

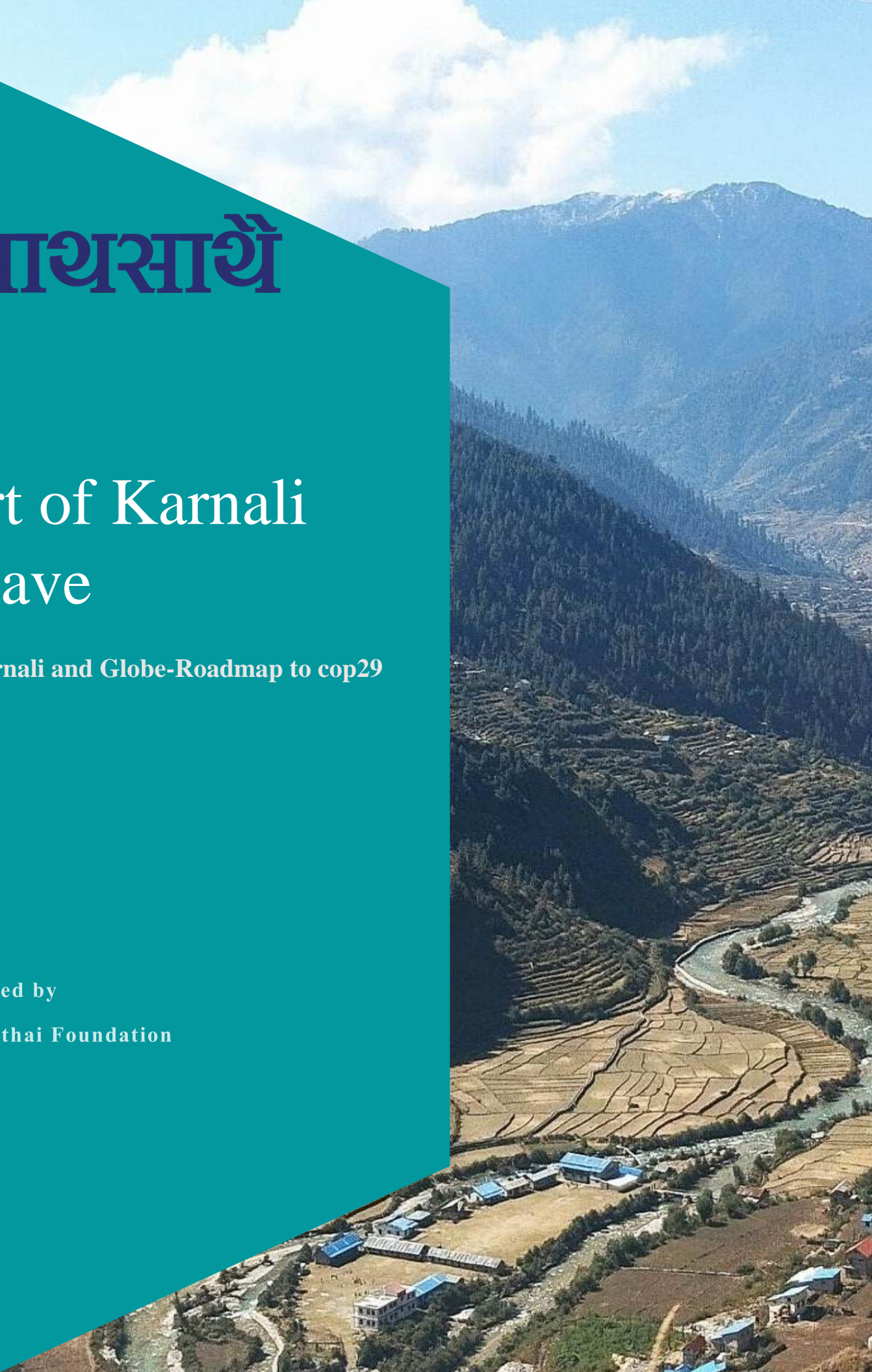


Report of Karnali Conclave

Bridging Karnali and Globe-Roadmap to cop29

Prepared by

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Photo 1: The Beautiful Landscape of Karnali

The event aimed to bridge grassroots realities with global climate negotiations, ensuring that Karnali's challenges and solutions inform national and international climate policies. The program entitled 'Bridging Karnali and Globe-Roadmap to COP29' was mainly focused on spreading the voices of Karnali province in the Baku COP29 of Azerbaijan.

Objectives of the Karnali Conclave

The major focus of the two day Karnali conclave was to highlight the issues Climate Change impact in Karnali Province. The specific objective of the conclave were:

- Providing a platform for local communities to share their lived experiences and challenges due to climate change.
- Engaging experts and local leaders to develop actionable strategies for adaptation and resilience.
- Strengthening partnerships between local provincial and central level government agencies and authorities and other stakeholders.
- Addressing the Triple Planetary Crisis.
- Aligning the discussions with Nepal's climate commitments and global sustainability goals in COP29.

Conclave Activities

The program was mainly focused on featuring the major activities in Rara National Park including the formal sessions and discussions, informal discussions, observation and field visit to Rara National Park and lake and cultural program with the engagement and collaboration with local communities and stakeholders. Based on the objectives of the event, the program was mainly focused on climate Justice, Nature Based tourism, community led solutions & adaptation strategies, Policy and Advocacy showcasing the Karnali voices in the COP29. The two days event ended with 'Karnali Declaration'.



Photo 2: The inauguration session of the first day of the event.

The first day of the event was focused on amplifying the voices of local communities to share their experiences and insights on climate change while the second day of the event was focused on the impacts of climate change and the opportunities for nature-based tourism as a potential solution.

First Day Event

The first day of the event started by welcoming the participants by Ms. Prajeeta Karki, President of Sathsathai Foundation. In the introduction session and program objectives, she introduced the foundation and outlined the objectives emphasizing the importance of including local voices in conversations about climate resilience. Senior Forest Officer at the Ministry of Forests and Environment, Ms. Deepa Oli hosted and moderated the event. She highlighted that the primary goal of the program was to identify and address the problems faced by locals due to the climate crisis and helping them adapt to changing weather patterns.



Photo 3: Participant quest during the first day of conclave.

Collecting Voices of the Locals

The main session of the first day was moderated by Dr. Bimala Rai Poudyal, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nepal. Her session brought together community members and experts who shared their firsthand experiences of climate challenges. The panelists included:

Nima Gyaljen Sherpa, Chairperson of Helambu Rural Municipality of Sindhupalchowk District: He talked about the innovative ways Helambu connects science with traditional practices. He discussed how communities have historically navigated drought using rituals and cultural knowledge bridging the gap between modern science and traditional knowledge. He also talked about the impacts of climate change in his rural municipality. His rural municipality is the first in Nepal to have local level Climate Change policy.

Bhagawati Giri, Head of the Department of Women and Children of Patarashi Rural Municipality of Jumla: She focused on the health impacts of climate change on women in Karnali sharing stories of women suffering miscarriages due to long walks to fetch water and other climate-related health issues.

Tashi Lhambu Sherpa, Vice-Chairperson of Khumbu Pasang Rural Municipality: Tashi recounted the devastating Thame flood that struck her municipality.



Photo 4: Dr Bimala Rai Poudyal hosting the first session of the event in Rara

She stressed the need for federal-local level collaboration to map hazards and plan effectively. She shared her perspective as a vice-chairperson committed to addressing local issues.

Rinzin Phonjuk Lama, Snow Leopard researcher from Humla: Rinzin spoke about the alarming rate of snowmelt and the shrinking habitat of snow leopards in Karnali leading to increasing human-wildlife conflict.

Birkha Bahadur Shahi, Social Activist of Rara, Mugu: Birkha is a lifelong resident of the Rara region, discussed the annual decline in vegetation and the challenges posed by the establishment of a national park that halted the development of a major highway to the region's headquarters and erratic weather patterns.

During the first day of the event panelists discussed about the importance of integrating cultural practices with scientific approaches to make climate actions effective, burden on women and the direct health consequences of climate change in Karnali, urgent need for federal support in mapping hazards and planning recovery efforts for disaster-prone areas, alarming rates of snowmelt and habitat and loss of biodiversity, conservation efforts and the developmental needs of marginalized communities.

Second Day

The second day was mainly focused on the impacts of climate change and the opportunities for nature-based tourism as a potential solution including the effective climate communication. Three sessions were conducted on the second day- First on climate change impacts and nature based tourism opportunities, 2nd on the voices of local and the last one was a climate dialogue with the Minister for Forest and Environment of Nepal.

Panel Discussion on Climate Change Impacts and Nature-Based Tourism Opportunities

During the first session of the second day, experts from various fields discussed the impacts of climate change and explore the actions. The speakers of the sessions were:

Renu Devi Sah, Member of Madeshi Commission : She talked about the impacts of melting glaciers and impacts in the Tarai Regions of Nepal and its cascading effects. She talked about the health impacts on women due to poverty and climate crises including asthma and cervical cancer. She called for gender-responsive climate action and policies and the need for adaptation measures.

Bhumika Shrestha, Chairperson of Blue Diamond Society of Nepal: As an advocate for the LGBTQI community, Bhumika shed light on the disproportionate impacts of climate change on LGBTQI communities.



Photo 5: Panelist sharing their experience and knowledge on climate change

She discussed the systemic discrimination they face during relief distribution and the challenges they encounter in shelter homes. She talked about the lack of representation of LGBTQI voices in climate discussions emphasizing the importance of inclusiveness in decision-making processes.

Shraddha Shrestha, Senior officer at Nepal Tourism Board: She spoke about the Nepal's natural beauty and the potential for nature-based tourism. She stressed the need to align tourism development with climate resilience particularly in the face of severe impacts on mountains which are key attractions for Nepal's tourism industry.

Bal Krishna Basnet, Chairman of Press Council Nepal: Basnet discussed the role of media in simplifying climate crisis narratives and making them accessible to all. He called on the media to connect local communities to the broader conversation, empowering them to take action and nationalize the climate

change issues. He also stressed the need of climate communication training to the local journalists and media personnel to showcase the issues to the outer world.

Voice of the Locals

The session was moderated by Mr. Manjeet Dhakal, Head of the LDC Support Team at Climate Analytics South Asia. This session was focused on the voices of local communities in Karnali. Panelists shared their firsthand experiences of the effects of climate change describing how weather patterns have become increasingly unpredictable. They mentioned that rainfall occurs unexpectedly, droughts last longer and the glaciers they rely on are shrinking every year. These changes are directly impacting their ability to farm as growing enough food is becoming more difficult in Karnali. Women in the community are particularly burdened by these changes. They often have to walk long distances to collect water and firewood, as these resources are becoming scarcer. Children also suffer, as crop failures lead to hunger, and the changing climate is causing an increase in illnesses. The local panelists emphasized the need for scientific research, effective policy-making and proper management of funds to adapt to these challenges. They believe that no single community can solve this crisis alone and stressed the importance of support from stakeholders, governmental institutions, NGOs and INGOs. They called the need of programs focusing on sustainable farming practices to build water storage systems and teach disaster preparedness connecting scientific knowledge with local practices in Karnali. They also highlighted the importance of ensuring that marginalized communities are not overlooked when policies are made. These communities need to be heard, and with the right support, they can adapt and build a better future.



Photo 6: Panel discussion on voice of the locals

The panel discussed some of the key challenges faced by the Karnali region due to climate change including:- increased mountain thunder and landslides, decreased crop production, changes in the blooming season of flowers (especially rhododendron), lower productivity of apples and other native crops, disappearance of water sources and wetlands from their original locations, unseasonal and reduced snowfall, habitat loss in aquatic ecosystems, increased migration due to drought and resource scarcity, human-monkey conflicts, decreased populations of endangered animals, Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs), rising temperatures, health hazards affecting children and pregnant women.

The panel included local level representatives of Karnali Province like the Chairperson of Chyanath Rural Municipality, Mr. Bishnu Kumar Bham, District Coordination Committee head of Mugu Mr. Manjan Bahadur Karki, Vice Chairperson of Chamunda Bindraisini rural municipality of Dailekh Mrs. Mansara Kumari Sharma.

TikTokers spreading awareness on climate issues

On the second day, tiktokers spread an awareness material content regarding the climate issues to the local. The tiktoker couple from Surkhet used the local language and presented an educational awareness comic drama to demonstrate the pathetic condition of locals undermined by climate change.



Photo 7: TikTokers spreading awareness on climate issues

They mentioned how simple negligence of our activities poaching, hunting and killing of animals have unknowingly created climate crisis and emptied the beauty of Karnali. Additionally, they also presented the root causes of the loss of biodiversity in the region such as overgrazing, killing animals for meat, deforestation by their sarcastic tone and expressions.

Talk Show with Minister for Forest and Environment:

The talk show was moderated by senior journalist Babita Basnet featuring Hon. Ain Bahadur Shahi Thakuri, the Minister for Forests and Environment of Nepal. He was elected from Mugu as the member of Parliament. He focused on Karnali's development priorities in the context of climate change. As a local of the region, he shared his personal connection recalling his first visit to Rara Lake as a teenager which inspired his dedication to representing Karnali on both national and international platforms.



Photo 8: Talk Show with Minister for Forest and Environment

The session aimed to highlight the region’s climate vulnerability and its potential for resilience, particularly in preparation for the upcoming COP29 conference. Hon. Thakuri discussed the importance of including local voices in the national position paper for COP29 and emphasized the need for open climate dialogues across all seven provinces, involving women, youth, and persons with disabilities to ensure inclusivity. He also proposed establishing a dedicated Ministry for Climate Change to better address the country’s climate challenges. He also talked about the importance of strengthening coordination among all government levels and empowering local governments to implement effective climate solutions. He also acknowledged the gap between the impacts of the climate crisis and the resources allocated to address it. A key focus of the discussions was the gendered impact of climate change particularly on women who bear the brunt of challenges like water scarcity. In response Hon. Thakuri announced that the Ministry is working on a gender-sensitive work plan which includes a dedicated budget to address the specific needs of women affected by climate change.

Conclusion

The two day event concluded with 5 points ‘Karnali Declaration’. The points are:

1. A major discussion and interaction was held at the conference regarding the overall impact of climate change in Nepal and the low capacity of the Karnali province to cope with cascading impact of climate change.
2. A special priority will be given in the regular development programs implemented by the local, provincial, and federal governments in Climate risk assessment and climate-friendly infrastructure development.
3. Impacts of climate change on women, children, youths, marginalized communities and climate justice issues will be raised at the international level with special priority.
4. Special emphasis will be placed on international cooperation to address the impacts of climate change and seize opportunities for climate-friendly infrastructure development in Nepal. Scientific assessments of the impacts of climate change on local livelihoods and natural disasters will be conducted with efforts to improve risk management and reduce impacts while enhancing the capacity of national, provincial, and local levels.

5. At the upcoming COP29, special priority will be taken regarding the impacts of climate change in Nepal, potential opportunities and the need for climate finance to implement climate-friendly developmental programs in the region.

Acknowledgement

SathSathai Foundation will likely to acknowledge Dr. Manish Raj Pandey, Head of Climate Section at National Trust For Nature Conservation (NTNC) and former Executive Director of NTNC Dr. Siddhartha Bajracharya for their valuable support during the program. Additionally, we will like to acknowledge NTNC, WWF Nepal, and UNDP Nepal, NTB Nepal, Press council and other supporting partner and organization.

Annex-1 : List of Participants of the Event

Annex II : The Karnali Declaration

कोप २९ को पुर्व तयारी, कर्णालीमा जलवायु परिवर्तनको असर र अबसर

कर्णाली घोषणापत्र

मिति २०८१ कार्तिक ३ र ४ गते मानविय धन तथा वातावरण मन्त्री ऐनबहादुर शाही को प्रमुख अतिथ्यमा धुर्खोथप राहा नगरपालिकामाथित राहा तालको सभियमा नेपाल सरकार वन तथा वातावरण मन्त्रालय र सापसोपै संस्थाद्वारा समुक्त रुपमा आयोजित "कोप २९ को पुर्व तयारी: कर्णालीमा जलवायु परिवर्तनको असर र अबसर" सम्मेलनमा सहभागी प्रेरा तथा स्थानिय प्रतिनिधीहरु, सोप सस्थाका प्रतिनिधी र विशहरको उपस्थितिमा भएको दुई दिने छलफल माट "कर्णाली घोषणा पत्र" अनुमोदन गरियो ।

- १.जलवायु परिवर्तनका कारण सबस नेपाल उपच जेधियमा भएको र कर्णाली प्रदेशमा जेधियमा मापै कम पोको जलवायु परिवर्तन संग जुपे हावमा आकल्प काम रहेको विषय सम्मेलनमा विशेष छलफल तथा अनारकृष गरियो ।
- २.स्थानिय प्रदेष्टिक र स्थानिय सरकारले कार्यान्वयन गर्न निश्चित विभागत निर्माणका कार्यकमहरुमा जलवायु परिवर्तन सम्बन्धी जेधिय व्यवस्थापन र जलवायु मैथी विकासकारहरु कार्यान्वयन गर्न विशेष प्राथमिकता दिनेगै ।
- ३.जलवायु परिवर्तनका कारण बढिमा, बालबालिका, युवा, विधायकृत समुदाय तथासामा पोको प्रभाव जेधियमा र जलवायु न्याय सम्बन्धी विषयलाई अन्तराष्ट्रिय तारस विशेष प्राथमिकताका साथ उदरप गरिनेगै ।
- ४.नेपालमा जलवायु परिवर्तनले पोको प्रभाव संग जुपन मापै जलवायु मैथी विकासका अवसरहरु प्राप्त गर्न अन्तराष्ट्रिय समुदायको सहकार्यलाई विशेष जोर दिनेगै । जलवायु परिवर्तनले स्थानिय जर्धभिकतामा पोको असर र प्रकृष्टिक बिपर को वैश्विक चेष्टामेका मापै जेधिय व्यवस्थापन र असर काम गदै रक्षिय,प्रेरा र स्थानिय शक्ती हावमा बढिपुई गरिनेगै ।
- ५.आसन्न कोप २९ मा नेपालमा जलवायु परिवर्तनले पोको असर र प्राप्त हुन सवने अवसरहरु: मापै जलवायु मैथी कार्यकमहरु कार्यान्वयन गर्न जलवायु मितको आवश्यकताका सोरमा विशेष ध्यान गरिनेगै ।

Annex-III : Some Photos of the Event

