

Development Dialogue in Province 5, Butwal, 29 August 2018

A Brief report

The Social Development Ministry in Province 5 in coordination with AIN, the Association of INGOs organized a half Day '**Development Dialogue entitled: INGOs in Province 5 and Social Development**'. Honorable Minister Sudarshan Baral had graced the event as the Chief Guest. Under Secretary Mr Pushkaraj Pant had chaired the Dialogue that was attended by Joint Secretaries, Under Secretaries and personnel from the Ministry & Government Stakeholders, along with several AIN Member INGOs, UNRC, NHRC, Lumbini Hospital, WFP, NGOs, FNJ and other media houses. The key objective of the Dialogue was to foster coordination and collaboration between the Ministry and INGOs present in the Province.

SC Member Dr Bhola Dahal had represented AIN; he made a presentation highlighting about AIN in Nepal's development, the historical background of AID & Development, role of INGOs, their contribution and key challenges. Dr Dahal emphasized on the need of having one door policy and mechanism to facilitate INGOs, stronger coordination between SWC and various Ministries & the need of common understanding and approaches to create enabling development space. He stressed on the need of clarity in the coordination structure at the Federal, Provincial and Local government level for INGOs, issues of fees and taxes at various level, facilitation and reporting systems for INGOs.

During the Dialogue, thirteen AIN Member INGOs namely Action Against Hunger, Aids HealthCare Foundation, CARE Nepal, Plan International, Fairmed, IPAS, UMN, Save the Children, Search For Common Ground, Oxfam, World Education, World Vision, Helen Keller International made a presentation about their projects in Province 5, their contributions, coverage, achievements and future plans.

Listening to the presentations, Dr Bhola Dahal summarized that the Province 5 INGO's major target group was Women, Children, disabled, poor & marginalized and their intervention sector is mainly education, health, agriculture, livelihood, DRR, Safety & Security, WASH & protection of women & children. Dr Bhola further assured that AIN is keen to hold Dialogue in other Provinces as well. The next Dialogue will be held at the Central since the key Ministries like MoF, MoWCSC, MoFAGA and the SWC is keen to bring in the new Social Development Act. He expressed that the 'Government should be facilitative rather than controlling'. There is a need to understand how INGOs function. There is a need of uniformity in the taxes that INGOs pay at various levels. There is a need to strengthen coordination and cooperation, the government and INGOs should meet regularly, at least in six months so that a proper feedback and consultation mechanism is established. INGOs have their limitations as they are guided by periodic plans; INGOs seek to work in sync with the national interest for national benefit.

INGO's presentation was followed by a presentation by the Ministry that mainly highlighted on the Policies, plan and priorities of the Government in Province 5. Their major social sectors being women, children, health, education, youth, employment, peace building, WASH and heritage.

The Presentation was followed by a Question Answer session. Some of the key concerns, queries and suggestions from the floor:

- ✚ INGOs are keen to share their best practices and engage closely with the Government so that the gap is reduced in the common efforts made by the Government & the INGOs.

- ✚ What can the Ministry do to facilitate INGO's work at the Province level. There is lack of clarity at the three layers. There is need of people's participation, engagement and suggestion while making policies and plans
- ✚ There are many policies and campaigns in place, for instance the 'School enrollment campaign', and policies like 'Free education for all' but still many children are out of school. There is a big gap in policy and plan. INGOs seek to bridge this gap in fulfilling these government policies hence there is a need of proper coordination.
- ✚ Negative perception towards INGOs, still looked upon as culprits. The accusation of Dollar farming still prevalent, the issue of transparency & accountability.
- ✚ SWC is there to facilitate INGOs at the central level but there is confusion regarding who is the authority at Province, where do INGOs go and who will facilitate INGOs. The control mechanism is increasing. There is a need to take approval for every Palika.
- ✚ The Dialogue is seen as a very good beginning to support and complement the work of INGOs and Government. There is a need of stakeholder consultation with the Ministry.

Remarks from the Minister

Minister Sudarshan Baral in his remarks emphasized that the three level Government structure has been established so that the 'Government is accessible everywhere; so that people get service everywhere'. The Government does not seek to create hurdles or troubles creating layers but they seek to start a swift, simple and easy process rather than long tedious ones. However, INGOs should understand that the 'Government could be facilitative and controlling as well' if needed. INGOs should seriously understand the priority areas and national interest. There is no need to be apprehensive towards the government if the INGOs are doing good work because the Government is always positive towards the INGOs. There are some good and bad examples of the INGO's work worldwide. China has flourished through International Aid whereas few African nations have failed. The Haiti earthquake is a poor example of International Aid. The INGOs should assess the need, capacity and intervention areas.

The Minister informed about soon to be held Ministerial level meeting to discuss on challenges, gaps, and duplication issues. A platform will be created to discuss and address such issues regularly. He mentioned that the Ministry has put aside budgets to address the special needs in education, health & disability sector.

The Minister advised INGOs to prepare presentations with real data with facts and figures, showing before and after results of INGO interventions, with the number of beneficiaries so that the real impact is seen. The Ministry is not looking for overall nationwide data but the actual number reached by each INGO. So that the performance rate is clear and the result could be compared. The Ministry advised INGOs to prepare a two pager summary of key information: activities, plan for next year, thematic areas of intervention, sectors, districts, partners, impact and budget. He stated that he will hold consultations with INGOs in every six months.

Regarding negative perception towards INGOs, the Minister expressed that due to lack of communication such accusations come. The Government, INGOs and Media should work together for

better communication of each other's work. He recommended that INGOs should do a press release before launching new projects so that it is well communicated with various stakeholders and transparency is maintained as well. The results of INGO work should be monitored by a third neutral party in the presence of beneficiaries, stakeholders and government.

The Minister assured that the Ministry is working towards creating an enabling environment for all the Development actors and partners and that the 'procedures are simple, effective and efficient'. They are in fact directing their policies and plans in that direction, so that it is more conducive and facilitative for INGOs. He also mentioned that they are in the process of drafting the Social Development Act and they would invite AIN Members in the consultation. The Ministry's vision and objectives are very ambitious but the resources are limited hence he seeks for proper coordination & collaboration from INGOs side in the coming days. He also gave examples of recently registered new Chinese INGOs, which he believes would tie up with the national priorities and needs of the Provincial government.

In his concluding remarks, Minister Baral reiterated on the need of regular dialogue with the development partners for proper coordination, facilitation, guidance and monitoring. Likewise, the Chairperson of the event Secretary Pushkar Raj Pant highlighted on the need of factual and actual data, information of INGOs working in province 5 and their status for proper collaboration in the coming days.

