfortunately the annual programmes and budgets are not able to carry the spirit of SDGs, on the other hand they are not compatible with 5-Year National Plans. Many development programmes and projects proposed by the Governments are politically motivated. There should be effective coordination between province and local governments in their planning process, to prevent the duplication of development projects.

⁴⁷ <https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/safta-and-nepal-time-for-paradigm-shift/>



It is clearly observed that there is a gap in policy and institutional coherence between three level governments. On the other hand, there is some gap among the ministries themselves. In order to implement development policy and programmes there should be improvement of horizontal coordination and vertical coordination. Cooperation and functional linkage are crucial in the development process. National annual programmes and budgets should be based on the reality of the country and development projects should be directly linked with the national 5-year plan. Sectoral coordination is another important area to improve in achieving SDGs.

Development policies, plans and public institutions should be more gender sensitive and they should focus on communities who are left behind and vulnerable as well such as senior citizens, Peoples with disability, informal sector workers and daily wage earners, migrant workers, poor, Dalits, Madeshis etc. Business as usual will not work in the coming days. Present time demands transformative shifts in leadership, policies and working approach. Country needs to deeply review the systemic gaps.

COVID-19 has changed the entire context of the country. Nepal may need to focus its policies, plans and resources to address the health emergency, food crisis, and to create jobs in the country. Therefore, the country needs to make short-term and long term recovery plans that should have based on the principle of inclusive, justice, and green recovery. Importantly, the Government should review its 15th Plan in the context of COVID-19 and national targets of SDGs.

Multi Stakeholder Partnership

SDGs cannot be achieved in isolation. All the development actors should come together, they need to develop partnerships and work together. Governments should sit in the driving seat. Multi-stakeholder partnership is necessary at all levels. At the country level Federal Governments should play a pivotal role to develop partnership.

Government is giving emphasis on partnering and coordination at all levels and with all stakeholders, including the CSOs. But, weak partnership with private and civil Society is clearly observed even after beginning SDGs. Marginalized and vulnerable people such as women, children, PWDs, youth, senior citizens, Indigenous Nationalities, farmers, workers should be embraced as development partners, rather than beneficiaries. On the other hand, CSOs should work continuously on this agenda.

In the case of Nepal, multi-stakeholder partnership is still weak. Country is not able to build adequate partnerships with the private sector, however the contribution of the private sector is important to drive the economy including production, construction, creating employment in the country. Private sector has invested in the hydro power sector, but they are not attracted to other infrastructure development sectors. Governments should make clear strategy and come with actions to build partnership with private sectors. Private sector wants Governments to build confidence and enable environments and make sure their investments are secured.

Governments should coordinate and engage local partners as well as foreign working partners to achieve the SDG goals. Political society should be more open to independent professionals, think-tanks and civil society. Bureaucracy and political society have a tendency to remain in status quo, which is the main hurdle for the development of new partnerships.

Three Tier Government Coordination Act 2019 was introduced, which is positive. But, it should be fully implemented. Works of three tire governments should complement each other and need to build synergy. The Federal Government needs to work with foreign as well as national development partners.

In implementing the policies for achieving SDGs, Nepal is facing challenges relating to resource generation, mainstreaming and localization of SDGs, lack of disaggregated data, capacity constraint and weak governance, monitoring and evaluation, and coordination. Partners should work together to address these issues.

In the last few years, CSOs and media are experiencing constraining their space in terms of legal and operational environments. Government should develop proper coordination mechanisms at local, province and federal level and ease them to work in the fields.

Data, Monitoring and Accountability

Government of Nepal and CBS are trying to improve the statistical system in the country. Government is developing the National Data Profile as a single depository and it will remain as open data. It is suggested to the governments to recognize and data produced by universities, research organizations and NGOs. Nepal concluded National Economic Survey in 2018.



It is very difficult to find fresh, updated and disaggregated data in the country. Similarly, the statistical system of local and provincial governments is weak. Because of unavailability of data, even the governments, CSOs, media and researchers are not in position to monitor the progress of development in the country.

Collecting data itself is very sensitive. Youth should take responsibility in statistical data undertaking and they need to provide inputs in every public survey or census. National census and statistical system should be inclusive and participatory. People should have easy access to official data produced by governments.

Leave No One Behind is the main principle of the 2030 Agenda. So, in case of Nepal we need disaggregated and decentralized data in the form of gender, ability/disability, caste and ethnicity, age group, migratory status, and geographical diversity. It is a serious issue that Governments at all levels are unable to present disaggregated data and it is very difficult to analyze the progress status of different communities in the country.

Governments need to monitor the progress status of women, Indigenous Nationalities, Dalits, Youth, Madeshis, Muslims, workers, PWDs in segregated ways. Therefore, disaggregated data is urgently needed at all levels including provincial and local level. Nepal needs to monitor progress of each goal through the perspective of gender equality and social inclusion. It is strongly suggested to form monitoring mechanisms of marginalized and excluded communities including women, PWDs, Dalits, Youth, Madhesi and Indigenous Nationalities. Upcoming National Census 2021 and surveys are good opportunities for the country to generate fresh disaggregated data.

SDGs status and roadmap (2016-2030) proposed 479 indicators, but more than hundred indicators do not have baseline data, even though they don't have national targets. Most of the environmental indicators do not have data. Some indicators are not compatible with global indicators. NPC has prescribed 119 SDGs indicators for province level.

In order to assist policy decisions, the government in association with the private sector and the civil society organizations needs to adopt state of the art data generation and sharing practices. This requires, to a large extent, encouragement of citizen-generated data. Data produced by universities and research organizations should be recognized by the Governments.

The Federal Government is not able to bring a Monitoring and Evaluation Act so far. Despite having regulatory and documents related with Monitoring of development projects, monitoring and accountability process is still weak and it is not inclusive as well.

Effective monitoring of development programmes is lacking, although there is a high level body for monitoring. Because of absence of tight monitoring, big projects are not completed on time and also they increase the costs of the projects. Government should improve its existing systems and practices. Monitoring and Evaluation department of NPC should be strengthened and its should be main fully responsible in monitoring exercises. Province and local governments should work hard to improve their M&E system. District Coordination Committees are mandated to monitor development works in the districts, but they are not able to do so as they don't have sufficient power.

Countries may need to establish powerful multi-stakeholder monitoring mechanisms to hold the public institutions accountable. The National Human Rights Commission is gradually becoming active to monitor the SDGs according to the Merida Declaration 2015, which is positive. But, it should collaborate with related Government agencies and CSOs. Further, it is suggested to the Federal Parliament and Parliament Committee (Sustainable Development and Good Governance Committee) to be more active to improve its watchdog role.







CHAPTER IV: FOLLOW UP AND REVIEW

Follow up and review process is very important for the implementation of the SDGs and to monitor the progress. First time, Nepal took part in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process in 2017 and presented a country report “National Review of SDGs” at HLPF 2017 in New York. In addition, Nepal has been participating in sub-regional forums and regional forums of Asia Pacific, which are convened by UN-ESCAP. These forums remain very important to share the progress and experiences. But, these forums should be able to make the Governments and stakeholder accountable.

The VPR 2020 exercise did not find any information about the follow-up activities of the Government after presenting VNR in 2017. It is difficult to get official information about the progress of way forward measures proposed by the VNR report of the Government.

VNR itself is an open, transparent, inclusive and participatory exercise. Being apex body of SDGs implementation, NPC organized consultations with stakeholders including CSOs, private sector, local governments, professional organizations, experts, but was unable to participate all civil society Major Groups, marginalized and vulnerable communities including Indigenous Peoples, PWDs, LGBTIQ, Youth, Madhesi, small farmers, workers. Despite Government organized consultations with local government associations, it is unable to hold discussions at province and local level with the VNR process.

Importantly, the VNR should be based on the global theme of HLPF 2020, but the VNR process is not aligned with the global theme. Country has to propose transformative actions as per the spirit of global understanding.

UN prescribed a VNR preparation checklist of actions, but the VPR process could not find clear information about development of stakeholder engagement plan, establishment of awareness-raising and public outreach component, and making targeted efforts to reach marginalized groups and people at risk of being left behind. Since detail draft VNR report was not available on time, stakeholders could not provide their comments in well manner, even though deadline of UN-DESA was 12 June 2020. Further, it is not clear, how different thematic committees played their role in VNR process, especially in thematic reviews.



CHAPTER V: CIVIC SPACE AND THE SDGs

Progresses and Achievements

The civil society aims to protect and empower the people (poor and marginalized) at the greatest risk to ensure “No One Is Left Behind.” For this reason, vibrant civic space is crucial to achieving the SDG goals of reducing inequality, ensuring inclusion and improving sustainability, and promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions. To that end, the constitution of Nepal has the mandate for inclusion and the country operates within a competitive political environment which envisions a broad-based development, growth and public services¹. On top of that, the government of Nepal has identified “a strong civil society, free press, and inclusiveness in social, economic and political processes” as “some of the key dimensions of good governance” in its SDGs Roadmap 2016-2030². Meanwhile, the article 3(1) of the Right to Information Act (2007) ensures the right to information of every Nepali citizen³. This provision fulfills the SDG goal 16.10.2 (ensure public access to information) which is closely interrelated to the theme of civic space.

As Nepal transitions in the new federalist system, there lie the avenues for the government to make new laws and policies to align with the constitutional provision which calls for the enabling environment for CSOs to work. Similarly, CSOs also have the opportunities to work more effectively at the local level as the deficits of appropriate manpower, resources, and leadership at the newly formed local units and provinces offer ample civic scope and space for their work in SDGs to enrich the virtues of civic life. A report published in 2018 suggests that there has been an improvement in advocacy, service provision and sectoral infrastructure of the CSOs in comparison to the previous years⁴ although the overall sustainability of the CSOs has largely been the same for the past three years⁵. These improvements are the reflection of CSOs’ increasing efforts to conduct evidence-based advocacy and to contribute in advocacy and the legislative process by tapping into political platforms and state policy⁶.

It is not only to provide inputs, but also to express dissent that the CSOs have been successful in mobilizing its members. Consequently, some restrictive legislative changes, policies, directives (such as national Integrity Policy, Guthi Bill, Media Bill and attempt to ban public protests in a historically important place like Maitighar Mandala among others) have been withdrawn or are currently on hold⁷. Similarly, in addition to working by receiving grants from the international organizations to work in their areas, the local CSOs are now increasingly collaborating with local governments on service provision⁸.

The role of CSOs (and by large civil society) has been significant in aiding the Nepal Government’s efforts to recuperate from the mega-earthquake of 2015. The CSOs of Nepal along with International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and the Government of Nepal provided immediate relief programmes and longer-term programmes targeted to rebuilding infrastructure and or helping people affected by the earthquake. The CSOs need to play as engaged role as during the earthquake to help the most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, to reignite the economy that is expected to be badly affected by the impending global recession and to fully realize the SDGs in Nepal.

Key Issues, Challenges and Gaps

Currently, the political power is wielded to a single party, to an extent much less seen in the past. The present power dynamics is the result of the democratic election process but the consequent legislative moves and practices suggest that the government is exerting control over the civic space⁹ and is giving relatively lower respect to civil and political rights¹⁰. A civic space assessment conducted with about 76 civic space actors in Kathmandu by merging Oxfam’s Civic Space Monitoring Tool and the CIVICUS Monitor tool to adapt to Nepal’s context found that five out of six categories of civic space as obstructed and another component as narrowed¹¹. Meanwhile, the similar assessment workshop conducted with the CSO actors from all the provinces came with the result that the overall civic space in six out of seven provinces as narrowed and obstructed in the remaining provinces¹².

⁹ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334671033_The_Implications_of_Closing_Civic_Space_for_Sustainable_Development_in_Nepal/link/5d3957e3299bf1995b487ace/download, page 34

¹⁰ https://actalliance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ACT_SynthesisReport_CivicSpace_2019_Final_WEB.pdf

¹¹ [http://www.cocap.org.np/assets/uploads/publication/Workshop%20Report%20Civic%20Space%20Assessment\[1444\].pdf](http://www.cocap.org.np/assets/uploads/publication/Workshop%20Report%20Civic%20Space%20Assessment[1444].pdf), page 5

¹² http://www.cocap.org.np/assets/uploads/publication/COCAP_Report%20on%20Provincial%20Civic%20Space%20Assessment.pdf, page 5



Pressure on civic space can be categorized as relatively moderate to severe in Nepal, depending on the nature of the CSOs. While “the rights-based organizations run by well-connected higher caste groups were likely to be largely unaffected”¹³, the government is increasingly restricting the activities of traditionally marginalized community¹⁴ and human rights organizations, advocacy groups and all actors that challenge vested interests and demand accountability. A proposed new bill regulating the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) activities and funding sources may harm smaller, grassroots and community-based organizations in remote areas on the one hand while the organizations working for the rights of indigenous, Madhesi, or Dalit rights were believed to be most affected by these new regulations. The groups advocating for rights and recognition of the Madhesi population can be labeled as ‘pro-Indian’ and have withstood most scrutiny from the state¹⁵. Similarly, the current practice of the Social Welfare Council (SWC) and the provisions of the draft NGO bill with an ‘approval system’ rather than a ‘notification system’ for projects of CSOs do not comply with international standards on the freedom of association¹⁶, violates the independence of CSOs and can lead to (self)censorship. There is a growing concern among the CSOs working on the ‘software’ as the government now is prioritizing and mandating the organizations to come up with programmes to help them achieve big macroeconomic development. The concept of big development will inevitably compete with the discourses of inclusion¹⁷, pushing issues of inequality and exclusion down the policy agenda¹⁸ and sidelining the organizations working on the same issue.

A couple of the contentious legislations pertaining to civic space were the IT Bill and Media Council Bill. IT bill has been feared by many as a potential tool to criminalize reporting on the government misconduct and expression of critical opinions by civil society and citizens by leveraging the vague provision of protecting national sovereignty¹⁹. Similarly, the media council bill wields more power to the government to control the media houses and journalists and aims to curb fake news and click-bait journalism through provisions of fines, imprisonment, and even physical torture²⁰. The provisions maybe a genuine attempt to curb the fake news and clickbait journalism but the harsh punishment through fines, imprisonment, and even physical torture²¹; and all-powerful pro-government media council has convinced many in the civil society and journalism sector into thinking the bill as a facade to control the fourth estate and freedom of expression.

Concerning the SDG 16.10.01, the number of violent incidents (assault and kidnapping) against the Human Rights Defenders has been on the rise in last two years in comparison to the year 2017 although there are no reported death of human rights defender in the last three years²². Similarly, in regards to the SDG 16.10.02, there are some gaps between the provisions in the Right to Information Act and its implementation. Many local governments do not proactively publish the information regarding the planning process and budget allocation²³ and there are many instances in which civil service members, activists, and journalists who request the information have had to follow up many times²⁴; have been denied the requested information altogether²⁵; and have been threatened, arrested or attacked²⁶.

¹³ https://actalliance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ACT_SynthesisReport_CivicSpace_2019_Final_WEB.pdf, page 23-24

¹⁴ https://actalliance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ACT_SynthesisReport_CivicSpace_2019_Final_WEB.pdf, page 18

¹⁵ Ibid, page 19

¹⁶ https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session23/A.HRC.23.39_EN.pdf

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid, page 22

¹⁹ <https://www.civicus.org/index.php/media-resources/media-releases/3779-proposed-new-social-media-law-in-nepal-threatens-freedom-of-expression>

²⁰ <https://thediplomat.com/2019/05/nepals-proposed-media-bill-is-a-press-freedom-killer/>

²¹ Ibid

²² <https://nepalmonitor.org/dashboard/expert-filter-result?startdate=2017-01-01&enddate=2019-12-31&tags%5B%5D=HRD+Issues&form%5B%5D=01&form%5B%5D=02&form%5B%5D=03&form%5B%5D=04&form%5B%5D=05&form%5B%5D=06&form%5B%5D=08&form%5B%5D=09&form%5B%5D=10&form%5B%5D=11&form%5B%5D=12&form%5B%5D=13&form%5B%5D=14&form%5B%5D=15&form%5B%5D=16&form%5B%5D=17&form%5B%5D=18&form%5B%5D=0&form%5B%5D=1000&form%5B%5D=07&form%5B%5D=19&form%5B%5D=191&form%5B%5D=192>

²³ http://www.cocap.org.np/assets/uploads/publication/COCAP_Report%20on%20Provincial%20Civic%20Space%20Assessment.pdf, page 21

²⁴ Ibid, page 15,19

²⁵ Ibid, page 9

²⁶ Ibid page 11



CSOs are not infallible either. In the democratically competitive political system of Nepal, civil society is itself divided along the party line²⁷ which makes it difficult for CSOs to maintain cohesion at contentious political issues. Similarly, most CSOs in Nepal lack the expertise, willingness, and capacity to hold the government accountable over public finances²⁸. Meanwhile, the project-based nature of the CSOs makes it difficult for the CSO to attract and retain the best human capital.

Call for Actions

- CSOs should come together in a collective way to make the government aware of the need for a vibrant and diverse civil society for sustainable and inclusive development. CSOs need to work in the direction of deflecting any legislation, policies or regulation curtailing the jurisdiction and workspace of CSOs.
- The mechanism should be set up such that the respective CSOs and the government discuss the protocols, methodology, and approaches of data collection before a project is approved. This mechanism ensures that the government is satisfied with the data collection and therefore validates the work of CSOs in the field of data, in coordination with CSOs.
- The network of the CSOs be it local network, regional network, or national network should encourage capacity building programmes in ‘peer to peer’ modules to help the CSO frame messages in a strategic, non-confrontative, and evidence-based manner. CSOs should strengthen its alliances or networks at national level, province level and local level.

²⁷ https://actalliance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ACT_SynthesisReport_CivicSpace_2019_Final_WEB.pdf, page 18

²⁸ Ibid, page 21





CHAPTER VI: ACHIEVING THE SDGS THROUGH COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

COVID 19 Pandemic Situation

The first COVID 19 case in Nepal was confirmed on 23 January 2020, with a Nepali student, who had returned from Wuhan China on 9 January. It was also the first recorded case of COVID-19 in South Asia. Between January and March, Nepal took steps to prevent a widespread outbreak of the disease while preparing for it by procuring essential supplies, equipment and medicine, upgrading health infrastructure, training medical personnel, and spreading public awareness. The country-wide lockdown came into effect on 24 March 2020. At the same time international border was shield and international flights were stopped. The first death occurred on 14 May 2020. It is still unclear what the ultimate effect of the coronavirus will be, the initial assessments are sobering, with losses of lives and livelihoods. The death toll is still climbing.

Impacts, Issues and Challenges

Actually, economic, social and humanitarian problems started after imposing lockdown. Lockdown restricted movement of the people within the country, and flight access in and out. Educational institutions, public offices, health institutions (except emergency), trade, industries, markets, construction works, transportations were totally closed down. Production and supply chain were disrupted.

More than 8 million students are at home in Nepal (MoEST, 2020). Public schools have been turned into quarantines managed by local governments. Digital divide is coming to the surface, since more than 49 percent of people don't have access to internet and general online technology (CEHRD, 2020).

Informal sector workers and daily wage earners have lost their jobs. Poor families, migrant workers and daily wage earners started to suffer from the food crisis. The limited access to nutritional services caused further risk to pregnant women, infants and children under 5 of the poorest families. Lockdown prevents humanitarian workers from accessing populations in need of assistance.

Despite the announcement of COVID-19-related relief support for the poor, there is neither a standard definition of 'the poor' in Nepali government frameworks, nor a database it could use to identify those who qualify to receive support. Poor migrant families, workers, and most vulnerable people such as LGBTIQ people could not receive relief support. COVID-19 crisis exposed the inequalities of society and it is most likely to rise in the days to come.

There is also a critical gap in Nepali policy-making when it comes to the way the informal economy intersects with the vulnerability of workers. The COVID-19 crisis has abruptly illuminated the glaring disparities between Nepal's 'haves' and 'have nots', most starkly between those in the formal versus informal sectors. Hundreds of thousands of migrants and workers living in cities were compelled to walk back home under the most inhumane conditions. Some of them have lost their lives on the way. It was proved that, rights of informal sector workers are not protected by the State, even if they do not have access to basic social protection.

Migrant workers have been returned from India, it is expected that more than 600,000 will return from India. In earlier days, thousands of Nepalese returnees were stranded in the Nepal-India border and they were maltreated. There are reports that repatriated migrants are stigmatized and some have been denied services.

The most vulnerable groups in Nepal are exposed to social structures such as caste, social norms, discriminatory practices, and gender discrimination. (UN 2020). In addition to poor families, migrant workers, daily wage earners; farmers, micro-entrepreneurs, Persons with Disabilities, chronic diseased persons, senior citizens, LGBTIQ, sex workers, pregnant and lactating women have been suffering a lot. With the spread of the epidemic and the consequent



risk of stigmatization, this exposure is likely to increase.

Officials record a rise in domestic violence. Maternal mortality, suicide cases, violence against women and girls have been significantly increased. For minority groups, crises like the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic can be doubly marginalizing.

First case of COVID19 was detected in January, so the Government had sufficient time for preparation and supply of health equipment and materials, but it did not happen in time. Private hospitals and nursing homes remained closed and they were reluctant to regularize their service during crisis time.

The healthcare system is likely to be put under significant stress as a consequence of increased cases of COVID-19, and access to health services will become more limited. The return of Nepalese migrants put additional pressure on an already overstretched healthcare system and will allow the virus to spread even faster. COVID19 has been an eye-opener of the fragile health system and infrastructures and has limited access to health and rights severely, especially among the most marginalized population.

The wholesale and retail sector has also been affected due to the fall of imports. The tourism sector has been suffering very hardly due to health risks and various travel restrictions imposed on travel globally. Nepal is projected to fall by 60 percent in 2020 resulting in a loss of foreign currency earnings worth USD 400 million. The average monthly Nepalese revenue of micro, small and medium size enterprises is decreasing by 95 percent. (UNDP 2020)

Manufacturing sector is experiencing a shortage of raw materials. The situation is exacerbated by spread of the pandemic to the Middle-east which is the main source of remittance. Remittance is expected to sharply drop by 14 percent (WB 2020). The World Bank estimates economic growth will be 1.4-2.9 percent in FY 2019/20 and it could be 2.7-3.6 percent in 2020/21. UN-ESCAP estimates 2.5 million are likely to be pushed into extreme poor.

COVID 19 crisis has directly impacted on revenue collection. Government is looking at funds between Rs 69 billion and Rs104 billion, equivalent to 2 to 3 percent of the GDP, to bridge the resource gap. Government also sought a deferral of the loan payment deadline and debt relief. Nepal needs additional funding as the country will require more money for the health care sector this year and for economic recovery next year. In the absence of adequate resources, Nepal has been forced to divert its capital budget towards procuring medical equipment and shoring up health care facilities.

Although Nepal has been spared the worst health effects of the pandemic so far, public frustration with the government is growing. In mid-June, groups of middle-class youth took to the streets in Kathmandu and other cities to protest perceived government apathy, incompetence, and corruption.

COVID-19 pandemic has made negative impacts in all the Goals, but Goal 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 16 and 17. But, positive change has been seen in the environmental sector, especially the air quality, due to lockdown. Within a few days of lockdown announced by the government, clear view of the sky and mountains and song of birds are creating new joy to nature lovers.

The temporary blanket ban on animal markets imposed by China as a response to the pandemic is expected to curb wildlife poaching and trafficking through Nepal, as the Chinese traditional medicine which uses various body parts of endangered animals as its ingredients has been the biggest challenge to wildlife conservation in the region.

For Nepal, the long-term impact of the COVID-19 crisis is likely to be exacerbated by perennial vulnerability and a legacy of past poor policy choices. Amidst an ever-extending lockdown, there are clear signs that Nepal is struggling to cope during this crisis.

Call for Actions

Nepal should recover from the human and economic devastation caused by COVID-19 by accelerating efforts to achieve SDGs.



Nepal needs clamor for policy attention and scarce resources, there is great temptation during crisis to react only for the immediate term. That would be a big mistake: as every recent crisis has revealed, Nepal is extremely vulnerable to underlying threats that can quickly become existential for large sections of the population.

For Nepal, response to crises must therefore be treated as a strategic opening, an opportunity to turn focus onto these underlying threats – as well as a chance to push for appropriate and affordable policy choices.

Crisis resilience must become a strategic policy priority for Nepal. There is an urgent need to achieve food self-sufficiency and renewable energy security, rationalize emergency services and stockpiles across all seven provinces.

Crisis resilience also requires strategic investment in technologies that support vertical and horizontal coordination of government, remote education and health, food supply chains, and energy efficiency.

The crisis exposes critical gaps in Nepal's policy-making infrastructure, which must be plugged. Nepal's unwieldy, bloated pre-federal public administration architecture must be rationalized to drive policy coherence across the whole of government.

Massive weaknesses in how data and evidence are utilized by the government become glaring during crises. The fragmented approach to data is not helpful, especially in the context of federalism. Improving and unifying data for policy-making is an essential policy choice.

The continued failure to understand, treat, and engage the informal sector as the majority perpetuates the development of policy that fails to engage fundamental governance concerns on inequality and justice. The pressing needs of society's most vulnerable will be better understood and prioritized through an informality-based policy approach.

The crisis provides a strategic opening to reimagine policy support for development effectiveness in Nepal's federalized context. In a country with scarce state resources and challenging geography, inter-sectoral policy coherence is essential.

This is the case in health and education, for example, where the desired outcomes of citizen wellbeing and capability depend on the effective, and concurrent, delivery of both health and education services. In a crisis, both of these come under strain, and their resilience demands policy coherence across sectors.

Crucially for development effectiveness, it is important to rethink policy choices around development funding. It should not take the panic of a crisis to be creative in funding. It should be rationalized and linked to both government and non-government entities based on ability, utility, and accountability.

Further, subsidiarity and resilience can be guiding principles that incentivize provincial and municipal governments to raise and spend resources for development.

Prioritizing the elimination of corruption in the center of government is critical. Other strategic counter corruption entry points are the reform of campaign finance and the elimination of the use of the army for non-security matters.

Instead of continuing poor policy practice, Nepal can adapt and respond to the changed patterns of international life through a self-critical appraisal of circumstances and a seriousness in policy choices going forward. While the COVID-19 pandemic response presents a serious challenge for Nepal, if policymakers make crisis preparedness and good governance a priority in the process, it could become a unique opportunity to chart a course to better days.

Decisions taken now on whether to return to the pre-pandemic world or to one that is more sustainable and equitable will help shape future outcomes. If coronavirus responses are ad-hoc, underfunded and without a view to long-term goals, decades of progress toward sustainable development stand to be reversed. Alternatively, the country needs to move towards recovery with targeted actions towards achieving the SDGs.

The key concern of the SDGs—to leave no one behind—must be central to planners and decision makers while developing COVID-19 recovery policies. These policies should be created with an eye towards protecting vulnerable groups including young people who face unemployment, children who have no access to online learning opportunities,



and women, who face a disproportionate increase in the burden of care work as well as greater risk of domestic violence.

The country should protect progress already made towards the SDGs, accelerating the universal provision of quality basic services, and protect the environment. The government should formulate and review the policies, frameworks, and mainstream the post-COVID-19 recovery plan to achieve the SDGs targets in line with the principles of open, inclusive, and green recovery.

To achieve national targets there should be greater coherence and coordination of national actions, as well as a stronger global partnership for development. In addition, the UN system must stand ready to facilitate progress in all these areas.

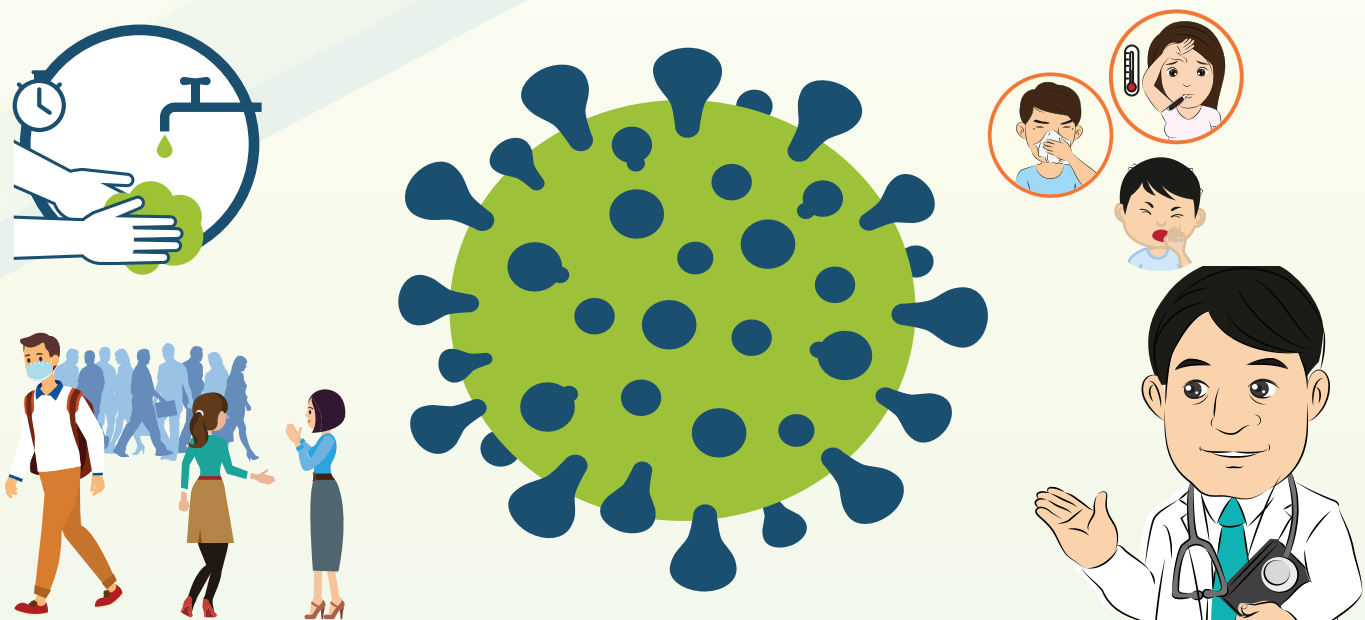
The transformation must “break the inequality and environmental degradation enchantment that darken our future”, National efforts should be based on sustainable consumption and production, on sustainable infrastructure that gives access to all to the opportunities of the future. We need concrete, radical and implementable solutions.

Historically marginalized and vulnerable identity groups must not be left outside of public health efforts or the pandemic will continue to spread. At the same time, economic programmes that address the economic consequences of COVID-19 need to address the hardships that migrants and fragile populations face during a crisis.

To lessen the negative impacts from this health crisis, we have to protect progress already made towards eradicating extreme deprivations by supporting those at immediate risk of poverty, hunger and disease; facilitating their safe return to work and education, and access to health care; and eliminating social or legal barriers for marginalized and disadvantaged groups.

We need to direct COVID-19 response stimulus packages toward the universal provision of quality essential services to build long-term resilience including by ensuring access to health care, education, social protection, water, sanitation, clean energy and the Internet. Additional support for the deployment of services in poorer countries needs to be made available.

Responding to COVID-19 crisis and resilient socio-economic recovery, demand a robust action oriented plan with full cooperation from political society. Lack of political stability and accountability may further escalate the situation. Government must focus its every action to protect the right to health and right to food security for instance. Reopening and revitalization of economic activities can create hope with the people. But, our future plans, policies and investments recovery plans must be compatible with long-term sustainability.





CHAPTER VII: LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Who are left Behind

Leave No One Behind is the core principle of the 2030 Agenda. Like other member states, Nepal has also committed to reach the people furthest behind, secure their rights and to promote their dignified life. Basically, poor families, migrant workers, daily-wage earners, small farmers, Indigenous Peoples (Adibasi Janajati), Dalits, Madhesis, Persons with Disabilities, Senior Citizens, LGBTIQ, sex workers, religious minorities and women and youth are still left behind.

Poor: Despite Nepal witnessing progress in the fight against poverty, 28.6 percent people are suffering from multidimensional poverty. But, the question is who are they, and where do they live?

Karnali and Province 2: By geography, multidimensional poverty is high in Karnali Province (51%) and Province No.2 (48%). Sudurpaschim Province (33.56%) follows them.

Informal sector workers: In Nepal, more than 70 percent of the economically active population is involved in the informal economy. Workers in the informal economy face multiple challenges and constraints because the government is not in a position to regulate it. Consequently, workers are subject to exploitation and deprived of many fundamental rights at work. Social protection for the workers in the informal economy is one of the emerging issues in Nepal. Many Nepali workers who went to India, Gulf and other countries are compelled to do difficult, dangerous and dirty jobs and they are not well paid.

Rural People: Naturally, the rural-urban divide is evident, with 7 percent of the urban population and 33 percent of the rural population being multidimensionally poor. This means rural people are comparatively left behind. Amidst poverty is less in urban areas, Urban poverty is becoming more pervasive in Nepal. The urban poor are vulnerable to natural hazards because of the location of informal settlements in marginal areas, the poor quality of housing, and the lack of assets to assist in their recovery.

Women and Girls: Population of women and girls is 50.4 percent. Gender inequality prevails, and women are discriminated against in the social, economic and political sector. Women from Dalits, indigenous people, minority and Muslim groups and women with disabilities continue to face gender-based and identity-based discrimination. The Gender Inequality Index of Nepal is 0.476. In general, progress is not enough in gender inequality in the last four years.

Dalits: Dalits comprises more than 13 percent population. It is estimated that more than 40 percent Dalits live below the poverty line. Dalit people face caste-based discrimination and untouchability. They are landless and much poorer than the dominant caste population. Their life expectancy is lower than the national average, and so is their literacy rate. Discrimination against Dalits has affected access to education, health care, employment, water availability and ability to enjoy an adequate standard of living. Many instances have been abruptly attacked. Recent massacre of Dalit youths in Western Rukum is an example of serious criminal act. Dalits are discriminated against in schools, temples and other public and private places. They are deprived of education and face malnutrition, child labor, trafficking and sexual violence. Madhesi Dalits endure greater exclusion, marginalization, and landlessness. Dalit women face multiple discriminations. Badi women face sexual exploitation.

Madhesi: Madhesi people originally reside in the Terai region of Nepal and comprise various cultural groups. Madhesi people comprise Brahmin and Dalit caste groups as well as ethnic groups such as Maithils, Bhojpuri and Bajjika speaking people. The Madhesi ethnic group living in this region comprises only 19.3 percent of the total population. In general, the socio-economic status of this community is weak. Further, they say the constitution has failed to address their main demands, which include better political and economic representation, an end to the



discriminatory citizenship law. This community has been doing a political movement several times for equal rights, dignity and identity. The government also failed during the year to publish the report of the Lal Commission, which investigated deadly violence between members of minority communities and the police in 2015.

Muslims: They are a religious minority community and one of the marginalized groups in the country, with a population 4.4 percent. Muslim women have lower access to health, justice and education because of cultural and language barriers. They suffer multiple forms of discrimination as women.

Indigenous Nationalities (Adhivasi Janajati): Indigenous peoples constitute 35.81 percent of the total population. Poverty among Hill Indigenous Peoples is higher (28.25%) than that of the high caste Brahmin (10.34%). Even, Nepal Government endorsed and approved the National Action Plan for the implementation of ILO 169, but it is not yet implemented. Big infrastructure development projects such as road, hydro power etc., and protected areas have been making negative impacts on their community rights and many families have been displaced.

Sexual and Gender Minorities (LGBTIQ): The Constitution recognizes “gender and sexual minority” people among the disadvantaged groups, but they are not able to enjoy the rights and benefits equally. LGBTIQ persons are subjected to discrimination, hate, social stigma, harassment, attacked in their own families, public places, schools, employment and public services. Some of them are forced to involve in sex works. They are not getting citizenship easily and they are totally out of social security services.

Persons with Disabilities (PWDs): PWDs have been excluded from public institutions. They lack support systems and social security, persons with psychosocial and other severe disabilities are often chained, incarcerated and treated in inhuman ways. Access to education, information and health facilities are difficult for PWDs. They often suffer a lot at the time of crisis and emergencies.

Former Bonded and forced Labor: Kamaiya, Kamalari, Haruwa, Charuwa, Haliya, rely on agriculture, and forced labour in brick kilns, stone quarries, entertainment sector, domestic work, restaurant and embroidered textiles for their livelihoods. These exploitations are complex in Nepalese context where legal enforcement is weak and impunity is high without much economic opportunities. In 2000, the government declared Kamaiya emancipation, including from debt. There are around 37,000 freed Kamaiya. However, two decades after their emancipation, they are still waiting for proper rehabilitation. They are compelled to work for previous landlords.

Senior Citizens: The population is ageing at such speed that the existing health care system and economy might fail to mitigate the challenges of ageing. The 60-plus population currently constitutes around 9 percent of the total population, which is expected to rise to 11 percent by 2030. In this light, a paradigm shift is expected in the pattern of diseases within this population. Another challenge with regards to healthy ageing is the lack of rehabilitative and long-term care services for older people.

Small Farmers: In Nepal around 74.2 percent of agricultural holdings are below one hectare. 91.7 percent of the agricultural holdings are less than two hectares, accounting for 68.7 percent of the total operated area. The average size of holding is only 0.8 hectare. Hence marginal and small farmers are the protagonists in Nepal’s agricultural scenario. The preponderance of small and fragmented holdings, weather dependent farming, and uncertainty in the price of their output are key issues. Generally, farmers do not even get half of the price paid by the final consumer. This has discouraged youths from taking up farming as their profession, which has fuelled out-migration.

Youth: The United Nations defines “youth” as persons between the ages of 15-24 whereas the government of Nepal extends the definition to those between 16 and 40 years of age, which accounts for over 40 percent of the country’s population. Unemployment, migration, lack of quality education are some key issues of youth. Further, young people continue to be marginalized at the political, social and economic spheres. Formal political processes and institutions are still characterized by limited youth participation. By COVID-19 Crisis, millions of youth have lost their jobs, young people entering the job market are becoming hopeless and they are worried about their future. On one hand they are not getting quality education, on the other hand, they are averted from education.

Children: Population of children is around 5.5 million (0-18 years) in the country. Rate of child mortality and





malnutrition is still high. Girls are still facing different types of violence due to social taboos and patriarchal social structure. Abuses and malpractices against children, trafficking, child labour and child marriage are still in prevalence in Nepal. Still, people give low priority in education, health and other basic requirements to female children than male children. Above all, discrimination between children on the basis of their work, class status, and caste status is common practices in Nepalese society.

Minorities: Some social groups or communities with small populations, categorized by religion, language and ethnicity, are minorities. By religion, Animism, Bon, Kiranta, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Sikh, Bahai are minorities. Some languages and few indigenous nationalities are in endanger. Some ethnic communities such as Musahar, Kurmi, Dhanu, Pasi, Raute, Nurg, Kusunda have less than 1 percent population. Thousands of *refugees*, most of them urban refugees are living in the country without proper legal recognition. All these minorities are vulnerable people. Caste and ethnic minorities remained more vulnerable than others to abuses, including excessive use of force by police, and torture in police custody. Crimes, such as sexual violence, against members of minority communities often go unreported and uninvestigated. It is estimated that number of *people living with HIV* is 29,944 and more *people are suffering from chronic diseases*, particularly non-communicable disease. Because of lack of money they and their families are trapped in poverty. More than 26 thousands of women have been working as *sex workers* because of poor economic conditions. All these above mentioned groups are deprived and highly vulnerable.

Survivors of natural disasters and conflict, such as seasonal flooding, who disproportionately belong to minority communities, were often not provided with adequate relief, such as basic shelter. Five years after the 2015 earthquake, which destroyed nearly 1 million homes, many survivors still live in temporary shelter. On the other hand, more than hundred thousand *conflict victim families* are patiently waiting for justice as they lost their family members, properties etc.

Call for Actions

Equitable distribution of power, resources and opportunities is the sustainable solution to end the marginalization and division in society. So, time has come to rethink all of its existing socio-economic and political policies, systems, practices and their norms and values. Political commitment is a must for radical transformation.

Government must adopt a human rights and justice based approach to development since human rights and SDGs are interwoven. All tiers of Governments must fully comply with international human rights laws and humanitarian laws. Laws, rules, regulations, policies, development plans and public resources should be able to deliver the provisions of the constitution. The government's Public Service Commission sought to undermine constitutional guarantees of quotas for minority communities in civil service jobs, by defying hiring procedures.

Country must ensure access to justice for all, improve political accountability and to end impunity, which is deepening in our society. We urge government to accede Rome Statute and ratify Optional Protocol of ICESCR, Convention Against Torture and Optional Protocol III of Child Rights Convention to protect the rights of the people. The Government must settle the issues of transitional justice as soon as possible.

The National Human Rights Commission should be made fully independent and other constitutional bodies related with human rights should be made effective. These commissions should be out of political and government influence and serve effectively and efficiently. There should be inclusive representations in these bodies. Government should establish a Disability Commission and Children's Commission.

Localizing human rights and SDGs is critical to protect, promote and fulfil the rights of the people. Province Governments, local governments and government agencies should be made responsible to implement recommendations of UPR and human rights treaty bodies. Federal Governments should support local governments to implement the National Human Rights Action Plan.

Some systemic barriers such as the caste system, patriarchy, harmful practices, structural discrimination, corruption, unequal distribution of power and resources, neo-liberal economic system, and feudalistic mind-sets have to be



addressed by reviewing all the existing policies, systems and practices.

It is essential to implement integrated and intensive poverty alleviation programmes for the poor, marginalized, and vulnerable communities with an adequate budget, robust monitoring and transparent public expenditure practise.

Nepal must improve statistical systems and come up with disaggregated and credibility of data by gender, caste/ethnicity, geography, age, sex, religion, migratory status, geographic location, ability, and economic class to monitor and track the SDGs' progress. Also it is recommended to utilize data generated by CSOs, Universities, research institutions and international organizations. Unfortunately, the Government was not able to present disaggregated data in its VNR report. Therefore, it is difficult to measure SDGs' progress of marginalized and vulnerable communities.

Government must implement laws and the Supreme Court decisions to make citizenship easily available based on the mother's citizenship. Effective implementation of laws and policies on gender equality is urgent, but that should be backed with sufficient resources. Meaningful and decisive participation of women must be ensured in political platforms. Government and all development actors must fully recognize intersectionality, diversity, and inclusivity within the women and girls.

Country should provide mother tongue-based multilingual education and to ensure access to schooling for children from Dalit and indigenous communities.

Government must establish fast track judicial service, investigate and prosecute cases of discrimination against Dalits, and to functionalize the National Dalit Commission and ensure access to justice on cases of discrimination. Existing law against caste-based discrimination; and policies, plans, strategies, programmes and budget should be effectively implementation. Government needs to amend all discriminatory laws, regulations, rules, directives, policies and programmes and inter-caste married couples should be protected.

Government need to ensure that all opportunities, resources and services are proportionally distributed among the hill and Madhesi Dalits and Dalit women as per the ratio of their respective populations. To end landlessness within one year, the government must provide citizenships to all Dalits.

Government must ensure that all religious groups have equal access to resources to preserve and protect religious and cultural heritage and to build religious infrastructures. Country needs to recognize and mainstream Madrasha education in Nepal's education system and ensure proportional representation of Muslim women in all public spheres.

Nepal needs to implement the Action Plan for the implementation of the ILO Convention 169, review existing laws or formulate new one to ensure the rights of indigenous peoples, and expedite appointment of the commissioners in Indigenous Nationalities Commission and provide adequate financial, human and technical resources for its full and effective functioning. Government must fully implement constitutional provisions on inclusion and proportional representation of IPs including indigenous women at decision-making levels and state policy. Government must seriously act on disaster risk reduction, climate actions, protection of natural resources and biodiversity, adapt indigenous knowledge and practices to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples.

Government needs to amend PWDs Act and address issues of psychosocial and other under-represented disabilities. Representation of PWDs should be ensured in all public institutions and they should be promoted in public and private services. Upcoming national census 2021 should design the questionnaire to get data of all types of disabilities.

Government must fully implement the constitutional provisions to increase the participation and representation of the LGBTI community in public services and state mechanisms and it must revise and amend the Civil and Criminal Codes and other discriminatory laws that restrict the rights of the LGBTI community. Government should ensure social security facilities, financial services, and LGBTI-Inclusive education. Policy makers should be aware about the LGBTIQ issues, stop violence against them, and provide citizenship according to their gender identity.

Government must ensure full and effective implementation of laws against slavery, including, the Kamaiyas (Prohibition) Act 2002 and to provide employment opportunities to freed bonded labourers. Local governments



should be made responsible to ensure that there is no slavery, servitude or slavery-like practices in communities. Governments must ensure rights to housing to all the freed bonded labourers.

Governments must increase budgets to child protection services, including but not limited to social welfare workforce, justice, policing, social work, case management, education staff, health workers, legal aid, psycho-social support and rescue. We need to strengthen provincial and municipal level capacity to lead on prevention and reduction of child labour, child marriage, violence against children, trafficking and children living in residential care institutions.

Senior citizens need long-term care services, besides usual curative services. They must be protected from violence. The state should provide healthy, active, independent and contributory living prospects to senior citizens. We should remember that 'older people might be retired, but they are not tired'. Local governments, in collaboration with communities, must strive to create geriatric-friendly communities that guarantee physical, familial as well as social security for the older population. Stakeholders must take into consideration the convenience of older people while building local infrastructure. The younger generations of families should play a pivotal role in ensuring 'healthy and happy ageing' for seniors at home. Our children will learn from the way we treat our parents and grandparents.

Governments should have proper data of informal sector workers, daily-wage earners, and migrant workers, particularly who have been working in cities and India. Nepali government would have to consider ways of including the returned workers in the domestic workforce. A sector that may be able to absorb this labor is agriculture.



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11. Environment & Public Health Organization
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13. Freedom Forum
14. Fresh Water Action Network South Asia Nepal
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20. National Association of Child Groups
21. National Association of Community Energy Users Nepal
22. National Campaign for Sustainable Development
23. National Farmers Group Federation
24. National Forum for Advocacy Nepal
25. National Indigenous Women Federation
26. National Indigenous Women Forum
27. National Trade Union Coordination Committee
28. Nepal Disable Women Association
29. Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities
30. Nepal Policy Institute
31. NGO Forum for Urban Water and Sanitation
32. Relief Fund for Wildlife Victims
33. Sankalpa and Women for Human Rights-SWG
34. Society fo International Law and Public Policies
35. Society of Econimic Journalists Nepal
36. Transparency International Nepal
37. Visible Impact
38. Youth for Environment Education and Development Foundation



ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATED IN VPR 2020

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| 1. Action Aid Nepal | 23. Child Fund Japan |
| 2. Action Works Nepal | 24. Clean Energy Nepal |
| 3. Ageing Nepal | 25. Conflict Victim Sajha Chautari |
| 4. Alliance for Social Dialogue | 26. CSRC Nepal |
| 5. Angalo | 27. Dalit NGOs Federation |
| 6. Arpan Poverty Allievation | 28. Dalit Welfare Organisation |
| 7. Asia Indigenous International Network | 29. Dalit Youth Alliance |
| 8. Asian Academy for Peace, Research and Development | 30. Development Exchange Center Nepal |
| 9. Asmita Women's Publishing House, Media & Resource organization | 31. Development Project Service Centre (DEPROSC-Nepal) |
| 10. Association for Dalit Women's Advancement of Nepal | 32. Dhimal Women Forum |
| 11. Association of Community Radio Broadcasters' (ACORAB) Nepal | 33. Digo Bikas Institute |
| 12. Association of Family Forest Owner's, Nepal (AFFON) | 34. Disaster Management Network Nepal |
| 13. Association of Youth Organizations Nepal (AYON) | 35. Earth Day Network |
| 14. Beyond Beijing Committee | 36. ENRUDEC |
| 15. Bikashka Lagi Sajha Abhiyan Siraha | 37. FECOFUN Nepal |
| 16. Blue Diamond Society | 38. Federation for Good Governance Nepal |
| 17. Campaign for Human Rights and Social Transformation (CAHURAST) | 39. Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN) |
| 18. CARE International in Nepal | 40. Federation of Drinking Water and Sanitation Users Nepal (FEDWASUN) |
| 19. Caritas Nepal | 41. Federation of Sexual and Gender Minorities Nepal |
| 20. Center of Needy and Creative, Experimental & Participatory Techniques | 42. Feminist Dalit organization (FEDO) |
| 21. Central Department of Environmental Science, TU | 43. FOCUS-Nepal |
| 22. Centre for Social Change | 44. Forest Environment Workers Union |
| | 45. Forum for Community Upliftment System Nepal (FOCUS-NEPAL) |
| | 46. Forum For Protection Of Consumer Rights Nepal |



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| 47. Freedom Forum | 74. Lumanti Support Group for Shelter |
| 48. Friends for Peacebuilding and Development | 75. Mahila Atma Nirvarta Kendra (MANK) |
| 49. GARJAN-Nepal | 76. Mahila Shakti Bikash Kendra Nepal |
| 50. Gate Organization | 77. Medecins Du Monde France |
| 51. GoGo Foundation | 78. MITINI NEPAL |
| 52. Good Shepherd International Foundation (GSIF Nepal) | 79. Municipal Association of Nepal |
| 53. Green Organization | 80. National Action and Coordinating Group |
| 54. Hami DajuVai | 81. National Association of Senior Citizens |
| 55. HAMI YUWA | 82. National Association of Community Electricity Users' Nepal, NACEUN |
| 56. HAPE Development and Welfare Association | 83. National Association of the Physical Disabled-Nepal |
| 57. HOPE Foundation Nepal | 84. National Campaign For Sustainable Development-Nepal |
| 58. Housing Recovery and Reconstruction Platform (HRRP) | 85. National Election Observation Committee (NEOC) |
| 59. INHURED International | 86. National Farmers' Group Federatiion |
| 60. INSEC Nepal | 87. National Federation of the Disabled Nepal (NFDN)) |
| 61. International Land Coalition, National Engagement Strategies – Nepal | 88. National Federation of Women Living with HIV and AIDS |
| 62. International Youth Forum | 89. National Federation of Youth NGOs Nepal |
| 63. Jagaran Media Centre | 90. National Forum for Advocacy Nepal |
| 64. Jagriti Child and Youth Concern Nepal (JCYCN) | 91. National Human Rights Commission |
| 65. Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre (JTUCC) | 92. National Human Rights Foundation (HURFON) |
| 66. Justice and Rights Institute Nepal (JuRI-Nepal) | 93. National Indigenous Disabled Women Association Nepal (NIDWAN) |
| 67. Kamana Foundation Nepal | 94. National Indigenous Women's Federation (NIWF) |
| 68. Kathmandu Business and Professional Women Association (YBPW) | 95. National Indigenous Women Forum (NIWF) |
| 69. Kathmandu University School of Education | 96. National Land Rights Forum |
| 70. KUSAL NEPAL | 97. Nepal Disabled Women Association (NDWA) |
| 71. LAHURNIP | 98. Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) |
| 72. Land Coalition Nepal | |
| 73. LEADERSHIP WATCH | |



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| 99. Nepal Majhi Women Upliftment Association | 126. Sustainability Week Kathmandu |
| 100. Nepal Transportation and Development Research Centre | 127. Tanneri Chaso Surkhet |
| 101. Nepal Water Conservation Foundation (NWCF) | 128. Sachet Youth Network |
| 102. Nepalese Youth for Climate Action | 129. terre des hommes Germany |
| 103. Nepal Water Conservation Foundation | 130. TEWA Nepal |
| 104. Network for Development of Indigenous Peoples (NDIP) | 131. The Resource Nepal |
| 105. One to watch | 132. Toni Hagen Foundation Nepal |
| 106. Option Nepal | 133. Transformation Nepal |
| 107. Poor and Dalit Upliftment Service Committee-PUSEC Dolpa | 134. TSD Socioeconomic Research Center |
| 108. Prayatna Nepal | 135. United Mission to Nepal |
| 109. Research for Environment Forest Agriculture and Development Nepal | 136. Visible Impact |
| 110. Resource Centre for Primary Health Care (RECPHEC) | 137. VSO International Nepal |
| 111. Restructuring Nepal | 138. Water Aid Nepal |
| 112. Rotaract Club of Matribhumi Baluwatar | 139. Women Development Society |
| 113. Rural Youth Network nepal | 140. Women For Human Rights Single Women Group |
| 114. SAMATA Foundation | 141. Women for Peace and Democracy Nepal |
| 115. Sankalpa | 142. Women Youth Empowerment in Social Service and Human Rights |
| 116. Sarokar Foundation | 143. World Wildlife Fund |
| 117. SDGs Studio | 144. World Vision International Nepal |
| 118. Self Help Environment Awareness Camp (SHEAC) Pokhara | 145. YFEED Foundation |
| 119. Social Protection Civil Society Network | 146. Young Women For Change |
| 120. Society for International Law and Public Policy | 147. Youth Advocacy Nepal (YAN) |
| 121. South Asia Dialogues on Ecological Democracy (SADED-Nepal) | 148. Youth Alliance for Environment Group |
| 122. South Asia Partnership Nepal | 149. Youth Development Center |
| 123. Spiral Farm House | 150. Youth for Human Rights Nepal |
| 124. Sunita Foundation | 151. Youth Network for Peace and Development, Mahottari |
| 125. Support Nepal | 152. Youth Vision Nepal, Banke |
| | 153. YUWA |



SDGs NATIONAL NETWORK NEPAL, NATIONAL COORDINATION GROUP

- Association of Youth Organizations Nepal (AYON)
- Dalit Welfare Organization (DWO)
- Dalit Youth Alliance (DYA)
- National Campaign for Sustainable Development Nepal (NACASUD-Nepal)
- National Farmers' Group Federation (NFGF)
- National Indigenous Disabled Women Association Nepal (NIDWAN)
- Nepal Disabled Women Association (NDWA)
- Women for Human Rights Single Women Group (WHR)
- Youth For Environment Education And Development Foundation (YFEED Foundation)

SECRETARIAT



National Campaign for Sustainable Development Nepal

NACASUD Nepal is the member of Regional Coordination Committee of Asia Pacific Regional CSOs Engagement Mechanism (AP-RCEM), which is directly engaging with UN-ESCAP at regional and sub-regional level.



SECRETARIAT



National Campaign for Sustainable Development Nepal



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 Nacasud Nepal



National Campaign For Sustainable Development-NPL