

Climate Resilient, Inclusive Water Supply and Sanitation in South Asia: Challenges and Solutions

SIDE EVENT DETAILS

Event ID: Government of Nepal Pavilion
Organizer: Ministry of Water Supply-Nepal/
Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and
Irrigation- Nepal, Water for Women Fund,
International Water Management Institute (IWMI),
UNICEF, SNV
Date: 9 December, 2023; **Time:** 2:00 – 3:00 PM

Session Overview

The governments in the South Asian region have affirmed commitment towards locally led adaptation practices and gender and socially inclusive adaptation planning ([National Climate Change Policy, 2019](#)).

[The 2015 Constitution of Nepal](#) for example ensures fundamental rights of people of Nepal to safe drinking water and sanitation. Nepal has made significant progress in formulating and implementing policies on WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene). However, achieving SDG-6 and more specifically SDG- 6.1 of attaining universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all is a challenge ([Joshi, 2022](#)).

Around 24 million people (81% of the population) in Nepal live without access to safely managed water ([Water Aid 2023](#)). Only 18% of water supply was considered safe and free from contamination. There is a decreasing trend of access to safely managed water supply (i.e. 25% in 2015 to 16% in 2019) ([UNICEF and WHO 2023](#)).

Climate change has a significant impact on the water supply and sanitation systems in South Asia, including Nepal and Pakistan. Climate hazards such as landslides and floods damage the water supply systems annually, which not only causes structural damage but also affects the quality of water supply and sanitation services available to the communities. Populations with diverse socio-economic backgrounds experience the impacts of climate change on water differently.

Women, people with disability, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized groups continue to bear the impacts of climate change on water resources. They have limited voices in WASH decision-making ([Khadka et. al. 2023](#)). Recent study was conducted among 800 children and youths around Nepal by UNICEF Nepal where 62% of them reported that they have reduced water available and 46% reported that there is decreasing quality of water. The access to information, technology and the skills needed for water security in a changing climate is also a challenge which we need to address. Yet, there has been limited actions towards developing water supply and sanitation systems (WSS) and services that are climate resilient and inclusive. It is crucial to develop climate resilient WSS to reduce adverse effects of climate extremes on local communities.



Session purpose

This session aims to discuss water security for drinking water and sanitation in a changing climate in South Asia region, including Nepal and Pakistan, and opportunities and challenges in policy and implementation level for designing and implementing climate resilient and inclusive water supply and sanitation systems and services. Building on policy, research and development experiences, this session will draw key recommendations for making water security and science-based actions visible in the WASH sector in general, and the climate actions particularly.

Guiding questions:

1. What are the challenges in achieving water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) progress in relation to SDGs keeping in mind the climate change impacts it is facing in recent years?
2. How climate change is impacting water supply, sanitation and hygiene in South Asia, including Nepal? what are gender and social inclusion issues of WASH?
3. What challenges women, marginalized groups and people with disability are experiencing to access water for drinking, sanitation and hygiene?
4. What are some of the policy and implementation level initiatives taken by Nepal and other countries of South Asia to address water challenge issues in a changing climate?
5. What should be the priorities for South Asia including Nepal for resilient and inclusive WASH?

Programme Details



Moderator
Ms. Anne Mutta
Country Director
SNV Laos

Panelists



Dr. Alison Baker
Fund Manager
Water for Women
Fund, GHD, Australia



Mr. Bilal Anwar
CEO
National Disaster Risk
Management Fund (NDRMF)
Government of Pakistan



Dr. Manohara Khadka
Country Representative
International Water
Management Institute
(IWMI)



Mr. Umesh Balal Magar
National Focal Point
Nepalese Youth for Climate
Action



Ms. Farai Tunhuma
Senior Adviser
UNICEF



Closing Remarks
Dr. Mark Smith
Director General
International Water Management Institute (IWMI)



**Mobility Zone B3, Building 31
Nepal Pavilion Blue Zone
Expo City - Dubai**



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