

Nepali Women's Civil Society Organizations: Position Paper and Call for Action for the 2017 High-Level Political Forum



Beyond Beijing Committee: Leading Women and Girls Constituency,
Nepal SDGs Forum

Women Major Group for Sustainable Development in Nepal (WMG-SDN)

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Position Paper and Call for Action for the 2017 High-Level Political Forum from Women's CSOs in Nepal ¹

This paper is being prepared using information collected through consultations held at the local, provincial, and national level with diverse groups, including women professionals, the constituencies of the Nepal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Forum, women's civil society organizations (WCSOs), government officials, and other stakeholders and review of related literatures.

The paper presents Nepal's achievements in reaching its targets for SDG 5, Gender Equality and Empowerment of Girls and Women in Nepal (GEEGW), as well as a plea to the government and other stakeholders to commit to and take ownership of GEEGW as both a standalone goal and as a means to mainstream and achieve sustainable development. It also calls for various actions to progressively achieve SDG 5 by 2030.

In addition to examining SDG 5, the paper presents Nepal's achievements in SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14, and 17, all of which will be reviewed at the 2017 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF).

Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Girls and Women in Nepal²

The government of Nepal (GoN) has made substantial efforts toward achieving gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women in Nepal since the Beijing Platform of Action was adopted in 1995. Nepal is a signatory to 23 human rights treaties and international human rights instruments including Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In line with CEDAW, the new Constitution (2015) is enshrined with fundamental rights for women.

The country has made substantial progress in gender equality and empowerment of women during Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) period. Since the adoption of 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, the government of Nepal has aligned the 14th Three Years Plan (2016/17-2018/19) and SDGs codes has been assigned for all national programs in the national budget.

With the promulgation of the Constitution 2015, Nepal has got a woman president and woman speaker of parliament for the first time in history. However, impediments to realizing substantive equality and rights by the female population at large are still many. The key barriers include the existence of discriminatory constitutional and legal frameworks, the unequal and inappropriate distribution of opportunities in developing capabilities and potentialities, lack of access and control over resources, violence against women and girls (VAWG), and lack of an enabling environment for exercising voice, agency and leadership.³

Nepal has achieved a medium level of human development (UNDP, 2016)⁴. Its human development index was 0.558 (2015 figures) and was in 144th rank of 188 countries. Its gender development index (GDI) was 0.925 (144th position) and gender inequality index (GII) was 0.497, and was placed at 115th position of 188 countries.

The Global Gender Gap Report ⁵ has acknowledged Nepal as one of the most improved countries placing it on 110th position out of 144 countries with Gender Gap Index (GGI) score 0.661. Nepal was also acknowledged recognized as one of the most improved countries by Inclusive Development Index (IDI) by ranking it on 27th position with a score 4.24 among 79 developing economies, while China was ranked at the 15th position, Bangladesh (36th) and Pakistan (52nd)⁶.

1 Written by Shanta Laxmi Shrestha, commented on by Kanchan Burma Lama, Shiba Satyal, Sushila Kumari Thapa Magar, Kopila Rijal, the BBC team and WMG-SDN

2 Papers presented by former vice-chair of the National Planning Commission (NPC), Dr. Yuba Raj Khatiwada; Ms. Radhika Aryal, the Joint Secretary of the MoWCSW; Mr. Khom Raj Koirala, Joint Secretary of the NPC; and Mr. Rudra Singh Tamang, Joint Secretary of the MoFALD at a national consultation on 25 June, 2017

3 *Progress of Women in Nepal (1995-2015)*, SAHAVAGI, DB & FEDO, 2015

4 Human Development Report, 2016

5 The Global Gender Gap Report (2016), World Economic Forum

6 Inclusive Growth and Development Report-2017, World Economic Forum

The social institutions and gender index (SIGI),⁷ indicated high SIGI with 0.3222 score. It measures five dimensions of discriminatory social institutions which span the major socio-economic areas that affect women's lives: discriminatory family codes, restricted physical integrity, son bias, restricted resources and assets, and restricted civil liberties.

Collectively, these indices indicate that though improvements were made, GEEGW work must be accelerated 0.32 by the government and other stakeholders, including the private sector, UN agencies, I/NGOs, and other civil society organizations (CSOs) in order to realize the 2030 Agenda 'Transforming our World' and the SDGs within the envisaged timeframe.

The SDGs 2nd review after its onset is going to be held in New York in July 2017 in the HLPF. The GoN has registered for Voluntary National Review (VNR) and is preparing 'SDGs voluntary national review report of Nepal: Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in Nepal'. It is also preparing 'Nepal SDGs Goal Baseline report 2017'. We commend the GoN's spirit of volunteering for the review to share and learn *in order to accelerate the process of* SDG localization in Nepal.

In this context, we ask the GoN to exhibit genuine political will directed at transformation of unequal gender relations by ensuring sufficient resource allocation for SDG5 as a standalone goal and also setting gender equality indicators and targets in each SDG to ensuring that GEEGW is mainstreamed in policies, programs, and processes at every level and in every sphere and sector.

Ten essential areas for action

Ensure Girls' and Women's Human Rights- Democratization and a human rights-based approach (DHRBA) are essential for the effective implementation of SDGs at all levels—national, provincial and local—particularly to reach those who have been left behind by setting plans and mechanisms to reach them first and foremost. In this endeavor, mapping those who have been left behind is essential.

There is a need to educate and sensitize all stakeholders to the centrality of gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment to the attainment of sustainable development and overall national development.

Concrete plans are needed to institutionalize human rights at the household level in order to ensure that all girls and women enjoy substantive equality in all daily matters throughout their lives, right from conception. National human rights institutions should engage with other actors to ensure that females can exercise the full and equal enjoyment of their fundamental freedoms and, in doing so, contribute to the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Secure Meaningful and Equal Participation- Women and girls are both rights holders and actors in development. Their rightful place in all mechanisms and processes must be ensured. Tokenism alone will not suffice. Women need to be meaningfully represented in all institutions, including the institutional arrangements recently established by the GoN at different levels for the implementation of its SDGs.

There is a need to recognize and integrate women's groups as major contributors to sustainable development in Nepal as is called for by the UN in its discussion of the processes of sustainable development.

Provide Space for Women and other CSOs- WCSOs have a unique capacity for and approach to reaching the vast majority of population (children, senior citizens, and people needing care and support, and persons with disability). This unique capacity should be acknowledged and utilized. Their rightful spaces should be ensured in SDG implementation, especially in terms of reaching the unreached and engaging in follow-up on and review of SDGs.

⁷ <http://www.genderindex.org>

Resources and support for grass-roots, local, provincial and national WCSOs to advance and promote gender equality, human rights and the empowerment of women and girls are essential. It is also key to support WCSOs, ensure their participation in local, provincial and national mechanisms, and find space for them in regional and global forums as partners in development if the 2030 Agenda is to be achieved.

Ensure Gender-Transformative Financing: GEEGW is a pre-requisite for achieving all other goals, so sufficient resources must be allocated directly to women's rights groups and WCSOs who work for transformation of gender discrimination (GD) and gender inequality to achieve two goals: 1) reaching unreached girls and women to boost their agency, and 2) enhancing WCSOs' capacity and visibility as actors.

A gender equality fund should be created and a gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) system be made mandatory at all levels and in all sectors, including CSOs.

Ensure Accountability and Transparency for GEEGW- The issues of GEEGW and gender equality mainstreaming (GEM) are the responsibilities of all actors, including individuals. To ensure the accountability of all, the government must establish a data/evidence base which can serve as a robust gender-responsive monitoring mechanism.

The government must acknowledge and use citizen-generated data and evidence to formulate specific policies and programs targeted at groups with special needs in order to ensure that no women and no girls from any group is left behind.

National-level methodologies need to be enhanced to improve the collection, analysis, dissemination, and compilation of gender data and statistics on, *inter alia*, poverty, income distribution within households, unpaid care work, women's access to and control and ownership of assets and productive resources, women's participation in all levels of decision-making, and VAWG, in order to facilitate the measurement of progress among women and girls with regard to SDGs.

CSOs have the management capacity and technical human resources necessary to successfully implement SDGs, but they lack sufficient financial resources. It is important that the government trust their agency and resources and create a conducive environment and spaces for candid engagement with the government and other stakeholders, including the private sector, financial institutions, and cooperatives.

Address Inclusivity Using an Intersectionality Approach: To achieve the ultimate aim of the SDGs—equality—the intersectionality approach is needed; only if it is inclusive enough of all identities and groups, including those formerly excluded, so as not to increase inequality among various groups of women. The inclusion of marginalized groups like *Dalits, people with disabilities, drug users, commercial sex workers, LGBTIs, people living with HIV and AIDS, migrant workers, domestic workers, people working in the informal sector, single women, religious minorities, indigenous and ethnic peoples, the disaster-affected, the conflict-affected, the geographically remote, children, adolescent girls and youths, senior citizens and other socially, culturally and economically marginalized group by analyzing them in an intersectional fashion and identifying the most excluded.* It is these most-excluded that should be the first priority if the government is to truly uphold the essence of leaving no one behind.

Transform Discriminatory Socio-Cultural Norms and Values: The subordination of and discrimination against females begins in the womb and continues to the tomb largely because of Nepal's deeply ingrained patriarchal norms and values. Women and girls face violence throughout their lives and lag behind men and boys no matter how advanced and economically and politically sound their families are. Unless these patriarchal norms and values are transformed, no matter how many laws the country enacts, practices harmful to females will not end. These norms and values act like a super-law, a “maha-kanun,” and supersede any law in the name of “pratha-chalan” (custom-practice) in daily

dealings and practice. It is essential to question and ultimately eradicate patriarchal norms in order to lay the foundation of equality and non-discrimination at home, in the family, in the community, and in the country at large.

Develop a Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Micro-Economic Policy: Of the world's poor population, it is estimated that nearly 70% are women. To address this state of poverty and unjust development, Nepal needs a gender-responsive and inclusive economic policy that acknowledges the contributions of domestic and care work, that ensures equal wages, that sufficiently regulate informal-sector work, that protects, respects and fulfills the rights to work of women and marginalized, and that focuses on "sama bridhi" (equitable growth) not just "samridhi" (growth).

Follow a Multi-Stakeholders' Approach and Forge Partnerships with CSOs: Success in achieving the implementation of SDGs demands that a common understanding be nurtured and that integrates efforts and synergies in the achievement of a common agenda and goals be forged amongst various stakeholders. CSOs have unique expertise in reaching the unreached people and mobilizing them. They need support from both the government and the private sector in utilizing such unique expertise in implementing SDGs collaboratively. Therefore, inclusive forums are essential.

Use a Gender-Sensitive Statistics System to Collect Data for Sustainable Development: Sustainable development is an issue of social justice and human development. "Human Development, if not engendered, is in danger" is the far-reaching message communicated in 1995 by the Human Development Report. It was with this concept that gender statistics emerged and were applied in many countries, including Nepal (CBS 2011). This concept has to be vitalized in collecting data for SDGs so that the previously left-out are reached first as called for in the 2030 Agenda. Besides, gender and social inclusion need to be a standing agenda for all meetings and forums to ensure the collection of additional information, planning, monitoring, and evaluation of programs and processes.

Status of SDG 5: Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls and Its Target

This section states the achievements made and the actions to be taken for the progressive realization of SDG 5.

5.1 End discrimination against all women and girls

Achievements

- Article 18 of the new constitution prohibits discrimination based on sex, guarantees equality before the law, and calls for equal protection under the law.⁸
- The constitution has, to some extent, expanded the scope of non-discrimination. It now recognizes physical and mental conditions, disability, health conditions, marital status, pregnancy and economic condition as reasons for discrimination that are prohibited.
- Article 38 of the constitution recognizes the rights of women, which, among others, specify that every woman has 'equal lineage right without gender-based discrimination.'

However, discriminatory laws still prevail. For example, Article 11(7) of the constitution of Nepal discriminates against the children of a Nepali woman and a foreign father. Cultural and social discriminatory practices such forcing girls to be nuns, sex work among the Badi caste group, and indentured servitude. The constitution still uses discriminatory terminology like *rastrapati* (president),

⁸ The Constitution of 2015, Government of Nepal

uparastapati (vice-president), *kulapati* (chancellor), and “backward women,” all of perpetuating patriarchy.

Call for Action

Include this Indicator in the National SDGs Plan: The degree to which the country’s laws, legislative processes, and judicial and administrative systems conform to the stipulations of the CEDAW and the CRC.

- Amend the constitution to end all forms of discrimination, *de facto* and *de jure*, direct and indirect, public and private, and that committed by both state and non-state actors.
- Recognize equal citizenship and reproductive rights are critical for ensuring the dignity of women and achieve substantive equality in an amendment to the constitution.
- The substantive equality principle should be included in the constitution of 2015.

5.2 Eliminate violence against women and girls

Achievements

- The constitution has made acts of physical, mental, sexual and psychological violence and all kinds of oppression against women as a result of religious, social, or cultural, traditions punishable by law (Article 38 (3)).
- The key laws enacted to end GBV such as the Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act, 2007; the Act to Amend Acts to Ensure Gender Equality 2006, 2015 and the Domestic Violence (Crime and Punishment) Act, 2008, the (Elimination of) Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Act 2014, and the Anti-Witchcraft Act 2015. Besides these, the Supreme Court has issued guidelines and directives on abolishing Chhaupadi (isolating women in small hut during menstruation and delivery).

Despite these achievements, allegations of and actions against witchcraft continue and the frequency of VAWG in both the private and the public sphere, including rape and acid attacks, is increasing. In addition, anecdotal evidence has demonstrated that women are not very aware about the acts listed above and that they lack proper implementation mechanisms.

Call for Action

Include this Indicator in the National SDGs Plan: The reduction of all forms of GBV and spousal violence by half.

- Take immediate steps to develop and implement laws against all forms of violence against women and children according to international requirements and standards.
- Adopt a restorative justice system and design and implement a program aimed at changing the behaviours and psycho-social patterns of perpetrators to prevent further VAWG.
- Enact a law to enable the National Women’s Commission to function as a constitutional body.
- Strengthen comprehensive and gender-sensitive preventive, protective, and prosecutorial measures as well as rehabilitation and reintegration services, including those which address psycho-social and mental impacts, related to WAWG in public and private spaces, and prioritize access to victim-centric justice in order to end impunity.
- Take urgent steps in the proper identification of the mental and psycho-social impacts of violence and in the promotion of accessibility to services and justice mechanisms to survivors.

5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices

Achievements

- The GoN has legally abolished many practices harmful to women and girls, such as child marriage, both forced and early, polygamy, the isolation of menstruating women, the offering of girls to temples, indentured servitude, caste-based commercial sex work, forcing girls to be nuns, the forcible veiling of women, polygamy, and dowry.
- Despite the legal provisions banning them, such practices persist and continue to prevent girls and women from developing their agency.

Call for action

Include an Indicator in the National SDGs Plan: The elimination of child marriage and menstrual taboos.

- Educate and equip institutions adequately by developing a gender equality information management system (GEMIS) for GEEGW by collecting gender-disaggregated data by marital status, age, profession, and other variable as necessitated by the SDGs.
- Eliminate harmful cultural, religious, and social gender-biased practices and stereotypes by enacting umbrella laws covering all harmful practices and by effectively implementing these laws in a gender-responsive fashion.

5.4 Recognize and value paid, care, and domestic work

Achievements

- The constitution of Nepal calls for the economic valuation of care and domestic work in Article 51 (J) (4)⁹.

Despite this recognition, however, there is no mechanism for its implementation and data and evidence regarding domestic and care work is limited. The government has yet to acknowledge women's contributions to the GDP although Nepal's rural economy is, by and large, maintained by women. 'Time poverty' due heavy involvement in unpaid care and domestic work has limited women's engagement in gainful formal employment.

Call for action

Include this Indicator in the National SDGs Plan: The calculation of the gender status index (GSI), which consists of three power components: social, economic and political power. It is also recommended to use average number of hours spent on paid and unpaid work by sex.

- The unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work between men and women must be ended end by redefining work in ways that are not binary (so there is no "male" work and "female" work but only work), that do not set up the dichotomy of "productive" and "non-productive," that teach that all types of work are the right and responsibility of all genders, that recognize all work as proper work, and that redistribute work equally so that women get equal opportunities in productive employment and decent work.
- Enhance the employability and economic efficiency of women as well as their opportunities to engage in productive employment and decent work to promote GEEGW. Generate time-use data for use in the recognition, reduction, and redistribution of care and domestic work and regulate the informal sector to protect women from exploitation and violence.

9 The Constitution of 2015, Government of Nepal

- Equip women and men with ICT knowledge and skills for the changing world of work and various forms of economy, including the gig (temporary position), gift, sharing, and barter economies, so they are prepared for any eventualities that trends in trade and development may bring.

5.5 Ensure women participate in decision-making

Achievements

- The constitution of 2015 states that women shall have the right to participate in all bodies of the state on the basis of proportional inclusion and that they shall have the right to obtain special opportunities in education, health, employment and social security on the basis of positive discrimination and affirmative action.
- The constitution, in its equality clause, states that special legal provisions can be made for the protection, empowerment or development of socially and culturally "backward" women.

Women's visibility and voice in the public sphere, including in the Constitutional Assembly (CA) and local governance, have improved substantially due to affirmative action and GESI policies. However, their representation in decision-making bodies is still very limited. In addition, they are not treated equally, especially if they are from rural areas or disadvantaged groups. A large number of socio-economic and cultural obstacles to women's political and public participation inhibit women representatives.

Call for action

Include this Indicator in the National SDGs Plan: A calculation of the proportion of positions held by women and minorities in national, provincial, and local professional, technical, managerial and administrative jobs in the government and non-government sectors, including CSOs, political parties, trade unions, employers' associations, the Parliament, and other decision-making positions.

- Ensure full and equal participation, voice and agency in decision-making across all spheres of governance and sectors, including state and non-state sectors, by formulating and implementing a mid-term action plan to achieve 33% representation of women initially and 50% representation by 2030.
- Adopt legal as well as other measures to remove socio-economic and cultural obstacles to the meaningful and influential political and public participation of women.

5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights

Achievements

- The constitution ensures women's right to health: "every woman shall have the right to safe motherhood and reproductive health" (79). The government recognized around 245 abortion sites across 75 districts and made all abortion service free (80) under the annual budget of 2015/016.
- Significant improvements in maternal and child health were achieved. Women's life expectancy increased to 70 years, contraceptive users increased to 45%, and the total fertility rate reduced to 2.6 (2013).

Despite these achievements, many young girls and women are forced to observe menstrual taboos and other harmful traditional practices. They also unwanted pregnancy, uterus prolapse, cervical cancer, and menopausal problems in virtual silence. The unwillingness of their spouses to use contraception, the lack of SRHR knowledge, cultural barriers to family planning, and the early marriage of girl children are all issues that have not been adequately addressed.

Call for action

Include this Indicator in the National SDGs Plan: The number of health facilities which offer free reproductive health services, including safe abortion services, per 500,000 people and the percentage of young people receiving comprehensive SRHR education.

- Educate girls, boys, and LGBTIs about their rights to and responsibilities in realizing SRHR and ensure that there is a rights-based, context-specific continuum of quality care based on the life-cycle approach that is applicable to all.
- Ensure the availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality of SRHR services, particularly stressing on the needs of youths and adolescents.
- Address the need for menstrual hygiene management in public and private spaces by providing adequate water and sanitation facilities.

5.a Ensure that women are given equal rights to economic resources, including land

Achievements

- The constitution of 2015 guarantees equal inheritance rights to both sons and daughters.
- A GRB system is being implemented. As a result, 22.27% of the total budget was directly allocated to gender-responsive programs during the fiscal year 2015-2016.¹⁰
- Over 20% of women own or have control over land and property.
- When land is registered in the name of a women or jointly in the names of a man and a woman, 25% of the fee is waived.
- Women's access to finance for micro and small businesses has been broadened with various schemes such as Micro Credit, the Women's Entrepreneurship Development Fund, and the Youth Self-Employment Fund.
- Presidential women's upliftment programs have been implemented to uplift the economic status of women, mostly those of poor and marginalized communities.
- Various sectoral agencies have promoted provisions for leasing public land to marginalized groups, including women's groups, to develop leasehold forestry, leased fish ponds, women-led community forests, and watershed management areas designed especially to promote climate change adaptation.

While these efforts are commendable, women's access to and control over the means of production (land, capital, credit and technology) is still limited, thereby preventing them from gaining equitable benefits and preparing for the changing world of work.

Call for action

Include this Indicator in the National SDGs Plan: Whether or not there are any waivers or other incentives in the payment of fees and taxes for any area or sector that help increase women's ownership of economic resources.

- Transform the culture of national GDP counting in order to acknowledge women's economic contributions beyond their reproductive role and thereby achieve gender equality and sustainable development by setting one goal of the macro economic policy as achieving

¹⁰ *Progress of Women in Nepal (1995-2015)*, SAHAVAGI, FEDO, Didi Bahini

gender equality and social inclusion. Achieving equitable growth “sama bridhi” and not just prosperity "samridhi" is crucial.

- Use resources from remittances efficiently by investing in gender-responsive infrastructure, public services, women's enterprises, technical and vocational education, and ICT for women in rural areas.
- Adopt a gender-responsive macroeconomic model.

5.b Enhance the use of ICT

Achievements

A special heading, “ICT for Youth, Women and Girls' Nepal,” was included in the ICT Policy of 2015.¹¹ It states that “a special program will be developed for positioning ICT as an instrument to mainstream youth and women issues in all activities of the economy and society as well as to empower youth and women through opportunities created by the implementation of ICT projects and programs in the country.” In addition, it states that measures will be taken to enable the full and equal participation of women and youths in creating an information society and those special measures will be taken to promote the use of ICT to change gender norms, to prevent and report incidents of GBV, and to coordinate response services.

However, the majority of rural women and girls lack access to ICT literacy and have no control over selection processes so there is no guarantee that women and girls will benefit from ICT education and services. Instead, they will continue to lag behind in using ICT meaningfully in digital society. The ICT world in Nepal is dominated by men because people continue to believe in the gender stereotype that technology is best handled by men.

Call for action

Include this Indicator in National SDGs Plan: The percentage of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) study streams.

- Encourage, facilitate, and support girls and women to pursue STEM study streams and become ICT champions.
- Through innovative partnerships with the private sector, invest in the development of girls’ and women's technological skills so that they can be prepared for and qualify for high-level technical jobs in the market and thereby fit into changing world of work.
- Use ICT to safeguard and protect women against violence and abuse everywhere, including in the workplace.

5.c Adopt strengthened policies and legislation.

Achievements

Under the new constitution, more than 200 acts, including the civil code, have transformed a once centralized unitary state into a federal one. This transformation is a great challenge as well as an opportunity to develop GESI-responsive legislation.

However, since the pressure to draft, pass, and promulgate many acts quickly in order to implement the constitution within the stipulated time period has meant that many acts that do not address GESI may be passed.

¹¹ Nepal Information and Communication Technology Policy of 2015, Government of Nepal

Call for action

Include this Indicator in the National SDGs Plan: The nature and number of affirmative action policies implemented at each level.

- Adopt a multi-stakeholder approach to and gender-responsive budgeting in developing acts not only to produce a well accepted outcome but also to build capacity. Awareness about these acts must be created so that their implementation will be effective.

Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Other Goals

This section describes the achievements made and the action that needs to be taken for the progressive realization of SDGs 1, 2, 3, 9, and 17.

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms

Achievements

- The Third Nepal Living Standards Survey (NLSS-III, 2010-11) reveals that 25.16% of the population lived below the poverty line in 2010. That proportion decreased to 24.8% in 2014 (NPC, 2015).
- Though Nepal has a constitutional provision for equal inheritance rights for women, only 20% percent of households have registered land under a women's name and only 11% of households have women as registered house owners.

There is no gender-disaggregated data on poverty, but it is believed that poverty is higher among the female population, especially those from disadvantaged castes and ethnicities.

Call for action

Include this Indicator in the National SDGs Plan: The percentage of the population that earns less than USD 1.25 per day (PPP value) by age, sex, ethnicity, caste, creed, geography, and other variables of interest and the percent of the population eligible for coverage under the national social protection program.

- Revisit economic policies in order to make them gender-responsive and thereby enable both women and men to maintain a work-life balance and to ensure that there are adverse impacts on the employment and economic opportunities for and potentialities of women.
- Demonstrate commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action.

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition

Achievements

- A new Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Plan (MSNP, 2013-2017) is being implemented. Its objectives are to reduce the prevalence of stunting among children under five to below 29%, of underweight children to below 20%; of wasting among children under five to below 5%, and of under-nutrition among women aged 15–49 years ($BMI < 18.5\text{kg/m}^2$) by 15%.
- Nepal has reduced the proportion of underweight children aged 6-59 months to 29%, the proportion of the population that consume less than the minimum level of dietary energy consumption to 25%, and the prevalence of stunting of children under five years of age to 30% by 2015. In 2011 Nepal joined the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) global movement, which unites national leaders, civil society, bilateral and multilateral organizations, donors, businesses, and researchers in a collective effort to improve nutrition.
- The GoN launched the Golden 1000 Days Campaign to improve the nutritional status of pregnant

women and children.

Data on household food insecurity and the nutritional status of children and women based on a nationally representative sample is not available. It is estimated that given women's low status and their lack of access to and control over resources, the nutritional status of girls and women has remained low.

Call for action

Include this Indicator in the National SDGs Plan: Under-nutrition among women aged 15–49 years (BMI < 18.5kg/m²) should be reduced by % and the proportion of women who consume less than the minimum level of dietary energy.

- Implement campaigns like the Golden 1000 Days Campaign in all food-insecure households of the country.
- Educate the masses about the importance of good nutrition among girls to promote good health and wellbeing and emphasize that improving women's health improves men's health, too.
- Demonstrate commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action

Goal 3. Ensure a healthy life and promote wellbeing for all at all ages

Achievement

- Nepal reduced its maternal mortality rate (MMR) from 281 in 2005 to 258 per 100,000 live births in 2015. Female life expectancy has increased to 70.8 years; it now surpasses male life expectancy (67.7) by three years (WHO, 2015).
- Safe abortion was legalized and comprehensive abortion care (CAC) services established throughout the country. Under the 2015/2016 budget, free abortion services were made available to needy women in public health facilities.

Despite these gains, women especially Dalits and Muslims, face multiple barriers to accessing health care service in their households and communities as well as in health institutions. On average, 72% (NDHS 2011) face problems accessing services. Besides, little attention has been paid to the needs of girl children, female adolescents, and elderly women.

Call for action

Include this Indicator in the National SDGs Plan: The percentage of Dalit and Muslim girls and female adolescents who can access reproductive health services from health facilities and the percentage of both urban- and rural-dwelling women who use safely managed sanitation services.

- Revisit health sector policies to incorporate a life cycle approach and to ensure that context-specific, rights-based continuum of quality care (CQC) services are provided universally.

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure and promote inclusive industrialization

Achievements

- After a 7.6 magnitude earthquake struck on 25th April, 2015, the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) was established and a reconstruction and recovery program called “Building Back Better and Safer Infrastructure” was launched. It had a GESI component¹² and is therefore a golden opportunity for Nepal to revitalize its social engineering and reconstruct the country in an inclusive and gender-friendly manner.
- The NRA set GESI indicators for building resilient and gender-responsive infrastructure.

¹² Nepal Earthquake, Post-Disaster Recovery Framework of 2015, Government of Nepal, National Reconstruction Authority

- Nepal ranks 27th among 79 developing economies with its score of 4.24 on the IDI. This represents “a remarkable improvement over the last five years,” according to the Inclusive Growth and Development Report-2017 published by the World Economic Forum (WEF).
- The GoN is in the process of formulating a disaster risk reduction policy and a separate crosscutting thematic group has been deputed to ensure that GESI is mainstreamed in it.

Although the NRA included GESI indicators and components in the Post-Disaster Recovery Framework of 2015, it has not been able to apply them and the executive committee is not characterized by GESI representation. In addition, the IDI report indicated that the informal sector is dogged by low wages, a fact leaving many workers, mainly female, in poverty.

Call for action

Include this Indicator in the National SDGs Plan: The percentage of VDCs, municipalities, districts, and provinces in the newly restructured federal state of Nepal where disaggregated data is collected, analyzed, and utilized to inform the building of resilient infrastructure as well as planning and monitoring and the percentages of women and excluded groups that engage in designing, implementing, and monitoring the building of infrastructure and that receive information about and have equitable access to infrastructure-building programs.

- Build infrastructure in an empowering way, one that ensures the participation of women and other disadvantaged groups throughout the planning process and targets the previously unreached and caters to groups with special needs. This approach will make both infrastructure and human development resilient.
- Regulate the informal sector to ensure that the environment is conducive for both males and females to work in and to protect all people’s rights to work.
- Tackle corruption and administrative barriers to starting and growing a business and continue to improve infrastructure and basic services, including education, particularly the availability and quality of vocational training.

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementing and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Achievements

- Nepal developed a private-public partnership policy in 2015 and has been implementing it since to forge partnerships with various stakeholders to implement the SDGs.¹³
- A right-to-information act was promulgated and the National Information Commission (NIC) was strengthened to it could better realize citizens’ right to information.
- The Nepal Information and Communication Technology Policy of 2015¹⁴ is being implemented to develop nation.. It includes a section called “ICT for Youth, Women and Girls” which promotes the use of ICT as a means to change gender norms and mobilize youth to create a digitized Nepal.
- Since remittance is the main source of fund-flows to Nepal, Nepal Rastra Bank promulgated remittances bylaws in 2010 to regulate companies.

While its policies are good, Nepal lags far behind in their implementation since the political will and

¹³ Private public partnership policy 2072 (in Nepali), Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal

¹⁴ National Information and Communication Technology Policy 2015, Ministry of Information and Communication, Government of Nepal

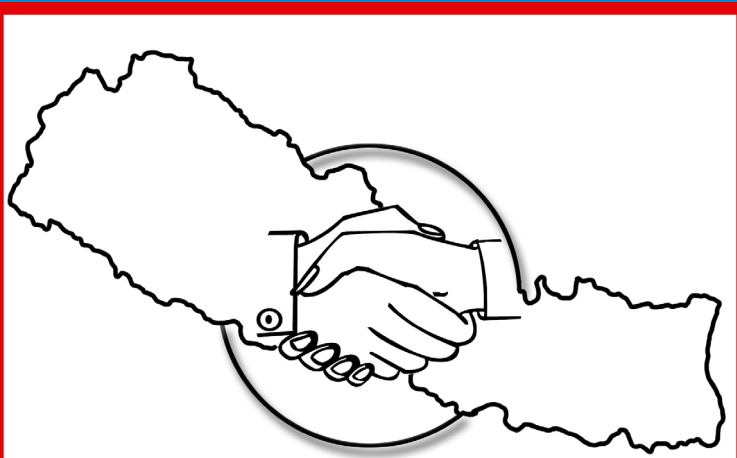
skill to transform policies into practice is lacking. In addition, many of the policies related to GESI were made simply to fulfill the requirements of funding agencies with no thought to their effective implementation. Moreover, funding agencies also lack sufficient commitment to see policies put into practice in order to realize the desired outcome.

Call for action

Include this Indicator in the National SDGs plan: The number of policies developed at local, provincial and central levels with a gender-transformative section like that of the ICT policy of 2015.

- Implement the ICT policy of 2015 in line with its spirit. Doing so will entail changing unequal gender norms and changing the means of implementation. In other words, finance, capacity-building, trade, and other systemic issues of SDG 17 and the Means of Implementation of all goals must be changed.
- Ensure that all partnerships with national and international organisations are based on commitment to the principles of gender equality and aim to achieve explicit and measurable results by 2020.
- Government, private sector and communities with gender policies e.g. administrative, regulatory procedures and practice in place and compliance levels monitored annually.
- Increase domestic revenues to reduce dependency in ODA. Make policies and code of conduct to end corruption and inefficient use of scarce resources.
- Nurture the practice of using resources efficiently.
- Adopt gender mainstreaming as a core value and practice in social transformation, organisational cultures, and the general polity of Nepal.
- Undertake both women- and men-specific projects as a means of developing the capabilities of both women and men to take advantage of economic and political opportunities that will result in the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment.





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