



Progress Towards Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability in Nepal faces serious challenges. The urban environment is becoming highly degraded, with high levels of unmanaged solid waste as well as high levels of air and water pollution. Noise pollution is also high and increasing. On the other hand, initiatives in the drinking water and forest sectors indicate that many problems relating to sustainable development can be solved or at least their impacts reduced. Policies related to protected areas and buffer zone management, for example, are in place. An Environment Protection Act, which, among others, fulfills the obligations outlined under the Montreal Protocol, has been implemented. Decentralization initiatives taken by the government are also expected to contribute to the reduction in the loss of environmental resources.

Poverty reduction and employment promotion policies, however, remain relatively unarticulated. Existing laws related to environmental resources are generally not strictly and often discriminatorily enforced. Private use of common resources has been on the rise over the last two decades. Such privatization has become the prime locale of political as well as petty corruption. While successes in the regeneration of community forests and, to a certain extent, the sustainability of drinking water facilities are widely linked to intensified local stake-holding, similar policy initiatives have not been taken with respect to other environmental resources.

Access to safe drinking water in Nepal is a great concern. Piped drinking water is unsafe in many, if not most, locations almost throughout the year. Contamination at source, at water collection points, in water collection jars, and in locations of storage within households appears to be common. Consequently, while in urban areas a significant proportion of households boil and/or filter water before drinking it, in rural areas the incidence of water-borne diseases is very high.

QUICK FACTS

CURRENT PORTFOLIO BUDGET

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Total UNDP-GEF and Co-Finance: | \$22,650,643 |
| Total UNDP and Co-Finance: | \$8,572,035 |
| Total MPU and Bilateral: | \$86,389 |
| Total: | \$31,309,067 |

Cumulative Total ODS Phased-Out: 17.4 ODP tonnes

In order to achieve the MDG 7 water target, Nepal needs to ensure the engagement of local governments in particular. They must continue to play a key role in responding to community demands for drinking water facilities, in sustained institutional strengthening of user groups in rural areas, and in supporting user groups to generate financial, cultural and political resources locally for the repair and maintenance of water facilities.¹

SPOTLIGHT



Technology Transfer Replaces Kerosene Lamps²

Using Kerosene for lighting is a health risk, as kerosene fumes pollute the air. The World Bank estimates that 780 million women and children breathing kerosene fumes inhale the equivalent of smoke from 2 packs of cigarettes a day.

In Nepal, the Village Development Programme launched by the Local Governance Programme, with support from UNDP and the local authority, has established Community Organisations in Pauthak VDC ward no. 5 and 6 of the remote Tehrathum district. Under its technology transfer component, the programme has supported the provision of training on new technologies to members of Community Organizations at Human Resource Development Centres in the district.

As a result, the community has been able to generate electricity by establishing a peltric set, a productive investment from a seed grant. The total estimated cost of the project was US\$ 3,500, of which the Community Organizations bore 44%, and the Government (through an ADB grant) 24%. To date a total of 16 households have benefited from the project. The project was carried out as a joint venture between two female and one male Community Organization.

What has happened is a miracle made possible through the transfer of technology. The ward has seen a huge positive change after the formation of the Community Organisations. The women of the ward now no longer light the small kerosene lamps known as tukis. As a result, the children now study under 40-watt electric lamps, much brighter than the turkis, and the men no longer worry about the price of kerosene that at times rises to US\$ 0.32 per litre. Following the success of this endeavour, other wards in the district are trying to do the same.

UNDP assistance to Nepal formulates pro-poor development policies and frameworks for sustainable development by ensuring environmental protection measures are strictly applied. At the community level, support has largely enhanced the capacity of the local communities to self-organize.³ While UNDP helps the Government formulate policy framework that is good for development and the environment, the most urgent need in the current complex country situation is for actions that provide energy and promote environment at the level of individual communities. These actions must favour women, ethnic and other disadvantage groups. UNDP is providing practical solutions on the ground.

Matthew Kahane, Resident Representative

PORTFOLIO

FSSD*

The Government of Nepal with the assistance of UNDP is developing a number of sector specific strategies that will lead to a comprehensive integrated sustainable development strategy for the country.

ENERGY

UNDP is supporting several projects in Nepal to strengthen the national policy frameworks on decentralized rural energy development, to further build on the strength of the community to manage rural energy services, and to develop alternative modes of financing and productive uses of renewable energy to remove barriers of renewable energy promotion.

BIODIVERSITY

UNDP is focusing its assistance in Nepal mainly on conserving biodiversity of actual and potential value and to preserve globally important habitats and species by enhancing the livelihood of surrounding communities who largely depend on natural resources and through developing strategic planning frameworks for park management. Also, the programmes intend to empower the local community to be able to develop and manage tourism in a sustainable manner for their own economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits.

CHEMICALS

MLF funding has made possible the provision of UNDP's assistance to Nepal in the refrigeration sector. Tools are being supplied to national enterprises to apply good management practices in refrigeration servicing. Additionally the project aims to pilot retrofitting of refrigeration equipment and establish an effective national monitoring system that is expected to facilitate the future enforcement initiatives of the Government.



CONTACTS

Ms. Lisa Simrique Singh – Lisa.singh@undp.org
Mr. Vijaya Singh – vijaya.singh@undp.org
Tel.: 977-1-5523200 (ext 1010)
Fax: 977-1-5523991, 5523986
http://www.undp.org.np/energy_env.htm

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