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Nepal Leads on Mountain Agenda: 28 Points Mustang Declaration



The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in collaboration with the Government of Nepal, successfully conducted the Mustang Advocacy Summit to mark the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development (IYSMD) 2022 on 20-21 September 2022. The programme culminated in a 28-point declaration on the mountain agenda addressing six major themes of the Mustang Advocacy Summit. While the inaugural session, Rt. Honourable Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba opined that the temperature is on an increasing trend between 0.3-0.6 °C and poses a serious threat to our mountain agriculture, economy, livelihoods, ecosystems and women. The Prime Minister also stressed that people in the mountains of the Hindu Kush Himalayas are at increased risk of climate change and assured that the Government of Nepal is captivating the climate agenda seriously on the global platform.

The Hon'ble Pradeep Yadav, Minister for Forests and Environment requested all stakeholders for consolidated effort and systematic planning in formulating key

actions to address the mountain agenda, focusing on climate adaptation and mitigation measures, the preservation of the water resources, biodiversity, and forests. He highlighted the importance of preserving mountain ecosystems, bio-diversity and the crucial need for transformative mountain solutions to address multiple challenges faced by mountain inhabitants across the Hindu-Kush Himalaya region.

The Hon'ble Krishna Chandra Nepali Pokharel, Chief Minister, Gandaki Province thanked the United Nations for declaring the Year 2022 as the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development, and the Ministry of Forests and Environment for setting up the Mountain Agenda of Mustang. The Chief Minister conveyed the commitment from the Gandaki Provincial Government to reduce the climate risks to biodiversity, natural and cultural heritage, water resources and the overall mountain economy.

Mr. Ken Shimizu, FAO Representative for Nepal, highlighted that Nepal, as a mountainous country is highly vulnerable

to climate change. The IYSMD aimed to strengthen the mountain agenda in the global forum, putting forward restoration initiatives for better livelihoods for humankind. He added that mountains are the “water towers” of the world and global hotspots for biodiversity, which must be preserved at any cost in every circumstance.

“At present, the value of the ecosystem, goods and services derived from mountains are under-recognised, under-valued and poorly compensated. The Mustang Advocacy Summit also opened avenues for regional and international collaboration to collective work on achieving the goal of sustainable mountain development,” he added.

Hon’ble Deepak Thapa, Minister for Industry, Tourism, Forests and Environment, GP, stated that the Provincial Ministry is dedicated to protecting all the citizens of the fragile mountain range from the high mountains to low lands. He requested local governments their proactive planning, action and implementation to mitigate the climate change impact at local level.

Dr. Madhav Karki, Climate Change Advisor to the Prime Minister, expressed the national government’s concern over the issues of climate change and suggested the global development agencies collaborate for the formulation and implementation of mountain-

friendly programs with dedicated finance to support climate adaptation and livelihood development in the mountains.

Dr. Pem Narayan Kandel, Secretary, MoFE, considered Mustang Advocacy Summit as a unique opportunity to highlight the growing climate vulnerability of mountain communities of Nepal, and the entire Hindu Kush Himalaya region.

Ms. Jamuna Thapa Magar, Vice Chairperson of Gharapjhong Municipality noticed the change in temperature, the emergency of new pests and disease in apples and declining agricultural production in the region. She put forth her concern that women are often left out of climate change issues and in key decision-making processes. She stated that the local municipality is trying to incorporate adaptation into agriculture and biodiversity.

During the summit, the presentations and panel discussion focused on six thematic areas, namely, agriculture, biodiversity, women, culture, climate and disaster risks with long term solutions for Sustainable Mountain use. The Mustang Declaration conveyed the way forward and key action points for the global stakeholders in addressing the mountain issues most possibly in the upcoming COP 27 in Egypt and aimed to explore better opportunities in addressing the impacts of Climate Change in the mountainous region.

Training of Facilitators on Climate Resilient Land Use Planning

Building a Resilient Churia Region in Nepal (BRCRN) conducted a five-day Training of Facilitators (ToF) to generate Provincial resource-enriched sound knowledge on climate-resilient land use, adaptation and mitigation strategies, climate trends, and gender and social inclusion targeting government officials from Bagmati and Madhesh Pradesh. The training module was designed on the capacity needs assessment in the active presence of officials from Divisional Forest, Soil & Watershed Conservation, and Agriculture Knowledge Centers, Livestock Services Centers, Provincial Forest Directorate, and Provincial Ministries.



World Food Day 2022: Collective Actions to Eradicate Hunger

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in collaboration with the Government of Nepal (GoN), observed the 42nd World Food Day in Kathmandu. The half-day celebration was commemorated with a walkathon, video competition, panel discussion, article writing contest, a press meeting and a formal program. In line with this year's theme "Leave No One Behind", FAO and GoN disseminated information on pathways to transforming Nepal's agri-food systems into a resilient and equitable food system for all.

FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD) conducted a series of events to mark October as a special month to raise awareness of the issues of food safety and security. In particular, through a written note, Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba expressed the country's strong commitment to collective actions to ensure food security and safety. He stated, "The Constitution of Nepal enshrines the Right to Food, ensuring that every citizen has the right to be protected from starvation and the right to food sovereignty. It strongly paves the way for collective actions to eradicate hunger, raise awareness, and ensure healthy diets and nutrition for everyone".

During the formal program, the Honorable Dr. Dil Bahadur Gurung, Member of the National Planning Commission, stated that in order to address the global challenges of food security, hunger, poverty, and inequality, GoN needs to redouble its efforts and resources for initiatives in support of better production and better life.

FAO Director-General, Dr. QU Dongyu, in a recorded video statement advised, "We need decent rural employment and services, and to end child labour, while fostering gender equality and supporting rural and Indigenous people who are the custodians of much of the earth's biodiversity. Governments need to provide timely and well-targeted social protection programmes that protect the most fragile."

Mr. Ken Shimizu, FAO Representative for Nepal and Bhutan expressed his concerns about the impact of the 5F crisis on agri-food systems in Nepal, which has resulted in increased food, fertilizer and fuel costs. He also mentioned that these impacts are being compounded by the impacts of the triple planetary crisis especially that of climate change. He highlighted the cooperative measures that



FAO is taking with the Government of Nepal to ensure the accessibility of safe and nutritious food for all people, enabling a well-nourished and healthy environment for food production, progressive realization of the right to food, and shifting to sustainable consumption patterns. He clarified that despite the impacts of the global 5F and climate change crisis, FAO is promoting and creating demand for healthy and sustainable diets, reducing food loss and waste in Nepal in order to achieve the SDG targets through the FAO strategic framework of 'Four Betters'.

Dr. Govinda Sharma, Secretary (MoALD), (Agriculture) stated that the budget for fiscal year 2020-21 had focused on several incentive programs to encourage and support farmers, including the farmer's card, crop and livestock insurance, automation, mechanization

and digital infrastructure subsidies. He congratulated the 30 award winning model farmers and wished them better incomes and lives in the future. Dr. Deepak Kumar Kharal, Secretary, MoALD (Livestock) specified that both agriculture and livestock had contributed to the sound living of people.

The Ministry has promoted sustainable agricultural development by transforming the current food system of subsistence-oriented farming systems into commercial and competitive farming. FAO Nepal together with GoN is actively engaged in promoting and supporting innovative and cost-effective measures aimed at providing social protection to reduce vulnerabilities, particularly of women, indigenous peoples and socially marginalized small holders' farmers with the message of "Leaving No One Behind".

Farm Business School Training Contributes in Profitable Agriculture

FAO TA to the Food and Nutrition Security Enhancement Project (FANSEP) focused on market-led farm production and market linkages for income generation through Farm Business School Approach for improving the market-led decision-making process for farm production and marketing by preparing local community level FBS facilitators for successful farm businesses.

The training contributed to facilitating community-based technicians and farmer

facilitators for effective implementation of FBS in project areas. The farmers and technicians were capacitated in different producer groups, market-led farm enterprises and support to producer-based organizations. They also facilitate the preparation of farm business plans, contribute to building climate resilience, strengthening market linkages and enhancing the negotiation skills of producers to make farm business more profitable.



Workshop on Food Safety on Fresh Market

FAO conducted an inception workshop on “One Health application” to modernize traditional fresh food markets and street food systems in partnership with the Department of Food Technology and Quality Control. Dr. Govinda Prasad Sharma, the Secretary of MoALD, stated that this project will explore the scenario of fresh food markets and street food vendors, in order to build a framework for areas that need improvement.

Mr. Ken Shimizu, FAO Representative for Nepal and Bhutan, thanked the government for its support on this project and put strong

support into assessing the current issues with fresh food markets. Dr. Matina Baidhya Joshi, Director General of Food Technology and Quality Control shared that this project will explore avenues for mass awareness raising through IEC materials targeting the stakeholders of the agri-food system.

Dr. Sridhar Dharampuri, Senior Food Safety and Nutrition Officer, Regional Office for Asia and Pacific, Mr. Mohan Krishna Maharjan, NPC/SFRO DFTQC and Mr. Arun GC, National Food Safety Expert presented papers on the core intervention and priorities of the project.



International Training on Veterinary Pathology and Diagnostics Organized

FAO Nepal, through the USAID funded GHSP project, collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Agriculture and Forestry University (AFU), the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) and the Global Health Pathology Network (GHPN), USA, in conducting a training titled “International Training on Veterinary Pathology and Diagnostics” with the active engagement of veterinary students from four universities, government veterinary, International Training on Veterinary Pathology and Diagnostics Organized labs, wildlife experts, the Nepal Agriculture Research Council and field veterinarians.

The international trainers, led by Dr. Corrie Brown, Professor, University of Georgia, USA, experts from the Global Health Pathology

Network and the David Thompson Foundation, trained to improve the diagnostic capacity of veterinarians in pathology using a systematic approach covering clinical signs, necropsy findings, histopathology and pathogenesis.



ToT Ecosystem Mapping and Land Monitoring

The BRCRN project conducted a training to assist and empower provincial level government representatives to use spatial tools to improve governance institutions' performance in Climate Resilient Land Use Planning and improve confidence in geospatial data and tools. A total of 25 participants were represented from Divisional Forest Offices, Agriculture Knowledge Centers, Watershed Management Offices, President Churia Cluster Office, Field Offices, and FRTC and Department of Hydrology and Metrology, BRCRN, PPMO & line ministries.

The training focused on effective improvement of understanding among participants in Quantum Geographical Information System, Google Earth, and the use of satellite imagery for mapping and land monitoring.



Rabies: One Health, Zero Deaths

FAO Nepal, through USAID funded GHSP project, observed World Rabies Day in collaboration with the Department of Livestock Services, Nepal Veterinary Association, Livestock Authorities at Gandaki Province, and Pokhara Metropolitan City to execute a series of programs and training to raise awareness of Rabies.

The main activities included mass vaccination of 1,500 stray and community dogs in Pokhara Metropolitan City, hands-on training for veterinarians on maintaining rabies databases, training of 25 veterinarians on animal birth control surgery training in two slots, and master's training for 28 veterinarians to serve as a resource person for rabies awareness campaigns at the school



level. Almost 1000 school children from Kaski district received information on rabies control and prevention during this mass campaign.

More than 95% of Rabies transmission in humans is caused by dog bites, so the project gave special attention to awareness raising and dog population management to prevent Rabies.

BRCRN Session on “Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)”

Marianna Bicchier, Social Inclusion Specialist from FAO RAP delivered a learning session on safeguarding and free prior and informed consent for creating an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) as well as improving CBOs' capacity for environmental and social assessment and management.

The learning session focused on FAO experience, learning and recommendations from a global perspective, as well as exploring the local

issues, challenges, and possible measures by the experts in Nepal. Post-evaluation on the training content, learning curve and feedback were collected from the participants.

Marianna shared her knowledge, insights, and suggestions about the FAO's global prospects throughout the learning session, and the specialists from Nepal shared their expertise on local problems, difficulties, and potential solutions.

World Antimicrobial Awareness Week 2022 Commemorated

With this year's theme, World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW), "Preventing Antimicrobial Resistance Together," FAO, through the USAID funded GHSP project, collaborated with the Ministry of Health and Population, Department of Livestock Services, and WHO Nepal in marking the WAAW 2022 week following a one health approach to raise awareness about AMR at all levels, from prescribers to consumers.

Throughout the WAAW, two workshops on the laboratory-clinical interface were organized, targeting government and private veterinarians/technicians with the goal of educating them on the most recent AMR policies and the patterns of AMR in significant bacterial isolates at central and satellite veterinary laboratories.



On the final day of the WAAW 2022, a joint rally was organized where around 175 participants marched from the Department of Health Services and the Ministry of Health and Population. Around 175 people from different line agencies participated in a rally to disseminate the message on the last day of the WAAW 2022.

New Project to Combat Antimicrobial Resistance Launches in Nepal

FAO Nepal has launched a new project - the "Action to support implementation of Codex AMR Texts (ACT)", which will lead to better containment and reduction of foodborne Address Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in the country. The first workshop, where around 50 participants from the government, One Health counterparts, academia, research institutes, and private sectors were introduced to the ACT project and assessed the national situation regarding efforts and capacity to address antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

AMR is a global public health threat and is also considered a silent pandemic which has an impact on food security, livelihoods, food safety, economic development, and the environment.

Dr. Matina Joshi Vaidya, Director General, the Department of Food Technology and Quality Control (DFTQC), stated that we need collaborative effort among various departments and agencies in One Health Approach resulting in strengthening our monitoring and surveillance system for

antimicrobial use (AMU) and AMR for the containment and reduction of foodborne AMR.

The ACT project helps the Government of Nepal to assess the country's status regarding the implementation of Codex AMR texts and provide technical support to plan and implement activities regarding raising awareness of food borne awareness, strengthening the monitoring and surveillance system, human and institutional capacity development to address food borne AMR, and support policy advocacy and recommendation



Close-UP

Ashmita Gautam, Policy and Private Sector Specialist,FAO

I hold a Master's degree in Economics from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and a B.A. Economics (honors) with minors in Sociology and Political Science from Christ University, Bangalore. Post-graduation, I led projects with development organizations and corporate bodies with specialization in project management across labour and migration governance, financial inclusion, digital ecosystem, and skilling initiatives. Working closely with multiple stakeholders made me recognize the distinct role of the private sector in areas such as innovation, digitalization, access to finance, investment, and its ability to lead social transformation at scale.



Over the years, the public sector has played a key role in the transformation of Nepal's agricultural sector from a subsistence-oriented into one that is more commercialized, profitably productive, and smallholder and entrepreneur-led. Private sector, however, has the ability to stimulate increased spending on R&D and infrastructure projects as well as to incorporate more innovation into the agricultural value chain.

My current position at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has strengthened my interest in bringing about positive change by designing and facilitating Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the development sector. This role necessitates close coordination with development agencies, private, and public organizations to enhance on-farm production for farmers as well as strengthen the supply chain for inputs, markets, transportation, and processing. With support from FAO, I am committed to forming alliances in this sector, paying particular attention to the empowerment of young farmers and agripreneurs. Special emphasis will be on access to finance, stronger market linkages, and higher incomes, in our collective pledge to leave no one behind and deliver better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life for all.

FAO Organizes Stakeholders' Dialogue in Karnali Province

FAO Nepal, in close coordination with the provincial government and Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperatives (MoLMAC), organized a Stakeholders' Dialogue to develop the joint initiatives for better collaboration among bilateral and multilateral agencies to implement the vision of "Transforming Karnali towards Resilient and Organic Agri-Food Systems".

The event included three presentations on "Impact of Climate Change in Karnali Province" by FAO Nepal, "Overview and Opportunities of Karnali Province" by MoLMAC, Karnali Province and "Forest Prospects and Prosperity in Karnali Province" by MoITFE, Karnali Province followed by interactions among bilateral, multilateral, and other diplomatic organizations to prioritize organic farming and forestry in Karnali Province.



Hon'ble Jeevan Bahadur Shahi, Chief Minister, thanked all the development actors for scoping their work in Karnali to support promoting and enhancing agro-ecosystem health, including biodiversity, ecosystem service, especially through capacity building, research and development, infrastructure development, marketing and trade.