



Newsletter

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SOHAM Election -2014

SOHAM-Nepal held an election on 26 August, 2014 (Bhadra 10, 2071), for the new executive committee for the period of next three years (2014-2017). The new executive committee was selected through the balloting process. However, the post of Vice Chairperson, Secretary and the Treasurer were unanimously elected. Around 120 SOHAM Life Members have attended this first historic voting process. The election committee coordinated by Mr. Deepak Aryal, Associate Professor, Central Department of

Hydrology and Meteorology, Tribhuvan University conducted the election. Other members of the committee include Society's life members Mr. Dharmendra Rajbhandari and Mr. Keshav Sharma.

Executive Committee members Dr. Khada Nanda Dulal and Mr. Pradeep Man Dangol had been nominated from the first meeting of the executive committee. The committee altogether consists thirteen executive committee members.

New Executive Committee (2014-2017)



Mr. Jagat Kumar Bhusal
Chairperson



Dr. Rijan Bhakta Kayastha
Vice Chairperson



Mr. Suman Kumar Regmi
General Secretary



Mr. Barun Paudel
Secretary



Mr. Rameshwor Rimal
Treasurer

Members



Mr. Binod Parajuli



Mr. Ram Chandra Karki



Mr. Sujan Subedi



Mr. Narayan Prasad Gautam



Dr. Hemu Kafle



Dr. Dibas Shrestha



Dr. Khada Nanda Dulal



Mr. Pradeep Man Dangol

Annual General Meeting



The Thirteenth Annual General Meeting (AGM) of SOHAM-Nepal was organized on 31 August, 2014 (Bhadra 15, 2071) in Kathmandu. The AGM gave farewell to the previous committee members and welcome the new executive members. Mr. Deepak Paudel, former General Secretary, presented the annual progress report for the fiscal year 2070/71. Similarly, Mr. Santosh Regmi, former Treasurer, presented the expenses made during 2070/71. Thereafter, former executive committee handed over the responsibility to the newly elected committee. Mr. Suman Kumar Regmi, newly elected General Secretary, also presented upcoming activities for 2071/72. The AGM was chaired by the Chairperson Mr. Jagat Kumar Bhusal. Mr. Bhusal has served SOHAM -Nepal as the chairperson for the 2011-2014 periods as well.

National Workshop

SOHAM-Nepal organized a National Workshop on "Adaptive Governance of Mountain Ecosystem services for poverty alleviation (ESPA) enabled by environmental virtual observatories (Mountain EVO-Nepal)" on 24 November, 2014 at Indreni Foodland, New Baneshwor. The main objective of the Workshop was to share knowledge and information generated by MOUNTAIN-EVO project through its project activities in the Upper Kaligandaki Basin. The project is being implemented in Mustang district with support from Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM) and District Development Committee, Mustang. Research papers from national and local stakeholders based on their research activities in the basin were presented during the workshop. The programme was inaugurated by Dr. Prem Prasad Dangal, Honorable member-National Planning Commission (NPC). Chief Principal Investigator of the project Dr. Wouter Buytaert from Imperial College, London delivered a lecture on MOUNTAIN-EVO project-theory and practice entitled "Participatory monitoring and citizen science to manage ecosystem services in high mountains". The project is a part of research program being implemented in Peru, Kyrgyzstan and Ethiopia as well.

Talk Programme

SOHAM-Nepal organized three talk programmes during September-December, 2014 as listed below.

- September 26, 2014 - Talk programme on "What we know about snow and ice of Nepal" by Dr. Rijan Bhakta Kayastha
- October 31, 2014 - Talk programme on "Remote Sensing of surface energy fluxes over complex terrain" by Dr. Hemu Kafle
- December 28, 2014 - Talk programme on "Thick Fog over Terai regions" by Ms. Shanti Kandel

Monsoon 2014

This year, a weak surge of Monsoon entered from eastern Nepal on 20th June and covered the entire country by the end of June. The arrival of monsoon in Nepal was delayed by 10 days against

the normal date. The normal onset date is 10 June for eastern Nepal and 12 June for Kathmandu.

This year the complete withdrawal of monsoon from the entire country took place on 7th October. The normal monsoon withdrawal date is September 23 for Kathmandu. The total monsoon days remains 109 in the year 2014 against the normal monsoon days 105.

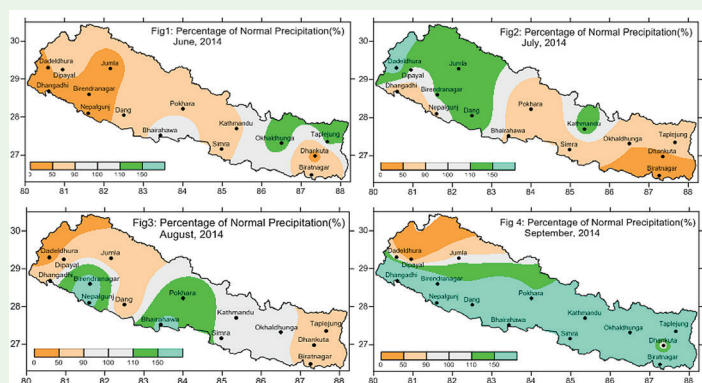
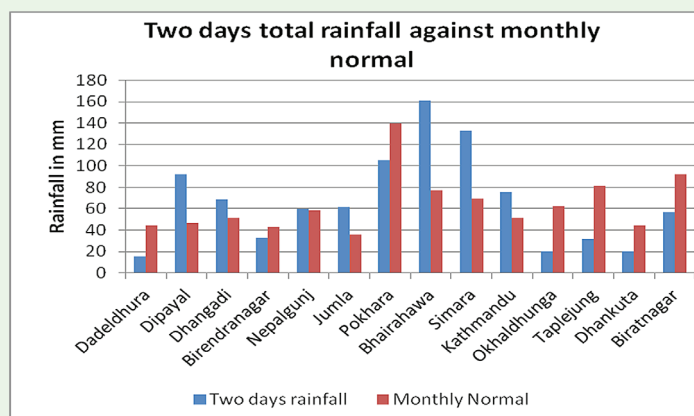


Fig 1-4: Monsoon precipitation Distribution

In the month of June, precipitation was poorly distributed mostly over western hilly and terai regions. Eastern and some parts of central region received normal or above normal monsoon rainfall. Pokhara received 188 mm of rainfall during 24 hours which was the highest record in the month of June.



Entire country received fair distribution of rainfall except eastern hilly and terai regions in July. Most parts of west Nepal also received above normal precipitation. This year's highest daily rainfall was recorded in Dadeldhura amounting 126 mm on 19th July.

In August, central Nepal and some parts of western Nepal received normal to above normal rainfall. East Nepal received below normal rainfall. On 15th August, record breaking rainfall occurred in Nepalgunj, Birendranagar and adjoining areas.

Table 1: Total rainfall recorded during 24 hours period on 15th August

Stations	Rainfall (mm)*	Stations	Rainfall (mm)*
Dhangadhi	105	Belhundi Dang	346
Birendranagar	423.1	Babai Chepang	326
Nepalgunj	184.4	Dang Tulsipur	299
Dang, Gorahi	298.4	Karnali Chisapani	493.8
Rajapur Bardiya	233		

* Rainfall ending at 0845AM

In September, eastern, central and most parts of western Nepal received above normal rainfall. The northwestern part of the country received below normal rainfall.

(Suman K. Regmi)

Nepal: Landslides and Floods - August 2014



Heavy rain caused massive landslides from the hillside in Jure, Mankhaa Village Development Committee of Sindhupalchowk district on 2 August, 2014. The landslide created a high artificial dam across the Sunkoshi River, one of the major tributaries of the Koshi River, blocking the flow of water completely. This collection of water accelerated the risk of flash floods with the possibility of impact up to Bihar, India. Altogether, 5,000 families had been displaced and dozens of houses destroyed from this catastrophe in Nepal. It is estimated that 156 people died from this event however, only 34 dead bodies had been recovered. Sunkoshi River was still blocked till 18 August, 2014 and the progress on releasing water from the naturally created dam was slow.

The other torrential rain affected throughout the country since 14 August, 2014 with massive floods and several landslides in 19 districts. The water level stations of Department of Hydrology and Meteorology recorded increase in water level of Koshi, Narayani, Karnali and west Rapti rivers above warning level during 14-16 August, 2014. The water overflowing along the banks of these rivers caused inundation in most of the Village Development Committees of Siraha, Dang, Surkhet, Banke, Bardiya and Kailali districts. Out of 19 districts five districts (Jajarkot, Salyan, Rukum, Rolpa and Lalitpur) also experienced landslides in addition to flood. The gauge station of Babai River in Bardiya, where the Early Warning System (EWS) was installed has also been washed away by the heavy flood.

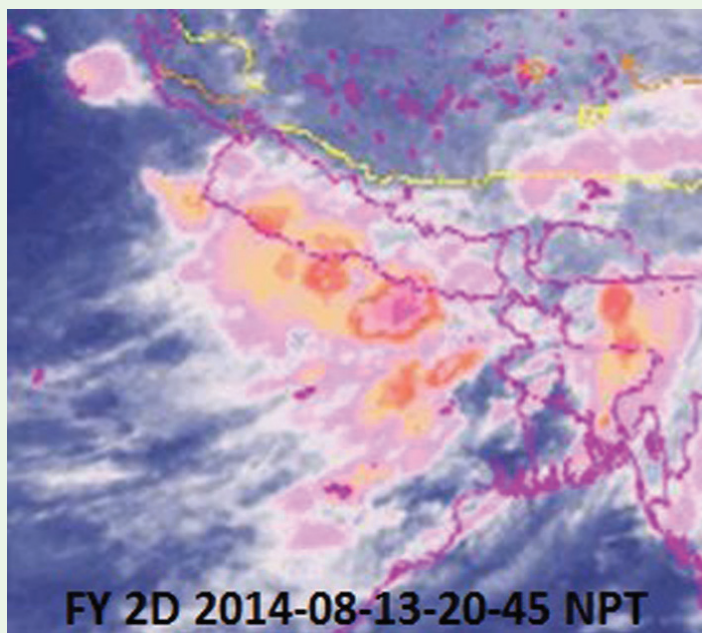
According to the Initial Rapid Assessment (IRA) reports received from the affected districts on 20 August 2014, a total of 43,354 families (216, 770 people) have been affected, of which 13,486 families (67,430 people) are displaced. The report indicates that 105 people are confirmed dead; 153 people are still missing; and 53 people have been injured. The numbers were increasing day by day even after the receipt of IRA.

In addition to human lives the floods and landslides arising from the heavy rainfall damaged various infrastructures such as roads; bridges; culverts; buildings; transport vehicles; as well as livestock; crops and other daily consumables. Many highways were blocked for number of days due to this disaster. One such example includes a highway linking Banke to Bardiya. The immediate response from the Government of Nepal had contributed a lot to minimize the risk of further devastation. The roles of Nepal Army, Armed Police Force and Nepal Police were praiseworthy. However, due to inundation, blockage of roads and remoteness, many affected areas could not be addressed immediately. Various

non governmental agencies had also contributed to save the life and property of the affected people and area.

(Binod Parajuli)

Hudhud cyclone



Hudhud Cyclone killed 40 people in Nepal mostly in the central and western region along with damage of properties costing millions of rupees. It was estimated that more than 500 people (most of them were tourist) were rescued from the Himalayan regions. This cyclonic system was originated in the Bay of Bengal on 6 October, 2014 and intensified into cyclone on 8th October.

The event began with the sudden change in the weather following the continuous rainfall in the central and western regions accompanied by the heavy snowfall in the high mountainous regions. The cyclone which was supposed to move in the northwest direction suddenly turned to northeast direction entering central Nepal on 13th October night. Most of the regional models predicted wrong track after crossing the land masses of Andhra Pradesh of India on 12th October. It has always been a challenge for the weather forecaster to improve the model and predict the correct path of the cyclonic system.

(Suman K. Regmi)

UNFCCC Conference-COP20 and Nepal

The 20th session of the Conference of Parties (COP20) and 10th session of the Conference of Parties Serving as the Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP10) recently organized in Lima, Peru from 1-12 December 2014. This UN climate change conference includes 41st session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI41); 41st session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA41) and Seventh part of the second session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP 2-7) as well. The COP is the supreme decision-making body of the United Nations Climate Change Convention where all States that are Parties to the Convention are represented.

The COP20-Lima COP comes up with the "Lima Call for Climate Action" which highlights the issues related to 2015 agreement process, Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) and pre-2020 mitigation ambition. In addition, the Conference also adopted a decision on "The Lima Ministerial Declaration on



Education and Awareness-raising" and "Lima work Programme on Gender". In terms of ADP the Conference comes up with the Elements text that annexed the 38 pages "elements of the draft negotiating text". The text is to be transferred to the draft negotiating text by May 2015. In terms of Loss and Damage, two years work programme has been approved and will start its implementation by the first meeting of the Executive Committee (by first quarter of 2015). Loss and Damage has been acknowledged on the preamble of COP decision on ADP.

In this COP, Nepal fulfilled the multiple responsibilities including the LDC Chair to UN climate change negotiations. Nepal has acted as the LDC chair since 2013 for the period of two years. During these years, Nepal became internationally visible on climate change negotiation process through active engagement in coordination, bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, strategic thinking, policy and advocacy related to the climate change. Soon after taking the responsibility of the LDC chair, Nepal has organized the first LDC strategy meeting in Kathmandu with the presence of LDC coordinators.

The Lima conference was attended by more than twenty Governmental delegates from Nepal headed by the Vice Chairman of National Planning Commission, Dr. Govind Raj Pokhrel. Other noticeable dignitaries include Constituent Assembly Members, member from National Planning Commission and other Governmental officials from different ministries/departments. Secretary from Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, Dr. Krishna Chandra Paudel and Joint-Secretary and the then LDC Chair, Mr. Ram Prasad Lamsal has also participated this conference. Nepali participants representing different NGOs, INGOs has also shown active participation. Nepal followed various agenda which falls under the COP, CMP, SBSTA, SBI and ADP. Nepalese delegation follows and negotiates the different agenda items under thematic sectors like ADP; Adaptation; Loss and Damage; Mitigation; Finance; Capacity building and Technology development and transfer.

During the conference numbers of statements were delivered on behalf of LDC by Nepal. Dr. Krishna Chandra Paudel and Mr. Ram Prasad Lamsal have instrumental role in this regard. In addition to

the statement on behalf of LDCs, Nepal also gave the statement on behalf of SAARC and Nepal as well. Moreover, Nepal raised the issue of Mountain agenda. The content related to disaster and climate change of the "Kathmandu Declaration" adopted from the 18th SAARC Summit held in Kathmandu, Nepal was also stressed in the high level statement. Prof Dr. Pokhrel delivering the statement mentioned that Climate-induced disasters have repeatedly claimed lives and properties in Nepal. He also stressed about the glacier retreat, GLOF and frequent avalanches. Nepal has call upon all Parties to develop a special Work Program on Mountains under the article 4.8 of the United Nations Framework Convention to reduce the climate change vulnerability and associated loss and damage.

From this COP, the new LDC chair has been nominated and Nepal handover the chairmanship to Angola. Angola was decided as the LDC chair for the period of 2015 and the chairmanship will be transferred to Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for the year 2016. Usually, the chairmanship is for the period of two years. So, this arrangement of one year each has been made under special circumstances and was decided not be taken as the precedence afterwards in future. Moreover, the LDC group has decided to establish a member committee to formulate the Rules of Procedure for the organization of the work of the Group. Nepal has been nominated as the alternate member for the Adaptation Fund Board by this Group.

The next COP-COP 21, is going to be held on Paris, France starting from November 30, 2015. As a former chair of LDC Group, Nepal still needs to play an active role in this negotiation process. Currently, Nepal is also chairing the LDC expert Group.

(Sujan Subedi)

CONGRATULATION

- SOHAM Nepal congratulates Mr. Jagat Kumar Bhusal, Chairperson of SOHAM-Nepal, for his appointment as the Chairman of Electricity Tariff Fixation Commission, Government of Nepal.
- SOHAM-Nepal congratulates Dr. Hemu Kafle, life member of SOHAM-Nepal, for receiving The World Academy of Science (TWAS) Award in physics awarded by Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST). She was awarded for her contribution in developing theoretical model for calculating land surface heat fluxes in complex topography using remote sensing data set.

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