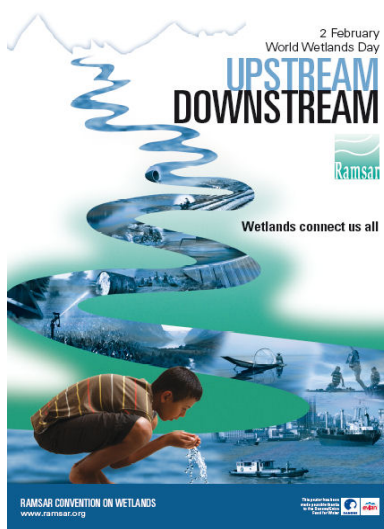


*A Report on*

World Wetlands Day-2009 Celebration

*“Upstream-Downstream: Wetlands connect us all”*



**Prepared by**  
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**Program I:** Wetlands Tour and Wetlands Photo Competition

**Venue:** Sundarjal and Chovar section of Bagmati River, Kathmandu, Nepal.

**Program II:** National Workshop on '*Upstream-Downstream: Wetlands connect us all*'

**Venue:** Seminar Hall, Greenwich Academy, Townplanning, Pepsicola, Kathmandu-35.

**Organizer:** Hindu Kush Himalayan Benthological Society (HKH BENSO), and  
Greenwich Academy in cooperation with the Department of National Parks  
and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), Government of Nepal

**Supported by**



National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC)  
Kathmandu, Nepal



World Wildlife Fund Nepal (WWF Nepal)  
Baluwatar, Kathmandu, Nepal



International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development  
(ICIMOD)  
Khumaltar, Lalitpur, Nepal

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## **1. ORGANIZATION: Brief description**

### **1.1 HKH BENSO:**

The environment of the world is gradually being deteriorating which has challenged the sustainability of the economic development and human progress. The freshwater resources, an important component of the nature and human survival, are at the apex of severe deterioration. Human pressures on freshwater resources are intense and will increase in the coming decades. About 10,000 species of freshwater invertebrates around the world are already extinct or imperilled. Hindu Kush-Himalayan region extending over 3500 km length over eight countries including Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, China and Myanmar and constituting the world's highest mountain is the freshwater tower. In this region, human pressures are more intense as it composes one of the most dense population in the world which has posed risk to freshwater species extinction. In addition, the scientific knowledge about the freshwater invertebrates is limited and is far less than vertebrates for which contemporary conservation biology was designed. This lacuna gave the birth of Hindu Kush-Himalayan Benthological Society.

Hindu Kush Himalayan Benthological Society (HKH BENSO) is non-profit, nonpolitical and non-governmental research oriented scientific organization. It is founded by an enthusiastic scientific community including international and national scientists. It conducts and promotes research on freshwater resources and environment building excellence in freshwater conservation.

1. HKH BENSO was established in 2006 as a non profit, non political, non government organization.
2. HKH BENSO is registered with CDO office, Bhaktapur and affiliated with Social Welfare Council.
3. HKH BENSO Constitution enables trained members to vote for a policy making body of 11 members.
4. HKH BENSO now has a network with Bhutan, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh

### **MISSION**

1. HKH BENSO will be a Model Professional Research Organization (PRO) dedicated towards wetland conservation management
2. HKH BENSO will organize programs so as to built up mechanism of networking between various stakeholders
3. HKH BENSO will enhance community awareness for wetland conservation and management

### **1.2 Greenwich Academy:**

Greenwich Academy (GA) established in 2052 BS is a Government Registered Academic Educational Organization focusing on quality education. The major objective of GA is to develop ourselves as a preferred learning community that graduates productive, caring citizens who are prepared to be competent in a global society.

## **2. WORLD WETLANDS DAY-2009**

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

The Ramsar Convention defines wetlands as: "areas of marsh, fen, peat land or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water, the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six meters." Wetlands are the most productive ecosystem on the earth. They have been described as the "Kidneys of the Landscape" because of their function in the hydrological and chemical cycles. Wetlands are recognized as "Biological Supermarkets" because of their extensive food webs and rich biodiversity they support (Barbier et al., 1997). Wetlands store excess water in the rainy season acting as sponges for flood abatements and provide irrigation water for agricultural production. Wetlands are the cradle of aquatic biodiversity upon which countless species of macrophytes, macro-invertebrates and several plants and animals depends for survival. Most of the wetlands are facing anthropogenic disturbances thus they are becoming shallow and eutrophic with luxuriant growth of aquatic vegetation.

World Wetlands Day is celebrated in the 2nd February each year. It marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. Each year since 1997, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, people of all levels of the community have taken advantage of the opportunity to undertake actions aimed at raising public awareness of wetland values and benefits in general and the Ramsar Convention in particular. Accepting the importance of wetlands, Hindu Kush-Himalayan Benthological Society (HKH BENSO) and Greenwich Academy have celebrated WORLD WETLANDS DAY 2009 by organizing different programs with the following objectives.

### **2.2. OBJECTIVE**

- To share knowledge, understandings & experiences on wetlands & issues of wetlands
- To generate awareness among school Environment/Science teachers and students of school & university level through dissemination of knowledge & understandings about wetlands

### 2.3. RATIONALE

Wetlands occupy approximately five percent of the total area of Nepal in the form of rivers, streams, lakes, reservoirs, village ponds, paddy fields, marshes and swamplands. Rivers, lakes, ponds and marshes perform a vital function in filtering and purifying fresh water, rendering it 'clean' for human consumption. Not only that, wetlands act as filters or traps for many pathogens- when the passage of water through wetlands is long enough pathogens loses viability or are consumed by other organisms. Nevertheless, wetlands can only provide us with clean water if we keep them healthy through effective management. These wetlands function should be undisturbed and there is an urgent need for continuous monitoring of wetland ecosystems.

Lack of awareness within the community and limitations on resources for implementation of awareness programs has meant that knowledge on importance of wetlands is limited in Nepal. Current scientific research and discussion on wetland importance has yet to reach local people. The education of young people on the issue will play an important role in the implementation of any future programs designed to reduce the impacts on wetlands. Students, in particular, are the future leaders for educating the community and therefore their knowledge and understanding of wetlands is important to any future changes. Greater awareness of the causes and effects on the wetlands by this group will also lead to broader community understanding on these matters. Making the youth actively participate in this initiatives and programs through values formation and environmental education and at the same time to promote environmental protection and conservation. This will be a positive contribution towards 'Strengthening the Environmental Education Program' too.

To develop a group of young conservationist interested in wetland conservation, we generated awareness among students particularly those studying environment science & school teachers teaching Environment Population & Health by organizing two key programs i.e., A workshop on ***“Upstream-Downstream: Wetlands connect us all”*** and Wetlands Tour with Wetlands photography competition.

### 3. PROGRAM DETAILS:

#### 3.1. Wetlands Tour & Wetlands photography competition

Altogether 29 school students from grade VII to IX participated in the wetland tour. Mr. Deep Narayan Shah, Chairman of HKH BENSO described on the importance of wetlands. Similarly Mr. Pramod Bhagat, Ms. Mangleswori Dhonju, Ms. Manju Sapkota Shrestha and Mr. Sanjan Thapa facilitated the orientation class.



The students analyzed physico-chemical parameters at Sundarijal and Chovar of Bagmati River to compare the data. They determined dissolved oxygen (DO), pH, turbidity and water temperature. The results showed that the upstream section (Sundarijal) of river is in pristine condition while the downstream section (Chovar) is extremely polluted.



Students participated in the photography competition at Sundarijal (upstream) and Chovar (downstream) of Bagmati River. They also wrote essay on the spot to describe present situation of Bagmati River. The best photos were awarded.



### **3.2. National Workshop on “*Upstream-Downstream: Wetlands connect us all*”**

The one day National Workshop on “*Upstream-Downstream: Wetlands connect us all*” was held on 1 February, 2009. The workshop was focused on the following topics.

1. Wetland and livelihood
2. Wetland and Environmental Investigations
3. Wetland Management, Conservation and Sustainability
4. Wetland Policy, Implementation and Effectiveness

With the objective of disseminating an in-depth understanding of wetlands through interaction of several counterparts and identification of issues that is needed to pronounce for development, we included presentation from

1. Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation, Kathmandu
2. IUCN
3. Bird Conservation Nepal, Kathmandu
4. Freelance Consultant
5. Hindu Kush Himalayan Benthological Society
6. Greenwich Academy

The program was held in four sessions; Inaugural session, Technical Session-I, Technical Session-II and the Concluding session.

#### **Inaugural Session**

Hosting the inauguration ceremony Ms. Manju Sapkota Shrestha threw light on the Program. Mr. Ramsharan Harisharan, Chairman of Greenwich Academy welcomed the invited participants, presenters and the guests. The program was inaugurated by the chief guest Hon’ble Minister Er. Ganesh Shah (Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology). Mr Ukesh Raj Bhujju, Chairman of IUCN National Committee of Nepal, delivered a keynote speech. He talked about wetland ecosystem services, Nepalese traditions and lifestyles highlighting the hidden yet close inter-relationship between science and culture with respect to upstream and downstream sections of streams/rivers. He furthermore concluded that Scientific Interpretation and analysis of Traditions and Rituals for Cultural Renaissance was very necessary. Cultural amalgamation of scientific facts and findings was of prime need for social acceptance and sustainability. He gave elaborated on Baraha Kshetra (Koshi region), Pashupat Kshetra (Bagmati region), Mukti Kshetra (Gandaki region) and Baijnath Kshetra (Karnali region). Dr. Chiranjibi Regmi delivered the guest speech. He emphasized on the importance of wetlands and its conservation challenges. Chairing the Session the Chairman of the Society, Mr. Deep Narayan Shah closed the inauguration ceremony.



## **Technical Session-I**

The session was chaired by **Dr. Madan Koirala**, Assistant Dean, IOST, Tribhuvan University and the Rapporteurs were Ms. Mira Prajapati and Mr. Pramod Bhagat. This session included the papers on following titles:

### **1. Why are Our Wetlands So Important?**

Dr. Bishnu B. Bhandari, PhD  
Chief Technical Advisor, Wetland Project, CSUWN

### **2. Wetlands Research in Nepal – *A biological perspective***

Mr. Deep Narayan Shah,  
Chairman, HKH BENSO

### **3. Wetlands and Birds**

Ms. Ishana Thapa Gurung  
Conservation Officer, Bird Conservation Nepal, Kathmandu

## **Technical Session-II**

The technical session-II was chaired by **Dr. Chiranjibi Regmi**, Nepal Academy of Science and Technology and the Rapporteurs were Mr. Krishna Raut and Ms. Mangleswori Dhonju.

This session included the papers on following titles:

### **4. Payments for Ecosystem Services: A Sustainable Approach for Wetland Conservation?**

Shyam K. Upadhyaya  
Freelance Consultant

### **5. Wetland Conservation Policy in Nepal**

Karun Pandit  
Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation

### **6. Importance of Wetlands Tour for students**

Sanjan Bdr. Thapa  
Hindu Kush Himalayan Benthological Society

### **7. Role of School and Students in wetland conservation**

Mr. Mohan Ghimire  
Principal, Greenwich Academy

## **Concluding Session**

The concluding session was chaired by Mr. Bimal Katwal (School Coordinator, Greenwich Academy). The program hosting was done by Ms. Manju Sapkota Shrestha. She presented the summary of all the presentations done in the National Workshop on *'Upstream-Downstream: Wetlands connect us all'*.

The concluding remark was given by **Mr. Bimal Katwal**. After the remarks, the concluding session was ended by the chairperson.

## **4. DISSEMINATION OF LEARNING'S FROM WORKSHOP**

The school teachers participating in the workshop will organize a talk program in their respective schools to share the learning from the workshop. It is expected that atleast 100 students from each school will be benefited from this National Workshop. For the wider dissemination, the news about the wetlands tour and national workshop was covered by The Kantipur and The Annapurna Post, national vernacular daily newspapers.

## **5. PARTICIPATION**

The national workshop brought wider group of people as a resource person or a participant such as wetland specialists, biodiversity experts, environmentalists, environmental lawyers, government officials, planners, representatives of INGOs, NGOs, CBOs, environment school teachers from 25 schools of the valley and students of Environment Science from different academic institutions (Central Department of Environmental Science, TU; College of Applied Science, Satdobato; Khwopa College, Bhaktapur) within the valley. Altogether 70 participants participated in this important workshop.

## **6. REMARKS**

The Workshop Organizing Committee would like to show sincere gratitude to the chief guest Hon'ble Minister Er. Ganesh Shah (Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology). Also we would like to thank Mr. Ukesh Raj Bhuju, Chairman, Nepal National Committee of IUCN Members for the Key Note speech. Thanks to the guests Dr. Chiranjibi Regmi (Nepal Academy of Science and Technology), Mr. Devi Bhattarai and all presenters from different organizations. Sincere thanks to the supporters; National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), WWF Nepal Program, and International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). The total expenditure for the program was NRs.55, 000 (fifty five thousand) only.

The Workshop Organizing Committee bears sincerest thanks to all the supporters and the media (The Kantipur and The Annapurna Post). The Committee is thankful to all those

participants and friends, including those who have contributed for the success of the program directly and indirectly.

## **7. FEEDBACK**

Feedback is one of the main components for the judgment of the program. So, the comments were documented. Some major comments and suggestions from the participants were compiled below;

- We are very happy to be the part of world wetlands day-2009 program.
- The program helped to built awareness among us.
- Wetlands are religiously significant to us, so it must be conserved.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

This workshop successfully transferred Knowledge/experience from national experts and generated awareness among graduate/secondary school students and teachers of school & college levels on wetlands. In the meantime, people from different walks of life also benefited. The workshop gave greater insight and understanding of wetlands through the interaction of counterparts and site visit. We are very confident that the present effort will contribute in wetland conservation.

HKH BENSO thanks all of them for their time and effort to make the program success and looking in future too. The program was successful to gather the targeted number of participants from local level, environmental science colleges, school teachers, governmental bodies, NGOs, CBOs and INGOs and bring attention on the present issues related to wetlands. The event was successful to raise awareness and achieve its defined objectives.

# **ANNEXES**

## Annex I

### Wetland Tour Schedule

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#### PROGRAMME

January 27, 2009

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**08:00 GATHERING at GREENWICH ACADEMY**

**08:10 INTRODUCTORY KEYNOTES**

**08:20 TRAVEL** (Departure from School)

#### **10:20 SITE I: SUNDARIJAL**

10:20 – 10:30	ORIENTATION on activities
10:30 – 11:00	WATER QUALITY ANALYSIS
11:00 – 11:30	WETLAND PHOTOGRAPHY
11:30 – 12:00	Get back to Bus
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch Break <i>inside bus</i>

#### **14:00 SITE II: CHOVAR**

14:00 – 14:30	WATER QUALITY ANALYSIS
14:30 – 15:00	WETLAND PHOTOGRAPHY
15:00	Get back to Bus
16:20	Arrival to School/closing of the day

**16:30 END OF FIELDVISIT**

**PROGRAMME****February 1, 2009****08:30 REGISTRATION****09:00 INTRODUCTORY KEYNOTES / INAUGURATION**

Welcome Remarks	<b>Mr. Ramsharan HARISHARAN</b> ; Chairman, Greenwich Academy
Inauguration by Chief Guest, Hon'ble Minister <b>Er. Ganesh SHAH</b> Ministry of Environment Science and Technology, Singha Durbar	
Keynote speech	<b>Mr. Ukesh Raj BHUJU</b> , Chairman IUCN National Committee of Nepal
Guest speech	<b>Dr. Chiranjibi Regmi</b> , Scientist Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST)
Chief Guest speech	Chief Guest, Hon'ble Minister <b>Er. Ganesh SHAH</b> Ministry of Environment Science and Technology, Singha Durbar
Thank you Remarks	<b>Mr. Deep Narayan SHAH</b> , Chairman Hindu Kush Himalayan Benthological Society (HKH BENSO)

**10:30 Coffee / Tea Break / Photo session****11:00 Session I:****Chairperson: Dr. Madan KOIRALA**, Assistant Dean, IOST, Tribhuvan University**Rapporteurs: Mira Prajapati and Pramod Bhagat**, Executive Members-HKH  
BENSO

11:00 – 11:25	<b>Dr. Bishnu B. BHANDARI</b> Chief Technical Advisor, WETLAND PROJECT Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetlands in Nepal (CSUWN)	WISE USE OF WETLANDS IN NEPAL
11:25 – 11:50	<b>Deep Narayan SHAH</b> Chairman HKH BENSO	WETLAND RESEARCH IN NEPAL – A <i>BIOLOGICAL</i> <i>PERSPECTIVE</i>
11:50 – 12:20	<b>DOCUMENTARY SHOW</b>	
12:20 – 12:30	<b>Ishana THAPA</b> Conservation Officer Bird Conservation Nepal, Kathmandu	WETLAND AVIFAUNA OF NEPAL

**PLENARY DISCUSSION****12:30 – 13:30 Lunch break**



Securing freshwater for future....

Workshop on

***“Upstream-Downstream: Wetlands connect us all”***



## 13:30 Session II:

**Chairperson: Dr. Chiranjibi Regmi**, Scientist, NAST

**Rapporteurs: Krishna Raut and Mangleswori Dhonju**, Executive Members-HKH BENSO

13:30 – 13:50	<b>Mr. Shyam K. UPADHYAYA</b> Freelance Consultant	PAYMENTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES: A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH FOR WETLAND CONSERVATION?
13:50 – 14:10	<b>Mr. Karun PANDIT</b> Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC)	GOVERNMENT POLICY AND WETLAND CONSERVATION
14:10 – 14:30	<b>Mr. Sanjan Thapa</b> Executive Member, HKH BENSO	IMPORTANCE OF WETLAND TOUR FOR STUDENTS
14:30 – 14:45	<b>PLENARY DISCUSSION</b>	
14:45 – 15:15	<b>DOCUMENTARY SHOW</b>	
15:15 – 15:30	<b>Ms. Manju S. Shrestha</b> Executive Member, HKH BENSO	RESOLUTION OF WETLAND WORKSHOP - 2009
15:30 – 15:45	<b>Mr. Mohan Ghimire</b> Principal, Greenwich Academy	ROLE OF SCHOOL AND STUDENTS IN WETLAND CONSERVATION
15:45 – 15:50	Representative of School teachers	EFFECTIVENESS OF NATIONAL WORKSHOP
15:50 – 16:00	<b>Mr. Bimal Kumar KATWAL</b> Academic Coordinator, Greenwich Academy	VOTE OF THANKS

## 16:00 CLOSING OF WORKSHOP

Tea/coffee/ Snacks

*Workshop on*  
**“Upstream-Downstream:  
Wetlands connect us all”**

*Organized by*  
Hindu Kush Himalayan Benthological Society  
(HKH BENSO) and Greenwich Academy



*Securing fresh water for future.....*

*Supported by:*



ICIMOD

*In cooperation with*  
Department of National Parks and Wildlife  
Conservation (DNPWC), Government of Nepal  
Venue: Greenwich Academy, Pepsicola, Kathmandu-35  
Date : February 1, 2009



## ANNEX IV

### Summary of the presentations

#### **Why are Our Wetlands So Important?**

##### Summary

The presentation on “Why are our wetlands so important?” was addressed by Dr. Bishnu Bhandari from IUCN Nepal. He stated that water is the lifeline of a wetland and wetlands are the supermarket of biological resources. He also discussed about Ecosystem Services like Provisioning, Regulating, Cultural and Support Services provided by wetlands and wetlands are target of 4D's, Diversion, Drainage, Dredging out and Development. Illustrating wetlands are regarded as the best places for Rice paddies, Fisheries, Real state pieces and Dumping sites, he mentioned the global importance of our wetlands and the Ramsar Convention. He finally assumed that wetlands are continuously lost due to pollution, over use, invasion species, encroachment and so on although wetland is an inter-disciplinary subject and is the place for creations of all forms of life.

#### **Wetlands Research in Nepal – *A biological perspective***

##### Summary

Mr. Deep Narayan Shah stated that the earth's ecosystems are strongly affected by anthropogenic pressures and these increasing pressures result in destruction, fragmentation and degradation of natural habitats and a reduction of global biodiversity at unprecedented rates. This biodiversity crisis will dramatically affect human well-being. However, a global crisis may still be averted if radical steps are taken towards sustainability. To achieve sustainable development without depleting ecological capital, it is essential to periodically monitor the state of the environment and provide early-warning indicators of dysfunction, as well as timely identification of probable sources of stress. The assessment of ecosystem status involves the articulation of the linkages between human activity, regional and global environmental change, reduction in ecological services and the consequences for human health, economic opportunity and human communities.

#### **Wetlands and Birds**

##### Summary

Ms. Ishana Thapa of BCN mentioned that among 863 bird species of Nepal nearly 200 species are wetland dependent. Lowland wetlands are especially important for water birds. Birds are the symbol of wetland conservation. 60 % of the wetland birds are nationally threatened of which 10% are critically endangered. Koshi Wetlands (Koshi Tappu and Koshi Barrage), Ghodaghodi

Lake Complex, Jagdishpur Reservoir, Bees Hazaari Tal, Rara Lake, Pokhara Lake Complex are some of the important wetlands for birds. Overexploitation of wetland resources mainly over fishing is the major problem for conservation of wetland birds. Complete ban on fishing in wetlands that are of international or national significance as well as strict rules, regulation and enforcement are some of the way forward.

### **Payments for Ecosystem Services: A Sustainable Approach for Wetland Conservation?**

#### **Summary**

The title on “Payments for Ecosystem Services: A Sustainable Approach for Wetland Conservation?” was presented by Mr. Shyam K. Upadhyaya from DNPECD. He shared out among participants about traditional approach to wetlands conservation, Ecosystem services (such as carbon sequestration, watershed services, Biodiversity, Eco-tourism, Water purification etc) and economics of Ecosystems Services. He also elaborated the ecosystem services provided by wetlands with the example of Kulekhani Watershed and demonstrated the status of Kulekhani Reservoir after and before using the techniques of Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES). He finally concluded that Payments for Ecosystem Services approach could be applied for Wetland conservation.

### **Wetland Conservation Policy in Nepal**

#### **Summary**

Karun Pandit, Assistant Conservation Education Officer from Department of National Parks & Wildlife Conservation, presented on the title “Wetland Conservation Policy in Nepal”. On his presentation, he described about Ramsar Convention and the Nine Ramsar sites of Nepal. He mentioned that some of the wetlands such as Titi Lake, Thulo Pokhari, Panch Pokhari, etc within & outside the PAs have been surveyed by DNPWC in collaboration with conservation partners. He elucidated major legal and policy frameworks related to wetlands such as Nepal Biodiversity Strategy, 2002, National Wetland Policy, 2003, National Parks & Wildlife Conservation Act 1973, Water Resources Act, 1992 and so on. He also demonstrated about wetland Management by taking an example of Bees-Hazari Lake, a Ramsar site, from the Buffer Zone of Chitwan National Park. For the conservation and Sustainable Management of wetlands, he focused on National inventory & surveying of wetlands, engagement of local people and Payment for ecological services from wetlands and so on.

## Annex V

### Photographs of National Workshop









