A Brief Report
Of
Global Week of Action for the SDGs in Nepal
18-26 September 2020

(An joint initiative of Government of Nepal, UN Agencies, Private Sector and CSOs

Organizer/Coordination: Nepal SDGs Forum
A national multi-stakeholders recognized platform for achieving 2030 agendas in Nepal
www.nepalsdgsforum.org

Secretariat: NGO Federation of Nepal
An umbrella of 6500 NGOs in Nepal
www.ngofederation.org

Supported by:
ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Introduction and Background

United Nations Member States in 2015 adopted The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and made a universal promise to leave no one behind in achieving a peaceful and prosperous world by 2030. To commemorate this event, stakeholders in Nepal celebrated the Global Goals Week to accelerate action on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially during the UN General Assembly High-level Week. Taking this as an opportunity to speak out as one voice, share ideas and transformative solutions in achieving the SDGs and also to build back better from global challenges, weeklong events were organized in Nepal from 18-26 September 2020.

Global SDGs Action Week is a shared commitment of partnership between government, civil society, business, academia and the UN system to push action on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially during the UN General Assembly High-level Week. Nepal SDGs Forum has been coordinating and organizing SDGs Action Week with joint collaboration of National Planning Commission (NPC), United Nation Development Program (UNDP), UN Agencies, bi-lateral and multilateral, development partners, CSOs, major groups and stakeholders.

Date: 18th-26th September 2020

Main event: 25th September 2020 (SDGs 5th Anniversary Celebration and Peoples' Assembly)

Slogan of this year: #TurnItAround accelerating progress on the SDGs through action for people, planet, peace, partnership and prosperity and recovering forward better from the pandemic.

Main Organizers:
National Planning Commission (NPC), United National Development Program (UNDP), UN Agencies, Association of International NGOs (AIN), Nepal SDGs Forum, NGO Federation of Nepal
International Organizing Partners

Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP), Action 4 Sustainable Development (A4SD), Forus International, CIVICUS, Asia Development Alliance (ADA), Asian Democracy Network (ADN), Fight Inequality Alliance (FIA), Transparency and Accountability Network (TAP)

Co-organizers

All Federations, Networks, Alliances, INGOs/NGOs, Majors Groups and Stakeholders

A series of activities were organized with initiation of different CSOs. Some of the major activities have been elaborated here.

Dialogue on Aid Effectiveness and Localization of Aid in Nepal

Also as part of the Social Service Day and SDGs Action Week Celebration in Nepal, Social Welfare Council (SWC) and NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN) organized a national dialogue on Aid Effectiveness and Localization of Aid with Member of Parliament Hon. Dr. Bimala Rai Paudyal, Under Secretary Dr. Narayan Dhakal from the Ministry of Finance, Chairperson of Association of International NGOs in Nepal (AIN) Mr. Achyut Luitel and NFN President Jitram Lama on the occasion of
41st Social Service Day. Mr Arjun Bhattarai, Deputy Secretary General of NFN, moderated the event.

Jit Ram Lama, President of NFN, mentioned about the Accra Agenda for Action and Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness and said that they need to be followed. He highlighted that at present, most of the social organizations are working on their own with the resources they generate. Although over 100,000 NGOs are registered in Nepal, only about 25% of the organizations get renewed every year. And only around 2% of the foreign aid is spent through the SWC or INGOs but the contribution and presence this way also is remarkable.

AIN’s Chair Mr. Luitel said that INGOs have been able to reach to the nooks and corners of the country, especially when the State presence was limited during the Maoist insurgency. While Nepal aspires to graduate to the middle-income country by 2030, the aid and the INGOs will still be useful and necessary. In the past, when the national focus was on political awareness, many INGOs started supporting for this. Not only the infrastructure, support of INGOs to the social sector will continue to be necessary for socio-economic transformation.

It is up to the government whether or not to receive foreign aid although the country still very much needs the aid. It also depends on the Government what sectors and geography to prioritize for the INGOs. INGOs can still contribute to the social change and elimination of the social taboos and malpractices.

Institutional capacity of the community organizations is certainly not growing as expected, when the organizations undergo leadership changes. INGOs have global experience and practices that are useful to us. How to transfer the global experience can be the subject of discussion.

Rather than who used the earmarked fund, it may be more important to consider about the effectiveness of it. In fact, INGOs also do not have access to the larger funds but the commercial partners or organizations which have higher overhead and thus higher costs and the fund may also go back abroad. INGOs spend actually for the country except for some organizations which have expats. Keeping INGOs from accessing earmarked funds does not necessarily mean that the fund will be accessible to local NGOs.
Mr. Luitel mentioned that INGOs mobilize around Rs. 20 billion, employ about 5,500 staff and pay approximately Rs. 1.25 billion to the Government in taxes.

Policy formulation towards making the aid more important may be more necessary and effective.

Under Secretary Dr Dhakal recalled the international principles and agreements on aid, including Accra Agenda for Action and Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness, of which Nepal has agreed or is committed to.

In terms of earmarked fund, Nepal Government’s intention is that the allocated fund should go to the same sector. In the context of INGOs, they are expected to generate or establish their own fund. This is also in pursuance of the principles of ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results, and mutual accountability of The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness as well as ownership, inclusive partnerships, delivering results, and capacity development as stated in The Accra Agenda for Action are the basic principles of the Government of Nepal.

The Nepal Government has formulated policies to manage development cooperation and aid, and has attempted to streamline aid based on the national priorities and interests. There are some features such as blended finance, South-South cooperation, commercial loan, and private sector engagement. Coordination mechanisms have been systematized in the federal context while considering the mobilization of aid at the Local Levels--which is in the formative stage. In terms of INGOs, there is a 20% limit in administrative costs and the priority areas have been defined, and the Aid Management Platform has been established at the Ministry of Finance.

In addition to this, he said, Nepal’s association at the international levels including the Steering Committee Member of Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), an active governing member of Internal Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) and climate finance forums shows Nepal’s commitment to the aid effectiveness.
Clarifying about the engagement of private contractors, Dr Dhakal said that in some cases donors prefer the implementing partners, but this has some practical implications. These preferences are only as implementing partners but not as contractors.

Member of National Assembly Dr. Rai Paudyal said that the issues of aid and development cooperation are gradually starting to get discussed at the parliament levels as well, most recently about the Millennium Challenge Corporation compact. Since one-fourth of the budget is based on the development cooperation, it is necessary that it is discussed at the parliament level in order to promote aid effectiveness and accountability.

The cascading down of the development cooperation (aid), transaction costs incurred and the resources that actually reach to the direct beneficiaries are critical aspects. Defining the sectors and priorities is the authority of the federal government. One-window policy and transparency and accountability are considered. The Constitution of Nepal has also defined the national priorities. The authorities of all levels of government have been defined. Amidst this, coordination and common understanding among all levels of government is necessary.

As far as the earmarked budget is concerned, it should be spent for Nepal, not for the benefits of expats. Results and accountability should be at the core. Apart from this, capacity of local organizations is debated for decades, but social organizations in Nepal are capable and vibrant. However, if the donors are still tilting towards INGOs to manage aid, it raises questions to their own success as why they have not been able to capacitate the national/local organizations.

**National SDGs Summit and Peoples' Assembly 2020**

As the major event during the SDGs Action Week, National SDGs Summit and Peoples' Assembly 2020 was organized on 25 September 2020 with the slogan of "Accelerating progress on the SDGs through action for people, planet, peace, prosperity and partnership and for recovering forward better from the pandemic". The schedule of the event is attached in the Annex I.
National People's Assembly was jointly organized by National Planning Commission/NPC (Government of Nepal), Nepal SDGs Forum which is coordinated by NGO Federation of Nepal, and UN Agencies in Nepal.

This event was remarkable and unique because of the inclusive multi-stakeholders that came together to organize and participate. Government agencies particularly National Planning Commission (NPC) which is the national focal agency for SDGs, Social Welfare Council (SWC), UN Agencies, civil society organizations in Nepal, National Cooperative Federation of Nepal (NCFN), Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), and local government associations' representatives attended the event.

The People's Assembly had two sessions—inaugural and thematic. President of National Cooperative Federation, President of Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), President of Municipality Association of Nepal (MuAN), United Nations Resident Coordinator in Nepal, and Vice Chair of NPC spoke in the first session that was moderated by Secretary General of NFN Mr Ram Prasad Subedi.

FNCCI Chair Ms. Bhawani Rana pointed out the lack of quality data as a constraint in meeting the SDGs. She highlighted the need of the coordination among all the tiers of the government and strong planning and implementation mechanisms towards meeting the SDGs. She also shared that the private sector will and can contribute to the SDGs.

President of NCF Nepal Mr Min Raj Kandel mentioned that cooperatives which are working in all the parts of the country have a major contribution to the economic and social transformation of the country. As about more than half of the cooperative members are women and about 40% of the women are in leadership positions of the cooperatives, there is high importance of the cooperatives in women empowerment.

Mr. Ashok Kumar Byanju (Shrestha), President of Municipality Association of Nepal, pointed out the issues of unplanned urbanization and urban poverty.
Chief Guest of the opening session, Hon. Puspa Raj Kadel, shed light that Constitution of Nepal with 31 fundamental rights we well as the policies and directives have very well incorporated many aspects of the SDGs and thus the policy alignment of the SDGs starts well from the supreme law of the nation. Yet, he said, Nepal has many challenges in achieving the SDGs, including resource gaps, localization and internalization of the SDGs. In order to overcome the challenges, he said, all the stakeholders need to work together, utilizing technology and harnessing resources. He added that ‘whole of society’ and ‘whole of the government’ approaches are necessary in order to accelerate the progress on SDGs. As Covid-19 pandemic has created resource constraints, and affected social security funds, best utilization of resources is crucial, Mr. Kadel said.

In the second or the thematic session, several presentations were made followed by plenary discussion. Hon. Tara Devi Bhatta, Chairperson of SDG and Governance Committee of the National Assembly, was the chief guest of this session which was moderated by Mr Jit Ram Lama, President of NFN.

Dr. Narayan Poudel, Director at NPC, presented on Engagement of Government on 2030 Agendas. Next, Mr. Arjun Bhattarai, Deputy Secretary General of NFN reviewed CSO Engagement on 2030 Agenda. Likewise, Mr. Dharma Swarnakar, Policy Advisor at UNDP Nepal, spoke about the UNDP engagement on SDGs in Nepal. Ms. Ilse du Pied, WHH Nepal Country Director made a review—based on the recent study report on SDG 2—on the role of INGOs for achieving SDG 2. Moreover, Mr. Achyut Luitel, President of Association of International NGOs (AIN) in Nepal highlighted on the contribution of INGOs on achieving 2030 Agendas, Mr. Hom Narayan Shrestha, President of National Association of Rural Municipalities in Nepal (NARMIN) talked about the role of Local Levels on achieving 2030 Agendas. Krishna Neupane of Association of District Coordination Committees of Nepal (ADCCN) also spoke on the occasion.

This was followed by open discussion and conclusion, in which the speakers focused that CSOs need to be provided with resources to make their engagement meaningful.

In the concluding session, Dr. Padma Prasad Khatriwada, Vice-chair of Social Welfare Council (SWC), said that SWC is promoting one-door system for
development works through CSOs. Towards better documenting and acknowledging the role and contribution of Nepali CSOs/NGOs, assessment of the role and contribution of the CSOs/NGOs has been a priority for SWC. Further, as an alternative to relying on funding, SWC will be promoting social entrepreneurship as a way to improve economy, prosperity and self-reliance.

Hon. Min Bahadur Shahi, member of National Planning Commission (NPC), assured that all the issues raised in the interactive meeting will be well-considered. While Nepal SDGs Forum represented by NFN, and National Cooperative Federation are already in the Steering Committee for the SDGs, further participation and collaboration with CSOs and cooperative sector will be integrated in the Government's actions. Mr Shahi assured that CSO Act which the CSOs have been demanding for years, will soon be formulated in a participatory way.

The Chief Guest of this session Hon. Tara Devi Bhatta appreciated that such a large number of people had gathered to discuss and understand about SDGs. Having acknowledged that SDGs can be achieved only through the collective efforts, she suggested of bringing all the stakeholders on board while resolving any outstanding issues. As the Chairperson of SDG and Governance Committee of the National Assembly, she expressed her commitment to contribute to the implementation of the SDGs. She also emphasized that Local Levels must be capacitated for meeting the SDGs, governance must be improved, investment should be increased, while the gaps need to be identified and addressed appropriately.

Finally, Mr. Bhakta Bishwakarma, President of Dalit NGO Federation, concluded the People's Assembly.

Key CSO Recommendations Presented in the National Peoples' Assembly on SDGs 2020

During the people’s assembly, CSO leaders and speakers emphasized and presented the following key demands:

1. Encourage small and medium enterprises and generate more employment opportunities. Introduce programmes to protect the livelihood of small
landholder farmers, landless agricultural workers, slum dwellers, daily wage labourers, and other poor and

2. Pro-poor and inclusive macro-economic policies need to be adopted to ensure that no one is left behind.

3. In the context of Covid-19, take urgent measures to protect public health, seriously consider the risks and damages caused by health problems other than Covid-19 such as the alarmingly increasing maternal mortality.

4. Provide free, inclusive, equitable and quality education and learning opportunities as guaranteed by the Constitution and ensure necessary legislations at local, province and federal levels.

5. There need to be targeted and focused programmes with higher budgetary allocation in order to address the intersectional marginalization and discrimination faced by women, to increase their public roles, economic opportunities and dignified situation in the society.

6. Increase access to clean, safe and piped drinking water, waste management, improve sanitation and hygiene particularly at schools and health facilities.

7. Give utmost importance in ending all forms of intersectional discrimination, violence, exclusion, exploitation and inequality of women, children, Dalits, indigenous peoples, marginalized groups, LGITIQ, poorest of the poor, older people, people living with HIV AIDS, people with disabilities, people living in remote rural areas and other vulnerable groups. Consider the special needs of these groups.

8. Create enabling environment for identity, education, decent employment and dignified life of sexual and gender minorities, and people with disabilities.

9. The effect of Covid-19 and lockdown has caused long term adverse effects on children and ultimately the future of the nation. So, protect children's physical and psychosocial health, address their learning needs and find ways to recover the loss.

10. Create a collaborative and harmonious environment between the government and civil society including the community organizations to work together to achieve the SDGs. Multi-stakeholder monitoring, review and coordination mechanisms should be in place at all levels of the government.

11. Build CSO-friendly policies and create enabling environment, mobilize them and utilize their strengths and expertise in order to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs.

12. Develop guidelines and frameworks, enhance capacity and support subnational governments in planning, resource allocation, implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. Also build awareness, involve and mobilize
other stakeholders including the local communities for transparency, accountability, ownership, sustainability and effectiveness.

13. Take urgent measures in order to improve governance, transparency, accountability and effectiveness of the implementing agencies and empower the oversight bodies at all levels: federal, province and local.

14. Create and strengthen forums and systems for learning and sharing of lessons, best practices, innovative solutions, constructive feedback and insights. Put emphasis on SDG 16 as a critical enabler and accelerator as it cuts across many themes and the SDGs.

15. Nepal needs to strongly negotiate and lobby with international community for privileges and preferential treatments in trade, technology transfer, foreign direct investment, debt cancellation and development cooperation in accordance with the various international agreements and declarations in this regard.

**Other Events across the country**

1. NCE Nepal organized the online discourse program regarding “Implementation of SDG4 National Framework” on 24th September with the participation of around 180 participants from Zoom and Facebook live.

2. National Campaign for Education Nepal Province 5 committee in coordination with District Coordination Committee Kapilvastu organized the online discourse program on COVID 19: Good Practices for School Education on 25th September.

3. NCE Nepal District Coordination Committee Dang organized two radio discourses on SDG 4 on 25th & 26th September.

4. NCE Nepal District Coordination Committee Parbat organized two online discourse programs regarding the role of local governments and CSOs on SDGs on 21st and 23rd September.


6. Youth Advocacy Nepal organized a panel discussion on “Role of Youth in localizing SDGs” and “Education 2030 Nepal National Framework” on 24 September.

7. Youth Advocacy Nepal organized the Second Nepal Youth SDG Summit from 24-26 September. It included dialogue on “Education Framework 2030: Challenges and Opportunities”, and “Localization of SDGs and Role of Young people”.
9. SWC, Nepal SDGs Forum, NGO Federation of Nepal and TDG Germany jointly organized
Annex I: Agenda of National SDGs Summit and Peoples' Assembly 2020

Leave no one behind
"Accelerating progress on the SDGs through action for people, planet, peace, prosperity and partnership and for recovering forward better from the pandemic"

Global Week of Action for the SDGs in Nepal
On the Occasion of the 5th Anniversary of the Launch of the SDGs
National SDGs Summit and Peoples' Assembly 2020
25 September 2020

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Agenda for National SDGs Summit</th>
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<td>2:00-2:10</td>
<td>Chair, Welcome and Context Setting by Jitram Lama, President of NGO Federation of Nepal</td>
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| 2:10-2:45  | **Chief Guest** Honorable **Prof Dr. Puspa Raj Kadel**, Vice Chair of National Planning Commission  
**Opening Message/Speakers of SDGs Summit**  
Mr Min Raj Kadel: President of National Cooperative Federation  
Ms. Bhawani Rana, President of Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI)  
Mr. Ashok Kumar Byanju (Shrestha), President of Municipality Association of Nepal  
Ms. Valerie Julliand, The United Nations Resident Coordinator in Nepal  
**Chief Guest** Honorable **Prof Dr Puspa Raj Kadel**, Vice Chair of National Planning Commission- |
| 2:45-2:50  | Launching books of CSOs: report on SDG 2 and youth constituency by chief guest Hon Prof Dr Kadel with Support of Mr. BB Thapa |
| 2:50-3:00  | Closing of First Session |
| 2:50-3:00  | Short video presentation on best practices of multi-stakeholders' engagement for achieving 2030 Agendas with support from Hum Bhandari |

Join us at zoom: [https://undp.zoom.us/j/99010455615](https://undp.zoom.us/j/99010455615)
National Workshop on Accelerating Progress of SDGs in Nepal/Peoples’ Assembly

Chief Guest of National Workshop: Ms. Hon. Tara Devi Bhatta-Chairperson of SDG and Governance Committee of Parliament

3:00-4:15

Panelists
Dr. Narayan Poudel, Director, National Planning Commission: Presentation on Engagement of Government on 2030 Agendas- 7 Min
Mr. Arjun Bhattarai, Deputy Secretary General of NGO Federation of Nepal: Review of CSOs Engagement on 2030 Agendas- 5 Min
Mr. Dharma Swarnakar: Policy Advisor, UNDP- UNDP engagement on SDGs in Nepal- 5 Min.
Ms. Ilse du Pied, Country Director- WHH Nepal: Role of INGOs for achieving Goal 2 - 5 min
Mr Achuyt Luitel: President of Association of International NGOs (AIN) in Nepal- Contribution of INGOs on achieving 2030 Agendas- 5 min
Mr. Hom Narayan Shrestha: President of National Association of Rural Municipality in Nepal (NARMIN)- Role of Local Levels on achieving 2030 Agendas -5 min

Interaction Session Moderated by Mr Jitram Lama

Interaction: CSOs Perspectives- (3 min each)
Youth: Mr. Naren Khatiwada, President - Youth Advocacy Nepal (YAN)
Irrigation: Mr. Shambhu Dulal- Secretary General - National Federation of Irrigation Water User’s Association, Nepal (NFIWUAN)
Dalit: Mr. Bhakta BK, Acting President- Dalit NGO Federation of Nepal
Forestry: Ms. Bharati Pathak, President- Federation of Community Forestry Users' Nepal

4:15-4:30

Commitment from Government-
Dr Padma Prasad Khatiwada: Vice-Chairperson of Social Welfare Council
Hon. Min Bahadur Shahi: Member of National Planning Commission
Chief Guest: Hon. Tara Devi Bhatta- Chairperson of SDG and Governance Committee of Parliament

Thanks and closing by the chair

#TurnItAround
Annex II: Banner and Invitations of National SDGs Summit and Peoples' Assembly 2020

Leave No One Behind

"Accelerating progress on the SDGs through action for people, planet, peace, partnership and prosperity and for recovering forward better from the pandemic"

INVITATION

Global Week of Action for the SDGs in Nepal
National People’s Assembly

Meeting Id: 99010455615

25 September 2020 2:00pm - 4:30pm

#TurnItAround

Organizers

Government of Nepal National Planning Commission
Annex III: Photographs