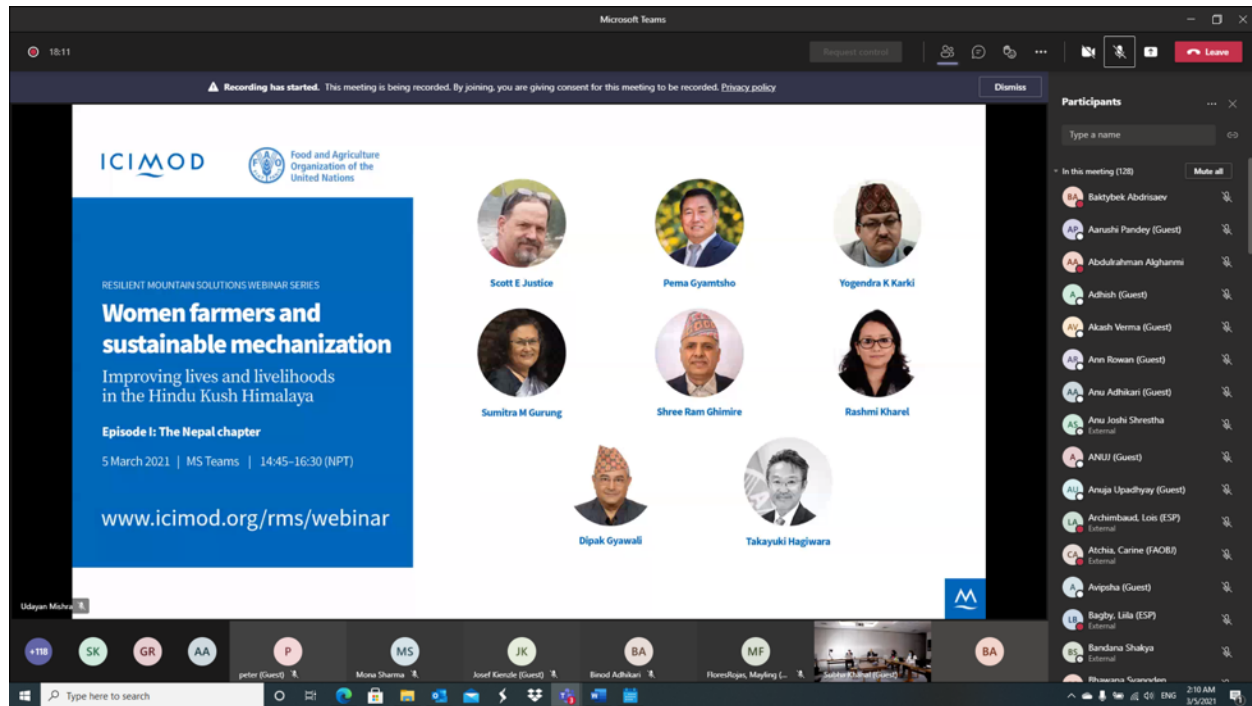


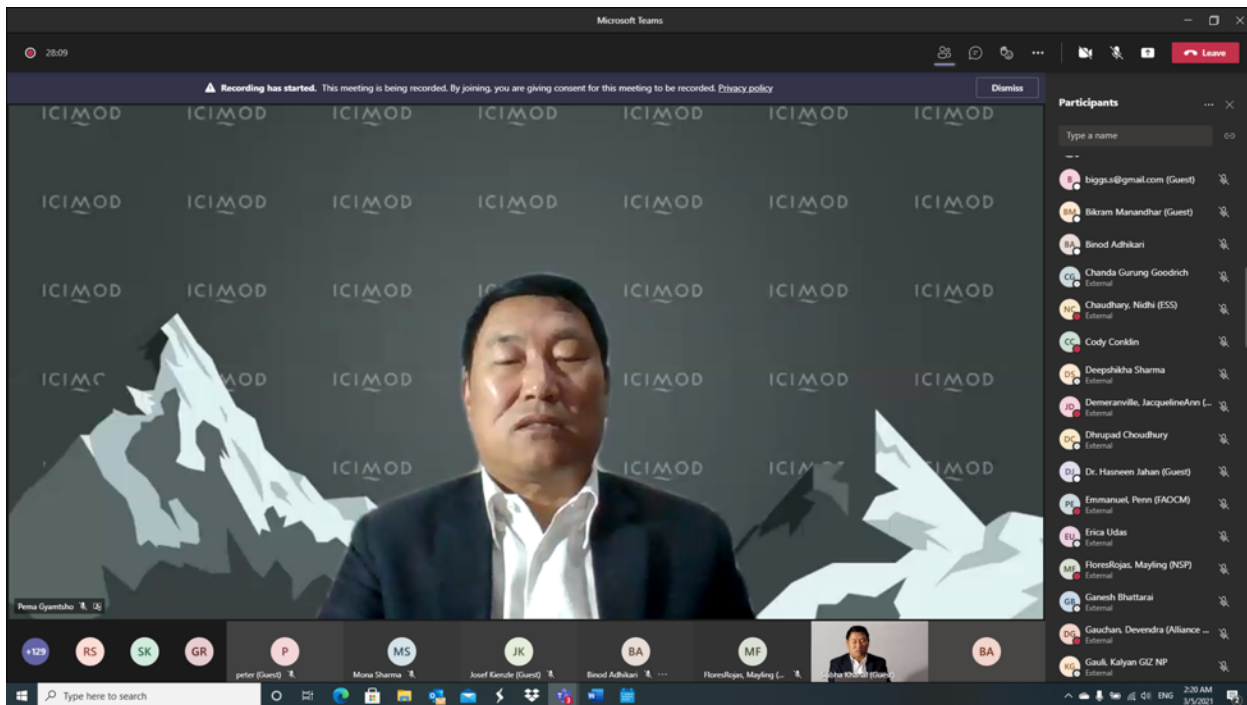
Representing UIMF at the Event Hosted by ICIMOD - Mountain Women in Nepal



ICIMOD & FAO Presenters

I had the great pleasure to attend the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) under their Resilient Mountain Solutions Webinar Series. It was co-hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The title of the event was “Women farmers and sustainable mechanization: Improving lives and livelihoods in the Hindu Kush Himalaya” which is the first episode of the Resilient Mountain Solutions Webinar Series. When I first heard about this event, I became very interested. I could tell that ICIMOD would become a great partner for our parallel event at the Sixty-Fifth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW65). Since I live in Utah and the event was located in Nepal, I realized it would take place at 2:00 am MST on Friday, March 5th. With the challenges of full-time employment I was unsure if I would be able to attend that event and have enough energy to spare the rest of the day. However, what I have learned as a non-traditional student is that sacrifice leads to rewards. With that mindset I jumped in, and it was truly a rewarding

experience to attend this event. During the event I was not only able to expand my knowledge and understanding, but I was also able to connect with one of the organizers at ICIMOD for further collaboration. As a member of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at UVU, we have the same goals for mountain women and would love to highlight these practical examples and ideas in our parallel event at CSW65.

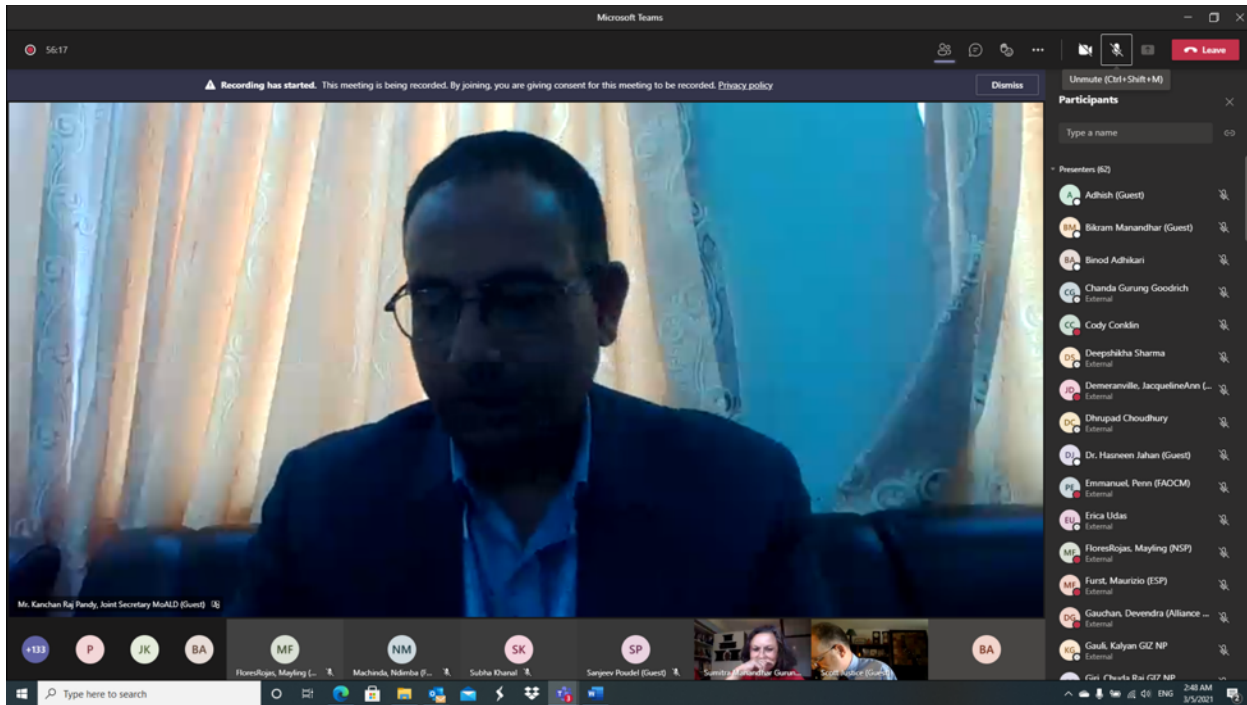


Greetings to the participants from President of ICIMOD Pema Gyamtsho

The webinar focused on reducing the drudgery and workload that women face as a result of out-migration of the males that have moved elsewhere to seek employment. Out-migration occurs when there are relatively better job opportunities in lowland areas than in their local mountainous communities. Out-migration leads to overcrowding and poverty in urban centers, which leaves women with the burden of agricultural duties in addition to family responsibilities as well. The topic of mechanization, or machinery and tools for women was discussed as an important tool to assist them to step out of the poverty-trap and reduce the total work hours. The theme of CSW 65 advocates for women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life and the empowerment of all women and girls. With the increase in mechanization these burdens can be lightened which empowers

them to move beyond drudgery and poverty. However, the presenters stressed that these machines need to be tailored to women. Many of these machines are designed for men, making these machines less feasible.

Current government subsidies for this mechanization initiative have failed to reach women for a variety of reasons. Sumitra Manandhar Gurung the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Mahila Sahayatra Microfinance Bittiya Sanstha Ltd explained that her organization helps women using microcredit transactions which provides access to mechanization. When mechanization is available, they observed that women either do not have the training or information to help them maintain and repair that equipment. Mountainous terrain is difficult to reach so that training on these tools can not always be easily provided. Government subsidies help these communities gain access to these machines, however, mostly men are able to take advantage of these subsidies, because women in these communities are either illiterate, or lack the knowledge to access these forms of aid. She called for better access and promotion of these microcredit practices for women by involving the central bank in directing microfinance to women. She also suggested the creation of a 10% fund for training, maintenance, and spare service parts. Educate the staff on the benefits of mechanization by providing leaflets, and catalogue exposures.



Shree Ram Ghimire, a Joint Secretary and Spokesperson for the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock

Development in Nepal presentation at the event

Shree Ram Ghimire, a Joint Secretary and Spokesperson for the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development in Nepal explained the current situation for their Mountain communities. He explained that traditional farming is a barrier to these development efforts. The agricultural sector occupies 2.363 million ha. but is characterized by low land productivity, such as subsistence farming. Right now, more than 60% of the Nepalese population's main occupation is agriculture. Shree explained that the effects of male out-migration has led to the "feminization of agriculture" which has disturbed social harmony and has led to conflict and divorce in these communities. Through real world application they have seen mechanization as an opportunity to increase labor productivity, and reduce the drudgery of women. He explained that "on average, a female works 15.7 hours more in non-economic works whereas male labor is paid for work at 7.4 hours more than females." This highlights the gap that can be filled through these projects that facilitate this mechanization.

Rashmi Kharel Karmacharya is a Gender Focal Person at the Center for Environmental and Agricultural Policy Research, Extension and Development (CEAPRED). Their project centered on two

problems; women’s increasing workload and drudgery and their engagement in low-productive work. Their solutions involved increasing women’s access to “scale appropriate mechanization” using a wide range of simple and modern tools. They found that these solutions saved women’s time and energy, reduced the drudgery of their work, enhanced labor productivity, and gave women farmers the ability to acquire agriculture equipment from their local government. They learned that men and women’s problems are different, these tools and technologies should be women friendly, and that simple or customized and affordable tech can be easily adopted.

PROBLEM STATEMENT/ CHALLENGES <i>“Increasing Male migration has been leading to increasing Women involvement in Agriculture”</i>			
KEY PROBLEMS 1. Women’s Increasing Workload and Drudgery 2. Engagement in Low-productive work	SOLUTIONS 1. Women's increased access to scale appropriate mechanization to reduce drudgery & increase productivity. ❖ <i>Poly house, Mulching</i> ❖ <i>Cream separator</i> ❖ <i>Mini Tillers</i> ❖ <i>Crop harvesters (Brush cutter-reaper, Reaper)</i> ❖ <i>Threshers / Shellers</i> 2. <i>Modern Irrigation Tools:</i> ❖ <i>Drip & Solar</i> ❖ <i>Soil cement tank</i>	RESULTS/ IMPACT 1. Saved Time & Energy 2. Drudgery reduction 3. Enhanced labor productivity 4. Women farmers able to leverage agriculture equipment from local government (municipality)	LESSONS LEARNED 1. Men & Women’s problem are different. 2. Technologies should be Women friendly. 3. Simple, customized and affordable technologies have quick and wider adoption.



Courtesy of Rashmi Kharel Karmacharya, Youtube

In conclusion, the panel shared with us the suggested call for action in which participants were allowed to vote. The action items are listed as follows: (1) Invest in research in understanding challenges and gaps. (2) Strengthen the capacities of the extension services on knowledge sharing. (3) Acknowledge and promote women-led small-scale mechanization enterprises. (4) Adapt, source, or invest in R&D of customized machines. (5) Recognize & encourage the informal private sector providing innovative machinery. (6) Provide subsidies and access to collateral free loans. These action

points provide a great opportunity for future research and progress for women in Hindu Kush Himalaya region.

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CC Cody Conklin 2:29 AM ❤️ 2
My name is Cody Conklin, I am representing the Utah International Mountain Forum, UIMF, a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University. I am thrilled to be here during this important event for us students from the United States. We have advocated for mountain women since 2011 and will do so on March 22nd by hosting a parallel event titled "*Mountain Women Empowerment Through the Inclusive Student-Engaged Learning Model*" at the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. **We are wondering whether one of you could join us with a short presentation? Or you could provide us with recommendations about the most important issues to raise for women in Nepal?** This will strengthen our partnership with friends from Nepal. During the International Women of the Mountains Conferences hosted in Utah we worked with Mr. Madhu Raman Acharya, Permanent Representative of Nepal to the UN and Mrs. Yankila Sherpa, President of the Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Association of Nepal among others. Thank you very much.

KW Kanwal Waqar (Guest) 2:31 AM
Pakistan is also in your agenda Cody Conklin

SB Suman Bisht (Guest) 2:31 AM
Cody Conklin - this is great initiative. you can reach us at suman.bisht@icimod.org and we can help connect you with relevant partners

CC Cody Conklin 2:35 AM 👍 1
Suman Bisht Thank you for the support! I will definitely be in contact.

Type a new message

Taskbar: 2:31 AM 3/5/2021

One of the goals of my participation was to inform participants of the event about our activities at CSW65 and invite them to contribute to our parallel event titled “*Mountain Women Empowerment Through the Inclusive Student-Engaged Learning Model.*” on March 22, 2021. I was able to do that by posting my message in the chat room for this event, I then received a positive response from Susan Bisht, one of the contacts for ICIMOD. Now, I am working with Susan Bisht on details of ICIMOD contribution to our event on March 22, 2021. I am excited that we would be able to expand the range of our participants and have a voice of women from Nepal included. Nepalese women always contributed to UVU and UIMF activities in the past.

Cody Conklin, UIMF member