



Nepal's Strategic Engagement with the UNFCCC

An overview of impact of the project at COP 17



January 2012

Background

The Government of Nepal is endeavoring, inter alia, to access financial resources for adaptation to climate change. As a country of highly vulnerable to climate change, Nepal, like other developing countries, has to actively participate on design and delivery of the Green Climate Fund, including other funds to ensure that it is easily accessible, fairly distributed and has a transparent governance mechanism. In this context, there has been a strong realization that Nepal needs more effective and strategic engagement in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations.

"Nepal's Strategic Engagement with the UNFCCC" is a project funded by Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN), which receives fund from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) for the benefit of developing countries. The project aims to:

- i. **Facilitate greater coordination among relevant Ministries in the Government of Nepal and concerned stakeholders in the preparation and follow-up to the UNFCCC negotiations;**
- ii. **Strengthen the capacity of the delegation of Nepal to participate in the UNFCCC negotiations in an informed and effective manner; and**
- iii. **Increase communication and coordination among delegations with a shared interest in the UNFCCC negotiations.**

In order to achieve the objectives mentioned above, the project provides logistic support to three to five delegates to COP 17 and COP 18, and produces background notes and policy briefs along with organizing inter-ministerial and inter-agency meetings, trainings, workshops and side-events at the COPs.

Integrated Development Society Nepal (IDS-Nepal) has been chosen as a service provider to the project. IDS-Nepal under the leadership of the Climate Change Management Division, Ministry of Environment, supported five additional delegates to COP 17, IDS-Nepal under the leadership of the Climate Change Management Division, Ministry of Environment, supported five additional delegates to COP 17, and organized Project Kick-off Meeting, Pre-COP 17 Consultation Workshop and Nepal's Side-Event at the COP 17 in Durban, South Africa. It also assisted the Ministry to prepare and produce background notes on four thematic areas (see the section Past Achievements Shared, below).



Hon'ble Mr. Hemraj Tater, Minister for Environment, Government of Nepal inaugurating the Pre-COP 17 Consultation Workshop in Kathmandu

This report highlights the Project's contribution to Nepalese delegates at COP 17 and reflections on Nepal's engagement in Durban. It also identifies lessons learnt and makes some recommendations for further support to the Government of Nepal in her endeavor to strengthen negotiating capacity of the delegates and in influencing the negotiations during the COPs and meetings of the Subsidiary Bodies.

Highlights of Project Contributions to Nepalese Delegation

Capacity strengthened: As an attempt to strengthen the capacity of the Nepalese delegation, a pre-COP consultation workshop was organized to provide necessary information to COP 17 delegates and other stakeholders. During the event, a keynote speech on "Climate Change Issues and Agenda: Nepalese Perspectives for COP 17" (idsnepal.org/nseu/downloads/Dr%20Devkota%20precop%20consultation.pdf) was presented by Dr. Dinesh Chandra Devkota, former Vice-Chair, National Planning Commission, Nepal.

The presentation highlighted on impacts and consequences of climate change, and how Nepal should put forward her position to get benefit from the UNFCCC negotiations in view of minimizing adverse impacts of climate change in Nepal. Another presentation was on "REDD readiness: Too far or too little in Nepal"

(idsnepal.org/nseu/downloads/Resham%20Dangi%20precop%20consultation.pdf) by Mr. Resham Dangi, Joint-Secretary (Tech.), Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation.

importance of REDD in the UNFCCC negotiation, the presentation was aimed at providing information on the national roadmap for REDD and issues and challenges associated with it in Nepal. In order to share the UNFCCC negotiation process, a presentation on "UNFCCC Process and Nepal's Preparation"

(idsnepal.org/nseu/downloads/Batu%20Upreti%20precop%20consultation.pdf) was made by Mr. Batu Krishna Upreti, Joint-Secretary (Tech.) and Head of Climate Change Management Division, Ministry of Environment. As the title itself highlights, this presentation was basically intended to explain the process of UNFCCC negotiation and it shared preliminary tactics that each Party might use to include issues and concerns of national interests and priorities.

COP 17 delegations nominated: The Nepalese government delegation to COP 17 was comprised of 31 members that also included five CDKN supported participants; three government officers, one academician and one independent researcher. Unlike in the past, the Ministry of Environment assigned specific tasks and responsibilities to each delegate to promote their active participation in meetings of the Subsidiary Bodies (SBs) and Ad-hoc Working Groups on LCA and KP. "After analyzing the reports and recommendations by the delegates, Government of Nepal has already decided to form a multi-disciplinary negotiating team, and plan for an effective participation in forthcoming meetings of the SBs and COPs" says Mr. Batu Krishna Upreti, Joint-Secretary (tech.) and UNFCCC Focal Point, Ministry of Environment.

Team performance assured: In order to ensure the presence of the Nepalese delegation in as many negotiation sessions as possible, the CDKN supported government nominee as the Member of the Nepalese Delegation Mr. Uddhav Prasad Baskota, Joint-Secretary, Ministry of Environment was assigned to attend the preparatory meetings (22-27 November, 2011) followed by Mr. Naresh Sharma, Agro-economist, Ministry of Environment who participated in sessions during 28 November to 10 December 2011. This gave both the delegates an opportunity to make a good overview of the COP and enhance their understanding on the procedures and politics of the negotiations. Similarly, Dr. Subhadra Jha, independent expert, accompanied the Hon'ble Minister for Environment (2-9 December, 2011) as a technical adviser while Prof. Dr. Madan Koirala, Expert Member, Climate Change Council, attended the meetings from 1 to 9 December 2011 as a climate change expert. Mr. Leela Mani Paudyal, Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, attended the COP session (4-9 December) including high-level segment. "Nepal's participation at COP17 has created an opportunity to enhance the capacity of individual delegates, team performance, and leadership development for the future COPs, contributing, ultimately, to building and enriching the country's capacity as a whole", says Mr. Krishna Gyawali, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Government of Nepal.

Past achievements shared: Being a landlocked and mountainous country, Nepal is trying hard to highlight the issues of mountain ecosystem that is seriously threatened by the adverse impact of climate change. In order to highlight climate change situation in Nepal and give an account of various initiatives taken so far to minimize

the adverse impact of climate change, four different flyers, namely Addressing the Climate Change Impacts, Mountain Initiative, Adaptation to Climate Change, Ecosystem Restoration in Nepal through REED-plus were distributed in the COP'17. These flyers provided a brief



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summary of activities related to National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) and Local Adaptation Plan for Action (LAPA), REDD Plus and other activities being carried out to address the impact of climate change in Nepal. "Information contained in these flyers are useful to introduce about the climate change initiatives in Nepal and to recognize the enormous scope for inter-ministerial coordination in implementing climate change mitigation and adaptation actions", says Mr. Resham Bahadur Dangi, Joint Secretary, Chief, REDD-Forestry and Climate Change Cell, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Government of Nepal. "Information contained in these flyers are useful to introduce about the climate change initiatives in Nepal and to recognize the enormous scope for inter-ministerial coordination in implementing climate change mitigation and adaptation actions", says Mr. Resham Bahadur Dangi, Joint Secretary, Chief, REDD-Forestry and Climate Change Cell, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Government of Nepal.

Side-event organized: Nepal organized a side-event on "Mountain Initiative" during COP 17 in Durban, South Africa on December 5, 2011. The objective of the gathering was to highlight the need to mainstream the Mountain Agenda in the UNFCCC negotiation process. Recalling the famous proverb -"United we stand, divided we fall"- Hon'ble Mr. Hemraj Tater, Minister for Environment, Government of Nepal highlighted the need for emphasizing on mountain issues during the climate negotiation in the event saying, "the mountain countries have to



*Hon'ble Mr. Hemraj Tater
Minister for Environment,
Government of Nepal*

"The mountain countries have to work together to have their voices heard, and translate their vision into reality through collective action and enhanced level of global partnership"

work together to have their voices heard, and translate their vision into reality through collective action and enhanced level of global partnership". Addressing the gathering as the Guest of Honor, Hon'ble Dr. Pema Gyamtsho, Minister for Agriculture and Forest, Royal Government of Bhutan appreciated Nepal's initiatives and called upon other mountain countries to join hands in this noble endeavour. Other speakers on the occasion included, His Excellency Mr. Gyan Chandra

Acharya, Dinesh Chandra Devkota, Former Vice- Chair, National Planning Commission, Government of Nepal, Mr. Mario Boccucci, Chief, Terrestrial Ecosystem Unit, UNEP, Dr. David Molden, Director General, ICIMOD, and Mr. Batu Krishna Uprety. Speakers appreciated the initiatives of Nepal and highlighted the importance of mountain countries for their joint efforts in streamlining the Mountain Agenda in the UNFCCC negotiation process. Apart from the invited speakers, the audience of around 90 people and invited guests also put forwarded their views on the role of mountain countries in addressing climate change impacts during floor discussion. The program was chaired by Mr. Krishna Gyawali, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, and Government of Nepal and moderated by Dr. Tara Nidhi Bhattarai.

Reflections on Success of Nepal's Engagement with the UNFCCC in Durban

"The project enabled decision-makers to participate and contribute effectively at the COP 17 proceedings", says Mr. Batu Krishna Uprety, Joint Secretary (Tech.) and UNFCCC Focal Point, Ministry of Environment. Providing an account of Nepal's engagement at COP 17, he further elaborates "Nepal attended meetings at high-level segments, made a submission on National Adaptation Plan (NAP), firmly stood for maintaining below 1.5 degree Celsius in the legally binding outcomes, and opted for the LDC Coordinator in the UNFCCC process for the year 2013 and 2014". Consequently, the level of understanding of the participants has been raised and seriousness of the negotiation has been fully realized. Recalling the complex process of COP negotiation and proposing a way forward, Mr. Uddhav Prasad Baskota, Joint-Secretary, Ministry of Environment says, "Nepalese delegation's capacity has to be further strengthened providing them with enough technical knowledge on climate change issues and knowledge on negotiation diplomacy to get productive results from the UNFCCC negotiations". In addition, the need for a long-term planning for the climate negotiation has also been recognised. "Ministry of Environment should immediately take initiative to create a group of negotiators and continuously engage them in negotiations throughout the year, enhance their capacity, assign specific responsibilities and assess their performance every year based on their role" says Leela Mani Paudyal, Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers. Accordingly, a permanent committee, comprising of decision-makers, experts, academicians, and representatives from civil societies, is to be set up soon by the government to look after the climate negotiations. Underscoring the need to further highlight the issues of Mountain in the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA)'s negotiation, the Government of Nepal has recently decided to organise a two-day International Conference of Mountain Countries on Climate Change" in Kathmandu beginning on 5th April 2012.

Lessons Learned: Some important lessons were learned while implementing this project including activities related to COP 17. The most important one is that the preparatory work for a COP needs careful design and thoughtful discussions among all the stakeholders, decision-makers and planners. An effective and result-oriented submission could only be made if preparatory works are started well in advance addressing the national concerns raised by different stakeholders, within the broader framework of negotiation process. It is also equally important that a good number of delegates attend the UNFCCC intercessional forthcoming meetings that would also contribute to prepare theme-based submissions reflecting Nepalese interest. Reference materials written in simplified English would serve the delegates to enhance their performance.



Nepal's representation at Climate Change Conference 2011, Durban, South Africa

Information in Nepali language is equally important to enhance the understanding of different stakeholders at national level. Likewise, there is also a need of more effective coordination among all the Nepalese delegates (government and non-government) to highlight the national key issues consistently in the COP sessions. The Project Manager should attend the COP meetings throughout the event to provide technical assistance to the delegates and be well-informed about the final decisions, which are important for the preparation for the next meetings. For an effective organization of a side-event, there should be sufficient time allocated for its preparation and communication with other countries to ensure their support and participation in the event.

Recommendations

- A good number of delegates (at least four to take a lead in the field of Mitigation in particular REDD issue, Adaptation, Technology Transfer, and Climate Finance) should attend the UNFCCC intercessional meetings to put concerns of national interests.
- A list of CDKN supported delegates should be finalized at least a month before the meetings.
- Each delegate should be provided with some concise reference materials and knowledge products in major agenda items relevant to Nepal before their departure to the COP.
- A carefully designed questionnaire survey should be conducted among the potential delegates to pinpoint their needs, which will assist to design appropriate support.
- The Project Manger should attend the COP proceedings throughout the negotiation providing technical support to ensure an effective coordination among the delegates.
- As far as possible, the side-event should be organized within the COP premises.
- Potential international invitees / speakers for the side-event should be finalized in advance to try to confirm their participation earlier.
- Research generated data should be used to influence negotiation process in Nepal's favour.