

NEPAL SDG SIXTEEN PLUS FOURM

30-31 January 2020, Kathmandu

CSOs Engagement on Volunteer National Review and
Localization SDG 16 Plus



*Organized by: Nepal SDGs Forum and
NGO Federation of Nepal*



Background

Nepal SDGs Forum (150 members from thematic federations, networks, alliances and CSOs) and NGO Federation of Nepal (6500 members' organizations) jointly organized two days **NEPAL SDGs 16 Plus Forum** at Kathmandu on 30-31, January 2020. This Forum focused on CSOs engagement on Volunteer National Review (VNR 2020) and localization of agendas 2030 and SDGs in Nepal. More than 300 participants from the CSOs, government of Nepal, United Nations, I/NGOs, women, farmer, youth, disabled, Dalit, LGBTIQ, private sector, senior citizens, cooperatives, development partners, medias, think-tanks and academicians including all major groups and stakeholders were represented from 77 districts and 7 province of Nepal.



The first day of Nepal SDG 16 Plus Forum chaired by Jitram Lama, president of NFN. Mr Arjun Bhattarai, on behalf of Nepal SDGs Forum shared objectives and CSOs engagement plan on VNR 2020. As a guest speaker Jyostna Mohan Singh, Asia Coordinator of Asia Development Alliance (ADA) highlighted global and regional perspectives on SDG 16 Plus and VNR as well Mr. Charles Allen from the Institute of Economics and Peace, Australia highlighted positive peace and linking SDG 16 Plus. The Forum



concluded with the interaction among conveners of SDGs Forum, major groups and stakeholders on issues related VNR 2020 and localization of 2030 agendas and SDGs in Nepal.

The second day was main day of Forum were organized 3 parallel forums **1. Civic Space 2. Climate Change and Disaster 3. SDG16 Plus, VNR 2020 and Localization.**

Opening of the forum including national civil society conference chair by NFN president. Right Honorable Ganesh Prasad Timilsina, Chair of National Assembly, was the chief guest while Minister

of Women, Children and Senior Citizens Hon. Parbat Gurung, and member of National Planning Commission (NPC) Hon. Min Bahadur Shahi were the special guests of the conference. Likewise, opposition party at parliament, Nepali Congress central committee member Jeevan Pariyar, leaders of difference civil society networks and alliances, human rights and development activists,



representatives of various development partners, and UN agencies were the guests speakers at opening panel. All together about 500 participants from the CSOs, government of Nepal, United Nations, I/NGOs, women, farmer, youth, disabled, Dalit, LGBTIQ, private sector, senior citizens, cooperatives, development partners, medias, think-tanks and academicians including all major groups and stakeholders were represented from 77 districts and 7 province of Nepal.

Guests and CSO representatives expressed their views and concerns in various areas of development, human rights, civil society, SDGs and governance among others in the inaugural session which was followed by three parallel thematic sessions on 1) CSO enabling environment: Policy, rights and operational concerns, 2) Disaster risk management and climate change, and 3) SDG 16 Plus Forum: Localization and VNR.

Nepali Congress leader Jeevan Pariyar duly acknowledged that civil society leaders also represent the people. Referring to the potentially restrictive measures in the upcoming CSO legal act, he emphasized that CSOs/NGOs should not be restricted to any specific area and sector for their actions. He also highlighted the need of further effectiveness and governance improvement of NGOs.

NPC member Min Bahadur Shahi attempted to assure that Government and NPC are holding a lot of consultations and participatory meetings with NGOs and CSOs in order to address their concerns and increase their participation in social and economic development. He appreciated the role of CSOs/NGOs in development and social transformation as well as their role and need in localization of SDGs and Voluntary National Review (VNR) process.

Minister Parbat Gurung also assured of making the policy and program development process more inclusive and participatory. Acknowledging the role of CSOs, he said that the Government welcomes the constructive criticism of civil society and CSOs. He also advised CSOs for improving their own institutional governance and enhancing their effectiveness so that they can cleanse negative impression towards them. Referring to the ongoing CSO law drafting process and the draft of this by Ministry of Home, he assured that Government will adequately consult and discuss with CSOs and

incorporate the principles of democracy, fundamental rights, and civic space. He appreciated and welcomed the role of CSOs.

The chief guest Rt. Hon. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina mainly focused on the important role of CSOs in democratic change, safeguarding human rights and socio-economic development. He requested the government to undertake the policy formulation and implementation process in participation of CSOs. When the CSO bill is sent to the National Assembly, he assured that CSOs will be consulted and discussed with.



The Civil Society Conference with there parallel forums concluded with a declaration. It was an interface among the local CSO leaders and the concerned stakeholders at the central level.

SDG16 Plus Forum on VNR and Localization: The Forum chaired and welcoming to all participants by Ganesh BK, Dlait activist and CSO leader. The starting presentation was given by Devraj Jhoshi, Director of National Planning Commission. His presentation was about the government plan, progress on SDGs and VNR. He acknowledged the institutional mechanisms of SDG, Ppolicy documents, targets and indicators of SDG and the challenges Nepal faces when achieving the set goals. He also proceeded to explain the Voluntary National Report (VNR).

Next, Mr. Dharma Swarnakar from UNDP Nepal gave a talk on the set agenda. He talked about the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) and why its failure calls for the importance of SDG. He presented the idea that we have to make sure our country becomes socially, economically and environmentally successful for us to have achieved the SDG's. Mr. Swarnakar stated that SDG should be everybody's goal and not just the governments because its aim is to *"leave no one behind"*. He talked about



UNDP's achievements and the SDG week in September. He ended his talk by suggesting that all provincial governments must mention the SDG as an effort to make it successful.

Mr. Arjun Bhattarai, Deputy Secretary General of NFN, gave the third presentation of the workshop on CSO'S *Prospective on SDG 16+ and VNR*. Mr. Bhattarai started with a short story to set an example which most people in the audience could relate to. His story stated that SDG can only be understood and achieved if localize in our own agendas. His presentation showed that all 10 thematic committees of the NPC discuss and represent the SDG directly or indirectly. His presentation showed which groups in our population need it the most and why. He talked about the five P's of SDG; People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. He also talked about the role of CSO in the localization of SDG's through awareness raising, research and monitoring, participation and networking and lobbying. He then proceeded to talk about where we are currently, regarding the SDG's. He ended his presentation by suggesting a vision for after achieving the SDG's. He stated NGO's must follow up on the goals during and after their achievement to make sure we are on the right track.



The second last presentation of the workshop was given by Ms. Shanta Laxmi Shrestha, President of Beyond Beijing Committee Nepal. She started by giving an introduction of beyond Beijing Committee and their goals and visions regarding gender equality. She added a meaning to "leave no one behind" by stating that SDG must include the rich and the poor both while being gender inclusive. SDG is not only to uplift the under developed but it is also to make sure the developed stay developed. She stated that the SDG will become like the MDG of we are not gender inclusive. Ms. Shrestha also put forth the idea that we must focus on "reaching the furthest before the first." She then proceeded to talk about goal 5 which focuses on gender equality. She talked about the nine targets of goal 5. She ended her presentation by stating that there are eighty-five global indicators which are directly related to goal five and spread throughout all SDG's making goal 5 very important to achieve all SDG's.

The final talk of the workshop was given by Mr. Charles Allen of the institute of economics and peace, Australia. He started by introducing the institute and its goals. IEP has three major goals as stated by Charles; Measuring peace in countries, Producing the SDG 16 plus report, Developing a proxy indicator to measure peace,

The institute of economics and peace prepares a base line report ranking the countries form most peaceful to least peaceful. This report has been produced every year for the past thirteen years and has been recognized as a global index to measure peace across the world. This report has been used by NGO's and INGO's globally as a



reference. Around 163 nations are ranked and this makes up about 99.7% of the world's population. Charles then revealed that Nepal ranked as the 76th most peaceful country among the 163 countries and has grown more peaceful in the past decade. These countries are ranked based on a positive peace index. This index identifies the conditions that correlate the most in making a country the most peaceful. He proceeded to state that SDG 16 is very much linked to positive peace because research shows that countries with higher positive peace have greater social wellbeing, better disaster management, a better economic condition, better environmental conservation and greater resilience. These factors make it possible to achieve the SDG's faster than the less peaceful countries. He ended his talk by giving a small example of a city in the Philippines to stress on the fact that peace is the most important factor on achieving the SDG.

The workshop ended with a note of Thanks by, Chair Ganesh BK and a photo session with the participants.

In order to bring about discussion in the workshop and make it interactive, we had discussion rounds after and between the presentations. The key issues, opinions and advices are summarized below:

- SDGs must be mentioned by all provincial and local governments;
- Making SDG gender inclusive is very important in achieving SDGs;
- Peace is the most important factor that needs to be achieved to be able to reach the set SDGs ;
- The 7 thematic committees of the NPC will be dividing the goals and work towards their achievement;
- VNR is an important innovation that will help achieve and maintain the SDGs ;
- We have to achieve economic, social and environmental improvements to be able to mark SDGs as a success;
- Reports and data relating to SDGs should be available to the public to maintain transparency;
- CSOs engagement is very important on VNR process and should include by government at all level of data collection and writing process

The SDG 16 Plus Forum covered most of issues related SDGs and VNR, the challenges we face and our plans on moving towards achieving the SDGs. This forum informed the audience about how we, as a country, are planning to achieve the set SDGs and what we have to work on to reach our goals and engagement on VNR 2020. Participants were express their concern for continuing the discussion on SDGs and SDG 16 Plus could work as an opportunity to know more about the goals and achievements.