

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) in Nepal Is there a middle way forward?**

**Kathmandu  
29<sup>th</sup> August 2014**

A one-day round table meeting was hosted on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2014 at Yala Maya Kendra in Patan on “Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) in Nepal: Is there a middle way forward?”. This was organised by the Nepal Office of International Water Management Institute (IWMI) in partnership with Kathmandu-based Southasia Institute of Advanced Studies (SIAS) in order to initiate a series of deliberative discussions on whether IWRM principles and river basin planning are or are not adapted to address key water management issues in Nepal and to reflect upon possible alternative ways of addressing the issues. This event brought together a total of thirty four representatives from government agencies, national and international research organizations, donors, universities, civil societies and media. There was wide diversity of participation from amongst researchers, policy-makers, practitioners and activists. The event was facilitated by Dr Hari Dhungana- Executive Director of SIAS. Dr Luna Bharati – Head of IWMI Nepal gave the welcome speech and concluding remarks as well in the meeting.

Dr Floriane Clement from IWMI first presented a review on the theory and practices of IWRM. Next, Mr Bikram Rana from Helvetas presented how they have developed Water Use Master Plans (WUMPs) in some selected VDCs in Nepal. It was followed by a presentation from Mr Prakash Poudel, former director general of Department of Water Induced Disaster Prevention (DWIDP), who discussed the need for a multifaceted assessment for the Mahakhali 2013 flood. In the afternoon session, Mr Basistha Raj Adhikari shared his experience on the relevance of IWRM for irrigation development and management. Finally, Mr Ravi Sharma Aryal outlined the current legal framework for IWRM and its gaps and limitations, with clear recommendations on the legal reforms needed, e.g. creation of a single Ministry for the management of water resources and the need to establish the Water Energy Commission Secretariat (WECS) under a special act. He also highlighted the lack of political commitment to initiate such reforms.

Speaking in the program, Dr Prachanda Man Pradhan highlighted three critical issues for implementing IWRM in general and in Nepal: (i) Enabling environment for implementation of IWRM (ii) Institutional arrangement and (iii) Technical and managerial tools. Shishir Koirala from the Department of Irrigation claimed that IWRM was already owned by the government, and whether the main constraint for the low uptake of IWRM was the government's inability to implement or something wrong with the principles of IWRM in the context of Nepal. He recommended to start IWRM to meet basic needs, focusing on Nepal's priorities, and expand its scope progressively.

Most of the participants acknowledged that there is a weak institutional coordination and a lack of integrated planning in Nepal for water resource management to balance competing needs, e.g. for energy and irrigation. Dr Hari Krishna Shrestha – a senior ecologist said that government institutions need to buy others ideas as well for the effective IWRM.

These deliberations aimed at raising key issues in an open discussion and share views between different organizations and the dialogues that will follow are expected to develop concrete inputs for policy and program development.

Thank you.

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