



Government of Nepal  
Ministry of Forests and  
Environment

REDD Implementation Centre  
Babarmahal, Kathmandu.

## **Report on Green Media Dialogue On**

### **Forest Tenure, Governance, Forest Landscape Restoration, Climate Change, and Economic Prosperity from Sustainable Management of Forests in Nepal**

#### **1. Event Overview:**

Forests play a vital role in mitigating climate change, preserving biodiversity, and supporting the livelihoods of millions of people, especially in rural communities. However, issues related to forest tenure—who owns and controls forests—are central to ensuring sustainable forest management and equitable economic development. Effective governance frameworks are necessary to address these issues, promoting transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness. Climate change poses significant threats to forest ecosystems, influencing their health and productivity. In turn, well-managed forests can act as substantial carbon sinks, helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The Green Foundation Nepal, committed to sustainable environmental practices and socio-economic development, organized a Green Media Dialogue in collaboration with REDD+ implementation center focusing on Forest Tenure, Governance, Forest Landscape Restoration, Climate change, and Economic Prosperity from Sustainable Management of Forest in Nepal. This program was intended to develop an intricate interconnectedness among journalists spread all over the country to validate their journalism in the field of Forest sector and contribute towards the wider picture of conservation and development.

Journalists play a crucial role in shaping public discourse and awareness around environmental issues like forest management and climate change. As trusted source of information, media professionals have the power to influence policymakers, stakeholders, and the general public on these critical topics. Thus, GFN in collaboration with REDD Implementation Centre initiated this noble cause to provide a shared platform.

Green Media Dialogue brought together multifaceted interest people all under the same roof. A wide range of people coming from varieties of discipline participated the dialogue held on the auspicious occasion of National Rice Day, Asar 15, 2081 (29<sup>th</sup> June, 2024). Green Media Dialogue aimed to engage journalists in a constructive dialogue on key challenges and opportunities related to thematic areas covered within the program such as Forest Tenure, Governance, Forest Landscape Restoration, Climate Justice, Forest Federalism, etc.

Venue: Alfa House, Alfa Beta Complex, New Baneshwor, Kathmandu

Time: 07:30 A.M- 17:00 PM.

Participants: 60 Participants (including organizing team).

Organizer: Green Foundation Nepal and REDD Implementation Centre, Babarmahal, Kathmandu.

Participants Summary:

1. Chairman: 4 (Mr. Keshab Pokhrel, Minister, Ministry of Forest and Environment, Bagmati Province, Mr. Anand Shrestha, Hon. Member of Bagmati Province Parliament, Ms. Bharati Pathak, Hon. Member of Bagmati Province Parliament, Mr. Hari Banstola)
2. Theme Paper Presenter: 4 (Dr. Ganga Dahal, Dr. Netra Timsina, Dr. Sony Baral, Dr. Bharat Pokhrel)
3. Moderate: 5 (Mr. Ghanshyam Pandey, Ms. Prakriti Bhusal, Mr. Suresh Kumar Rawot, Mr. Arbin Poudel, Mr. Ram Krishna Bhandari)
4. Panelists: (Mr. Pashang Sherpa, Mr. Sunil Manandhar, Mr. Anand Shrestha, Mr. Chup Bahadur Thapa, Mr. Jog Raj Giri, Mr. Birkha Sahi, Mrs. Usha Thakuri, Mrs. Rojina Thapa, Mr. Sushil Mainali).
5. Participants: Journalists (33)

## **2. Event Summary:**

Green Media Dialogue aims to foster understanding and collaboration among media professionals, policymakers, academics, and civil society to address the critical intersections of environmental stewardship, climate action, economic development, and governance. Equipped with five different sessions, shared by five distinguished and experts in their respective field, critical explication by esteemed panelists hovering their long expertise in the respective sessions. Participants were

mainly journalists that develop an understanding of the interconnected social, environmental, and economic dimensions of forest management, environmental justice, federalism, and governance.

### **Sessions:**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Session: Forest Tenure, Governance and Forest Landscape Restoration**

Session Chair: Keshab Pokhrel, Forest Minister, Ministry of Forest and Environment, Bagmati Province.

Guest: Ms. Bharati Pathak, Hon. Member of Bagmati Province Parliament, Anand Shrestha, Hon. Member of Bagmati Province Parliament.

Moderator: Ghanshyam Pandey,

Theme paper Presentation: Dr Ganga Ram Dahal

Panelists: Dr Pashang Sherpa, Sunil Manandhar

**Summary:** The opening ceremony of the program commenced with the introductory segment from the chairman of Green Foundation Nepal, Mr. Ghanshyam Pandey. He moderated the first session, and introduced the objective of the session, and facilitated the introduction of all the participants. Then, the first session was prepared by Dr. Ganga Ram Dahal, and the presentation begins with the basic introduction of forest tenure, governance in the south east Asia area, and generalize that practice in terms of Nepal. He explained the global forest tenurial status, how the forest governance relates with forest tenure. He also then revealed the inter connection between governance and forest ecosystem restoration. He explained how Africa has the greatest restoration opportunity area, and despite that, how Africa is prominent for degradation of forest ecosystem. He then stated the contribution of communal modality of management of forest into forest landscape restoration in Asia from 1990-2020, adapted from FAO report 2020. He demonstrated how community-based restoration mechanism has transitioned in India, Indonesia, Myanmar, and how it differentiated with respect to Nepal. The key takeaway was the appreciation of community-based restoration that extensively being adopted in Nepal, has resulted the pioneer movement in the field of conservation and development.

#### **Panelists Sharing and Overall Discussion:**

Dr. Pasang Sherpa, delves into the key message from the presentation and he stated the explicit relation of indigenous people in securing forest tenure, governance and forest landscape restoration. He then mentioned the various entities that play a pivotal role in developing a resilient and self-sustaining ecosystem for forest ecosystem. He then stressed on the conceptual basis of forest ecosystem restoration through the cumulative approach of indigenous people and local communities. Mr. Sunil Manandhar, expressed his past experience when he was the forest minister under Ministry of Forest, how community forest model of forest management has revolutionized the terminology of forest management in Nepal and how it has left an exemplary impact in the world. Then the platform was open for participants, where journalists has raised their concerns and queries. Some of the major concerns were:

1. Development and Deforestation are now two sides of the same coin. How can this be rectified?
2. As Forest assessment verified the increased coverage of forest, still the news of massive deforestation and degradation are prevalent in the country? What is the true scenario of forest coverage?

Theme Paper presenter, Mr. Dahal responded with the progressive image of world-wide innovation and development commenced from the felling of the forest area. He also stated that, country wise responsibility to increase the forest coverage falls upon the forest management practitioner rather than the political entity as they are more obliged towards policy crafting. For the second query, Mr. Sunil Manandhar responded “Although the forest area of Terai has been deforested and decreased, the forest area in the mid-hills region, has been increased as a result of migration of people, leaving forest area untouched and increased crown cover dictates the overall increased coverage”. Special Guest, and the Hon. Member of Bagmati Province, and ex-chairman of FECOFUN, Ms. Bharati Pathak state the importance of community in the execution of good governance in the forest sector. She also declared her role in the Bagmati Parliament about the provision of community forest in the policy and activities. Chairman of the first session, forest minister, Bagmati Province, Mr. Pokhrel, thanked the organizing team about this important issue and how he will exercise this learning into his tenure. He also stated that, the role of journalist in the forest sector is evidently crucial as they translate technical research into accessible, engaging content, and are responsible for raising awareness and understanding among the citizens.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Session: Political economy of Climate Finance, Peoples Rights, Justice and Governance**

Session Chair: Mr. Anand Shrestha, Hon. Member of Bagmati Province

Moderate: Ms. Prakriti Bhusal,

Theme paper Presentation: Dr Netra Timsina

Panelists: Mr. Chup Bahadur Thapa

**Summary:** Dr. Netra Timsina, is an esteemed climate activist, and one of the pioneer individuals of the country that expertise in the field of climate economy. His presentation revolves around various funding scheme and options available in the field of climate change. He commenced with a brief introduction of climate justice, and how climate justice seeks to ensure climate finance. He stated that climate finance, has a broad definition and can be categorized into two ways: within UNFCCC, and outside UNFCCC. Climate Finance is a mechanism of providing incentives by the developed countries to the developing countries, to cover the costs of mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage. He explained that climate finance is rather an indirect approach adopted by developed countries when they are unable to cater to UNFCCC agreements, and they collaborate with bilateral, multilateral, private labels such as carbon finance, bio-carbon fund, etc. He then explained the two types of funds that is available in the world of climate finance, viz., Green Climate Fund (GCF), and Loss and Damage Fund (LDF). There are currently, 3 projects implementing under GCF (1 related to mitigation, 2 related to adaptation). BRCRN, improving climate resilience in Gandaki Basin, and Climate Friendly Clean Cooking Solutions were the projects that is currently working within Climate Finance. LDF is a newly developed progressive model of climate finance, discussed on COP 28, that will provide directly access to government units, that will increase the country's capacity to scale up resilience to the impact of the climate crisis. He then concluded his presentation with a takeaway message to the journalist to explore the commendable space of the challenges and opportunities of climate justice and climate finance, and reflect transparently how government if leveraging climate funds in the country.

**Panelist Summary and Discussion:** Mr. Thapa from the panelist, state the implication of climate change in the forest ecosystem in the country and what significance it holds when journalists provide their in-depth analysis of concurrent issues of climate crisis. He also shared that, despite the short-comings of climate crisis has halted the development of the country, interventions and projects that ventured into leveraging millions of dollars for the rectification or substantially reduced the impacts has enhanced. He explicitly stated the politics existence behind the climate economy has ruined the opportunities that can foster a better future, He then stressed the journalist

into shaping public discourse, driving accountability, and advocating for equitable climate solutions in Nepal.

Then the platform was subjected to open discussions, where journalist raised some intriguing queries revolving the concept of climate justice in the forestry sector, and how the government are planning to handle the implications of adverse impacts of climate change. Here are some of the queries that intrigued the presenter and the panelist:

1. Although forest area has been increased, the tendency of dried water source has increased.
2. The reach of the climate fund has not been accessible to the ground-root individuals that are in fact troubled by the climate crisis.
3. Different funding agency, funding source, developed year after year, but target audience remained same, and still the implications are of high stake and question.

These issues and queries tailored the interest of other participants as well. These queries were addressed by Mr. Timsina, where he responded, the tendency of water source being dried out is due to unregulated management of forest, and is cosmopolitan. He stated that, climate crisis holds its dominance first to the natural resources, and then its exploit the atmosphere. He mentioned that an imbalance in one system is imperative for cascading effects on the other system, as he established the intrinsic connection between forest ecosystem and water resources. He then, addressed the second issues of funding not reaching grass-root levels, as the political bureaucracy of the country holds back the institutions that lands the funding, and issues around institutional coordination, clarity of roles and responsibilities, and lack of trust between ministries, donors, and civil society. In addition to this, he also stated that, in Nepal as the climate policy mandate the application of 80% of the project fund in the grass-root level, the actual proportion of the government versus donor funding has not aligned with that margin.

The session chairman, Hon. Member, Bagmati Province, Mr. Anand Shrestha stated that climate change is the one constant that is happening worldwide, but not all country is equipped to tackle this crisis as Nepal can. He apprised the abundancy of the resources and potentiality of the mobilization of those resources, that the country can witness remarkable growth in terms of climate finance. He concluded his statement with “as a developing country, Nepal currently is undermined from entertaining the benefits it is supposed to achieve”.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Session: Forest for Prosperity, Forest Economy & Sustainable Management of Forest**

Session Chair: Mr. Ganesh BK,

Moderate: Mr. Suresh Kumar Rawat,

Theme paper Presentation: Dr. Sony Baral

Panelists: Mr. Jog Raj Giri, Mrs. Usha Thakuri

**Summary:** Suresh Rawat moderated the third session and introduced the session chair, theme paper presenter and panelists. Dr. Sony Baral provided a comprehensive national context forest management scenario in her presentation. Her presentation delves into the pathways of prosperity through intrinsic forest management and how it relates with national economy. She visualized the current scenario of forest wood consumption in Nepal, and export and import scale of forest-based trade in the country. Her contradictory statement of importing large volume of timber is a question for the economic burden in the country, as countries like China adopted the similar concept and has resulted into the enhancement in the biodiversity conservation. She also put into the picture the current trend of youth migration leaving the country, and how it had impacted the GDP of the country. She also stressed that despite about half of the total area is covered by Forest area, upon which, nearly half under community-based forest management regime, the timber-based supply is accompanied by the private forest regime. She also emphasized redefining forest as rather than a commoditized resources to more multifaceted dimensions. She underscored the underharvesting of forest stock in the country has resulted in the higher dependency in the imported forest goods. She then surmises her presentation with adapting an interwoven nexus of interventions that fits best for all kind of issues, as one solution doesn't fit altogether for all settings.

**Panelists Sharing and Overall Discussions:**

AFFON chairperson, Mr. Jog Raj Giri, underlined the out-ward youth migration and how forest have the potential to address their needs and accompany themselves within the country. He then brought up the conundrum that the family forest is more affected by the country's policy of inaccessible harvesting to the private forest and deteriorating the adjacent resources that is abundant in the homelands, and reluctant to the imported timber. Mrs. Usha Thakuri, holds a long year of experience in the field of sustainable forest management. She shared her experience of how private forest owner are underprivileged of assessing their timber, and how the government

incapability of utilizing the forest resources has extreme repercussion in the national economy. Then the platform was opened for discussions; where various discussion regarding scientific and sustainable forest management, how national economy can be supported by the efficient utilization of the natural resources.

1. How scientific forest management is different from sustainable forest management? As a journalist, it is very difficult to track the progress of forest management in the country.

Dr. Baral, addressed the strategic response to the controversial statement of Forest Management, whether scientific or sustainable, as a regulated mechanism of forest management. Scientific forest management stands with a specific objective, and sustainable forest management stands with a different objective.

Ganesh B.K., chairman of Rastriya Dalit Network, explored the possibility of forest sector contribution to national GDP and also stated that journalism in a wider sense has the potential to capture that contribution and generalize to the citizens. Journalists can leverage their platforms to unlock the full economic potential of Nepal's forest sector, leading to increased prosperity, job creation, and sustainable development at the local and national levels.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Session: Forest Federalism & Governance**

Session Chair: Bharati Pathak, Hon. Member of Bagmati Province

Moderate: Arbin Poudel,

Theme paper Presentation: Dr Bharat Pokharel

Panelists: Birkha Shahi.

#### **Summary:**

Dr. Bharat Pokharel, commenced his presentation with good practices of forest federalism in context of Nepal. He then explained the fundamentals of good forest management in the Nepal through integrated model of Public, People, Private and Partnership. He then addresses the wrongdoing aftermath of Federalism, policy hurdles, and clear demarcation between behavior and practices. Forest after federalism, resembles 3Cs (Coordination, Cooperation & Coexistence) and in practice (Control and command, Conflict and contested, Confrontation, Contradictions, Competition (unhealthy), Complex and complicated). He then presented the possibility of community forest user groups in income and employment opportunity. His presentation, then



revealed the possible production capacity of forest goods and services, carbon market and NTFPs. He then exercised the disparity in the current Fiscal Policy 2081/082 and how government disability to really portray the real scenario of forest condition in Nepal. He stressed the journalists to hold their pens for the shortcomings and wrongdoings of the government and shed light in the deformity, disparity and dis-oriented concept of forest management practices implementing in the forest sector in the country.

Birkha Shahi, Special Vice Chairperson of FECOFUN articulate the long advocacy of the shortcomings of the Forest Regulation 2079, and how FECOFUN ordained various circulars to resist the government's decision against community forest user groups. He then also asserted the collaboration of FECOFUN and journalist alliances have been pivotal regarding forest issues and concerns.

On the open discussion segments, journalists raised issues regarding Churia forests, Mr. Pokharel clarified about the carrying capacity of Chure region of Nepal which contributes for a large percentage of forest area of Nepal. He also questioned about the prohibition in the internal consumption of the timber, and increasing country's expenditure by importing large volume of timber annually, leading to double loss as the loss of the readily available natural resources deterioration, and bought the same resources from foreign countries.

The session was chaired by Hon. Member, Bagmati Province, Ms. Bharati Pathak, stressed the government incapable assessment of timber production and requirement has led country to a surge of income discrepancy. As ex-chairman of FECOFUN, she mentioned her pro-longed intended interventions to conserve Churai through a different model rather than the current one, where the carrying capacity of Churia was taken into consideration before adopting the model. She concluded the session by providing constructive criticism to the participants to rigorously write on behalf of conservation and development rather than building a diplomatic competency with the person of interest.

5<sup>th</sup> Session: **Way forward, Recommendation and Closing**

Session Chair: Hari Banstola, Senior Journalist, RaSaSa Daily

Moderate: Ramkrishna Bhandari,

Panelists: Sushil Mainali, Rojina Thapa

Mr. Ramkrishna Bhandari officiated the final session by thanking all the participants for their unwavering commitments and attendance throughout these sessions. He then expressed his gratitude towards all the theme paper presenter that impart their knowledge on a mass platform. He then appreciated all the panellists that contributes their knowledge and expertise in addition to the presentation.

He then moved to the overall narrative summary of the program and initiated the final session and discussed the agenda of the dialogue. He then suggested the formulation of a nexus organization of journalists that works in the field of forest and environment. A series of discussions resulted into 11- members executive committee formation entitled “Forest and Environment Journalist Association Nepal” with the following members as functioning ad-hoc committee:

1. Sushil Mainali: Chairman
2. Hari Banstola
3. Rojina Thapa
4. ShubhaLakhsmi B.K
5. Anjali Thapa
6. Keshab Bhandari
7. Bhanubhakta Acharya
8. Bikas Acharya
9. Anil Parajuli
10. Ghanshyam Poudel
11. Prem Banstola

The last session chairman, Hari Banstola thanked all the participants, panelists, theme paper presenter, and the organizing team. He expressed his intention of formation of the association is the form a regulated controlled and sustainable network of journalist that dictates the future of forest and environment sector and showed his commitments towards securing the association as one of the leading CSOs in the country in the coming years.

Photo Plates:





Government of Nepal  
Ministry of Forests and Environment  
REDD Implementation Centre  
Bokormahal, Kathmandu

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Foundation Nepal

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