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The Subnational Governance Program in Nepal (SNGP) (स्थानीय सरकार सबलीकरण कार्यक्रम) is implemented through a strategic partnership between the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and The Asia Foundation, in coordination with the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration. SNGP aims to promote an enabling environment for the development of strong, effective and inclusive sub-national government in Nepal that benefits all.

National Interaction Program: “Inclusive Development and Prosperous Nepal”

On 7 January 2020, National Concern and Coordination Committee of National Assembly organized an interaction program in Kathmandu to discuss “Inclusive Development and Prosperous Nepal” with approximately 70 federal parliamentarians and civil society members. In the program chaired by Hon. Dil Kumari Thapa Rawal (Parbati), Chair of the Committee- Hon. Ishwor Pokhrel, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, Hon. Dr. Yuba Raj Khatriwada, Minister of Finance and Dr. Swarnim Wagle, Former Vice Chair of National Planning Commission were the Chief Guest and Guest Speakers respectively.

Addressing the program as the guest, His Excellency Peter Budd, Australian Ambassador to Nepal, shared Australia's experiences on intergovernmental relationship between spheres of government and explained how the orders of government are collaborating to respond to the tragedy brought by the massive bushfire in Australia.

In the discussion session, Dr. Swarnim Wagle made a presentation on "Nepal 2030: Goals, Trends, Resources, and Challenges" followed by a presentation from Dr. Yuba Raj Khatriwada and Ms. Mahalaxmi Upadhyay Dina on “Inclusive Development and Prosperous Nepal: Policy, Commitment and Current Status” and “Women and Inclusive Development” respectively. Hon. Ishwor Pokhrel addressed the program as chief guest as well.

National Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (NFPPD) supported the Committee to organize the event. NFPPD is a partner of the Australian Government-The Asia Foundation Partnership on Subnational Governance in Nepal.

POLICY DIALOGUES

Policy Dialogue on Key Impediments of public Private Partnership

On 20 December 2019, the program organized a policy dialogue on Municipal Financing in Kathmandu. Due to limited own source of revenue and ever-growing needs of municipalities under the current federal structure, increasing alternate sources of municipal financing is imperative for municipal independence and development.

The dialogue which was moderated by Mr. Radhesh Pant, senior partner at VRock was focused on identifying specific opportunities and challenges faced by different stakeholders in providing and accessing financing for municipal projects from 4 key financing mechanisms currently available in the country. These are: Commercial Banks and Nepal Infrastructure Bank (NIFRA), Town Development Fund (TDF), Intergovernmental Loans and Internal Loans, Funds from Foreign Sources.

The discussion also aimed to identify the kind of regulations that can be introduced and practices that can be changed in order to facilitate municipal lending. The event was attended by a range of stakeholders comprising of bankers, donor representatives, and stakeholders in sub-national governance.



Defense Minister Ishwor Pokharel addressing the national interaction program on “Inclusive Development and Prosperous Nepal”

High-level Interaction Program on Intergovernmental Relation

On 6 January 2020, Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC) Centre for Federalism Studies (CFS) organized a “High-level Interaction Program on Intergovernmental Relation” in Biratnagar, Province No. 1. Participants include Chief Minister Serdhan Rai, Minister Hikmat Karki, Speaker Pradeep Bhandari, Deputy Speaker Saraswati Pokharel, Chair of Parliamentary Committees, Members of Provincial Assembly, Principal Secretary, Secretary of Office of Chief Minister and Council of Ministers (OCMCM), Secretary of Provincial Assembly, and other senior bureaucrats of the Province Government.

Dr. Bipin Adhikari, who served as a resource person on the Constitution highlighted key provisions of intergovernmental relations in the proposed Federal, Province, and Local level Interrelation Management bill passed by the National Assembly to House of Representatives.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:

On January 29-30, 2020, The Asia Foundation Nepal convened governance experts from the Foundation and donor counterparts in Nagarkot, Nepal to further the global discussions on principles for adaptive management in governance programming.

Media Roundtable on Subnational Governance

On 13 January 2020, Association of Community Radio (ACORAB- CIN) organized a roundtable discussion among journalists and editors representing 15 media organizations (including Kantipur, Annapurna Post, AP1, OnlineKhabar, Setopati, Ratopati, Naya Patrika, Sagarmatha, Gorkhapatra) in Kathmandu. The event has effectively initiated the discussion with the media on their role to help strengthen subnational governance. The participants shared their thoughts on how mainstream media could collaborate with local media to bring about discussions on the issue of federalism and help promote local government good practices mostly catering to transparency and accountability. The said event was also reported in this news link—<https://www.cinkhabar.com/sajha/753>.

Since September 2019, ACORAB with support from the *DFAT-Asia Foundation Strategic Partnership on Subnational Governance* is broadcasting the *Hamro Palika* program (<https://www.cinkhabar.com/podcasts/17>) every Thursday to around 10 community radio stations across seven municipalities. The program is a platform for sharing good practices on governance from local governments and brings into discussion various issues related to policy planning, fiscal management, service delivery, gender equality and social inclusion, and accountability. The program promotes dialogue among media outlets across various spheres of government on subnational governance issues.