

National River Summit

Sunkoshi Declaration 2014

1. River has diverse and major role in society and nature, where all the tributaries flows on their own way. Rivers and waters could be managed with the directives based on economic benefits, social and environmental balances. There should be coordination between science and knowledge for utilization of rivers and natural resources and sustainable development of Nepal.
2. Water availability, utilization, rainfall on basin, sub-basin and micro-basin, vaporization and flow must be measured regularly and continuously, so, those data helps for scientific fundamentals to understand the Himalayan Rivers and waters. It is essential to spread those data and information to the riverine, lowland citizens/communities and stakeholders on simple and understandable languages.
3. Many people have not got any compensation for their losses, damaged and displaced during the implementation of projects, plan and treaties. So, it is essential to manage and compensate the victim people, their families and their assets/properties.
4. To minimize the poverty of Ganges basin area and to build more strong relationship between Nepal and India, we should evaluate the experiences of river resources utilization (e.g. Koshi, Gandak, Mahakali/Sharada), effectiveness, benefits and risk minimization at local level in relation to climate induced uncertainty. Different social movements are playing important roles for local resources utilization, individual and communities' rights, so, the states and the constitution should be guaranteed their continuous critical and creative roles.
5. The ownership and rights over the water must be clear to conserve river water resources. Rights of the marginalized communities (socially, economically) and other lives (plants and animals) must be secured by the laws, acts and policies by the states.
6. Certain section/stretch of major rivers which are ecologically, culturally and tourism important must be flowing freely and independently without disturbance. The world class river like Bhotekoshi is an example of adventure tourism activities. There must be essential at least one river system from all major river basins of Nepal may keep free flowing for nature and future generations. New strategies could be essential for minimizing pollution and for clean rivers.
7. The development structures like road construction, embankment, and haphazard infrastructure development are major factors for disturbing ecosystem which results reducing of

water sources that effect on local environment, economy and community as well as in food security. It is essential to assess the risk in future planned project where regular participation of local must be secured. So, those strategies helps to cope against climate change induced uncertainty.

8. Local and traditional knowledge of river and water management could be analyzed. During the planning and implementation of projects there must be coordination between low priorities areas like gender issues, local ecosystem and education which helps to share the knowledge and experiences of local people and the experts. Investment on research and education must be increased by the government as well as need t produce capable experts/analysts to coordinate all those sectors.

9. The state has the provision of the benefit sharing from hydroelectricity projects in the policy but those communities/tribes like Majhi, Bote, Raji, Musahar, Danuwar, Sudana etc. are not benefitted yet. So, there must be essential to institutionalized to allocate certain percentage of the benefits from the projects to those communities.

10. There must be cooperation between people, organizations, institutions of Nepal, India and other countries for river conservation and management by sharing of information, trust, respect and minimizing the disputes and doubts each other.

11. Establishment of knowledge and data based resource center must be essential where the knowledge and data of rivers and their watershed, ecological status, availability and utilization of water, conservation and management and other resources can easily accessed by students, researchers, technocrats, professors, lecturers, policy makers and information seekers.

12. The summit feels the establishment of Independent Multipurpose Commission to support the government for policy making on river conservation and management, utilization of water, assessment of risk and hazard induced by climate change, geopolitical, social and biological status.

13. Rivers are the foundation of water resources, energy, irrigation, drinking water, forest and other sectors so the summit feels that it is too late to form institutional structure to develop/formulate and implement the different and integrated river policy, plan, strategy, acts and legislation. Also the summit commits to work together with all stakeholders to these purposes.

14. Increasing river pollution is the major challenge in Nepalese society. To institutionalize the initiatives like successfully and regularly operating Bagmati River Festival and cleanup campaigns, there must be essential to form "Bagmati River Foundation" form the citizens.

15. The summit declares and starts lobbying to the international community to celebrate 23rd September as an International River Day every year. The summit also decides to organize national river summit in different river basins every year and Himalayan River Summit will be organized in September 2016 with the participation from HKH region countries.

Tuesday, 23rd September 2014