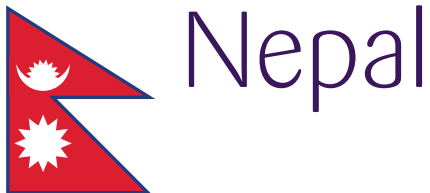


APFSD YOUTH FORUM 2023



Asia-Pacific Regional Youth Call to Action 2023



Nepal

Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels in Asia and the Pacific with Young People at the Forefront

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Nepal, like many countries around the world, has been largely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and has faced many challenges in curbing it, including a shortage of medical supplies and equipment, inadequate healthcare infrastructure, and a large population of migrant workers returning from India and other countries. The country has implemented various measures to control the spread of the virus, including lockdowns, travel restrictions, and mass testing campaigns. The number of reports have indicated that the virus has affected all sectors, leaving none untouched. The pandemic has resulted in tens of thousands of Nepalese losing their jobs both domestically and internationally.

Currently, the country has paced up recovering from the devastating impact of the COVID-19. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) aim to provide a “blueprint for a better and more sustainable future for all” and are broadly aligned with the social, economic and

environmental aspirations which Nepal has set for itself in its new constitution. The SDGs, therefore, are not just an international milestone, but they represent a set of solemn commitments made by the Nepal government for shared progress.

Over the past two decades, Nepal has achieved notable advancements in reducing poverty and promoting human development. The country’s absolute poverty rate has decreased by one percent annually, while its Human Development Index (HDI) has increased by one basis point per year. However, Nepal’s absolute poverty rate of 21.6 percent remains one of the highest in South Asia, and its human development status is among the lowest for middle-income countries.

Nevertheless, even three years after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and despite the frequent occurrence of disasters in Nepal, the government has yet to develop specific, targeted, and practical initiatives and plans to address emergencies and humanitarian crises. To this day,

indigenous youth and those living in rural areas continue to face a lack of awareness, knowledge, and capacity-building opportunities that are specifically tailored to their local and community contexts with regards to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and addressing the differential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nepal's weak institutional setup for maintaining clean and sanitary water practices is a major obstacle to achieving SDG 6. The inadequate policies, regulations, funding, and coordination among government agencies and other stakeholders have resulted in poor maintenance of water supply and sanitation infrastructure, leading to frequent breakdowns and service interruptions.

The lack of progress indicators and insufficient capital budget for promoting renewable energy, coupled with high costs for those in need, pose challenges for achieving SDG 7. Empowering and mobilising youth, prioritising vulnerable communities, and adopting energy-efficient practices are necessary steps.

Adding on, discrimination in the industrial sector and the digital divide, particularly for poor young people and those with disabilities, pose challenges for achieving SDG 9 in Nepal. The lack of digital literacy and public-private partnerships for building resilient infrastructure and communities through innovations further hinders progress.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

In consideration of above situations, a diverse and inclusive group of Nepalese youth participants engaged together at the APFSD Youth Forum 2023 in hybrid model for calling an action to our government, international organisations, United Nations agencies, civil society organisations, development partners and other duty bearers on following SDGs.

SDG6: Clean Water And Sanitation

1. Strengthen institutional arrangements for water and sanitation: Improve sanitation in public places especially in schools, health facilities, etc. with access to clean and functional toilets, hand-washing facilities, proper waste disposal systems, gender friendly, child friendly and disability friendly infrastructures.

2. Promote public-private partnerships: Reinforce multi sectoral coordination on drinking water distribution, waste management, curbing air and plastic pollution, etc. for accountability and sustainability of WASH activities. Besides, recognising waste recyclers and sanitation workers, supporting their occupational health and safety, access to WASH services, etc. play a huge role in keeping our space clean and sanitised.
3. Ensure youth engagement in research-based advocacy, campaigns, and awareness events.
4. Robustly implement result-based monitoring mechanisms in the WASH sector and sensitise stakeholders for accountability.

SDG7: Affordable and Clean Energy

1. Conduct awareness programmes, capacity-building training to communities, youths and duty bearers on climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, renewable energy and sustainable agriculture practices that they can play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
2. Promote clean energy sources such as solar, electrical vehicles and appliances, wind energy, which can reduce carbon emissions and energy consumption.
3. Advocate for policies such as developing railway, ropeway infrastructure to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and hence reduce the carbon footprint is essential in the context of Nepal.
4. Strengthen connections between local and policy sectors to empower women, children, youth and people with disabilities.
5. Promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean cooking technologies and decentralised sustainable energy technologies that support gender equality and women's economic empowerment, civic engagement and participation, including youth-led advocacy campaigns and initiatives to promote youth leadership.
6. Build knowledge on gender expertise and experience on gender issues across the energy value chain

SDG9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

1. Promote the resilient, transformative, occupational safety and friendly infrastructures and innovations at all levels.

2. Invest in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields where girls and women, LGBTIQ communities, people with disabilities, people in underprivileged and hard to reach areas, etc. also have equal access to technology.
3. Promote indigenous knowledge, skills and practices through research activities for evidence based advocacy.
4. Encourage private sectors for investments and partnerships.
5. Support youth-led initiatives and innovations in terms of technical, inclusive education schemes, and financial support.
6. Promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace and consumer's rights at the forefront.

SDG11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

1. Adopt nature-based solutions for urban climate resilience and trained communities on sustainable agri-ecosystem.
2. Promote resilience to urban floods through wetlands and other emergency preparedness plans.
3. Support sustainable waste management systems by promoting waste segregation at source, promoting Reduce-reuse and recycle (3R).
4. Support indigenous knowledge, skills and practices by conducting research and building a resilient and inclusive social environment.
5. Include youth in an emergency rapid response team (RRT) and mobilising during the emergencies and crisis.
6. Ensure continuous advocacy to government and duty bearers to make disabled friendly infrastructure in cities and communities.
7. Following the national building code while constructing the infrastructures should be strictly implemented.
8. Foster green spaces to promote healthy living and sustainable urbanisation while developing rural areas can distribute the population and reduce the burden on urban areas.
9. Providing basic services such as healthcare, education, and clean water to all, including people with disabilities, is important. This includes teaching life skills, providing hearing aids and braille, and maintaining tiles in public spaces.

SDG17: Partnerships For The Goals

1. Form coalitions and networks with the government/INGOs/CSOs working on similar issues, for resource sharing, and prevention of the duplication of the programmes.
2. Strengthen people, public, and private partnerships to achieve all SDGs at different levels.
3. Increase capacities of civil society organisations and government institutions to respond to the activities by enriching the resources and technical support.

Overall, the following are the strategic recommendations for all SDGs:

1. Vulnerable communities are the primary targets to intervene considering their culture, values and dignity (especially, people with disabilities, ultra-remote and hard to reach areas, urban poor, recycling professionals, migrants and internally displaced people, LGBTIQ and minority communities, etc.)
2. Empower youths and communities
3. Promote cooperation, collaboration and public-private partnerships
4. Ensure capacity development of duty bearers for the resilient, transformative and strengthened public system
5. Fund and provide awareness, evidence based advocacy and research activities
6. Provide technical and financial assistance for the capacity enhancement of the system
7. Ensure inclusive education to people with disabilities and everyone.
8. Amplify media utilisation to raise the voice, demands and commitments for the solutions.

The APFSD country and sub-regional briefs were developed through collective discussions and engagements between youth advocates at the APFSD Youth Forum in Bangkok on March 18-20, 2023. The Nepal drafting team was led by Mansingh Aidee and Rubina Adhikari and inputs were provided by Aanchal Adhikari, Angel Lama, Anu Rai, Bishwamitra Bhitrakoti, Dipesh Limbu, Ganesh Poudel, Gyaljen Lama, Kalpana Rai, Lirisha Tuladhar, Manish Maharjan, Manisha Thapa, Pema Wangmo Lama, Prajwal Subedi, Prakriti Dangol, Priya K.C, Priyanka B.C, Puja Khadka, Pushpa Joshi, Reyusha Chalise, Richa Shrestha, Rubina Tamang, Sachita Maharjan, Shilpa Lamichhane, Shristi Garu, Sonika Poudel, Suhana Thapa Magar, Susmita Bhandari, Tanchhoma Limbu, and Yuvraj Lama. Overall supervision was provided by the ARROW Call To Action team.
