

CONFERENCE PROCEEDING



**NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
PRACTITIONERS ON
CLIMATE CHANGE: LINKING
PRACTICES TO POLICY**

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Climate and Development Dialogue

Climate and Development Dialogue (C&D Dialogue) is an informal common platform of non-governmental organizations that facilitates dialogue, and exchange of knowledge and learning on the interrelations between climate change, development and gender equality. It also works to bridge the knowledge gap in these areas between the national and local levels, and generate collective actions for policy interventions.



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BACKGROUND

In the wake of new climate change policy in Nepal and country's experience implementing climate change related initiatives it is of essential importance to get the perspective of the practitioners. For practitioners, some of the policy dialogue on climate change can seem very different from the realities and implementation challenges they face on the ground. It is they who constantly and systematically iterate, refine, and adapt it based on what they are learn throughout the process. Therefore, it is crucial to get their valuable insights into the practice of designing, implementing, evaluating, and scaling interventions. Such learning approach for all stakeholders, including the policymakers, will help to derive useful practical insights to frame quality, inclusive, and coherent climate change interventions.

Recognizing and building on the knowledge through the “doing” of the practitioners, Climate and Development Dialogue organized a day-long conference on November 22, 2019 in Kathmandu. The conference reflected on good practices in climate change work and thereby sought to influence policy and practice in Nepal and expand this knowledge internationally as well.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

- *Contribute on building new knowledge on climate change and thereby influencing the policy and practices both in Nepal and internationally.*
- *Bring practitioners, policy makers, researchers and experts in climate change and DRR in learning and sharing platform.*
- *Document best practices, learning and challenges in implementing climate change projects and programmes in the form of case stories.*

OPENING SESSION



WELCOME ADDRESS

Welcoming the participants to the workshop, Saroj Pokhrel, laid particular emphasis on the need of a global effort to shift the narrative from climate change to climate justice as this issue is linked with people's lives and livelihoods. He said it was important to involve all stakeholders, including practitioners and academia in this discourse and called on everyone to be a part of this dialogue. He was glad that the policy on climate change was in place but stressed on its proper implementation. He felt that this workshop involving practitioners would go a long way to make climate change discourse not only pragmatic but also create ownership of all key stakeholders.

Saroj Pokhrel

*Program Policy Manager
ActionAid Nepal*



Dr. Bharat Kumar Pokharel

*Country Director, HELVETAS Swiss
Intercooperation*

KEY NOTE SPEECH

He termed climate change agenda “global noise and local cry” as he observed that the climate change discourse is very catchy and much precedence is given to global interactions rather than local issues. The stand point of the victims is going unheeded in the present day climate discourse; they have too limited access to climate finance and are denied justice as the polluters are still dictating terms to non-polluting country like ours. Therefore, as the victim we are adapting to the impacts of climate change on our own; various such adaptation measures are under way in our villages. Therefore, it is high time to emphasize “practice to policy” approach rather than being guided by policy, first. It is imperative to ensure that the lived experiences and indigenous adaptation practices are reflected in our policies, and relevant international policies informed accordingly.

He was of the view that the language of the current climate change discourse is very scientific and complex for local community people to comprehend which has systematically excluded them from participating in such dialogue.

It is important to contextualize and localize the narrative, language and terms used in climate discourse so that the local community people can be aware of, participate and own the process.

He also mentioned that the whole climate discourse should also be compatible with the federal structure of the country. Implementation of the National Climate Change Policy requires a law and regulations clearly spelling out the climate governance structure and resource allocation mechanism. He felt that the local government was doing good work and called on them to cooperate, coordinate and coexist. He thanked the organizers for including the practitioners’ perspective in this discourse which enticed him to be a part of this conference. He concluded by stressing the need for a match between appropriate policy, legal framework and local practice to respond to climate change effectively.



Dr. Maheshwar Dhakal

*Head, Climate Change Management Division,
Ministry of Forests and Environment*

GUEST REMARK

Dr. Maheshwor Dhakal thanked organizers as he felt that such dialogue would help the government to be familiar with views of the stakeholders, especially of the practitioners, and in the process facilitate fine tune its policies and practices. He brought to attention that the current policy on climate change has incorporated the insights of wide ranging stakeholders through a nationwide consultative dialogue. He described the policy as an attempt to ensure compatibility with the country's five-year development plan and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with climate change as the cross cutting theme.

The policy has secured space also for the role of NGOs, he said asking NGOs working in climate change to share their good work under way in different parts of the country and their results with the government so that it can showcase the good practices of Nepal in international forums like the Conference of Parties meeting of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. While awareness and capacity building, and access to information are crucial for scaling climate actions, climate finance plays the pivotal role, he said and underlined the need for concerted effort to bring in more climate finance and necessary technology. Generating finances for climate actions within the country is equally important, he said suggesting linking community forests to industry could be one of the areas to explore in this regard.



Dr. Krishna Prasad Oli

Member, National Planning Commission

CHIEF GUEST REMARK

He said that he was pleased to see a number of young people participating in the conference. He likened the current climate change deliberations like a Pandit chanting something and then people following without understanding anything. The climate change discourse is loaded with terms that are almost incomprehensible for a common person. But people are still trying to go for it because it is catchy but few have realized that on closer observation the Pandit, who used to visit our house during pujas, was actually saying things that current climate change proponents are propagating. So it is important for us to look within and contextualize such issues to successfully practice it.

He mentioned amongst the current bigger challenges: proliferation of nuclear weapons, scarcity of resources, infectious diseases, climate change was one of them and needed to be recognized and treated as an emergency. He said that everyone has to be conscious of it and made aware of by localizing the issues. Underlining the gravity of the impact of climate change in Nepal, he said even if the global temperature is maintained at 1.5 degree C, 30 per cent of the Himalayas will melt.

He was of the view that the agenda for the country should be that of justice and its right as a vulnerable country which has to face the climate change brunt without any of its fault.



Mr. Govinda Shahi

Executive Director, KIRDARC

CHAIR REMARK

Introducing himself as a practitioner, not an expert, Mr. Shahi shared his lived experiences of the effects of climate change on the local communities (Karnali) in the forms of changing weather patterns, droughts, drying of water sources etc. Increased incidents of displacement by the Karnali floods are becoming common phenomena, less snowfall has resulted in low winter crop yield and people are experiencing a distortion in flowering and fruiting phases. But, he said, the community people have no clue as to why all these are happening.

However, he further said, the community people are taking measures to cope with the changes they are experiencing so as to make sure their day-to-day lives are not thrown out of gear. The country's policies including climate change policy should be informed by such local realities and indigenously evolving practices for adaptation, he observed

He felt that international forums do not reach people that are encountering the affects of climate change and called for creating an all-encompassing network for raising voice against the polluting nations to stand by their international commitments to rightfully compensate those who are affected by climate change. On this front, Climate and Development Dialogue (C&D Dialogue), a forum of about a dozen INGOs and NGOs working in the areas of climate change, gender and sustainable development is a unique initiative in this direction. The forum is playing crucial role in creating local subnational national linkage; using community experience and learning as a tool for policy influencing at national as well as global level and creating opportunities for exchange of experience and learning such as this conference, Mr Shahi observed.

THEMATIC SESSIONS

THEMATIC SESSION 1: CONDUCTING CLIMATE VULNERABILITY AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Moderator:

Sunil Acharya, Practical Action



Bina Buddhacharya

Nepal Mahila Ekta Samaj



Her presentation mostly centered on her experience working with poor women in unorganized urban settlements of Kathmandu. The rapid growth of urban population and the resultant competition for the limited resources has resulted in disproportionate effect of climate-induced disasters on the urban poor as they are highly vulnerable with low resilience, she observed.

While they have been living in high risk areas with challenging conditions, uncertain shifting weather patterns, as a result of climate change, bring in frequent rains and resultant floods which have further compounded their problems. Thunderstorm and windstorm are also causes of worry as their temporary shelters are damaged. The cramped settlements sometimes are cause of fire too. During such adversity lot of women health related issues come to the fore.

Mahila Ekta Samaj has been working with such women to build their capacities on safe housing, self defence, decent living. Whilst working with the local government she found out that though and there is a disaster management committee with a certain budget, the community cannot access it because they do not have land entitlements. She said that they do not have access to such government institutions as “our repeated plea to redress our issues have fallen on deaf ears.” She said that rampant development is making people vulnerable. Helping each other is the only way out for the communities.

Surendra Thaguna

Center for Social Development and Research (CSDR), Bardiya

He shared his experience using Flood Resilience Measurement of Communities (FRMC) in four rural municipalities, two each in Bardiya and Kailali districts. The tool is used to measure community-level resilience to flooding and generate evidence and provide a guide to further develop this resilience. He finds this tool comprehensive which uses five capital



and 44 sources of resilience. It helps to deepen understanding of the key components of disaster resilience in order to improve target resilience-enhancing initiatives. It also measure disaster resilience over a period of time and compare how resilience changes as a result of different capacities, actions and hazards. He also said that the learning has been shared with the local governments and it has helped them in considering resilience building in their planning process.

Mahesh Gautam

Nepal Red Cross Society, Bardiya



Referring to the country's diverse geography and topography, Mr. Gautam said rainfall during the monsoon season causes flood, landslide and debris flow as most of the rivers that flow downstream have their outlet in the terai region. He said that the country has been grappling with myriad issues; related to climate-induced and other disasters.

He pointed out that during field visit to the community he did not find any documentation of disasters at the local government level; using “recall method” elderly people just refer to as a big flood in a certain year. Flooding and change of course by the rivers not only caused some settlements but also the district headquarters to be relocated. Observing that there are instances of poverty causing community people to risk their life in order to secure their livelihood, he said during one of the Karnali floods one of the members of a family that was on the rooftop of the house, which was already inundated, climbed down into the house to protect a little money the family had saved from the growing water level. But he never climbed back to the rooftop as he drowned.

He drew the participants' attention to the year 2028-2035 BS when a lot of deforestation took place in order to resettle those affected by floods in the Terai. He cited the example of Kanchanpur district where 12000 Bighas (around 1926 Ha) forest was razed for such settlement, 5.5 Bighas respectively in Kailali and Bardiya. Over a period people migrated and settled in and around the forest areas. He pointed out the over dependent for resources on the fragile eco-system of Chure. Construction of dams and high road around the border area by India is also another reason for flooding in the terai region.

He admitted that the disaster risks and impacts assessment tools currently in practice are not very practical and spoke of the need to integrate climate change considerations into these tools and related guideline. These tools need to simplify them so that everyone can understand and apply them. He also stressed the need for uniformity in the laws made by local government on supporting those affected by disasters; some rural municipalities provide five hundred thousand Nepali rupees to those whose houses have been destroyed where as some adjoining ones offer only ten thousand Nepali rupees.

Dev D. Bhatta

Practical Action Nepal

He shared the climate and fragility assessment tool that Practical Action is applying



successfully, he gave an example of building roads. It is good to build roads but, meanwhile, it is equally important to make sure road building does not cause inundation. In his presentation he pointed out the increasing global temperature and climate change as a threat multiplier which is leading to seven compounding climate fragility risk threatening state and societies.

He presented the findings generated by applying the tool in four municipalities of Kailali and Bardiya districts. He talked about three key fragility risk indicators: exposure to climatic risks, sensibility, and adaptive capacity of the affected communities. The study findings showed that all the four municipalities were highly vulnerable but the Geruwa Municipality was the most fragile in terms of all the three key indicators.

REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Urban centers are equally vulnerable and at risks of climate disasters. Climate vulnerability and risk assessment must include indicators of urban vulnerabilities.*
2. *Current methods of climate vulnerability and risk assessment use mix of participatory tools and science-based hydro metrological information to assess vulnerabilities and risk induced by climate change.*
3. *It is essential to de-construct climate change terminologies so that local people can relate to them. For example, it is difficult for many to distinguish between 'vulnerability' and 'fragility'. Tools used for various purposes are too complicated to understand and apply, they need to be simplified.*
4. *Relocation and resettlement due to climate induced disasters is evident and increasing with more frequent and intense disasters. Methods and tools to document loss and damage associated with climate change need to be developed.*



THEMATIC SESSIONS

THEMATIC SESSION 2: TRACKING CLIMATE FINANCE AT NATIONAL, PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL LEVELS

Moderator:

Prabin Man Singh, Prakriti Resources Centre.



Sneha Rai

Prakriti Resources Centre



Ms Rai's presentation centered around the findings of PRC's research on Adaptation Finance Tracking in Nepal. The research that covered the period 2013-17, looked into compatibility between the fund committed by selected multi-lateral and bilateral agencies (as reported to OECD) and the actual budget size of the projects implemented by various agencies on the ground. During the study period Nepal received 609 climate related projects with a budget of USD 1.9 billion. The

largest funding agencies were: WB 33 %, ADB 29 %, European Investment Bank, 11%. Among the bi- laterals the highest was UK 4% followed by US, 3.9 % and Germany 2.4%.

The research assessed the projects by applying a three-step approach-- climate vulnerability context, statement of purpose or intent, link to project activities-- and scored on the scale of 0-10. The overall finding showed discrepancies in the budget for adaptation finance (AF). Projects earmarked as adaptation finance, especially large projects, did not have significant share of adaptation. There appeared to be inconsistency between the project document figures and the actual amount utilized.

She also listed some of the challenges whilst conducting the research. One of the issues was of double counting (climate finance and development finance), Certain projects like earthquake housing reconstruction project and road sector development project did not comply with climate change criteria and had to be dropped from the selected list for assessment. People contacted for the information did not always provide the right documents and some documents were yet to be in public domain.

Yogendra Subedi

Institute for Social and Environment Transition Nepal (ISET Nepal)

Mr. Subedi underlined the need to ensure that the communities receive maximum fund for climate change adaption work. He based his presentation on two reports Adaptation Finance Accountability Initiative, 2016 and Climate Finance Governance in Nepal, 2018. His study focused on four projects, namely, EBA 1, Hariyo Ban, NCCSP, MSFP.

A deduction can be made through various interactions with stakeholders and analysis of data that the introduction of budget code has helped track climate change finance



at national. He stressed the need for the stakeholders-- researchers and practitioners-- to get together and develop criteria for defining climate finance. At the local government level climate adaptation issues still do not get priority and the government is falling far short of spending 80% benchmark on adaptation at the community level. He pointed out a lack of coordination among government agencies concerned at the national level.

REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *There is inconsistency in donor marking of climate finance. Projects are double counted both as development finance and climate finance.*
2. *Information related to climate finance are not readily accessible. Many organizations are reluctant to provide financial information about climate change programme and projects.*
3. *A common and accepted definition of climate finance is needed to effectively track climate finance nationally and internationally.*
4. *There is a need to develop a detailed mechanism to devolve more climate finance to sub-national levels as targeted in the policy.*



THEMATIC SESSIONS

THEMATIC SESSION 3: MAIN-STREAMING GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN CLIMATE PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

Moderator:

Saloni Singh, DidiBahini



Yamuna Ghale

Gender, Agriculture and Climate Change Expert



Welcoming the focus of the conference on practitioners-policies linkages, Ms Ghale talked about climate change from agriculture and gender perspective. 66% of the country's population is engaged in agriculture, while this is one of the sectors most sensitive to climate change. In the villages where most of youths have left for better employment opportunities, woman's workload has increased many folds with additional agricultural related work. This double – triple fold burden has led to lack of enthusiasm among women to do anything to enhance their learning in areas such as climate change, she said. She spoke of the need to broaden the understanding of agriculture from simply production particularly, on discourses like climate change. Agricultural is multi-functional, socio-cultural, political, environmental and economic, and therefore climate discussions should take cognizance of such fact.

She pointed out that the provincial and local governments are making new laws but the presence of women and small farmers are extremely low in policy formulation process. Municipalities and rural municipalities are more interested in market which evokes attention more of private sector, which is interested in large lands. In these significant discussions the participation of women and small farmers is almost nonexistent. Hence, it is critical that the political and economic capability of the climate vulnerable groups is enhanced.

Thir Bahadur Thapa Magar

Himawanti Province 3



Mr Magar presented a case study of Ward no. 3 in Khadadevi rural municipality of Ramechhap district. The village comprises 47 households, majority of them belonging to Majhi or fishermen community. All households were below poverty line as the village had low literacy rate, just a small number of them with school leaving certificate, livelihoods depended on agriculture, daily wages and foreign employment. As their settlements were near the river they were highly vulnerable to disasters like landslides and floods. The effect of climate change was quite visible. The district as a whole is badly affected by drought. As many other parts of the Ward no. 3 experienced frequent flooding when Sunkoshi River swells, gradual drying of water sources, decrease in agricultural output, forest fires etc.

With the support of government and non-government organizations including

Himawanti the scenario of this village has currently changed for the better. The Majhi community is embarking on the path of resilience, he said while talking about various software and hardware measures undertaken to respond to climate change. The village now is seeing gradual increase in the livelihoods as agriculture output as well as livestock has grown. Women's participation has gone up as most of them are in leadership roles in various users' committees and cooperatives. The election of local person from the Majhi community as ward member has helped local issues of the village to find expression in ward and rural municipality meetings.

Dr. Anita Shrestha

Himawanti



She narrated her research experience working, initially with communities of 6 VDCs near the Tamakoshi River, and later in Manthali and Khadadevi Municipalities. Referring to her ethnographic research findings she said the effects of climate change were experienced by the local women as water sources were drying and agriculture was affected by unpredictable weather pattern. The crops that used to grow in certain topography are now growing in other areas too. Papaya which used to grow in low lands of Manthali are now found growing in the upper reaches of Chisapani.

The drying of water sources in the uplands has forced women to travel to low areas for water which has led to many problems for them such as snake bites, pregnant women losing their life in slippery slopes, difficulty during menstrual cycles, missing schools by young girls and dropping out of school. Increase in work load but also decrease in it because as they don't have water for cultivating the land there have nothing else to do. In light of what she learnt from her research, Dr Shrestha emphasized that climate change discourse has to be looked from the perspective of socio-cultural lens as well.

REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Impacts of climate change on agriculture and water resources are increasing work burden and adversely affecting livelihoods of women and indigenous communities like Majhis (fisherfolks).*
2. *Adaptation actions must prioritize agriculture and water resources to protect sustainable livelihoods of the most vulnerable communities.*
3. *Representation of women and indigenous communities in laws making processes is critical in addressing their needs and concerns.*

THEMATIC SESSIONS

THEMATIC SESSION 4: WORKING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN MAINSTREAMING CLIMATE CHANGE IN MUNICIPAL PLANS AND BUDGETS

Moderator:

Rajendra Khanal, DanChurch Aid



Kamala Basnet

Deputy Mayor, Bhimeshwar Municipality



The deputy mayor highlighted some of the municipality's environment and climate change related initiatives. She mentioned that they have been setting aside budget every year for climate change. Despite some confusion over the mandate concerning forests the municipality allocated NPR 7.5 million for forest and environment in FY 2074-2075 BS. In the following two FY budgets, NPR 10 million and NPR 8.5 million was set aside respectively primarily

to such initiatives as 'one community forest and one pond' campaign, tree plantation, institutional development and capacity building of community forest users groups etc. She also said that Disaster Risk Management Committee (DRMC) has been formed and engaged mostly in landslides control and addressing community vulnerability to such disasters. She said that the government has been providing irrigation support to farmers, encouraged organic farming and as the farmers have found kiwi farming lucrative the local government has supported such initiatives too.

Although the municipality has not so far developed its climate change policy as such it has been provisioned in its policy and programme. The deputy mayor said and informed the conference that the municipality will develop this policy during its upcoming plan period.

Kripa Ram Chaudhary

Ward Member, Belauri Municipality, Kanchanpur

Ward no. 5 member Mr. Chaudhary shed light on the local government initiatives, which, he feels, are supporting the livelihoods of community people, while contributing to addressing impacts of climate change. He cited the engagement of 170 households of freed Kamaiyas in



fish farming by utilizing 12 hectares of marsh land known as Shobha Taal (lake). He also said that he worked closely with the municipality also to arrange for solar-powered water lifting system in the fish farm so as to retain water even during the dry season. At the request of the community members Mr. Chaudhary supported them to plant lemon plants and bamboo around the fish pond. As a result of the fish farming and other small agricultural farming activities, the communities have diversified their livelihoods and are earning well to send their children to schools, he said, adding he has been allocating budget for tree plantation, cultivation along the river banks and, promoting biogas as alternative energy. The local government has supported the maintenance of community forests in the adjoining areas. The future plan of the people and the local government is to make the area a tourist destination, he said

Rama Poudel

Himawanti Province 2



Ms. Poudel said that she had heard a lot about climate change but did not understand it much. This event, she added, helped a lot to learn what climate change is all about and how it is affecting various aspects of life. She referred to the empirical evidences of the impacts of climate change that the communities are experiencing in various forms such as decrease in water level, crops infested with pests etc. Stressing the need to make all adaptation interventions context specific, she opined that adaptation capacity of local communities must be taken into account while collecting data on climate change. The most important thing that is needed in the communities is the language of climate change; it needs to be simple enough for them to understand otherwise they might be excluded.

REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Local government actions such as organic farming, controlling use of pesticides etc have directly and indirectly contributed to build resilience and adaptive capacity of local communities. However many of these actions are sporadic and difficult to measure.*
2. *Local governments need to formulate policies and plans and allocate additional financial resources to effectively undertake climate actions in their respective municipalities.*
3. *Capacity building support is needed to local governments to work more efficiently for addressing climate change impacts.*



CLOSING SESSION



Ms. Elisa Rai

The Mountain Institute

VOTE OF THANKS

Quoting Charles Darwin, “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change survives”, Elisa Rai of The Mountain Institute thanked all the participants for exchanging their experience and acknowledged the effort of Climate and Development Dialogue for giving space for representatives from the grassroots to the policy levels in the deliberations on the important issue. She called on everyone to be a part of such dialogue and contribute to the climate change discourse in the country also in the days to come.



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