ADVOCATING THE MOUNTAIN AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE HUMAN FUTURE

GEETA PANDEY
KIRDARC Nepal
Building Resilience of Communities from Highlands to Oceans in the Face of Climate Crisis

Thursday, 04 Nov 2021

Association of Sustainable Ecological Engineering Development (ASEED)
Why Mountain matters?

- Home to 15% of the World’s Population
- Host about half of the World’s Biodiversity
- Provide Freshwater for everyday life to more than Half of Humanity
- 6 of the 20 most important food crops originate in mountains
• However, mountain region are at the forefront of climate change impacts with imminent water crisis and huge losses due to climate induced disaster.

• Mountain and its unique characteristics, vulnerability and threats, and its role for building resilience are not adequately represented in UNFCCC and climate negotiations.

• Mountain people frequently face political, social and economic marginalization and lack access to such basic services.
Climate Crisis is Hitting the Mountains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uniqueness of the Mountain Region</th>
<th>forefront of climate change impacts with looming water crisis and huge losses due to disaster events.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glaciers Melting twice the rate in 2000</td>
<td>Warming at three times the global average</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/3 Himalayan Glaciers vanish by 2100 even if global warming halted to 1.5°C</td>
<td>Scores of Villages forced to relocate</td>
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<tr>
<td>53% of rural mountain population vulnerable to food insecurity</td>
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Red code for humanity: AR6 of the IPCC

• Unequivocal that humans have caused the global climate change
• Global warming is expected to breach the threshold of 1.5°C degree next 20 years.
• 2021 to be the hottest year
• Earth will be warmer by 1.4 – 4.4°C by 2100 depending on the emission cuts.
• Increase in 1°C leads to increase in 7% in extreme rain events
• Ice melt will continue for the next 1000 years even if we stop CO₂ emission

South Asia
• Extreme precipitation, river floods to increase across Asia. South Asian monsoon will intensify.
• Foods and landslides most frequently occurring natural hazards in eastern Himalaya.
• Third pole – will experience increasing snow melt patterns
• Dangerous heat stress thresholds to cross in Asia – esp. South Asia
• Increase in monsoon precipitation
Impact in the Mountains of Nepal

Extreme weather events

- Melamchi Flood, 2021
- Manang Flood, 2021
- Jure Landslide, 2014
- Snow Storm in Annapurna region 2014
- Seti River flood, 2012
- 2021 unseasonal flood during the end of October
- 47 dangerous lakes on the Koshi, Gandak and Karnali basins - 31 found at very high risk, 12 are at moderate risk and 4 lakes in the lower risk category. (25 – China, 1- India, 21 Nepal) – ICIMOD, UNDP, 2020
Mountain Economy
- Livestock based livelihoods vanishing due to degradation of pastoral land
- Tourism one of the key economic activity in the mountains suffering
- 1.5 to 2% GDP Loss annually and 13% GDP Loss by 2100
- Food insecurity due to production losses

Down Stream Impacts
- Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs)
- More frequent floods in already fragile region in the short term with increasing river discharge
- Drought in the long run with glacier-less mountains and waterless rivers
- Changes in the hydrological cycle altering upstream – downstream nexus

Society and Culture
Poverty and Injustice
Traditions, customary practices being lost
Migration and forced displacement

Poor, Indigenous, marginalized, women, girls, children, disabled, elderly groups are mostly impacted by climate change
Our demands!!!

- Urges all parties to address the issue of the effect of climate change on food security and livelihood affecting women and marginalized groups and develop and execute climate resilient policies, ensuring financing and implementation mechanisms with assured voices of mountain people leaving no one behind.

- Urges the parties to agree on making Loss and Damage a permanent agenda item of the UNFCCC and that Nepal government to strongly link and advocate on this issue based on recent extreme events on Nepal’s high mountains and seek dedicated finance for loss and damage.
Contd...

- We demand the need for collaboration between mountainous and island countries in the international climate change discourse.
- We urge the United Nations Member State to establish a separate UN mechanism to deal with the mountain crisis.
- Urges the government of Nepal to raise and lead the issues and agendas of mountain countries during the COP26 and including other international forums.
Contd...

- We encourage all governments to develop effective and efficient collaborative partnership initiative, and cooperation Initiatives to tackle the global mountain issues and agendas.

- Urges the global communities to recognize mountain as the pulse of the planet and harness the strength of the mountain region to enhance regional and international cooperation and scale-up investment in mountain-specific climate priorities.

- Urges the government to encourage study, research, and monitor to identify knowledge gaps, needs, opportunities, and constraints in mountain ecosystem, ecology, and sustainable development.
Highlights of PM: COP 26

• I urge world leaders to recognize the specific climate vulnerability of the high Mountains and accord high priority to the mountain agenda in all climate-related negotiations.

• We call upon the Parties to agree on making Loss and Damage a stand-alone agenda for negotiations and support the framework of additional financing for it.

• To raise awareness on the climate crisis in the Himalaya, my government will host Sagarmatha Sambad – a dialogue named after Mt. Everest.

• "Keeping the global temperature below 1.5°C is vital for mountain people. It is an issue of our survival."
THANK YOU