

Amplifying community voices to influence the process and outcome of SACOSAN VII

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Implemented by:

**Asian
Coalition
for Housing
Rights**

FANSA
Freshwater Action Network
South Asia

Amplifying Community Voices to Influence the Process and Outcome Of SACOSAN VII

1. Introduction:

New Venture Fund has provided grant support to Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) which in turn partnered with and funded Freshwater Action Network South Asia (FANSA) for implementation of a project titled '**Amplifying community voices to influence the process and outcome of SACOSAN VIII**'. Initially the project was sanctioned for three months starting from 1st January 2022 but further got extended upto 31st May '22 as organizing of the SACOSAN VIII has been postponed by the host country (which is Government of India) and also because of the delay in processing the funding. The project grant was utilized for implementation of several local and national level CSOs' activities in seven out of eight countries in South Asia Region where FANSA National chapters are operational and that includes Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. In addition, there were few culminating activities implemented at the South Asia regional level by the FANSA Regional Secretariat located in Kathmandu for cross learning and sharing among all the Stakeholders. The activities implemented and work carried out by FANSA as a whole across all the seven countries and at regional level is reflected in this consolidated report which is based on the individual country reports received by FANSA regional secretariat.

2. Background:

The South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN) is a government led biennial convention held on a rotational basis in each of the SAARC countries, namely; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. SACOSANs are intended to develop a regional agenda on sanitation, enabling learning from past experiences and setting actions for the future. In addition to the National Governments of South Asia, all the important sector partners have the opportunity to be part of SACOSANs and contribute to achieving the objectives of the same. FANSA is the only CSOs network recognized and included as a constituent member of the Inter Country Working group (ICWG) which is responsible for planning and organizing the SACOSANs. Though FANSA is quite intensely engaged in SACOSAN process, the main role being played is to support in planning and preparation for the conferences, facilitating active engagement of CSOs and Community leaders including securing opportunities for their voices to be heard at the conference, feeding grassroots realities and evidence based key messages into the deliberations of the conference and holding Governments accountable for the commitments made through Ministerial declaration at each conference. SACOSAN VII was held in Islamabad in April 2018 and now Government of India has kick started the preparatory process for hosting of the SACOSAN VIII.

In continuation of the past efforts, FANSA planned to mobilize CSOs and Community leaders' participation during the planning and preparation for the SACOSAN VIII for which FANSA has been provided with a grant support from NVF. The project submitted by ACHR-FANSA was mainly focused on three key result areas. Firstly, steering a consultative process through which a report assessing the progress made by each country in fulfilling the ten commitments made at SACOSAN VII (April 2018) would be developed by consolidating the country reports into a regional report. Second, organizing series of trainings cum workshops to build capacities of the vulnerable groups

(Frontline sanitation workers, Persons with disability, Elderly persons, hard to reach communities, women, etc) and provide them an opportunity to reflect on their access to WASH services basing on which consolidated key messages / key asks of the vulnerable communities were planned to be advocated at the upcoming SACOSAN VIII. Finally, FANSA National chapters also organised the policy influencing meetings at local, provincial/state and National levels to advocate for the progress of the SDG6 i.e Water and Sanitation for All.

Thus, implementation of these project activities was envisaged as CSOs and Communities preparation for the upcoming SACOSAN VIII which was expected to happen, at the time of this proposal writing, in February 2022. Postponement of the conference dates (now expected in September 22) by Government of India and delay in grant disbursement from NVF had affected the pace of implementation of this project. However, after seeking approval for two months no cost extension, FANSA pursued implementation of the planned activities and completed the same by 31st May 2022.

3. Steering the Project Implementation:

The overall leadership for this project implementation was provided by the Regional Convenor Ms.Lajana Manadhar and the Regional Coordinator Dr. Snehalatha Mekala who are part of the FANSA Regional Secretariat. Immediately after approval of the grant from NVF, a virtual Regional Steering Committee meeting was organized by the Regional Secretariat and explained the overall objectives to be achieved and emphasized in course of project implementation as many FANSA Members as possible, other key stakeholders and concerned Government agencies must be engaged. Further the National Chapters were requested to prepare an action plan at the country level for detailed implementation and the same was requested to submit to the Regional Secretariat for necessary guidance and support. This was followed by similar kind of planning and preparatory meetings organized by FANSA National chapters under the leadership of respective National Convenors in all the seven countries and the action plans were prepared. All these consultations resulted in building shared understanding on the purpose and objectives of the project, developing a clear plan of action with alignment between the regional guidelines and the National context, perfect sharing of responsibilities among the National Steering Committee Members for implementing of various activities. At the country level potential partners and other CSO Organizations working on the rights of the vulnerable communities were identified as collaborating partners in implementation of this project. All the planned activities have been successfully implemented and the results / outputs generated have contributed to achieving the overall purpose and objectives of this short-term project. Activity wise progress achieved and process adopted in implementation of the planned activities is summarized in the ensuing sections of this report.

4. Progress on project activities:

4.1 Capacity Enhancement of CSO's & Vulnerable communities (Local Dialogues):

One of the important objectives of this project is to build the capacities and enable CSOs and Community leaders particularly representing vulnerable population groups in all the seven countries to present their key issues and recommendations to access improved and sustainable WASH services. In pursuance of this objective FANSA Regional Secretariat has identified five key thematic issues. During the country level planning process, the steering committees of FANSA National chapters have

identified the most appropriate population group and locations to be covered for each of the thematic workshops. FANSA Member organizations having significant experience of working on each of those five prioritized themes were assigned with responsibility of organizing the capacity building workshops in each country. All other Member CSOs of FANSA and non-member CSOs working on respective themes, associations of the vulnerable population concerned with identified themes, concerned local government agencies were all engaged in these capacity building workshops. Overview of the country wise thematic workshops organized are presented in the table below.

#	Themes	Climate resilience in WASH solution	Protecting the rights of sanitation workers	Raising the voices of People with Disability	Access to finance for improved WASH services in urban poor communities	Building women leadership at the local level
	Countries					
1	Countries where these thematic workshops were organized	Bangladesh; Bhutan; India; Maldives; Nepal; Pakistan	Bhutan; India; Nepal; Pakistan; Sri Lanka	Maldives; Sri Lanka	Bangladesh; Nepal	Bangladesh; Bhutan; India; Maldives; Pakistan; Sri Lanka
2	No of CSOs and Community Champions benefitted	483	181	370	64	480
3	Key stakeholder s partnered	PHEDs, Local Governance Bodies, Media, Clean Bhutan Campaign, Bhutan Ecological Society, Bhutan Toilet Organization, Bhutan Water, Ugdam, Sabarmati University, Niru Desai AMA Center for Climate Mgmt., UNICEF, CEE, RADO-Nepal	Thimpu Thromde Municipality, Action Aid, WaterAid, UNICEF, State Health Departments, LUMANTH I Support group for shelter, Urban Council, Public	Vaadhoo Island community and students association, Maldives Economic Review, Evolves Life Foundation, We for Rights Organization Sri Lanka	Women SHG leaders, Local governance bodies, Local people's alliances, Community Women's Forum-Nepal	Local Bodies of Governance, Community Women's organizations, School Teachers, District Health Departments, Mangmi, Tshogpa, Leaders Women Watch, Taldanga Mission, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Organizations of Tribals,

#	Themes	Climate resilience in WASH solution	Protecting the rights of sanitation workers	Raising the voices of People with Disability	Access to finance for improved WASH services in urban poor communities	Building women leadership at the local level
	Countries					
			Health Officers.			

Key Messages identified from the above thematic workshops:

a. Climate Resilience in WASH Solutions:

- Although countries in South Asia have Climate Change management policies and ongoing programmes, there is no focus on building climate resilience into WASH. Raised Toilets to prevent inundation and roof water harvesting to mitigate acute water scarcity, SATO Toilets for extreme cold places in Bhutan, River diversion irrigation systems, Springshed management are some of the relevant solutions tried on a small scale by NGOs but Governments are yet to accept and invest adequately in scaling these meaningful solutions evolved by different sector partners.
- *“No need to reinvent the wheel. There are lot of positive examples of building climate resilience into WASH demonstrated by various organizations at various levels. These need to be systematically documented, disseminated and advocated to influence policy and practice and demand for special budget allocations for the same”* was the feedback message provided by most of the practitioners in the sector.
- Local communities living in climate sensitive geographies need to be capacitated and engaged in developing decentralized action plans for building climate resilience into WASH and these plans must be backed by adequate funding from the Governments to ensure effective implementation.
- Although policy level documents and guidelines for integrating climate resilience into WASH have been introduced by the governments there is a lack of awareness among the communities and personnel of Government agencies who need competency and capacities to implement these policies and guidelines.



- Building climate resilience into WASH must be pursued through inter departmental coordination rather than isolated efforts of Public Health and Engineering (PHED) and Water Supply and Sanitation departments (DWS &S) which are responsible for delivery of WASH services. The imperative role of local bodies of Governance must be advocated in implementing measures for integrating climate change resilience into WASH interventions.



b. Protecting the rights of sanitation workers:

- Urban Municipal bodies are increasingly resorting to sourcing the sanitation workers through third party contract system which is not only causing low wages and insecurity of livelihoods but also leading to exploitation of the sanitation workers and violation of their rights by the contractors. There is need for mandating every urban local body to frame and strictly enforce regulations that ensure decent working conditions, livelihood security and dignity of the sanitation workers.
- Sanitation workers engaged in maintenance of sewer lines, UGDs, solid waste collection and disposal are exposed to high level of health risks particularly due to lack of awareness and access to personal safety equipment. In the absence of social security measures like insurance and access to affordable health care facilities sanitation workers are left to suffer from chronic illnesses. There is an urgency to formulate policies and programmes dedicated to protect the health and safety of the sanitation workers.
- Sanitation workers like door-to-door waste collectors, sweepers, work force deployed on waste transportation trucks, landfills and septic tank emptying trucks etc are required to leave home very early leaving their children without proper care and protection. This is leading to malnourishment, ill health and deprivation of education to their children. This envisages the need for good child care and educational facilities to be located within the habitations pre-dominantly inhabited by the sanitation workers.



- Lack of access to safe water, toilets, rest rooms, hand hygiene facilities are the common problems faced by most of the sanitation workers directly engaged in sanitation jobs. Constant mobility during the daily work course is also seriously limiting their access to basic WASH facilities. The urban local bodies should be responsive to make special efforts to ensure basic WASH facilities for all the categories of frontline sanitation workers. There must be periodic third-party checks to monitor provision of basic WASH facilities to the frontline sanitation workers deployed by Urban Municipalities.



- City development and city sanitation plans should integrate realization of rights and livelihood security of the sanitation workers. Significance of the role played by Sanitation workers in protecting the public health must be recognized, valued and society should pay them back by ensuring their safety, dignity and livelihood security.

c. Raising the voices of People with Disability:

- Availability of WASH facilities at a household level are not accessible for persons with disabilities on par with the level of accessibility enjoyed by the members of the same household who have no disability. This needs sensitization of the families to be more responsive to the WASH needs of their family members having disability. Assessing disabled friendly WASH facilities is most often limited to public places. But it is equally important to use the same lens for addressing the gaps at the household level.
- Direct voices of the persons with disability should be supported and encouraged rather than others speaking on their behalf. Associations of the PWDs must be capacitated to actively participate in planning, implementation and monitoring of interventions aimed at improving accessible WASH facilities for the persons with disabilities. Their independent representation of the issues would have greater credibility and acceptance of decision makers for initiating corrective action.



d. Access to finance for improved WASH services in urban poor communities:

- Up-gradation and sustainable maintenance of WASH facilities is a continuous process that requires recurring investment. Upgrading an existing toilet to increase the comfort and accessibility, retrofitting and repairing, emptying of septic tank, UGD connection etc are all the range of activities related to improving toilet facility which requires money to be invested.
- Similar aspirations exist for improving water and hygiene facilities. But, in the absence of easily accessible financing options the urban poor will not be able to meet these growing needs and aspirations. Low cost capital for community MFIs, low cost financing products from Banks, regulating the service charges of sanitation services entrepreneurs like septic tank emptying operators etc are required to ensure access to financing for the urban poor to meet their needs and aspirations related to WASH services.



e. Building women leadership at the local level:

- There is need for further enhancement of opportunities for building women leadership and engaging them in planning, implementation and monitoring of WASH infrastructure and service delivery. Particularly in the Tribal pockets in India and in hard-to-reach areas in other countries opportunities for women engagement in the WASH sector are highly inadequate.
- Behavioural change for improved practices and community responsibility sharing in maintenance of WASH facilities cannot be achieved without promoting women leadership in the WASH sector. Self Help Groups and Thrift and Credit programmes in South Asia have helped in identification and nurturing of women leadership which must be leveraged for promoting women leadership in the WASH sector.
- Increase in micro financing opportunities for the poor and vulnerable to improve their access to WASH services has been identified as the potential opportunity and the CSOs need to realize the need for coming up with more systematic financial and capacity building plans to make consistent efforts to build community women leadership in the WASH sector.



- Local governance bodies (LGIs, PRIs, ULBs, Island Councils etc) need to be sensitized and motivated to make conscious efforts to increase opportunities for women leadership in the local level planning, implementation and monitoring of WASH infrastructure and service delivery.
- WASH in schools and promoting safe MHM practices are other areas where there is great need and urgency to promote women leadership for achieving expected results. CSOs can play a good supportive role in bringing about such transformation in WASH management by the local bodies of governance which makes it easy for promoting the women leadership at higher levels of planning, implementation and monitoring. The need for dedicated programmes to systematically mentor women leadership was recognized for sustainable WASH services which would benefit women as well as everyone in the community.
- The practical experiences from the work of several CSOs provided strong evidence that building women leadership in WASH sector at the local community level has great potential for demand generation and increasing accountability of the WASH service delivery agencies.

4.2 Policy influencing dialogues and initiatives for accelerated and inclusive progress on SDG-6:

FANSA national chapters have adopted different methodologies to organise the policy influencing meetings on accelerated and inclusive progress on SDG-6. Some countries organised the local, state and national level meetings separately while some of them combined all three to bring everyone to a single platform. These policy dialogues with multi stakeholder engagement were taken up as one of the important activities under the NVF grant support project with a view to generate key messages and recommendations that can be advocated by FANSA at SACOSAN VIII and at other National and international platforms for accelerating progress on achieving SDG 6 in an inclusive and equitable manner. In line with this overall purpose that National chapters of FANSA in all the seven countries organized the policy dialogue meetings which were aligned to the country context and ongoing advocacy work of the local CSOs. The strengths of the FANSA National chapters, openness of the Governments to join these dialogue meetings, interest shown by other sector partners, etc have influenced design and implementation of these National level dialogue meetings on WASH and realization of Governments' commitments at SACOSAN s and SDG 6. Country wise summary of policy dialogue meetings and the outcome of the same is summarized below;



A. Bangladesh:

Action implemented	Outcome
<p>National Development Programme (NDP), one of the member organizations of FANSA-BD, organized the Policy dialogue Meeting on 17 May 2022 at Belkuchi upazila (char & flood context) under Sirajganj district. Another member AVAS organized similar Meeting covering the Barishal district (Coastal zone) on 18 May 2022. Based on the outcomes of the above meetings and also WASH policy issues in general, FANSA-BD Secretariat organized the national level meeting virtually on 26 May 2022. Local Administration, DPHE, Other Govt. Officials, UP Chairmen, Medical Officers, CSOs, WASH Champions, local allies, Media have participated at the sub-district and District level meetings which brought out the facts of actual WASH situation on the ground with particular focus on the issues of the marginalized and vulnerable communities. The National level virtual meeting had participation of Joint-Secretary- LGD, and Additional Chief Engineer (Planning) Department Of DPHE, Director, ITN-BUET, WASH sector Specialists, CSOs, other key sector partners, media, etc. All together about 136 representatives from the above mentioned constituencies have participated and actively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ WASH Challenges and deficits in provision of services in the flood prone areas of Char have been brought to the notice of all the concerned actors and lack of sustainability in the interventions being made by both Government and other actors including CSOs were highlighted for immediate corrective action. ➤ Stakeholders understanding got deepened that due to natural disasters and effects of climate change, the south-western part of Bangladesh is always under threats. Water sources and sanitation systems are recurrently getting damaged or washed out by cyclones & tidal surges and salinity. Due to unplanned abstraction of groundwater, the water level is going down rapidly and drinking water is not available in many parts of the coastal areas in the summer. ➤ Serious gaps between the National level policies and strategies and actual implementation on the ground were recognized by all the stakeholders. ➤ Assurance was also given by the service providers to ensure water and sanitation facilities for the marginalized and vulnerable communities in the flood affected areas. ➤ National level policy dialogue meeting emphasized that climate-induced calamities i.e. flood, river erosion, cyclones, and salinity intrusion are great threats to the achievement of SDG-6. ➤ The dialogue meetings contributed mutual understanding of the strengths and enabling environment for collaboration between govt. and CSOs to work jointly for achieving the SDG-6 particularly for the marginalized and vulnerable. ➤ The National dialogue meeting identified that combined budget allocation for Water, sanitation and Hygiene for the country as a whole is a major issue as it is leading to more spending on water compared to allocation for sanitation and hygiene. There is need for advocating special allocations of budgets based on the hydro geographical zones to address the specific WASH needs. The disparity in allocating the WASH budget in rural and urban areas was also identified as an issue for advocacy. Although the local government is increasing the WASH budget, on contrary, the shrinking of the external fund is barring the poor people from getting adequate support for resilient WASH facilities. To meet the SDG-6 additional national financing is an essential requirement

Action implemented	Outcome
contributed at this policy dialogue meetings.	

B. Bhutan:

Action implemented	Outcome
<p>FANSA Bhutan has consolidated the WASH issues identified during the three thematic workshops organized with engagement of various stakeholders including community representatives. This was further discussed and analyzed by the core team of FANSA Bhutan and on the basis of the same, a policy brief has been prepared listing the key issues and recommended actions for achieving SDG 6 in Bhutan. This document has been submitted to the National Committees constituted by the National Council of Bhutan on Social & Cultural Affairs and Natural Resources and Environment of the National Council of Bhutan. The National Council and committees constituted by it are considered appropriate for submission of this policy brief as they are responsible for policy review and formulation at the National level. The policy brief also pointed out the role of CSOs in contributing to achieve SDG 6 in Bhutan with no one left behind.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The policy brief served as an important input to inform the members of high level National Committees of Government of Bhutan about the ground level challenges limiting the realization of SDG 6 particularly for the marginalized and vulnerable communities. ➤ FANSA Bhutan is following up the process and it is expecting that very soon the National Council will be inviting them for a formal interaction wherein FANSA Bhutan Members will have further opportunity to explain the contents of the Policy brief and influence planning process for future WASH development programs in the country. ➤ FANSA Bhutan could gain capacity, confidence and visibility through the process adopted for developing the policy brief and advocating the same at the national level.

C. India:

Action implemented	Outcome
<p>FANSA India formed a core team of senior leaders who have organized a two-day learning sharing event on 25th and 26th May 2022 at Bhubaneswar. This event was planned to align and establish collaboration with the efforts of Government of India to promote localization of SDGs including SDG 6. For the purpose of organizing this national level learning sharing event FANSA India partnered with Center for Advocacy Research (CFAR) which has</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The learning sharing event was very successful in building a shared understanding among the participants on the concept of localization of SDGs which essentially means developing a framework of action for realizing SDGs in the local context, particularly to address the needs and aspirations of the vulnerable and marginalized communities. The learning visit to the slums enabled the participants to understand the process of applying SDGs framework to the living conditions of the poor and vulnerable in slums to assess the gaps and challenges from the perspective of the targeted

Action implemented	Outcome
<p>significant years of experience in empowering the urban slum communities to claim their rights and entitlements including WASH. 40 CSO participants from 8 states of India participated in person in Bhubaneswar during the two days event and additionally about 50 participants joined the virtual consultation meeting on 26th May. This learning sharing event has primarily focused on the following objectives;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To deepen the understanding on the interconnectedness of SDG 6 and the frame work of action being pursued by Government of India for localization of SDG 6; ● To explain the concept of community empowerment-based approaches of realizing WASH Rights and SDG 6 and providing an opportunity to learn from the practical experience of CFAR in urban slumsof Bhubaneswer city; ● To explain the participatory tools of building community empowerment approaches in WASH; ● To facilitate Multi stakeholders dialogue to identify inter-sectoral collaboration opportunities with Government and other sector partners to pursue realization of WASH Rights and SDG 6 for the marginalized and vulnerable communities; 	<p>progress / development under the SDGs. Based on this assessment CFAR has engaged in community capacity building that ultimately resulted in making substantive progress in realization of SDG-6.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The important learning from the work of CFAR is that it is just not sufficient to build the capacities of only community leaders to demand for WASH services, but it is equally important to simultaneously strengthen the capacities of the Governments to be able to effectively deliver the services to the last mile population. ➤ The discussions revealed that participatory tracking / monitoring processes adopted to consistently assess the improvements in the conditions of the slum communities played an important role in achieving the targeted progress. ➤ The event made rich contribution in terms of deepening the learningon community lead process of claiming rights and entitlements including WASH, excellent results could be generated and all the participants felt the need to customize and adapt the approach of CFAR in other geographies too. ➤ Participation of senior bureaucrats from the Government Smt Jayashree Raghunandan, IAS, Chairperson, Expert Group on Localizing SDGsin PRIs and Mr.RSN Sharma, Member of the Core Committee LSDGS, Mayor and Commissioner of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation was very helpful in making the participants understand the Government approach and efforts towards localizing SDGs and the opportunities for CSOs' engagement were identified. ➤ The event also gave good visibility for the efforts being made by FANSA in strengthening the engagement of CSOs and Community champions towards accelerating progress on SDG 6.



D. Maldives:

Action implemented	Outcome
<p>FANSA Maldives organized two local Level policy dialogue meetings on 5th May and on 14th May 2022 to discuss and suggest solutions to WASH challenges in the country context. One of the key issues focused during these policy dialogue meetings was ‘implementation of education curriculum on WASH awareness to students in schools’. This consultation was organized as a follow-up on previous attempts to have dialogue with Male City Council, discussions in public forum held by Local Government Authority (LGA) and Local Councils.</p> <p>Similarly the two National level policy dialogue meetings organized on virtual platforms on 11th and 22nd May 2022 focused on issues related to Water rights, current state of WASH service delivery, identifying gaps in the context of building climate resilience in Wash planning and implementation, affordability of WASH service, WASH services access to people with disabilities and how the challenges could be addressed from the angle of land use planning and building regulations. Educators, Curriculum developers, Researchers, Ecocare (NGO), DTM, cooperative Urban planner, Climate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discussions revealed that there is an extensive coverage of the WASH issues is evident in the curriculum which was explained by the school education curriculum developer. However, there are challenges to delivery of the concepts to the students due to capacity limitations of the teachers. The solutions relate to in-service training quality which again depends on professional competency of the trainers in the education system. It was also realized during the discussion that there is no linkage between teacher development programs, as well as monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching. ➤ To address the interconnected issues of WASH, Climate change and Health the policy dialogue meetings resolved for strengthening mutual cooperation for sharing of knowledge by building a culture of social solidarity and also promote new learning through innovation, creativity and enterprise. ➤ The National level dialogue meeting led to reconfirmation of the ministry’s (MECCT) commitment to establish multi-stakeholder platform to provide opportunity for the civil society to raise their voices regarding access to WASH facilities and services by the marginalised. The ministry further assured of its

specialist, Lawyer, utility service provider etc have joined the local level dialogue meetings on WASH policy. Whereas the National level consultation meeting was mainly with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change.	support for establishment of FANSA Maldives and empowerment of the network. Further, the officials recognise the role that the WASH network can play in assisting the government’s initiatives for accelerating progress towards SDG6.
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E. Nepal:

Action implemented	Outcome
<p>FANSA Nepal had organized the policy dialogue meeting as a follow up of the Nepal progress assessment on SACOSAN VII commitments. The findings of this assessment were disseminated to trigger the discussion at the policy dialogue meetings on WASH organized at National, Provincial and local levels to sensitize inform the key decision-makers about the status of WASH services for the vulnerable communities. This had stimulated discussion on the new strategies and interventions to be undertaken for ensuring equitable, inclusive and sustainable WASH progress in Nepal. FEDWASUN Nepal which is a national level federation of the community users associations had taken the responsibility and organized all the three policy dialogue meetings. National level meeting was organized in Kathmandu on 25th March in which about 94 multi stakeholders including the Government agencies have participated. The local level policy consultation was held on 20th April 2022 in Barachetra Municipality Sunsari with participation of 37 stakeholders. Provincial level consultation was organized in Biratnagar with about 35 participants on 22nd April 2022. The National level policy dialogue was titled as “Linking Efforts towards the achievement of SDG-6”. The dialogue was interactive and participatory that generated a open sharing of diversified views. Stakeholder's role in Localization, and implementation of SDG-6, Reviewing progress on Sanitation and Water for All and SACOSAN commitments and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The National level policy dialogue meeting highlighted the achievements, challenges and way forward related to SDG-6 in Nepal. It acted as a reality check for government and non-government agencies on their efforts and contribution towards the achievement of SDG-6 and also provided guidelines for further boosting of the progress. ➤ The NWASH app initiated by the GoN is a good tool to generate data on WASH progress. ➤ The data in the NWASH can be used by WASH sector agencies and government in planning. However, it was suggested that more comprehensive data can be uploaded on a regular basis, including the field level data by the local governments. ➤ The provincial governments should be aware of the commitments made by the National Governments and it should make best efforts to fulfil these commitments. The efforts of development cooperation partners like Water Aid, UNICEF and I/NGOs should be harmonized to support Governments in fulfilling these commitments. ➤ Policy dialogue meetings were found to be very useful in identifying the gaps in the WASH progress being made in Nepal and further the strategies were identified for effectively addressing the bottlenecks and pave way for holistic and synergic efforts towards achieving the SDG-6.

Action implemented	Outcome
<p>achievements, achieving Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation for all as a basic human right were the important topics focused during the National level policy dialogue. The Provincial meeting in Biratnagar, had the participation from Provincial level WASH minister, representatives from Office of the Chief Minister, Finance Minister, Health Minister, Forest and Environment Ministry, representatives from local, national and international agencies.</p> <p>The local level Policy dialogue meeting organized in Barahakshetra municipality had good participation of diversified stakeholders including Deputy Mayor, Chief Administrative Officer, Ward Head, Civil Society Representatives and others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Minister at the Provincial meeting had committed to address the WASH issues identified at the meeting particularly to ensure WASH services for the marginalized and vulnerable population. ➤ The WASH issues in Terai and hill areas are quite distinct compared to other geographies of Nepal. Most of the water sources come from hill and mountain areas and the sources are drying because of haphazard construction roads, buildings and houses in hill and mountains areas. It was highlighted that protection and conservation of the sources of water in hill and mountain areas should be given top priority by the provincial and local governments. ➤ To achieve the goal of SDG-6, sensitization and awareness raising programs, training to community people and users committee on technical and environmental aspect should be provided.

F. Pakistan:

Action implemented	outcome

<p>FANSA Pakistan organized four Policy dialogue Meetings in Punjab (19th May), Sindh (19th May), KPK (18th May), and Balochistan (18th May) provinces and the respective focal points of FANSA Pakistan shared the responsibility and organized these dialogue meetings. All together 85 members from Parliamentarians, politicians, Civil Society, media and Policy makers had participated. FANSA Pakistan had shared at these meetings the findings of National Assessment Report against Commitments of SACOSAN VII.</p> <p>All four policy dialogue meetings were conducted at provincial level as the passing of the 18th constitutional amendment lead to decentralization of most powers of the departments from federal level to provincial governments which includes WASH also.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The need for improving existing policies and or adoption of new and better policies by the Provincial Assemblies to improve WASH service delivery in country was highlighted at all these Provincial meetings. ➤ Parliamentarians were urged to align their planned activities with SDGs and particularly SDG 6. ➤ Media Persons were also sensitized and they have committed to highlight WASH sector issues in mainstream media to influence policies. ➤ Civil Society Organizations agreed and committed to increase their advocacy activities with policy makers to improve formulation and implementation of WASH policies.
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G. Sri Lanka:

As a consequence of serious economic crisis and inflation in Sri Lanka, there have been series of public protests against the Governments and normalcy of life is totally disturbed. The turbulence was getting more intensive due to which the FANSA Sri Lanka chapter had to call off the proposed National level policy dialogue meetings.

4.3 Assessment of progress on SACOSAN VII commitments:

One of the important objectives set to be achieved under this NVF grant support project was to increase the accountability of the National Governments by producing evidence-based analysis on the status of SACOSAN VII commitments to address sanitation and Hygiene issues of the marginalized through an assessment report. Thus FANSA planned to bring the evidence from the field on the real progress made and gaps in reaching the last mile in sanitation progress across all these seven South Asian Countries by bringing out the assessment report. The objectives for carrying out this assessment process were;

- *To strengthen overall accountability of SACOSAN process;*
- *To provide an objective and independent CSOs assessment of the progress achieved by Governments on the SACOSAN VII commitments;*
- *To provide an opportunity to CSOs to reflect on the commitments from the perspective of the real-life conditions of the communities with whom they are working;*
- *To support the efforts of the government in making participatory and evidence-based report on SACOSAN VII commitments;*
- *To use the outcome of the assessment in CSOs preparation for developing the key messages*

and targeting to influence the outcome of SACOSAN VIII, and

- *To build visibility for FANSA by making a meaningful contribution to ensure that SACOSAN VIII process includes focus on the au issues affecting WASH progress in SA region.*

In pursuance of these objectives all the seven National chapters have carried out the assessment exercise and produced the country wise reports which are further consolidated by Regional Secretariat and produced a synthesis report. The National Chapters of FANSA have adopted processes that were considered appropriate in the country context and feasible within the time available. Bangladesh had first carried out desk research and then organized a national level consultation webinar with 46 multi stakeholders based on which the first draft report was developed. This was further presented for feedback and validation by the community representatives in different geographical pockets of the country. Series of FGDs & KIIs were conducted in different hard-to-reach and difficult parts & pockets under the coastal, char, flood, hoar, hill, and tea garden areas covering especially the poor & disadvantaged communities. The consolidated outcome of the study has drawn a real picture of the implementation status of the SACOSAN-VII Commitments in Bangladesh.

FANSA Bhutan had the internal consultation and decided that for the reasons of objectivity and professionalism in conducting the assessment an appropriate and competent agency may be engaged. Accordingly, Footprint Consulting Services was hired which had independently facilitated the process and produced the report.

FANSA India has formed a small core team to develop a concept note on the proposed assessment, identify an external resource person to systematically conduct the assessment process and also to closely support and work with the resource person for timely completion of the process. The other sector partners identified as potential partners were engaged in conducting this progress assessment process. Desk review of the relevant documents, online survey, interviews with key informants were the methodology followed for this assessment process.

In Maldives the opportunity of conducting this assessment enabled FANSA Maldives to re-engage with the public, private and the development sector partners. It also created an opportunity to capture all the vital information and produce an updated WASH status report. Maldives hired consultant who carried out required research and produced the draft report for feedback and input from the sector partners and the responses were highly limited in number. However, the finalized report was presented for CSOs' reflection and the responses are presented separately in the final report.

The assessment process in Nepal adopted qualitative method for identifying the existing gaps and progress made in implementing SACOSAN VII commitments and status of sanitation with specific reference to reaching the most marginalized in the context of COVID 19. Literature review and secondary data analysis, Key Informant Interview (KII), Focus Group Discussion, data Analysis and report preparation tools were used for preparing the assessment report.



FANSA Pakistan had engaged a well reputed, experienced Consultant, who has attended previous SACOSANs himself. The assessment process was conducted in all four provinces to assess the progress made and existing gaps in implementing SACOSAN VII commitments with specific reference to reaching sanitation services to the most marginalized in the context of COVID 19.

FANSA Sri Lanka also engaged a consultant to steer the process of assessment with the engagement of CSOs, sector partners and the concerned Government agencies. Ministry of Water Supply, National Water Supply and Drainage Board, Department of Community Water Supply, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Water Supply and Sanitation Improvement Project and INGOs like UNICEF were involved in seeking responses to the assessment process basing on which the consultant has produced the report.



Based on all these reports the consolidated report with key messages to be advocated at SACOSAN VIII has been produced and the same is attached as **Annexure 1**.

4.4 Training on advocating Right to WASH to CSOs and marginalized community leaders:

This training was planned as a common action programme for all the seven countries. During the RSC meeting held on implementation of the NVF project, the need and importance of strengthening the capacities of CSOs and the associations of marginalized and vulnerable communities to advocate for realization of the WASH rights was emphasized. The broad objectives and focus of this training were discussed and it was agreed that the own association of the vulnerable communities, CSOs advocating for their rights and concerned Government agencies should be involved in this training programme. Accordingly, all the National chapters of FANSA have organized the capacity building events on advocating for WASH Rights. The specific objectives pursued through implementation of these capacity building activities were;

- To engage all ~~core~~ stakeholders including the government delivery agencies in a critical review of the status of coverage of marginalized and vulnerable population under WASH coverage and identify the strategy and action to accelerate the progress on the same;
- To provide an opportunity for the marginalized and vulnerable community leaders to share their life experience with regards to having access to safe and adequate WASH services;
- To build the capacities of the leaders from the associations of marginalized and vulnerable to effectively demand for realization of their WASH Rights and Entitlements;

Details of capacity building events organized on WASH rights across the seven countries:

Country	Number of trainings organized	No. of CSOs and Community leaders benefitted	Remarks
Bangladesh	3 Barishal coastal Zone-(12 th May), Dhaka Urban (14 th May), Sirajganj (17 th May)	82 Community leaders, Youth leaders, Teachers, CSOs, LGIs, PWDs, Women leaders, Media, Local administration and DPHE	AVAS, SUK and B-Scan conducted these trainings
Bhutan	One training in Tashi, Yoedling, Thimpu (27 th May)	12	Stakeholders from CSOs, Private sector and local communities participated in the training
India	4 Dindigul, Mysore, Tirupathi (19 th May) and In Bihar (28 th May)	326 Members from CSOs, vulnerable groups and concerned Government agencies	Three state chapters in Tamilnadu, AP and Karnataka organized trainings on the same date as a common action and Bihar state organized it on 28 th May
Maldives	1 (21 st May)	300 CSOs, Community leaders, Government agencies)	Virtual club house event
Nepal	3 Makawanpur (27 th February), Kathmandu (15 th March), Kathmandu (10 th May)	91 Local CSOs, Leaders of marginalized communities, sanitation worker, women leaders from urban cooperatives	Other sector partners collaborated and provided active support
Pakistan	3 Mansehra (13 th May), Punjab (18 th May), Sibi Balochistan (2 nd May)	56 CSO leaders, Sanitation worker, women leaders, local Government agencies	
Sri Lanka	2 Avisawella (7 th May), Badulla (8 th June)	56 CSOs, Community leaders and official from Dept of community water supply and National Water Supply and Drainage Board	Government officials took keen interest in participation and supporting the trainings

Key messages from the trainings organized on advocating for WASH Rights:

- ❖ Salinity intrusion and sudden shocks, such as cyclones and storms affect the WASH system, therefore, the participants recommended a cyclone and storm tolerant WASH System to be innovated to tackle the problem as well as make awareness of mass people on preventing salinity intrusion.
- ❖ WASH Rights of the Persons with Disabilities (PWD), the laws and policies mandating and protecting their WASH rights must be widely publicized to increase demand as well as accountability of delivery agencies.
- ❖ Women's leadership in the WASH system needs to be upheld to manage WASH safely and more effectively.
- ❖ One of the major gaps observed in the current approaches of reaching sanitation services for the PWDs and elderly was that different forms of disability is not well understood and hence 'one size fits all' kind of solutions are offered rather than developing sanitation solutions specific to each disability category.
- ❖ Lack of sensitivity and responsibility of the family members was also identified as an issue to be addressed for ensuring appropriate sanitation facilities for the PWDs and Elderly persons whose disability is ignored in most cases.
- ❖ One of the common challenges identified across all the countries was that Governments have invested considerable funds and created sanitation facilities at public places that can be easily accessed by PWDs and Elderly. However, due to neglect of O and M and proper monitoring the infrastructure created has become dysfunctional in most places. It was agreed by the Government partners to increase allocation for repairing of such dysfunctional sanitation facilities.
- ❖ Awareness promotion on WASH Rights of the PWDs and elderly persons, leadership and capacity building to strengthen advocacy efforts for improved realization of the WASH rights, continuous engagement in developing customized solutions and strengthening community-based care and support to include WASH services were the common action points identified during these trainings.
- ❖ Lack of ability to provide collateral security, absence of low interest loans for the ultra-poor are the main reasons limiting the opportunities of the poor to access loan funds of community level MFIs to meet their financing needs for improving the household level WASH facilities.
- ❖ The trainings have resulted in increased knowledge, motivation and skills required for demanding realization of WASH rights of the marginalized and vulnerable at the National, Provincial and local level.

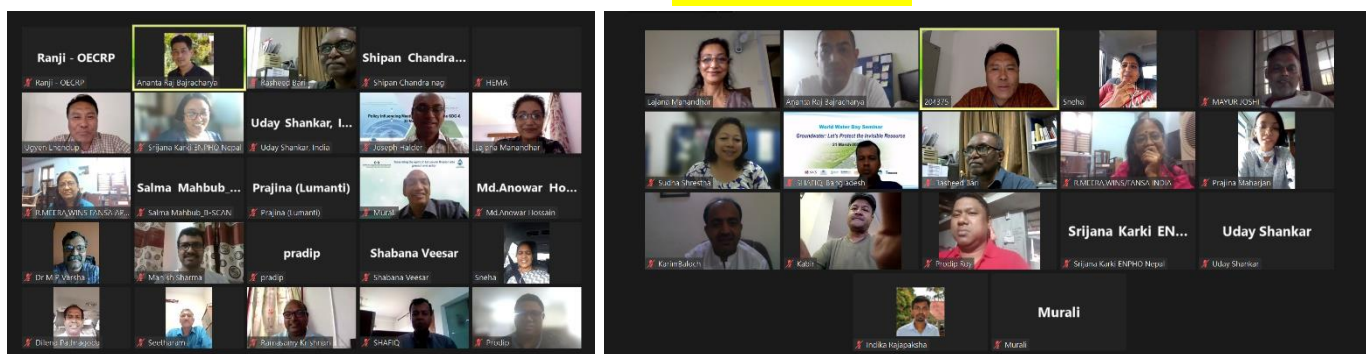


5 Strengthening of FANSA network through implementation of NVF supported project:

- NVF grant was the primary source of support that enabled FANSA to meaningfully engage and respond to some of the key issues prioritized for advocacy action. Implementation of NVF activities created excellent opportunity to build the capacities of CSO Members of FANSA and the Community leaders on important thematic issues, viz, 'Climate resilience in WASH solutions', 'Protecting the rights of sanitation workers' and 'Building leadership of Tribal women in the local WASH planning and implementation', 'Raising the voices of People with Disability', and 'Access to finance for improved WASH services in urban poor communities'.
- The opportunity to organize diversified thematic trainings, policy dialogue meetings, assessment of country progress on SACOSAN VII commitments, etc have all contributed to enhancing capacities of FANSA National Chapters. The learning sharing meetings organized at the Regional level enabled the key leaders of FANSA to develop a regional perspective of the some of the common WASH challenges faced by all the countries.
- Activities implemented under NVF grant enhanced the credibility and reputation of FANSA as these activities were rated by the other sector partners and Governments as highly relevant and meaningful and thus attracted good collaboration and participation of important stakeholders including key decision makers from the National and local governments. FANSA could clearly demonstrate its ability to mobilize all important stakeholders in consultations around improving WASH progress with focus on LNOB and sustainability. By end of the project period the strength of FANSA to build collaborative linkages with other key sector partners has significantly improved.
- Activities under NVF grant support enabled continuity of FANSA's advocacy and CSO engagement work. It strengthened the capacities to be able to highlight the issues of WASH sector and motivate policy makers to increase budgetary allocations for WASH services to improve the living conditions of poor and marginalized groups.
- The process initiated on assessing countries' progress on SACOSAN VII commitments demonstrated the seriousness and commitment of FANSA to SACOSAN process and this had won good appreciation for FANSA among all the sector partners. This assessment process also further increased capacities of FANSA in rallying all the stakeholders to critically review the progress across countries in meeting the targets and aspirations set at SACOSAN VII. Project implementation has resulted in FANSA being strongly positioned and well prepared to engage effectively with upcoming SACOSAN VIII.
- The spirit of shared leadership, mutual bonding and accountability among the members, confidence to plan and implement advocacy activities has certainly increased as a result of the processes adopted for planning and implementation of the NVF Project activities.

6 Sharing and Learning events organised at Regional Level:

The Regional Secretariat organised the learning and sharing events to disseminate the findings from the National chapters on the lessons learnt during the capacity building of CSOs and on the various challenges and solutions suggested by vulnerable communities during the policy dialogue meetings organized at local/district, state and national Levels. FANSA members and other CSOs attended these virtual events and benefitted from the discussions. Further the subject experts from the region were invited to these events to reflect and respond to the findings shared by the country chapters. These meetings ended with key messages that need to be disseminated at the National and regional levels to advocate the actions needed to accelerate the progress of SDG-6. The details of the virtual events are attached as [Annexures 2 and 3](#)



7 Engagement of FANSA Members in implementation of the NVF supported project:

All the FANSA National chapters have taken proactive role and shared the responsibility of planning and implementation of the activities. Regional secretariat was limited to providing guidance, advisory services and facilitation of learning sharing events among all the National chapters and other non FANSA actors at the regional level. All the National Chapters have very clearly demonstrated that implementation of NVF project activities is pursued in the perfect spirit of shared responsibility and all the geographies within the countries are outreached to the extent possible. The strengths and expertise available among the FANSA Members was systematically mapped and most appropriate Member organizations were assigned with the responsibility of implementing different activities which ensured quality and efficiency of implementation despite the constraints of time and resources. FANSA Members are well rooted into the local communities which worked very well in drawing forth the participation of community leaders and vulnerable groups in various training and advocacy activities implemented under the NVF Project. Their linkages with the local Governments worked very well in engaging the local level concerned Government officials in the policy dialogue meetings and training programmes.

8 Conclusion and Way forward:

- Through the assessment of countries' progress on SACOSAN VII commitments FANSA National chapters have already gathered valuable evidence and feedback from concerned stakeholders in the WASH sector. The findings of the CSOs' assessment must be systematically shared with

the respective National governments so that the country reporting on SACOSAN VII commitments becomes more balanced, reliable and accountable. The guidelines from India as a host country of next SACOSAN already explicitly mentioned that the country progress reports on SACOSAN VII commitments must be finalized after taking into consideration the views of CSOs and other sector partners. FANSA is now very well positioned to feed CSOs views into country progress reports making.

- The series of policy dialogue meetings, workshops and learning sharing events have generated good understanding on the challenges being faced by the marginalized and vulnerable in realizing their WASH rights and entitlements and what needs to be done to break the barriers is also identified from the perspective of community leaders and grassroots CSOs. This output needs to be processed and synthesized to craft smart advocacy messages that FANSA and other CSOs can use to influence the deliberations and outcome of SACOSAN VIII and other key policy making processes at the National and sub-national levels.
- Community level leadership building and training of community champions done under the NVF activities has enabled the FANSA Chapters to identify the most potential representatives of marginalized and vulnerable communities. FANSA needs to now focus on coaching them to effectively articulate their key asks and demands at the SACOSAN VIII.
- The insights and evidence gathered through implementation of NVF project activities must be used to feed into various thematic / technical sessions planned for SACOSAN VIII. FANSA needs to prioritize the required consolidation and sharing responsibility among its key leaders to effectively engage with different thematic sessions of SACOSAN VIII.
- FANSA also needs to continue to keep engaged with various sector partners and Government officials who's participation was mobilized during the implementation of NVF Project activities.
- FANSA should continue to plan and implement common action programmes that build solidarity and collective working opportunities for its members and all other CSOs.