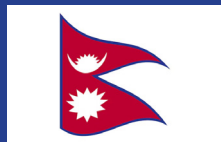


Rural Development in Nepal



On the auspicious occasion of World Rural Development Day, I extend warm greetings and best wishes to all the citizens of the member countries of CRIDAP, especially those living and working in the rural heartlands of respective countries. This day is a reminder of the vital importance in shaping the socioeconomic framework of rural communities. Moreover, this is a very special day to reiterate the importance of the alignment of all initiatives for the rural development and transformation supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. As a member of CIRDAP, we recognize the immense value of regional cooperation and knowledge sharing in overcoming shared rural development challenges and building resilient rural communities across Asia and the Pacific.

Over the past decades, Nepal has made significant footsteps in rural development. Community forest, rural and agricultural road expansion, agriculture modernization and irrigation, entrepreneurship development and employment generation, decentralized education, health, nutrition and WASH,

services, and targeted social protection schemes have transformed rural communities. The introduction of cooperatives and microfinance has given rural women and marginalized groups access to credit, allowing them to become active participants in the economy.

Moreover, the devolution of power through federalism has provided local governments with a stronger mandate to implement development projects according to the needs of their constituencies. This shift has laid the foundation for more participatory, transparent, and accountable rural development.

Despite the progress, we must acknowledge that there are many challenges to be addressed. Climate change is affecting agricultural productivity, increasing the vulnerability of small farmers. Limited market access, poor transportation networks, and digital exclusion are keeping rural Nepal disconnected from larger economic opportunities. Gender disparities and the social exclusion of marginalized communities continue to hinder inclusive development. Furthermore, youth from rural area are increasingly migrating to cities or abroad in search of better education and employment. While remittances contribute significantly to the national economy, this trend is also leading to a shortage of workforce in villages and a decline in agricultural engagement.

To address these challenges, our development efforts must be holistic, inclusive, tailored and targeted. Investments in education and skill development, sustainable farming practices, market access, productivity, linking local products with regional and global value chain and digital connectivity are essential to ensure rural development.

Nepal is strongly committed to the principles of integrated rural development, which emphasize a multi-sectoral, participatory, and sustainable approach. We have prioritized rural development in our federal structure, empowering local governments with constitutional authority and resources to address their unique needs and priorities.

The future of every nation lies in the balanced development of both urban and rural areas and strong rural urban linkage. We must foster resilient

rural economies by supporting smallholder farmers, promoting agro-processing industries, encouraging rural tourism, and expanding entrepreneurship. The green economy, particularly organic farming, and climate-smart agriculture, can offer rural communities both sustainability and prosperity.

Strengthening rural infrastructure including roads, irrigation, communication, and market systems is crucial. Equally important is the capacity building of local governments so they can effectively plan and implement development activities. Moreover, we must ensure social inclusion in every aspect of rural development. Women, Dalits, Indigenous Communities, and People with Disabilities must be given the resources, voice, and representation they deserve. The use of technology is another key area with transformative potential. Digital literacy, mobile banking, e-commerce, telemedicine, and remote learning can bridge the gap between rural and urban areas. The government, private sector, and development partners must collaborate to make these innovations accessible in every village.

On this global day of recognition, we also thank our international development partners who have supported rural transformation through technical expertise, financial assistance, and knowledge sharing. South-South cooperation, regional collaboration, and global development forums offer valuable opportunities for learning and collective progress.

On this World Rural Development Day, I would like to renew our collective commitment to bridging the urban-rural divide and ensuring that no one is left behind. Together, we can create vibrant rural communities that thrive in harmony with nature and tradition, while embracing the opportunities of modern development. As we mark World Rural Development Day, let this not be a day of celebration alone, but one of renewed commitment. Every citizen, policymaker, institution, and youth must play their part in building a just, inclusive, and self-reliant society. The development of our villages is not just a policy matter, it is a national imperative and a moral responsibility.

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