SACOSAN VII and SWA:

Review of Commitments and Progress

Introduction

The Freshwater Action Network South Asia (FANSA) Nepal Chapter enhances WASH governance by empowering civil society in decision-making, and prioritizing environmental and developmental aspects to ensure the right to water and sanitation. It focuses on strengthening civil society's role in WASH policymaking in South Asia, supporting international water and sanitation targets, and enhancing regional cooperation. The Constitution of Nepal guarantees access to safe water and sanitation of the citizens. For over 12 years, FANSA has shaped the regional WASH agenda, aligning with global partners to achieve universal access to sanitation and water by 2030.

Purpose

This comprehensive review evaluates national and international commitments and progress within the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector, focusing on SACOSAN VII and Sanitation and Water for All (SWA). The review aims to:

- Examine established commitments and progress.
- Identify gaps and challenges hindering their achievements.
- Inform decision-makers and service providers, urging transformative changes in WASH service provision, especially for marginalized communities.

Context

SACOSAN is a biennial forum that fosters political will and cooperation among South Asian countries to promote sanitation and hygiene, accelerating progress towards SDG 6.1 and 6.2. The SWA partnership, facilitated by the United Nations, mobilizes diverse stakeholders to achieve universal access to WASH. The study involved a desk review of WASH commitments and targets from SACOSAN VII, SWA, and national policies, along with stakeholder consultations and community reports. A comprehensive review report was produced in 2024 to inform and influence decision-makers and service providers.

Commitments and Progress

SACOSAN VII Commitments and Progress

1. SDG Targets 6.1 and 6.2

- **Commitments:** Establish baseline and targets for WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene). Align national policies with SDGs. Streamline data collection.
- ***Progress:*** *Baselines and targets established. Nepal declared Open Defecation Free in September 2019. WASH Act endorsed; WASH Regulation drafted. Digital tools like N-WASH tool have been used for data collection.*

2. Ensuring Inclusivity

- **Commitments:** Address inequalities in WASH access. Improve targeting and participation.
- ***Progress:*** *MIS via NWASH identifies unserved populations. WASH plans development for all local government units has been provisioned, prioritizing the least served communities.*

3. Sectoral Reforms, WASH Financing, and Human Capital Development

- **Commitments:** Conduct human resource assessment. Implement sectoral reforms. Develop financial planning.
- ***Progress:*** *WASH sector human resources enhanced with a Capacity Development Master Plan and a business plan for the National Water and Sanitation Training Centre. WASH Act introduced. Automated financial analysis system implemented.*

4. Advocacy and Knowledge Management

- **Commitments:** Develop advocacy plans. Strengthen knowledge management.
- ***Progress:*** *Joint Sector Review 2023 resolutions prioritized advocacy efforts. Collaborations with CBOs for evidence-based advocacy. Online learning portal and training packages developed.*

5. WASH in Institutions

- **Commitments:** Focus on WASH in schools, healthcare facilities, and public places. Implement menstrual hygiene management.
- ***Progress:*** *Institutional WASH is improving with ongoing N-WASH data collection and enhanced standards through guidelines and tools like WASH FIT, WASH in School Guideline, and the National Standard for WASH in Healthcare Facilities.*

6. WASH and Climate Change

- **Commitments:** Support climate change adaptations. Explore financing for climate-resilient technologies.
- ***Progress:*** *Proposing a comprehensive financial strategy and integrating climate resilience and gender equality into the WASH sector.*

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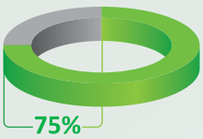
SWA Commitments and Progress



Financial and Capacity Development

Commitments: Access climate financing. Implement Capacity Development Master Plan.

Progress: 75%. *Second Nationally determined contribution (NDC) emphasizes WASH adaptation plans. Training programs ongoing.*

Quality Standards and Sector-Wide Approach

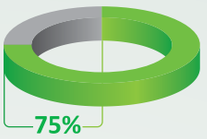
Commitments: Establish national WASH standards. Initiate sector-wide approach.

Progress: 75%. *Drinking Water Quality Standard revised. Sector-wide approach model pending.*

Partner's Commitment

Commitments: Mobilize WASH credit facilities. Strengthen partnerships. Advocate for WASH Act.

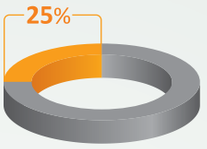
Progress: *Development partners initiated credit facilities. Ongoing capacity development and advocacy.*



Regulatory and Governance Framework

Commitments: Endorse WASH Act. Establish sector monitoring framework.

Progress: 75% *WASH Act introduced, regulations drafted. Sector monitoring framework in progress.*



Joint Commitments

Commitments: Develop costed WASH plans. Approve Hand Hygiene for All (HH4A) roadmap.

Progress: 25%. *Initial draft of the Hand Hygiene for All (HH4A) roadmap approved, and finalization efforts are underway.*

This brief provides an overview of Nepal's commitments and progress in WASH sector development, reflecting significant achievements and ongoing efforts across multiple fronts.

Gaps : *Nepal's WASH Sector Challenges*

1 Capacity Constraints at Local Levels:
Significant gaps exist in local capacity to implement and sustain WASH projects, particularly in remote areas.

2 Financing Issues:
Inadequate funding for WASH infrastructure, especially in underprivileged areas, and lack of innovative financing mechanisms.

3 Data Gaps and Monitoring:
Inconsistent data collection and monitoring frameworks impede accurate assessment and targeted interventions.

4 Climate Resilience:
Limited integration of climate resilience in WASH planning, increasing vulnerability to climate change impacts.

5 Inclusivity:
Persistent inequalities in access to WASH services among marginalized communities, necessitating targeted, inclusive and tailored approaches.

Recommendations

Strengthening Local Capacities:
Enhance institutional and technical capabilities, improving long-term strategic planning, and strengthening financial management at the local government level.

Innovative Financing Mechanisms:
Develop and adopt innovative financing strategies, including public-private partnerships, to ensure sustainable funding.

Comprehensive Data Systems:
Improve data collection, analysis, and monitoring systems to enable evidence-based decision-making and policy adjustments.

Climate-Resilient Infrastructure:
Integrate climate resilience into WASH infrastructure design and planning to mitigate future risks.

Targeted Inclusivity Programs:
Design and implement programs specifically addressing the needs of marginalized communities, ensuring equitable access to WASH services.

Conclusion

Nepal has made notable progress in the WASH sector through various commitments and strategic plans. However, addressing the identified gaps and implementing the recommended actions are critical to achieving sustainable and inclusive WASH services for all, aligning with national and global objectives. The combined efforts of government, civil society, and international partners are essential to realize the full potential of these initiatives, ensuring that no one is left behind.

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