

Strengthening Capacity of Nepal's Water Users to Adapt to Climate Change at the Central and Grassroots Levels: Working in coalition to achieve a common platform on Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) principles of various water users and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI):

Background

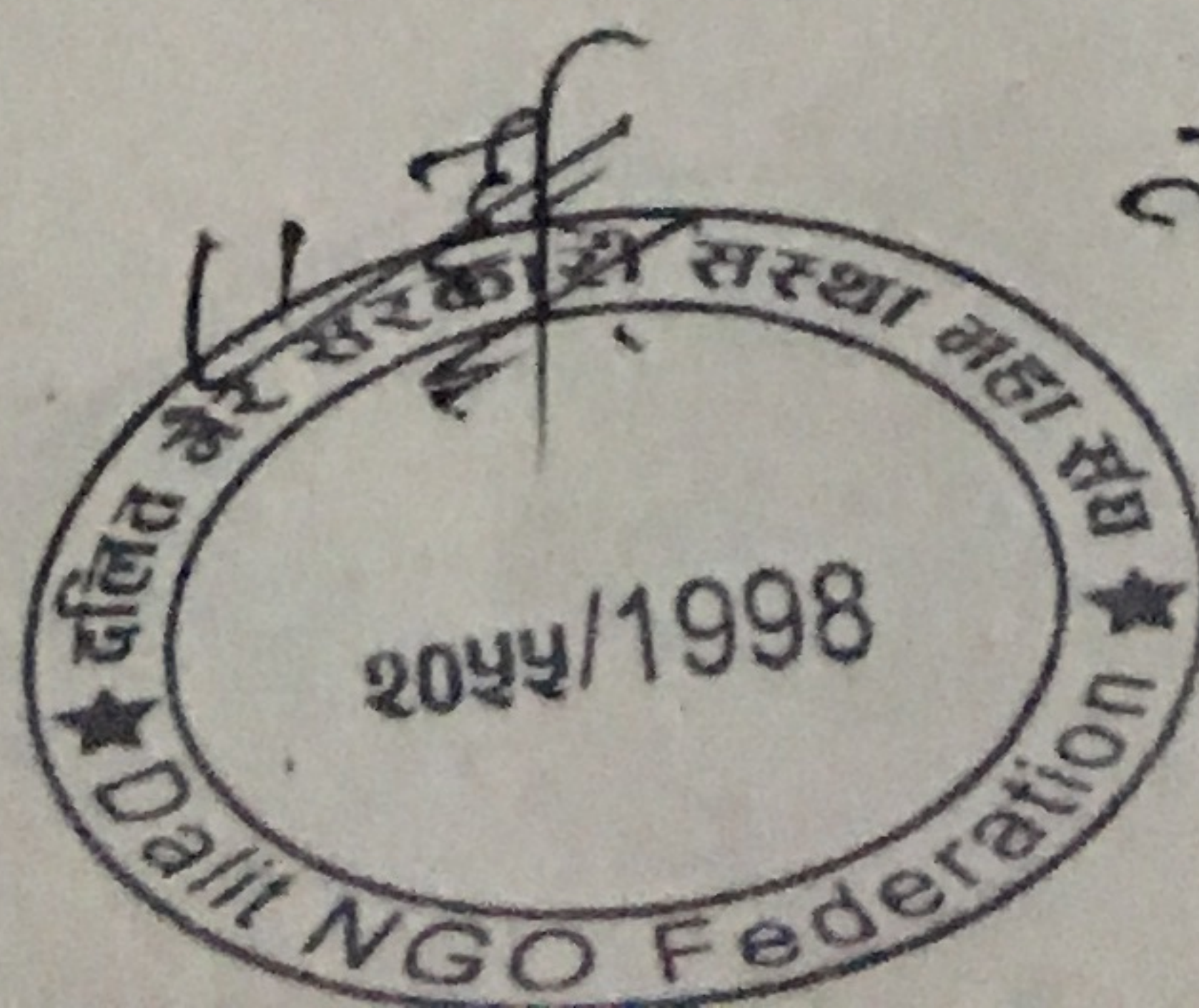
The sustainable management of water resources in Nepal depends on addressing climate change and protecting healthy and bio-diverse ecosystems, which requires that stakeholders have the ability to manage fresh water resources and biodiversity in an appropriate manner. In this context, with an overall objective of contributing to enhanced watershed health, the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN), National Federation of Irrigation Water Users Association, Nepal (NFIWUAN), Federation of Drinking Water and Sanitation Users Nepal (FEDWASUN), Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association (HIMAWANTI), Nepal and Consortium of Dalit Organization Dalit NGO Federation (including Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO), Dalit Alliance for Natural Resources (DANAR)) have been awarded different grants by the USAID Paani Program. These organizations will be referred to as the "Federation Partners," here after.

Federation partners have been working to enhance the ability of human and ecological communities to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, maintain healthy watersheds and conserve freshwater biodiversity through improved water management. Federation partners propose taking a holistic and integrated approach in watersheds to preserve fresh water biodiversity and enhance resilience to climate change. Thus, the Federations have adopted common principles for IWRM with reference to the Dublin principles, which was passed on 31 January 1992 at the International Conference on Water and the Environment, Dublin, Ireland. The Dublin Statement on Water and Sustainable Development recognizes the increasing scarcity of water as a result of the different conflicting uses and overuses.

Federation partners' overarching principles on watershed management:

- Multiple values of natural resources such as water – including economic, social, cultural and ecological values - for human societies and the natural environment shall be recognized, respected and promoted for aquatic biodiversity, healthy watersheds and freshwater biodiversity conservation.
- Healthy watersheds and freshwater biodiversity shall be maintained through enhancing the capacity of human communities and promoting sustainable ecology
- Watershed and river basin management laws, policies, programs, actions and activities shall recognize, respect and promote human rights of communities, including those of indigenous peoples, Dalits, community user groups, women and other marginalized groups and other vulnerable groups from the Tarai, hill and mountain regions.
- Ensure and promote good governance and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI).

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Federations agree to adopt the following guiding principles for Integrated Water Resource Management based on the above overarching principles set by the Federation partners. Concentrated efforts of the partners and other development partners are needed to manage water resources and reverse the trends of overconsumption, pollution and rising threats from droughts and floods. The meeting of Federation partners calls out for action at the local government and watershed, province and national level to influence and implement at local, province and federal level.

Principle 1 - Fresh water is a finite and vulnerable resource, essential to sustaining life, development and the environment

Water is essential to sustain life, and effective management of water resources demands a holistic approach that links social and economic development with protection of natural ecosystems. Effective management also links land and water uses across the entire watershed level.

Principle 2 - Water development and management should be based on a participatory approach, involving all stakeholders including, Dalit, Janajati, poor and marginalized in coordination with local government.

A participatory approach involves raising awareness on the importance of water among policy-makers and the general public. This means that decisions are taken at the local level, with full public consultation and involvement of users in the planning and implementation of water projects, which requires Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC).

Principle 3 - Women play a critical role in the provision, management and safeguarding of water

This pivotal role of women as providers and users of water, and as guardians of the living environment, has seldom been reflected in institutional arrangements for the development and management of water resources. Acceptance and implementation of this principle requires positive policies that address women and Dalits specific needs and equip and empower them to participate inclusively at all levels in water resources management, including decision-making and implementation - in ways defined by them. Any form of exclusion in water access and use will be avoided.

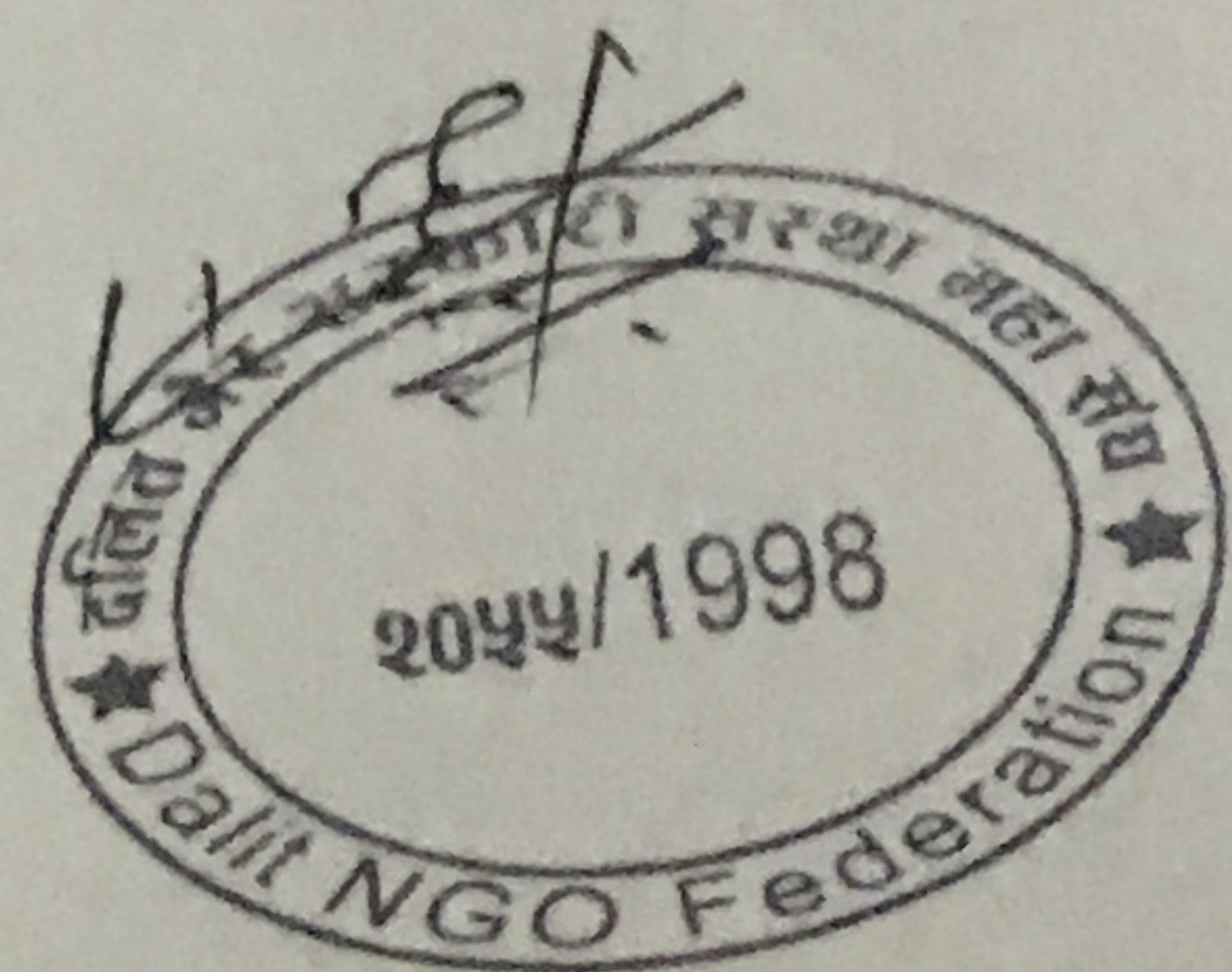
Principle. 4 - Water has an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognized as an economic good and social, cultural and ecological value.

It is vital to recognize first the basic right of all human beings to have access to clean water and sanitation at an affordable price. Managing water as an economic good is an important way to achieve efficient and equitable use, and to encourage conservation and protection of water resources throughout the watershed.

Principle 5 - Use of water in diverse sectors on a priority basis

The priority of water use will be in the need of the community and their consent. Priority the use of the water in the watershed will be based on the prevailing act/regulation that set in the Act/Federal

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Law. (priority 1. Drinking and domestic use 2. Irrigation 3. Agricultural uses such as animal husbandry and fisheries; 4. Hydroelectricity; 5. Cottage Industry, industrial enterprises and mining uses, 6. Navigation; 7. Recreational uses; 8. Other uses)

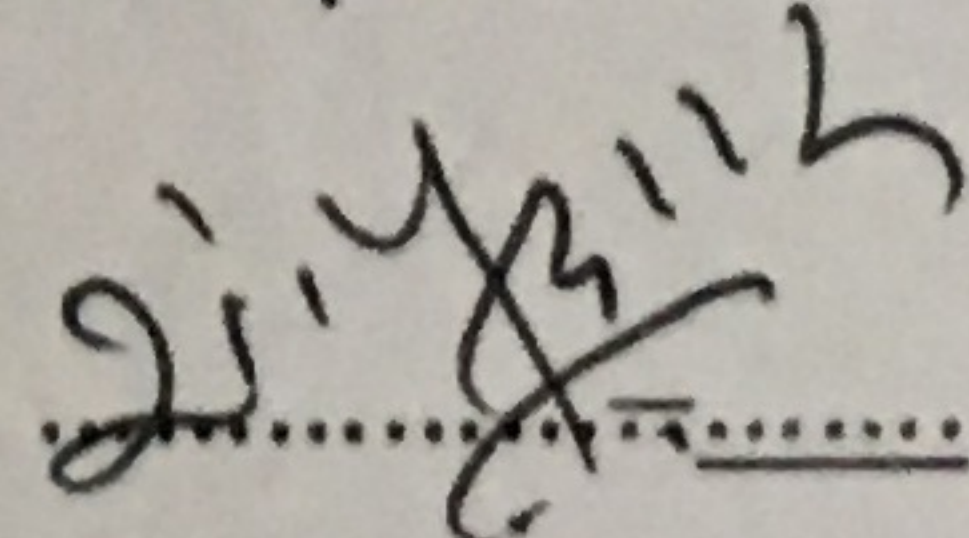
Objectives of the principle:

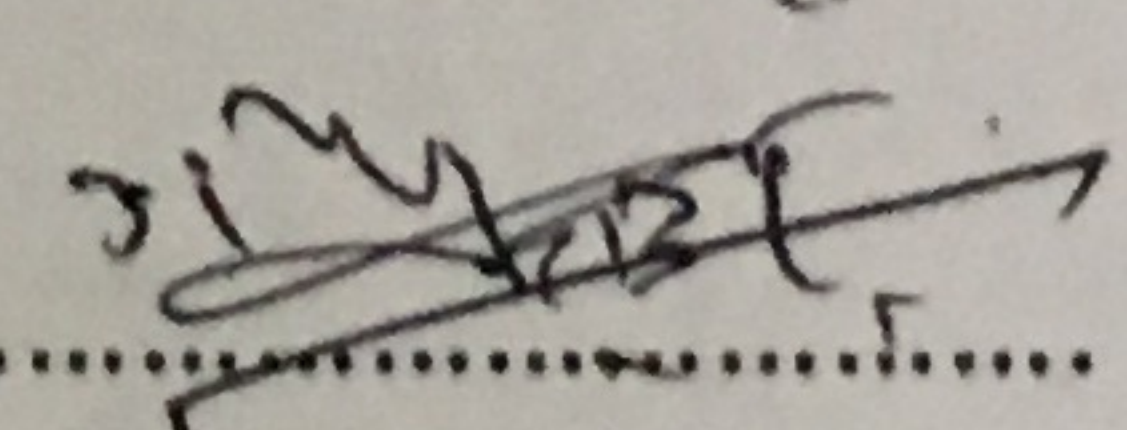
Principles shall be used in joint advocacy campaigns and other efforts to inform watershed and river basin management decisions and practices to ensure the rights of indigenous peoples, Dalits, community user groups, women, marginalized groups and other vulnerable groups from the Tarai, hill and mountain regions.

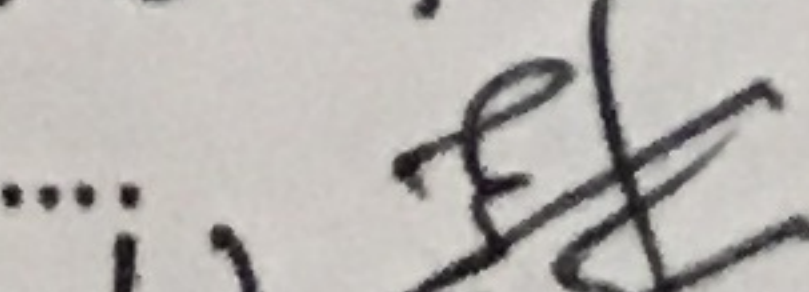
Approaches:

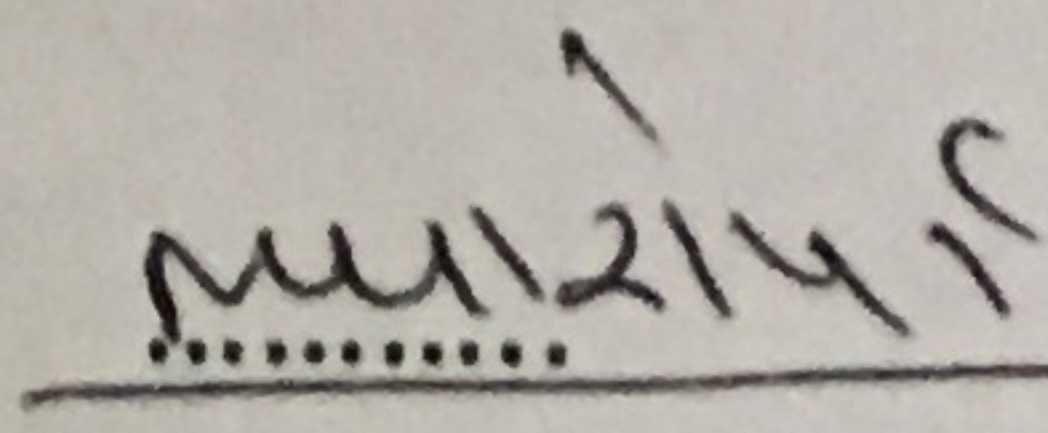
- Conservation and sustainable use of aquatic and terrestrial biological resources
- Inclusive and participatory at all levels (local, province and federal) and all phases (planning, implementation and monitoring)
- Collaboration and partnership at all levels and phases from local to national.
- Representation in different institutions and fora
- Equal access to decision-making
- Equitable benefit sharing without any kind of discrimination Recognition, promotion, and protection of experiences and skills, and the knowledge of women, dalit, indigenous peoples, local communities and stakeholders, including government authorities, investors and others
- Recognition and promotion of Community Based Monitoring and Information Systems (full and effective participation of end users) and proportionate representation of women and all types of caste and ethnicity.
- Respect and promotion of self-determined sustainable development.

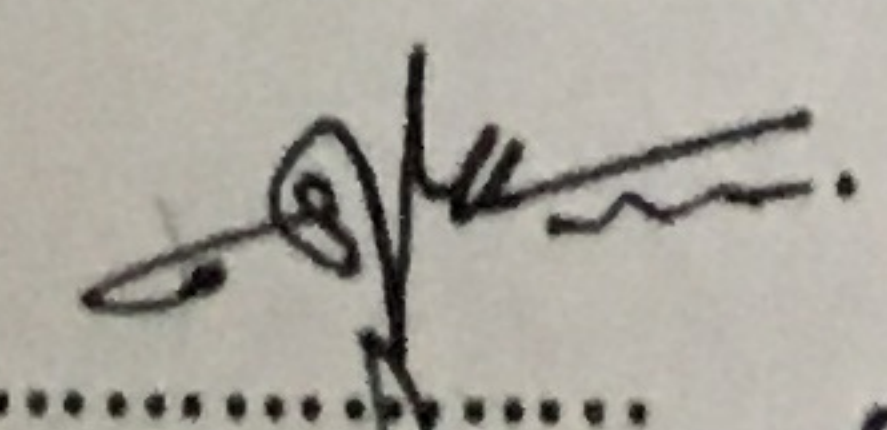
Signed by;

1. NFIWUAN Shambhu Dulal Secretary General 

2. FECOFUN Ganesh Karki, Chairperson 

3. DNF (including FEDO and DANAR) ~~JB Biswakarma, General Secretary~~ 
Remlaxan Harijan, National president

4. NEFIN Lakpa Sherpa, General Secretary 

5. HIMAWANTI Sita Sunuwar , Secretary , 

6. FEDWASUN Rajendra Aryal, National President 