



World Social Forum (WSF), Kathmandu, Nepal - February 15-19, 2024

Nepali Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), activists, and social movements successfully convened the 16th edition of the World Social Forum (WSF) in Kathmandu, Nepal from February 15-19, 2024. This historic event marked the largest gathering, bringing together farmers, peasants, people from landless and informal settlements, marginalized women, youth, indigenous groups, intersectional communities, CSOs, social movements, grassroots activists, trade union members and those impacted by the consequences of neoliberal capitalism and privatization. With over [50,000 participants representing 1,400 organizations from six continents and 98 countries](#), the WSF embodied hope, inspiration, and solidarity for the vision that “**Another World is Possible.**” CARE being a member of Nepal Organizing Committee of the WSF was intensively engaged in the process by extending its solidarity to the Network of Partners¹ and Nepal Organizing Committee. The details of CARE Nepal and Network of Partners engagement in the WSF is found [here](#).

Key Achievements

In alignment with WSF priorities, CARE Vision 2030 and Asia roadmap, CARE Nepal as lead country office, was able to achieve the following:

1. Increased awareness of Nepal's vulnerability to climate change bringing the gender specific needs of impacted populations on the agenda of global decision-makers: The emphasis on Nepal's vulnerability to climate change highlights the need for action, preparedness, and anticipatory action, and led to increased awareness among participants and stakeholders.

¹ Network of Partner is a platform convene by CARE Nepal with the aim of strengthening locally led efforts. It brings together diverse partners, including social movements, CSOs and the thematic representational partners, to facilitate learning exchanges, extending solidarity in aligned agendas and promote collaborative efforts among the partners for inclusive, equitable and sustainable development.

2. Recognition of the importance of climate justice and finance: The emphasis on connecting Nepal's climate justice issues and climate finance to the international arena suggests a growing recognition of the need for equitable solutions and financial support for vulnerable countries like Nepal, Bangladesh, The Philippines, and others across the region and beyond. Participants were also able to shape this narrative and their own recommendations.

3. Investment in local knowledge and community engagement: The strong emphasis on utilizing local knowledge and community engagement for climate action and disaster management could lead to increased support and investment in grassroots initiatives and community-led projects in the coming months to a year. CARE Nepal will continue to work with its partners and share learning on better and more equitable ways to partner.

4. Empowerment of smallholder farmers, especially women: The discussion in the Peasant's Forum regarding sustainable food systems and the empowerment of smallholder farmers, with a focus on women, could lead to increased support for initiatives aimed at improving the livelihoods and rights of women in agriculture.

5. Advocacy for land and housing rights for women, including discussions on policy gaps and implementation

“Nepal Mahila Ekata Samaj participated for the first time in the WSF, sharing experiences of landless women, hearing painful stories of forceful evictions globally, and fostering critical discussions. This participation empowered us, highlighting the issue and fostering new ideas to fight inequality and injustice. The WSF also served as a platform for social movements and activists, providing a great opportunity for women and young people to share and engage in the different issues.”

Ms. Bhagavati Adhikari, Executive Director, Nepal Mahila Ekata Samaj (CARE's partner)

“The WSF was an excellent opportunity to widely share about the network-based partnership model called ‘Humanitarian Partnership Platform’ that CARE and its partners are collectively advancing for localized and gender responsive emergencies preparedness and humanitarian response. Furthermore, it provided space for the diverse and marginalized women working in humanitarian actions to participate and share their experience on the localization and gender in emergencies. It provided them an exposure to voice out their advocacy agendas on women leadership and amplify it to take forward at the global and regional spaces.”

Bhawa Raj Regmi, Executive Director, NEEDS Nepal, Secretariat of Humanitarian Partnership Platform (CARE's partner)



challenges: The panel discussion on Land and Housing Rights for Women highlights ongoing issues of poverty, displacement, and limited access to land and housing that affect women's autonomy and independence. CARE could record impacts related to increased awareness and advocacy for women's land and housing rights, as well as collective action to combat injustices against women in informal settlements. The forum facilitated a deeper understanding among participants regarding the existing policy gaps and challenges in implementing gender-responsive land policies. This awareness could lead to more targeted advocacy efforts and policy reforms with proper follow up.

6. Call for collaboration on gender-responsive action plans and capacity building: Emphasizing the need for collaboration on gender-responsive action plans and capacity building of local organizations suggests a recognition of the importance of collective efforts in addressing gender disparities in land rights.

CARE could document increased commitments from stakeholders to work together on capacity-building initiatives aimed at strengthening local organizations and implementing gender-responsive action plans.

7. Role of social movements: Recognizing the role of social movements in advocating for women's land rights suggests a growing acknowledgment of the importance of grassroots activism. CARE could document increased support for social movements and community-led initiatives aimed at advancing women's land rights by other



peer organizations showcasing our through leadership in changing the narratives and investing in a network of networks approach.

8. Supported the creation of space for testimonials by women leaders: The testimonials by women, sharing their struggles and successes in accessing land, for example, underscore the importance of personal narratives in advocating for policy change. CARE will build momentum for action on women's land rights in line with programmatic priorities.



CARE Nepal's Country Director Ms. Mona Sherpa sharing her thoughts on Land and Housing Rights

The WSF kicked off with a solidarity march, highlighting the diverse backgrounds of the participants. Prominent social movement activists such as Aleida Guevara, Medha Patkar, Shoya Yoshida, Thomas Wallgren, Burry Tunkara Gambie, Tala Nasir, Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Wen Tiejun, among others, emphasized the importance of collective efforts for the just world. Additionally, UN Secretary-General António Guterres conveyed his best wishes emphasizing WSF's role in amplifying voices, addressing vulnerability, restoring hope, and fostering innovation for people and the planet. He called for inclusive decision-making, anchored in trust, justice, and human rights, ensuring a peaceful, dignified, and sustainable world. *Media coverage of the message* ([link](#)).

Throughout the event, over 400 sessions, dialogues and discussions took place, covering thirteen varied themes, including economic inequality, climate change, gender-based violence, democratic spaces, human rights, as well as topics related to conflict, displacement, social movements, and media. As powerful as the voices and messages were, the mediums were as innovative and inspiring as well which was observed through creative representation via the use of posters, slogans, banners, exhibits, art installations, live art, paintings, songs, dances, and many more that witnessed during the days. During the closing, more than 60 declarations on [economic](#), [Global Feminist Forum](#), [Peasant's Forum](#), [education](#), [health](#), [disability](#), [natural resources](#), [climate justice](#), [ending Criminalization of LGBTQAI+](#), [People living with HIV and Sex Workers](#), [rights of workers in the entertainment and hospitality sectors](#), [Universal Social Protection](#) from organizations worldwide were issued, pledging the pursuit of another, fairer and more just world.

Key Sessions in Which CARE Provided Support as Expert Panel Members

The **'World Conference on Climate Change and DRR'** emphasized the urgent need to address Nepal's vulnerability to climate change and stressed the importance of connecting its climate justice issues and climate finance to the international arena. Furthermore, there was a strong emphasis on utilizing local knowledge and community engagement for climate action and disaster management.

The **'Peasant's Forum'** addressed critical topics such as sustainable food systems, the empowerment of small holder farmers (with a focus on women), and global experiences in agriculture, along with a critical discussion on promoting local practices, addressing challenges faced by small holder farmers, and adopting sustainable technologies.

The panel discussion on **'Land and Housing Rights for Women'** emphasized the ongoing issues of poverty, displacement, and limited access to land and housing that affect women's autonomy, independence, and education. The forum argued that recognizing these rights as fundamental human rights enhances women's social and political rights, increases their bargaining power, and gives them control over resources. The panel members criticized the eviction of people from informal settlements for development purposes and called for collective action to combat injustices against women.



Shashank Bibhu, FFBS Manager, CARE, sharing his experience with small farmers during the Peasant's Forum

'Women's land rights: Shifting power to the women for economic empowerment, gender equality and climate justice' highlighted on land rights and gender equality by linking it with policy gaps and implementation challenges. The forum emphasized the need for collaboration on gender-responsive action plans and capacity building of local organizations, importance of indigenous populations' connection to land, women's access to

land for children's health, and the role of social movements. The need for global commitments like secure land tenure, addressing harmful social norms, and engaging men for gender equality was stressed. The testimonials by women highlighted the struggles and successes in land access and the importance of political will and inclusive policies.



Karl Deering, Senior Director, Climate Justice, CARE, sharing his remarks on Women's land rights: Shifting power to the women for economic empowerment, gender equality and climate justice.

Reflection from the WSF

"The World Social Forum proved very fruitful. We directly engaged with peasants from all 66 Nepali districts, amplifying the plight of landless farmers on a regional and global scale. We extend our deep gratitude to CARE for their financial and technical support. We especially thank, Mr. Shashank Bibhu, for sharing the Farmer Field and Business School model and assisting with the declaration drafting. We firmly believe this will empower our future advocacy efforts. With CARE by our side, our voices will be heard."

Kedar Koirala, National Director, National Farmers Group Federations (NFGF) (CARE's Partner)

WSF 2024 concluded by recognizing the existing inequalities, crises, and systemic issues. However, it also showcased the immense power of collective efforts within the social movement for systemic change. It encouraged collective imagination, creativity, and action to build a world that places justice, equality, and human dignity at the forefront. WSF 2024 presented an incredible opportunity for CARE to demonstrate our strong solidarity with the agendas of our partners, facilitating dynamic discussions



and dialogues around their pertinent issues, and shaping their agendas in the form of thematic declarations to garner the attention of the multi-stakeholder community. CARE envisions collaborating and working more intensively with movement-based organizations, and the forum provided us with a learning experience to engage with grassroots organizations and movement more effectively. Similarly, the thematic declarations issued by our partners during the WSF will serve as valuable insights for integrating their agendas into our programs and strategies.

Way forward

On March 5, 2024, CARE Nepal organized a joint review and reflection meeting with its members of Network of Partners including Nepal Organizing Committee and received following suggestions as a way forward.

- Developing common and better understanding of Social Movement to engage effectively with diverse movement-based organizations.
- Facilitate unifying the scattered social movements through convening diverse movements for collaboration in shared agendas.
- Support in connecting local movement's agendas to the regional and global spaces to amplify the voices of unheard mass.
- Prioritize the issue of urban poor by linking it with climate change and justice-based development.
- Extend more solidarity and support to drive the local movements led by farmers, peasants, people from landless and informal settlements, marginalized women, youth, indigenous groups, intersectional communities, CSOs, social movements, grassroots activists, trade union members. Invest in women's struggles to strengthen the fight against injustice and connect from local to regional and global.
- Integrate the agendas from WSF thematic declaration in CARE and members of Network of Partners in their advocacy and programming.



“The WSF became a space to deepen and politicize our agendas. Through the Global Feminist Forum (GFF), feminists around the world sent a loud and clear message: to enhance the global solidarity and strengthen the movements to tackle the structural discriminations created by patriarchy, neoliberalism, fundamentalism, and militarism. The declaration reflected the spirit of movements and collective actions.”

Sunita Mainali, Executive Director, Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC) (CARE's partner)

Coverage in Media

1. [World Social Forum 2024 kicks off in Kathmandu \(Pictures\)](#)
2. [World Social Forum 2024 kicks off today](#)
3. [World Social Forum 2024 concludes in Kathmandu](#)
4. [Video: WSF2024 Nepal Opening Ceremony](#)
5. [Video: WSF2024 Nepal Closing Ceremony](#)
6. [The World Social Forum: The counterweight to the World Economic Forum](#)
7. [Migrant worker plight highlighted at World Social Forum 2024](#)
8. [The World Social Forum insists: Another world is possible](#)
9. [‘The global economic system has failed the interest of developing countries’](#)
10. [World Social Forum: Rethinking and Redefining Development Itself](#)
11. [The World Social Forum \(WSF\) 2024 concluded in Kathmandu today with a solidarity march involving diverse participants in Kathmandu](#)
12. [UN Secretary-General extends best wishes for WSF 2024](#)
13. [World Social Forum 2024: Uniting Voices for Global Solidarity and Change](#)
14. [Launching a Major International Front Against the Extreme Right](#)