

4. Interaction Program on Linkages Between the MDGs and the BPFA

Program Background:

Acknowledging the tremendous force required to change mindsets and mould public opinion, SAS felt that the media has to play a more responsible role in advocating and covering issues regarding gender equality and women's empowerment. In this regard it has been organizing on regular basis a monthly interaction program on current issues pertaining to women and women movements in Nepal as a part of its activity under IMPACS program.

Giving continuity to this process SAS conducted its 4th interaction program under it on Linkages Between the MDGs and the BPFA on 27th January 2005 at Kathmandu. The program witnessed the presence of nearly 70 women activist working on different issues related to women in Nepal, representatives from different national and international development sectors as well as journalists including Regional Director UNIFEM Nepal Ms Chadani Joshi as the special guests. Honorable Mr. Shanker Sharma, Chairman of National Planning Commission was the chief guest of the program that was chaired by Bandana Rana, President Sancharika Samuha.

It is universally known that the Beijing Platform for Action is the most thorough document ever produced by a United Nations conference on the subject of women's rights, as it incorporates the accomplishments of prior conferences and treaties, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) and the Vienna Declaration.

At the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, 189 nations including Nepal adopted the Millennium Declaration, which outlines peace, security and development concerns including environment, human rights and governance. The Declaration mainstreamed a set of inter connected and mutually reinforcing development goals the Millennium Development Goals into a global agenda. The central focus and objective of the Millennium Development Goals is to reduce poverty as well as its causes and manifestations. The MDGs offer us a comprehensive framework to identify the objectives of human development as set by the UN and its member states.

There are many organizations working on the implementation of BPFA in Nepal. At the same time when a critical review of progress made ten years after the Beijing Conference is taking place it was felt that it is very crucial that BPFA activists have a clear understanding of the linkages between BPFA and MDGs.

Therefore in view of the forthcoming Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) of the United Nations, where a critical review of the BPFA will take place, Sancharika Samuha thought it appropriate to organize a discussion Programme on the above subject. The Programme is expected to enhance a clearer understanding of the linkages between the BPFA and MDGs among women activists with the objective of taking the two together for more effective implementation of BPFA in Nepal for the advancement of women.

Shaym Sunder Sharma, joint Secretary at the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare speaking on the occasion said that among the eight points under MDGs, many of them are linked with women empowerment and gender equity. He added that the 10th Plan could link the BPFA and MDG in a most effective manner in its long-term goals. He viewed that there is a need of linking MDGs including the issues of gender equity, governance and delivery them in the action Plan. The MDGs should be known as common issues and must be taken as a national perspective. Though there have been difficulties in linking BPFA and MGDs due to a large number of action plans but still there exists avenues for it.

Delivering his remark on the occasion, Mr. Faruq Faisel , Director IMPACS Nepal said that many countries including Nepal were not been able to achieve the MGDs goal due to internal conflict. He viewed that no development goal would be achieved without coordinating with the government. Therefore there is a need of mutual collaboration for a long-term sustainable development in the region.

Speaking in the program Chadani Joshi, regional director of United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), urged all women rights activists and organizations to unite in order to meet the targets set in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Similarly, Dr Shankar Sharma, Vice-chairperson of the National Planning Commission, said that though the 10th Plan is a major document for development for Nepal but at the same time MGD also have its equal importance. Therefore the government has perceived the MDGs and the 10th plan as major tools for development. Though the points of the MDGs are limited, they can be made flexible and country-specific, he said. He added that to empower the women, government would provide scholarships for girls students for higher studies from this fiscal year. In also informed that in order to reduce maternal mortality the government would provide ANM Training to 550 women health workers. He said that not only resource but also working capacity was needed to be develop for a long term sustainable development

While trying to link CEDAW with MGD, Sapana Malla, President, FWLD called for empowering women and ending all forms of violence against women to bring women in the development mainstream.

In the program, Bandana Rana presented a paper on Linkages between BPFA and MDGs