

# **PART I: SEMINAR INITIATION**

## WELCOME ADDRESS

*RAJAN SUBEDI<sup>1</sup>*

Respectable Chairman Dr. Trailokya Nath Upraiti, honorable keynote speakers Prof. Elinor Ostrom, Prof. Norman Uphoff and Dr. Robert Yoder, distinguished guests, paper presenters, participants, ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of Farmer Managed Irrigation Systems (FMIS) Promotion Trust, I have the privilege to welcome you all to the Second International Seminar on FMIS in the Changed Context in the capital city of Nepal. Nepal is well known for its tradition of collective management of common resources. FMIS spread over the country provide irrigation services to more than two-third of the country's total irrigated area. Recognizing the existence of these FMIS as the provider of food and institutional security in the country, His majesty's Government of Nepal started FMIS support programs in late eighties. Now the big question is, is it really helping FMIS in facing the challenges in the changed context?

In the global context, the FMIS is influenced by changes in local social system, national and international economic environment and depleting natural resource base. Factors that emerged from such changes also comprise first, the necessity to undertake Integrated Water Resource Management so that the scarce resource is better utilized across the sectors; and second, the recognition of the role of the individuals and communities in water resources management which has an implication on water as basic human rights.

Thus, the future prospects and the role of FMIS in this changing context has been our concern. By sharing each other's experience in this seminar, we hope to learn more on future direction of FMIS development.

We have about 130 participants including 49 from 14 countries abroad. The participant's countries include: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Germany, India, Laos, New Zealand, Nepal, The Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States of America and Vietnam.

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<sup>1</sup> Member Secretary, FMIS Promotion Trust, Nepal.

To our distinguished participants, particularly those from abroad, we wish you all very pleasant, comfortable and memorable stay in our country.

We heartily welcome you all again. Thank you.

## **THEME OF THE SEMINAR**

*PRACHANDA PRADHAN<sup>1</sup>*

It is my honor to introduce you the theme of the seminar, which will be our subject of discussion for next two days. We have chosen "Farmer Managed Irrigation Systems in the Changed Context" as our theme for this second international seminar. Two years ago, we organized the first international seminar on "Challenges to Farmer Managed Irrigation Systems".

The objective of the seminar this time is to share ideas, experiences and information on the fast changing context of Farmer Managed Irrigation Systems (FMIS). Many of the countries that have been participating in this international seminar have recognizable share of FMIS in contributing for the food security of those countries.

We are very much pleased to have among us Dr. Lin Ostrom, Dr. Norman Uphoff and Dr. Robert Yoder. These people have contributed a lot to understand the dynamics of the FMIS. They have helped promote the knowledge of FMIS.

Similarly we have participants from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Switzerland, Norway and other countries. I want to mention specially Deutsche Stiftung fur Internationale Entwicklung (DSE), and Mr. Franz Heim who took interest to bring participants from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in this seminar and to undertake study tour to observe some of the FMIS in Nepal. I want to recognize my senior colleagues here Charles Abernethy, Jitti, Mongkolnchaiarunya, and John Skutsch. We are very much pleased to have our first awardee Dr. Linden Vincent with us.

We have here senior officers from Department of Irrigation. Their participation has made the theme even more important. Currently Nepal is preparing the Tenth Plan. The 10<sup>th</sup> Five-year Plan of Nepal is expected to give special attention to FMIS. This forum brings academics, practitioners, NGOs and researchers together to discuss the changing context of the FMIS.

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<sup>1</sup> Chairman, FMIS Promotion Trust, Nepal.

We have provided equal opportunity to persons who are interested in FMIS to participate in this seminar. We posted information about the seminar in five Internet websites and also in a daily newspaper in Kathmandu. We have many requests for participation. Unfortunately, we were not in the position to support travel to those participants. The thing that has encouraged us tremendously is that those participants who have come here are on their own. Their active participation in this seminar proves that FMIS in the changed context is a very important theme, and many participants are interested to share their experiences.

FMIS is for us a symbol of democratic value because the local community manages the resources. We also take it as our national heritage because it has long history; it has helped foster unique culture of Nepal. Still the share of FMIS in the irrigated agriculture in Nepal is almost 70%. It has very important role to play in the Nepalese social and economic life of the people. They are still vibrant organizations in Nepal. If FMIS is to survive and be vibrant as they used to be, they have to be adaptable in the changing context. Appropriate policy of the government to promote FMIS will be very important. In the same way, it is important to see how FMIS can change its role and enter into new fields and new economic arena.

Changes in local social system, national and international economic environment and natural resource base including overall water scarcity influence the FMIS context. Even those old FMIS need to go through an organizational change in order to match the organization with the democratic process and economic challenges of the social system. Examples of such transformation can be found in rehabilitated FMIS.

It is also equally important to look at the opportunities by those FMIS beyond water focused activities. They need to widen their horizon and enter into more of those economic enterprises and take the opportunity to exploit more benefits to the members of the system. Can FMIS play a role in poverty alleviation program?

Sustainable utilization of water and developments of pluralistic society and self-governance have played their role in the changed FMIS context as well. Two factors have come out prominently: first, the necessity to undertake Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) so that the scarce resource is better utilized across the sectors; second, the recognition of the role of the individuals and communities for autonomous and decentralized water resource management. The recognition of the role of

the individuals and communities in water resources management has brought to the fore the question on water as basic human rights.

I sincerely believe that this seminar will be able to bring out the issues of FMIS in the changed context. We sincerely hope that at the end of the seminar, we will be able to get direction for our future activities.

## FMIS PROMOTION TRUST IN 2000 - 2002

UPENDRA GAUTAM<sup>1</sup>

It is my privilege to engage in dialogue with you on this auspicious morning. This morning, Kathmandu looks prettier, and more pensive. Yes, there was some drizzle last evening. But more important perhaps was your arrival in Kathmandu. Wherever friends of Farmer Managed Irrigation Systems (FMIS) go, they do bring some good omen.

We at the FMIS Promotion Trust are indeed acutely aware of the beauty and character of FMIS. What we feel though is that, despite this awareness, we have not adequately been able to understand the risks FMIS have been facing in a State, which has largely been rendered disable. A disabled State can not properly work and negotiate with the bilateral counterparts and the multi-lateral financing and trade regimes. It is unable to appreciate the indigenous heritage and strengths of its own people, and plan to systematically enhance its national capability. The best a disabled State can offer is a gigantic opportunity to destroy or radically reform itself.

I am referring to the disabled State as an overarching variable to the change-context of FMIS. No doubt, external interest or regime dominates any disabled State's policy, institutions, rules, plans and programs. Indigenous institutions such as FMIS's struggle, therefore, need to encompass the State to contribute in developing it into an enabling State to continue protect and promote FMIS. Of late, we have tried to focus the Trust efforts and program inputs on this particular change-context of FMIS. This august gathering may agree with these words of wisdom: *the best way to predict the future is to create it today.*

Diversification of water user association functions, multiple use of water and upstream and downstream linkages in a sub-watershed, mechanism for communication with FMIS, new FMIS and their dynamism, recrafting role of education for FMIS knowledge promotion have been the key research areas of the Trust activities in these years. The Trust has been organizing these research activities in collaboration with independent inter-disciplinary group of young professionals, the bare foot researchers at the grassroots, senior professionals in the government and private sector

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<sup>1</sup> Vice-chairman, FMIS Promotion Trust, Nepal.

agencies, Kathmandu District Unit of National Federation of Water User Association, and Nepal Engineering College/Pokhara University. In addition to these research activities, the Trust holds best practicing FMIS award program, workshop/training, dialogue and seminars to promote FMIS knowledge and skills, and share experience and information about FMIS.

As a number of the Trust research and associated activities is being presented in this seminar, I do not need to further dwell on them. Nevertheless, I would like to mention about the best practicing FMIS award for the years 2000 and 1999. For the year 2000 best practicing FMIS award the theme selected was *resource mobilization for irrigation system operation and maintenance*. *Chhattis Mauja* FMIS in Rupandehi district won this award. It annually mobilized NRs. 745 per hectare for the irrigation system operation and maintenance. In this ceremony, I recognize Mr. Keshab Neupane, representative of *Chhattis Mauja* FMIS, and Mr. Dilli Ram Neupane, representative of *Bhutlung* FMIS in Jhapa district, the best practicing FMIS on the theme of *conservation measures for irrigation system* for the year 1999.

For the year 2001, we were not able to complete the planned award administration process. This was basically due to the continued poor response of FMIS. The theme selected for 2001 best practicing FMIS was *diversification of activities for FMIS sustainability*. The poor response of FMIS despite their most extensive presence and critical contribution in the country's agricultural political economy was indicative of complete lack of a regular communication mechanism between FMIS and the external assistance agencies.

Therefore, one of the priority areas of the Trust activity support, since 2001, has been communication. A key lesson that we have learned in all these years is: *A two-way regular communication with FMIS was a prerequisite for enhancing their capacity to learn, share and transfer irrigation management knowledge and skills. External assistance to FMIS not supported by a regular communication mechanism was like an unknown value, which is not accountable. As the value is not accountable, it is unlikely to be sustainable.*

For enhancing the communication on FMIS to the common people, the Trust has published a booklet entitled *Kisan Byabasthit Sinchai ko Chinari* (FMIS: an Introduction) in simple Nepali language. This booklet is sent to all the Village Development Committees, District development Committees and municipalities in Nepal. It is distributed to the public

irrigation offices, non-governmental organizations and members of Nepal Engineers' Association. The booklet is sent to all 450 FMIS whose addresses are there in the database of the Trust. In Kathmandu, the Trust in collaboration with Kathmandu District Unit of FMIS has sent the booklet to 238 FMIS whose inventory was prepared by the Kathmandu District Unit with support from the Trust. To forge communication with the international FMIS community, the Trust published the proceedings of the first international seminar on "Challenges to FMIS," which was organized in Kathmandu in March 2000, the report on the award winning FMIS and dialogue programs. The books on the seminar proceedings and award winning FMIS are posted on web sites [www.cbnrm.org](http://www.cbnrm.org) and [www.inpim.org](http://www.inpim.org). In addition to enhancing the familiarization of FMIS to the international as well as national community, the Trust has engaged itself in developing organizational development capability of selected group of farmer representatives at the district, inter-FMIS or sub-district and FMIS levels.

Now I would like to share a few thoughts with you about the Trust management itself. Volunteers manage the Trust. We in the executive committee of the Trust certainly charge a fee when we are assigned a professional task by the Trust. But the fee that we charge is returned to the Trust as donation. The initial Trust fund that was created out of our direct original contribution was NRs. 80,000 in 1998. The support of the friends of FMIS has increased the size of the Trust Fund by 12 folds in the last four years. The proclaimed policy of the Trust is not to accept any external support on a donor-driven project-financing mode. We approached Ford Foundation and have received a grant support of US\$ 100,000 for the Trust programs. In my experience of work with several multi-lateral and bilateral donors in the last 20 years or so, it is perhaps this Foundation, which rather encourages the national institutions to work on a program mode and, optimize the use of the grant with greater integrity. Indeed, we target to finance 80% of the Trust reiterative program by our internal resources in the next five years. We are committed to our policy of sustainable and autonomous development. These are as a matter of fact two fundamental values that the national cultural heritage of FMIS has so distinctively established in this country. To contribute towards this objective, the Trust has initially favorably invested a small amount of money in a commercial bank stock. It looks forward to the probable diversification of FMIS activities as one of the potentials to internally enhance its level of sustenance.

With these words, I would like to end my statement here. Thank you all for your patience and attention.

## HONOR AWARDS

Keeping alive its tradition of honoring the distinguished scholars who have made remarkable contribution to uphold the values of Farmer Managed Irrigation Systems (FMIS), the Trust this year, through ample deliberation among its members, unanimously decided to honor three scholars. Names of the three scholars to be honored were declared by Krishna Murari Gautam, Master of the Ceremony. The declared names were: Prof. Elinor Ostrom, Prof. Norman Uphoff and Dr. Robert Yoder.

### INTRODUCTION OF THE "ICONS OF HONOR"

Dr. Vijaya Shrestha, member of the Trust introduced the scholars whom the Trust preferred to address as "Icons of Honor". Their brief introductions are as follows:

**Elinor Ostrom:** Prof. Elinor Ostrom is Arthur F. Bentley Professor of Government and the Co-director of Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, USA. She is the Co-director of Center for the Study of Institutions, Population and Environmental Change, Indiana University. She is the Professor of School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Indiana University.

She was also the President of International Association for the Study of Common Property from 1990-91. She was the President of American Political Science Association from 1996-97.

She has been associated with Grants and Funded Research in many organizations in America and abroad in capacity as the Project Director, Principal Investigator or Co-principal. She was associated with projects such as "Nepal Irrigation Institutions and Systems Database" and the Parks and People Project in the Nepal Terai".

Many publications including books and journals are to her credit. They include: Crafting Institutions for Self-Governing Irrigation Systems, Irrigation Institutions and Games Irrigators Play: Rule Enforcement Without Guards, Irrigation institutions And Games Irrigators Play: Rules Enforcement in Government and Farmer Managed Systems, The Performance of Self-Governing Irrigation Systems in Nepal, The Institutional Analysis and Development Framework: Application to

Irrigation Policy in Nepal, Collective Action, Property Rights and Decentralization in Resource Use in India and Nepal.

**Norman Uphoff:** Prof. Norman Uphoff is the Director of Cornell International Institute for Food, Agriculture and Development and of the International Agriculture Program, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He is the professor at Department of Government, College of Arts and Sciences and Cornell University. Prof. Uphoff has obtained his Ph.D. degree from University of California, Berkeley in 1970. He is a Visiting Professor in many Asian, African and Western countries.

Many books, articles and journals are to his credit. This includes Improving International Irrigation Management with Farmer Participation, Managing Irrigation Analyzing and Improving Performance of Bureaucracies. He was an advisor in committee on Agricultural Sustainability in Developing Countries in 1993. He is involved in several professional activities in the capacity of an advisory councilor, research consultant and training expert in education, health, agriculture development, irrigation and social science. He has provided his expertise in different international organizations such as ADB, WB and UNDP. He was an advisor to U.S. Agency for International Development for Irrigation Management Project in Nepal from 1986-89.

He has delivered lectures in many institutions in Nepal namely, Institute of Agriculture and Animal Science, Rampur in 1998; International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Kathmandu in 1986 and 1987; International Irrigation Management Institute, Kathmandu in 1988; and Irrigation Management Center, Kathmandu in 1989.

**Robort Yoder:** Dr. Robert Yoder is a Senior Associate in Associates Rural Development (ARD), Inc. in the United States. He was trained as a civil and agricultural engineer. Much of his professional work has focused on research and improvement of farmer-managed irrigation systems. His recent work in Romania and Jordan included increasing farmer involvement in irrigation management.

He was team leader for the start-up phase of the World Bank-funded Nepal Irrigation Sector Project. In Indonesia, he carried out an evaluation of the ADB-funded Bali Irrigation Sector Project to determine the impact on the indigenous *subak* irrigation institutions and the support network provided to *subaks* by the water temple system. In Pakistan he helped design a project for ADB funding for farmer-management of large irrigation system

below the main canal level. He led a study in Thailand, Myanmar, and Vietnam that examined the relationship between quality of routine maintenance and irrigation system performance. In Indonesia he assisted ADB staff in designing a project to assist FMIS in five provinces.

From 1985 to 1990, Dr. Yoder was Head of IIMI's field operations in Nepal where he assisted WECS with a unique FMIS rehabilitation project that was designed to improve farmer skills and experience in carrying out system operation and maintenance tasks.

Together with an agricultural economist and a social scientist, Dr. Yoder carried out field-based research on FMIS in Palpa District of Nepal from 1981 to 1983. Farmer-to-farmer training techniques for strengthening FMIS institutions were developed as part of this research. In the period from 1966 to 1978 he worked for eight years at the Butwal Technical Institute in Nepal where he initiated a program for manufacturing and installing water powered grain mills and village electrification systems. He also supervised construction of the Tinau Hydroelectric Project for the Butwal Power Company.

## **BESTOWING THE HONOR AWARDS**

After the introduction, Dr. Prachanda Pradhan, Chairman, FMIS Promotion Trust, honored the "Icons of Honor" by presenting Dosallah (shawl), which is a traditional Nepali way of bestowing honors to the distinguished persons. Dr. Upendra Gautam, Vice-chairman, FMIS Promotion Trust, honored them by presenting commendation plaques, and Mr. Rajan Subedi, Member Secretary, FMIS Promotion Trust by presenting bouquets. Mrs. Rupa Lamichhane, Trust Researcher read out the citations inscribed in the plaques conferred to the "Icons of Honor" during that ceremony.

**Commendation plaque to Prof. Elinor Ostrom reads:** "This plaque of honor is presented to Prof. Elinor Ostrom in recognition of her outstanding contribution in synthesizing international learning and crafting institutions related to FMIS."

**Commendation plaque to Prof. Norman Uphoff reads:** "This plaque of honor is presented to Prof. Norman Uphoff in recognition of his outstanding contribution in farmer-centered academic enrichment and knowledge building."

**Commendation plaque to Dr. Robert Yoder reads:** "This plaque of honor is presented to Dr. Robert Yoder in recognition of his indigenous research and continuous support in promoting the best farmer managed irrigation system practices."

The glorious moments of honor award ceremony were captured in the photographs which are shown in the following pages.

## CLOSING REMARKS

*TRAILOKYA NATH UPRAITI<sup>1</sup>*

It is my great honor to chair this initiation session of the seminar. Firstly, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Farmer Managed Irrigation Systems (FMIS) Promotion Trust for providing me this opportunity. I would take this moment to appreciate the keynote speeches by the distinguished scholars.

Though I am not directly associated with irrigation, I highly regard the efforts made by the Trust from an educationist's perspective. I would like to share my own experience as regards the farmers' initiative and concerted efforts in raising their livelihoods and managing production related to the society. It was the event in a village of western Nepal in early 1950s. During my trip to that village, I was quite surprised to find the systematic and well functioning farmer organization. The villagers had maintained their own crop calendar throughout the agriculture cycle and they had an unwritten convention regarding irrigation activities. Organizational strength is thus prominently observed in FMIS that makes possible enormous contribution towards nation building.

Western influence and effect are all present in the main fabrication of the Nepalese society. Hence, we should be little more careful while adopting western models. FMIS are a more appropriate alternative for development than the indiscriminately borrowed western organizational designs.

Nepal is witnessing gloomy situations in political, social and economic spheres today. Amid this prevailing aura of pessimism too, the initiatives undertaken by the Trust in promoting the values of FMIS has helped instill an element of hope in the farmers in particular and entire nation in general. I would mention that honest commitment of the Trust is more imperative to extend its contribution in other fields beyond irrigation. Even in this

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<sup>1</sup> President, Society for the Promotion of Civic Education, Former Vice-chancellor, Tribhuvan University, and Royal Nepali Ambassador to France. Dr. Upraiti was Chief Guest at the initiation of the seminar.

bleak national scenario, I am still sanguine that courageous and skillful leaders will emerge one day to seize the opportunity for the overall development of the nation.

To conclude my remarks, I am highly grateful to FMIS Promotion Trust for imparting me this opportunity.

Thank you!