



# E-NEWSLETTER

January 2022 - April 2022

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

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## Consultation on the BIMSTEC Summit: People's Agenda and Concerns for the Summit

16<sup>th</sup> March, 2022

Before the conclusion of the BIMSTEC Summit on March 30, 2022 in Sri Lanka, a pre consultation session was organized at Hotel Kutumba, Lalitpur, Nepal. At the BIMSTEC meeting in 2021, the heads of states of all member countries had pledged to cooperate with each other in the fight against the pandemic and to overcome its consequences. In this context, five countries of South Asia would be represented in the upcoming summit. Realizing that a regional level pre-discussion/consultation is important in order to demonstrate concerns of the public and submit recommendations from the civil societies, Human Rights Alliance organized a national level consultation as a precursor to the regional level consultation with the objective to identify the key concerns for the people of Nepal that need to be taken to the attention of the concerned authorities.

The discussion was successful in identifying some of the key agendas that need to be raised in the upcoming summit.

The key point agenda from civil society perspective that was agreed upon by the experts was that: it is essential to create space for civil society in BIMSTEC process. There is a lack of civil society voices in this process and the BIMSTEC process needs to be pro people in the future.

The first half of the discussion centred on identifying the major areas of concern. The following were identified other important agendas that need to be raised:

1. Civic space and people's freedom
2. Right to health: peoples vaccine, accessibility of COVID vaccine and pandemic response
3. State accountability and democratization
4. Climate change, climate adaptation, global justice, forced migration, disaster induced displacement
5. Trade, investment and connectivity (framework/free trade agreement has developed/ drafted but not passed yet)
  - o Transparent trade and trade facilities (goods and services)
  - o Minimizing trade cost/free market
  - o Benefit to producers, farmers and people. People participation: how poor, women, marginalized communities and informal sectors can be benefited?
  - o Investment cooperation and environment
  - o Better trade and supply chain (minimizing trade cost)
  - o Market access and tariff
  - o Inequality, economy recovery after COVID, support to SMEs (Small and Middle Enterprises)
6. Migration governance (Nepal-India migration and labor migration in other countries), refugee protection and zero cost of recruitment for foreign migrant worker
7. Natural resources and energy

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8. Development cooperation, working freedom for development agencies and civil society organizations
9. Tourism
10. Gender, trade, green growth and unpaid care economy
11. People to people connection
12. Debt and poverty alleviation
13. Militarization

The second half of the discussion focused on how could Nepal benefit from the platform, and what asks or suggestions should be submitted in order to make BIMSTEC a more dynamic platform. The following were identified as the main areas of importance for Nepal:

- Nepal can use BIMSTEC to connect with other member states and Asian countries.
- Nepal can use this platform to promote Buddhism, Buddhism circuit and Buddhism tourism
- Nepal can explore the prospect to sell Nepal's electricity to other South Asian countries in addition to India
- Nepal can take the lead on including the Poverty Alleviation theme
- How can Nepal and other member countries remain in open society/open visa regime?
- How Nepal can be engaged in bi-lateral engagement with India and other member countries for the better cooperation?

The discussion ended with an agreement to submit a set of asks to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before the BIMSTEC Summit on 30th March so that the concerns identified can be submitted to the concerned authority. Following the discussion, Human Rights Alliance along with SAAPE and NGO Federation of Nepal, prepared an Appeal Letter to submit to the BIMSTEC. Through SAAPE, the appeal was submitted and was received in a positive manner in the summit. The appeal thus submitted above.



March 29, 2022

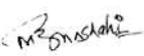
### Address the People's Concerns in the BIMSTEC Summit

We, the civil society of Nepal, had organized and discussed the key concerns of the people to be raised during the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Summit which is going to be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on March 30, 2022. The discussion was concluded among former foreign Ministers, academics, foreign experts, senior journalists, and CSOs representatives. We appreciate the regular convening of the BIMSTEC and enabling environment of economic growth and peace and security in the region. The discussion had raised the following key concerns and agendas to be raised by the governments of the region.

1. **Post COVID-19 Economy Recovery:** We the representatives of the civil society would like to request to prioritize the post-COVID-19 economic recovery in the BIMSTEC region. Many small and medium enterprises have collapsed, so BIMSTEC as a regional forum should discuss what programs and policies are necessary to revive the SMEs (Small and Middle Enterprises) and reduce the economic inequality among the people.
2. **Facilitate and strengthen the Mountain –low lands – Coastal connectivity** in the region by promoting transparent trade and trade facilities (goods and services) and people-to-people connections. We urge the representatives of the BIMSTEC to respect and promote the rights of the poor and marginalized communities.
3. **We call upon all the governments of BIMSTEC to make the COVID-19 vaccines accessible and free to the people including the marginalized communities.** We noted that the current state of the vaccination drive has exacerbated existing inequalities and created new forms of inequalities in the region. Regional cooperation and a coordinated effort to address these issues are equally important. In addition, the entire process from vaccine acquisition to distribution needs to be transparent.
4. **We considered the immediate need of addressing the issues of climate justice and environmental governance in the BIMSTEC region.** Increased climatic impacts had jeopardized development efforts as well as the lives and livelihoods of people, particularly indigenous peoples, local communities, women, and other marginalized groups residing in the mountain region and downstream.
5. **Similarly, the people of Delta regions of India and Bangladesh are facing problems of unpredictable weather and floods which impacted the livelihood of the people in the region.** Thus, we urge the representatives to adopt fast and fair appropriate strategies and actions to address the concern of the climate crisis.

  
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South Asia Alliance for Poverty  
Eradication (SAAPE)

  
Ram Prasad Subedi  
Chairperson,  
NGO Federation of Nepal

  
Min Bahadur Shahi  
Chairperson,  
National Alliance for Human  
Rights and Social Justice Nepal

# 5<sup>th</sup> National Convention Of National Alliance For Human Rights and Social Justice Nepal

7<sup>th</sup> March, 2022

The 5th National Convention of National Alliance for Human Rights and Social Justice (Human Rights Alliance) was concluded on 7th March 2022 at New Era Party Palace, Pokhara, Nepal. The chief guest during the inauguration of the Convention was former Prime Minister of Nepal, Hon'ble K.P. Sharma Oli and the special guests of the session included distinguished leaders including Mr. Parbat Gurung, Mr. Bishnu Rimal, Mr. Rajan Bhattarai, and Mr. Prithvi Gurung, Mr. Khaga Raj Adhikari. Other guests of the inauguration session included central committee members of N.K.P. U.M.L. and the advisors of Human Rights Alliance. The guests and special guests of the session expressed their congratulations to Human Rights Alliance and expressed best wishes for the future of the organization.

The chief guest, Hon'ble K.P. Sharma Oli while expressing his best wishes shared about the human rights culture in Nepal and shared a brief history of the development of human rights in the world and in Nepal. The history of human rights despite being full of ups and downs, he stated that we have progressed and therefore we need to work harder to further promote human rights culture. The role of human rights organizations such as Human Rights Alliance is therefore very important to do so. He expressed his best wishes and hoped that the organization will continue to work for the cause of human rights and social justice.

The inauguration session was followed by a closed session where the election committee formed took the nominations

for membership and for selection in the board. After the election committee described the procedure for elections and nominations, the interested candidates gave their names for nominations. The election was held in an inclusive democratic manner wherein the candidacy was divided in terms of geography (province wise), gender, caste and minority groups. After the elections, the former board handed over the responsibilities to the newly formed board and the newly appointed central committee members.



## Human Rights Defenders Conference

6<sup>th</sup> March, 2022

National Alliance for Human Rights and Social Justice Nepal (Human Rights Alliance) had organized a national level consultation with a small group of experts from different sectors in order to identify the key concerns of the people that need to be raised in the upcoming BIMSTEC Summit from Nepal. With over a hundred participants comprising of human rights activists and defenders from all over the country, the conference covered a range of issues including enabling environment of civil society, COVID 19 and vaccine distribution, protection and promotion of right to food and the space for human rights defenders in Nepal.

Mr. Ram Prasad Subedi, Chairperson of NGO Federation of Nepal, chaired the event. Mr. Min Bahadur Shahi, former member of Planning Commission of Nepal formally welcomed all the guests and participants in the event and the rest of the event was moderated by Mr.

Arjun Bhattarai. The key objectives of the conference was to enhance the knowledge of human rights, contribute to localizing human rights, and identify the role of HR defenders in changing context of Nepal. HR Alliance initiated the conference in order to develop and capacitate the defenders at the local level actively and ultimately promote human rights and foster democracy at the local level. In this regard, there were three keynote presentations and general remarks from the guests.

The first keynote presentation was by Mr. Tanka Aryal who presented on the theme 'Enabling environment for civil societies in Nepal'. Sharing the importance of civil societies in the protection and promotion of human rights, he stated that despite the important role, the enabling environment for civil society organizations is not very favourable. The second keynote presenter, Mr. Ashok Bahadur Singh shared a brief presentation on the

'Protection of Right to Food in Nepal. The final key note presenter Mr. Arjun Bhattarai presented a brief presentation on a very contemporary topic 'Vaccine inequality and status of vaccination in Nepal.' The discourse of human rights or any social issue today is incomplete without the inclusion of the issue of vaccination. The issue of COVID 19 vaccination is not only a health issue but a very important concern for human rights as well.

These insightful presentations was followed by brief comments by the key guests including Mr. Jitaram Lama, Mr. Ammar Bahadur Air, Ms. Sharmila Karki, among others. Finally, the closing remarks were shared by the chairperson of the event, Mr. Ram Prasad Subedi who announced the closing of the session.



## Policy Dialogue on the Roles and Responsibilities of CSOs



15<sup>th</sup> February, 2022

On 15th February 2022, National Alliance for Human Rights and Social Justice, Nepal (Human Rights Alliance) organized a policy dialogue on the roles and responsibilities of CSOs of Nepal. The policy dialogue event was organized at Hotel Kutumba, Lalitpur with 29 participants including representatives of various civil society organizations of Nepal and advisors of Human Rights Alliance. The dialogue session was chaired by Mr. Min Bdr. Shahi, chairperson of Human Rights Alliance and the chief guest of the event was Hon'ble Parbat Gurung. The dialogue was moderated by Dr. Padma Prasad Khatiwada, former Secretary General of Human Rights Alliance.

The key objective of the dialogue was to discuss the current context of the country and the role of civil society organizations and human rights alliance in the human rights movement of the country. Amidst the advisors of Human Rights Alliance, leading civil society activists and human rights defenders, an open discussion was completed. Hon'ble Parbat Gurung stated that it was a very important initiative by Human Rights Alliance to bring together activists from all over the country. Senior human rights activist and founding chairperson of Human Rights Alliance, Mr. Gauri Pradhan highlighted the importance of social networking and alliances in the fight for human rights. He stressed on the need for collective action to attain the motto of empowering people through social actions. Dr. Netra Prasad Timsina suggested

Human Rights Alliance to focus and identify a key message that the organization wants to give to the community and centralize on that particular issue. Other speakers in the session included Dr. Krishna Prasad Subedi, Mr. Gopal Lamsal, Mr. Milan Dharel, Mr. Bishnu Khatri, Mr. Narendra Dangol, Dr. Yogendra Bahadur Gurung and Ms. Sharmila Karki among others.

The chief guest Hon'ble Parbat Gurung congratulated Human Rights Alliance for taking the lead to represent the interests of social justice on behalf of civil society organizations. He stated that initiatives such as this bringing together activists and defenders from different sectors to discuss and identify key concerns and goals is very important. He stressed that it is very important to make the social sector of Nepal a matter of national glory and pride. Therefore, the role of civil society organizations such as Human Rights Alliance is very important in the fight for human rights and democracy in the present context of Nepal. Finally, the session was formally closed by Mr. Min Bahadur Shahi who thanked everyone for their participation and contribution and announced the formal closing of the discussion session.

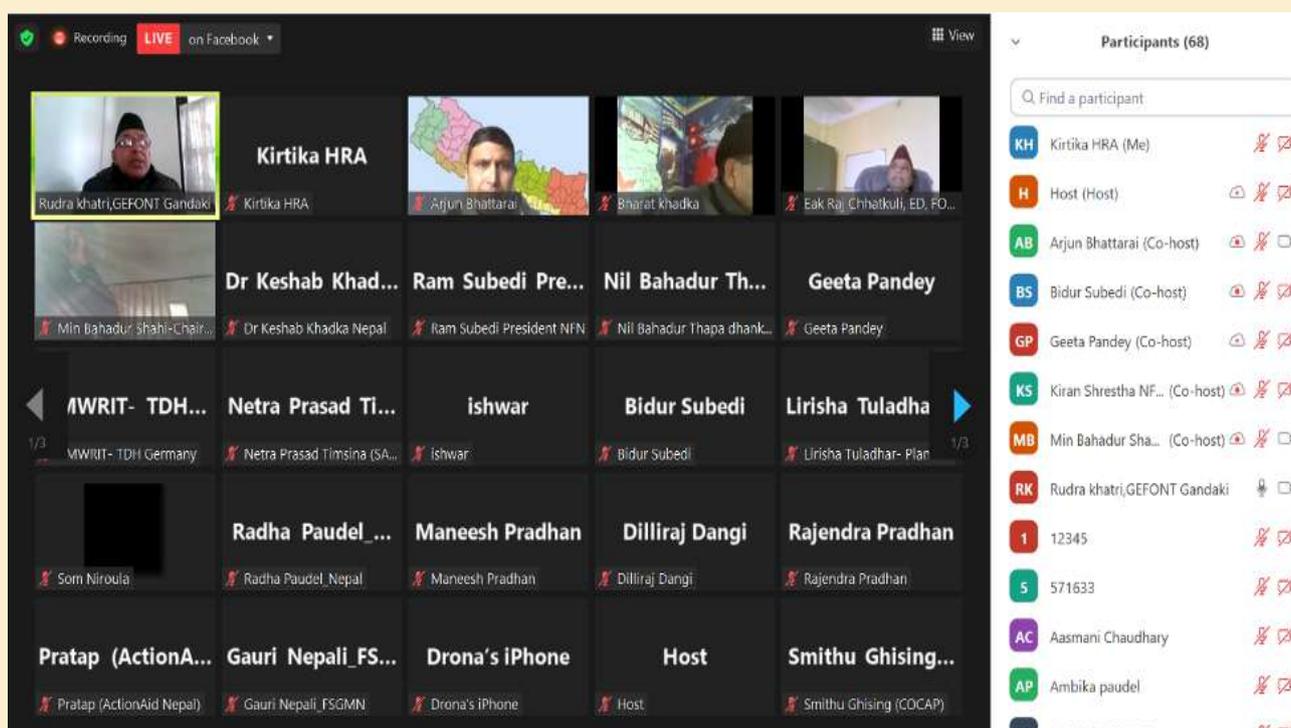
## COVID 19 and Rising Inequality

21<sup>st</sup> January, 2022

On 21st January 2022, Fight Inequality Alliance, People's Vaccine Alliance (PVA) and SAAPE jointly organized a discussion on the rising inequalities post the COVID pandemic. Human Rights Alliance coordinated the organization of the dialogue and the discussion was organized virtually via zoom platform in the presence of 74 participants. The program was moderated by Mr. Min Bdr. Shahi, Convener of HAMI. The objectives of the event were:

- To share the status of inequality in Nepal post the COVID 19 pandemic
- To discuss on the current status and develop recommendations for moving ahead

On behalf of Inequality Alliance, PVA and SAAPE, Mr. Bidur Subedi welcomed all the guests and participants. There have always been inequalities in the world in different forms. After the onset of the pandemic, in many aspects the existing inequalities have increased, and some new forms of inequalities have emerged. In the event of the Davos campaign, considering the restrictions placed due to the pandemic, this event has been virtually organized to discuss the status of inequality in Nepal. The key presenters were Ms. Geeta Pandey, Convenor of Fight Inequality Alliance Nepal and Mr. Arjun Bhattarai, Convener of People's Vaccine Alliance Nepal. Other speakers who shared their thoughts and comments were Dr. Keshab Khadka, Dr. Rudra Khatri, Ms. Bina Silwal, Mr. Bharat Khadka, Mr. Pom Paudel, Mr. Som Niroula, Mr. Ram Prasad Subedi, Dr. Netra Prasad Timsina and Mr. Bal Krishna Kattel. The program was formally closed by Mr. Min Bahadur Shahi, chairperson, Human Rights Alliance.



## Strategic Meeting / Kick Off Meeting (Campaign to demand equitable and just distribution of COVID 19 Vaccine in South Asia)

18<sup>th</sup> January, 2022

The first official strategic kick off meeting for the Campaign to demand equitable and just distribution of COVID 19 vaccine was organized using a hybrid model (with both physical and virtual participants) on 18th January 2022 at Hotel Kutumba and via zoom platform simultaneously. The general objective of the meeting was to discuss about the initiation of the Campaign for just and equitable distribution of vaccine in South Asia. The specific agendas discussed were:

- To determine the areas of coordination and collaboration with SAAPE, Fight Inequality Alliance, Peoples Vaccine Alliance and various Federations to generate a wider reach for the campaign
- To discuss the strategies for moving ahead and to discuss how to organize the upcoming event to generate maximum output for the development of a detailed action plan

Mr. Bidur Subedi, Project Coordinator, Human Rights Alliance briefly presented the summary of the project, the planned activities and the targeted outcome of the

project. He shared the proposed timeline of the project activities and shared the proposed areas of action. The presentation about the project activities and objectives was followed by a discussion on how to carry forward the campaign and how to collaborate with other forums including the Fight Inequality Campaign and Peoples Vaccine Alliance. The presentation was followed by a round table discussion, which submitted a set of recommendations:

The key recommendations developed from the strategic meeting include:

- First, there is the need to identify the areas of coordination and collaboration with existing alliances and movements working for inequality
- For building regional collaboration, the role of SAAPE is very important, therefore a regional strategic meeting needs to be organized with focal representatives through SAAPE
- It is also important to find organizations working for similar causes in other South Asian countries and approach them for a collaborative approach

- A situation analysis paper needs to be prepared, and further strategies need to be developed according to it

- A consultative workshop needs to be organized in order to engage with and develop collaboration with various federations, Fight Inequality Alliance, People's Vaccine Alliance and SAAPE

- The concerns of local levels concerning inequalities need to be highlighted in this campaign – if reaching the local level is not feasible, at least the concerns from provincial level should be incorporated

- Linking the campaign with Davos forum will help generate a bigger momentum, so organizing an event before 22nd January would be helpful to spread awareness about the campaign and to build rapport with the desired organizations and forums for collaboration

It was concluded that the concerns of inequality and the statistics of vaccine inequality in Nepal should be presented in the upcoming event and the campaign should build momentum from that.

## 24<sup>th</sup> Earthquake Day - Build Back Better: Nepal's Reconstruction Process and Lessons

17<sup>th</sup> January, 2022

Humanitarian Accountability Monitoring Initiative (HAMI) via Human Rights Alliance, in collaboration with ARSOW Nepal, NGO Federation and Triangle Generation Humanitaire (TGH) organized an event on the occasion of the 24th Earthquake Safety Day. The event was organized both physically and virtually where some key speakers were physically present, and other joined virtually via zoom platform. There were a total of 68 participants (17 physically present and 51 virtual participants). The physical half of the event was organized at Alfa House Banquet, Baneshwor. The event was chaired by Mr. Min Bdr. Shahi and moderated by Mr. Bidur Subedi.

The special guests of the event were Dr. Padma Prasad Khatiwada, Dr. Chandra Bahadur Shrestha (NRA), Mr. Nilesh Nakarmi, Mr. Rajendra Aryal, Mr. Arjun Bhattarai and Ms. Kamala Biswakarma among others.

The event was organized in order to share the lessons concerning reconstruction after the devastating earthquake of 2015. Sharing the practices of CSOs including ARSOW Nepal, TGH and HAMI Initiative in reconstruction process, the event was successful in not only sharing the past experiences but also provided guidelines for the future.

Dr. Padma Prasad Khatiwada welcomed all the participants and guests of the event. He shared the importance of reconstruction and shared that one of the objectives of organizing this event was to share the lessons from reconstruction after the 2015 earthquake.



## Consultation Meeting

31st December, 2022

The first discussion meeting for the initiation of the Campaign to demand equitable and just distribution of COVID 19 Vaccine in South Asia was completed at Hotel Kutumba, Lalitpur. The agenda of the meeting was to discuss how to initiate the campaign for just distribution of COVID 19 Vaccine. The discussion identified the following activities to be completed:

- To Organize a project kick off meeting

Tentative date: 17th Jan 2022

With core project team (HRA representatives and SAAPE representatives)

Discussion agendas for meeting: Identification of key issues

How to build an Alliance and launch the Campaign

Preparation of appropriate slogan/message for the campaign

- Organize a policy dialogue with former and present NPC members on the issue of People's Vaccination

Prepare a skeleton about vaccination status in Nepal based on the discussion and share with FOCUS

- Organize interaction dialogue with experts and health officials to discuss the progress made so far regarding vaccination in Nepal

- Objectives of the discussion:

To take updates about the vaccination status in Nepal

To prepare a status report about vaccination in Nepal

To formulate a detailed action plan based to move ahead based on the report

- To develop a social media handle for regular update about vaccination in Nepal and South Asia

Website, Facebook page and Twitter handle for regular updating

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