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KUSOM POLICY LAB



Policy Brief on

SDGs Implementation in Nepal

Project Title

Institutional Framework of
Implementation of SDGs in
Nepal: A Diagnostic Review
from a Public Policy and
Governance Perspective

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Prepared by

South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG)

North South University

Sustainable Development Goals in Nepal

Through a multifaceted approach that includes policy alignment, capacity building, and stakeholder engagement Government of Nepal has shown a commitment to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals aim to address key development challenges and bring about significant improvements in people's lives by 2030. The government has taken a comprehensive and integrated approach to SDG implementation.

Recognizing the interconnectedness of the SDGs with national development outcomes, the Government of Nepal has strategically integrated the 17 SDGs into its national development plans and policies. The 15th National Plan (2019-2023) of Nepal is aligned with the SDGs, and the government has also developed a National Voluntary Review (NVR) report on SDGs. The Government has established an SDG Secretariat within the National Planning Commission (NPC) to coordinate SDG implementation and monitoring at the national level. Additionally, the government has formed a multi-stakeholder National Steering Committee on SDGs and established SDG units in each of the seven provinces. The Government of Nepal has placed a high priority on capacity building across various sectors, intending to enhance the understanding and skills necessary for the implementation of SDGs, while emphasizing data collection and monitoring to track progress towards the SDGs. It has developed a National SDG Indicators Framework and has developed an SDG Dashboard, which provides real-time data and information on the progress made on each of the SDGs. The government has collaborated with the private sector to promote renewable energy, improve access to finance, and enhance innovation. This inclusive approach aims to ensure that the implementation of SDGs is a collective effort. The Government has decentralized its approach to ensure that the goals are localized. Each federal, provincial, and local government entity has been given the responsibility to incorporate and implement the SDGs within their respective jurisdictions.

Challenges of SDGs Implementation in Nepal

While the Government of Nepal shows a strong commitment to the SDGs, several significant challenges remain. Major challenges of SDG implementation in Nepal are as follows:

Financial Constraints:

From various government documents and the interviews conducted, the primary challenge for the Government of Nepal is the limited financial resources available for implementing the SDGs. Mobilizing sufficient domestic and international funding to support comprehensive development initiatives is a significant obstacle that needs to be addressed. Furthermore, the respondents highlighted that the fiscal federalism scenario is not that promising. In the past, in comparison to general administration, the total capital investment was more than 50%. However, as a result of federalism, the government's administrative costs have risen and now account for more than half of the overall budget for economic growth and infrastructure development. The question here is not so much about the large administration spending as it is about the lack of return on investment in administration and government office infrastructure development. Tax collection is also an issue since Nepal lacks discriminatory and ambiguous legislation that governs tax collection at the government level. The central government collects significant revenues like as VAT and income tax, while non-major sources such as land tax and so on are distributed to the municipal level. It was suggested by our respondents that to improve the local economy, the government should adjust its investment strategy away from hardcore infrastructure development and toward softcore infrastructure development. In comparison to other South Asian nations, private sector employment growth of Nepal is weak.

Geographical Barriers:

Nepal's diverse geographical landscape poses another challenge. With a large portion of the population living in remote and hilly regions, the government faces a daunting task in ensuring that developmental services and infrastructure reaches everyone.

Political Instability:

Periodic political turmoil and changes in government have affected consistent policy-making, planning, and the implementation of SDGs. The lack of a stable political environment can lead to policy discontinuity, which hampers the execution of long-term development plans.

Capacity Limitations:

Nepal struggles with limitations in technical expertise and institutional capacity necessary for the wide-scale implementation of the SDGs. Despite capacity building efforts, the shortage of skilled personnel in both public and private sectors remain a significant barrier.

Data Availability:

Reliable, high-quality, and timely data are essential for monitoring progress, making informed decisions, and ensuring accountability. However, it was reported by several respondents that Nepal faces a major challenge in data availability and management. Gaps in data collection, analysis, and dissemination hinder the ability to track and report progress towards the SDGs effectively.

Climate Change and Natural Disasters:

As a country prone to natural disasters and with high vulnerability to climate change, the Government of Nepal faces additional hurdles in achieving the SDGs. Earthquakes, landslides, and floods, among other disasters, can derail progress and put additional strains on resources.

Social Inequality:

Achieving the SDGs requires inclusive growth and development. However, persistent social inequalities and discrimination based on caste, gender, ethnicity, and geography present another challenge in ensuring that the benefits of development reach all sectors of society.

Way Forward

- The government needs to streamline administrative costs and ensure efficient spending. Focus should be on achieving tangible results with each rupee spent. The government should standardize and clarify tax legislation and implement technology-driven solutions to improve tax collection and reduce tax evasion.
- SDGs should be made a national priority, above party politics. Collaboration and cooperation between political parties are essential to ensure that institutions are resilient to political changes, thereby ensuring continuity in SDG implementation.
- Regular training programs for civil servants need to be in place to build the capacity of existing staff. Universities and research institutions can be engaged in capacity-building and technical assistance.
- The government must invest in data infrastructure and prioritize the establishment of robust digital platforms for data collection and analysis. It can also collaborate with international organizations for technical assistance and training in data management. The government can also arrange training sessions for officials at all levels on the importance and use of data.
- Regional and sub-regional cooperation between South Asian countries can be fruitful in supplementing national strategies for several SDGs, given their shared challenges, cultures and similar initial conditions. For example, industrial strategies devised to harness the potential of regional value chains can help create productive capacities in South Asian LDCs. Greater investment in liberalizing trade through the facilitation of cross-border transport and equipping faster transit times can be useful in extending production networking and transport connectivity. UNESCAP (2018) estimates that gains from annual exports can rise by an additional US\$55 billion within the sub-region, given the opportunities of a closer economic partnership is exploited. Regional cooperation can also ensure greater energy security and sustainability in South Asia, and since there is a need for a unified energy market, it can be led by a revolution in the renewable energy field.

- SAFTA needs to be reinvigorated and operationalized in order to play a more meaningful role in directing trade barriers. Creating designated platforms and channels for priority trade between regional industries sharing common goals can help build complementarities and lead the way for conglomerate expansion. The 21st century being the peak age for globalization and changing dynamics for the world economic order presents South Asian nations with a unique opportunity that can be exploited only with a change in their collective approaches and strategies towards each other.
- Regional and sub-regional cooperation between South Asian countries can be fruitful in supplementing national strategies for several SDGs, given their shared challenges, cultures and similar initial conditions. For example, industrial strategies devised to harness the potential of regional value chains can help create productive capacities in South Asian LDCs. Greater investment in liberalizing trade through the facilitation of cross-border transport and equipping faster transit times can be useful in extending production networking and transport connectivity. UNESCAP (2018) estimates that gains from annual exports can rise by an additional US\$55 billion within the sub-region, given the opportunities of a closer economic partnership is exploited. Regional cooperation can also ensure greater energy security and sustainability in South Asia, and since there is a need for a unified energy market, it can be led by a revolution in the renewable energy field.
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नीति संक्षिप्तमा

नेपालमा दिगो विकास लक्ष्यको कार्यान्वयन
परियोजना शीर्षक

दिगो विकास लक्ष्य कार्यान्वयनमा संस्थागत
रूपरेखा नेपाल: सार्वजनिक नीतिबाट निदान
समीक्षा र सुशासन दृष्टिकोण

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नेपालमा दिगो विकास लक्ष्यको कार्यान्वयन

नेपाल सरकारले संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघको दिगो विकास लक्ष्यप्रति प्रतिबद्धता जनाएको छ । नेपालले बहुपक्षीय दृष्टिकोणमार्फत नीतिगत पडिक्तबद्धता समावेश गर्दै सरोकारवालाको संलग्नतामा क्षमता विकास गरी दिगो विकास गर्ने लक्ष्य राखेको छ । यी लक्ष्यहरूले विकाससम्बन्धी मुख्य चुनौतीहरूलाई सम्बोधन गर्दै सन् २०३० सम्ममा जनताको जीवनमा उल्लेख्य सुधार गर्ने उद्देश्य राखेका छन् ।

सरकारले दिगो विकास लक्ष्य कार्यान्वयनका लागि व्यापक र एकीकृत दृष्टिकोण बनाएको छ । राष्ट्रिय विकासका प्रतिफलसँग एसडीजीको अन्तरसम्बन्धलाई स्वीकार्दै सरकारले आफ्नो राष्ट्रिय विकास योजना र नीतिहरूमा रणनीतिक रूपमा १७ वटा एसडीजीहरूलाई समावेश गरेको छ । नेपालको १५औँ पञ्चवर्षीय योजना (२०१९-२०२३) एसडीजीसँग सम्बद्ध छ र सरकारले त्यसैका आधारमा उक्त योजना विकास गरेको छ । एसडीजीका लागि सरकारले राष्ट्रिय स्वैच्छिक समीक्षा (ख्यगिलतबचथ ल्वतष्यलर्वा च्भखष्भध) अर्थात् एनभीआर निकाले गरेको छ । एसडीजी कार्यान्वयन र अनुगमन गर्न राष्ट्रिय योजना आयोगको समन्वयमा राष्ट्रियस्तरको एसडीजी सचिवालय स्थापना पनि गरेको छ । यसका साथै सरकारले बहुपक्षीय राष्ट्रिय नेतृत्व गठन गरेको छ । एसडीजीसम्बन्धी समिति र सात वटा प्रदेशमा एसडीजी इकाईहरू स्थापना गरेको छ ।

नेपाल सरकारले एसडीजी कार्यान्वयनका लागि विभिन्न क्षेत्रहरूमा आवश्यक पर्ने विस्तृत ज्ञान र सीप विकासका लागि क्षमता अभिवृद्धिलाई उच्च प्राथमिकता राखेको छ । सरकारले प्रगति विवरण हेर्न तथ्यांक संकलन र अनुगमनमा जोड दिएको छ । राष्ट्रिय दिगो विकास लक्ष्यमा नेपालको प्रगति सूचक हेर्न मिल्ने ढाँचा विकास गरेको छ, जसले रियल टाइमको तथ्यांक प्रदान गर्छ ।

सरकारले नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा प्रवर्द्धन गर्न, वित्तमा पहुँच सुधार गर्न र नवप्रवर्तन अभिवृद्धि गर्न निजी क्षेत्रसँग सहकार्य गरेको छ । सरकारको यो समावेशी दृष्टिकोणले दिगो विकास लक्ष्य कार्यान्वयनमा सामूहिक प्रयास रहेको सुनिश्चित गर्छ । सरकारले आफ्नो लक्ष्य पूरा गर्नका लागि विकेन्द्रीकृत दृष्टिकोण अपनाएको छ । यसले लक्ष्यहरू स्थानीयकृत छन् भनी सुनिश्चित गरेको छ । प्रत्येक संघीय, प्रादेशिक र स्थानीय तहमा एसडीजीहरू समावेश गरी कार्यान्वयन गर्ने जिम्मेवारी सम्बन्धित क्षेत्राधिकार भएको सरकारी निकायलाई दिइएको छ ।

नेपालमा एसडीजी कार्यान्वयनका चुनौती

नेपाल सरकारले दिगो विकास लक्ष्यहरूप्रति दृढ प्रतिबद्धता जनाउँदै गर्दा केही महत्वपूर्ण चुनौतीको सामना पनि गर्नुपर्नेछ। नेपालमा एसडीजी कार्यान्वयनका प्रमुख चुनौतीलाई तल वर्णन गरिएको छः

आर्थिक अवरोधः

विभिन्न सरकारी कागजातहरू र हामीले सञ्चालन गरेका अन्तर्वार्ताहरूबाट नेपाल सरकारका लागि उपलब्ध सीमित वित्तीय स्रोत एसडीजी कार्यान्वयनका लागि मुख्य चुनौतीका रूपमा देखिएको छ। बृहत् विकास पहलमा स्वदेशी तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय अनुदानको उचित रूपमा परिचालन नहुनु नै एउटा अवरोध हो, जसलाई सम्बोधन गर्न आवश्यक छ। यसबाहेक हाम्रा उत्तरदाताहरूले वित्तीय संघीयताको परिदृश्य त्यति आशालाग्दो छैन भनी प्रकाश पारे। विगतमा प्रशासनिक खर्चको तुलनामा कुल पुँजीगत खर्च ५० प्रतिशतभन्दा बढी थियो। यद्यपि संघीयताका कारण सरकारको प्रशासनिक लागत बढेको छ। पूर्वाधार विकासका लागि समग्र बजेटको आधाभन्दा बढी खर्च हुन्छ। प्रश्न ठूलो प्रशासनिक खर्चबारे मात्र होइन, प्रतिफल बिनाको लगानी, प्रशासन र सरकारी कार्यालयको पूर्वाधार विकासबारे पनि हो। कर असुलीमा पनि समस्या छ। नेपालमा सरकारीस्तरमा कर असुलीलाई नियन्त्रण गर्ने भेदभावरहित र स्पष्ट कानूनको अभाव छ। केन्द्र सरकारले मूल्य अभिवृद्धि कर र आयकर जस्ता महत्वपूर्ण राजस्व संकलन गर्छ। गैरकर राजस्व-, घरजग्गा कर लगायतका स्रोतहरू नगरपालिका तहमा बाँडफाँड गरिएका छन्। हाम्रा उत्तरदाताको सुझाव थियोः स्थानीय अर्थतन्त्र सुधार गर्न सरकारले आफ्नो लगानीसम्बन्धी रणनीतिलाई समायोजन गर्नुपर्छ। हार्डकोर पूर्वाधार विकासभन्दा सफ्टकोर पूर्वाधार विकासमा सरकारले ध्यान दिनुपर्छ। अन्य दक्षिण एसियाली राष्ट्रहरूको तुलनामा निजी क्षेत्रबाट उपलब्ध हुने रोजगारी वृद्धिको अवस्था नेपालमा कमजोर छ।

भौगोलिक कठिनाइः

नेपालको भौगोलिक विविधता अर्को चुनौती हो। दुर्गम र पहाडी क्षेत्रमा बसोबास गर्ने ठूलो हिस्साको जनसंख्यालाई विकास र पूर्वाधारको पहुँच सुनिश्चित गर्न सरकारलाई चुनौतीबनिरहेको छ।

राजनीतिक अस्थिरता:

बारम्बार हुने राजनीतिक उथलपुथल र सरकार परिवर्तनले नीति निर्माण, योजना र एसडीजी कार्यान्वयनमा निरन्तर असर गरेको छ। अस्थिर राजनीतिक वातावरणले नीतिगत असन्तुलन निम्त्याउँछ। जसले दीर्घकालीन विकास योजनाहरूको कार्यान्वयनमा बाधा पुऱ्याउँछ।

क्षमताको सीमा:

दिगो विकास लक्ष्यको व्यापक मात्रामा कार्यान्वयनका लागि आवश्यक पर्ने प्राविधिक विशेषज्ञता र संस्थागत क्षमताको सीमिततासँग नेपाल संघर्ष गरिरहेको छ। क्षमता अभिवृद्धिको प्रयास भए पनि अभाव छ। सार्वजनिक र निजी दुवै क्षेत्रमा दक्ष जनशक्तिको ठूलो अभाव र त्यसका सीमा रहेका छन्।

डाटाको उपलब्धता:

प्रगति विवरणको अनुगमन, निर्णयलाई सूचित गर्ने कार्य र जवाफदेहिता सुनिश्चित गर्न भरपर्दो, उच्च गुणस्तरीय र समयसापेक्ष तथ्यांकको आवश्यकता हुन्छ। यद्यपि धेरै उत्तरदाताहरूले नेपालले डाटाको उपलब्धता र व्यवस्थापनमा ठूलो चुनौती सामना गरेको गुनासो गरेका छन्। तथ्यांक संकलन, विश्लेषण र प्रसारको कमीले एसडीजीको प्रगतिलाई प्रभावकारी रूपमा मार्ग पहिल्याउन र विवरण दिने क्षमतामा बाधा पुऱ्याउँछ।

जलवायु परिवर्तन र प्राकृतिक प्रकोपहरू:

प्राकृतिक प्रकोपको उच्च जोखिम रहेको देशको रूपमा नेपाल सरकारले जलवायु परिवर्तनको जोखिमका कारण दिगो विकास लक्ष्यमा सफलता हासिल गर्न थप बाधाहरू सामना गरिरहेको छ। भूकम्प, पहिरो र बाढी, अन्य प्राकृतिक प्रकोपका कारण कामको प्रगतिलाई अवरोध गर्ने र थप तनावहरू निम्त्याउँछ।

सामाजिक असमानता:

दिगो विकास लक्ष्य हासिल गर्न समावेशी वृद्धि र विकास चाहिन्छ। यद्यपि जात, लिङ्ग, जातीय र भूगोलमा आधारित सामाजिक असमानता र भेदभाव निरन्तर रहँदा विकासका प्रतिफल समाजका सबै क्षेत्रहरूमा पुगेको सुनिश्चित गर्नु अर्को चुनौती हो।

अबको बाटो

- सरकारले प्रशासनिक खर्चलाई व्यवस्थित र प्रभावकारी रूपमा सुनिश्चित गर्न आवश्यक छ । प्रत्येक रकम खर्चसँग ठोस परिणाम प्राप्त गर्ने विषयमा सरकार केन्द्रित हुनुपर्छ । सरकारले कर संकलनमा सुधार र करछली न्यूनिकरण गर्न कर कानूनलाई समयसापेक्ष, स्पष्ट र प्राविधिमा आधारित समाधानयुक्त बनाएर लागु गर्नुपर्छ ।
- दिगो विकास लक्ष्यलाई दलीय राजनीति भन्दाभाति राष्ट्रिय प्राथमिकताको विषय बनाउनुपर्छ । एसडीजी कार्यान्वयन भएको निरन्तर सुनिश्चित गर्न राजनीतिक परिवर्तनका लागि संस्थाहरू लचिलो छन् भनी दलहरूबीच सहकार्य आवश्यक छ ।
- निजामती कर्मचारीको क्षमता अभिवृद्धि गर्न कर्मचारीका लागि नियमित तालिम कार्यक्रम सञ्चालन गर्न आवश्यक छ । विश्वविद्यालय र अनुसन्धान संस्थाहरूलाई क्षमता अभिवृद्धि र प्राविधिक सहयोगमा संलग्न गराउन सकिन्छ ।
- सरकारले डाटासम्बन्धी पूर्वाधारमा लगानी गर्नुपर्छ । तथ्यांक संकलन र विश्लेषणका लागि बलियो डिजिटल प्लेटफर्म स्थापनालाई प्राथमिकता दिनुपर्छ । तथ्यांक व्यवस्थापनमा प्राविधिक सहयोग र तालिमका लागि अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय संस्थाहरूसँग पनि सहकार्य गर्न सकिन्छ । सरकारले सबै तहका अधिकारीलाई तथ्यांकको महत्व र प्रयोगबारे तालिमको व्यवस्था पनि गर्न सक्छ ।
- दक्षिण एसियाली देशहरूबीचको क्षेत्रीय र उपक्षेत्रीय सहयोग फलदायी हुनसक्छ । उनीहरूको साभा चुनौती, संस्कृति र समान प्रारम्भिक अवस्थालाई ध्यानमा राख्दै एसडीजीका लागि राष्ट्रिय रणनीतिको पूरक रणनीति बनाउनु लाभदायी हुनसक्छ । उदाहरणका लागि क्षेत्रीय मूल्य श्रृंखलाहरूको सम्भावनालाई उपयोग गर्नका लागि बनाइएका औद्योगिक रणनीतिहरूले दक्षिण एसियाली अल्पविकसित देशहरूमा उत्पादक क्षमता अभिवृद्धि गर्न मद्दत गर्न सक्छ ।

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