

**Intervention by Mr. Shatrudhwan P S Pokharel, Second Secretary,
Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations at the final sitting of
the 13th session of Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable
Development Goals (SDGs) on 18 July, 2014 at New York**

Distinguished Co-chairs,

Thank you very much for giving me the floor. It's almost 10 PM and I know I should be very brief in my intervention. But, forgive me this might not be the case as I need to share something which my delegation considers very important at this point of time.

In one of my interventions in a previous meeting I had shared how excited I had been to be the part of this Group, looking forward to have goals and targets which belong to all and address the concerns of all countries. Though I am not losing my faith yet, I am now speaking out of frustration as one issue which deserves to be included in the revised zero draft is missing.

My delegation has been consistently highlighting in various interventions under this group the importance of Sustainable Mountain Development and also why it's important to be included in Sustainable development framework, at least as a stand-alone target under a goal.

But, every time when the summary and reports of the co-chairs especially 'Working Document' and 'Zero Draft' came out, the Sustainable Mountain Development was not included. We made our point every time in the hope of getting it in the upcoming reports but it never happened.

Now we all see that it is still not there in the current updated draft too despite the various delegations' request in this session. After that I myself looked back and tried to raise some questions and also tried to have answers to the same. But after seeing all those answers I am not convinced myself.

Distinguished Co-chairs,

Now let me try to describe those questions and the answers I have developed before you in brief.

1. Does Sustainable Mountain Development not deserve to be included in the sustainable development framework as a target under a goal?

No, it deserves, because:

- Twelve per cent of the global population lives in mountainous regions.
- Almost fifty per cent of the global population depends upon mountains for fresh water and eco-system services.
- Mountains are the home to twenty five percent of terrestrial biodiversity.
- It is an important source of Renewable energy.
- Mountain peoples are among the worlds' poorest. 40 percent of the mountain population in developing and transition countries are vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition.
- Land degradation, landslides, glacial lake outburst, and floods have become recurrent phenomenon in mountainous countries thereby making mountain people one of the most vulnerable to climate change.
- The benefits derived from mountain ecosystems are essential for sustainable development.

2. Are there not enough voices in its favour in OWG?

The answer is ‘No’ as several troikas and countries including my delegation have been consistently speaking in its favour. My delegation has been speaking about it as priority issue in all relevant sessions.

3. Are there any opposition to it?

The answer is again ‘No’. No delegation has spoken against it in any meeting of Open Working Group so far in their interventions.

4. Is it missing as there are already too many targets under goal 15?

That is also not the case Honourable Co-chairs as other goals have many more targets than the Goal 15 has.

Distinguished Co-chairs,

As I am not convinced myself with the exclusion of mountain issues from the latest report, now, I am requesting you, as the **Co-chairs** of this Group, to give me the answer as to why mountain does not deserve due place in SDG process which I can give as your respectable logic to my government and people and also to all people of the world who are living in mountain regions, no matter whether they are in Asia or Europe or America or elsewhere. I am not only speaking for my country and people but all those people who are living in mountain regions. Therefore, I need either a convincing answer from you or a stand-alone target under Goal 15.

I thank you, Mr. Co-Chairs.