

Youth Call for Action for Voluntary National Review of Nepal 2020



BEYOND BEIJING COMMITTEE NEPAL

—GIRLS
ADVOCACY
ALLIANCE



The youth of today, deeply appreciate the efforts of the earlier generations. Unified by their common problems, struggles, and aspirations, they collectively raised their concerns and asserted to advocate for human rights, social and environmental justice to be heard from national to global levels.

Youth force is the change agent of political, economic and social changes in any country. In the development and progress of every country the contribution of the youth has occupied a prominent place.

It is in this framework that we, young social advocates of age (15-25) representatives from different socio economic backgrounds of work and field such as student, journalists, youth and youth - led organizations from diverse social movements of Nepal, would like to collectively call for sustainable solutions to eradicate poverty in its' all form and promote prosperity through an intersectional and intergenerational analysis, participatory and social justice approach. A multidimensional perspective on poverty necessitates addressing not only economic concerns, but also environmental sustainability, as well as social dimensions on the basis of equity and equality.

Young people face intersecting challenges, including economic, education, participation, forced migration, child marriages, unintended pregnancies, gender-based violence and other harmful practices etc. These challenges are amplified with geography, caste, sexual orientation and identity, education, with disabilities and indigenous and tribal youths. Young people should not be considered as a homogeneous group, within the young people, the diversity needs to be acknowledged and addressed during the development and implementation of policies, budget allocation and addressing agenda 2030.

In Nepal, out of total population 31 million, 24.0% consist of youth population; thus, Nepal is experiencing its demographic dividend for the first time; therefore, young people should be at the center of sustainable development. As equal partners in turning the 2030 Agenda into reality, we strongly reiterate that this ambitious global agenda can only be achieved with young people's leadership, meaningful inclusive participation and support, and empowering youth-adult partnerships and cooperation.

This call for action statement highlights and uncovers the challenges and issues faced by youth and echoes the young people's voices pertaining to goal 4, 5 and 8 and new problems brought by the current global pandemic to address the above-mentioned goals provides recommendation in these goals.

OVER ALL CALLS

1. Acknowledging that the SDGs are the young people's driven agenda, spaces should be created for young people to meaningfully engage, participate and included in its implementation, monitoring, and evaluation at all levels—from the local and national levels to the regional and global.
2. Young people in their all diversity must be included in the SDGs process: engage in development of plans and roadmaps for the effective implementation and follow up of SDGs, in VNR and HLPF
3. Recognize and reaffirm that human rights, gender equality, equity, social inclusion, accountability, and justice, environment of the planet with young people's empowerment and future are central and critical to achieving the sustainable development goals.
4. Provide financing for youth issues and movements. In particular, investment on strengthening capacities of young people ensuring diversity of young people on sustainable development goals must be provided to ensure they take ownership for effective implementation.
5. Enact and enforce laws, policies and programs that contribute to achieving gender equality and women's human rights, particularly in marginalized communities; eliminate laws, policies, and practices, that are harmful to women, girls, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) people.
6. Ensure the privacy of adolescent and young people in the provision of Sexual and Reproductive Health Services including the provision of contraceptive information, education and its quality services.
7. Ensure equality and end all kinds discrimination for LGBTQI people, including through laws that protect their right to marriage equality, which is guaranteed by the constitution of the country already.

SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Education is a fundamental human right. It is essential to make sure that all children and adolescents can enjoy

their right to quality and inclusive education, from early learning opportunities that lay the groundwork for success in school, all the way through secondary school.

Over the last 20 years, Nepal has made significant progress in education. The net enrolment rate in primary schools has risen to 97 per cent. However, the country still has many challenges to tackle, issues that continue to persist in education including: poor quality and inequity in access, geographical remoteness, gender, and socioeconomic and ethnic differences. Key barriers to enrolment, attendance and continuity include poverty, social exclusion, disability, migration, child labor, social norms and gender bias¹. Additionally, LGBTQI and PWD face discrimination and face challenges in accessing education. In many cases they have been denied enrollment for education.

Additionally, with ongoing pandemic, the GoN needs to consider the impact on young people's education. With school's shutdown, and students who are out of school for extended period of time are much less likely to return when classrooms reopen, especially girls². COVID 19 will further exacerbate the vulnerabilities especially among the poorest and most marginalized households³ which could lead many to discontinue and leave their education and opportunities generated by education forever.

1. Education in emergencies can be seen, and planned from day one, as part of the development process and not solely as a 'relief' effort with adequate budget allocation and the arrangements of technology and resources for reaching the students through alternative means such as radio, television and internet to continue their education.
2. Develop a different learning method which is accessible to all the young people despite the socio economic and geographical barriers addressing their diversity.
3. Provide necessary and appropriate guidelines, modules and allocate sufficient funds to train educators/teachers on providing quality education.
4. Ensure accessibility to quality education to all especially to young people without discrimination to their sexual orientation and identity and people with disability who face social economic challenges.
5. Support community- and youth-led initiatives and programs to address child marriage and other forms of GBV; and support menstrual health.
6. Include comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and ensure gender sensitivity education and promote positive norms as necessary for changes in gendered power imbalances and addressing gender inequality,

1 <https://www.unicef.org/nepal/education>

2 <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/dont-let-children-be-hidden-victims-covid-19-pandemic>

3 <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2020/03/greater-support-needed-for-working-families-as-covid-19-takes-hold>

the root cause of child marriage, linking SDG targets 5.3 and 5.6 to targets 3.7 and 4.5 and ensure the content covers sexual orientation and identity with correct definition.

7. Promote quality education programs for young girls who are married, girls and boys out of school and ensure their accessibility to education.
8. Ensure accessibility to quality education for young people with disabilities and ensure their needs including disable friendly learning environment, support during exams and ensure that the schools are disable friendly.

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Achieving women's and young girls' empowerment and gender equality is contingent on breaking down predefined gender roles, taboos, transformation of unequal power in gender relations, social roles, gender norms, stereotypes and challenging preexisting societal system of patriarchy and hierarchy to realizing the full potential of all individuals, regardless of their gender, sexuality, socio-economic context. Despite, progressive laws, plans and policies that address the need to uplift women and girls; social expectations towards women's reproductive and caring roles are still widely widespread and women continue to bear the burden of unpaid care and domestic work. It requires accelerated action, scaling up of good practices and a much higher level of ambition and political will and desire also financial commitment to accomplish gender equality.

1. Eliminate structural barriers to gender equality, taking into account the various roles and vulnerabilities of diverse young people and their level of influence and reach at individual, household, community, national, and global levels.
2. Harnessing quality, timely and disaggregated data, and improving data management system to be reflected in national policies and programs to eliminate all forms of discrimination and to achieve gender equality and neutrality.
3. Refer to girls who have been married at a young age as "married girls" to avoid removing all agency by solely referring to them as "victims", and promote their empowerment and active engagement and participation, linking SDG targets 5.3 and 5.5.
4. Advocate for more explicit language on the role and participation of men and boys in eliminating child marriage, linking SDG targets 5.1 and 5.3.
5. Ensure development of regulations and guidelines for the effective implementation and monitoring

of existing laws and policies e.g. The Right to Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Act.

6. Ensure laws and policies are evidence and result based, developed with a coherent understanding of the situation and context that promotes and secures the fundamental reproductive rights of women and girls.
7. Ascertain fundamental gender equality by immediately amending or repeal existing discriminatory laws and provisions in the Constitution to ensure women's right to identity, right to acquire, provide, hold on to or give up their citizenship in an independent manner, minimizing discriminatory situations for women.
8. Ensure the women and girls into power and all state mechanisms to cross the existing stereotype barriers. (Women holding 33 % seat in parliament of Nepal)

SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Young people continue to face lack of decent work opportunities, full and productive employment and capacity development. Promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, decent work, and enterprises for mainstreaming young peoples to the national economy should be a priority of the government. This should also be seamlessly integrated with guaranteeing rights at work and social protection and security for young people emphasizing the most vulnerable and historically marginalized especially for young people with disabilities. Nepal has a very large youth population which, in the current socio-economic environment, is unable to be adequately absorbed and well connected into the labor market⁴. As a consequence, poor youth employment outcomes are considerable: high rates of unemployment, high rates of informality, and high rates of out-migration⁵. Bonded and forced labor practices are also still highly prevalent in Nepal, with more than 100,000 bonded laborer households involved in agriculture, and approximately 12,000 girls trafficked annually from Nepal⁶. Additionally, LGBTIQ and PWD are completely excluded from the labor market and employment count, they face various discrimination, find non compatible and are unable to receive any job opportunity.

Additionally, the outbreak of the COVID 19 has an immense impact in the global labor market and will have an impact in Nepal's labor market. Young people are most

4 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_502340.pdf

5 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_502340.pdf

6 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_502340.pdf

vulnerable to forced labor, low paid and trapped in jobs into which they were coerced or deceived and which they cannot leave, such as domestic work, agriculture, construction, manufacturing and entertainment.

1. Ensure appropriate policy measures, which is accessible by the marginalized and poor households.
2. Develop policy that will reflect the need of vulnerable groups including women, single women, and indigenous women's, widows, girls, boys and sexual minorities and women with disabilities in order to ensure that women are included in the recovering process.
3. Invest in youth innovation and training with adequate budget allocation. The youth innovation should be facilitated through the idea incubation lab and seed funding to develop and run startups.
4. Promote the participation of young people in their diversity, in associations to enable them to acquire experience, knowledge and capacities that builds acumen skills which are transferable to the field of both public and private sphere.
5. Identify the root causes that prevent young people from becoming entrepreneurs, including: discriminatory (customary) laws (i.e. child marriage, property and inheritance), poor access to formal financial institutions, time constraints due to family and household responsibilities, and patriarchal norms, linking SDG targets 5.1, 5.4, and 5.A with targets 10.2, 10.3, and 16.3.
6. Embrace capacity building activities (training, workshop, seminar) to achieve impactful development. Foster entrepreneurial culture and invest in or mentor young entrepreneurs.
7. Education and knowledge systems must be future oriented and should focus on training young people

to solve the problems of today and the future. This means, building the knowledge of youth towards the green sector, including vocational jobs, and leveraging on their creativity and determination.

8. Develop a firm policy against unfair hiring and recruitment practices, particularly of young vulnerable groups such as migrant workers, Dalit, young people with disabilities, Madhesi.

ABOUT THIS CALL:

In order to meet ambitious targets and indicators set in the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, it is highly important to fully consider the principles of intergenerational equity and co-creation and implementation with future generations.

We need to understand the priorities of people, their needs and keep a contextual narrative at the core center of all public and private initiatives and policies. Through the COVID pandemic, we have learned the importance of context-specific action while supporting global solidarity. These lessons should carry on while we recover and set a path towards a better future.

This call for action is an outcome of various consultation and interaction with young people from the provincial level, covering all the seven provinces, followed by consultation with the core drafting team of young people on addressing the issue of young people through coordinated advocacy, which was organized by Beyond Beijing Committee in support of Plan International, Right Here Right Now, Amplify Change.

Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC) Nepal's Brief Introduction:

"Beyond Beijing Committee Nepal (BBC) is a human rights feminist National Network organization. It has been advocating and working continuously on the Beijing Platform for Action aftermath of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing since 1995. BBC aims to work towards the civil, political, economic and social empowerment of women and girls to achieve substantive gender equality, women's human rights and sustainable development in Nepal. BBC has been actively engaging in CEDAW monitoring, ICPD Monitoring, UPR reporting, and MDGs' implementation and currently the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). BBC is a founder of Nepal SDGs Forum (CSOs Forum) and the Convener of Women and Girls' constituency and gender justice theme. It also functions as the secretariat of the Women Major Group for Sustainable Development in Nepal founded (WGMG-SDN) in 2017".

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