

A Report on

Dialogue with the Parliamentary Members of the Committee on
Industry, Tourism Forests and Environment and Associated stakeholders

Submitted by

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Submitted to:

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Venue: Hotel Roshan and Lodge (Near Provincial Assembly Hall)

Background

As the Bagmati Province National Forest Act is in the process of amendment, it is essential for provincial members to be aware of the concerns raised by local communities. The livelihoods of many people who live close to the forest are directly reliant on it. At every stage of their work, Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) adhere to specific laws and regulations while actively participating in the conservation and sustainable use of community forests. The main objective of the program was to hold a meeting for the required amendments and to ensure that the activities are still aligned with the project goals. The meeting had a wonderful discussion of previously identified gaps of current Province Forest Act and for the amendments of such gaps.

Program highlights

The meeting was completed with an active participation of the Hon'ble members of Industry, Tourism and Environment Committee of Provincial Assembly of Bagmati Province. The meeting was chaired by chairperson of Industry, Tourism and Environment Committee of Provincial Assembly of Bagmati Province, Hon. Aananda Kumar Shrestha and facilitation of the meeting was handled by Chairperson of Women Rights and Resource Network, Ms. Aarati Pathak.



Figure 1 Ms. Aarati Pathak clarifying the listed suggestions

The program was officially started by Ms. Pathak by welcoming all the participants and setting out the environment through brief description about major agenda of the meeting. All the participants were handed over a printout listing out the suggestions for the amendment which were collected from the previous dialogue program with same participants. The dialogue program was

held in order to understand about the updates in the amendment process of existing Bagmati Province Forest Act.

Ms. Pathak in the program spoke about one previous experience of Bankariya women (most vulnerable community of Nepal) where they have had received a month-long training for soap making which was funded by the Industry and Commerce Office. Though the training was very successful and the community group learned a lot from training about soap making and became confident about their process of making soap through locally available resources, but the products that were prepared with the help of training were all taken back to the office by the Industry and Commerce Office after the completion of training. Upon criticism of the practice, they clearly mentioned about the law of Government of bringing back those prepared products back to the office after completion of program. Ms. Pathak also mentioned that the products they have had formed could be used

for selling so that they could generate some financial aid for further preparation of the products and that this kind of law needs to be seriously reconsidered and revised. Hon. Yamuna Devi Shrestha agreed with this idea, and she asked policymakers to include provisions pertaining to this topic because it directly impacts the local community that tries to make a living by using the resources in their immediate vicinity.

The importance of alignment of the Bagmati Province Forest Act with the Federal Forest Act was emphasized by Ms. Aarati Pathak. Members of the provincial assembly have responded favorably to the addition of the specified amendment suggestions thus far. Clarification on the Community Forest merger provision was requested by Hon. Laxman Lamsal.



Figure 2 Hon. Yamuna Devi Shrestha criticizing the practice of returning products to funding organization.



Figure 3 Hon. Ruku Chaulagain expressing the commitment of the Industry, Tourism and Environment Committee to address all the suggestions, in the process of amendment of Bagmati Province Forest Act.

In response, Ms. Aarati Pathak explained that if there is a conflict over leadership or Community Forest protection, it is better for the Community Forest to remain independent to ensure the protection of the stakeholders' rights.

According to Hon. Ruku Chaulagain, this meeting which have been held simultaneously for the amendment process of Bagmati Province Forest Act were both very fruitful because they discussed all of the listed suggestions, which were all very relevant. This will undoubtedly assist them in incorporating the recommendations made by CF stakeholders in Bagmati Province Forest Act. They expressed their appreciation to WRRN for setting up this meeting and hearing the IPLC's concerns in order to further improve the ongoing amendment for the benefit of stakeholders. Hon. Laxman Lamsal and all of the distinguished guests concurred with Hon. Ruku Chaulagain, pledging to prioritize these recommendations when the Bagmati Province Forest Act is being revised.



Figure 4 Hon. Ananda Kumar Shrestha delivering his closing remarks.

Hon. Ananda Kumar Shrestha, the chairperson of the Industry, Tourism, and Environment Committee of the Provincial Assembly of Bagmati province, gave the final remarks. He explained that the law did not adequately address the need for IPLCs until a few years ago, and that programs are now being organized to discuss issues that require reconsideration. Just this is a significant advancement. He revealed that they felt confident that the amended law would be to the fullest advantage of LCs because they had covered a lot of ground in that meeting.

Photo plates

