



E-NEWSLETTER

August 2020 - January 2021

National Alliance for Human Rights and Social Justice - Nepal
(Human Rights Alliance)

ON THIS ISSUE

- **Dialogue on Effects of COVID-19 on the Informal Sector**
- **Policy Dialogue on Informal Sector and Impact of COVID 19 on Travel and Transport Sector**
- **A Policy Dialogue on the Prevention of Impact of COVID-19 in Town Areas**
- **Events Organized at the Provincial level on the Occasion of International Human Rights Day and Human Rights Magna Meet:**
 - Dialogue on the Rights of Street Children (Province 5)
 - Interactive Dialogue on the Effects of the COVID 19 on the Right to Food and Food Security (Karnali Province)

Effects of COVID-19 on the Informal Sector

21st July 2020

National Alliance for Human Rights and Social Justice (Human Rights Alliance) organized a meeting on 21st July 2020, on zoom online platform in the subject 'Informal Sector and Effects of COVID-19.' The meeting was hosted by Mr. Bidur Subedi from Human Rights alliance and chaired by Mr. Samir Nepal, Senior Vice President of Human Rights Alliance. The meeting was concluded with the representatives from civil society organizations, Trade Union organizations and from local government offices. The agenda of the meeting was to discuss about the situation of workers in the informal sector and the impact of COVID-19 on them.

Due to the unique nature of the pandemic, there are no pre-existing mechanisms to deal with the issue. Hence, the discussion was organized in order to identify the major concerns and contribute in policy advocacy by identifying probable solutions. With over 45 participants representing the civil society, trade union and local government, the meeting was successful in identifying some of the major problems faced by workers in the informal sector because of the COVID pandemic. Some of the keynote speakers Mr. Bidur Karki, Vice-President of GEFONT and Mr. Jitram Lama, President of NGO Federation reaffirmed that the informal sector is the most affected sector in Nepal and daily wage workers among them are the worst affected among them. Mr. Tejendra Jung Karkee, Vice President of Nepal Trade Union Congress and Advisor to ILO stated that the initiatives at local level are the most important in developing effective and long-term solutions. He stated that utilizing the social security fund could be one probable solution.



The session organized by Human Rights Alliance was successful in identifying some of the major problems faced by workers in the informal sector because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The speakers and presenters identified some of the legitimate concerns of workers in different categories of informal sector. Workers in the informal sectors such as construction, tourism, home based sector, domestic sector, etc. are the most severely affected. The forum finally agreed upon a set of recommendations to move ahead. It was agreed that a robust follow-up system and monitoring mechanism is necessary, a system of proper record keeping and documentation at the local level needs to be developed, and necessary institutional mechanisms and proper legal procedure needs to be developed in order to facilitate the local governments to take desired actions at the local level. The issues raised and the feedback received from the forum speakers and participants will be crucial in shaping the future course and strategy in policy advocacy to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Other key speakers in the dialogue were Dr. Padma Prasad Khatiwada, Vice-Chairman of Social Welfare Council, Mr. Meetra Prasad Ghimire, Secretary General of Solid Waste Management Association of Nepal (SWMAN), Dr. Sarba Raj Khadka, Ms. Juna Basnet, Deputy Mayor of Suryabinayak Municipality, Mr. Chandra Sagar Lama, President of GEFONT and Mr. Amar Thapa, Chairman of Kathekhola Rural Municipality, Baglung.

Dialogue on Informal Sector and Impact of COVID 19 on Travel and Transport Sector

27th September 2020

National Alliance for Human Rights and Social Justice (Human Rights Alliance) had initiated an online policy dialogue on The Effects of Covid 19 on the Informal Sector of Nepal on 21st July 2020 among labour organizations, trade unions, civil society leaders and concerned stakeholders to discuss on the major

concerns in the informal sector. Continuing the pattern, Human Rights Alliance on 27th September 2020 organized another consultation meeting to discuss the effects on the travel and transportation sector, which was previously identified as one of the most severely affected areas within the informal sector. The program was chaired by Mr. Samir Nepal, Senior Vice-President of Human Rights Alliance and moderated by Mr. Bidur Subedi from Human Rights Alliance. The key speakers were Mr. Bhim Jwala Rai, the Chairman of Nepal Yatayat Swatantra Majdoor Mahasangh and Dr. Padam Shahi from the Department of Transport Management.



The agenda of the discussion was to identify the major effects of COVID and the subsequent lockdown imposed by the government in the transportation sector, particularly the public transportation sector and to identify the major policy issues and discuss possible ways of moving forward by minimizing the health risks. In the event, participants were from across the country and they raised their voices as issues which was suffering in

the pandemic situation mainly transportation sectors, vehicles owner and labours. They reflected the effect of the pandemic as a mirror in the transportation sector of Nepal. Mr. Bhim Jwala Rai stressed that over 11 lakhs workers are involved in the transportation and the hindrance in the sector has not only affected them but severely affected the national economy.

The discussion concluded that civil society organizations need to take the lead role and policy advocacy and awareness building in order to minimize the effects of the pandemic and run the transportation sector smoothly. It was agreed that certain steps need to be taken to move ahead in this situation. For instance, the government needs to work on developing a new policy to adapt to the situation and minimize further risk in the transportation sector, provisions for subsidies need to be introduced and there needs to be proper coordination and flow of information between the central and the local levels of government to ensure that the policies are locally implemented. The major policy issues identified and suggested recommendations were forwarded to the Social Wel-



fare Council by Human Rights Alliance for further policy action.

Mr. Bhim Jwala Rai, the Chairman of Nepal Yatayat Swatantra Majdoor Mahasangh, Mr. Dek Nath Gautam, Vice Chairman of Nepal Yatayat Byabasahi Mahasangh, Dr. Padma Prasad Khatiwada, Vice-Chairman of Social Welfare Council and Dr. Padam Shahi, Yatayat Wyasastha Bibhag were some of the key speakers of the program.

A Policy Dialogue on the Prevention of Impact of COVID-19 in Town Areas

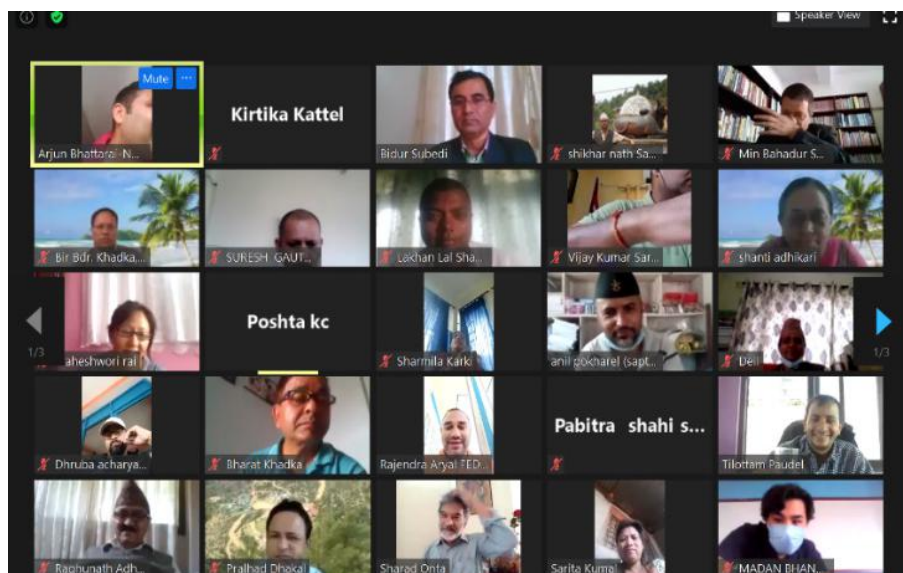
19th Oct 2020

Human Rights Alliance in collaboration with HAMI organized a virtual policy dialogue (via zoom online platform) among the representatives of various municipalities, policymakers, civil society representatives and other concerned stakeholders. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, Human Rights Alliance has been organizing consultations and policy dialogue series

on the effects of COVID 19. Continuing the momentum, this time Human Rights Alliance organized a policy dialogue on the effects of COVID with particular focus on the Kathmandu Valley and other town areas. There were over 170 participants from different sectors. The program was hosted by Mr. Bidur Subedi from Human Rights Alliance and chaired by Mr.

Min Bahadur Shahi. Hon'ble Vice President Ishwar Pokhrel, Chairman of the High-Level Coordination Committee for the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 was the Chief Guest of the program.

The program was successful in identifying the key problems and discussing on the possible way forward. Experts including Dr. Sharad Onta and Mr. Subodh Raj Pyakurel were concerned about the Health Ministry's decision that the corona infected people need to pay the cost of treatment on their own has created concerns because there is no criteria to determine who can afford and who cannot afford to pay for treatment. Hon'ble Ishwar Pokharel stated that the government is doing as much as it can to minimize the risk of the pandemic and stressed that the intensity of the problem is so big that a collaborative effort from non-governmental actors including civil society organizations is needed to fully address the problem. He also requested the general population to take



necessary precautions from their side.

It was concluded that the people need to learn how to move ahead while tackling the effects of Covid at the same time because it is no longer possible to wait for the pandemic to end. The forum agreed that a collaborative effort is essential to tackle the problems being faced. At the government level, policy action needs to be taken by the central and federal governments and the local governments

should do their best to implement the decisions with the support from the civil society and other local actors. The forum agreed that the situation can only be overcome through a collaborative effort of the government, civil society organizations, social sector and the people.

In the programme, various local government representatives expressed their views including: Mr. Sunil Prajapati, Mayor of Bhaktapur Municipality, Mr. Vinay

Kumar Swaragi, Mayor of Birgunj Metropolitan City, Mohan Maya Bhandari, Deputy Mayor of Birendranagar municipality, Ghanashyam Pandey, Mayor of Tulsipur Sub-metropolitan, Padampani sharma, Mayor of Phalebas Municipality, Surendra Bista, Mayor from Bhimdutta municipality, Manju Bhandari, Deputy Mayor from Dharan Sub-metropolitan city and Ashok Byanju, Chair, Nagarpalika Association.



Events Organized at the Provincial level on the Occasion of International Human Rights Day and Human Rights Magna Meet

Dialogue on the Rights of Street Children

November 20, 2020

Alliance for Human Rights and Social Justice Kaski organized an interactive dialogue on the issue of the rights of street

children on November 20, 2020. Under the chair of the Provincial coordinator Mr. Govinda Pahadi, with Gandaki Province's

social development Minister Hon'ble Naradevi Pun Magar as the chief guest, the event was organized in the event of the 72nd International Human Rights Day.



Hon'ble Minister stated that organizing such priority based thematic programs such as this is important because organizing events related to broader issues is not always effective. She also expressed the Ministry's commitment to provide support in training and educating street children in the region. She also expressed the Ministry's willingness to collaborate with local organizations working in the field to ensure the welfare of street children. Mr. Ram Chandra Paudel, the chair of Human Rights Alliance Kaski and Executive Di-

rector of Children Nepal, shared the report on the status of street children in Gandaki Province. Mr. Govinda Pahadi, the chairman of the event highlighted that the initiative of Human Rights Alliance Kaski of organizing this program in the issue of the rights of street children has been very informative and

he ended with a hopeful note that the program will encourage further commitment in ensuring the protection of rights of street children in the region.

Other key speakers included Mr. Padam Pahadi, chair of NGO Federation Kaski, Bishnu Maya Sharma, Pokhara Metropol-

itan's Women Development Officer, Mr. Thakur Chapagain, Mr. Shankar Nepali from CWIN and Mr. Bhim Paudel from Angel Nepal. There were 36 participants present physically in the program and the Moderator of the event was Mr. Rajesh Parajuli from Human Rights Alliance Kaski.

Interactive Dialogue on the Effects of the COVID 19 on the Right to Food and Food Security

13th November 2020

On the occasion of the 72nd International Human Rights day and 12th National Human Rights Magna Meet, Human Rights Alliance, FIAN Nepal collaborated to organize an interactive dialogue on the impacts of COVID 19 on the right to food and food security and the challenges presented therein. Mr. Suresh Gautam, the vice-chairman of Human Rights Alliance and regional coordinator of FIAN Nepal moderated the interactive session. The program was chaired by Mr. Amar Bahadur Nair, the chairman of FIAN Nepal and a wide participation from a number of civil society partners was seen. The chief guest of the event was Hon'ble Bimala K.C. from the Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Co-operative.

Mr. Dhan Bahadur Kathayat from the Karnali provincial Chapter of the Ministry presented the working paper detailing the effects of COVID 19 on food security and the right to food within the Karnali province. While presenting the paper, he stressed that the food situation of Karnali province is not satisfactory and specially, the four pillars of food security i.e. availability, accessibility, utilization and stability have not been achieved in the province. Despite the constitutionally guaranteed right to food, the people in the Karnali region are continuously facing a lack of food. The working paper identified that at least 28% of the population is facing food insecurity. After the presentation of the findings of the working paper, the discussion continued on

how to ensure lasting access to food and nutrition and how to overcome the additional challenges presented by the pandemic. The discussion concluded that necessary policy changes are required focusing on food sustainability and the local people must be included in the process of policy formation so that the real problems are reflected in the laws and policies. The pre-existing problems were exacerbated by the pandemic because it hindered mobility of the farmers and hindered the regular flow of the food market. However, in some instances, positive effects were also noted such as the farmers who could access the market were able to get a higher value for their sold goods.

Various district representatives presented their views in the interactive session. Some of the key speakers were : Ms. Kabita Basnet from Salyan, Ms. Huma D.C. from Dang, Mr. Jhankar Bahadur Rawal from National Human Rights Commission Nepalgunj, Mr. Man Bahadur Rokaya from Human Rights Alliance Jumla, Mr. Rajendra Sharma from Surkhet, Mr. Pom Paudel, Human Rights Alliance Kapilbastu, Mr. Yogendra Shahi, Member of Planning Commission Karnali, Mr. Ganesh B.K., Advisor of Human Rights Alliance, Mr. Gobinda Shahi, Social Welfare Council, Mr. Ashok Bahadur Singh, Executive Director of FIAN Nepal Kathmandu and Mr. Ambar Bahadur Iyer, Chairman of FIAN Nepal.

For More Information:



National Alliance for Human Rights and Social Justice - Nepal (Human Rights Alliance)

Sanepa, Lalitpur, Nepal

P.O. Box: 9993, Phone: 977-01-5548321, 5548040, Fax: 977-01-5549093

Email: info@hralliance.org.np, alliance.humanrights@gmail.com

Url: <http://www.hralliance.org.np>