



Government of Nepal

National Planning Commission



Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal

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Visit of Honourable Member of National Planning Commission

Dr. Ram Kumar Phuyal to Geneva

Hon'ble Member Dr. Ram Kumar Phuyal of National Planning Commission (NPC) led the Nepali delegation to Geneva for the Technical Workshop on Care, Decent Work and Macroeconomic Policy from 27-28 March 2023 followed by high-level meeting on Social Protection and Employment Policy department on 29 March 2023 at the International Labour Organization (ILO) Headquarters. The Honourable Member was joined by NPC official along with representatives from Joint Trade Union Coordination Center (JTUCC), Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI), Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS), ILO, and UN Women Nepal Country Offices both in person and virtually from Nepal.

The Technical Workshop, hosted by the UN-Women-ILO Joint Programme "Promoting Decent Employment for Women through Inclusive Growth Policies and Investments in the Care economy", provided a platform to showcase results of the UN Women and ILO collaboration at the country level. The Technical Workshop informed on key lessons learned, shared innovative approaches, and reflected on issues and strategic future perspectives/solutions on Care, Decent Work and Macroeconomic Policy. The Workshop brought together government officials, representatives of workers' and employers' organizations, and national implementing partners from Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nepal and Morocco, as well as experts and country and global teams from UN Women and ILO. Delegates from each of these countries presented the progress they have achieved in the Joint Programme activities.

As part of the global JP, the three policy tools, namely: 1. Assessing fiscal stimulus packages from a gender equality perspective; 2. Assessing the gendered employment impacts of COVID-19 and supporting a gender-responsive recovery and 3. A guide to public investments in the care economy; guided the national implementation. The implementation of these tools influenced gender inclusive post-COVID recovery and growth in the country in line with the 15th national periodic plan and will inform the upcoming plan.

The National Steering Committee (NSC) members of Joint Programme are from National Planning Commission (NPC), Joint Trade Union Coordination Center and Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI) who joined as delegates from Nepal. The tripartite NSC was formed in July 2022 under the leadership of National Planning Commission (NPC) with representatives from the National Women's Commission (NWC), Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC); Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MoLESS), Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST); Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies (MoICS) and Erstwhile Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) along with JTUCC and FNCCI.

On the first day, Honorable Member Dr. Ram Kumar Phuyal and representative Ms. Astha Bhatta from IIDS presented as a panelist on Macroeconomic Policy Responses to COVID-19 through a Gender Equality lens and shared the key findings and lessons from its application of Assessing fiscal stimulus packages from a gender equality perspective in Nepal, and discussion on innovative approaches among participants. It captured what fiscal and monetary fiscal stimulus measures were



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adopted and designed from a gender-equality perspective and in what ways the findings from the national assessments are going to inform future policy measures and investments for gender equality. The recommendations were primarily on:

- Introducing monitoring and evaluation mechanism for concessional credit programs to ensure women gain from the program targeted to them
- Ensuring mechanism to publish periodic unemployment data and gender disaggregated targets and reporting system
- Strengthening coordination and cooperation between the three tiers of government as well as between the government, private and non-government sectors for integrated approach for gender equality outcomes
- Integrating and targeting fiscal and monetary policies with social policies to creating an enabling environment for gender mainstreaming

The second session, Gendered Employment Impacts of COVID-19 and gender-responsive employment policies, was chaired by the Honorable Member Dr. Ram Kumar Phuyal, National Planning Commission. The discussion was based on employment policies on the basis of Assessing the gendered employment impacts of COVID-19 and supporting a gender-responsive recovery tool implementation at the country level and how they shaped gendered labour market outcomes during and after COVID-19. The presentations explored potential sectors to generate decent employment opportunities for women and lessons learned in the implementation of gender-responsive employment policies. The presenters were Dr. Lok Nath Bhusal from NPC and Dr. Bazlul Haque Khondker from ILO along with the discussant Ms. Priti Shrestha from UN Women. The recommendations were primarily on:

- An integrated gender-responsive employment policy framework should be adopted to address the gendered employment challenges which includes creation of the decent jobs, improvement in job qualities and transitions in the labour market to connect people to jobs
- Federal, along with provincial and local governments, should prioritize women's needs in expanding both physical and social care infrastructure spending
- Policy priority should be given to include women in economic diversification strategies (product diversification/foreign employment diversification)
- Financial and technical support to women-managed informal and formal SMEs
- Extend digital infrastructure and reduce gender gaps in access (market/digital economy)
- Professionalisation of care work/Skills development of care workers (returnee migrant/domestic care migrant workers)

Similarly, for the third session Supporting Public Investments in the Care Economy was presented by representative Ms. Astha Bhatta from IIDS and Dr. Bazlul Haque Khondker from ILO. The focus on the key findings from national assessments: A guide to public investments in the care economy of the care deficit, investment costs, and economic returns of increasing public investments in the care economy. This further explored policy challenges and opportunities for scaling up investments and financing of national care systems and strategies to build political will



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and policy attention among national stakeholders to implement transformative gender-responsive care policies. The recommendations were primarily on:

- The estimated multipliers and Benefit Cost Ratios (BCRs) are high validating the feasibility of investment in care services
- The investment is also justified with respect to not just direct but also indirect and induced employment generation – especially for women's employment
- The impressive economic and employment impacts suggest that National Steering Committee under the leadership of National Planning Commission should devise ways to adequately fund the care services in Nepal at all the levels
- In addition to public sector investment, there are scopes for private sector investment in care services. This is an area for Public-private-community partnership

This was followed by discussant Dr. Lok Nath Bhusal from Nepal who presented key highlights, lessons, innovative approaches, and common threads on estimation of care deficits, costs and economic returns of public Investments in the care economy.

This led to country-level discussion on developing a roadmap for policy implementation and Honorable member Dr. Ram Kumar Phuyal presented Nepal's development agenda and pathways to socio-economic transformation of the country. Dr. Phuyal presented the pathways to structural transformation including strategies for care economy through fundamental rights of constitution of Nepal, periodic plan 15th and 16th plan, LDC graduation strategies, SDG 2030s and long term vision of Nepal 2043, sectoral policies, National integrated social protection framework, National integrated employment framework and National action for formalization of employment mainstreaming care sectors and measure it into the national accounts and GDP. He highlighted the need for mainstreaming care economy issues in these national development frameworks.

He noted that COVID-19 has increased the care burden on women and girls causing job losses and needs transformative care policies for recognition, reduction, redistribution of unpaid and domestic work along with rewards and representation of care workers in decent work ensuring gender-responsive recovery. NPC remains committed to fulfilling targets of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2020/21 – 2023/24) and informs the upcoming plan. This also corresponds to the Nepal's commitment on fulfilling SDG 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls, Target 5.4: Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.

On 29 March 2023, the Nepalis delegation from the National Planning Commission met ILO officials from the Social Protection Department (SOCPRO) in Geneva. The day started with Hon'ble Dr. Ram Kumar Phuyal providing a national context on social protection in Nepal including developments related to the recent formalization of the National Integrated Social Protection Framework as well as on the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead on extension of social protection in Nepal.



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The Delegates met with the Director and Deputy Director of the SOCRO Department and discussed on the global initiatives, specifically, the *Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions*. The Global Accelerator promotes a job-rich recovery, as well as just ecological, technological and societal transitions to more sustainable and inclusive economies and societies. Three areas of work under the Global Accelerator include development of integrated and coordinated employment and social protection policies and strategies, establishment of integrated national financing frameworks, and improvement of multilateral cooperation. The meeting also discussed pathfinder countries and the various commitments required at the level of government. Nepal's possible involvement as a pathfinder country was also discussed during this occasion.

The Delegates also met various experts to discuss strategies related to the extension of social security and sustainable financing of social protection systems. The Social Security Fund (SSF) started implementation of contribution-based social security to workers in formal employment in 2019. In 2022, extension of all seven branches of the Contributory based Social Security (CBSS) was launched for self-employed, workers in the informal economy, and workers in foreign employment. Because Nepal has a relatively well established and large (non-contributory) Social Security Allowance (SSA) programme, discussion on the necessary complementarity between contributory and non-contributory schemes to achieve universal coverage was discussed. Approaches for progressive vertical and horizontal extension that would be relevant was also discussed. Given the increase in social protection expenditure over the past decade discussions also included on how countries can ensure sustainability of social protection investments. Various technical studies including costing exercises to assess financing gaps and fiscal space analysis to provide guidance to the government and other stakeholders on the potential avenues to further create fiscal space to finance a sustainable social protection system in the country was also discussed.

The Delegates concluded the day with discussion with officials from the Employment Strategies for Inclusive Transformation Unit (EMPLAB) to understand evidence-based policy-level interventions on decent employment and linkages between social protection and care economy.

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