

# Climate Finance Capacity Strengthening Workshop

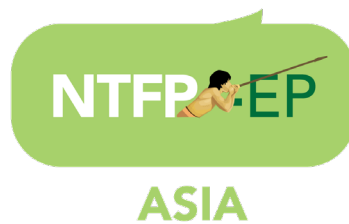
## Proceeding Report

27-29 October 2024

Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha, Kathmandu, Nepal



# Collaborating Partners



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# Background

As the effects of climate change intensify, urgent global action for adaptation, mitigation and climate action plans has become pressing, particularly in Asia, where vulnerability is rapidly increasing. Countries like Nepal, India, and the Philippines have been facing the severe brunt of erratic monsoons, causing immense devastation to both human lives and their economies. Moreover, these climate crises are exacerbating the vulnerabilities of women of different intersections, girls and differently abled people, underscoring the urgent need for climate finance to protect these vulnerable groups.

Over the years, many countries have committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and are developing climate action plans, but significant increase in climate finance is essential for their success. The International Monetary Fund (2024) estimates that developing Asian countries need at least USD 1.1 trillion annually for climate investments, with current funding falling short by USD 800 billion. The Asian Development Bank's 2023 climate finance report reveals that mitigation efforts dominate climate finance, with only 8 % allocated to adaptation measures.

International cooperation and multilateral initiatives, particularly through the Green Climate Fund (GCF), have been crucial in supporting climate finance efforts in Asia, where many countries are engaging in enhancing their policies and institutional frameworks to mobilise and utilise climate finance effectively. For this, civil society organisations (CSOs) – the essentials for a more resilient and sustainable future, have been instrumental in addressing gaps in climate finance by advocating for increased funding, promoting transparency and accountability, supporting community-led initiatives, and advancing inclusive and equitable approaches to climate actions.

Building on this premise, Prakriti Resources Center (PRC), in collaboration with Dhaatri Trust, Non-Timber Forest Product-Exchange Programme (NTFP-EP), and Both ENDS, organized the 'Climate Finance Capacity Strengthening Workshop' from 27 October to 29 October 2024. The workshop aimed to strengthen the capacity of partner organisations of the Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA) in Asia to run advocacy programmes effectively. It emphasised knowledge sharing and building to empower the different advocacy movements for climate finance led by the participants in their respective countries for gender-just climate solutions.

## Participation

Participation: 20 participants from different CSOs in India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, the Netherlands and the Philippines attended the workshop, providing an intense and intimate setting for the seminar to share and build knowledge together.



Opening session:

## Prabin Man Singh

### **The Programme and Finance Director at Prakriti Resources Centre**

Starting the workshop, Prabin Man Singh welcomed everyone and asked for their meaningful participation in the seminar. Introducing the programme, Singh outlined the two objectives of the workshop:

- Capacitating the GAGGA members in Asia in their knowledge of climate finance and Green Climate Fund.
- Identifying advocacy priorities on climate finance for GAGGA member organizations in the UNFCCC COP29 and beyond.

The workshop looked at understanding the different levels of climate negotiations happening globally, nationally, and locally. The workshop focused on the processes of applying for climate finance and addressing gaps in funds while also critically looking at how the dispersed funds have been used. Singh also said the workshop aimed to link climate finance processes at the global level to the community level. The workshop's findings and discussion would be pertinent for the upcoming COP 29 happening in Baku. Singh, concluding his remarks, invited everyone to learn from each other and asked participants to engage more with one another to build networks for the future and to collaborate on climate initiatives together.



Welcome address:

**Raju Pandit  
Chhetri**

### **The Executive Director at Prakriti Resources Centre**

Raju Pandit Chhetri welcomed all the participants and expressed his excitement at seeing participants engage with each other. Chhetri discussed the need to expand one's knowledge about gender interventions and climate finance by examining how countries have approached climate finance and adaptation and mitigation actions. In his address, Chhetri highlighted the importance of the GAGGA network and how it has allowed for knowledge exchange among countries to work on their respective climate efforts. He also acknowledged the support of Both Ends in promoting and endorsing knowledge-sharing and building workshops like this to help engage with climate interventions, objectives and actions more effectively. Chhetri asked participants to deem the question, *'How can one work among climate actors in the national context?'* with the knowledge sharing led by workshops like this at the international level. He said it is important to discuss and take knowledge of climate processes to the national level and, from there, the local level to connect it with the larger global perspective. He highlighted that countries and CSOs can no longer work alone; collaboration is necessary to combat climate change.

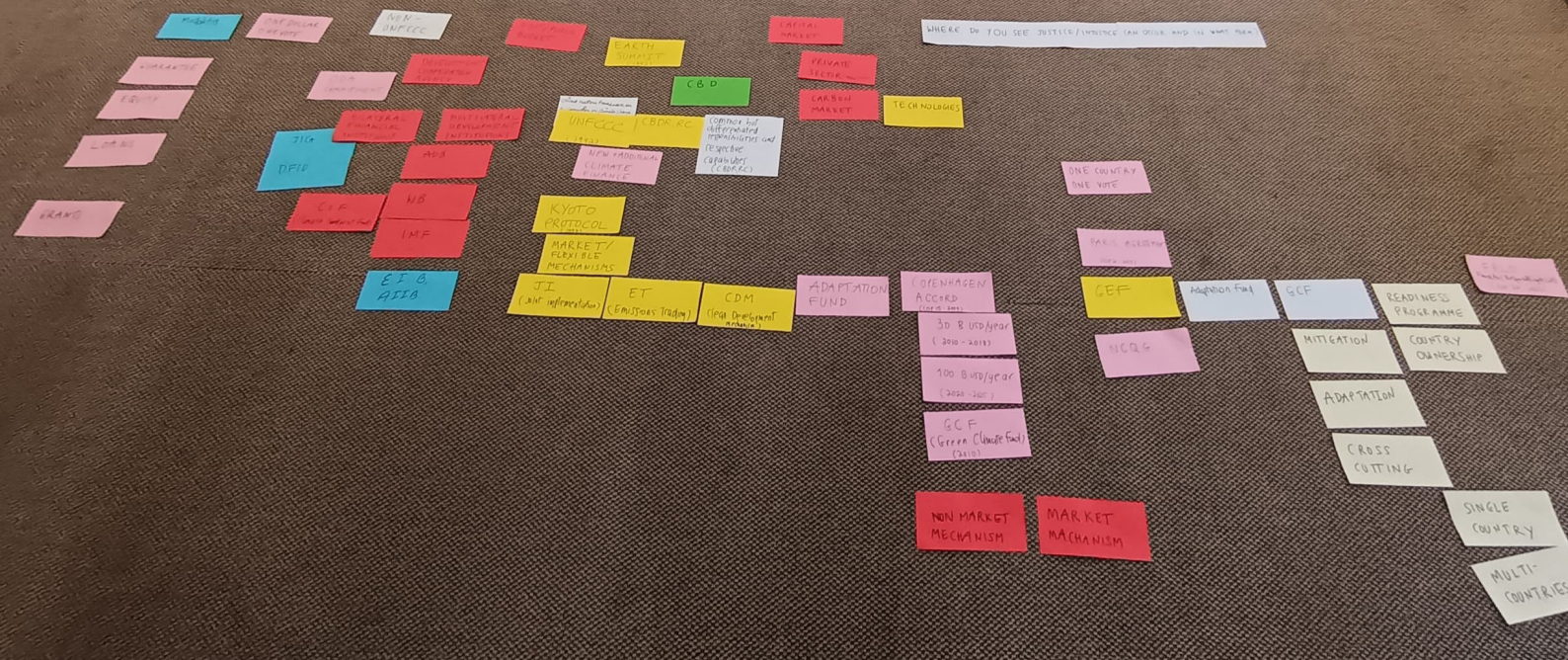


Welcome address:

**Daan  
Robben**

### **The Senior Policy Advisor for Climate Finance at Both ENDS**

Welcoming the participants, Daan Robben said he has been involved with GAGGA since 2017 and has been inspired by the alliance's different engagement in fostering a climate resilient, sustainable just-future. Robben highlighted that GAGGA has adapted its agenda over the years to incorporate women's role in climate action. He noted that the network has gained recognition for its commitment to gender-just climate adaptation initiatives. However, he expressed concern over the network's future stability as the Netherlands' governance is going through a change. He assured the participants that the GAGGA network is not just a project but a movement in its own and will continue to evolve. As an example, he talked about the collaboration between PRC and TEWA in Nepal, emphasising how partnerships allow for more effective results in these organisations' work. Robben, encouraging participation in the workshop said he looks forward to knowing how the seminar would strengthen the participating CSOs' climate advocacy and initiatives. He also urged participants to think of how they can collaborate with each other to work together on climate initiatives.



# Session 1: Concepts of Climate Finance

**Titi Soentoro,**  
 The Executive Director at Aksi! for Gender, Social and Ecological Justice, Indonesia

**Wanun Permpibul,**  
 The Executive Director at Climate Watch Thailand

As part of the first workshop session, Titi Soentoro and Wanun Permpibul organised an interactive learning activity with participants that focussed on the storytelling of climate finance with the help of placards distributed to participants. The session provided background knowledge of climate finance to enable participants to understand the discussions later in the workshop. Soentoro and Permpibul emphasised the importance of understanding the origins and pathways of climate financing, including government finance, public budgets and capital markets. They highlighted that funds are largely channelled through Official Development Assistance (ODA), Bilateral Financial Institutions, Multilateral Development Institutions and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). They also mentioned ODA is committed to acknowledging historical responsibilities stemming from colonialism and aims to address both development and climate issues.

They explained, the UNFCCC framework established in 1992 introduced the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CbDR), recognising that countries vary in capacities to address climate change. The UNFCCC framework introduced the Green Climate Fund (GCF) in 2010.

Later, in 2015, the Paris Agreement further reinforced committed countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and take adaptive climate actions while calling on developed nations to support climate initiatives in developing countries financially. It also stated that the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the Adaptation Fund (AF) are the three financial mechanisms under the UNFCCC. In 2022, the Loss and Damage Fund was established under the UNFCCC.

Over the years, many non-UNFCCC entities have also accessed UNFCCC funds to combine their financing and enhance the impact of their climate-related projects. Permpibul and Soentoro asked the participants to think about where justice and injustice occur in this financial architecture. Both UNFCCC and non-UNFCCC follow the same modality of finance: grants, loans, guarantees and equity. They pointed out that although a new mechanism has been brought about for climate finance, over the years, the power of the fund has rested upon developed countries. The two presenters also pointed out that the country's ownership of the UNFCCC often overshadows people's views and speaks more about the interests of influential private sectors. They said there are policies and mechanisms under the UNFCCC that attempt to strengthen developing countries and processes that capacitate them to access finance under GCF, like the Readiness Program. However, it is essential to be critical of who is making the decisions on climate finance and actions and who ultimately benefits from them. To know how the seminar would strengthen the participating CSOs' climate advocacy and initiatives. He also urged participants to think of how they can collaborate with each other to work together on climate initiatives.



## Session 2: Experiences and Mobilisation of Finance for Climate and Gender Actions

The panel session, moderated by Mynabel Pomarin, discussed Nepal, India, and Indonesia's case studies in climate-related actions concerning climate finance. The session also elucidated the financing mechanism used by projects. Additionally, it emphasised the importance of a gender-just approach in climate projects in various countries. Furthermore, it highlighted that climate projects need to listen to the voices of marginalised and vulnerable communities. Moreover, it discussed each of their organisation's roles in lobbying and advocating for climate action and justice.

### **Pragya Sherchan,** The Programme Coordinator at Prakriti Resources Centre

Pragya Sherchan presented on 'Female Climate Heroes', highlighting the role of women in advancing climate action in Nepal. She mentioned since the introduction of the climate budget coding system in 2013, federal budgets have been allocated for climate initiatives. However, PRC's research findings reveal significant gaps in budget allocation; only 5% of projects are directly relevant to climate change, while only 20% are indirectly related. Sherchan noted that although Nepal has a gender-responsive budget, there is often no clear distinction between climate and gender finance.

PRC has been collaborating with Tewa, a non-governmental organisation that promotes grassroots philanthropy and sustainable development for rural women in Nepal since 2018 to engage with the diverse networks of women's groups that Tewa has built throughout its work.

PRC has been collaborating with Tewa, a non-governmental organisation that promotes grassroots philanthropy and sustainable development for rural women in Nepal since 2018 to engage with the diverse networks of women's groups that Tewa has built throughout its work. PRC has, until now, capacitated five women's groups and has continued to transform women into active actors in climate change. Through their joint knowledge-capacitating programmes, women's groups have conserved water sources and provided access to clean drinking water. They have also been able to cultivate, plant, and contribute to climate efforts. According to PRC's findings, women groups have accessed about Rs. 2,935,000 for their locally led climate actions. One of the women's groups, Sahayatra Nepal in Ilam, has not only been able to access local finance for their locally led climate actions but has also been able to help their local municipality develop the region's adaptation action plans.

Throughout PRC's climate advocacy efforts, these women-led success stories have offered valuable insights for the organisation to take these lessons forward, replicate this success, and enhance the effectiveness of women-led interventions. Sherchan shared some of these critical learnings as:

1. Women's leadership can play a significant role in shaping policies and addressing climate impacts.
2. There is a need to change the notion of women from victims, recipients, or beneficiaries to active agents of change and key stakeholders.
3. More climate finance is needed to scale up the gender-just climate solutions.



# Gayathri Thayappa,

## The Programme Coordinator at Dhaatri Resources Centre

Gayathri Thayappa discussed climate finance in India and highlighted her organisation's involvement in various climate projects. Thayappa highlighted that about 12 climate projects are underway in India, with significant solar power and transmission infrastructure investments. Thayappa raised concerns about the inclusivity of local communities in these projects; she noted that their voices often go unheard in decision-making processes. For instance, she said an indigenous community lost about 5,000 hectares of land due to a GCF project. Although India's Community Forest Rights Act enshrines ownership of the community forests to local communities, she said the people's rights over their land have not been protected. This project has also impacted water sources in the region

Dhaatri Resources Centre's studies found that communities (including tribal) were struggling to adapt to new lifestyle changes as they were no longer allowed to access firewood or food from the forests like they used to. Many climate projects only fulfilled their agendas but did not address the needs of the communities. She said many training programmes led by climate projects fail to provide knowledge that would genuinely benefit communities.

Thayappa said that the Dhaatri Resources Centre has been actively addressing the gap between local communities and entities executing climate projects. They have been engaging with communities to understand their needs better. Recently, they have approached local governments to advocate for the land rights of tribal communities. The Centre also organised forest workshops to understand what the forest means for these communities. These efforts have helped community members to think of their own conservation efforts. The Centre has also collaborated with the communities in groundwater regeneration efforts. Thayappa also highlighted that community people lacked access to become shareholders in projects occurring in their region; moreover, they were not benefiting from these projects.



# Titi Soentoro,

## The Executive Director at Aksi! for Gender, Social and Ecological Justice

As part of the first workshop session, Titi Soentoro and Wanun Perpipul organised an interactive learning activity with participants that focussed on the storytelling of climate finance with the help of placards distributed to participants. The session provided background knowledge of climate finance to enable participants to understand the discussions later in the workshop. Soentoro and Perpipul emphasised the importance of understanding the origins and pathways of climate financing, including government finance, public budgets and capital markets. They highlighted that funds are largely channelled through Official Development Assistance (ODA), Bilateral Financial Institutions, Multilateral Development Institutions and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). They also mentioned ODA is committed to acknowledging historical responsibilities stemming from colonialism and aims to address both development and climate issues.

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## from the session, the audience and the panel interaction:

- Communities and women have suffered due to many climate projects; these projects fail to address their needs and priorities. They have also hindered their relationship with their ecosystem, moreover, impacting their agricultural activities.
- Many government bodies and institutions still do not address the effects of climate change and the climate interventions implemented by women groups and CSOs.
- Climate linking and learning activities should also involve communities in identifying their losses and damages, enabling them to address these issues effectively.
- Communities and various levels of government must be effectively informed about global and national climate change policies and commitments.
- Women and communities are not aware of how they can access climate finance. The processes of climate finance should be communicated, and these financial mechanisms must be made efficient and accessible.
- Marginalised groups should not be generalised; institutions need to be more accountable in addressing the climate priorities and needs of people from diverse intersections. Women are disproportionately affected by climate change, but the perception of women as victims needs to change to encourage their participation as active actors of climate action.

## Session 3: Climate Finance in Asia and Global Process

The panel session, moderated by Mynabel Pomarin, discussed Nepal, India, and Indonesia's case studies in climate-related actions concerning climate finance. The session also elucidated the financing mechanism used by projects. Additionally, it emphasised the importance of a gender-just approach in climate projects in various countries. Furthermore, it highlighted that climate projects need to listen to the voices of marginalised and vulnerable communities. Moreover, it discussed each of their organisation's roles in lobbying and advocating for climate action and justice.

### **Sunil Acharya,** The Regional Policy and Campaigns Coordinator at Oxfam International in Asia

Sunil Acharya presented 'Making climate finance work for the people', focusing on the climate finance context in South Asia. He emphasised the need for people-driven climate actions, highlighting that national/international agreements on climate actions should reflect communities' voices.

Acharya highlighted that although Asia's per capita greenhouse gas emissions are low and historical contributions to climate change are minimal, Asian countries are experiencing significant impacts of climate change. From 1990 to 2019, the wealthiest nations' greenhouse gas emissions caused USD 4.2 trillion in environmental and economic damage, which is expected to rise to USD 46 trillion by 2050 from emissions until 2030. He said that from 1990 to 2023, Asia saw crop losses that could have fed four million people. Additionally, it is estimated that 9,460 deaths could result from heat in Asia between 2020 and 2030 from emissions produced between 2015 and 2019.

Addressing the financial gap, Acharya stated that the estimated financial requirement for climate action from now until 2030 is USD 1.3 trillion per year. However, from 2013 to 2020, the total amount of climate finance disbursed averaged just USD 14 billion annually. He also highlighted that grants to countries averaged USD 6.1 billion per year during this period, of which one-third of the finance was allocated to adaptation efforts. Acharya highlighted that finance defined in agreements has yet to reach where it needs to, and rather, these finances have been inadequately disbursed. Moreover, the finances have been being provided as loans, which could pose more threats to developing countries in the long run. Furthermore, Acharya asserted that only about 41% of climate finance addresses gender integration objectives so far. He pointed out that local communities still need help accessing climate finance, and according to a 2022 climate finance report by OXFAM, only 0.5% of finance is locally led.

Concluding his presentation, Acharya emphasised that adaptation finance should primarily come from developed countries as grants. He also called for accountability in climate finance management, simplifying access for local communities and ensuring transparent reporting and effective monitoring to improve oversight.





# Raju Pandit Chhetri,

The Executive Director at Prakriti Resources Centre

Raju Pandit Chhetri presented on 'Climate Finance in UNFCCC negotiation,' focusing on the upcoming COP 29 in Baku. He emphasised that climate finance is a key 2024 UN COP agenda. This iteration of the conference aims to address funding issues and gaps in financial mechanisms under the UNFCCC framework.

Chhetri noted that effective action against climate change is unattainable without proper finance. He highlighted that climate finance must align with the Paris Agreement's objectives, which include limiting global temperature rise to less than 2 Degrees Celcius and achieving net zero emissions by 2050. The treaty, he said, also allocates USD 100 billion per year to support climate actions, including mitigation and adaptation efforts, underscoring the importance of climate finance. He said that the Agreement also mandates countries to revise their climate plans and goals every 5 years.

He also reiterated the goal established by the 2015 Paris Agreement to mobilise USD 100 billion annually for climate finance through 2025, with an anticipated increase afterwards to meet the evolving needs of developing nations—this is a process called the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate finance. In upcoming COPs, a new financial goal will be envisioned based on the emerging needs and priorities of developing countries, noted Chhetri.

However, the next financial target to support climate initiatives should consider science and sustainable development. This target should also consider how much of the finance should go for different structures in climate efforts; it should distinguish how much money should be allotted for adaptive, mitigation, loss, and damage efforts. The mechanism should also ensure that the supplied finance does not burden the developing countries accessing it. Moreover, financial mechanisms should be enhanced and made more efficient for fair access.

Chhetri stressed that climate action and investment are not about making more money but about lives, livelihoods, and communities. He encouraged participants to critically examine resources pledged on paper and demand fair and equitable climate finance.









## Session 4: Brainstorming Session on Emerging Issues in Climate Finance

Participants were dispersed into four groups to discuss climate finance projects in their countries and share what they had learned and what the challenges were in implementing them. They were also asked to discuss how to address the projects' challenges. Pragma Sherchan Sneha Rai, Arpithabhai Muchal, and Ariunaa Tsogetoo, facilitated the discussion for each group.

Group A: Participants in group A discussed the knowledge gap in understanding GCF's mechanisms at the grassroots level. They highlighted the difficulty indigenous communities and grassroots populations face in accessing information about climate change despite the wealth of online resources. The group highlighted that communities are often unaware of projects being implemented in their areas, indicating that project designs frequently overlook their participation. It suggested that information about climate issues and funding opportunities must be dispersed in local languages to bridge the knowledge gap. Additionally, the group emphasised the need for climate funds to be distributed as small grants within countries, making them more accessible to grassroots communities.

Group B: Using a renewable energy project in India as an example, Group B discussed its impact on food security and farming activities in local communities. The group noted that wind and solar installations have been placed on agricultural lands, especially those owned by indigenous people. While the projects were implemented with the consent of individual families, women were excluded from the public consultations.

Additionally, the group highlighted that the renewable energy project does not consider local communities as beneficiaries. Instead, the electricity generated is distributed to metropolitan areas in India. It emphasised that women must be included in project consultations and communities should have opportunities to become shareholders and beneficiaries of such projects. The group also stressed the need for gender and environmental sustainability assessments for project planning. It recommended that local governments be consulted about private-sector climate initiatives to ensure community concerns are represented. It also advocated for decentralising energy production and distribution by enabling local individuals to participate in the project and allowing them to sell the electricity produced on their land to the central power grid.

Group C: In their discussion, Group C highlighted key learnings from their on-the-groundwork. The group emphasised the need for more community-driven and community-defined climate projects. Participants said such projects should look at the social context of places in order to address their specific climate issues. The group also emphasised the importance of incorporating indigenous knowledge and practices into climate initiatives. Additionally, the group identified several key challenges. Participants discussed how grassroots communities often feel unsafe when raising concerns about climate initiatives that fail to address their needs. They also pointed out that some projects are politically unstable, posing significant risks to local populations. The group underscored the importance of including robust safeguard mechanisms within project frameworks to address these risks.

The group highlighted issues such as gender stigma, caste and race discrimination and the lack of proper representation in the decision-making processes. They pointed to the difficulties grassroots communities face in accessing resources, such as banking services, which further limits their ability to secure funding opportunities. To address these challenges, particularly in terms of climate finance, the group said there is a need for efficient funding mechanisms that ensure accessibility for the most climate-vulnerable communities. They also advocated for a bottom-up approach to climate initiatives, emphasising the importance of addressing the needs and priorities of affected communities.

Group D: While discussing the challenges of climate projects, Group D emphasised that developing countries often prioritise development projects over climate initiatives. For example, the group highlighted a development project in the Philippines that resulted in deforestation, significantly impacting the country's broader ecosystem. The group stressed the importance of government entities prioritising climate-driven activities to address climate challenges and meet climate-affected communities' needs. It also highlighted the need for collaboration between government entities and CSOs, calling for strengthened capacities to tackle climate issues effectively. Additionally, CSOs should strengthen their relationships with environment ministries to influence decision-making processes in favour of communities at the grassroots, the participants asserted

The group highlighted the need for governments and CSOs at various levels to engage with grassroots communities to raise awareness about climate issues and work on effective climate solutions. They also noted the importance of mechanisms to ensure fair compensation for communities affected by climate initiatives within project areas. The group also advocated for greater emphasis on research to inform decision-making through scientific knowledge. These research works, they said, would be critical for securing funding for climate-related projects.

## Session 5: Getting to Know the Green Climate Fund

The session titled 'Understanding the Green Climate Fund' was designed in an interview format. Daan Robben, and Mainkya Gurumoorthy Bhat, moderated the session. The panellists included Wanun Permpibul Raju Pandit Chhetri, and Titi Soentoro,. Both Robben and Bhat guided the session with important questions relating to the GCF's work over the years and how CSOs can collaborate with the institution. The session discussed the financial mechanisms under the GCF and the criteria that make projects eligible for funding. It also emphasised the importance of addressing indigenous and gender issues with projects. The session encouraged CSOs to work with GCF-accredited institutions. Additionally, it talked about the Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM) under GCF. The session covered the history of GCF and the challenges and opportunities to engage with the institution.

### Titi Soentoro

#### The Executive Director at Aksi! for Gender, Social and Ecological Justice

Titi Soentoro who has engaged with the GCF since 2015, highlighted the vital role of CSOs in holding the GCF accountable for supporting climate initiatives in developing countries. Her focus has been ensuring that funding reaches those in need without further burdening vulnerable populations. She noted that GCF acknowledges the importance of CSOs's involvement, allowing them to serve as observers.

GCF offers funding at different scales: micro-scale projects receive at least USD 10 million, small projects receive USD 10-50 million, medium projects receive USD 50-250 million, and large projects exceed USD 250 million. While accredited entities must report on fund usage every two years for accountability, Soentoro pointed out the challenges in tracking misuse. Entities funded by GCF must comply with its gender and indigenous policies, but Soentoro emphasised that CSOs must navigate the agendas of accredited entities when representing grassroots concerns.

To ensure justice in the projects it undertakes, the GCF has three independent units monitoring the impacts and effectiveness of the projects. The Evaluation Unit assesses operations, the Integrity Unit addresses corruption, and the Redress Mechanism handles grievances from affected communities. However, the reporting process to these units remains complicated, making it difficult to address ongoing project impacts. Soentoro urged CSOs to advocate for those negatively affected by climate projects and to strengthen their networks to voice their concerns.



# Raju Pandit Chhetri,

## The Executive Director at Prakriti Resources Centre

Raju Pandit Chhetri, who has been interacting with GCF since 2013, pointed out that GCF brought large-scale funding to climate actions for the first time, and before this, climate finance was minimal. The funding institution's governing board has 12 members from developed countries and 12 from developing countries to ensure equal representation in climate decisions.

The GCF board meets three times a year to approve climate project proposals. And the secretariat of the board oversees the administrative work. The board meetings have two co-chairs who are responsible for bringing forward proposals alongside the secretariat, especially when they present these proposals to the parties of the UNFCCC framework. The whole process involves rigorous procedures, said Chhetri.

However, there are two main windows for GCF funding: one for climate adaptation and mitigation actions and the other for the private sector. Chhetri highlighted that the funding process is not random and involves a lot of cross-checking to see if the priorities of the applicant entities align with GCF's principles and priorities and their NDAs. "Therefore, the entities are more responsible for bringing proposals that answer to the individual country's climate commitments and priorities," he said. Entities working on climate action proposals must communicate and align with the country's focal agency.

Chhetri also highlighted the GCF's Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme, which helps institutions build capacity and enhance their operational knowledge to thereby access GCF funding. The programme empowers these institutions to plan and develop initiatives that can ultimately contribute to climate actions.

# Wanun Permpibul,

## The Executive Director at Climate Watch Thailand

Wanun Permpibul discussed the challenges developing countries faced in accessing adaptation funds prior to the GCF's establishment, where involvement in clean development mechanism projects was necessary for funding. Her recent engagement with GCF involves monitoring its policies and project development. Permpibul said it is crucial to involve women, farmers, and fisherfolk in the GCF processes to enable them to apply for funding, as they are the most impacted by climate change. She said that CSOs's role in advocating for access to such funding is imperative.

Permpibul highlighted that GCF-funded projects must adhere to social and environmental safeguards and gender assessment procedures. While these mechanisms are in place, she pointed out a gap between policy and practice. She advocated for collaboration between CSOs and accredited institutions to address community concerns effectively. She also noted that accredited entities need to get a No Objection Letter from National Designated Authorities to be eligible for funding GCF's funding applications.

Permpibul also highlighted how CSOs can participate in GCF's board meetings to approve climate projects. The GCF has allocated two seats (one CSO member from a developed country and another representative from a developing country) for CSOs in their board meetings, along with a seat for a representative from a climate sector. Despite having a platform to express their concerns, she noted that CSOs's voices are often overlooked; nevertheless, these procedural opportunities should still be engaged with. She called for CSOs to enhance their knowledge to be impactful advocates in climate negotiations.

## Session 6: Understanding Green Climate Fund's Gender Mainstreaming Mechanisms and Independent Redress Mechanism

Moderated by Daan Robben, the session delved into understanding GCF's mechanisms to address gender in relation to climate action projects and accredited entities. Robben conversed with Seblewongel Negussie, the GCF Gender Specialist on GCF's gender policy and gender action plan. The session also discussed the Independent Redress Mechanism (IRM) offered under GCF processes to address the grievances of people who have been made vulnerable by GCF-funded projects through interaction with Sonja Derkum, the head of GCF's IRM. Robben guided the conversation with critical questions about the two mechanisms to show how CSOs can use these procedures to enhance their climate advocacy and monitoring and evaluation initiatives.

### **Seblewongel Negussie,** The Gender Specialist at GCF

Seblewongel Negussie, who has been looking at GCF's strategies and policies to address gender with their climate fund, said that GCF has many instrumental policies governing them. These guidelines include Environmental Social Policy, Indigenous People Policy and Gender Policy. Under Environmental Social Policy, they have also been working to incorporate a policy on sexual harassment. She highlighted that all institutions that partner, collaborate, or work with them must abide by their policies.

The gender assessment, a crucial step in project planning, should comprehensively address the who, where, how, and why of women's issues in the project area. The climate project's success in this area depends on the stakeholders' genuine embrace and ownership of these policies. GCF provides tools to entities to foster gender responsiveness in their practices. The Project Preparation Facility under GCF works with different entities (preparing for funding) to build their capacities to tackle gender under their projects.

Negussie noted that project outcomes have constantly varied in practice even with these mechanisms in place. She said the Gender Action Plan is a living document that evolves over time to address real-time issues. This adaptability necessitates periodic revisions of investments to access better resources. She also highlighted how GCF supports the development of countries' National Adaptation Plans and engages with countries to assist them with their adaptation activities.

Negussie noted that their division has not been able to conduct as many stakeholder consultations as they would have liked. She mentioned that although entities submit their annual reports every year, the quantity and quality of their work differ significantly. She said they have noticed that entities are challenged by their limitations. Many entities still struggle with their processes, and because of that, they are not able to work on the project outcomes.



# Sonja Derkum,

## The head of GCF's Independent Redress Mechanism

Sonja Derkum from the GCF Redress Mechanism emphasised their role in addressing grievances related to GCF-funded climate projects. They assess complaints for eligibility, engage with affected communities to understand their issues and work towards resolving disputes through mediation. GCF collaborates only with accredited entities encouraging them to establish redress mechanisms in their operations.

IRM also provides capacity-building programmes to entities to address grievances and communities to engage with climate projects. They also roll out training to entities to better equip them to address the project's issues. IRM works with local communities, CSOs, and GCF observers in its operations. Derkum highlighted that this collaboration is instrumental in tackling the project's issues and responding to complaints.

Derkum shared examples, including a solar energy project in Egypt, where their mediation resolved issues. She also discussed a wetland restoration project in Uganda facing multiple community grievances. The restrictions imposed by the project impacted livelihoods, food security, and access to education.

The IRM operates within a one-year timeframe for complaints, requiring coordination with various stakeholders. Although currently handling a few cases, their department aims to incorporate pre-cases by monitoring external media and communications.

Peter Carlson, the Communication Officer at IRM added that IRM is focused on outreach, raising awareness among CSOs and stakeholders through webinars and workshops to address concerns related to climate projects. Additionally, they provide toolkits to help entities navigate project-related challenges. They also have grants available for CSOs to conduct community consultations and engage grassroots communities in developing their climate solutions in relation to GCF-funded projects. They have also introduced a board game, 'Road to Redress,' which CSOs and stakeholders could use to understand how they can handle complaints related to projects.



# Key takeaways

## from the session, the audience and the panel interaction:

- Gender assessments and action plans are imperative for gender-just climate solutions. Both mechanisms should be engaged repeatedly at different project levels.
- Information related to GCF's various mechanisms, including how local stakeholders and CSOs can engage with GCF's programmes, should be made more accessible and prominent.
- To make information about climate interventions and engagement more accessible, GCF needs to engage in more diverse ways of communicating with people at the grassroots and CSOs.
- Entities like GCF and CSOs should leverage their position in key areas where they can make a difference.
- The GCF's IRM collaborates with CSOs to engage with communities on the ground. But CSOs also need to know how to claim these spaces provided by the funding institution.
- IRM provides funding opportunities for CSOs to conduct community consultations and engage communities to determine their approaches to address climate problems related to GCF projects.
- CSOs need to actively intervene in and interact with climate projects' monitoring and evaluation processes.
- A more robust and efficient approach to addressing complaints at the local level is needed. These redress processes should also include safeguards to protect communities.

## Session 7: CSO Engagement and Monitoring of Green Climate Fund

The session, led by Urmila Shrestha, discussed the experiences of CSOs in engaging with and monitoring the Green Climate Fund. The panellists included Ariunaa Tsogeto, Prabin Man Singh, and Wanun Permpibul, the. The session explored how CSOs have observed and intervened in the GCF-related projects happening in their countries. It also closely looked at each country's experience with GCF-funded projects in terms of their impacts on communities.

### **Prabin Man Singh,** The Programme Finance Director at Prakriti Resources Centre

Prabin Man Singh discussed GCF's support for three climate projects in Nepal, which are being carried out by the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. He said PRC's recent evaluation under the GAGGA initiative led to recommendations for improving gender considerations on one of the climate projects. Their suggestions included:

- Integrating women in the project's management design
- Collecting gender-specific disaggregated statistics
- Empowering women identified as vulnerable to climate change to become active agents of change in their community for climate initiatives.

Singh said there are two kinds of opportunities for CSOs to engage in and monitor climate projects: one involves invited participation, while the other requires CSOs to take the initiative to enter climate conversations.

Singh highlighted the (Nationally Determined Authority) NDA's regulation mandates to bring in stakeholders to discuss climate commitments and projects. The focal agency, he said, considers only banks and private sectors as their stakeholders and thus, it is the responsibility of CSOs to claim spaces where they can voice climate concerns. He added that CSOs engagement in projects is frequently viewed as an opposition to the project's activities, making it necessary for CSOs to advocate that their involvement aims to enhance their institution's climate efforts. Singh also emphasised the importance of CSOs advocating for risk and gender safeguards to mitigate climate projects' negative impacts.





# Wanun Permpibul,

## The Executive Director at Climate Watch Thailand

Wanun Permpibul during her presentation, discussed two GCF projects currently underway in Thailand. By doing so she highlighted the role of Climate Watch Thailand in monitoring them to emphasise CSOs how CSOs can monitor climate projects.

**Enhancing climate resilience in Thailand through effective water management and sustainable agriculture:** This project aims to manage climate-induced floods through the construction of 13 river canals. However, the infrastructural intervention unintentionally altered the river's course, negatively impacting downstream communities who were unaware of the project activities and could not voice their concerns.

**The Thai Rice Project:** Implemented by GIZ, this project promotes climate-friendly rice farming culture to reduce methane emissions. While training farmers in sustainable rice cultivation practices, it limited farmers from growing other crops. Eventually, the operation of the project led to higher food costs and impacted the region's food diversity. In response to these impacts, some local women have started experimenting with traditional drought-resistant rice varieties, and this has helped improve their livelihoods.

Permpibul explained that they were able to identify gaps and impacts in the two climate projects because four local groups were leading the project's monitoring and evaluation efforts. Permpibul mentioned that their organisation had supported the training of these local groups in partnership with GAGGA, enabling them to identify their concerns regarding the projects ongoing in their areas. She emphasised the importance of building the expertise of local communities to ensure their voices are included in climate interventions. She also pointed out that projects frequently overlook the necessity of risk safeguards, which need to be accessible to communities vulnerable to climate change.

In her country's case, Permpibul said that many women are still not prepared to voice their concerns about projects affecting them as they fear for their safety. As powerful institutions and government bodies lead many projects, it is important to recognise that the power dynamics among institutions can pose significant challenges for community members. Therefore, it's also the responsibility of the CSOs to wait for the community to raise their issues by themselves. Collaboration among CSOs is essential to address climate issues, as governments often underestimate the scope of climate action needed, she said.

## from the session, the audience and the panel interaction:

- CSOs must claim spaces to intervene and engage in climate monitoring and evaluation initiatives.
- CSOs should work with people at the grassroots to increase their understanding of climate change and turn them into active actors in their climate issues.
- Gender reassessments should be carried out during the implementation of climate project activities to understand the project's implications for people and women and address them as the project is being implemented.
- Gender dynamics always vary in different cultural contexts, so organisations should address the gender dynamics of communities when conducting gender assessments and planning gender action plans.
- Gender mainstreaming is a mechanism for addressing equality and equity. It involves including women and addressing gender gaps in policy and decision-making.

## Session 8: Implementation of Gender Action Plan in GCF-Funded Project from the Lens of Accredited Entity

### **Mukti Chhetri,** The Programme Manager for the GCF Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme at the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC)

Mukti Chhetri presented about (Alternative Energy Promotion Centre) AEPC's engagement with the Green Climate Fund and how they have incorporated gender concerns into their projects to align with GCF's gender policy. He elucidated the processes of getting accredited by GCF.

AEPC, established in 1993 and part of Nepal's Ministry of Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation, promotes renewable energy and efficiency. AEPC is also Nepal's first Direct Access Entity (DAE) to the GCF. Their accreditation enables them to develop projects between USD 10 million and USD 50 million. For the accreditation process, GCF assesses if the organisation can implement a gender policy in line with the gender principles of GCF's gender approach. On average, he said, it takes about two years for a direct access entity to get accredited for projects. The process involves an extensive interrogation of the entities' systems. Chhetri said that initially, they had thought that this project was specifically designed for women. However, the gender specialist at the GCF responded to them by saying that the project promotes gender stereotypes

Therefore, his team conducted another gender assessment and prepared a gender action plan. Their ground assessment revealed that 50% of Nepal's population relies on wood for cooking, and 44.28% uses LPG, which poses risks to energy security. This project, he said, is expected to benefit women because women are typically associated with kitchen duties. They spend four hours daily cooking on traditional stoves and over two hours collecting firewood, while men average only 50 minutes. Women contribute significantly to collecting agricultural residue, such as cow dung, at 70.2%, compared to men's 29.8%. Chhetri emphasised that women are at greater risk of illness from household air pollution caused by traditional cooking fuels, which produce high levels of fine particulate matter. The project aims to reduce 50% of women's exposure to indoor air pollution.

Apart from women as beneficiaries, the project also ensures 33% women's participation in all of its training programmes related to carbon capture and storage technologies. To implement their activities, Chhetri said they have ensured the involvement of women in every part of their operational work at different levels.

The project will also ensure environmental and gender safeguards for carrying out the activities related to the project on the ground. FP 172 will also conduct gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation in different phases of its operation. Throughout the implementation of the activities, the project will emphasise the advocacy of gender equality and support for vulnerable communities.



## from the session:

- The accreditation process of the GCF ensures gender and inclusivity of commitments.
- Entities preparing for accreditation should carry out gender assessment and gender action plans and ensure that these findings are part of the project's framework.
- Accredited entities' efforts must align with the broader national goals of developing a climate-resilient country supported by sustainable infrastructure that fosters gender equity.
- Entities also need to incorporate tools/mechanisms to ensure gender inclusivity, such as GESI audits and appointing gender focal persons. AEPC is committed to ensuring these mechanisms under project FP 172.
- Although AEPC's FP 172 project caters to women, it still needs to consider how it can challenge the gender stereotypes that assign cooking and household responsibilities primarily to women.
- AEPC's project is likely to bring about a climate-friendly lifestyle change, but it needs to address gender issues to help build women's agencies beyond their household roles.

## Session 9: Developing a joint GAGGA Advocacy on Climate Finance in Asia

To conclude the workshop, Daan Robben and Mynabel Pomarin engaged participants in an interactive session to discuss the key learnings from the workshop together. They divided participants into groups and asked them to jot down what they had learned from the workshop. The participants were asked to think of their advocacy priorities going forward in terms of climate conversation. They were also asked how they would engage with the GAGGA network in the future. Additionally, they were requested to write a joint message to address in COP 29.

### Some of the key learnings shared in the session were:

- The members of GAGGA network should engage and learn from each other to foster their climate advocacy and initiatives and climate knowledge.
- Networks like GAGGA should expand to bring together diverse experiences and knowledge from different countries to address climate efforts.
- Participants were also grateful for learning about the various GCF funding processes and mechanisms to ensure gender and inclusivity.
- Women-led communities and groups should monitor GCF-funded projects, especially in reviewing their implications for women and marginalised communities.
- Gender assessments need to include impact assessments of the climate projects.
- GCF/Climate finance should be accessible to people at the grassroots. More mechanisms need to be devised to ensure their direct/indirect access to climate funds so that they can mobilise climate initiatives through them.
- There is a need for more gender-just movements and advocacy to make gender a priority in climate projects.
- CSOs should participate as observers in the monitoring processes of climate projects to hold them accountable and ensure gender-just climate actions. Their engagement is necessary to ensure that finance reaches the climate-vulnerable groups of developing countries.
- Policies and principles related to gender and inclusivity must be reflected in the implementation process.
- Countries should share challenges and insights from on-the-ground monitoring and evaluation processes in climate projects.
- Women are the key actors in responding to gender-just climate action. Climate funds need to scale up to address their participation and specific needs.

## Some of the climate advocacy priorities shared by the participants were:

- Climate finance and justice should address the intersecting needs of gender and people with disabilities.
- More community-defined climate actions should be designed and mobilised.
- The perception of women as victims of climate change should shift to recognise them as active agents of change in climate action.
- CSOs need to engage in the monitoring processes of climate projects to ensure accountability and transparency in executing climate initiatives.
- Information about GCF's funding processes and mechanisms to ensure gender-just-inclusive climate activities, including project monitoring, should be made more accessible for knowledge-sharing

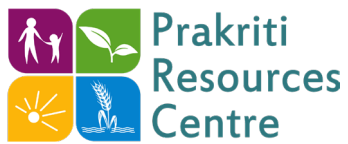
### Ways to strengthen the CSOs/GAGGA network:

Besides discussing learnings and climate advocacy priorities, participants also discussed how they could strengthen their climate network to support their climate advocacy and initiatives. Some of the suggestions discussed the need to engage climate activists and people at the grassroots in their initiative. They also underscored the importance of bringing in capacity-building programs to build their knowledge about climate finance and project monitoring methods and practices. Participants also emphasised that they must come together to advocate for and support their climate initiatives and priorities. They suggested more online meetings to discuss climate issues, especially in relation to understanding the global/national and regional conversations around climate finance like GCF, to empower them to raise their concerns about the xcontinuing to connect and learn about climate issues through international/regional workshops. They also discussed the opportunity to engage in GCF processes and mechanisms, like GCF's Redress Mechanism, to voice their issues with ongoing climate projects. Participants also shared a desire for more opportunities to share their challenges, case studies and experiences with the network through online platforms or in-person workshops.

## Key messages for COP29:

As part of the session, participants also wrote down the message they wanted to amplify in COP29. Some of the messages read as follows:

- The COP29/ UNFCCC framework should demand diversity and meaningful representation from its members, collaborative entities, and direct access entities in decision-making.
- The current global climate finance is inadequate to support climate initiatives in developing countries, targeting populations most affected by climate change.
- Climate finance should focus more on loss and damage programmes in terms of addressing climate change in developing countries.
- Climate projects should be carried out with the intention of conserving nature and ecosystem.
- There is a need to integrate human rights impact assessments into the gender approach of different climate projects.
- Multi-country monitoring mechanisms should also be introduced into climate projects.
- Climate finance should be accessible to developing countries, specifically communities at the grassroots, to address their climate issues.
- Engagement should be promoted among CSOs to foster ownership and ensure the accountability of NDAs.
- Women-led climate solutions are already in practice, but these initiatives should have access to climate finance. Moreover, to support these initiatives, climate finance needs to be scaled up.
- The development and design of climate projects should be consulted with communities, women, people from different intersections, and stakeholders before implementation.



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