

Nepal's Experience in Climate Change Issues

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Background

Nepal is a signatory of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio De Janeiro in 1992. By ratifying the Convention, His Majesty's Government of Nepal abides by the provisions of the relevant articles of the Convention. Ministry of Population and Environment (MOPE) has the responsibility for coordinating the country's programme to fulfill its obligations under the UNFCCC.

MOPE has the mandate to be primarily responsible for formulating and implementing policies, plans and programs; preparing Acts; Regulation and Guidelines; conducting surveys, studies and research; disseminating information and carrying out publicity; monitoring and evaluating programs; developing human resources; and acting as a national and international **focal point** in the domain of population and environment and all climate change issues.

The impact of climate change is severe on a least developed country like Nepal because of her geographical and climatic conditions, high dependence on natural resources and lack of resources to cope with the changing climate. The satisfaction of current human needs without depleting the natural resource base for future generations - is perhaps the greatest challenge facing humanity today. Much thought and debate have helped in elaborating this vital concept. Series of summits and conferences have stressed the urgent need to combat the threats arising from the anthropogenic emissions of GHGs in the atmosphere. UNFCCC is one of them. It has recognized pertinent issues and put emphasis on the capacity building and technology transfer of environmental friendly technologies in developing countries.

Nepal has certain plans and programmes to promote clean energy and energy efficiency. Alternative technologies such as biogas, micro-hydro and solar through subsidies and technical assistance are being promoted in the country. These technologies are gaining popularity among the rural communities in Nepal.

Nepal is also ideal for the promotion of electric vehicles because they use hydropower, a local and clean energy resource instead of imported fossil fuel, and the driving conditions (short distances and relatively slow speeds) are suitable for EVs. Kathmandu now has approximately 600 zero-emission electric vehicles and there is potential for a lot more,

Current Activities

- 1 Initial National Communication to UNFCCC is finalized(endorsed by HMGN on July 1, 2004)
- 2 INFOTERA agreed in providing infrastructural support to strengthen Climate Change unit in MOPE.

Pipeline Activities

- 1 National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA) is under preparation under UNDP collaboration.
- 2 CDM strategy for Nepal is under preparation.
- 3 MOPE in collaboration with UNEP has finalized a program for capacity building in climate change.
- 4 National Climate Change Strategy is under preparation.

Needs

- 1 Institutional Strengthening.
- 2 Implementation of the recommendation of National Communication.
- 3 Demonstration Project like "Establishment of systemic observation of climate change" with equipments.
- 4 Climate change awareness program
- 5 Support to training, seminar, and conference on climate change.

Major Climate change issues raised by Nepal in different International Forum

- Nepal recognizes the significance of capacity building. It is an essential component of the integrated approach to national sustainable development, which embraces both of the needs to adapt to climate change and to take action towards achieving the ultimate goal of the convention. Such an approach will enable a country like Nepal whose economy is in transition to fulfill their obligation under the convention and participate effectively. However Nepal seeks assistance for undertaking a self-assessment of needs for capacity building.
- Nepal seeks assistance in the areas of report preparation, scientific equipments, action oriented work and joint research programs on improved affordable and accessible technology for climate change issues.
- Nepal welcomes the modalities for afforestation and reforestation project under CDM. Nepal's long term policy on forest focuses on delivering firewood, fodder and other regular forest products to communities, coordination of forest and agriculture system to increase agricultural productivity and conservation of land against land degradation, flood and other environmental imbalances.
- Nepal has sufficient indigenous environmentally sound technology. However we do not have financial resources to make inventory and Nepal is willing to share these technologies with the world.
- Technical cooperation among developing countries may also be effective, particularly for, but not limited to, indigenous technologies. Sectors where Nepal has the potential to have a comparative and competitive advantages include technology investment, particularly the economically viable energy, the hydropower, tourism, agro and forest based industries and pharmaceuticals.
- Nepal expects an integrated approach from international organizations for implementation of recommendations using synergies among the conventions.

- International concerns and assistance should be directed towards mitigating the reoccurring GLOF's problems which is prominent in the Himalayan Mountains of Nepal.
- The escalating trend of new disease outbursts and reoccurrence of eradicated diseases should be checked
- The deterioration in the productivity of agricultural sector in relation to global climate change phenomenon should be addressed immediately.
- Nepal's massive hydropower potential can be developed and exploited to create a regional energy grid. This can contribute significantly in reducing GHG emission in this region. Attention should be focused on the development of hydropower in Nepal.

Conclusions:

Nepal's share in climate change is negligibly small. The population of Nepal is less than 0.4% of the world population and is responsible for only about 0.025% of annual greenhouse gas emissions. However, Nepal is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts. Temperatures are likely to increase more in high mountain areas than elsewhere. Glaciers and snowfields will recede and may even disappear, reducing Nepal's dry season water resources. This will affect irrigation and drinking water supply and hydroelectricity will be less reliable. In addition, receding glaciers often leave behind growing glacier lakes that can break through terminal moraines causing catastrophic floods. Global climate change will also likely shift monsoon precipitation patterns in ways that will threaten Nepal's current agricultural practices, infrastructure, bio-diversity, especially in mountain regions where migration of species is physically restricted.