



# Proaction

Vol -21 Issue 1, 2021

## COVID-19 and Civil Society Organizations



NGO Federation of Nepal

**NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN)** is an umbrella organization of NGOs working in various fields of social welfare and development in Nepal. Established in 1991 for the promotion and protection of social justice, human rights and pro-poor development, NFN has evolved as a national organization working for the entire NGO movement in Nepal. It is actively working to unite, organize and mobilize civil society to create a peaceful, democratic and just Nepal.

NFN is an autonomous, independent and politically non-partisan organization, governed by its own Constitution. NFN has about 6,499 member NGOs affiliated to it through 77 district chapters. To coordinate and mobilize its member NGOs to carry out various programs effectively and efficiently, NFN has seven province committees comprised of 7–9 members in each province. Together, they work as a catalyst to support member organizations in leadership and professional skills development, and to enable them to contribute to sustainable development.

For more information, visit: [www.ngofederation.org](http://www.ngofederation.org)

## Contents:

1. Ensure Vaccination against Covid-19 for All	3
2. Formation of Rapid Response Teams (RRTs)	5
3. Orientation to the RRTs	6
4. Human Rights Situation During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Nepal	8
• <i>Right to Health</i>	8
• <i>Right to Livelihood</i>	9
• <i>Right to Education</i>	9
• <i>Right to Food</i>	9
• <i>Consumer Rights</i>	10
• <i>Gender Aspects</i>	10
5. A summary of the report : Human rights situation during Covid-19 pandemic	11
6. Impact Study of COVID-19 on CSOs in Nepal	13
7. COVID-19 Response by Social Organizations	18
8. Engagement of Social Organizations in COVID-19 Response in Nepal	20
• <i>Operation of COVID-19 Isolation Centres and Supply of Medical Equipment</i>	20
• <i>Support in Food Relief Programs</i>	22
• <i>Remote Consultation with Doctors and Management of the Crowd During Swab Collection</i>	23
9. Ordinance for COVID-19 Crisis Management, 2021	24
10. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals	25
11. Engagement of Nepali CSOs for SDGs	26
12. Nepal SDGs Forum Review Meeting	26
13. National Civil Society Conference and 26th Annual General Meeting of NFN	28
14. Interaction on Disaster Management and Mitigation of Monsoon Related Risks	31
15. Civil Society Critical of Covid-19 Crisis Management Ordinance	34
16. Interaction on Enrolment of Social Organization Employees to Social Security Fund	37
17. Side Event on: Accelerating the SDGs Monitoring and Implementation Actions Using SDG 16+	40
18. Global Hunger Index (GHI) Report- 2020 Launching Event	43
19. Recent Publications	47

## Advisors

Jit Ram Lama	Bishnu Thakali
Gopal Lamsal	Baidhyanath Chaudhary
Dhruba Prasad Deo	Bhawana Bhatta
Bhim Prasad Sharma	Devi Prasad Timilsina
Sumitra Sharma	Shovaram Dangi
Ram Prasad Subedi	Dillu Prasad Ghimire
Dinesh Kumar Chaudhary	Dharmaraj Pathak
Arjun Kumar Bhattarai	

## Editorial and Collection Team

Umesh Bishwakarma	Shradha Baskota
Hum Bhandari	Rajendra Bahadur Singh
Shiksha Risal	

## Publisher

Communication and Documentation Department

## Design and Layout

Nirmal Gaire

## Ensure Vaccination against Covid-19 for All

The Covid-19 pandemic has had its unprecedented health impact worldwide. Nepal, on its own, has been trying to contain the spread primarily with lockdowns and restriction orders. However, as with the first wave, the second wave also took a heavy toll. The lockdown and health measures have somehow contained the spread but there is always this risk of another wave on the horizon if adequate vaccines are not rapidly supplied. Till now, the government's approach seems to be highly ineffective, with only 2.55% of the total population having received both doses of the vaccine during the first five months of the vaccination drive. At this pace, it is certainly going to take years for Nepal's more than 30 million population to get fully vaccinated.

Although imposing lockdowns and restrictions have somehow slowed the pace of the virus spread, it is obviously not the perfect solution as the country has already seen huge damage to its economy and people's livelihood. No one is safe until everyone is safe. That's why the civil society has shown its serious concern on the government's lack of proactivity in procuring vaccine doses for its citizens.

The pandemic has starkly exposed the vulnerabilities and inequalities prevalent in the social, economic and health sectors. The second wave saw the harsh reality of inadequate

health infrastructures country wide. People went to extreme measures to acquire beds and oxygen supply for their ill ones. Data released on the Covid crisis show how bad of a situation Nepal currently is in. As of 27 June, 2021, Nepal stands at the 109th position worldwide in terms of cases per one million population; 105th in terms of deaths per million and is the 40th country worldwide in terms of total number of Covid cases<sup>1</sup>. New cases rose to as high as 9,317 per day and the death toll reached upto 246 per day in May 2021. The literal collapse of Nepal's health

***Nepal saw a huge increase in cases of domestic violence, mental health problems and suicides amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. With the health institutions' primary focus just on Covid-19 cases, people with other health issues, such as those with kidney problems, could not get the attention they needed and were thus deprived of their basic health rights.***

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>, 27 June 2021

care system saw a lot of people losing their lives for the lack of oxygen and adequate health care infrastructures.

Apart from the health crisis, a sharp increase in incidents of human rights violation was seen during the period. People were deprived of their basic human rights. Amidst the crisis, Nepal's civil society organisations showed their utmost concern and actively engaged themselves in the containment of the virus as well as making sure people were getting support for their basic amenities. However, the lack of government facilitation and recognition somehow diluted the overall impact of the social organisations.

In comparison to the general population, human rights violation cases had their most impacts on the poor, marginalized, children, women and senior citizens. The lack of income or income opportunities made it hard for the vulnerable to even sustain their daily livelihood. Nepal saw a huge increase in cases of domestic violence, mental health problems and suicides amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. With the health institutions' primary focus just on Covid-19 cases, people with other health issues, such as those with kidney problems, could not get the attention they needed and were thus deprived of their basic health rights.

In this context, NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN) has been effortlessly monitoring and

keeping records of the incidents of human rights violations and has been continuously drawing the attention of the concerned government bodies to protect human rights. NFN has called on the government and its concerned wings to make arrangements of food and other basic amenities alongside controlling the black market in an urge to save the livelihood of the poor people during this pandemic.

Since the first wave of the pandemic, NFN has been engaging itself as an active member of the Human Rights Monitoring Network from the central to the province as well as district levels. NFN led the Network in 24 of the 77 districts. Likewise, NFN has been recently leading the Rapid Response Teams against the Covid-19 pandemic in province and district levels. Multiple social organisations have been as usual working in the frontline in the fight against the crisis.

On a precise note, it is essential to learn from the overall socio-economic and health hazards created by the pandemic. The issues of inequalities, vulnerabilities and the weak social security systems need to be addressed. Vaccination is and should be the foremost priority alongside the containment measures. This is a real test for the government on whether or not its vaccine diplomacy bears some fruits and is able to acquire vaccines for its population.



# Covid-19 Pandemic

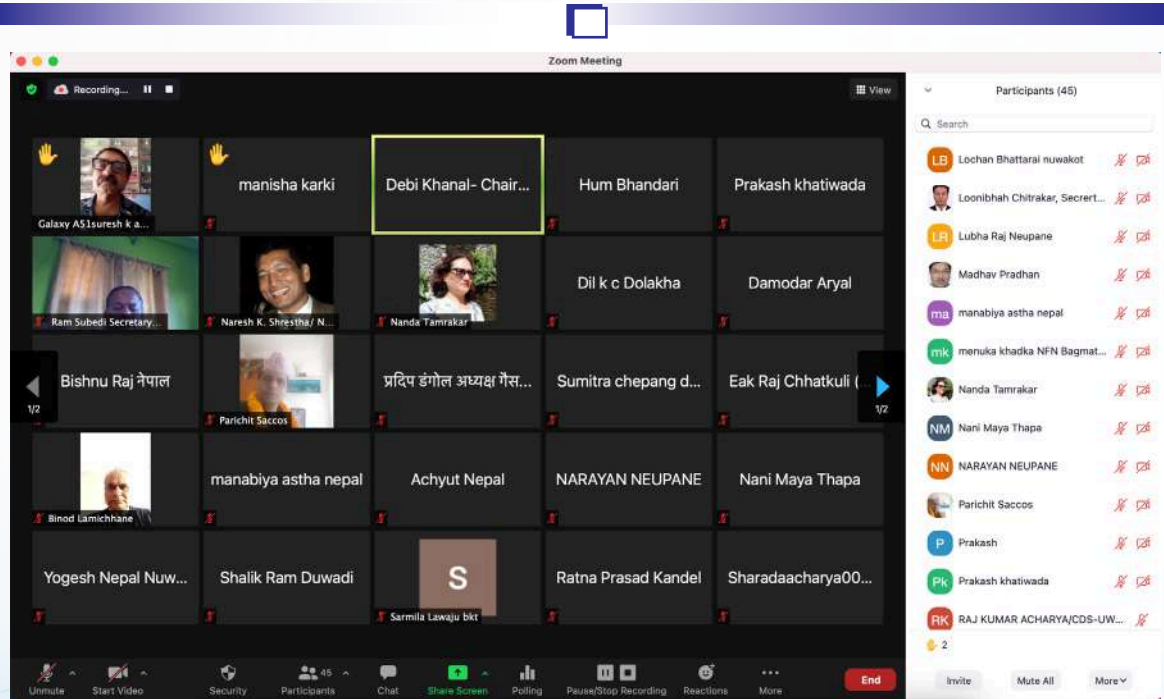
## Formation of Rapid Response Teams (RRTs)

---

RRTs have been set up in the central, province and district levels in collaboration and coordination of NFN, Social Welfare Council (SWC), and Association of International NGOs in Nepal (AIN). Multiple meetings held at the province and district levels finalised the province and district level RRTs. The teams have been collecting and compiling information on the efforts, responses

and contributions made by the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in multiple levels as a collaborative fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. The teams have also been actively working on a rapid response modality in order to support those infected with COVID-19 with medical services, relief packages and other basic services. The data is being collected and managed using Google forms.

# Orientation to the RRTs



NFN organised a total of 7 virtual orientation sessions for the province and district level RRT's in June 2021. The primary goal of the session was to shed light on the scope of RRTs among the team members. A total of 198 participants attended the multiple orientation sessions.

*The ordinance also ignored the transparency and accountability alongside the space for oversight bodies particularly the civil societies.*

The sessions were aimed at sharing the policy analysis of the ordinance on Covid-19

crisis management. The teams were oriented about the reporting template used primarily to collect, compile and analyse the human rights situation and the contribution of social organizations. Similarly, they were briefed on the responses and contributions made by CSOs in the fight against Covid-19. Indicators to collect information and cases on human right violations during the pandemic were also discussed.

Mr. Sanjeev Ghimire made a presentation on policy analysis of ordinance on Covid-19 crisis management. The presentation highlighted the role of CSOs, their recognition and civic space included in the ordinance. As there is a huge importance of the participation and contribution of CSOs as well as the government entities like SWC and Min-



istry of Women Children and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC) in preventive response to Covid-19, Mr Ghimire stressed that the ordinance should have at least created adequate space and role for social organisations and civil society sectors as the assessment showed the aspects to have been completely ignored. Similarly, the ordinance also ignored the transparency and accountability alongside the space for oversight bodies particularly the civil societies. In fact, freedom of association, freedom of expression, separation of power and protection of human rights have recently been undermined.

Mr. Debi Prasad Khanal gave a briefing on all major aspects to be considered while CSOs monitor the Covid-19 response and management. He designed and shared a reporting template for CSOs to be used in order to collect, compile and document monitoring information, response and contributions of CSOs in the collective fight against Covid-19.

NFN has developed a reporting template for all the CSOs in districts and province levels. The major components of the template include the monitoring of human rights during the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic and the contribution of CSOs in balancing cash and kind. Likewise, support from CSOs regarding food, medical supplies, medical

equipment, medical services, psychosocial counselling, awareness activities, quarantine and holding centers management, and number of beneficiaries and cash contribution have been included in the form. The information is to be compiled and published to demonstrate the role and contribution of CSOs.

Mr. Hum Bhandari shared a presentation on templates and indicators for monitoring of human rights and Covid-19 response and management. The discussion focused on the five major pillars during the CSO monitoring of Covid-19; namely, human rights, democracy and civic space, governance, management and response effectiveness, and the impacts on socio-economic development.

Through these orientations the RRT members were briefed on the provisions in the ordinance for Covid-19 crisis management. They were further oriented on documentation and integration of response and contribution of CSOs during the second wave of Covid-19 in Nepal. Important indicators on the perspective of human rights, democracy, civic rights, good governance, and SDGs which ought to be considered while responding, reporting violations, documenting the contributions of CSOs during Covid-19 were also discussed in these orientations.

# Human Rights Situation During Covid-19 Pandemic in Nepal

Covid-19 pandemic is said to have induced gaps in poverty, inequality, injustice and civic space. People have been deprived of their fundamental rights. The pandemic has not only hit one sector, but it has also impacted almost every sector of the Nepalese economy.

The impact of the pandemic on the poor, marginalized, children, women, people with disabilities and senior citizens has been considerably higher. The incidence of domestic violence, psychosocial problems and suicides are also on the rise. Similarly, due to all health services being focused on Covid-19, people with other health adversities were deprived of enough care.

In this regard, the problems people faced ranged from mobility, health, livelihood to human rights violation. While the restrictive measures were taken in order to control the spread of coronavirus, people got deprived of their opportunities to enjoy their rights and freedom. The imposed restrictions deprived people of their access to justice and other basic services. Studies and reports have shown an increase in cases of violence and harassment within households.

## Right to Health

In the pretext of Covid-19, good health care and wellbeing were challenged at various levels. As per World Health Organization

(WHO), across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 59 indicators are related to the health sector mentioning that Covid-19 has made it difficult to achieve SDGs by 2030.

The Constitution of Nepal has guaranteed the right to basic health which the state failed to guarantee during Covid-19. People who could have been saved lost their lives just because of the lack of hospital care and shortage of oxygen supply.

*The incidence of domestic violence, psychosocial problems and suicides are also on the rise. Similarly, due to all health services being focused on Covid-19, people with other health adversities were deprived of enough care.*

According to one of UNDP reports, three in five employees lost their jobs due to Covid-19 in Nepal. Source of income was limited and people faced economic hardships which in turn deteriorated mental health and also caused a rise in suicide cases during the period. Health workers and patients infected with Covid-19 faced a lot of hardships and discrimination. During the initial days of the pandemic, even the frontline health workers could not be supplied with enough Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

### **Right to Livelihood**

As per the ILO reference, Covid-19 labour market impact in Nepal, “Between 1.6 and 2.0 million jobs are likely to be disrupted in Nepal, either due to complete job loss or reduced working hours and wages. Nearly four in every five workers most vulnerable to disruption are in the construction, manufacturing and trade sectors.”

The World Bank states that Nepal’s economy contracted by 1.9% in FY 2020, the first incident of such kind in nearly 40 years. “Assuming a successful vaccination roll-out domestically and globally, and a gradual resumption of international tourism, real GDP is projected to grow by 2.7 percent in FY21 and 3.9 percent in FY22”. This bleak economic outlook implies that more Nepalese are certain to be pushed to poverty and deprivation.

The UNDP report states that temporary workers, internal migrants, and day labourers were among the most vulnerable based on income and their ability to sustain them-

selves through the slowdown. An inability to find an alternative source of income is judged to be the main impact of the crisis on those already vulnerable or otherwise engaged in precarious work”.

### **Right to Education**

UNDP stated that 86% of children from the least developed countries have been deprived of education due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Schools and colleges were shut down and an online education system was implemented mostly by the private education institutions. Those with internet connectivity somehow managed to benefit from the virtual classes, but people from remote areas, people from poor communities who mostly go to government schools and colleges, and the people not connected to or who could not afford an internet access are deprived of education. This gap in the access to education as well as the digital divide will certainly have its huge impacts in the days to come.

### **Right to Food**

Covid-19 has challenged food security and induced malnutrition. Lockdown or restrictive measures imposed for a long period increased unemployment whereby employees were forced to take unpaid leave as businesses were closed. Loss of income directly impacted people’s ability to buy food. The situation further led towards food insecurity and malnutrition. The entire food production and distribution chain has been disrupted. Unavailability of agricultural inputs has worsened. The pandemic saw a rise in food prices as well.

## Consumer Rights

The restrictions hampered adequate monitoring of the price and quality of the basic goods and daily consumables in the market. Artificial shortage, price hike, and sale of expired goods were reported. Passive regulatory mechanisms made the consumers suffer. Also, medical suppliers took the opportunity to increase the price of masks, sanitizers. NHRC reported the daily life of the general public to have been severely impacted due to the artificial scarcity of consumer goods, medicines and cooking gas.

## Gender Aspects

A nationwide lockdown to contain the first wave of coronavirus was imposed from 24 March to 14 June 2020. The complete lockdown was partially lifted after 14 June 2020. During this period, a total of 885 complaints of domestic violence were received by the 24-hour-toll-free helpline, according to the record of the National Women Commission from April, 2020 to June, 2020. The com-

plaints received were double as compared to similar period earlier.

Gender based violence considerably increased during the Covid-19 lockdown. WOREC Nepal reported 465 cases of violence against women and girls during the first 2 months of the lockdown. The period also saw an increase in cases of sexual violence.

Report published by WOREC stated that 45.7% of women complained the “work from home” (household/care work) during the lockdown has been challenging due to increased workload. Loss of jobs among females were found to be more as compared to their counterparts because females mostly tend to be associated with service industries or needing physical presence. LGBTIQ people are reported to have been highly affected by the pandemic.

The effect of the coronavirus pandemic particularly during the second wave is unfolding and remains to be assessed more comprehensively.

## A Summary of the Report:

### Human Rights Situation During Covid-19 Pandemic

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN), Federation of Nepali Journalist (FNJ) and Nepal Bar Association (NBA) collaborated and coordinated for the monitoring of human rights situation during the pandemic in Nepal. In a collaborative manner, these organizations monitored the human rights situation under the various sub-committees provisioned under the “Human Rights Situation Monitoring Procedure, 2076” for Covid-19 at central, province and district levels. A report “Human Rights Situation during Covid-19 pandemic in Nepal” has been developed by

NFN in collaboration and coordination with NHRC. The report has covered human rights from the perspective of economic, social and cultural rights, including right to health, management of quarantines, civil and political rights, rights of migrant workers, rights of persons with disabilities, women rights.

The report indicated an increase in vulnerabilities among the least protected people in Nepali society due to the Covid-19 crisis. Caste-based discrimination and stigmatization increased. The Covid-19 has also been found to be leaving a long term and profound impact on the elderly people’s health and wellbeing. The situation of people with disabilities alongside women and children is also considerably weak and these groups are yet to have access to justice. Various mental health problems and lack of psychosocial services in response has led to a rise in cases of suicide. There has been a huge increase in cases of people developing mental health disorders. Health care workers were also found to have faced discrimination and violence owing to stigma and fear of Covid-19 infection. Moreover, the tourism industry has been the hardest one to be hit with the industry workers facing a heavy economic instability.

The report further states that the pandemic impacted the Nepali migrant workers in a

***Health care workers were also found to have faced discrimination and violence owing to stigma and fear of Covid-19 infection. Moreover, the tourism industry has been the hardest one to be hit with the industry workers facing a heavy economic instability.***

distinct manner. A large number of Nepali migrant workers lost their jobs and income while still being vulnerable to getting infected with Covid-19 abroad. Human and labour rights of the migrant workers were also violated with cases of increased stigmatization and discriminatory practices.

The report urged everyone to follow the lockdown imposed by the government to effectively and systematically reduce the spread of Covid-19. The report recommended the government to increase the testing of Covid-19 and prioritize PCR testing considering its effectiveness. Paying attention to the needs and protection of the vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, senior citizens, pregnant and maternal women, infants and frontline workers is strongly recommended in the report. The report further recommends protection against gender based and domestic violence, provision of proper

online education for the students, supply of medical equipment to the health care workers, medical facilities and medicines to the infected. The report recommends women friendly and well-equipped quarantine centres. The report recommends to control border points and avoid rush and congestion of humans and vehicles at these points, at the same time it is recommended in the report to take diplomatic initiatives to ensure basic necessities of international Nepali students, migrant workers, tourists and those stranded abroad. The report also recommends to fulfil the right to information to the media and protection of journalists, and to set provisions of psychosocial counselling to the people.

The report covers the observation made basically in the first wave of Covid-19 in 2020. The full report of “Human Rights Situation during Covid-19 Pandemic in Nepal “ can be accessed on NFN’s website.

# Impact Study of Covid-19 on CSOs in Nepal

## A Summary of the Report

### Daily COVID-19 cases and policies

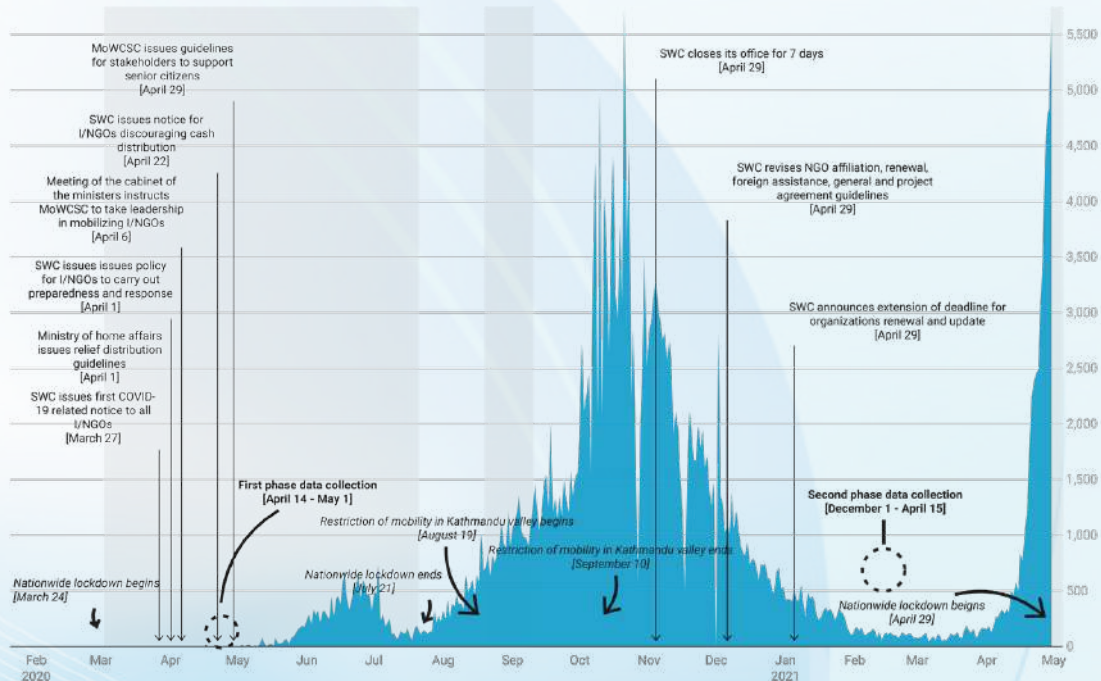


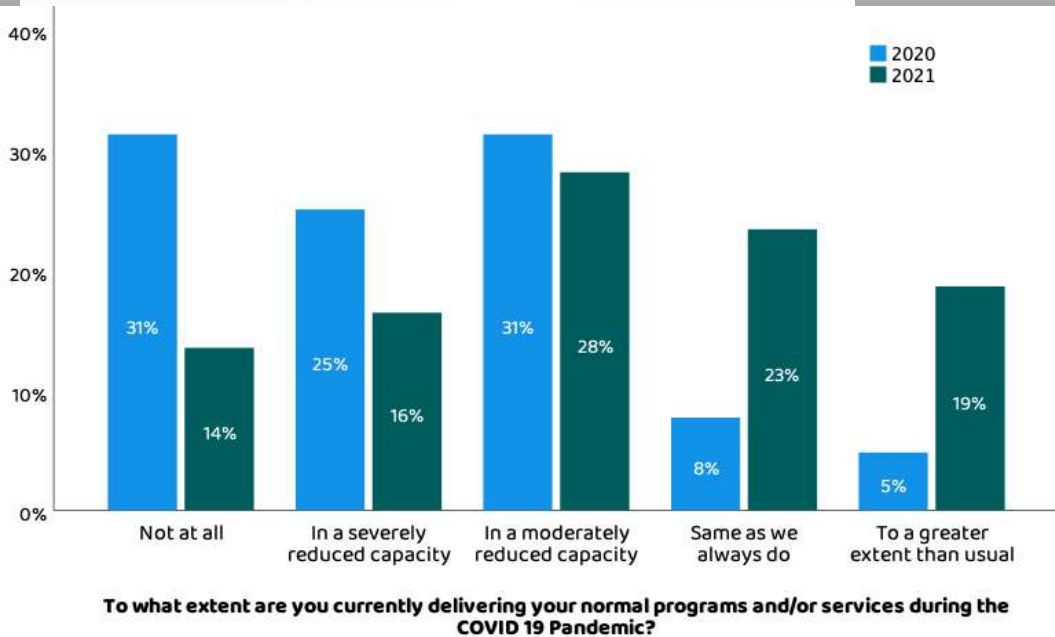
Chart: Dipendra KC - Source: COVID-19 Data Repository by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University, Social Welfare Council, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Social Welfare and Senior Citizens - Created with Datawrapper

After the first wave of Covid-19 in 2020, NFN carried out a study on Covid-19 impacts on the CSOs in Nepal. The study focused on understanding CSOs' response to the pandemic, their perception on the response of the government during the pandemic and to illustrate their perspective on the state of freedom of expression and the freedom of association during Covid-19.

### Findings of the impact study:

#### Impact on CSOs

1. 87% of the CSOs reported a reduction in their ability to deliver programs and services. With an improvement in the pandemic's situation, the organisations also reported a slight improvement in their ability to provide



services. Moreover, even with some improvement in the capacity, 58% of CSOs still reported a decline in their ability to deliver regular programs.

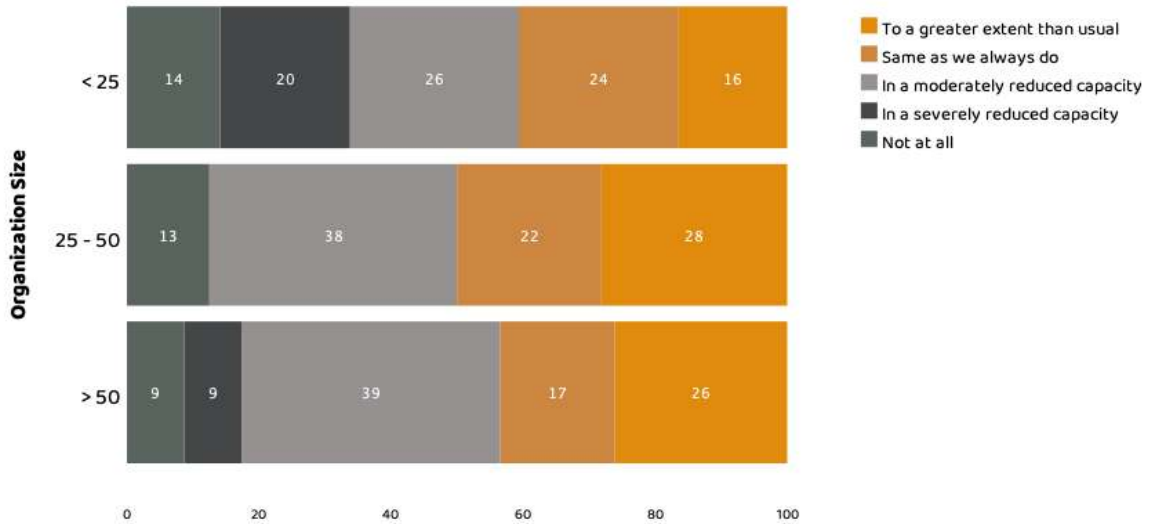
2. 14% of the organisations reported a complete halt to their programs and services. The finding was itself alarming when approximately 1400 CSOs were reported of not being able to deliver their programs and services for nearly a year.
3. Advocacy-oriented organisations reported a slightly higher impact on their ability to deliver regular programs and services.
4. Covid-19 affected the registration of new CSOs as well. There was a decline of 89% in new registration in 2076/77 as compared to that of 2075/76. Similarly, new project approvals saw a decline of 8%.

### Concerns

1. Nearly 6 out of 10 CSOs expressed their worry over not being able to meet the registration/renewal deadlines.
2. 4 out of 10 CSOs were moderately to severely concerned about having to lay off their employees for a long period. Similarly, half of the organisations were concerned about not being able to cover their operational expenses.
3. Almost half of the CSOs were concerned about not being able to cope up with an increase in demand for their services as well as not being able to meet face-to-face with the community they serve.
4. Most of the CSOs switched to special or virtual AGMs due to the restrictions.



**To what extent are you currently delivering your normal programs and/or services during the COVID 19 Pandemic?**



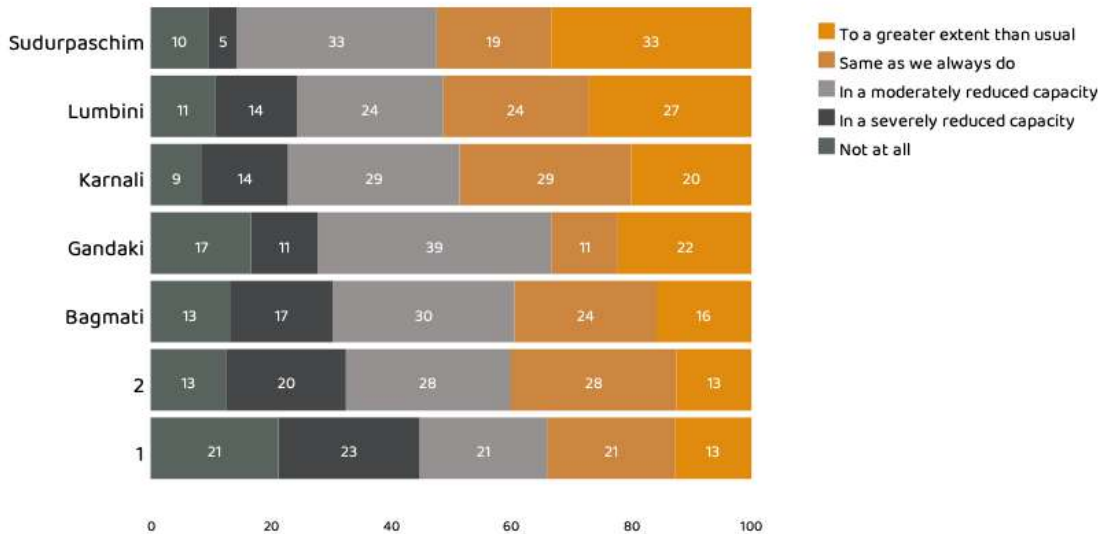
**Funding**

1. Only 4 out of 10 CSOs received some sort of funding to carry out their Covid response activities.
2. In FY 2066/77, about 10% of the SWC approved projects were for Covid-19 response and recovery accounting to 1.3% (USD 2.02 million) of the total approved budget of USD 151.85 million.
3. Despite the growth in number, the percentage of approved projects for Covid-19 was comparatively lower than the overall projects. The approved budget for Covid-19 accounted for only 5.1% of the total budget. Large number of projects with the least amount of budget showed the smaller scale and fragmentation of projects related to Covid-19.
4. 68% of the funded organisations re-

ceived funds from INGOs, followed by 33% from the government and 24.7 from membership fees.

5. The organisation’s budget saw an increase in funding from INGOs by 14 percent in comparison to the previous year while the funding from government sources saw an overall decline by 17%.
6. Although the funding from private organisations saw an increase in 5% during the pandemic, the contribution to CSOs is still considerably low.
7. INGOs provided grants to 76% of service delivering organisations while only provided grants to 56% of advocacy organisations which signifies a considerable bias towards the former when it came to funding.
8. The donors of 6 out of 10 organisations encouraged them to freely

**To what extent are you currently delivering your normal programs and/or services during the COVID 19 Pandemic?**



speaking on the issues and challenges they were facing and to seek help in areas of their needs.

- Only 1 out of 10 organisations felt commitment from their donors in investment in strengthening their digital capacity and infrastructure.

**CSO Response**

- Nepali CSOs contributed an approximate USD 30 million during the first wave of the Covid-19 outbreak.
- Over 400,000 volunteers actively contributed during the pandemic whereas 50,000 paid staff laid their role in response and recovery during the first wave of the pandemic.
- CSOs contributed approximately 157,000 PPE sets and other sanitary

kits during the first wave of the pandemic.

- The top three response activities included distribution of sanitary kits, awareness generation and sensitizing communities.
- 8 out of 10 CSOs served people from the Dalit communities while 6 out of 10 CSOs provided support to indigenous people.

**Perception on the response from the government**

- In general, CSO leaders were not found to be satisfied with the government’s measure to contain the Covid-19 spread. The satisfaction score was reported to be 2.74 on a 1 to 5 scale, which indicates a relative-

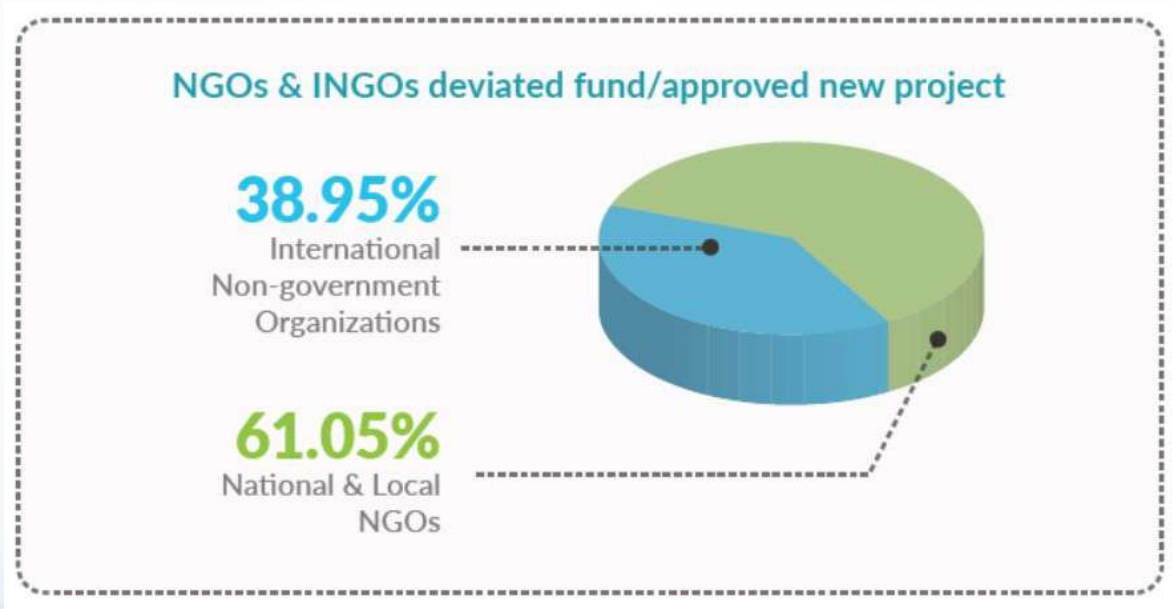
- ly low level of trust and satisfaction in the government.
2. CSOs in Province 2 reported the lowest level of satisfaction while those from the Karnali Province expressed a comparatively better level of satisfaction.
  3. CSOs expressed a relatively better satisfaction with the effort of the local government when compared to that of the province and federal governments.
  2. CSOs at urban level felt a better freedom of expression compared to their rural counterparts.
  3. Leaders of small (<25) and medium-sized (25-50) organisations felt a better freedom of expression in comparison to those of larger (>50) organisations.
  4. Organisations working in advocacy sectors were more critical of the state of freedom of expression in comparison to service delivery organisations. Similarly, differences were noticed in organisations led by females and those led by males, where female-led organisations faced more issues than the latter.

### ***Perception on freedom of expression and association***

1. Province 1, 2, Bagmati and Karnali perceived a better freedom of expression in comparison to Lumbini, Gandaki and Sudurpaschim province as per the recorded responses.

The full report of “Impact Study of Covid-19 on CSOs in Nepal” can be accessed on NFN’s website.

# Covid-19 Response by Social Organizations<sup>1</sup>



- A total of 1570 Covid-19 response activities were performed in all of the 7 provinces.
- 347 out of the total 1570 activities were implemented in Bagmati province while province 1 saw 185 activities.
- Support on medical supplies, equipment, PPEs, food packages and test kits were provided by various humanitarian agencies during the Covid-19 crisis.
- With 270 social organizations reporting their direct or indirect contribution to Covid-19 response and management, the exact number is thought to be much larger. The main priority sectors were health and food security.
- Various NGOs and INGOs reported their total commitment of more than Rs. 2.5 billion in response to Covid-19 out of which the NGOs share accounted for a total of 59.67%
- Around 6 million people are thought to have been positively impacted with the organisations contributing in sectors of health, food security, education, communication and shelter.

<sup>1</sup> As published by Social Welfare Council (SWC) Nepal on July 9, 2021

## COVID-19 SUPPORT FROM HUMANATARIAN AGENCIES



**153,776**  
Personal Protective  
Equipments (PPEs)



**82,450**  
Isolation  
Kits



**4,157**  
Oximeters



**177,322**  
Antigen Test  
Kits



**20,098**  
RT-PCR Kits



**3,258**  
Oxygen  
Cylinders



**8**  
Oxygen  
Plants



**813**  
Oxygen  
Concentrators



**1,036,138**  
Safety, Health &  
Hygiene Kits



**838,909**  
Face  
shields



**58,421**  
Food  
Package



**520,518**  
Hand  
Sanitizers



**822,655**  
Gloves



**2,205,874**  
Masks



**2,920**  
Thermal gun

# Engagement of Social Organizations in Covid-19 Response in Nepal

Social and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have been hugely contributing in the containment and response to the Covid-19 pandemic situation in Nepal. Their scale of contributions in communities all over the country is however not being documented in a full scale currently. An attempt has been made here to provide a glimpse on the work done by CSOs particularly during the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, this report does not give a full picture of the response and may not include total interventions of any organization.

The second wave of Covid-19 in Nepal revealed how poorly managed health systems and infrastructures the country has. With the pandemic hitting the people hard, claiming thousands of lives and exhausting the medical resources, many CSOs have been extending support in different ways. They are providing critical medical supplies such as oxygen cylinders, oxygen concentrators, testing kits and critical care equipment, supporting Covid survivors and their families with food and home-based medical and psychosocial care as well as managing quarantine and isolation centres. Here are some examples of Covid-19 responses by NGOs/CSOs:

## Operation of Covid-19 Isolation Centres and Supply of Medical Equipment

As the number of coronavirus positive cases rose rapidly in Nepal, various places were

lacking isolation facilities and centres while also being run out of medical supplies and equipment. NGOs came forward in the operation of the Covid-19 isolation centre in Kathmandu as well as other places in the country. They also supplied many health and medical equipment including oxygen concentrators, personal protective equipment (PPE), surgical and N95 masks, and face shields throughout the country.

- Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)* set up a 51 bed isolation centre equipped with an oxygen facility in Biratnagar. Medical supplies were distributed to the isolation centre operated by RRN in partnership with Biratnagar Metropolitan City. Masks and sanitizers were distributed in joint coordination of NFN District Chapter Morang and District Rapid Response Team, Morang.



- *KIRDARC Nepal* provided health supplies worth Rs. 600,000 to Kalikot District Hospital. Items handed over included 150 PPE sets, 250 VTMs, 1,200 surgical masks, 2 IR thermometers, 150 masks, posters, 10 pieces of spray container, and other health items.
- *NEEDS Nepal* provided a large number of health supplies including but not limited to oxygen cylinders to Mahakali Hospital during the second wave of Covid-19. The organization handed 20 (40-litre capacity) oxygen cylinders to the hospital through the Humanitarian Aid Partnership Promotion Forum in partnership with CARE Nepal.



- *The Rural Community Development Centre (RCDC) Lamjung*, with the financial and technical support of World



- *Vision International Nepal* provided oxygen cylinders and health supplies to District Covid-19 Crisis Management Center, Lamjung. These supplies included 35 oxygen cylinders, 35 pulse oximeters, 35 thermal temperature guns and 35 PPE sets.
- *CID Nepal and CDC* in partnership with World Vision International handed over various health items including oxygen cylinders to the District Health Office, Doti. The health items worth Rs, 22 Lakhs and 64 Thousand were handed over to support treatment of Covid-19 patients in Doti.
- *Humanity Foundation Nepal*, which has been providing free oxygen to government hospitals in the far west and the general public through an Oxygen Bank for the treatment of Covid-19 patients, has provided oxygen, masks and PPE sets to Beldadi village of Kanchanpur. The foundation donated 4,000 masks, five new cylinders, five PPE sets and five beds to Beldadi village. The Foundation has been providing free oxygen to the Covid-19 patients with the help and cooperation of other organizations.
- *Gagan Chand Divine Foundation* handed over 10 new oxygen cylinders to District Hospital, Baitadi. The foundation purchased the cylinders at its own expense and handed them over to the hospital to facilitate the treatment of Covid-19 infected patients.

- *Shaheed Dasharath Chandra Memorial Foundation*, which operated an oxygen assistance campaign, handed over eight new oxygen cylinders to the District Hospital, Baitadi.
- *ARSOW Nepal* distributed health supplies to Panchpokhari Hospital in Sindhupalchowk. The supplies were handed over to isolation centres run by the municipality office and wards of the rural municipality.
- *Marwadi Sewa Samaj* operated a 51-bed isolation centre in Gaushala, Kathmandu which was inaugurated by Deputy Prime Minister Ishwor Pokhrel. This centre is providing free treatment, medicine, food and accommodation for Covid-19 patients.
- *Radha Poudel Foundation* handed over several health items to Karnali Province Hospital and Birendranagar Municipal Hospital in Surkhet. The medical supplies including 6 oxygen concentrators, 20 PPE sets, 100 face shields, sanitary pads for women health workers were provided to the two hospitals.
- *Namaste Khwap TV*, Bhaktapur and *Dance Directors Association Nepal*, Bhaktapur jointly launched a relief distribution campaign. These organizations distributed food to 63 families in three districts of Kathmandu Valley including single and pregnant women, cerebral palsy patients, unemployed, daily wage earners, homeless, people with disabilities, patients with renal failure, poor and orphaned children.
- *Maithil Brahmin Mahasabha Nepal*, *Youth Committee*, *Biratnagar* and *Social Association of Professional Nepali in America* have provided relief to the extremely poor families of 2, 6, 8, 10, 14 and 16 wards of Biratnagar. Segregated portions of rice, cooking oil, lentil, potato, salt, hand washing soap and sanitary masks were provided to each family.



### Support in Food Relief Programs

As the second wave of the Covid-19 epidemic spread across the country and the government-imposed lockdown measures, many families faced the challenge of hand-to-mouth. Hence, many NGOs came forward to distribute free food to the people and families as during the first wave of the pandemic.





- *Humanity Foundation Nepal* distributed relief materials to the poor, vulnerable and people with disabilities in Kailali. The 10 needy and financially weak families of Geta, Kailali alongside five members of Nepal Handicapped Association were handed over food items like rice, lentils, salt and cooking oil.
- *Namaste Kids Kaski, RRDC Lamjung* and local entrepreneurs distributed relief materials to those impacted when an earthquake with a magnitude of 5.8 struck Lamjung and surrounding districts amidst the Covid crisis on May 5, 2021.

#### **Remote Consultation with Doctors and Management of the Crowd During Swab Collection**

- As the infections continued, *Our Kaskikot Youth Network*, Pokhara con-

ducted regular consultation programs with doctors in order to benefit people stuck at home without direct access to medical consultants. Patients, exposed persons, chronically ill and other people could ask their health questions directly to the doctor during the virtual program.

- *Paribartanka Lagi Hatemalo Samaj* volunteered in crowd management at the swab collection facility at Koshi Hospital, Biratnagar. The team also volunteered at the hospital to help collect swabs as well as assisted in sanitizing the houses of Covid-19 patients in two wards of Biratnagar Metropolitan City.



# Policy Analysis

## Ordinance for Covid-19 Crisis Management, 2021

NFN made an analysis of the Covid-19 Crisis Management Ordinance 2021, enacted by the government on 20 May 2021. The analysis was based on international standards, constitutional spirits and best practices. The review was aimed at identifying provisional gaps, the grey areas, potential misuse, parity of the ordinance's provisions in regard to civic space, freedom of expression, freedom of association and other policy and operational issues of the CSOs.

The role of CSOs and inclusion of civic space in the ordinance were also analysed alongside provisions on human rights, freedom of association and expression, separation of power, transparency and role of CSOs as watchdog.

The ordinance has also narrowed the fundamental rights of the people, especially the freedom of assembly and association. Despite the ordinance's attempt to efficiently speed up the Covid-19 response management, it could not secure the transparency and accountability of the same. The constitution has itself provisioned for the partnership among all levels of governments, mechanisms and CSOs during national emergencies such as the Covid-19 pandemic, but the ordinance has envisioned just the role of the federal government.

More analysis is available on the news report about the CSOs' meeting on the ordinance. Also, the full analysis of the ordinance on Covid-19 crisis management can be read on NFN's website.



## 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, 195 member nations of the United Nations adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Goals. SDGs are the global call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and the environment, and ensure global peace and prosperity. The accompanying 17 Goals, 169 targets and 232 indicators are to be accomplished by 2030 with the partnerships of governments, civil society, businesses, media, institutions of higher education, and other stakeholders. A total of 494 indicators (479 without repetition) have been proposed for monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs in Nepal.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are transformational and inclusive for the welfare of living-beings and the environment of the earth.

SDGs are considered as a universal commitment to ‘leave no one behind’ in achieving

a peaceful, inclusive and prosperous world.

The SDGs can be organized under 5 Ps: *People* to end poverty and hunger in all forms and ensure dignity and equality; *Planet* to protect natural resources and environment; *Prosperity* to ensure prosperous and fulfilling lives in harmony with nature, *Peace* to foster peaceful, justice and inclusive societies, and *Partnership* to implement the agenda through global partnership.

Materialization of SDGs is only possible through the engagement of different stakeholders. As civil society is rich in resources with required expertise for the localization of SDGs, Nepali CSOs have formed ‘Nepal SDGs Forum’ a common platform for effective implementation of SDGs.

## Engagement of Nepali CSOs for SDGs

Civil society organizations (CSOs) in Nepal have remained active with their multiple roles for the acceleration, accountability and achievement of the SDGs. Coming together under Nepal SDGs Forum, they have continued dialogues, learning-sharing and advocacy actions each year on various occasions including the UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF) for SDGs, Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), and SDG Anniversary. Nepal has taken part in the two VNRs, in 2017 and in 2020. On both occasions, led by NFN and Nepal SDGs Forum, civil society reports on SDGs were prepared and shared with Nepal

Government and with the international community.

A week-long campaigns and activities have been organized collaboratively to mark the SDG anniversary on 25 September. CSOs' role is crucial for ensuring civil society partnership, accountability, transparency and 'leaving no one behind.' The role of CSOs in awareness building, localization and capacity building for SDGs are crucial. At the same time, monitoring and advocacy will contribute to ensuring that everything possible is done to accelerate and achieve the SDGs, by bringing prosperity and justice for all.

## Nepal SDGs Forum Review Meeting



Nepal SDGs Forum, coordinated by NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN), held a review meeting on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and made review and reflection of the Universal Periodic Review

(UPR) Third Cycle of Nepal on February 9, 2021.

In the meeting, updates on the SDGs were shared while associating them with the UPR process and human rights instruments, and

in consideration with Covid-19 pandemic. The meeting was chaired by Jitram Lama, President of NFN, and Hon. Min Bahadur Shahi, Member of National Planning Commission (NPC) was the chief guest.

In his presentation, Hon. Min Bahadur Shahi analyzed the progress Nepal has made towards realizing the SDGs and shared the gaps and challenges. As he presented the progress update in some indicators, it was evident that enhancing the disaggregated data and quality aspects were the most important aspects to be considered. He also accepted the weak data system in terms of SDGs implementation, especially SDG 16. It means measuring the progress is not possible or ineffective.

Notably, the Government of Nepal has recently unveiled the SDG progress report and SDG localization guideline which will be useful for implementing SDGs at the local level.

Similarly, at the meeting Joint Secretary of Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers Koshal Chandra Subedi made his presentation on UPR Third Cycle of Nepal from the perspectives of SDGs. Having shared the process, experiences and lessons, he showed how SDGs are associated with key human rights principles or how they are interrelated. Subedi's presentation was useful for the participants to know about interconnection between human rights

and SDGs and how they can utilize these instruments to hold the concerned agencies accountable.

During the open discussion session, the participants expressed their concerns related to the inclusive realization of the SDGs, enabling environment for the participation and contribution of CSOs, localization of the SDGs, assessment and acknowledgement of CSO contribution, and rights and entitlements of the marginalized and vulnerable groups. They also focused on and asked the Government of Nepal for the making the data and information available on SDG 16 and take this more seriously. Data generated by CSOs and from other sources was suggested to reduce the data gaps.

Arjun Bhattarai, Deputy Secretary General of NFN, shared the recent updates on SDGs at the national and international level. This was useful for everyone to get updated, as this meeting was held physically after a long time due to the coronavirus pandemic. Secretary General of NFN Ram Prasad Subedi facilitated the meeting.

The organizations associated with Nepal SDGs Forum as Conveners of different Goals, coordinators of thematic sectors or MGoS, INGOs or development partners associated as advisors of Nepal SDGs Forum, representatives of CSOs, and media persons joined the meeting.



# Featured Events

## National Civil Society Conference and 26<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of NFN



NGO Federation of Nepal organized a National Civil Society Conference and 26th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Kathmandu on 9 April 2021. As a conference organized in a virtual-physical model, 178 participants were physically present while nearly 150 took part virtually.

The participation included representatives from government including Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC), Social Welfare Council (SWC), National Planning Commission (NPC), NFN Board, NFN province committees and district level representatives of NFN members,



UN agencies, European Union, I/NGOs, media and CSO networks and federations.

The program was held in three parts: an inaugural session, a thematic session on policy and operational issues of CSOs in Nepal and the Annual General Meeting.

The program was inaugurated by the Chief Guest of the program, Hon. Minister of Women, Children and Senior Citizen (MOWCSC), Julie Kumari Mahato. Minister Mahato, shared that a drafting committee for the anticipated Unified Social Development Act has been proposed to the Council of Ministers. She expressed her commitment to draft and pass this law at the earliest possible to protect the rights of CSOs. She further committed to consult CSOs in the drafting process. She also expressed her awareness of the hassles faced by CSOs. She informed that soon the CSOs will be able to register and renew themselves online.

Guests of the conference and AGM delivered inaugural speeches focusing on the current issues of human rights, democracy and civic space while emphasizing the historical role of CSOs in Nepal. Member of NPC, Min Bahadur Shahi; Vice- Chair of SWC Dr. Padma Prasad Khatiwada, Ambassador of the Delegation of the EU Nona Deprez, Chairperson of Red Cross Dr. Netra Prasad Timsina, Advisor of NFN Mr. Gauri Pradhan, Advisor of NFN Mr. Shanta Lall Mulmi, President of DPNNet and NFN Advisor Mr. Surya Bahadur Thapa, President of FEDWASUN Mr Rajendra Aryal and AIN representative Mr Bishal Bhandari were present as special guests and spoke during the Civil Society Conference.

President of NFN, Jitaram Lama, took the opportunity to demand improved CSO law/s and hassle-free operations for CSOs in presence of the Minister. He reiterated the role of CSO in democracy and the roles of Nepali CSOs to establish federal democracy in

Nepal. Thus, he expressed NFN's and larger CSO's commitment to support the government of Nepal for social development of Nepal and simultaneously demanded a unified Social Development Act that ensures rights and hassle-free operation of CSOs.

Later, a thematic session was held on Policy and Operation Issues of CSOs in Nepal. NFN Province Chairs from all the 7 provinces of Nepal spoke on the gaps of the federal and province level CSO related laws. They also raised the operational hassles CSO faced regarding registration, renewal, taxation and VAT. Some of the representatives opined that the current role of SWC in the federal system is inadequate and SWC should be present in all the provinces. They reiterated that the line ministry for the CSOs should be MOWCSC and therefore the role of the Ministry of Home Affairs in registration and renewal of CSOs should be put to an end through the upcoming law.

Immediate Past president of NFN, Mr. Gopal Lamsal stressed that the CSO-related law has

been long pending, and that NFN along with other CSOs are struggling for decades for an improved CSO related law. He demanded that the CSO law should be drafted and passed immediately and civic space, democracy and freedom should be ensured.

Senior Law, Policy and Human Rights Advisor of FHI 360, Mr. Tanka Aryal spoke in the thematic session. He stated that when matters related to principles of CSO related law are agreed upon, operational matters especially related to registration, renewal, tax, vat, project approval will be resolved accordingly; therefore, he stressed that CSOs should focus and advocate for improved CSO related law at first and foremost.

Then, an AGM of the NGO Federation of Nepal was conducted. Secretary General of NFN Mr Ram Prasad Subedi presented the progress report of NFN. Similarly, Treasurer Ms Bishnu Thakali shared the financial report of NFN. Both of the reports were endorsed.





# Interaction on Disaster Management and Mitigation of Monsoon Related Risks



NGO Federation of Nepal has conducted an interaction program on disaster management and mitigation of monsoon related risks on Thursday, June 17th, 2021. Each year, Nepal sees a huge loss of lives and properties in the recurring natural calamities. With the onset of monsoon already, Nepal has started seeing the crisis loom in several districts like Sindhupalchowk and Manang. Cases of floods, landslides and continuous rise in river levels are being reported all across the country.

In this regard, the interaction program was held on the preparedness on risk minimization along with the role of social organisations, civil society and government in the

crisis management. According to Meteorologist Dr. Dharma Upreti, monsoon in Nepal started 2 days earlier this year in comparison to that of previous year. He says there is a high risk of massive rainfall occurring in the next 90 days. He reported the highest rainfall in the central region of Nepal, especially the Bagmati province in the last 5 days. “We need to be in a state of high alert at this time. There should be an utmost priority in the access of information alongside preparedness of risk mitigation”, stated Dr. Upreti. The SMS alert services of Telecommunication providers such as NTC and Ncell are not well distributed throughout the nation. People need to have early access to the safety in-



Flash floods in the Melamchi river left houses damaged in Nepal's Sindhupalchok district. | Prakash Mathema / AFP,

formation before the crisis actually happens. Dr. Upreti emphasized on the importance of widespread availability of SMS alerts along with informational campaigns at society level on how to move to safer places in crisis and on how to minimize the loss with proactiveness.

There is a huge importance of the role of social organizations in times of crisis. Nepal has been seeing a rapid growth in new settlements. River encroachment, flood, landslides as well as the Covid crisis are currently some huge priority concerns of the government as per Bed Nidhi Khanal, the deputy secretary of Nepal Disaster Risk Reduction Authority. There are ongoing constructions of roads even in the monsoon season. Settlements are being made near river sides. River sides have been encroached. There is a sharp rise in land plotting and unscientific settlements. This year saw an increase in forest fires as well. The government has been working on the integration of open public spaces, construction

of homes for those impacted, helipads and fire safety management in the system according to Khanal. “Despite the ongoing effort of the government every year, the crisis is far away from being solved due to the lack of awareness programs among citizens”, states Khanal.

Reports suggest that more than 640,000 people are directly impacted each year due to different natural disasters nationwide. Risk mitigation is only possible if people can be informed and alerted in advance as per Bipul Pokharel, president of the Federation of Nepali Journalists. He requested all media personnel to take care of their safety while collecting reports on the crisis. He also stressed on the need of “Rapid Response Desk” from the effort of civil society.

All the participants emphasised on the need of proactiveness as to not act when the crisis happens but be prepared beforehand. The participants also raised their voices on the



Flood after heavy rainfall in Melamchi , Source: Himlal Khabar



importance of psychological counselling and mental health awareness for those directly impacted by the calamities. Accordingly, they also stated the importance of taking not only care of the public in general but also special care to pregnant women, physically challenged and children.

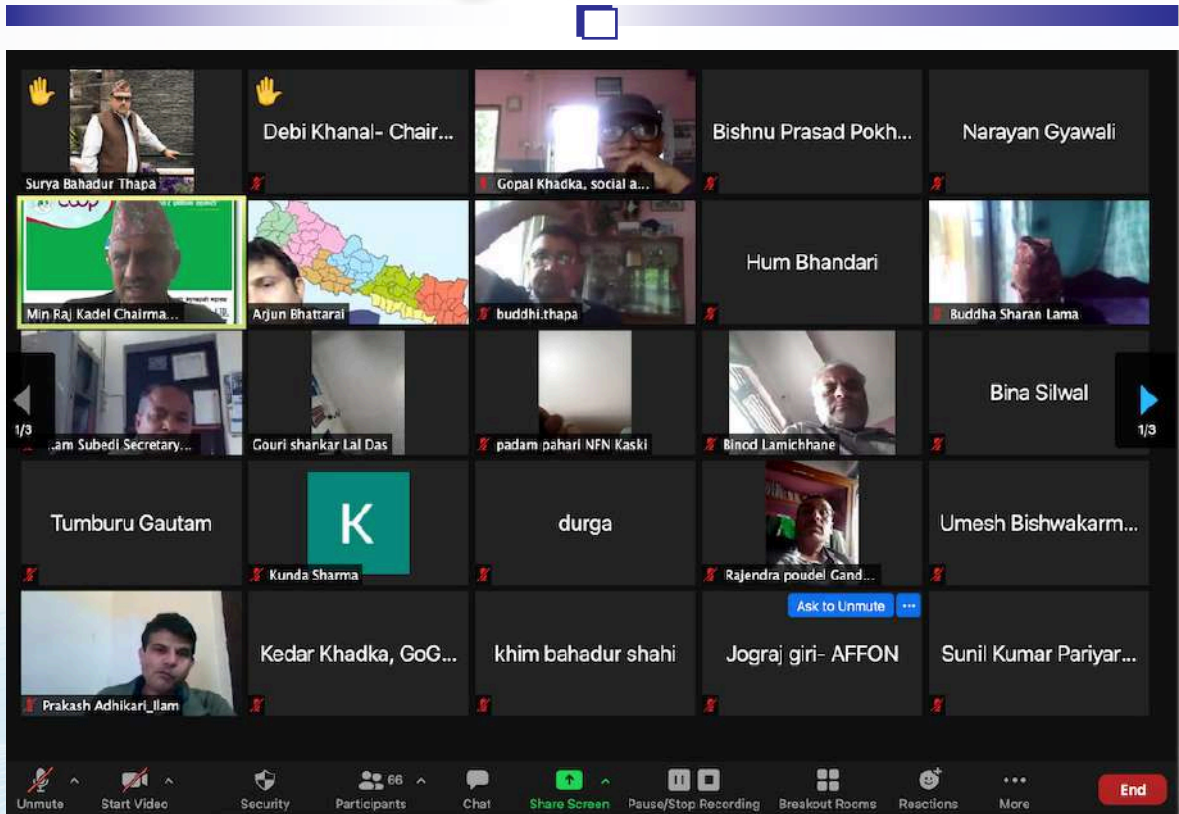
More than 150 participants from different government and non-government institu-

tions attended the program. Analysts suggested the need of at least a University for studies and research on Natural Disaster Risk Management alongside the setup of crisis management teams in every province which prepares a detailed audit on crisis forecast, its investigation and preparation of risk mitigation.



Source: Nagarik Khabar

## Civil Society Critical of Covid-19 Crisis Management Ordinance

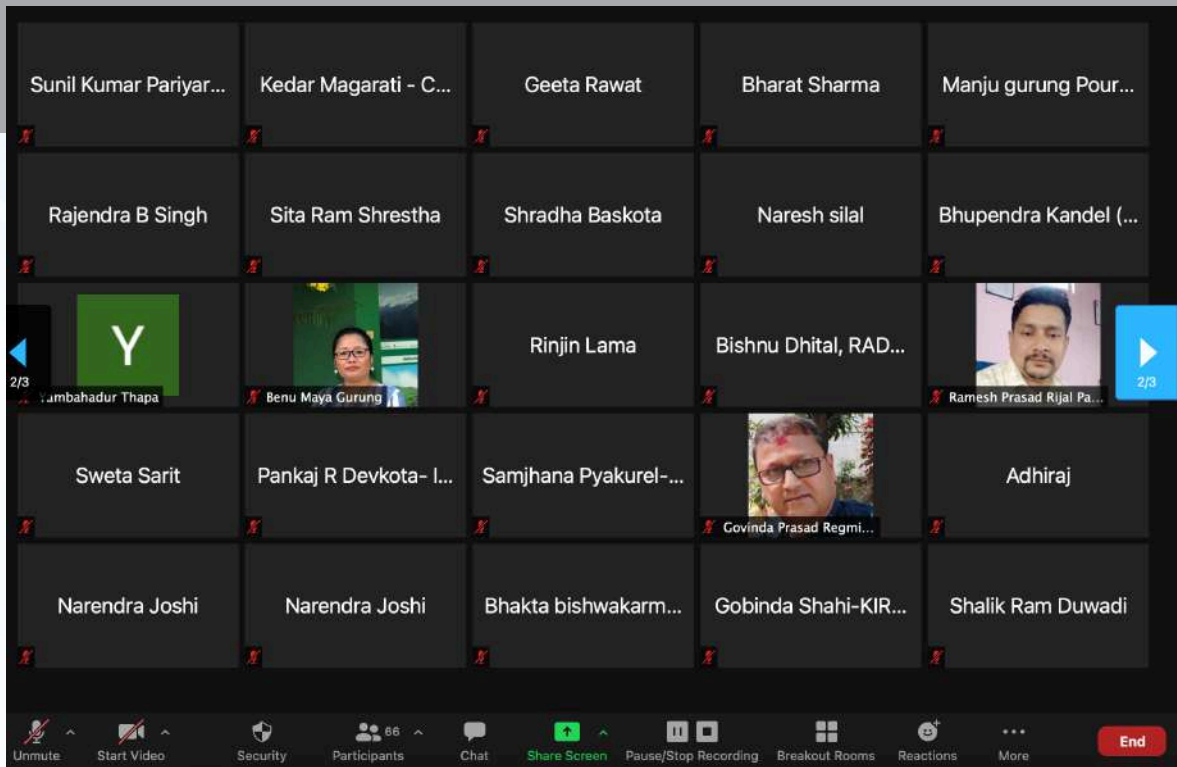


NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN) organized a virtual discussion meeting on 2 July 2021 to analyse the government’s ‘Ordinance for Covid-19 Crisis Management, 2021’. More than 70 civil society leaders joined the meeting. An analysis of the ordinance presented by NFN’s President Mr. Jit Ram Lama was followed by the comments and views of the participants.

The Government of Nepal introduced on 20 May 2021 the ‘Ordinance for Covid-19 Crisis Management, 2021’ to strengthen the Covid-19 prevention and response activities.

The ordinance has provisioned health emergency declaration, unified central hospitals, Covid-19 crisis management centre, federal, province and district committees, and provisions related to fund and procurement management, monitoring, and safety of health workers. It also sets the crimes and punishment in terms of the Covid-19 prevention, control, diagnosis, and treatment.

The unilateral efforts made by the government may not be sufficient to control the spread and treatment of Covid-19. But the organizational structures envisaged by the



ordinance do not recognize the roles and participation of the civil society organizations in the crisis management. It is against the spirit of the UN Sendai Framework 2015-2030 which Nepal has endorsed.

The ordinance has put impetus on the federal government; whereas it provides the nominal roles and functions to the province, and local governments in control and prevention of the Covid-19 pandemic. The restrictions on the grounds of Covid-19 may curtail fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and freedom of association which should not even be curtailed in the general emergency.

The ordinance sets the provisions of punishment if the activities towards the prevention and control of the coronavirus are violated. But the seriousness of crime and punishment are not proportionate, and the level of authority to Chief District Officers in this case. The ordinance has undermined the transparency and accountability provisions. It does

not articulate accountability mechanisms and punishment to the authorities if they fail to fulfill their responsibilities.

The participants of the meeting strongly raised that the ordinance fails to include the civil society participation and role, and even ignores the associated government agencies for Covid-19 control as well as disaster management. While the Covid-19 is also a sort of disaster and could be managed by activating National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority, its role is not properly recognized. Fighting disasters is the common responsibility of all tiers of government but the province and local governments are like the implementers.

Other aspects unaddressed by the ordinance are vaccines, psychosocial supports, education, transportation and communication.

It was concluded that civil society organizations will continue advocacy for securing the

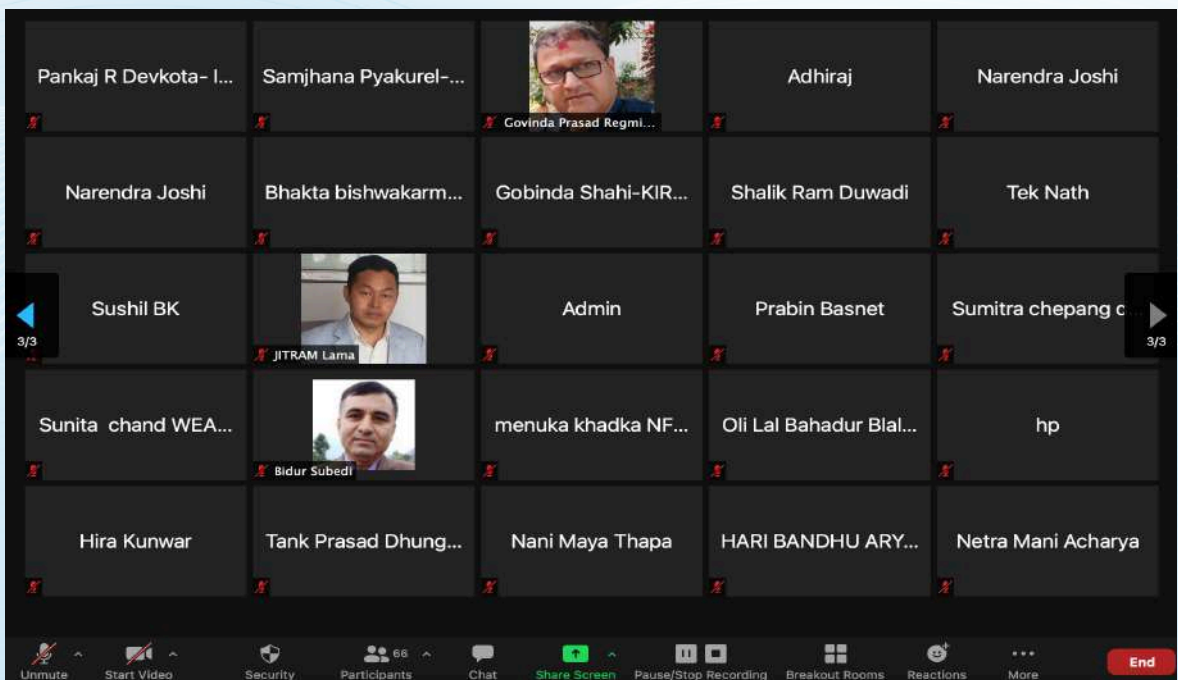
constitutionally provisioned space for civil society and guarantee of fundamental rights. Regular monitoring, support and collaboration with the government, and support to the vulnerable and marginalized communities will be continued by CSOs. Likewise, enhancing capacity and accountability of local governments should also be the agenda of CSOs.

Regardless of the fact that the government did not facilitate or provide space to CSOs during the pandemic and also did not prioritize the CSO frontline workers for vaccine, CSOs' contribution is remarkable. Nevertheless, CSOs' contributions still need to be well-documented. In fact, it was not lack of resources with the government, thereby the necessity of resources from CSOs, but inability to utilize, manage and mobilize the

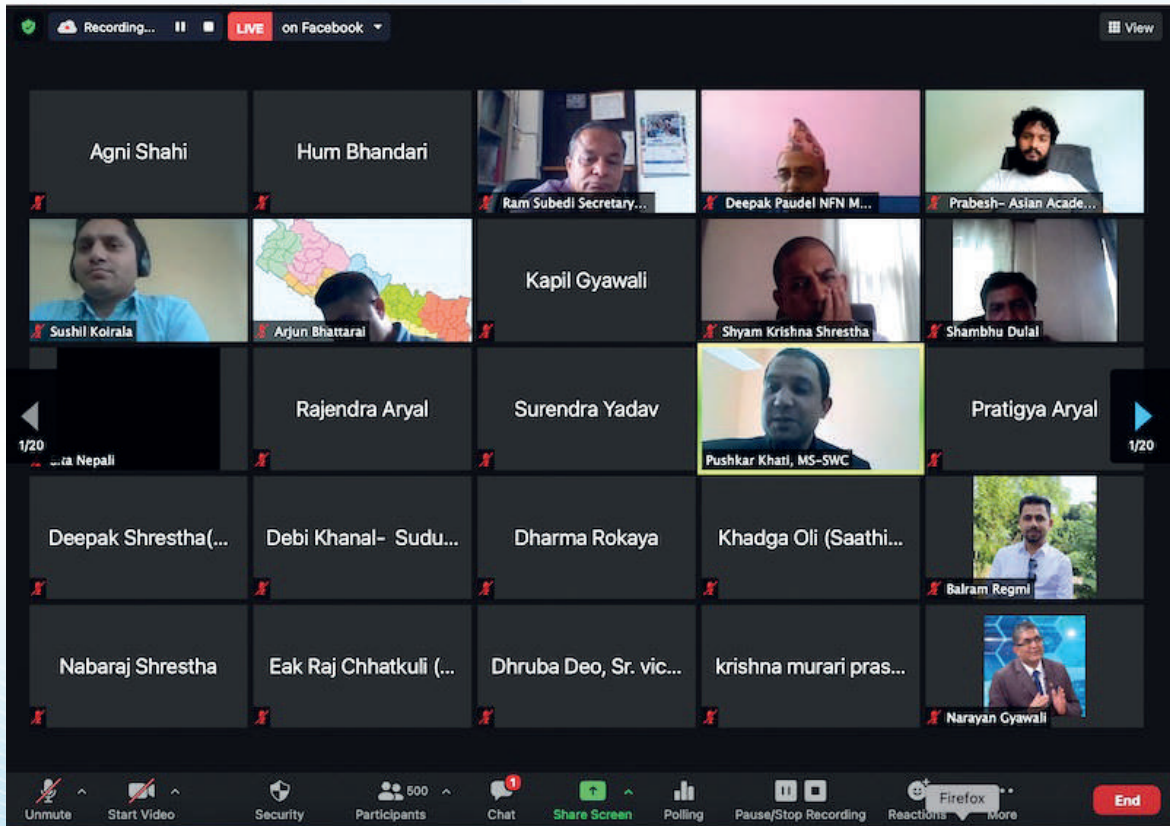
existing resources and mechanisms of the government.

President of National Cooperative Federation Mr. Min Raj Kadel, Executive Chair of Dalit NGO Federation Mr. Bhakta Bishwakarma, President of Community Electricity Users' Federation Mr. Narayan Gyawali, Mr. Bishnu Pokhrel of JuRI Nepal, Chair of DPNET Mr. Surya Bahadur Thapa, Executive Director of GoGo Foundation Mr Kedar Khadka, Executive Director of AATWIN Ms. Benu Maya Gurung and civil society activist Mr. Tanka Aryal were among the speakers.

The meeting was facilitated by Mr. Arjun Bhattarai, Deputy Secretary General of NFN and the context and objectives of the meeting were highlighted by Mr. Ram Subedi, Secretary General of NFN.



# Interaction on Enrolment of Social Organization Employees to Social Security Fund



The government of Nepal has introduced social security scheme to provide coverage for the valuable human resources in the country. The government established the Social Security Fund (SSF) to ensure proper management of pensions, insurance, and social security and has asked private and non-government organizations for participation. However, in recent time, the social security scheme has been subject to criticism from different quarters for its inability to address the private and non-government sector's

unique circumstances.

Various provisions regarding participation of social organizations to the SSF are unclear and vague. The lack of understanding has resulted in various issues and problems. So, to clarify existing issues and confusion regarding association to the SSF, a virtual discussion was organized jointly by NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN) and Association of International NGO in Nepal (AIN) on 6 July 2021.

During the interaction program, Chairman of AIN Sushil Koirala emphasized on various complexities and disadvantages in relation to associating with SSF. According to Koirala, the deposits in Citizen Investment Trust (CIT) and Employee Provident Fund (EPF) should be returned before enrolment to the SSF. He also demanded clarity before enforcement of the mandatory enrolment to SSF.

Ram Prasad Subedi, General Secretary of NFN, stated that the Social Security Fund, though a good initiation, is not applicable and practical for short term project employees. He further added that many people want to join SSF but the unavailability of options for those who want to quit their job early or start their own business has been worrisome.

Kapilmani Gyawali, Executive Director of SSF, addressed some of the queries raised by the participants. He highlighted the fact that enrolment in SSF has increased over the past year. SSF is aware of all the voices raised regarding SSF and would clarify and address raised queries and issues. He further added that the organisations that join the SSF before 2078 B.S. will receive special benefits; they will be allowed to withdraw their savings at the age of 28, 33 and 60.

During the interaction program many of the participants showed their deep dissatisfaction towards the provisions of SSF. Dissatisfaction about unilateral enforcement without employees' acceptance was raised. In fact, CSOs, NGOs and their employees are ready to comply with the government's requirement but before that clarity of some issues,

ensuring comparative advantage of the employees, and due consideration of the changing employment situation of the employees in the social sector is crucial.

Agni Shahi from Bajura said that his organisation has been participating in SSF for over a year. But the promises made by SSF have not been executed well. Health benefits have not been addressed.

Similarly, Renu Adhikari said 'We all have to follow the government's rule eventually. It's our civil duty. But it's too early to implement SSF. Not enough discussions and discourse has been made regarding the SSF. The implementation of SSF will result in unavailability of human resources in NGOs.'

Participant Shreya Karki questioned the double tax system. She expressed the confusion and lack of security on her investment.

Addressing the queries of the participants Gyawali further clarified 'SSF is in accordance with the Labour Act 2074 and is within the law. SSF should not be seen as an enforced fund and has been created by following international practices. All of the other funds have been corresponded and will be merged gradually. There is no deadline. Entering the SSF is always open. Entering before 2078 B.S. is only a scheme.'

Member-Secretary of Social Welfare Council, Mr Pushkar Khatri accepted that reforms had been made on SSF over the course of time. He further added that SSF is a milestone step and should be updated and reformed continuously. He said the SWC is ready to



facilitate and discuss necessary changes.

Similarly, Dr. Gaurishankar Laal, Advisor of National Senior Citizen Federation, stated that SSF is a major issue right now and is creating a lot of confusion. Many of the projects are short termed and will not be able to follow the SSF protocol. SSF should allow free entry and free exit policy.

Bidur Subedi of Human Rights Alliance expressed that social security is a fundamental right of the citizens and provisions related to this need to ensure the feeling of security.

So, the methods and process should be transparent, reliable and proper. SSF should improve according to the suggestions.

Many other participants expressed their unique cases which they feel are not addressed by the existing provisions of SSF. Enforcement without further discussion, consultation and consideration to the concerns raised is impractical.

More than 500 participants were involved in the virtual discussion.





## HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### Side Event on Accelerating the SDGs Monitoring and Implementation Actions Using SDG 16+



NGO Federation of Nepal co-hosted the virtual side event on *Accelerating the SDGs Monitoring and Implementation Actions Using SDG 16+* on 7 July 2021. Side events of the UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF) are held outside the official programme and provide great opportunities to discuss the theme and SDGs under review at the HLPF.

The meeting was hosted by National Planning Commission of Nepal with co-hosts namely All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia On Sustainable Development Goals

(APPGM-SDG), United Nations Resident Coordination Office of Nepal, Korea NGO Council for Overseas Development Cooperation (KCOC), NGO Federation of Nepal,





Nepal SDGs Forum, Japan NGO Centre for International Cooperation (JANIC), Transparency, Accountability & Participation (TAP) Network, Forus, and Malaysian CSO SDG Alliance.

This side event brought together the government officials, policy-makers, the UN institutions, experts and civil society activists to share and address the critical challenges pertaining to the monitoring of SDG 16+.

SDG 16+ bring in the agenda of human rights, civil society participation, good governance, justice, equality and inclusion. These are not only the major concerns of civil society but also the enablers and accelerators of SDGs.

The side event has been a great opportunity to further highlight Goals, targets and agenda associated with SDG 16+. With exchange of progress, challenges and experiences, the stakeholders have renewed their commitments to achieving SDGs by taking SDG

16+ as the accelerators and monitoring tools.

The panellists, speakers and participants acknowledged mainstreaming of SDGs at subnational level, lack of data, coordination and harmonization, Covid-19 pandemic, and inadequate political commitment among others as the challenges.

NFN President Jit Ram Lama made welcome remarks. He emphasized that the Goals like SDG 16, SDG 5, SDG 17 and SDG 10 have been the primary concern of the civil society. CSOs can work with and support the governments to implement many initiatives. He said no one should undermine participation, monitoring role and contribution of civil society.

In his key-note speech Vice-chair of NPC Nepal Prof. Dr. Puspa Raj Kadel shared Nepal Government's initiatives to mainstream and implement the SDG 16 plus. Some of the Nepal Government's initiatives he shared in-

cluded the ongoing effort of ‘leave no one behind framework’, province-wise analysis of human development, and preparation of SDG 16 report which is expected to be published soon.

There were two panel discussions on integrating SDG 16 plus with human rights at global level, and assessing the regional and national trends of SDG 16 plus over the last 5 years and relevance and importance of SDG 16 plus in post Covid-19 recovery era.

Here are some of the key points that emerged during the discussion and deliberations:

- Poverty, inequality and corruption give rise to conflict.
- SDG 16 should be annually reviewed by HLPF.
- Effective multi-stakeholder partnership for SDG 16 is necessary.
- Citizen-led data should be recognized to complement the data gaps.
- Global initiatives should focus and invest in civil society initiatives.
- Find the link between SDG 16 plus and other SDGs.
- Data only can demonstrate and concretize the concept and situation of inequality.
- CSOs’ solidarity and action, and sharing and promoting good practices is essential.
- Need to revitalize the global partnership for development.
- Middle income class are at the risk of falling down the poverty line and the poor to extreme poverty.
- Not only the policies but the institutions and implementation are vital.
- Mutual cooperation between the civil society and government can be enhanced through forums such as VNRs, and UPRs.



**HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM  
SIDE EVENT 2021**

**11.30 to 1330 Hrs  
GMT**

**July 7,  
2021**

**ACCELERATING  
THE SDGs MONITORING  
AND  
IMPLEMENTATION  
ACTION USING  
SDG 16+**

**Policy Discussion**

Register here : [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_LSRmiToXQ6aryaGELm7DyA](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_LSRmiToXQ6aryaGELm7DyA)

Logos: ADA, JANIC, Government of West Bank, forus, GOALS, TAP NETWORK, POLITICAL FORUM FOR SDG-SDG, KOICA, KCDC



## Global Hunger Index (GHI) Report- 2020 Nepal Launching Programme

31 March 2021  
Kathmandu



Nepal Launching Programme of Global Hunger Index report was successfully held in Kathmandu on 31 March 2021. NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN) and Welthungerhilfe (WHH) organized together the Global Hunger Index (GHI) Report- 2020 Nepal Launching Programme in coordination with Nepal SDGs Forum and with financial support from Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development Germany (BMZ). The event was held on 31 March 2021 in Hotel Himalaya, Lalitpur. This report summarizes and provides a glimpse of the event.

The report was introduced by highlighting the key facts and figures and was discussed

in the Nepali context from various perspectives. Government, civil society, private sector, development partners and media have taken part in the event and have helped to publicize the report which had special focus on Nepal. Starting from the global presentation, opportunities were created for presentations and discussion to analyse the situation of hunger and malnutrition in general, from the perspective of inclusion or leaving no one behind, and government initiatives towards zero hunger. Situation of hunger at the subnational level—particularly in the Karnali province—was discussed while seeking solutions. National level policy makers representing the National Planning Commission commented and presented their views. In the

programme organized in a hybrid model—physically and virtually—participants raised their concerns demanding gender equality and social inclusion, improvement in the supply and demand, and participatory planning.

The event aimed at introducing the GHI report among stakeholders in Nepal; highlight the status, key issues and challenges relating to hunger and (mal)nutrition in Nepal; and make policy advocacy and recommendations to improve the food and nutrition situation in Nepal and pave ways for attainment of SDG2 in Nepal.

Ms. Miriam Wiemers from WHH Headquarters, in her presentation virtually. In her presentation she covered the background and global perspectives and status as reflected in the GHI 2020 report. Similarly, Dr. Padma Prasad Khatiwada made the first presentation from a general perspective in Nepali context whereas Dr Yamuna Ghale focused on the inclusion and issues of vulnerable populations. On the other hand, Mr Mahesh Kharel's role was to shed light on the government's status and response towards ending hunger and malnutrition. Beyond these 'national' positions, the role of the Vice-chair of the Planning Commission of Karnali Province was to highlight the issues of hunger and malnutrition at subnational levels and particularly in Karnaliprovince, which is characterized by high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition. These presentations were supplemented by NPC member Min Bahadur Shahi and NPC Vice-chair Puspa Raj Kandel. The program was hosted by Bhawana Bhatta, secretary at NFN. The event witnessed participa-

tion from different quarters including NGOs, government agencies, researchers, experts and other stakeholders. The event saw foot-fall of more than 115 people virtually and physically.

## Highlights of Keynote Speeches and Presentations



**Jitram Lama**, President of NGO Federation of Nepal said this is a historic moment in launching of the GHI report that has special focus on Nepal. This is the second time the GHI report has been

launched in Nepal in initiation of WHH since last year. The report launch will also focus on the achievement of SDG 2. Covid-19 pandemic has adversely affected the progress towards zero hunger but hopefully the coordinated efforts will help us recover. This event will provide us a future direction for action.

### Miriam Wiemers

introduced the GHI report 2020 from a broader and global perspective and zoomed in to the implications to Nepal. GHI measures three

dimensions (Inadequate food supply, child mortality and child undernutrition) and four indicators (undernourishment, under five mortality rate, child wasting and child stunting).



**Padma Prasad Khatiwada** Vice Chairperson of Social Welfare Council, focused on the GHI report from Nepalese perspective.



He introduced the existing policies and government measures related to food and nutrition security. Article

36 of the constitution of Nepal has enshrined rights related to food. He presented the progress Nepal has made on SDG 2 indicators. But challenges remain including irrigation facilities and modern inputs, mitigation and adaptation to effects of climate change, ensuring year-round food availability in far-flung and remote regions, data collection and reporting system, monitoring food quality and controlling use of chemical pesticides.

Agriculture and Food Security Specialist **Yamuna Ghale**'s focus was on leaving no one behind (LNOB). In other words, the inherent diversity, inequalities, marginalization



and poverty need to be seriously considered. There are policies including the constitutional and legal provisions, international human rights instruments and global commitments which need to be implemented. LNOB is to be conceptualized at all three tiers of the government.

**Mahesh Kharel** Programme Director, Agriculture and Poverty Alleviation Section,

National Planning Commission, introduced the policies and initiatives of the Government related to agriculture, food security, nutrition, and SDGs. The Right to Food



and Food Sovereignty Act addresses food security, distribution, and institutional arrangements at all levels of government. The way forward should be increasing the role of women, increasing the production and productivity of agriculture, and making the food system sustainable, inclusive and resilient at all levels of production, distribution and consumption. Likewise, it is necessary to make the food healthy, diversified and nutritious. Access to health, clean drinking water and sanitation, and healthy eating habits are equally important.



**Sarba Raj Khadka**, Vice-chairperson of Planning Commission of Karnali Province brought to light the grim situation of Karnali Province. The multidimensional poverty index (MPI) of Karnali is 51.2% whereas the national data is 28.6%. Also, in terms of absolute poverty, this province's poverty rate is 28.9 against the national rate of 18.7.

Not only this, Karnali has higher child and infant mortality rates. Karnali Province is vulnerable and insecure in terms of food and nutrition. Likewise, agricultural land and

irrigation facilities are limited. Challenges include poverty, governance, impacts of climate change, Covid-19 pandemic. It is also challenging to implement programmes due to lack of human resources.



**Nona Deprez**, Ambassador Delegation of the European Union to Nepal expressed that the GHI report is really useful to monitor with data. The EU has been attempting to work together with stake-

holders through a multisectoral nutrition program (MSNP II). The EU would continue supporting under the leadership of NPC, and is designing a programme focusing on green growth.

**Min Bahadur Shahi** member of National Planning Commission mentioned that multi-dimensional poverty has been reduced much below the target which is good. Government is working with long-term planning, targeting zero hunger and reducing the multidimensional poverty index to 3%. This needs partnership for which the Government is ready to create an enabling environment. Government has very well addressed gender and disability issues in the fifteenth periodic plan which needs to be taken as an achievement by the civil society. In the process of devel-



oping the 15th periodic plan, stakeholders were consulted; so they need to seek their role. Preventing the fragmentation of land and promoting scientific use of land needs to be focused on.



**Puspa Raj Kadel**, Vice chairperson of National Planning Commission acknowledged that the special focus of the report on Nepal has been useful to highlight the issues of Nepal and bring

to notice of the government. Although Nepal has made some good progress, it is not sufficient. We have prepared periodic plans, SDG-related plans and frameworks which will contribute to reducing hunger and poverty. The vision of the Prime Minister--nobody will face hunger, nobody will die of hunger--also reflects the government's priorities. We have managed to reduce the number of street children and beggars.

**Ram Subedi**, General secretary of NGO Federation of Nepal thanked all the guests and participants. All the presentations and remarks have been focused on zero hunger. Hopefully, the facts and recommendations will guide government, policy makers and stakeholders to take action in future. There also needs to be proper follow up to the recommendations.






# Recent Publications


**Leave no one behind**

Nepal Civil Society  
Perspectives on the 2030  
Agenda for Sustainable Development

**CSOs' Voluntary National Review  
2020**



Nepal SDGs Forum  
(National Secretariat: NGO Federation of Nepal)




July 2020



**CSOs' Contribution to Post-Earthquake  
Recovery and Reconstruction:  
A Collection of Case Studies**

**Status and Trends of Localization of  
SDG 2 in Nepal:  
Civil Society Perspectives**










NGO Federation of Nepal

Nepal SDGs Forum

WFP  
welt hunger hilfe  
For a world without hunger

**Nature in All Goals:  
Localization of Environmental  
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nepal**

Nepal SDGs Forum

NGO Federation of Nepal



**Nepal SDGs Forum** was established in 2016 as a common platform of thematic federations and networks, CSOs, I/NGOs, private sector, cooperatives, media, UN agencies, bilateral and multilateral development partners and major groups and stakeholders which aspire to contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Nepal SDGs Forum is the only civil society platform recognized by High-Level SDG Steering Committee, Thematic Committees as well as Nepal Government's institutional mechanisms set up for implementation of SDGs. Now, more than 50 federations and alliances and over 500 organizations from across the country are the members of this Forum. This Forum comprises of organizations which have taken their specific responsibilities as Conveners, Co-Conveners, and Major Groups. In addition to the designated Conveners and Co-conveners for each goals, Nepal SDGs Forum has formed the civil society Major Groups as well as cross-cutting or thematic areas that include Youth, Women, People with Disabilities, Senior Citizens, Children, Dalit, Indigenous Communities, LGBTIQ, Farmers, Development Partners, Cooperatives, Media, Trade Unions, Private Sectors, Science and Technology. As an open forum, Nepal SDGs Forum welcomes everyone interested in SDGs to join this forum. INGOs working in Nepal are part of this forum as advisors.

Nepal SDGs Forum aims to accelerate, localize and contribute to achieving SDGs while guided by the principles of 'leaving no one behind', shared and sustained prosperity, and increased role and participation of civil society. It works in close coordination with National Planning Commission (NPC) and other state and non-state actors. By working under this Forum, various stakeholders aim to coordinate, collaborate and build synergy in influencing and impacting sustainable development. Although different organizations have their own priorities and actions, they come together under this Forum so as to impact and influence policy, coherence, harmonization as well as to create a common understanding and voice at the national and international level. They share their activities, lessons learned, priorities and way forward by meeting regularly.

NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN) facilitates in the functioning of Nepal SDGs Forum at central and province levels. Its secretariat is located at NFN at Buddhanagar, Kathmandu. As a host organization of Nepal SDGs Forum as well as the leading CSO network of Nepal, NFN functionalizes this forum, coordinates and builds synergy among CSOs, NGOs, INGOs, and establishes linkage with Government of Nepal. This has made it possible to localize the SDGs at grassroots level, while engaging with national, provincial and local level state and non-state actors and stakeholders for The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

For more information, visit: [www.nepalsdgforum.org](http://www.nepalsdgforum.org)



# **NGO Federation of Nepal**

P.O.Box; 7768, Buddhanagar, Kathmandu

Tel: +977-1-4792908, 4781368, 4790559

E-mail : [info@ngofederation.org](mailto:info@ngofederation.org).

Website : [www.ngofederation.org](http://www.ngofederation.org)