

SAFP meets Nepal Parliamentarians on Gender Equal land reform in Nepal: by Alessandro Tosatto, Delhi, 21st December 2009.

This Monday could be considered a normal day, one of many common first day of the week. Instead it could be the beginning of SAFP advocacy for Sustainable Development Gender Equal Zone (SDGEZ) with government..

'Sathi All For Partnership' (SAFP) was invited by 'Nepal Institute of Development Studies' (NIDS), to address a delegation of Nepal Parliamentarians and government representatives. The meeting was hosted by UNIFEM south Asia office in Delhi. Among the members, from Nepal were Mr. Ganesh Gurung, of NIDs, Mr. Krishna Raj B.C, and Radha Devi Bhattarai, respectively joint secretary and member of the 'high level commission on scientific land reform' of the government of Nepal, the Chairperson of National Women's Commission Nepal Ms Nainakala Thapa and three members team of women Parliamentarians. The delegation wanted to understand what the government should do to give women an equal stake in the land reform process they are planning in Nepal at present. SAFP also invited from Delhi Ms Rajni Tilak, from "Center for Alternative Dalit Media" (CADAM) for giving the alternative Dalit perspective to the SDGEZ roll out that SAFP Program Director Ms Shivani Bhardwaj was presenting to the parliamentary delegation.



Representatives of CADAM, SAFP and NIDS

SDGEZ stands for reaching gender equality and

sustainable development in a geographical area. The planning of each area can be done to balance regenerative power of the 5 capitals it has i.e. human, environmental, economic, social and political. The connection between land, reforms and area development plan like SDGEZ, has opportunity to situate equity measures to safeguard market interest along with creating inclusive growth. It is known that land reform did not result in lessening the divide between the landed and the landless in India. When land continues to be in control of the landed and state continues to govern land administration then these entities also have to deliver distributive justice in its planned development efforts to sustain the 5 capitals within land development plan.



NCW and women parliamentarians from Nepal at the meeting

In India, like elsewhere, women have less access to the resources than men. Even as the 11th plan has provided for 40% of new land entitlements to women, no specific schemes at state level provide land uniformly to women. A study in the state of Uttar Pradesh reveals in 2006 only 5% upper caste women, 2% middle-caste and 15% of lower caste women owned land.

SAFP advocates that resource agencies share their productive assets with women to have use rights or fixed term ownership to manage infrastructure, housing, land and credit individually, jointly and in groups. SAFP presented its work to the parliamentarians based on a district gender sub plan roll out submitted to government of Chhattisgarh. The methodology provided by SAFP is based on building capacity of government, local governance office bearers and community leaders, to be sensitive about creating gender equality in the sustainable development

plan of the area they will administer. This sensitization should be done through a process of generating sex disaggregated data on resource ownership, such that the gaps inform which group of excluded and poor will get what resources to sustain and regenerate in the area that will be acceptable to the neighborhoods in the area. In essence, a base line data needs to inform existence of gaps to plan adequate actions, such that each capital complements the other.

Ms Rajni Tilak's input on Dalit women's land rights in India touched upon the need to plan for the excluded. The Dalit has so far focused attention on educating themselves but besides jobs that have become scarce due to privatization; land based enterprises should also be planned and resource allocation needs to be proportional to populations demographic representation in an area.



Ms. Anne F. Stenhammer, Regional Programme Director of UNIFEM in South Asia

"Women role development for productive roles and skills for asset management is essential for creating a better living" Ms Anne F. Stenhammer 'Regional Programme Director of UNIFEM' in South Asia, shared at the end of this meeting. She shared her experience of being in an active political career, while also successfully trying to alter socializing her male and girl children differently on gender roles. If boys are not trained to cook and change diapers of children in the family or to iron clothes of women in the family and girls to manage sustaining productive assets, gender equality cannot be negotiated. If roles between family members can be viewed interchangeably, humanity may have a chance to look at solutions in a re generative way. Ms Stenhammer attributed the failure of the summit

on Climate Change in Copenhagen on less representation of women on the negotiation dais. She presented a framework of women impacting climate change by explaining how working within the framework of the three program pillars of UNIFEM (i.e., violence against women, governance and economic security) would work towards creating a gender equal society. She stressed the efforts to build capacity to co create a men-women balance as necessity for the society. UNIFEM in South Asia has land rights for women on the agenda.

SAFP requested the setting aside of resources for a pilot to increase resource base for excluded women and men within the context of nation building of Nepal. The discussions at the meeting clarified that planning for equal resources for women and men can be a way to link land reform with development of a district and collective needs of an areas current and migrant people. Staff in government, governance systems, corporate and religious institutions needs to be trained to promote neighborhood care, production and environment sustainability project that women lead to become active participants in districts sustainability. Even if the land reform commission in Nepal is constrained to plan distributive justice at present, it is possible to add in the dimension of development and sustainability paradigm.



Ms. Anne F. Stenhammer stated that women and land rights is on the agenda for UNIFEM

Land reform alone cannot deliver equality of ownership unless skills and attitude training is budgeted in context of sustainable development of area based resources that the women could lead to plan, manage and sustain. SDGEZ pilots linked to land reform will facilitate a more inclusive society.