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## Association of International NGOs in Nepal

An informal network of INGOs working in Nepal



## Province 1 Development Dialogue

Summary report by

Reshma Shrestha, 19 September 2019

## Introduction

The Association of International NGOs in Nepal, AIN in coordination with the Social Development Ministry of Province 1 organized a half Day Development Dialogue on 19 September 2019 in Biratnagar. In the context of decentralization under the federal system in Nepal, this is the fifth Development Dialogue that AIN facilitated to have a discussion over development program and priorities in the province.

The Honorable Minister of Province 1, Jeevan Ghimire had graced the Dialogue as the Chair and Hon. Chief Minister Sherdhan Rai as the Chief Guest. Honorable Vice Chairperson Subodh Pyakurel, Hon. Hikmat Bahadur Karki, Hon. Indra Kumar Angbo had attended as special guests. Other Dignitaries present were Principal Secretary Suresh Adhikari, Secretary of Ministry of Social Development Bir Bahadur Rai and Secretary Damodar Regmi from Ministry of Economic Affairs & Planning.

The main objective of this dialogue was to interact with the government officials to establish a positive and productive relationship between provincial government and AIN members; to improve collaboration and coordination with the Provincial Government; and sharing information about programmatic interventions; identifying practical mechanisms for regular contact and discussion; and to provide basic information about AIN, its principles, objectives, INGOs operational procedures.

AIN Member INGOs Heifer International, Habitat for Humanity, Qatar Charity, ADRA, World Vision, The Asia Foundation, Lutheran WF, CBM, PSI, Save the Children, Plan International, Helen Keller International, MCC, Action Aid, AWO, Ipas, Red Panda, One Heart Worldwide, Swiss Contact, CRS and UMN had attended the Development Dialogue along with NGO Federation. There were representatives from DFID, WHO, UNHRC, IOM, SDC and UNDSS. Media Houses like Kantipur, Nepal TV, News 24, RSS and Udgosh Daily had attended the Dialogue.

## Welcome remarks: Coordination and cooperation with INGOs

Secretary Bir Bahadur Rai in his opening remarks appreciated AIN for its presence and highlighted that the timing of the Dialogue has been appropriate since there is a need to strengthen coordination and cooperation between the Government and the INGOs. He opined that there are few number of INGOs and NGOs in Province 1 and many in Karnali maybe because the need is more there. He stressed on the need of one window system and expressed that there are lot of issues that need to be prioritized categorically namely the hardware software issues, accountability & transparency and the Social Development Act. INGOs role is that of a watch dog and to fulfil the gap by reducing duplication maintaining internal governance and transparency; INGOs should do Social Audit. INGOs are registered with SWC but they need to inform the Provincial Government and get themselves enlisted. There is a need to do joint coordination with local government and it should be reflected in the annual report. Bir Bahadur Rai reflected that there are problems and challenges in terms of Data and Province 1 lacks systematic data which needs to be managed in coordination with SWC. The other issue being linkage of INGO's priorities with local need. There is duplication of efforts and hence there is gap. He emphasized that there is a need of information with a synopsis of INGO's work in Province 1. The session was moderated by Durga Baral Social Development Department Chief.

## Remarks by the Vice Chairperson of Planning Commission

Vice Chairperson of the Planning Commission Subodh Pyakurel shared his views on how the development should be owned, development for whom, how development will be for oneself and how it could be for all. Development should be pre informed, based on contribution and one's ownership in the development process. He highlighted on the long term vision of Province 1 mainly in sectors like healthy and balanced ecology, basic hygiene and sanitation, renewable energy and organic agriculture. He expressed that development leads to a civil and lawful society, good governance and high quality life. He briefly shared about Human Development Report and localization of SDGs. He opined that development should not be taken as donation. There should be contribution from beneficiaries as well. He emphasized that the foundation of true development is equality and social justice.

### Province 1 long term vision and overall strategy:

- Improved and dignified life
- Creation of a civilized and just society
- Human capital formation and identification of potentiality
- High and equitable income
- Development of human capital and utilization of potential opportunities
- Modern, interlinked and easily accessible infrastructure
- High products and productivity
  
- ✚ Increase in Agriculture and non- agriculture products
- ✚ Outreach in health, education and other basic services
- ✚ Development of infrastructures like transportation, hydropower, irrigation
- ✚ Forest, environment, climate change and effective management of disaster risk reduction
- ✚ Promotion and development of responsible, transparent and result oriented Administration
- ✚ Good governance and capacity building, ensuring human rights, peace and security
- ✚ Interrelated areas: Poverty alleviation, employment opportunities

### Province 1 Government is keen to do partnership in the following areas:

- Make people understand the real meaning of development
- Coordinate and collaborate in areas of human rights, human development and sustainable development
- Build and develop self- reliant people
- Strengthen mechanism of right to information, transparency and accountability
- Establish the system of making plan, monitoring and ownership by the citizens
- To systematize all work as committed in the Constitution and International commitments

## AIN presentations

### Regulatory framework for INGOs

AIN Policy Analyst, Shiva Paudel, made a presentation highlighting about regulatory framework for INGOs, the history of INGOs, how it started, who are INGOs. He explained about the frameworks

that recognizes INGO namely the Constitution of Nepal, Social Welfare Act, Nepal Reconstruction Authority, Development Cooperation Policy 2019.

He briefly shared about the challenges in terms of:

- **One door-policy and mechanism:** SWC and various ministries...no common understanding and approaches
- **Delay in Agreements and its Renewal:** General Agreement, Project Agreement and Evaluations
- **Federal system:** Where to coordinate and how? Who is responsible? Roles of Federal, Province and Local Government...including DCC
- **Restriction of I/NGOs:** Fees and Taxes at various level, SWC Agreement fee, M and E fee, Office Registration Fee and Renewal Fee
- **V I S A and Tax Exemption:** Equipment, Medicines and Relief Materials
- **Facilitation and Reporting:** L G Us? Province? Federal? SWC? Ministries? Tax Offices? Effectiveness of D P A C and C P A C

### Way forward

#### **National Level**

- One window system for approval
- Facilitative simple and clear bureaucratic process (visas, agreements, M/E, tax exemption and approvals)
- **Provincial Level**
  - Support in one window system: National / Provincial/Local
  - More welcoming environment and facilitation of INGOs presence
- **Overall**
  - Recognition
  - Constructive Dialogue and Participation (at policy and decision making)
  - Independent evaluation and scale up good practices and learning from INGOs
  - Transparency, public disclosure *yet free civil society space*

*\*Presentation attached with mail*

#### **Contribution of INGOs in development**

AIN SC Member Suraj Sigdel Country Director of CBM made a presentation on the overall contribution of AIN Members in Development. He highlighted that Development Cooperation Policy, 2019 has acknowledged INGOs contribution in service delivery, advocacy, awareness raising, humanitarian assistance, strengthening voice, accountability mechanisms and infrastructure. He presented about INGOs' Core funding from their overseas grant and contribution in creating employment. He explained that the budget flow trends in Nepal had risen during 2015- 2016 during Earthquake and now it is decreasing.

Suraj Sigdel presented about sectors and budget of AIN Members active in Province 1. There are around 35 AIN Member INGOs working in Province 1 in sectors like Education, health, livelihood, Infrastructure, Alternative Energy and Child Protection, civil society and governance, GESI, women empowerment, Disability, Water & Sanitation WASH, HIV Aids, DRR, Agriculture, Environment,

Biodiversity Conservation, Climate Change, renewable energy, migration & remittance, irrigation. The annual budget of AIN Members in Province 1 is around NRs 1,430,850,744 (1 Arab 43 crore)

*\*Presentation attached with mail*






### **Presentation by Principal Secretary Suresh Adhikari**

Principle Secretary Suresh Adhikari made a presentation on Province Government and International INGOs: coordination, cooperation and effectiveness. He highlighted on Province 1 policies and shared about the expectations from INGOs mainly as a development partner, supporting in province government's policies, plan and programs, building local level capacity, maintaining transparency and accountability of resources, focusing on tangible work with emphasis on social inclusion maintaining neutrality on political, social and religious ground.

#### **He gave examples of INGOs engagement mainly in:**

- Formulation of policies and plans as expert help
- Health services promotion ( technical and physical support)
- Improvement in quality of education/ensure access to education, modern and vocational education
- Disaster Management: Not only in awareness education but also cooperation in solid work ( relief, rescue and rehabilitation)
- Empowerment of marginalized community( Not only in advocacy but for support with community housing (example)
- Environment protection: technical support for waste management, solar energy, pollution control
- Clean drinking water: support and cooperation for marginalized settlement
- Modern techniques in agriculture: learning and support
- Creation of employment: training, support in entrepreneurship
- Old age home, children's home
- Campaigns against Human trafficking & gender based violence, safe homes
- Support in eradicating social superstitious practices

#### **Role of Province 1 Government**

-  Registration, renewal and documentation of INGOs interested to work in Province 1
-  Prioritization of working sector of INGOs
-  Facilitation of INGOs performance evaluation mainly for recommendation, security and coordination
-  Identifying areas of collaboration and cooperation between Government and INGOs , MOU for the same
-  Focal person for easily managing One window system



Consultation with INGOs for suggestions and recommendations on Policy, budget and program formulation



Periodic Evaluation and problem resolving

Principal Secretary Adhikari explained that the Government does not seek to control and impose INGOs but are keen to facilitate since INGOs follow principles of self- good governance. But INGOS need to be transparent about what they give to the beneficiaries, should not misuse the funds, do self- declaration of sources since there is money laundering cases and all money is not legal at times. He emphasized that the communication system should be strengthened and priorities have changed as per time. INGOs need to inform and support Provincial government; there is a need of one reporting format. The government is planning to revive social development council as well.

### Remarks from the Minister of Social Development

Hon. Minister Jeevan Ghimire remarked that the Development dialogue will be a meaningful event for a new beginning of coordination and cooperation. He expressed that Province 1 does not have the official record of who is doing what and where till now hence the dialogue will help in keeping the record. Minister informed that the Social Development Act of Province 1 has already been formulated. This Act will help in establishing one standard mechanism and system. However, Province 1 Government is ready to revisit the Act and make amendments if required. The Government does not intend to create hurdle of any kind to INGOs but they seek to work in coordination and cooperation with INGOs.

The Minister remarked that INGOs budget in Province 1 seems bit less hence it might be an indicator that Province 1 is doing well. He expressed that they do not give priority to allowances but they want real work in the field because sometimes projects are beautiful in papers only. While sometimes everybody is blamed for a bad example set by some others. He gave example of good development work like the Dharan Dhankuta road constructed by the UK Government in 1976 that need no major repairs even after 40plus years. Chief Minister also suggested that province 1 needs some more SOS Children's Village. Minister stated that in Province 1 only 2 districts are left for declaration of full literacy. There are 7000 schools in Province 1 but only 100 schools have computers. He explained that the definition of literacy is changing and it has become digital literacy now; if a person does not know how to operate a computer it would look the person is illiterate. The Government needs INGOs' support to strengthen the sector and advised INGOs to join the literacy campaign of the Government. 80% of school teachers are not computer literate.

Hon. Minister Ghimire also requested INGOs to support their 'healthy life' awareness campaign to ensure good health for all. He stressed on the importance of doing regular check-up; at least once in every six months. He requested for INGOs support for old age home, teaching hospital, nursing schools and laptops for 350 blind students. He added that there is a need of a Research Centre in Province 1 for innovations. Province 1 Government seeks to work in partnership modality with INGOs and NGOs for single Women pilot projects.

*\*All the presentations attached with the mail*



## Remarks from the Minister of Economic affairs and Planning

Hon. Minister of Economic Affairs and Planning Indra Bahadur Angbo remarked that the Development Dialogue is an important event for mutual strength and partnership between Government and INGOs. There is a need to change with the changing development context in the new Federal structure. Now the Government is stable and there is a system in place. It is also important to work aligning with government priorities in coordination with the lowest level local bodies to achieve the Development goals and vision of Province 1.




## Remarks from the Chief Minister

Hon. Chief Minister Sherdhan Rai appreciated that it is the first kind of development dialogue that has opened doors for coordination and cooperation with INGOs in the coming days. Through this platform both can do exemplary work, create new models, contribute and collaborate. He remarked that with new responsibility there is new vigor and Province 1 has understood its priorities and need. In the past the state system was weak, there were no proper systems to monitor the INGOs but it did not mean that INGOs did not deliver. People had misconception towards INGOs. INGOs work in flourishing places only. He shared that sometimes INGOs and NGOs have spoilt the rules by giving allowances and there are no allowances in the political party meetings. He stressed on the need of one door system and assured to work together to bring it in reality. With the lack of one door system INGOs have faced lot of hurdles. Since INGOs are an important entity for development, both Government and INGOs should walk together.

Chief Minister suggested that all sectors including the private, NGOs and external development partners should join hands to achieve the goals, priorities and vision of the country: 'happy Nepali, prosperous Nepal'. All key sectors and bodies should work hand in hand. Province 1 is in the process of establishing a Fund Board and trying to organize an Investment summit for private partnership. People are now aware of their rights; it is the people who chose Federalism hence they should comprehend it as well through proper understanding and partnership with all key stakeholders. In his concluding remarks Hon. Chief Minister stressed that there is a need for a follow up discussions. He assured that the Government does not intend to control the INGOs but they seek to enlist INGOs to enter the door for mutual cooperation and coordination for development.

## Open Floor discussion

### Queries & Concerns:

-  Province 1 has its own budget. How can INGOs be invited to meet the gaps and challenges?
-  Many INGOs are waiting for PA with SWC and again there is a need for approval from Province Government. There is no clarity of procedures since nothing is there is writing
-  INGOs have played significant role in resettlement of Bhutanese Refugees, what are the plans of Province 1 Government

- ✚ How has the Province 1 Planning Commission planned for the social inclusion of Dalit and Women (GESI issues). What are the strategies to address the issues?
- ✚ How did the Province 1 make budget, did it follow the 7 step planning process?
- ✚ What is the commitment of Province 1 Government to address the issues like TB, Malaria and HIV Aid, how can it be linked at the Palika level to reach the target group?

#### **Recommendations from floor:**

- ✚ Recommended for having a strong Project Monitoring Committee and a uniform format for reporting with clarity of time
- ✚ INGOs do not focus or prioritize on giving meeting allowances. AIN does not have any policy to give allowances during meetings and does not practice it
- ✚ INGOs work should be reflected in the Red Book
- ✚ There is a need for more such Dialogues
- ✚ There is a need to review INGOs work for sustainability and institutionalization
- ✚ There is a need to rethink the objective of INGOs sometimes the work of Government and INGOs do not match. The budget defined at the central level do not match with the activity, programs and plans at the Province level
- ✚ Though there is a single door but operated by many windows
- ✚ There is problem at local level in making plans
- ✚ There is a problem of digital data hence need to create good system through partnership
- ✚ INGOs should not take it as a hassle but since there is a three tier government one needs to respect

#### **Clarifications from Government:**

- ✚ The Government does not seek to control INGOs but welcomes them
- ✚ Registration of INGOs at Province level does not mean Government seeks to control but it is just to enlist
- ✚ Even if it contradicts with DCP it is mandatory for INGOs to take pre approval of the projects from Provinces (Legal Advisor Kosh Raj Neupane). There is a need for massive discussion regarding this issue along with SWC and PAFC team. It was informed that only 6 INGOs have registered themselves in the Province
- ✚ It was emphasized that there is a need to work together at local level more closely in the coming days
- ✚ The Province Strategy was made following the seven steps of partnership in a most democratic way
- ✚ Government cannot work in isolation hence needs a co partner
- ✚ INGOs should lend its extended hand to support government in resolving problem, supporting in supply side and strengthen demand side
- ✚ Regarding gender inclusion in 2062/63 it was 8.5% and now it is 26% in civil service
- ✚ Regarding Refugees issues Province 1 Government is dealing in coordination with MOHA



## Vote of thanks and closing remarks

Secretary Bir B Rai in his closing remarks stated that Province 1 Government is prioritizing its policies aligning with the global development agenda, SDGs and LDC graduation. As a next step the Ministry is keen to build the trust between INGOs and Government and reduce the gap by strengthening cooperation. Together both the Government and INGOs should try to reach the unreached and work as per the Act. He assured that INGOs achievement and best practices with indicators will be recognized so that the real outcome can be measured and would be visible as well. INGOs were requested to send a one pager synopsis of their information so that the Ministry is well informed. Secretary Rai thanked all the participants for their meaningful presence, he emphasized that it is the time to energize each other and make Province 1 the number one Province in real.

## Meeting between AIN Members

After the Dialogue a meeting was held between AIN Members to discuss on the way forward. The meeting agreed to form a 'Provincial Chapter of Province 1' to work together and strengthen their coordination and collaboration in the coming days. It would function as per the Working Groups of AIN to discuss on the provincial issues, challenges and concerns. Members advised to draft a TOR on how to mobilize the group and what will be the mandate of the group. The meeting also agreed to discuss on sectoral and operational issues (clarity on procedures/uniformity) and stand as one voice in times of need and interface with the Government. Members agreed that the AIN provincial chapter should carry AIN logo and should be ready to fulfill the AIN compliance. The meeting agreed that World Vision, Pramil Adhikari Public Engagement Specialist, East Field Office would take lead as the Coordinator and Save the Children, Haribol Bajagain Project Manager, TB Malaria & HIV Aids program, Eastern Field Office as the Co- Coordinator for 2020 for the AIN Chapter Province 1. In the past the Eastern region INGOs had been active and engaging regularly mainly during emergencies and coordination events/meetings.

## Development Dialogue Glimpses



*Hon. Chief Minister Sherdhan Rai*



*Hon. Vice Chair Planning Commission Subodh Pyakurel*



*Principal Secretary Suresh Adhikari*



*MOSD Secretary Bir B Rai*



*Hon. Minister MOSD Jeevan Ghimire*








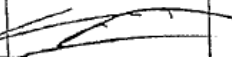



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