



# Leave No One Behind: National Dialogue Analysis Report September 2016 Nepal

## 1. Background

The 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development was adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at an historic UN Summit and it came into force from 1 January 2016. These Global Goals set the ambition to end poverty, reduce inequalities and tackle climate change over the next 15 years.

At the heart of the Goals is a commitment to ensure that ‘no one is left behind’ and that no Goal is considered met unless it is met for all nations, peoples and groups in society. That’s because, although we have witnessed huge progress in the fight against poverty and injustice, too many people - the most impoverished, those that are excluded, disadvantaged, and at risk of violence and discrimination – still face terrible inequalities when it comes to accessing resources, opportunities and their rights. The world must focus on reaching these groups and ensuring they can make their voices heard and benefit from progress, if we are to achieve a better world for all. The ‘Leave No One Behind’ commitment was included in Agenda 2030 in large part because people from around the world, from all walks of life came together to demand their leaders prioritize the needs and interests of the poorest, most marginalized and disadvantaged people. To fulfill this promise, everyone must know about the Leave No One Behind pledge and get engaged in making sure it is delivered by 2030. The Leave No One Behind Partnership, established in July 2016, seeks to drive global momentum to make sure that happens.

Being a part of Leave No One Behind Partnership, on behalf of CSOs, NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN) led a national dialogue in Nepal in August-September 2016, including conducting survey, mobilization of CSOs and convening a high level dialogue with key major stakeholders. This report aims to present findings of survey, assess the marginalization, views of marginalized communities and key policy asks with the government.

## 2. Survey

A questionnaire form developed by LNB initiative was used for the purpose of data collection, which was widely shared through emails. 64 persons (residents of Nepal), who were associated with different types of organizations, have participated in the survey and most of them were from grassroots organizations and NGOs.

| <b>Types of organizations participated in survey</b> |     |
|--|-----|
| Types  | No. |
| Company  | 6   |
| Cooperative  | 6   |
| Cultural group/organization                          | 6   |
| Development Professional                             | 8   |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Faith-based organization                                   | 4  |
| Grass-roots organization                                   | 11 |
| Media agency   | 3  |
| Philanthropic / Funding organization                       | 7  |
| Research institute / Think tank                            | 2  |
| Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)                        | 8  |
| University / Educational establishment                     | 1  |
| Network, alliance, membership-based organization           | 1  |
| International non-governmental organization (INGO)         | 1  |
| Trade or professional association (including trade unions) | 0  |

### 3. Groups that are marginalized

Nepal itself is one of the least developed countries. Human Development Index (HDI) (2015) of Nepal is 0.548. So, Nepal is backward in terms of all development indicators, despite it is rich in natural resources. Nepal is diverse in terms of geography, natural resource, social communities and languages. More than 125 different ethnic and caste groups live in Nepal. Dalit community is the highly marginalized in the country as their poverty rate is high and they have low representative in political decision makings. Discrimination on the basis of gender, caste, class, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity and religion persisted. Constitutional amendments did not guarantee equal rights to citizenship for women, or provide protection from discrimination to marginalized communities, including Dalits and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people.

According to the 14<sup>th</sup> National Plan Document, country has been able to halve its poverty rate that means MDG 1 has been achieved, but people living in Karnali region, Dalits, Muslims and marginalized indigenous people are suffering from extreme poverty. According to the National Human Development Report 2014, spatial inequality is apparent. Mid-western region and Far-western regions and mostly their hill and mountain areas have been marginalized. Madhesi Dalits living in Tarai region (USD 258 per capita income) and Muslims (USD 290 per capita income) are extremely poor. Moreover, indigenous nationalities, specifically minorities living in rural areas are another group who are marginalized. Interestingly, these people do not know "the poverty is because of lack of right policies and system, and fail to implement them". Fatalism has been deep rooted in their minds.

Similarly, Madhesi community is also historically marginalized in the country. In Nepal women are suffering from hunger, poverty, violence and illiteracy. Moreover, people living with HIV and AIDs, physically and mentally disable people, children from poor families, farm workers, unskilled labors, people living in remote areas are the highly marginalized. Life expectancy of the people has been gradually increasing, but the elder people are becoming marginalized nowadays. Poor people wherever they live and whatever their caste or ethnicity they represent, they are living with difficult lives. Youth unemployment is another problem in the country. The survey result indicates ethnic groups, disable, people with diseases, and older people are marginalized groups in the country. Another category of marginalization is still many families, who were severely affected by earthquake and flood in 2014-2015 are still living in miserable condition.

| <b>Social Groups</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Ethnic groups        | 21.88          |
| Older persons        | 3.13           |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| People that live in a certain area of the locality          | 10.94      |
| People with communicable diseases (HIV, tuberculosis, etc.) | 4.69       |
| People with physical disabilities                           | 7.81       |
| Women   | 1.56       |
| Dalits  | 50.00      |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>100</b> |

#### **4. Factors that lead to the marginalization**

Level of income (income inequality) is perceived as the most important factor that determines marginalization. But, the place where the people live, level of education, type of employment, gender and ethnicity are other factors to be considered for identifying marginalization. Reasons behind the marginalization is inadequate development financing in those reasons and existing policies and programmes have not been effectively implemented in the country because of weak governance. Weak governance is caused by instable government and inadequate government capacities. Because of ignorance and weak voices they do not have good access with essential public services and productive resources. Because of inadequate education, lack of skills and poor health and remoteness, they do not have good income generation capacities and tap the opportunities. Absence of elected peoples' representatives in local government units is another main reason for underdevelopment. Similar reason is observed in case of underdevelopment of Dalits and Muslim communities. Still there is no availability of disaggregated data according to caste/ethnicity, gender, age-group, and ability in the indicators of 2030 agenda, which has made difficulty to plan and set targets at country level.

#### **5. Primary forms of marginalization**

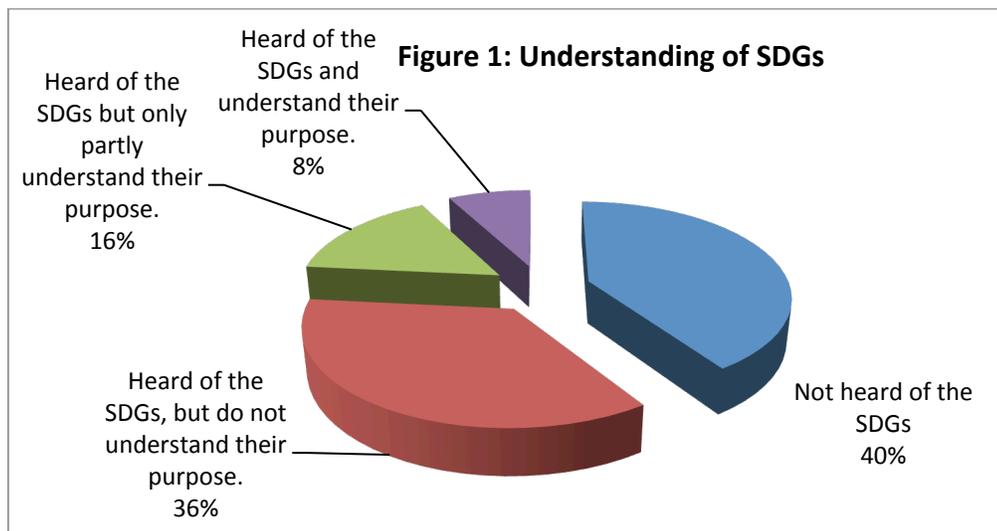
Marginalization refers to unavailability, lacking or poor access to productive resources in general. But, poor access to basic income, essential public services, quality education, employment and quality health are other major forms of marginalization in case of Nepal. People living in rural and remote areas do not have adequate income to live their lives and so the most of the young people; they tend to go abroad for employment. Poor people and people living in rural areas are not getting quality education, so they are not able to compete in labour market. On the other hand, people are not getting quality health services in those areas. Commercialization of education and health services, have marginalized the poor people to access to the quality education and health services. Unfortunately, the provision of social security services provided by the Government is not adequate in the country, despite government provides some sort of social security allowances to older people, disable and widow women.

#### **6. Aid and/or government services to marginalized groups**

Government is providing different types of public services to the people including infrastructure facilities, health, education, security etc. But, according to the results of survey, basic education service, medical services, transportation are perceived as the major services, which are being provided to the marginalized people. Recently, government has started to distribute identity cards to the poor families, for the purpose of providing special supports and facilities. On the other hand, government is providing social security allowances to the senior citizens, people with disable and widows. Similarly, government has earmarked 35 percent local development grants for children, women and Dalits. Vocational educational services and supply of electricity are the major services demanded for marginalized groups.

## 7. Level of understanding of the UN SDGs

Understanding of SDGs is the entry point to work on this agenda. In case of Nepal, even the tenure of MDGs was over, many people did not know about the MDGs and same case is observed even after adoption of 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development by UN, according to the results of survey. Even the political leaders, government officials, parliamentarians and even the CSOs do not have adequate information about the SDGs. Some people, including high level political leaders and even some people from CSOs, these agendas are imposed by western countries. Those people, even they have some sort of understanding about the SDGs, they believe it would be not achieved.



## 8. Impacts of on daily lives of marginalized groups

Many respondents think that SDGs are more progressive and all goals are equally important for the marginalized people. Goal 14 is not very relevant in case of country context because Nepal is a landlocked country. But respondents perceived that Goal 1, Goal 2, Goal 3 and Goal 4 are the most important goals in case of Nepal in order to impact the marginalized groups of the country. In Nepal, 21.6 percent of people are living under the poverty line (but it is said to be decreasing according to government statistics) and many people do not have food security due to the absence of farm lands and low production in remote hill areas. Marginalized people do not have adequate access to education and health services. First, they do not have enough money to afford health and education services, and second, even if they are available, they are of very poor quality, especially for people living in remote rural areas. Interestingly, it was observed that many respondents answered Gender Equality and Empowerment (Goal 5), reduce inequality (Goal 10) and Goal 16 are other goals, which can directly impact on marginalized communities.

| Table 2: Level of possible impacts to marginalized groups by goals  |         |
|---|---------|
| Goals   | Percent |
| Goal 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere  | 16.96   |
| Goal 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture         | 13.92   |
| Goal 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages                                      | 12.67   |
| Goal 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all | 13.75   |
| Goal 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls  | 9.32    |

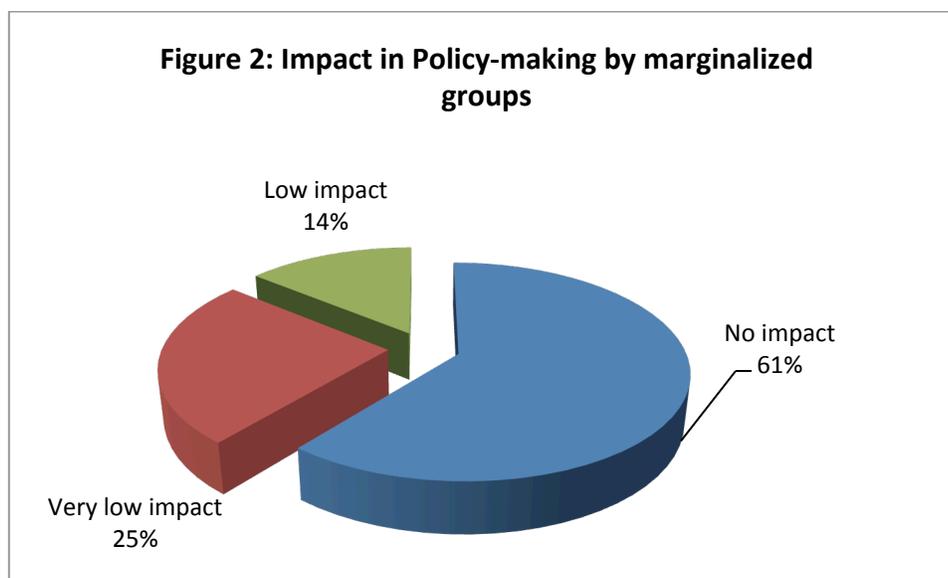
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|--|------|
| Goal 6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all  | 6.19 |
| Goal 7 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all  | 5.71 |
| Goal 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all  | 6.14 |
| Goal 9 Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation   | 0.00 |
| Goal 10 Reduce inequality within and among countries   | 7.70 |
| Goal 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable   | 0.00 |
| Goal 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns   | 0.00 |
| Goal 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts  | 0.17 |
| Goal 14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development   | 0.00 |
| Goal 15 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss | 0.00 |
| Goal 16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels            | 7.47 |
| Goal 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development   | 0.00 |

## 9. Institutions to deliver SDGs

National Planning Commission (NPC), which is headed by the Prime Ministry of Nepal, is seemed as the apex body to work on SDGs on behalf of Government of Nepal. But, there is absence of clear cut rule, which is the focal organization/agency of the government to look on 2030 agenda adopted by the UN. NPC has produced a Preliminary Report on SDG in 2015, when UN was adopting the agenda. Recently, it has also produced the Final Report of MDGs' Progress (2000-2-15). Moreover, government tried to align SDGs in 14<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan and also tried to address in Annual Programme and Budget of current fiscal year. But, due to absence of elected representatives, SDGs has been implemented at local level. Local political leaders and CSOs do not know about the SDGs. In case of CSOs, NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN) is working as a focal agency on behalf of CSOs. Nepalese CSOs who are interested to work on SDGs has formed CSOs Forum on Sustainable Development in Nepal (Nepal SDGs Forum) as a common civil society platform on February 2016. NFN is continuously dealing with the government and other development actors on this agenda.

## 10. Marginalized groups in policy making

In case of Nepal, people from marginalized groups have very little access to policy making bodies. Even they represent, they are not able to influence in policy reform and new policy making according to the aspirations. New constitution has guaranteed at least 33 percent of women in national parliament and 40 percent women in local council bodies, but they have yet to be practiced. In terms of policy making, top leaders of major political parties have high domination and at local level, local political leaders have high influence in decision making. Many respondents in survey believe that there is no impact or very low impact from marginalized groups in policy process. It is found that there should be high policy influence at national level and next at local level and advocacy activities, whatever they are, should be focused at national level.



## 11. Key policy asks or suggestions for decision makers as well as for other stakeholders

### Suggestions of Dalits

- To realize the slogan of Leave No One Behind, Dalits community should be given first priority.
- Country strategy on SDGs should be prepared, only after review of impacts made by MDGs to Dalits.
- SDG should reach to Dalits' settlements through localization process and we need to ensure right to development, employment and dignified life by increasing their participation and ownership.
- Create an appropriate environment by empowering government bodies and organizations to eliminate caste based disparities and untouchability.
- Declare Dalits' rights decade.
- All ministries, government agencies and law enforcement bodies should be inclusive, effective, responsible and accountable according to the spirit of Goal 16.
- Create an appropriate environment to accept inter-caste marriage by conducting joint campaigns from local level.
- Government should formulate a strategy to work on Goal 10.
- There should be proportional representation in executive body, legislative body, judiciary at all levels according to the provision of new constitution and also in other institutions such as constitutional bodies, diplomatic mission, non-government sector, private sector and political parties.
- Existing laws should be effectively implemented by formulating laws according the provisions in favour of Dalits in new constitution.
- A high level mechanism should be formed including representatives of Dalits, Experts and government officials to monitor and evaluate the implementation of international commitments made by government, SDGs and Policy and Programmes related with Social Inclusion.
- Nepal's economic system should be reformed in terms of policy and laws with participation of Dalit community. Government's policy, programme and budget should be inclusive by allocating adequate budgets for uplifting Dalits community.

- Nepal's development framework should be Dalit-oriented and inclusive by representing Dalits in National Planning Commission, Poverty Alleviation Fund and other development sector by reforming policies and institutional arrangement.
- Local indicators should be prepared in such a way that they could present disaggregated data including of Dalits community
- Dalits community should be kept in first priority when receiving international cooperation. International development partners should be aware and active for making strategies, policies and budgets.

#### Suggestions of CSOs working with Children

- Review the proposed indicators.
- Complete the projected indicators.
- Nepal government should think about child participation, while implementing child-friendly local governance.
- Provide birth certificated to all borned children.
- There should be coordination and need to prepare budget investment plan.

#### Suggestions of disable people

- All policy, rules, regulations and human behaviours should be disable-friendly. In additions to existing efforts, government should give emphasis to mental disability, intellectual disability, hemophilia, people with extreme or complete disability.
- Government should formulate the laws and implement them according to the provisions of Nepal's constitution 2015 and Incheon Strategy 2006.

#### Suggestions of farmers

- Promulgate Agriculture Act and protect the rights of small and poor farmers.
- Reform the policy and practices of grant assistance and facilities.
- Service centers of government should be targeted to villages and the farmers.
- Increase investment in least development countries including agriculture infrastructure, research, technology development and genetic engineering.

#### Suggestions of Indigenous Peoples

- Revise national level policies and acts.
- Form of National Level Partnership Mechanism or of Multi-stakeholder/Right Holder for consultation and coordination.
- Effective and Meaningful engagement of IPs in all development issues and process.
- Adopt national framework and implement international human rights instruments.
- Political commitment on development, good governance and inclusion.
- Commitment of international community for technical and financial support focusing ground reality.

#### Suggestions of LGBTI

- Understand the issues of LGBTI and its recent constitutional changes and make inclusive.
- Without mentioning in such important documents, the issues of LGBTI community would never come to limelight and will hindering the principle of SDG vision in the global scenario.

- Supporting and inclusion of such community who are deprived from various rights is a must. So, there is necessary to include sexual and gender minorities in any plan and policies.

#### Suggestions from migrant workers

- Nepal should ratify all international conventions and laws that are in favour of migrants and workers. Existing laws should be amended and to make workers friendly. There should be policy coherence between international laws and national laws.
- Those countries, who are receiving foreign workers, should provide cooperation to the countries of origin of migrant workers. Destination countries and transit countries should understand the human trafficking and refugees issues and support to the countries of origin.
- Destination countries should organize the programmes that support to increase social and cultural harmony and mutual cooperation.

#### Suggestions from mountain communities

- Focus on mountain issues.
- More discussion needed on 17 goals 17.1 indicators.
- Form advocacy group and mainstream in local, region, national and international level.
- Localize SDGs.
- Advocate focusing thematic positioning by funding agencies and thematic groups on mountain issues.

#### Suggestions from women

- Constitution of Nepal-2015 and efforts to implement it by developing policies and mechanism in congruent with the constitution could be taken as an opportunity to end discrimination in policies and practices. The awakened masses, capable CSOs, responsive partners all together will help government and the politicians accountable to put principles and policies to practice.
- All partners and stakeholders of SDGs implementation in Nepal could work on 14th National Plan to make it more gender responsive to reduce gender inequality. Movement to engage men in ending Gender Based Violence and gender inequality and 50:50 by 2030 campaign would also develop potentialities to end gender inequality.
- National Gender Equality Policy along with laws enacted already to end harmful practices and violence would bring equality.
- Focus on women and girls constituency identified by Nepal SDG forum and the theme women and justice to be mainstreamed in other constituencies and themes in the plan and programs of state and non-state actors.

#### Suggestion from Youth

- Ensure meaningful participation of youth while localizing SDGs, determining indicators, policy making and implementation, planning at all levels.
- Issues of youth in quite different when talking on SDGs, so they should be addressed.
- There should be segregated data of youth, which is required to assess the progress of SDGs on youth.

## **12. Conclusion and way forward**

Despite a significant reduction in poverty in Nepal over the last 15 years, people are still being left behind, particularly in rural areas. Prolonged political transition, instable government, lack of political commitment, weak government system and machineries, absence of elected representatives in local government units are the

main reasons of backwardness of the country. Culture of corruption, poor governance and weak management capacity and impunity are other reasons. Marginalization among the people is the result of above mentioned causes. Patriarchy, untouchability and environmental degradation and natural hazards are also contributing to inequality among the people.

In order to address the poverty and marginalization, strong political leadership is needed. Political transition should be ended as early as possible. Stability of government is prerequisite for effective implementation of plans, policies and laws. Capacity of governments should be increased at all levels. Political parties, leaders, bureaucrats, non-government sectors and international development partner should be more responsive, responsible, accountable and people-centric and work together for common cause. Available resources should be optimally utilized and target to most marginalized and vulnerable people. Ensuring availability and access to essential goods and services should be taken as the entitlements of the marginalized people. Reducing gender gaps in education, health, employment, economic and political decision-making, and the social and legal empowerment of women are key measures to gender based inequality. Practice of awarding and punishment should be encouraged at all levels in the country.

In case of Nepal, all goals, targets and indicators are equally important. But, there should be supplementary indicators in some goals and targets according to the need of country context. Availability of accurate, updated and disaggregated data is required for tracking the progress on SDG indicators.

Keeping in mind the importance of Leave No One Behind envisioned by 2030 Agenda, Nepalese CSOs should raise collective voices and draw the attention of governments at all levels. They should be heavily involved in delivery of SDGs rather to limit their role in advocacy.

Raising awareness is the first step and intervenes in planning and programme would be the next important action. CSOs should be directly involved in monitoring and review process and to make all stakeholders accountable and do their business in favour of marginalized people. Nepal SDGs Forum, which is coordinating and facilitating by NGO Federation of Nepal, could be the best forum to mobilize and engage the CSOs meaningfully.