

Local elections and AFFONs participation

Nepal has witnessed a huge political shift within few decades. As per the newly promulgated constitution, nation is undergoing federalism such that it is to have three tier government systems. In this process of institutionalizing democracy and decentralization, setting up of the local governments is on the first row. Local elections are held for municipal assemblies in municipalities and for village assemblies in rural municipalities. The assembly comprises of a Mayor (Head in the case of village assemblies) and Deputy Mayor (Deputy Head in village assemblies) as well as a ward chairman and members from every ward of the municipality.

Nepalese observed the first local elections, in two decades. Two phases of the local elections are over (14 May, 28 June 2017) and one more is on its go (18 September 2017).

Association of family forest Owners Nepal (AFFON) is an institution that has been working since its inception in March 2015 to establish the rights of the family forest farmers; it has also worked to raise awareness and leadership among its members. AFFON has always believed that when there is political access, it gets easier to achieve the rights of the family forest farmers/owners and hence motivated its members to get involved into the local level elections through different political parties of their interest. This enhanced skill among AFFON members has been reflected in the local level elections as 35 AFFON members are elected (more than 50% of them are women) representing different political parties, some of these elected members however had previous engagements in politics. When we still have the third phase election, the number of elected AFFON members is sure to increase. Beside the AFFON members, during this local election persons with several years of involvement into social sectors have been elected.

With all these elected members in the Municipal & Village assemblies, that are responsible for local affairs including tax collection, local legislation, policy-making, development planning, administration and disbursement of benefits and local development funds; AFFON expects that it will be easier working with them in establishing the rights of the family forest owners at local level as well as placing family forestry in priorities of the government plan.

List of AFFON members, elected as local representatives

Of the total 35 elected AFFON members, two are Mayor, one Head; three are Deputy Mayor, two Deputy Head, 15 Ward Chair, 1 Deputy Chair and the rest 11 are Ward Members.

1. Mr. Ghanshyam Pandey : Mayor, Tulsipur Sub Metropolitan , Dang

Mr. Ghanshyam Pandey, who has been working since decades to establish the rights of the communities over natural resource, has been elected as a Mayor of Tulsipur Sub Metropolitan city, Dang.

Mr. Pandey, an expert of the community and family forestry as well as a campaigner is an advisor to AFFON and has been continuously supporting AFFON since its conceptualization. Moreover, he has played vital roles during the establishment of AFFON and in bringing the issues of family forest.



Ghanshyam Pandey, Mayor, Tulsipur sub metropolitan city-Dang

Additionally Mr. Pandey is capable of linking the policy interventions from local to national level as well as internationally.

2. Ms. Chhaya Devkota : Deputy Head, Bhanjani Rural Municipality, Kailali

Ms. Chhaya Devkota, Secretary of AFFON Kailali District Chapter, is elected as a Deputy Head of Bhanjani Rural Municipality. Furthermore, Ms. Devkota has been actively working for women rights over natural resources and has the experience of more than a decade in forestry sector.



Chhaya Devkota, Deputy Head, Bhanjani Rural Municipality-Kailali

3. Ms. Ratnaa Kathayat:

Ms. Ratna Kathayat, AFFON member, is elected as Deputy Mayor of Godawari Municipality, Kailali. She has been working for Gender issues and working as activist for Natural Resources Management since last 12 years.



Ratna Kathayat, Deputy Mayor, Godawari Municipality, Kailali

4. Ms. Sabita Rasaili:



Ms. Sabita Rasaili, treasurer to AFFON Tanahu District Chapter, has been elected as Deputy Mayor of Sukla Gandaki Municipality, Tanahu. Furthermore, Ms Rasaili is a single woman and represents highly discriminated untouchable group. She is a campaigner who had advocated for gender and social justice perspective of natural resource management.

Sabita Rasaili, Deputy Mayor, Sukla Gandaki Municipality-Tanahu

5. Ms. Bimala Kumari Shahi:

Ms. Bimala Kumari Shahi, a member of AFFON District Chapter Humla, has been elected as Deputy Head of Chakheli Rural Municipality, Humla. Ms, Shahi represent a very remote area with adequate possibilities for commercial production of herbs and medicinal plants.



Bimala Kumari Shahi, Vice President, Chakheli Rural Municipality-Humla

SN	Name	Position	Municipality/District
6	Dhan Bahadur K.C	ward Chairperson	Dang
7	Keshav Gautam	Ward Chairperson	Ramdhoni Municipality, Sunsari
8	Ram Nath Yogi	Ward Chairperson	Bhimdutta Municipality, Kanchanpur

9	Dhoj Bahadur Bista		Bhimdutta Municipality, Kanchanpur
10	Chini Giri	Deputy Mayor	Mahakali Municipality, Kanchanpur
11	Chandra Magar	Ward Chairperson of	Deumaai Municipality, Illam
12	Surendra Bista	Mayor	Bhimdutta Municipality -9, Kanchanpur
13	Prabhananda Joshi	Ward Chairperson	Bhimdutta Municipality-10, Kanchanpur
14	Meher Singh Paija	Head	Barang Rural Municipality Baglung
15	Prem lamichhane	Ward Chairperson	Kathekhola Rural Municipality, Baglung
16	Shiva Sapkota	Ward Chairperson	Baglung
17	DamuRam Chepang	Ward Chairperson	Rapti Muinicipality, Chitwan
18	Sabitri Pudasaini	Ward member	Kalika VDC, Rasuwa
19	Lok Raj	Ward Chairperson	Sundar Bazzar Municipality-2, Lamjung
20	Krishna Kanta Adhikari	Ward Chairperson	Sundar bazaar Municipality-8, Lamjung
21	Khar Maya Bitalu	Ward Deputy Chair	Maalika Rural Municipality, Myagdi
22	Pushpa Giri	Ward Chairperson	Maanmat Thana Chakra Municipality-11, Kalikot
23	Yam Kumari Paija Pun	Ward Member	Beni Municipality-5, Myagdi
24	Karna Rokka	Ward Member	Maalika Rural Municipality-6, Myagdi
25	Sanjiv Dhakal	Ward Chairperson	Kavre
26	Sita Bhusal	Ward Member	Devchuli Municipality-12, Nawalparasi
27	Tara Bahadur Kulami Magar	Ward Member	Bandhikali Rural Municipality-6, Nawalparasi
28	Jeevan Uchai Thakuri	Ward Chairperson	Mahashila Rural Municipality-5,Parbat
29	Kabita B.K	Ward Member	Phalebas Municipality-9,Parbat
30	Pramila Panta	Ward Member	Phalebas Municipality -9,Parbat
31	Narayani oli	Ward Member	Koholpur Municipality-10, Banke
32	Bhim Gurung	Ward Chairperson	Kushma Municipality -14
33	Baburam Poudel	Ward Member	Kushma Municipality-11
34	Dipak Verma	Ward Member	Janaki Rural Municipality-3
35	Deu Maya Thapa Khajura	Ward Member	Khajura Municipality-3