

The COVID-19 Pandemic not only Puts Challenges but also Opens Opportunities for Sustainable Transformation

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected humankind worldwide, slowing down and even reversing the progress made in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It has negatively impacted most SDGs but with positive impacts on a few. We discuss some initial impacts observed and explores potential impacts on the achievement of SDGs for Nepal. The study followed a knowledge co-creation process with experts from various professional backgrounds, involving five steps: online survey, online workshop, assessment of expert's opinions, review and validation, and revision and synthesis. The pandemic has restricting impacts on the progress of most SDGs. However, it has also opened a window of opportunity for sustainable transformation. Many of the negative impacts may subside in the medium and long terms. The negative impacts on SDGs resulted from factors linked to the pandemic or the measures taken to control it. The key five impending factors are lockdowns, underemployment and unemployment, closure of institutions and facilities, diluted focus and funds for non-COVID-19 issues, and anticipated reduced support from development partners. The generated transformative opportunities are lessons learned for planning and actions, socio-economic recovery plan, use of information and communication technologies and impetus to the digital economy, reverse migration and 'brain gain,' and local governments' exercising authorities. For sustainable transformation, the window to grasp these opportunities is short-lived and will get narrow over time, i.e., before rebounds occur following the past trajectories.

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69 **Key Points:**

- 70 • The COVID-19 pandemic has negative impacts on most Sustainable Development Goals,
71 which may subside in the medium and long terms.
- 72 • Key impending factors causing the negative impacts include lockdowns, unemployment,
73 and diluted focus for non-COVID issues.
- 74 • The pandemic has also opened a window of opportunity for sustainable transformation,
75 which is short-lived and will get narrow over time.

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected humankind worldwide, slowing down and even reversing the progress made in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It has negatively impacted most SDGs but with positive impacts on a few. We discuss some initial impacts observed and explores potential impacts on the achievement of SDGs for Nepal. The study followed a knowledge co-creation process with experts from various professional backgrounds, involving five steps: online survey, online workshop, assessment of expert's opinions, review and validation, and revision and synthesis. The pandemic has restricting impacts on the progress of most SDGs. However, it has also opened a window of opportunity for sustainable transformation. Many of the negative impacts may subside in the medium and long terms. The negative impacts on SDGs resulted from factors linked to the pandemic or the measures taken to control it. The key five impending factors are lockdowns, underemployment and unemployment, closure of institutions and facilities, diluted focus and funds for non-COVID-19 issues, and anticipated reduced support from development partners. The generated transformative opportunities are lessons learned for planning and actions, socio-economic recovery plan, use of information and communication technologies and impetus to the digital economy, reverse migration and 'brain gain,' and local governments' exercising authorities. For sustainable transformation, the window to grasp these opportunities is short-lived and will get narrow over time, i.e., before rebounds occur following the past trajectories.

Plain Language Summary (200 words)

The current pandemic has impacts on social, economic, and environmental systems, including Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDGs consist of 17 interlinked goals that aim to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. We studied the pandemic's impacts on SDGs for Nepal by following a knowledge co-creation process. For this, we conducted online surveys and workshops with experts from various professional backgrounds. Afterward, we assessed expert's opinions articulated in the surveys and workshops. The experts reviewed and validated our assessment. Then, we revised and synthesized the assessment. Our study highlights that the pandemic has negative impacts on most SDGs. These negative impacts may subside in the medium and long terms. The key factors behind the negative impacts are: lockdowns, underemployment and unemployment, closure of facilities, diluted focus and funds for non-pandemic issues, and anticipated reduced development support. The pandemic has also opened a window of opportunity for sustainable transformation, which is short-lived and will get narrow over time. The transformative opportunities consist of lessons learned for planning and actions, socio-economic recovery plan, use of information and communication technologies and impetus to the digital economy, reverse migration and 'brain gain,' and local governments' exercising authorities.

1 Introduction

In 2015, the United Nations Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 targets, to be achieved by 2030, for transforming our world. Progress made on SDGs in the last five years shows that it is less likely to achieve them in many countries with the current trends (Editorials, 2020; Sachs et al., 2019). Hence, the SDG summit in 2019 called for a Decade of Action, pledging to mobilize resources and enhance national implementation to achieve SDGs in stipulated time.

At the beginning of this decade of action, the COVID-19 pandemic (from now on referred to as pandemic) hit the world, affecting all three sustainability pillars - society, economy, and environment (Diffenbaugh et al., 2020). For example, measures taken to control the pandemic have impacted existing workforces, closed schools, affected healthcare systems, and decreased manufacturing activities. These impacts led to various negative socio-economic repercussions (Nicola et al., 2020). However, these measures also have a few positive impacts on the environment, e.g., reduced air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions (Chen et al., 2020; Le Quéré et al., 2020). Most past studies have investigated the pandemic's social, economic, and environmental impacts separately or have only focused on a few SDGs (Adhikari et al., 2021; Filho et al., 2020; Fleetwood, 2020; UN, 2020). Comprehensive studies on the impacts of the pandemic (both restricting and promoting) are still lacking, especially in the context of developing countries.

For achieving the 2030 Agenda, there is a need to understand the impacts of the pandemic on SDGs thoroughly so that policymakers can develop interventions to address the negative impacts. This holistic understanding is crucial because SDGs is considered a system of interacting components rather than a sum-up of goals, indicators, and targets (Pradhan, 2019). However, it might be too early to understand the pandemic's full impacts, including the potential structural transformation, because they are still unfolding. Additionally, inadequate and lack of information and data in the developing countries make a proper estimation of the impacts difficult.

Based on a participatory approach to the knowledge co-creation process, this study, which is the first of its kind, investigates the pandemic's potential impacts on SDGs' achievement. We consider Nepal as a case study for our assessment. Nepal is one of the developing countries that made remarkable progress in achieving many Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, 2015), putting a similar expectation for SDGs' achievement. It has made progress in many SDGs in the last five years (NPC, 2020). However, the country still faces challenges in achieving most of them (Sachs et al., 2020). This research's findings are expected to substantially enhance our understanding and help formulate or refine relevant policies and management decisions to minimize the pandemic's impacts in Nepal and other developing countries.

2 Methods

We based this study on the co-creation of knowledge involving experts with various professional backgrounds from academia, civil society organizations, governments, grassroots initiatives, national and international organizations, and the private sector. We identified key experts in each SDG through our networks and snowball sampling. To facilitate mutual learning and evidence-based reasoning, we took a participatory approach to the knowledge co-creating process, encouraging the experts to participate as equal partners (Chambers, 1994). This study did not include SDG 14 (Life below water), which the Government of Nepal (GoN) has excluded being a land-locked country. While most experts participated in only one SDG, some contributed to multiple SDGs based on their primary expertise. The process involved the following five steps (Figure 1).

First, we conducted an online survey among the selected experts to familiarize them with our approach and collect their initial perception of the pandemic's impacts. The survey included questionnaires on each target of SDGs where experts would evaluate impacts of the pandemic in

the short term (current year), medium term (within five years), and long term (by 2030) using a seven-point scale: -3 (strongly restricting), -2 (moderately restricting), -1 (weakly restricting), 0 (no influence), +1 (weakly promoting), +2 (moderately promoting), and +3 (strongly promoting). We adapted the seven-point scale framework developed by Nilsson et al. (2016) to understand SDG interactions. Other studies have also applied this framework for a similar purpose, e.g., to investigate the impact of food systems innovation on SDGs (Herrero et al., 2020). Besides providing scores on the seven-point scale, experts could also describe in the survey the rationale and mechanisms behind the impacts. We received a total of 410 responses from 365 experts with an average of 23 and a minimum of 10 responses per SDG (see Figure S1).

Second, we organized 20 online workshops, with at least one workshop for each SDG (more than one for SDG 4 and SDG 17), to offer the experts a platform for a multilateral discussion on the impacts. For SDG 4, we conducted four workshops to discuss the pandemic's impacts on four education domains: primary education, secondary education and training, higher education, and policy. Similarly, we organized two workshops for SDG 17 due to its large number of targets. Altogether, 302 experts participated in these workshops (some experts joined more than one workshop). Each workshop had an average of 19 (minimum 11) expert participants (see Figure S1). In the workshops, we shared the survey results. We encouraged participants to explain the discrepancies among the scores they had provided. This process helped build a consensus on mechanisms and scores of the impacts. We conducted the workshops between 17th July and 30th August 2020.

Third, we assessed the experts' scores and opinions collected through the survey and workshops. The authors tasked with individual SDGs supplemented the assessment to fill the information gap based on their expertise. This supplement was mainly instrumental in a few cases where the pandemic's arguments were not captured well either due to time constraints or deviations from the workshop's core discussion. We drafted a report for each SDG based on this assessment, tabulating the impact scores for short, medium, and long terms at the target level and corresponding descriptive reasonings.

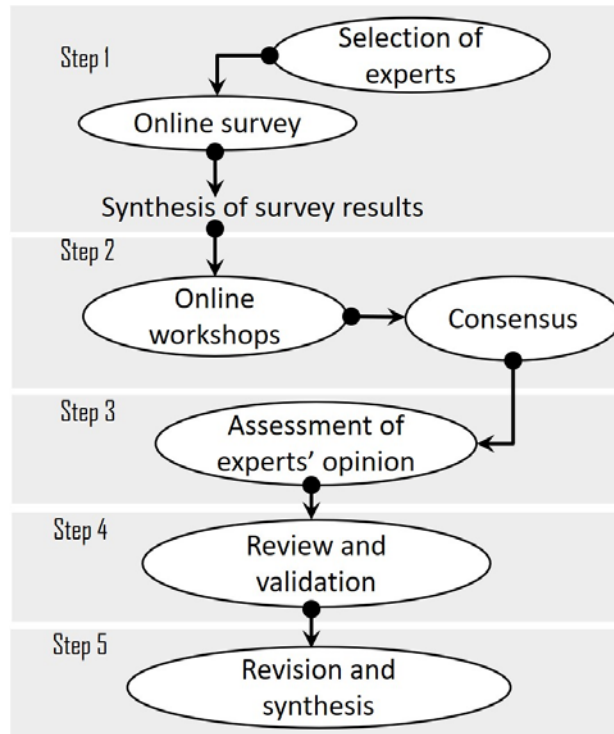


Figure 1. The methodological framework of the study consisting of five steps: (i) online survey, (ii) online workshop, (iii) assessment of expert's opinions, (iv) review and validation, and (v) revision and synthesis.

Fourth, we offered a final opportunity to the respective experts to review and validate our assessment reports. The experts either agreed to the reports or provided additional suggestions on the impact scores and mechanisms behind the impacts.

Finally, we prepared the final reports by incorporating, when needed, experts' feedback collected in step four of the review and validation process. We then analyzed the revised and finalized reports to identify key impeding factors of the pandemic on SDGs and the transformative opportunities it offers to achieve them.

3 Results

The pandemic has and may have weakly to moderately restricting impacts on most SDGs in the short term (Figure 2 and Table S1), particularly on targets of SDG 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, and 16, bringing new challenges in achieving those SDGs by 2030. In the short term, a few targets, mainly of SDG 2, 3, 6, and 11, could also have weakly promoting impacts of the pandemic, mainly due to an increased focus on health care systems, information and communication technologies (ICTs), and digital economy (Figure S2). In the medium and long terms, many of the negative impacts may subside, resulting in no influence or even up to moderately promoting impacts on most SDG targets. Nevertheless, restricting impacts would persist on few targets, such as SDG 3, 5, 8, and 10, in the medium and long terms, reflecting a massive time needed to recover from the pandemic fully. The experts expected the positive impacts, assuming that the GoN would utilize the generated transformative opportunities. The pandemic has opened a window of opportunity for sustainable transformation, i.e., to make

progress in achieving SDGs. However, we expect it to narrow over time. We have distilled and described below the key impeding factors and the transformative opportunities offered by the pandemic for achieving the SDGs based on the described rationale and mechanisms behind the impacts by the experts. Table S1 consists of the detailed rationale and mechanisms of the impacts and respective impact scores.

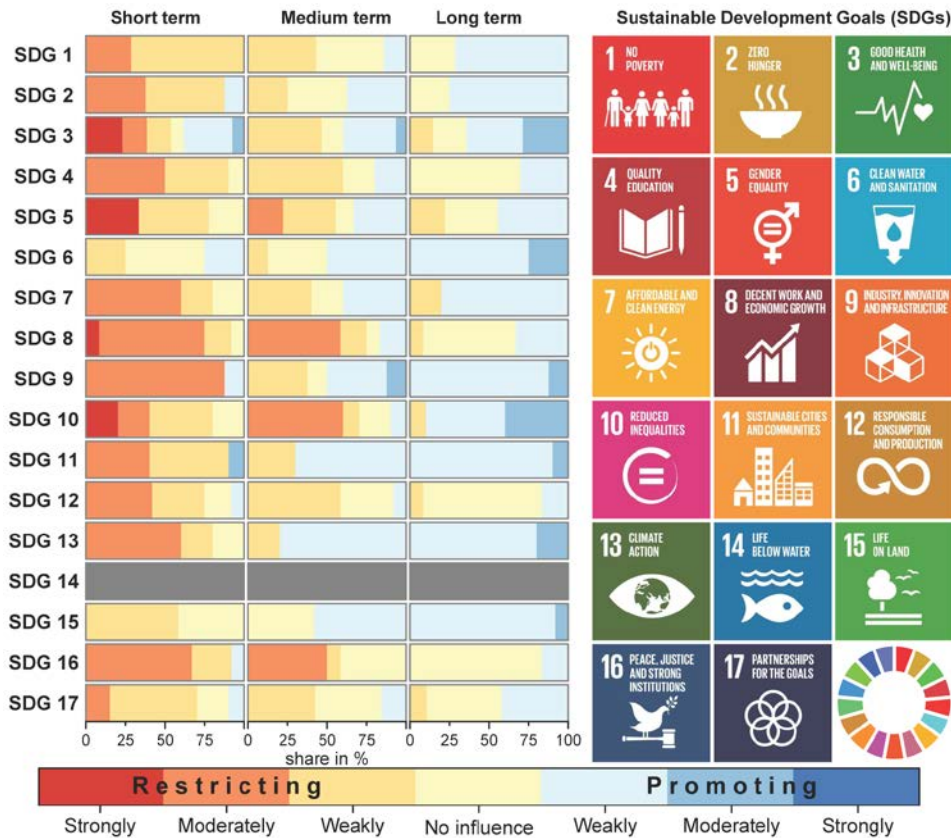


Figure 2. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nepal for short term (within a year), medium term (within next five years), and long term (by 2030). The color bars represent the shares of impacts from strongly promoting to strongly restricting at the goal level. We derived the shares from the impact scores at the target level (see Figure S2). The impact scores are co-created, involving 302 experts with various professional backgrounds (see Figure S1) based on surveys and workshops. The gray bar depicts no data because our study does not include SDG 14.

3.1 Key impending factors

The pandemic's negative impacts arise from various factors, directly or indirectly linked to it, or repercussions of the measures put in place by the government to control it. Most of these impending factors would exist for a short term, which might subside after controlling the pandemic, as reflected in Figure 2. However, several factors, putting challenges on SDGs' achievement, persist until medium or long terms. Here, we present the five key impending factors together with their cascading impacts.

Lockdowns: The GoN imposed lockdowns and restrictions on movements in two phases to contain the pandemic: the first phase from 24th March 2020 for 17 weeks and the second phase from 18th August 2020 for five weeks. This measure had negatively impacted many SDGs. We highlight two significant repercussions (underemployment and unemployment, and closure of various institutions) as key impeding factors below. Our discussion here mainly focuses on other restricting impacts led by this measure.

The lockdowns have disrupted supply chains, manufacturing, production, and markets, impacting many SDGs negatively, mostly in the short term. For example, disrupted food and agriculture supply chains exacerbated food insecurity and decreased agricultural productivity (SDG 2), and increased food losses (SDG 12) (Adhikari et al., 2021). Disrupted material supply chains have hindered activities associated with clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), construction of energy infrastructures (SDG 7), and industrial production and infrastructural development (SDG 9). Overall, Nepal's economy (SDG 8), including government revenue (SDG 17), has slowed down because of disrupted supply chains and exports/imports. Nepal's projected economic growth rate is reduced from 7.3% to 2.7% for the fiscal year 2020 due to pandemic (ADB, 2020).

At least for the short term, the restriction on movement postponed several plans and programs. The list of postponed plans and programs include National Vaccination Program, Vitamin A Program (SDG 2), Visit Nepal 2020 tourism promotion campaign (SDG 8 and 12), the first *Sagarmatha Sambaad* - the global dialogue forum with a focus on climate change and sustainability (SDG 13 and 17). It also hindered the existing services, e.g., maternal health (SDG 3) and judicial (SDG 16) services. For example, by the end of lockdowns, childbirth at medical facilities was reduced by 52.4% compared to the preceding year (KC et al., 2020). The negative impacts on SDG 3 are also related to anxiety, isolation, fear, and stigma associated with the pandemic both at the service receiver and provider sides. Additionally, restriction on movement increased mental health problems both in adults and children, resulting in negative impacts on SDG 3, 4, and 16. During the lockdowns, domestic violence incidences, mainly against children and women, have also increased (SDG 5 and 16). During the lockdowns, over twice women violence cases are being reported (Sharma, 2020). Although such violence might subside with lifting the lockdowns, its subsequent impacts would remain in the medium or long terms. During the lockdowns, women and girls are also more engaged in household and unpaid care work than male members, resulting in increased gender inequalities (SDG 5). Restriction on movements nationally and internationally also goes against a target of SDG 10 on responsible and well-managed migration policies. The lockdowns have also disrupted cultural activities, including various festivals (e.g., *Rato Machhindranath Jatra* - the longest chariot festival in Nepal), public transport systems, and rural-urban linkages (SDG 11). Weakened law enforcement due to the staff's restricted mobility and unemployment also led to increased illegal extractions of forest products and wildlife poaching (SDG 15).

Temporarily, the lockdowns have also positively impacted a few SDG targets. Consequently, reduced traffic and industrial activities led to decreased air and water pollution (SDG 6 and 11). For example, the Kathmandu Valley's air quality, which suffers from severe air pollution almost throughout the year, improved visibly and substantially. The monthly PM_{2.5} concentration decreased from around 150 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ a month before the first lockdown to around 100 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ a month into the first lockdown (Shrestha et al., 2020). Clear blue sky and the unprecedented view of Mt. Everest from the Kathmandu Valley and elsewhere in Nepal for the

first time in decades were evident from improved air quality and visibility. This restriction also limited human trafficking (SDG 5 and 16), the movement of invasive species (SDG 15), illegal wildlife trade (SDG 15), and illicit financial flow (SDG 16) temporarily. For example, Nepal observed an increase in remittance despite many Nepali migrants losing their jobs in countries where they were employed (NRB, 2020). A reason for this increased remittance is a decline in illicit financial flow, commonly known as *hundi*. The majority of Nepali migrants widely practice *hundi* to remit money back home at a cheaper fee (Seddon et al., 2002).

Underemployment and unemployment: As a result of shrinking domestic and international labor markets due to the pandemic, many workers (three out of five) in formal and informal economies lost their jobs (UNDP, 2020). Informal sectors mostly suffered from unemployment, while underemployment is an issue in the formal sectors. Around two-thirds of Nepal's workforce is employed in informal sectors (MOLE, 2018). Nepal has issued over 4 million labor permits to migrant workers in the last decade, mainly for the Gulf countries and Malaysia (MOLESS, 2020). Remittance contributes to 25.4% of Nepal's gross domestic product (NRB, 2019).

Increased underemployment and unemployment are a setback to Nepal's progress in poverty reduction (SDG 1) and economic growth (SDG 8). Subsequently, underemployment and unemployment also have cascading impacts on other SDGs. With reduced income, households have limited access to various essential goods and services, e.g., nutritious food (SDG 2), health care (SDG 3), education (SDG 4), in the short and medium terms. Additionally, poverty and reduced incomes could lead to unsustainable agricultural practices on marginal lands (SDG 2), abuse of drugs and alcohol (SDG 3), and an increase in school dropout rates (SDG 4), mainly of girls (SDG 5). Even in the pre-COVID-19 situation, 3.0-4.8 % of students leave primary schools every year in Nepal, with a higher dropout rate for girls than boys (DOE, 2018). The pandemic has also exacerbated gender discrimination in terms of unemployment (SDG 5). Around 90 % of women in employment are in informal sectors in Nepal (CBS, 2019). Self-employed, domestic workers, female-headed households, and those in casual or temporary agency employees are at particular risk of losing the job (UNICEF, 2020). In addition to jobs lost, female household members are also subjected to increased gender-based violence (SDG 5), resulting from stresses at homes due to underemployment and unemployment. In the absence of recovery plans to support the poor and vulnerable population, underemployment and unemployment could increase modern slavery and child labor, restrict labor rights (SDG 8), widen the gaps between rich and poor (SDG 10), and push more people into informal settlements (SDG 11). Increased poverty would put additional pressure on natural resources, mainly on the forest for timber and non-timber products (SDG 15), as a traditional livelihood alternative. Reduced livelihood options will also put women and children at risk of trafficking (SDG 5 and 16) in the short and medium terms. A similar risk of human trafficking was evident after Nepal Earthquake 2015 (Gyawali et al., 2017). Unemployment would also increase illicit arms flow due to a growth in criminal activities in the medium and long terms (SDG 16).

Closure of institutions and facilities: The GoN closed or limited the opening of various institutions and facilities, including schools, universities, public transports, government offices, international borders, and industries. The closure of educational institutions has negative impacts on various aspects of students' growth and learning at different levels (primary, secondary, tertiary, and vocational education) due to hindrance in activities associated with education, teaching, training, and regular examinations (SDG 4). Although face-to-face education would

resume after controlling the pandemic, these hindrances in educational activities would limit the country's economic development in the medium and long terms (SDG 8). Additionally, confinement at home could raise the risk of violence against children and disruption in their social networks (SDG 16). ICTs have been increasingly used as an alternative learning and teaching tool to overcome the impacts of educational institutions' closure. However, it has revealed and resulted in a digital divide between boys and girls within a household (SDG 5), between rich and poor (SDG 10), and between urban and rural areas (SDG 11). That means this alternative approach also has a negative impact on the overall agenda "leave no one behind." In contrast, SDG implementations prioritizing women, younger, and rural populations, i.e., leaving no one behind, can leverage SDGs' achievements (Warchold et al., 2020).

Limited opening of various institutions also reduced training, skill enhancement, and internship possibilities for students (SDG 4). Similarly, the limited opening of judicial facilities has discouraged the reporting of cases, e.g., on violence against women (SDG 5 and 16). Additionally, the closure of major industries and markets resulted in unemployment and underemployment with negative impacts on SDG 9 and an increase in inequalities (SDG 10). Many temples, including the famous and sacred Hindu temple - *Pashupatinath*, are closed due to the pandemic, hindering cultural activities (SDG 11). Additionally, the limited opening of government offices has also resulted in weak law enforcement, illicit extraction of natural resources [e.g., deforestation (SDG 15)], and a delay in services [e.g., for providing vital registration (SDG 16)]. Closure of international borders and travel limitations have restricted international collaboration, capacity building activities, and trade (SDG 17).

Closure or limited opening of institutions and facilities also has a few positive impacts. Some of these impacts, e.g., enhanced ICTs in education (SDG 4) and digitalization in vital registration (SDG 16), could facilitate achieving SDGs in the long term. However, other impacts would be temporary, e.g., reduced food waste from restaurants and businesses (SDG 12) and improved water and air quality (SDG 6 and 11).

Diluted focus and funds on non-COVID-related issues: The GoN has currently mobilized its resources to control the pandemic. Concentrated efforts are a prerequisite to deal with the pandemic. However, they would also dilute the government's focus and funds on other issues, mainly on implementing SDGs, in the short term. All SDGs would have negative impacts due to diluted focus and funds. For example, sectoral budgets have been reduced during the pandemic compared to last year's budget. Other health issues (e.g., maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health, non-communicable diseases) have been side-lined as well.

Anticipated reduced support from development partners: As a developing country, Nepal relies heavily on development partners' support for various development agendas, including implementing SDGs. The pandemic has hit most countries globally, including development partners of Nepal. Thus, there are concerns if ongoing official development assistance and capacity building activities would continue in the medium and long terms. While the partners are and would support controlling the pandemic, there are questions on whether and to what extent they will continue to support implementing and financing SDGs. This concern is due to the shrinkage of their economies and additional funds required for revitalizing their economies. Most support provided by the development partners lately is in the form of loans, which is likely to increase the indebtedness of a developing country like Nepal.

3.2 Transformative opportunities

The pandemic has also opened a window of opportunities for sustainable transformations. Although these opportunities' impacts would be visible in the medium and long terms, the window to grasp these opportunities would be short and become narrower over time. In the absence of steering towards more sustainable pathways, rebounds would occur, following the past business-as-usual trajectories. The achievement of SDGs would depend on the successful utilization of these opportunities. We present the five key transformative opportunities together with their promoting impacts on various SDGs.

Lessons learned: The pandemic has laid bare the strengths and weaknesses in governance, socio-economic systems, and leadership worldwide. Its bright side is that various lessons are learned (e.g., from improving planning and actions on SDGs to preparing for future crises). These lessons could positively impact many SDGs in the medium and long terms. We highlight lessons in the four main categories as key transformative opportunities below, separately. Our discussion here mainly focuses on other lessons that have promoting impacts on SDGs.

The pandemic has highlighted the crucial role of proper nutrition to have a healthy population, i.e., to end all forms of malnutrition and the importance of maintaining plant genetic diversity, promoting rural infrastructure and agricultural research, and enhancing food self-sufficiency (SDG 2). Activities that could positively impact SDG 2, e.g., cultivation of fallow land, development of urban rooftop gardens, and use of local seeds, have increased during the lockdowns. Nepal observed the highest area of paddy cultivation this year (MOALD, 2020). The pandemic provided lessons and raised awareness on sanitation and hygiene (SDG 6) and various aspects of healthcare systems to ensure the public health and well-being and required funding for it (SDG 3). Another lesson learned, mainly because of job loss, is a need for education policy that promotes entrepreneurial- and skill-oriented focus on self-employment (SDG 4). Similarly, the pandemic has largely impacted poor and vulnerable populations regarding access to health care facilities and social security programs. This impact provides an essential lesson on the need to reduce inequalities (SDG 10), including the promotion of gender equality (SDG 5).

The pandemic has also emphasized the need for regularization and upgrading of low-income settlements, inadequate housing, and public transport systems for overall urban transformations (SDG 11). There is limited possibility of maintaining physical distances in low-income settlements and public transport systems required to control the spread of COVID-19. The pandemic also revealed a lack of holistic disaster risk management plans at different governance levels, which is also crucial to managing other crises.

Public awareness has also been raised during the pandemic on responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), e.g., food waste reduction due to decreased food availability and waste management for maintaining hygiene. This raised awareness also holds for climate action (SDG 13) to respond to the climate emergency, mainly conserving nature for resilience and adaptive capacity and ensuring environment-friendly development through pollution and emission reduction in sectors like transportation and industries. Since the source of the pandemic and zoonotic diseases is the degradation of nature, the planners and policymakers would be more aware of the importance of healthy ecosystems for ensuring public health (SDG 15). The pandemic has taught us all around the globe that maintaining better air quality is essential for avoiding severe health outcomes from the pandemic. The current health emergency has provided

glimpses of the potential climate emergency in the absence of climate action (Vinke et al., 2020). Another crucial lesson of the pandemic is to promote South-South cooperation together with North-South cooperation (SDG 17). So far, Nepal has not been able to get many benefits from South-South cooperation.

Socio-economy recovery plan: A sound plan is required to recover from the pandemic's negative impacts. This plan provides a window of opportunity to steer socio-economic systems towards sustainable transformation instead of letting them rebound to the past trajectories. The lessons learned from the pandemic can contribute to designing the recovery plan with positive impacts on SDGs. For example, the pandemic has highlighted a need for a more pro-poor, gender-sensitive, equitable, and inclusive policy framework (SDG 1, 5, 10), e.g., on social security programs. Similarly, the pandemic has reversed many processes in achieving SDGs related to the health and education sectors (SDG 3 and 4). Thus, the recovery plan should focus on reinstalling the activities and programs disturbed by the pandemic and developing new ones to accelerate the progress on various SDGs based on past experiences. Self-reliance, resilience, and local resources should be at the forefront of the recovery plan, focusing on low carbon and environment-friendly development (SDG 13 and 15). This approach would lead to poverty eradication (SDG 1), employment generation (including green jobs), economic growth (SDG 8), and equitable development (SDG 5, 10), together with the promotion of clean and affordable energy (SDG 7). The pandemic has reinforced the importance of a build-back better and greener economy with a low carbon strategy and development cooperation (SDG 17). During the pandemic, another lesson is that Nepal should no longer rely on tourism and international remittances to support its economy. External forces could easily hit these sectors, crippling the economy. Nepal has made a clear realization that the agriculture sector needs to be self-sufficient to avoid any future problems demonstrated by the pandemic. Hence, it has increased its agriculture budget this year.

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) and digital economy: The use of ICTs and the digital economy played an essential role in coping with pandemic impacts across different sectors. This use has opened a transformative opportunity to promote many SDGs in the medium and long terms. For example, online delivery, new online business, commercial, and banking activities could contribute to equal rights to ownership, essential services, technology, economic resources (SDG 1), decent work, and economic growth (SDG 8). The pandemic has opened a new window of opportunity to leverage digital and distance learning across educational levels and disciplines despite the digital divide, also promoting international cooperation (SDG 4). With adequate digital infrastructure and facilities, this new learning approach can also enhance many health workers' skills in remote areas (SDG 3). The increased use of ICTs and the digital economy could also empower women in the medium and long terms (SDG 5). For example, digital innovations have provided women entrepreneurs with an opportunity to strengthen skills and expand their business during the pandemic. The pandemic's lessons and experiences using ICTs to acquire vital registration and acquainting with social and digital media would help achieve targets on providing universal legal identity and ensuring public access to information (SDG 16). Overall, the ICTs' awareness and experience during the pandemic will be crucial for further developing sustainable development measures (SDG 17). To achieve universal and affordable access to ICTs is also a target of SDG 9.

Reverse migration and 'brain gain': The pandemic has also triggered reverse migration in Nepal, i.e., from abroad to Nepal or from urban centers to rural areas, leading to 'brain gain.'

Reverse migration, mainly of the youth population, provides an opportunity, not available otherwise, to utilize the skilled-workforces with experience abroad and their knowledge for sustainable transformation of various sectors. The lockdown period has provided some glimpses of these possibilities if realized. The reverse migration has stimulated the cultivation of fallow land left due to labor shortage, raising hope for increasing food production (SDG 2) (MOALD, 2020). In the medium and long terms, self-reliance and a rural economic transformation due to reverse migration would strengthen regional development (SDG 11). The return of skilled and semi-skilled migrant workers would also provide the needed labor force and investment to increase agricultural and industrial production capabilities (SDG 9). These economic activities driven by reverse migration would also trickle down to the population's lower strata (SDG 10). For sustainable transformation, policies to utilize reverse migration and brain gain need to focus on creating green jobs based on conservation-friendly policies (SDG 15) instead of following the past trajectories. Swift and widespread policies and actions need to put in place to tap on the resources provided by reverse migration and brain gain. In the lack of livelihood opportunities, the returnees have already started migrating again.

Exercising authorities by local government: The pandemic has also provided an opportunity for local governments to exercise their authority over jurisdiction given by Nepal's 2015 Constitution. The constitution has entrusted local governments with different functional competencies to operate as a government, unlike the central government's decentralized unit. During the pandemic, most local governments are being as responsive as provincial and federal governments and active in health care and other provisioning services, which was rarely the case before. Their positive performance in managing the pandemic could be an asset to improve the health sector (SDG 3) and sustainable transformation at the local level. For example, they could actively contribute to eradicating poverty (SDG 1), fostering sustainable urbanization (SDG 11), building a climate-resilient society (SDG 13), and conserving biodiversity (SDG 15).

4 Discussion

As our results show, the pandemic has put additional challenges to achieving SDGs and opened a window of sustainable transformation opportunities. However, urgent actions are needed to utilize these opportunities before rebounds occur. Key insights and learnings from the Nepal case study may also be applicable in other parts of the world, particularly in the developing world contexts. More specifically, the pandemic's perception as a challenge and an opportunity to reset priorities, resources, capacities, and planning can be useful elsewhere in devising appropriate pathways for sustainable transformation. We bring several novel understandings to realize such sustainable transformation.

First, our study provided a holistic understanding of the pandemic's potential impacts on SDGs at the target level. Like the existing studies (UN, 2020), we found that the pandemic has restricted most SDGs in the short term. However, this study also advanced the state-of-art understanding by figuring out a few promoting impacts in the medium and long terms. These pandemic's positive and negative impacts are similar to SDG interactions, consisting of synergies and trade-offs (Pradhan et al., 2017). The negative impacts on SDG, i.e., trade-offs, need to be tackled by understanding the impending factors behind them. Simultaneously, transformative opportunities generating positive impacts or synergies need to be identified and leveraged for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Second, we identified key impeding factors directly or indirectly linked to the pandemic. Most key factors are associated with repercussions of the measures taken to contain and control the pandemic, including lockdowns, underemployment and unemployment, and institutions and facilities' closure. These findings highlight how vulnerable Nepal's current social and economic systems are to unprecedented disasters like the pandemic. Therefore, there is a need for sustainable transformation of our social and economic systems, building resilience to unprecedented disasters, including climate emergencies.

Third, we highlighted key transformative opportunities generated by the pandemic for achieving SDGs. These opportunities are mostly associated with various lessons learned during the pandemic with an expectation of a transformative recovery plan in the post-COVID era. The promoting impacts of these transformative opportunities would be visible in the medium and long terms. However, the window to grasp these opportunities is tiny and shrinking. The rebounds may soon occur following the past trajectories. The pandemic has provided an opportunity to build back better, focusing on overall sustainability, including biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and living in harmony with nature. In the lack of urgent actions now, opportunities for sustainable transformation would be missed.

Fourth, key insights and experience gained from the methodological approach applied in our study can also be useful in future studies. In particular, field research in the post-COVID world may require adapting existing research methods (i.e., through the blended approach we adopted). Our experience shows that online tools can effectively facilitate useful interactions among research team members and experts. They also help enhance the sharing of knowledge and experience and foster co-learning, capacity building, and co-generation of knowledge involving experts from multiple disciplines.

At the same time, we also acknowledge that our study has a few limitations. First, it is too early to estimate the pandemic's full impacts on our society, economy, and environment quantitatively. Nevertheless, we provide a holistic qualitative understanding of the potential impacts on SDGs. Second, our study is based on expert judgment and perception of what is anticipated instead of quantification or simulation of potential impacts. Even so, expert judgment is an accepted approach given the need for rapid assessment. Third, we did not focus on the impacts of SDGs on pandemics, which could be a question for future research. Achievement of SDGs could also help contain and combat pandemics and similar challenges in the future. There are specific interactions between SDGs and pandemic, e.g., achieving SDG 3 and SDG 15 could help reduce the risks and spread of zoonotic diseases in the future. Fourth, our understanding of the potential impacts, the key impending factors, and the transformative opportunities are based on Nepal's case study. The transfer of this understanding to other countries needs to be taken cautiously. However, our approach to knowledge co-creation is applicable in other countries.

Finally, there are some policy lessons and specific recommendations for Nepal. The way forward for the country to recover from the pandemic consists of several aspects. Better coordination among federal, provincial, and local governments is needed to develop, implement, and monitor the transformative socio-economic recovery plan. This plan needs to compose special packages for poor, vulnerable, and disadvantaged groups and returnees based on a gender-sensitive approach with more significant support to largely impacted sectors and societies. More systematic and coordinated efforts are also required to enhance awareness about the importance of nature conservation and nature-based solutions among the politicians and the general public. Collaboration among all stakeholders is another important aspect of designing

and implementing the plan. For implementing SDGs, Nepal needs to mobilize national and international funds, knowledge, and skills, including diaspora Nepali, together with other enabling conditions (e.g., governance, transparency, and accountability). Sound interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research is required to explore, investigate, identify, utilize, and facilitate the implementation of transformative opportunities. Evidence-based policymaking is a crucial component of governance that enables sustainable transformations and, thus, for achieving the SDGs and the national aspiration of "Prosperous Nepal and Happy Nepali."

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655

The COVID-19 Pandemic not only Puts Challenges but also Opens Opportunities for Sustainable Transformation

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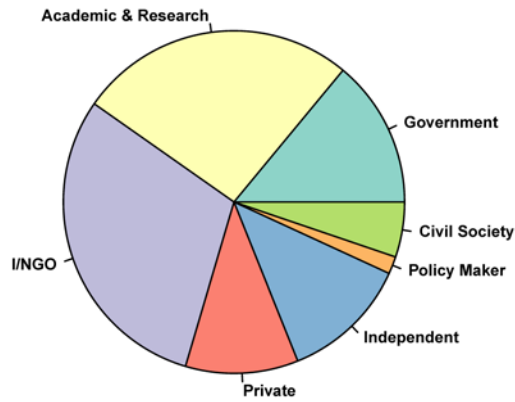
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Figures S1 to S2

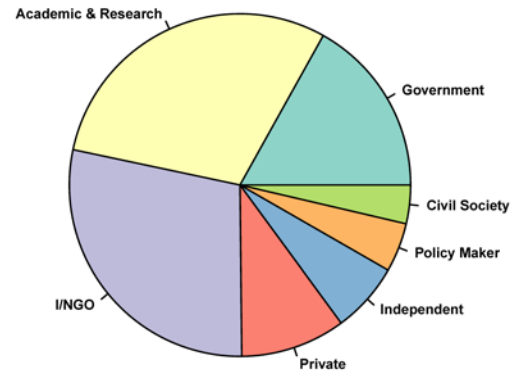
Table S1

Introduction

This supporting information consists of two figures and one tables.



Total Survey Participants (365)



Total Workshop Participants (302)

Figure S1. Experts with various professional backgrounds from academia, civil society organizations, governments, grassroots initiatives, national and international organizations, and the private sector have participated in our survey (left) and workshops (right).



Figure S2. Impact of the COVID-19 on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nepal for short term (within a year), medium term (within the next five years), and long term (by 2030) at the target level. We allocated seven-point scale impact scores by assessing expert's opinion collected during our online questionnaire survey and online workshops: -3 (strongly restricting), -2 (moderately restricting), -1 (weakly restricting), 0 (no influence), +1 (weakly promoting), +2 (moderately promoting), and +3 (strongly promoting). After our assessment, the experts also reviewed these scores. Due to the complex nature of the impacts and the targets, a few targets also have two scores. See Table S1 for details on the narrative behind these scores.

Table S1. Scores and mechanism of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on SDGs at the target level in Nepal for short term (within a year), medium term (within the next five years), and long term (by 2030). We allocated seven-point impact scores by assessing expert's opinion collected during our online questionnaire survey and online workshops: scale [-3 (strongly restricting), -2 (moderately restricting), -1 (weakly restricting), 0 (no influence), +1 (weakly promoting), +2 (moderately promoting), and +3 (strongly promoting)].

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere	
1. By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.90 a day.	
Short term [-2]	In the short term, the COVID-19 pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target to eradicate extreme poverty. Nepal's government has a target to eradicate poverty and limit it to 13.7 by 2022, which seems impossible with the present condition. The impacts occur due to increasing job losses and unemployment. People with formal and informal employment have either lost their job or are under-employed. The tourism sector is on the verge of collapse. As a result, more than one million people who were, directly and indirectly, engaged in this sector are unemployed. Increasing job losses and unemployment in a foreign land also have negatively impacted the remittance flow into the country, a significant source of tax and revenue in Nepal. These phenomena' cumulative effects would decrease the country's GDP in the short term, hardening the government's plans and policies smoothly. Therefore, the pandemic can push low-income families even below the national poverty line. Meanwhile, there are some positive steps taken by the government to lessen the impacts of the pandemic. The government has provided the reschedule of loan payment facilities and lowered the interest rates on loans to affected sectors. Also, it has provided additional working capital for affected industries.
Medium term [-1]	In the medium term, the pandemic would have weakly restricting impacts on this target. Although the situation would improve in the next years, the returnee migrant workers may not get full employment soon. Similarly, the tourism industries may not revive in the medium term as well. Therefore, a considerable population would still be below the poverty line in the medium term.
Long term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term. The government has also allocated a budget to create about 6,00,000 additional employments through the Prime Minister Employment Program. The annual budget has also made provisions for the pandemic affected industries, e.g., tourism, agriculture, and cottage and small-scale enterprises. The government, the private sector, individuals, and households would take necessary measures to increase employment, agricultural production, and productivity. These measures may contribute positively to household income and lessen poverty. However, based on the pre-COVID/19 experiences, there is doubt of full implementation and realization of budgetary commitments.

1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women, and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target to reduce poverty by at least 50%. There are three reasons behind it. First, significant populations working in formal and informal sectors, within and outside Nepal, have either lost their jobs or partially paid/unpaid jobs. Also, the pandemic has constrained the employment opportunities for youth as well as returned migrant workers. Concerning unemployment and job losses, the poor, disadvantaged, and marginalized population, who are dependent on daily wages for their lives and livelihood, are worst hit by the pandemic. Second, responding to the pandemic may consume higher resources, which may cause a resource crunch for the efforts and initiatives aimed at reducing poverty. Third, poverty has increased with the private sector's constrained economic activities because of the nationwide lockdowns.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term. For Nepal, a considerable time may be required to revive the economy and reap benefits from the restructuring of global supply chains. With its young and relatively cheap human resources, Nepal is expected to integrate into global value chains.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic would have weakly promoting impacts on this target in the long term. A large stock of resources is necessary to design the government's targeted plans, civil society organizations, and development partners to revive the economy in the long term. With the sustainable use of resources, the progress could be accelerated. The country's poverty could decline with available jobs in the market.
1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target to implement social protection systems. As discussed in Targets 1.1 and 1.2, job losses, unemployment, and constrained private sectors' economic activities have directly or indirectly decreased tax and revenue collection with a substantial impact on economic growth. The dwindling economic growth would have adverse impacts on the implementation of appropriate social protection systems. Likewise, there would be a financial resource crunch in social protection since most of the funds are diverted to cope with the pandemic.
Medium term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the medium term. The efficient use of the Prime Minister Employment Scheme may help mitigate the pandemic's negative impacts in the next years.

Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic would have weakly promoting impacts on this target. The current disaster has highlighted the need for social protection programs, pushing the governments to improve such systems and future measures.
1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology, and financial services, including microfinance	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target of equal rights to ownership, essential services, technology, and economic resources. The economic impacts on poor, vulnerable, and disadvantaged populations are higher, adversely affecting equal rights and access to ownership and economic resources. The pandemic has increased economic inequalities and deepened the gaps among society's economic classes. Additionally, it has opened the window of digitization in different spheres of society. The problem is that the digital divide since access to technology is not smooth across its social groups and geographical regions.
Medium term [0]	In the mid-term, the pandemic would not influence this target. The governments would accelerate the efforts towards digital transactions and the economy.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target in the long term. E-commerce, e-business, online classes, and virtual training would flourish in the longer run. The knowledge and skills of technology used during the pandemic would create the conditions to utilize these e-services and online facilities better. State intervention to narrow down the digital divide would enable this target in the future. Additionally, returning migrants who are skillful with technology could provide sound knowledge in the agricultural and other technical sectors. Those who have lost jobs will look for employment opportunities in their places, thus encouraging them to increase their access to economic and productive income resources.
1.5: By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social, and environmental shocks and disasters	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to build resilience to environmental, economic, and social disasters. The economic, environmental, and social impacts of the pandemic have adversely affected the resilience to disasters. The pandemic has improved the air quality in the urban location but increased deforestation and poaching in several places since the lockdown. The strict rules of social and physical distancing have negatively affected the preventive and regulatory mechanism. For example, wildfire incidents, poaching of wildlife, and

	deforestation have been on the rise in several forests in Morang and Mahottari district. ¹ Similarly, there is a rise in timber smuggling in Kapilbastu and Arghakhachi districts. ² During the pandemic, there is an increase in social problems such as violence, deaths, trafficking, and exploitation.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the crisis would have a weakly promoting impact on this target. Four explanations support the argument. First, the pandemic lessons may boost the governments and people to prepare better strategies to tackle environmental, social, health, and economic disasters. Second, the proactive role of local governments would help to build resilience to disasters. As has been seen, local governments are widely involved in the various activities to tackle the pandemic within their jurisdiction. The experience and knowledge gained would enable them to devise and implement the appropriate policies, plans, strategies, and programs to respond to disasters in the future. Third, the crisis has increased greater consciousness and awareness of people to conserve and protect the environment and natural resources. Finally, it has taught people that disasters are part of life, so people must learn to live with them.
Long term [+1]	Similar to the medium term, the pandemic would have weakly promoting impacts on this target in the long term.
1.a: Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programs and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions	
Short term [-2]	In the short run, the pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target to mobilize resources to implement policies to end poverty. It would be hard to have funds from development partners to LDCs and developing countries because of the economic downturn and changed priorities caused by the pandemic in the developed countries. As a result, it would be challenging to mobilize resources for poverty alleviation.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term. The negative impacts of a pandemic on developed countries' economies would limit the options to mobilize resources. Similarly, their priorities to tackle the pandemic may dilute their official assistance commitments to LDCs and developing countries in the medium term. However, the level of impact would be lower than in the short term.
Long term	In the long term, the pandemic would not influence this target. The economic recovery in the advanced economy may help to reduce the negative impacts on this target. Similarly, LDCs and developing countries like Nepal may seek and find

¹ <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2020/04/13/wildfire-poaching-and-tree-felling-go-unchecked-in-forests-of-morang-and-mahottari>

² <https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/lockdown-a-boon-for-timber-smugglers/>

[0]	alternative funding sources like advanced economies of the South to ensure the support for its efforts towards poverty reduction.
1.b: Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional, and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to create a pro-poor and gender-sensitive policy framework. The priority is diverted towards the health sector and economic recovery. There may be less interest in pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies. More specifically, the priority now is to deal with the COVID-19 outbreak and control the spread, which has a considerable cost on poverty reduction efforts.
Medium term [0]	The pandemic would not influence this target in the medium term. There would not be any problem with creating pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies to accelerate poverty eradication investment. However, the budget allocation would be more on restoring the economic activities, which is hampered by the pandemic, rather than on the poverty eradication actions.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic would have weakly promoting impacts on this target in the long term. There would be an increased need for resources and investment to support the poverty eradication actions since the pandemic has significantly increased poverty. This need would push the related actors and stakeholders at the national, regional, and international levels to create a more pro-poor and gender-sensitive policy framework in the post-pandemic world.
Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	
2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round	
Short term [-2]	The COVID-19 pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on achieving this target of universal access to safe and nutritious food in the short term. This impact occurs from three different mechanisms. First, the restriction of movement or lockdown, as a measure to control the pandemic transfer rate, has disrupted the food supply chain and resulted in limited access to food, mainly for vulnerable and pro-poor people. Since Nepal is a food importing country, disruption of the food distribution system makes food expensive, limiting food access and food diversity. Similarly, schools' closure due to movement or lockdown restriction also negatively impacts access to safe and nutritious food for children benefiting from school meal programs. Second, the restriction of movement or lockdown has a negative effect on local food production due to disruption in the distribution of agricultural inputs (e.g., seeds and fertilizers) and in the timely harvest. These input and harvest limitations would reduce food production, affecting food access in the short term. Third, reduced

	incomes of many households, mainly pro-poor and vulnerable households due to the pandemic and increase in food price have also limited access to safe and nutritious food. Restricted economic activities at national and international levels have reduced many households' incomes due to reduced working hours or job loss. This reduced income is severe for households supported by daily wages, travel and tourism, hospitality, and remittances. Many migrant workers from Nepal have lost their jobs. They are forced to return to the country due to the pandemic.
Medium term [+1]	The pandemic could have a weakly promoting effect on this target via two mechanisms in the medium term. First, it created an opposite trend in migration than usual, i.e., from cities to rural areas and from abroad to the nation. The initial observation was that the returnees have started cultivating fallow land both in urban and rural areas. It showed that the pandemic has resulted in the cultivation of fallow land due to increased engagement of returnee migrants. If this reversed trend is sustained, food production will increase, revitalizing rural livelihoods and the economy. As a result, access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food all year round might be improved. However, we should be cautious that many young people who returned from India have returned to India to continue their jobs. Second, urban rooftop gardens, mainly for producing fruits and vegetables, have also become popular during the restriction of movement or lockdown period. The pandemic has triggered behavior change in producing at least some food, e.g., vegetables at home. If this changed behavior persisted, urban inhabitants would benefit from increased dietary diversity, resulting in improved food accessibility. Since other businesses and occupations have been hampered, the youth have come to farming changing their livelihood strategy. It would increase food production in the medium term.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic could have a weakly promoting effect on this target in the long term when taken as a transformation opportunity. The pandemic could help increase domestic food production and strengthen the local economy. When such change would occur, domestic production would help ensure better access to food. Similarly, the pandemic has also increased awareness of nutritious food to enhance body immunity. In this sense, the promotion of traditional cereals, mainly neglected and underutilized crops, could take place in the long term. So far, the focus is on imports to meet the country's food demand rather than encouraging local food crops, including mountain crops, which have not received enough attention. These crops could help end hunger and ensure universal access to safe and nutritious food in the long term. In the long term, it would promote a local food regime along with a self-sufficient local economy.
2.2 By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on achieving this target to end all forms of malnutrition. Additional to the mechanism described for Target 2.1, this impact occurs from the other three mechanisms. First, the

	restriction of movement and fear of transmission of Covid-19 have made it difficult to carry out programs related to nutrition, e.g., Vitamin A Distribution Program, and to utilize health services. Second, since the pandemic responses have not focused much on nutritional aspects, currently. In lack of such focus, in the immediate future also the concerned agencies may not promote measures to end malnutrition considering the potential impact of the pandemic. In contrast, the progress on nutrition-related indicators might slow down soon, and addressing marginalized populations' nutritional needs might be difficult. Third, movement restriction has reduced physical activities among all the age groups, increasing body weight. Overweight and obesity is a growing form of malnutrition in the country.
Medium term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the medium term because of two reasons. First, the existing programs to end all forms of malnutrition will continue once the pandemic is resolved. Second, achieving this target requires long term planning and improvements in various other related sectors (e.g., health care, water, sanitation) through coordinated efforts. Thus, achieving this target in the medium term will depend on adaptive planning and management, raised awareness, advocacy aspects, and coordinated efforts.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic might have a weakly promoting impact on this target in the long term. This positive impact could be expected under the assumption that the government may put further efforts to meet this target, such as promoting immune-boosting foods and taking lessons from COVID-19. The pandemic has highlighted the crucial role of proper nutrition to have a healthy population.
2.3 By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on achieving this target to double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers. Mainly, the restriction of movement or lockdown has disrupted the supply chain of vital agricultural inputs (particularly seed and chemical fertilizer), extension and community services, the market for outputs, and agriculture activities' timeliness. The restriction in the movement has also negatively affected labor availability. This disruption would result in lower yields. Nepal's policies and programs for fiscal 2020-21 has a particular focus on the agriculture sector. These policies and programs include implementing contract farming, increasing employment, minimum price rate, promoting the dairy sector, and establishing factories to provide fertilizer and seeds to farmers. However, the farmers felt a lack of support on increasing productivity, setting up storage facilities, efficient supply chain, and agro-processing center during the pandemic. Food has been classified as 'most essential goods.'

Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic would weakly promote this target if the government provides opportunities to the returnees and unemployed population for different commercial agriculture types. However, it largely depends on the government's proactiveness to formulate and implement necessary policy measures. Returnee migrants' absorption in agriculture could increase fallow land and agro-entrepreneurship in rural areas. However, we should be careful with this expectation as the labor force might not be entirely suitable for contributing to agriculture. They may need training for building agriculture skills.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic may weakly promote this target in the long term if the government introduces policy measures to retain the returnee migrants in the agriculture sector. However, we also need to acknowledge that achieving this target would be challenging even in the pre-COVID-19 situation, although production could increase via cultivation of currently fallow areas. This challenge is underlined in the required stimulus and support packages to double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers. These packages include easy access to agriculture inputs, extension services, markets (e.g., minimum support price or buy back arrangement), and adoption of modern tools and technologies. Additionally, the pandemic might also help bring more budget and programs in agriculture, improving productivity in the long term.
2.4 By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on achieving this target of sustainable food production and resilient agriculture practices. The mechanism behind this impact is similar to Target 2.3. Additionally, the food shortages may trigger unsustainable agriculture practices to ensure immediate food and nutrition needs that have been limitedly accessible due to the pandemic. These unsustainable practices can severely hamper ecosystem balance, biodiversity conservation, and their capacity for adaptation to climate change. The current crisis has also highlighted the need for contingency plans, insurance options, and effective subsidy programs to ensure sustainable and resilient agriculture practices.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic would weakly promote this target because of raised awareness. This crisis highlighted that Nepal needs to focus on increasing food self-sufficiency. This awareness was raised mainly at an individual level. For example, fallow land has been cultivated during the lockdown period. We can speculate that people may follow sustainable and climate-resilient agricultural practices, including crop diversification, due to raised awareness. This raised awareness would also promote environment-friendly green jobs.

Long term [+1]	Like the medium term, the pandemic would weakly promote this target if the government would motivate farmers towards agro-based industry establishment. Learning lessons from the pandemic, the government would promote a sustainable and resilient food production system toward increased food self-sufficiency of the county and promotion of local food industries.
2.5 By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed.	
Short term [+1]	The pandemic can weakly promote this target to maintain the genetic diversity in food production in the short term. This promoting effect is observed due to the use of local seed varieties by farmers and the consumption of local plant species during the lockdown. This practice could change food culture and could conservation genetic diversity.
Medium term [0]	In the medium term, the current crisis might not influence this target. The major challenge underlying this target is to conserve local species and promote local seed varieties.
Long term [0]	Similar to the medium term, the pandemic would not influence this target.
2.a Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries.	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target to invest in rural infrastructure, agricultural research, technology, and gene banks. This restricting impact is mainly due to local, provincial, and federal governments' current focus on responding to the pandemic. Additionally, many donor countries may focus on recovering from the pandemic instead of providing aids to the least developed countries like Nepal.
Medium term [-1]	In the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target in the short term due to focusing on revitalizing the economy in the post-pandemic era. There might be an investment shift for local food industries.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target in the long term. The government may invest more in rural infrastructure and agricultural research as a preparatory measure to face pandemics and disasters

	and to reduce the trade deficit in food and agriculture. This assumption might also hold for donor countries and international funding.
2.b Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round.	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target to prevent agricultural trade restrictions, market distortions, and export subsidies. This impact can mainly occur due to export restrictions imposed on agricultural products.
Medium term [-1]	In the medium term, the pandemic could have a similarly restricting impact on achieving this target as in the short term. This impact can mainly occur as a residual effect of distortion of product marketing and distribution system in the short term.
Long term [0]	The pandemic could have no influence on this target in the long term because any restrictions and distortions imposed due to the crisis will be corrected in the long term.
2.c Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility.	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target to ensure a stable food commodity market and timely access to information. This restricting impact is mainly because of the disruption of agriculture markets, food prices, and market information during the lockdown.
Medium term [0]	The pandemic could have no influence on this target in the medium term. We assume that the current disruption of agriculture markets, food prices, and market information would be resolved once the crisis is over.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic could have a weakly promoting impact on this target. The concerned agencies may improve market infrastructure and food distribution and regulate the price based on lessons learned during the pandemic. The additional focus could be on making traditional markets such as <i>hat bazaars</i> and street vending safe and responding to the customers' needs.
SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages	
3.1 By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births	

Short term [-3]	The pandemic has a strongly restricting impact on this target to reduce maternal mortality in the short term. This impact occurs due to the following mechanisms. First, both health care providers and receivers have anxiety and fear for COVID-19 transmission. This situation has adversely impacted the availability of maternal health services at health facilities, particularly at periphery levels, e.g., primary health care centers, and health posts. Despite the government emergency plan to open all health facilities for essential health care services, most health facilities remained closed during the lockdown period due to fear of COVID-19. As a result, the maternal mortality ratio has also significantly increased during this lockdown period. Second, there has been increased cases of unsafe abortion and home delivery in the absence of health workers due to a crash in regular maternal health services at all level of health facilities. Maternal health is the most neglected area of health service during this pandemic. Additionally, due to fear of COVID-19, mothers are also reluctant to visit health facilities for maternal health services, putting them at high risks of deaths or related complications. Second, many women could not reach health facilities for their regular checkups or emergency services during pregnancy due to transportation obstruction.
Medium term [-1]	The negative impact of the pandemic on this target may continue to the medium term. However, it may have only a weakly restricting impact. This impact is mainly due to deteriorated maternal health care quality due to the pandemic focused health care system. A rapid tracking system for more than a hundred health facilities from the family welfare division has also shown that maternal health services are severely affected. Though the government has launched "reaching the unreached" strategies to reduce health inequality, the weak COVID-19 health care tracking system will impact its implementation. Currently, the attention and efforts of countries in the world have been diverted to pandemic mitigation. The pandemic focused health care system has shifted the health care priority. Government and non-government sectors have diverted their concentration towards controlling the pandemic. This changed focus may also divert the financial investment and health workforce deployment towards the pandemic, putting maternal health services in shadow.
Long term [+2]	The pandemic can have a moderately promoting impact on this target in the long term. The maternal health program is a government priority program. The pandemic will have a short-term impact on the disruption of maternal health services. However, the government would bring specific plans for the smooth delivery of services at all levels of health facilities. The increase in maternal deaths during the period of COVID-19 has brought greater attention to maternal health services. Considering the severity of the problem, the government may bring policy guidelines for delivering uninterrupted maternal health services at all levels. Additionally, Nepal has had good experiences in achieving maternal health indicators in the past.
3.2 By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 20 per 1,000 live births	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic has a moderately restricting impact on this target to end all preventable deaths under five years. This impact occurs due to two mechanisms. First, this crisis has disrupted routine immunization systems, health services (e.g., antenatal and postnatal

	care services), and institutional delivery. Second, the current priority of the government is on the pandemic and emergency measures now. This changed focus can lead to a funding crisis in newborn and child health, affecting the target.
Medium term [-1 and +1]	In the medium term, the pandemic could have both weakly restricting and promoting impacts on this target. The restricting impact comes from the social determinants of health. The pandemic and lockdown have affected various social determinants, thus impacting newborn and child health. During this pandemic, many people have lost their job and income sources. There are growing poverty, disparities, and uncertainties. These would affect the purchasing capacity of families, nutrition, and various other needs. Thus, it will have negative implications for meeting the target. The promoting impact could occur due to behavior change. The pandemic is instrumental in bringing awareness of hygiene and sanitation. More people are maintaining a physical distance. They are more concerned about eating healthy food for developing immunity systems. These factors may bring positive changes in newborn and children's health, contributing to reducing their deaths. During this pandemic, the local governments are more responsive and active in health care provisioning, which was rarely the case before. Due to their positive performance in health crisis management, we assume that they will be more aware and concerned about the overall health sector.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact in this target, mainly due to behavior change and increased attention on the local governments' health care system.
3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic has a weakly restricting impact on this target to fight communicable diseases due to the following reasons. Firstly, the status of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and neglected tropical diseases, and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases, and other communicable diseases in Nepal are still rampant. The diagnosis and treatment of communicable diseases have been affected due to the pandemic focused health care system. Due to the pandemic, all other communicable diseases are hidden in the community. Patients are approaching delay for diagnosis and treatment and sometimes not getting adequate treatment facilities. Even people are dying of diarrheal diseases, which could have been saved just with oral rehydration solutions' timely availability. Secondly, all governments, health organizations, and other authorities are continuously only focusing on identifying the cases affected by the COVID-19. The recent national prevalence survey has also shown an increase in the prevalence of tuberculosis. Thirdly, inadequate personal protective equipment and mosquito nets in quarantine centers can also increase malarial diseases. Lastly, supplies of essential medicine at peripheral health facilities have been affected due to the pandemic.
Medium term [-1]	In the medium term, the pandemic will still have a weakly restricting impact on this target. This impact needs to be analyzed from a financial perspective. Global funds and other external partners have been supported heavily to reduce non-communicable diseases in the middle- and low-income countries like Nepal. Globally, the economies of the majority of donor countries have shrunk. The reduced economy may create a shift in donor priority. There is a chance that the donor community may shift their priority that could immediately impact the control programs of these diseases. The pandemic has currently affected the delivery of routine services.

	This effect may continue into a few years. Thus, the diseases which are in the elimination phase may increase due to the lack of timely treatment, inadequate preparedness, and monitoring and shifting priority in the new disease management.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on this target. Behaviors change in population on personal sanitation and hygiene can bring positive change, interrupting communicable disease, and neglected tropical diseases. Currently, the consciousness level of the community has been increased towards hygiene. The lesson learned from the pandemic could bring positive influences in preventing other contagious diseases. Public health measures like isolation, physical distancing, and personal sanitation have also helped decrease the prevalence of other communicable diseases in short and medium terms. However, such positive health behaviors depend on regular health awareness interventions and a long-term policy on communicable disease control and prevention. Recent survey reports have also shown a decline in prevalences of HIV/AIDS, water-borne diseases, and other neglected tropical diseases like leprosy, Kala-azar, filariasis, dengue, and rabies. Thus, the improvement in community health behavior may have a positive impact on achieving this target. Globally, the pandemic has also brought communicable diseases in high priority. The government has also reviewed its communicable disease prevention and control strategies due to an unexpected pandemic. Due to restrictions in people's movement, telemedicine has been used rapidly during the pandemic period. Many patients received counseling and medical advice via SMS. Continuations of these lessons learned during the pandemic can also positively impact communicable disease prevention in the long term.
3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and wellbeing	
Short term [-3]	The pandemic strongly restricts this target to reduce mortality from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and promote mental health. This negative impact takes place due to the following reasons. First, the lockdown has confined people at home and restricted their mobility. This restricted mobility would affect their physical health and mental health. People are currently less physically active. Second, disruption in routine health services has affected the majority of the population. This disruption dramatically affects patients with chronic health problems. Their diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation would require long term care, and delay in such procedures will aggravate the morbidity conditions, leading to more deaths. Additionally, due to COVID 19, the current priority of the government is to control the pandemic. The suicides have rapidly increased during the lockdown period, and no specific intervention has been designed to prevent suicides. Hence, NCDs and mental health are currently in the shadows. There could be a cut in the funding, resulting in diluted efforts.
Medium term [-1 and +1]	In the medium term, the pandemic can have both weakly restricting and promoting impact on this target. The negative impact is associated with social determinants of health. COVID-19 and the associated lockdown has increased uncertainty among the population about their income loss and employment opportunities. Domestic violence and suicides are commonly reported. The majority of experts believed such conditions would increase the burden of mental illnesses. The lockdown would deepen the existing inequalities among populations. These inequalities will deprive them of basic needs such as adequate nutrition leading to more

	vulnerability to NCDs. The positive impact is associated with behavior change on healthy diets (e.g., junk foods are replaced by homemade snacks) and homemade remedies to strengthen the immunity.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target in the long term, under the assumption that positive behavior towards healthy food and exercise is expected to continue.
3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic has a moderately restricting impact on this target to prevent and treat substance abuse. It is a significant stress factor for people and has put people under pressure for their survival and economic sustainability. People have lost their jobs and incomes. There is growing uncertainty when the problem gets solved, and they will be back to their everyday lives. These situations might make people, especially youths, more vulnerable to substance and drug abuse.
Medium term [-1]	Since it is unsure when life will become normal, this crisis would still have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term.
Long term [-1]	The reason for having a weakly restricting impact also holds for the long term.
3.6. By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents	
Short term [0]	The pandemic does not influence this target to reduce road injuries and deaths. The promotion of nationwide lockdown and limited access to vehicles during the pandemic period revealed a lessened the death due to road accidents than in the last several years. However, the current situation has a concise life. The situation might change after lockdown with a possible increment in road traffic accidents as in previous years.
Medium term [0]	As in the short term, the pandemic does not influence this target to reduce road injuries and deaths in the medium term.
Long term [0]	The pandemic does not influence this target to reduce road injuries and deaths in the long term, similar to the short and medium terms.
3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic has a weakly restricting impact on this target of universal access to sexual and reproductive care, family planning, and education in the short term. During this crisis period, unwanted pregnancies are likely to increase due to contraceptive services' low accessibility. These unwanted pregnancies may increase unsafe abortion, maternal complications, and additional burden to the health system in the short and medium terms. Lack of access to sexual and reproductive health-care services and information

	contributes to high morbidity and mortality rates for largely preventable sexual and reproductive health-care problems, particularly in developing countries like Nepal.
Medium term [-1]	In the medium term, the pandemic will still have a weakly restricting impact on this target. Due to the pandemic, sexual and reproductive health services have been disrupted both at public and private health facilities. There is a shortage of family planning commodities at most peripheral health facilities, including condoms and contraceptive pills. This shortage may increase unsafe sexual activity, unwanted pregnancies, and increase sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS. Additionally, restrictions on information also limit people's ability to make choices regarding their sexual and reproductive health and rights during the period of lockdown. The quality monitoring mechanism for reproductive health services at many health facilities has also been hampered due to fear of COVID-19 among health staff. Nepal is still struggling to cater to the sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescents. The pandemic may negatively impact reducing a high prevalence of early and child marriage and unmet sexual and reproductive health needs. The current inequality in utilization of sexual and reproductive health services among the adolescent population may increase due to service obstructions at primary health care centers. Besides, due to lack of adequate information on adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health services and fear of COVID-19, the services' utilization has been decreased at the community level. Sex education and reproductive health care come under secondary priority. The priority is essential health service delivery and currently focused on pandemic mitigation. So these sectors may receive funding cuts following the economic recession due to the current pandemic.
Long term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term. Nepal can even achieve this target by 2030 because of its existing institutions dedicated to this target. In Nepal, local volunteers provide information and education to community people and regularly distribute condoms and resupply of oral contraceptive pills. Therefore, sexual and reproductive health services can improve in the long term. Similarly, both federal and local governments' commitments towards improving sexual and reproductive health services are indivisible to achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health and family planning services by 2030. There are possibilities of bringing innovative programs at local levels in the future. Nepal has already committed plans like National Family Planning Costed Implementation Plan 2015-2021, Nepal Health Sector Strategy 2015-2020 (NHSS), and the Government of Nepal's commitments to FP2020 vital policy documents to progress sexual and reproductive services in the long term.
3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services, and access to safe, effective, quality, and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic has a weakly restricting impact on this target to achieve universal health coverage (UHC) in the short term. Although it has created an opportunity for government budget allocation to achieve UHC, UHC's progress was already plodding. The work needed to be accelerated. In this pandemic, the health service user expenditure has increased due to the unavailability of health services at public health facilities, which may impact health-care services access. The financial risk protection would also have

	dwindled. There are some opportunities such as digital health, enhancing health infrastructure, and improving quality of care that cut down the availability of free drugs and services in the health facilities.
Medium term [-1]	In the medium term, the pandemic will also have a weakly restricting impact on this target, similar to the short term.
Long term [+2]	In the long term, the pandemic will have positive influences in achieving UHC. It has changed the perception of health protection and promotion among the general population and concerned authorities. This change may accelerate social health insurance programs' coverage to bring the maximum population under the safety net to protect them from additional financial burden for health. The pandemic has also created awareness for the right-based approach to health among all population segments. Consequently, the recently enacted Public Health Service Act 2075 (2018) will provide a robust legal instrument to get free basic and emergency health service guaranteed by Nepal's Constitution.
3.9 By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water, and soil pollution and contamination	
Short term [+1]	The pandemic has a weakly promoting impact on this target to reduce illness and deaths from hazardous chemicals and pollutants. Globally, air pollution and other chemical hazards have reduced substantially during the pandemic. Similar is the case for Nepal because of no vehicular movement and industry closure. This pandemic has brought a positive effect to make the environment clean and pollution-free. The pandemic has a positive effect on air, water, and soil pollution due to the closure of automobiles, factories, and less traffic. Temporarily, the industrial sector has been halted. The extraction of hazardous chemicals and pollutants has been decreased that causes air, water, and soil pollution. The quality of air and water has improved significantly due to seasonal changes too.
Medium term [0]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have no influence on this target when the economic activities restart and function as in the past without sustainable transformation.
Long term [0]	Like the medium term, the pandemic may have no influence on this target in the long term when the economic activities restart and function as in the past without sustainable transformation.
3.a Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate	
Short term [+1]	The pandemic has a weakly promoting impact on this target to implement the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), mainly due to a change in people's behavior and social environment. Due to the fear of transmission of COVID-19, people are not sharing tobacco products among their friends now as they take it as a risk. It is likely to sustain this practice in the future as well. Many people have perceived smoking itself as a risk factor for COVID-19 transmission. Consequently, current smokers may quit-smoking, and potential new smokers will be discouraged from starting. This behavior change will ultimately reduce tobacco use in the population and contribute to meeting the targets. Additionally, the mobility of people is now restricted due to pandemic. This

	restriction has limited social gatherings, naturally decreasing the use of tobacco. Besides, restricted mobility has also impacted availability and access to tobacco products, leading to reduced tobacco use.
Medium term [+2]	In the medium term, the pandemic would have a moderately promoting impact on this target. The change in people's behavior and the social environment from the short term may continue. Additionally, we assume that the government's regulatory legal provisions will find a conducive environment for their implementation.
Long term [+2 and -1]	The pandemic would have a moderately promoting and weakly restricting impact on this target, mainly due to the positive role of WHO. WHO is seriously concerned with addressing the problems of NCDs. Tobacco use is one of the significant determinants of NCDs, established as the predisposing factor of COVID-19 mortality. Therefore, the WHO is expected to prioritize the FCTC agendas further. WHO is the authentic body to monitor the progress in the achievement of FCTC targets. WHO's active role can be expected to maintain the progress avoiding any possible negative impacts of the pandemic worldwide and in Nepal. The pandemic's adverse impact on the government's policy is seen as the primary factor leading to negative impacts on FCTC targets. The policy implications might be reflected in multiple ways. First, the government's efforts will be focused on addressing the pandemic and its recovery in the health sector. As a result of the government's priority shift, efforts to meet the FCTC related targets will be diluted. There is a need for the government to address other issues because the pandemic agenda of FCTC may be ignored and pushed in shadow. Additionally, the government may not allocate necessary funds to accomplish necessary activities planned to meet the FCTC related targets.
3.b Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all	
Short term [+2]	The pandemic can have a moderately promoting impact on this target on research, development, and universal access to affordable vaccines and medicines in the short term, mainly due to the priority of WHO and increased funding in research. The vaccine is seen as instrumental in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic in the long run. Therefore, WHO has initiated a multi-country collaboration in the development of the COVID-19 vaccine. WHO is further interested in funding research activities at the national level. Every country will have the opportunity to receive this support. This support will help Nepal to enhance research capacities. During the current pandemic, many countries have also shown their interest in developing vaccines independently. These countries are investing in the academic sector for research. This investment can be seen as a favorable environment to improve research capacity for Nepal.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic can have weakly promoted this target due to the continuation of the short term's positive impacts. Additionally, people in all the countries have been adversely affected by the pandemic and seek relief. Therefore, besides WHO, the global community has realized the urgency of vaccine development to address the pandemic effectively. This urgency will

	place vaccine development in high priority and may ultimately influence the donor countries to fund the research. Nepal can take advantage of such a positive environment to receive financial and technical support for improving research capacity and opportunity.
Long term [+1]	Similarly, the pandemic can also have a weakly promoting impact on this target in the long term, mainly due to the Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC). NHRC has been pursuing the enhancement of national capacity in health research for the last several years. This pandemic is considered as the positive factor to meet the research component of this SDG target. With the pandemic's experience and the WHO support, NHRC will further reinforce its efforts to meet the targets in the long term.
3.c Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training, and retention of the health workforce	
Short term [+1]	In the short term, the pandemic can have a weakly promoting impact on this target to increase health financing and support the health workforce in developing countries. The pandemic has opened a new window of opportunity to leverage digital learning (low-cost but effective). This digital learning will benefit many health workers' skill enhancement, even in the lockdown and remote areas. Different levels of Nepal's governments have allocated a higher budget allocation than the last year because of the pandemic. Due to a substantial increase in health financing, the recruitment, development, training, and retention of the health workforce have increased in Nepal. The pandemic has properly utilized human resources. If motivated and interested people are recruited, trained, and retained, it is not challenging to accelerate the halted services. The good news is that Nepal has already made a remarkable achievement in human resources for health production. However, the pandemic has adversely affected the attraction and retention of a health professional.
Medium term [+1]	In the aftermath of the pandemic, there may have a general realization of the need to increase health financing. Nepal is implementing health insurance schemes in a gradual phase, which may positively impact the future. The allocation needs to be proper in support of achieving the goal of UHC. Given the pandemic, we hope that the government will be more convinced to increase health resources, develop and train the health workforce, and adopt measures to retain them. It might increase the health-care workforce in the medium term with an increase in the health care budget. It will contribute positively to meeting this target.
Long term [+2]	The pandemic can have a moderately promoting impact on this target in the long term. Nepal tries to recruit, train, develop and retain their health workers in the long run that ascertains that this target can be met by 2030. National Health Training Center contributes to meet the targets envisioned in the National Health Policy 2071, National Health Sector Strategy (2015- 2020), and Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Reform of the health system with appropriate human resources would be a priority in this new lifestyle-related issue. It has opened the eyes of policy-makers in Nepal that the importance of health care workers and health facilities has been highlighted during this pandemic. However, there might be some challenges in the area of deployment, retention, and performance. Hopefully, the health system's strengthening will create an attractive and enabling environment for the produced human resource for health (HRH) to engage in the public health system and effectively meet the population's health needs. Due to the pandemic, this year's government has increased the health budget to fulfill the human resources for health in the government system.

3.d Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks.	
Short term [+1]	The pandemic can have a weakly promoting impact on this target to improve early warning for global health risks in the short term. It could be a significant initiative to emphasize the current working system with advanced diagnostic tests.
Medium term [+1]	The ongoing pandemic may increase awareness and preparation against disease among people shortly.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target in the long term. Due to the pandemic's impact, international donors, health systems, and reporting systems could be developed, which would run for the long term. The pandemic has created good opportunities and made it obligatory for Nepal to improvise current health systems. During the pandemic, the government received proper support from the WHO to develop health system management. Strengthening national program on prevention and control of diseases
SDG 4 Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All	
4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.	
Short term [-2]	The COVID-19 pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target of free primary and secondary education. The impacts occur in four different ways. First, schools' closure across the country has halted the conventional face-to-face class delivery system. The alternative method adopted to continue the Teaching & Learning (T & L) activities via web apps, radio, and television could not reach all the students. This disparity is because access to and availability of devices, services, and facilities required for alternative T & L are not smooth across Nepal's social groups and geographical regions. Also, alternative T & L requires the parents' capacity and student's capacity and interests, especially at the primary level, which may vary across the geographical regions and social groups. Second, the increasing infection cases have repeatedly postponed the conventional paper-based examination to the uncertain future. The uncertainty of assessment has directly affected the students of Class 12 who need the grades to choose and enroll in the undergraduate courses. Third, the pandemic has interrupted distributing benefits such as textbooks, scholarships, mid-day meals, and other learning materials. Last but not least, it has disrupted the academic calendar of primary and secondary education in Nepal.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target. The impacts occur because of the absence of socio-economic recovery plans in the post-pandemic context, with few exceptions. Local governments, the responsible entities, have yet to bring quality assurance plans in the post-pandemic context. In the absence of appropriate plans and actions, the digital divide would be a significant challenge of education in the medium term. Similarly, local governments are very

	slow to bring health recovery plans. Lack of appropriate plans concerning infected and recovered cases among the students would directly impact the effective and quality learning outcomes. Therefore, effective learning outcomes are questionable in the medium term.
Long term [0]	In the long term, the pandemic would not influence this target. The aggressive use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in primary and secondary education may minimize the pandemic's adverse effects. On a positive note, Nepal's fifteenth five-year plan (2076/77 to 2080/81) commits to ensuring ICTs in education. However, there would be challenges of lack of parents' and children's capacity to use ICTs in education.
4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to equal access to quality pre-primary education. There are several reasons behind this. First, the effectiveness of alternative T & L at the pre-primary level demands parents' active role and responsibility. This demand is hardly possible to meet in poor, illiterate, and disadvantaged populations. Second, Early Childhood Development centers' closure and prolonged lockdown have interrupted one of the leading learning methods of pre-primary children learning through socialization. The children are confined inside the home, limiting their social interactions. Third, schools' use as quarantine and isolation centers has destroyed the schools' most decorated pre-primary classroom. Finally, the pandemic may push higher dropout rates in the pre-schools this year.
Medium term [0]	In the medium term, the pandemic would not influence this target. Parents' active participation in children's education and development would holistically recover the pandemic's loss.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target. This impact is because parents are aware of the necessity and importance of allocating time for their children's emotional and physical development during the pandemic. In the longer run, parents would allot more time to spend with their children. Also, the awareness of parents' role in children's education and development during the pandemic would enable active participation in pre-school learning and development. Moreover, the Early Childhood Development Center's health facilities and services would be better because of health sanitation awareness.
4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university	
Short term [-2]	In the short term, the pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target to equal access to affordable technical, vocational, and higher education. It has affected the class delivery system and the students' assessment in

	<p>university education and Technical Education and Vocational Training (TEVT). The uncertainty of assessment will have more significant effects on the final year university and TEVT students. The alternative T & L, adopted to mitigate the pandemic's effects, could not reach all the students because of accessibility and affordability of devices, services, and facilities as discussed on Target 4.1. It is challenging to begin the T & L through radio and television, with a bit larger coverage than the web apps, at the university and TEVT level, because of these education institutions' diverse courses. Regarding TEVT, the ICT based learning environment has not been very useful in Nepal as the TVET demands in-person education and training. Some theoretical training through online courses has been under implementation but in the absence of parallel practical training. Even those who have attended these sessions have difficulty understanding, and then applying the expected skills. It makes little sense to rely only on theoretical sessions. Similarly, a significant proportion of enrolled learners do not have access to ICT facilities, which means they do not have access to these online efforts. These issues aside, technical glitches with ICT make it difficult for learners to understand even the courses they deliver. Hence, the efforts so far made appear to be an excuse for engaging the learners.</p>
Medium term [-1]	<p>The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target. There would be no improvement in ensuring higher education marred by closure during the pandemic. Nepal's universities have yet to take initiatives to cope with the pandemic with few exceptions. Tribhuvan University (TU) did not take the substantial initiative to engage its faculty and students during the pandemic. TU has the majority of students, around 80% in Nepal. Thus, Nepal's higher education will suffer, and students' low quality would be reflected in the medium term. In the case of TVET, unless strategies such as conducting theoretical and practical training ensure safe distance in the classroom and workplace, the current impact may remain in the medium term.</p>
Long term [0]	<p>The pandemic would not influence this target. It has provided the opportunity to incorporate blended T & L in the long-term technical, vocational, and tertiary education strategy, bringing positive changes in the longer run.</p>
4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship	
Short term [-2]	<p>The pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target to increase people with relevant financial success skills. The complete and partial shutdown of industries, manufacturing sectors, service sectors, and others has affected the learning environment of TEVT. The students are not able to work as interns or volunteers in the related agencies and institutions. This loss in opportunity directly impacts the graduation of skilled human resources necessary for the jobs, entrepreneurship, and employment. On the other hand, dwindling economic activities and constrained job opportunities have increased the underemployment and unemployment of youth and adults. Similarly, an increasing number of youths</p>

	and adults with relevant skills have been losing jobs due to the pandemic's negative consequences. On the other hand, the state has failed to retain and employ the returnee migrant workers, mostly youths and adults, in the country.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term. The economic crisis caused by the pandemic would continue to bar the prospects of employment and decent jobs for youth and adults having relevant skills.
Long- term [0]	The pandemic would not influence this target. However, the lesson learned from the pandemic would shift the priority and policy of TEVT education towards the promotion of entrepreneur skills in the longer run. This shift may attract youth and adults to entrepreneurship.
4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target to eliminate all discrimination in education. The digital divide and economic impacts of the pandemic would increase the disparities in education. The access and affordability of ICT infrastructure, facilities, and services necessary for the virtual classroom are not smooth across Nepal's social groups and geographical region. This inequality will push the students of poor, marginalized, and vulnerable groups and backward regions out of the learning process at all levels of education- primary, secondary, TEVT, and higher secondary in the hour of the pandemic. Similarly, the pandemic's growing economic impact on the household would directly or indirectly influence the girls' and women's education in the short term. More specifically, the reduced household income may result in the increased dropout rate among the girls and women in Nepal. Also, the pandemic situation has added an extra burden to girl children to support their family work. Similarly, access to all education levels by poor and vulnerable groups will go down because of the pandemic's economic impact.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term. The slow economic recovery among the poor, disadvantaged, and vulnerable population would keep the students away from the educational institutions. Moreover, the students from poor and vulnerable populations would have to struggle to find jobs to sustain household lives in the medium term. The reduced household income would continue to devoid the girls and women out of education.
Long term [0]	The pandemic would not influence this target. The challenges would be to bring the school droppers back to the school in the longer run.
4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy	

Short term [0]	The pandemic would not influence this target of universal literacy and numeracy. Despite the political upheavals, Nepal did achieve the Millennium Development Goals' target of literacy and numeracy in 2015.
Medium term [0]	Similar to the short term, the pandemic would not influence this target.
Long term [0]	The pandemic would not influence this target to ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.
4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this education target for sustainable development and global citizenship. This impact is because the pandemic has intensified the school's psychosocial problems, teachers, and management bodies. The growing psychological and emotional problems may promote a culture of violence and aggression rather than peace and non-violence in society. The cases of domestic violence and violence against children inside the home have significantly increased during the pandemic. Children being the witness of domestic violence and victim of torture and violence within the home do not promote a culture of peace and non-violence. Children's socialization process has been disrupted with the long confinement of them within the home's boundaries. This confinement would have adverse effects on the appreciation of cultural diversity and reduce the importance of respect for each other. Schools' indefinite closure has forced children to engage in illegal activities like drug addiction and crime in different ways.
Medium term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target. The psychosocial support programs at the education institutions may minimize the pandemic's adverse effects on psychological and emotional health. The pandemic makes the realization of more international cooperation, for example, access to the vaccine for the treatments of the COVID-19. Similarly, it has increased the feeling of global citizenship and augmented the appreciation for SDGs.
Long term [+1]	Similar to the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target.
4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all	

Short term [-1]	The pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to build and upgrade inclusive and safe schools. The schools, colleges, and university premises have been used as quarantine and isolation centers to lodge the infected population. This use has brought mainly two negative consequences towards the education facilities in the institutions. First, the school and college environment has been widely polluted in the absence of proper waste disposal mechanisms. Second, the infrastructure and education facilities such as desks, benches, building walls, and whiteboards have been destroyed.
Medium term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target. The positive part of the pandemic is that it has increased health consciousness among the teachers and students. Also, there is a greater realization among the teachers and students about the need for ICT infrastructure and technology-friendly schools. These lessons learned from the pandemic would help build and upgrade health facilities in the schools and higher education institutions, such as recruiting full-time health professionals and upgrading the health care facilities and services in the future. The ICT infrastructure would also be built and upgraded. Nevertheless, the government would increase infrastructure building, including IT facilities.
Long term [+1]	Similar to the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target.
4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to expand higher education scholarships for developing countries. With the worsening health situation, the prospects of higher education scholarship available to developing countries would be shrunk at the international level. There are two factors behind it: changed priority and economic impact. Health assistance and support largely dominate international cooperation at present. In this context, expanding the number of scholarships for developing countries would not be the developed countries' priority. The growing economic deterioration in the developed countries and other developing countries triggered by the pandemic would reduce their contributions to the higher education scholarship.

Medium term [-1]	Similar to the short term, the pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target. The developed countries would experience low economic growth for some years, which may negatively impact the higher education scholarship available to the developing and least developed countries.
Long Term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the longer run.
4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to increase qualified teachers' supply in developing countries. The explanations have to be unfolded at both domestic as well as international level. At the domestic level, the supply of qualified teachers is restricted in two ways. First, the teachers' low digital literacy level has impeded them to undertake the virtual classes regularly. Second, due to the half paid or no paid jobs, private education institutions' teachers are looking for alternative employment opportunities. This underpayment may cause the scarcities of qualified teachers in private schools and colleges. At the international level, the economic recession and changing priorities of developed countries would negatively affect the international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries.
Medium term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target in the medium term. There are two reasons behind this. First, the pandemic situation has made teachers learn new techniques and enhance their skills. There is significant improvement among school supported teachers and self-motivated teachers towards this end. Second, the new normal has widened the international cooperation space for teacher training in developing countries. The pandemic has shown the prospects of virtual teacher training programs in the collaboration between developing countries and developed countries. In the mid-Term, the aggressive virtual teacher training program in developing countries with developed countries' support would increase qualified teachers' supply. Besides, the use of ICTs in education, pushed by pandemic, would allow internationally qualified teachers and professors to take the classes and interact with students from anywhere worldwide.
Long Term [+1]	Like the short term, the pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target in the longer run.
Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.	
Target 5.1: End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.	

Short term [-3]	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic can strongly restrict achieving this target to end discrimination against women and girls. The differences are observed across the education, health, and economic sectors and the upsurge of domestic violence and discriminatory COVID-19 responses from government and private institutions. The direct discrimination seen as a consequence of the pandemic is a form of increased work burden at the household level and increased caregiving responsibilities among professional working women. Increasing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and its impact on women's health are reflected in different indicators. For example, the maternal mortality rate has increased during this period. Compared to pre-lockdown rates, the number of births in the country's health institutions was reduced by approximately 49.9%, with increased inequality by caste and ethnicity. Stillbirth rates in the hospitals increased by 50% from 14 per 1,000 total births before lockdown to 21 per 1,000 total births³. The pandemic has also led to a high increase in harmful practices among girls and women, such as sexual exploitation, rape, and violence. Women were reluctant to report the cases because of the closure of courts during the lockdown. Women and LGBTIQs are facing difficulties in accessing relief packages and services, particularly Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and Violence Against Women (VAW) services, due to the NGOs closing down their shelter services and access to justice services. Nevertheless, VAW cases are defined as individual criminal cases, and individual criminal cases are not dealt with by courts. The quarantine and isolation centers across the country are not designed and arranged in a gender-sensitive manner. The needs of pregnant women, lactating women, menstruating women, senior citizens, people with disabilities, LGBTIQ, children, and people living with other diseases are unmet. Their safety and security issues are not addressed. Besides, the centers' infrastructure (running water and toilets) do not meet WHO standards and guidelines, which may exacerbate ill-health conditions and accelerate death rates during quarantine periods. Gender friendly Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services and facilities are not considered while implementing the centers' structural and logistics planning. The overall gender gap, including education and access to digital services between the "haves" and "have nots" amidst the pandemic, is evident. Most urban-centered schools are already running classes digitally. However, the rural areas are not equipped digitally to do so. Similarly, access to digital services by women was low compared to their counterpart men. As a result, such a 'digital divide' can directly negatively impact the indicators such as 'secondary completion rate of education' at every grade level.</p>
Medium term [-2]	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic would have a moderately restricting impact on achieving this target in the medium term. The significant foreseen impact is the de-allocation of resources initially allocated for gender issues to be diverted to the</p>

³ KC A, Gurung R, Kinney M V., et al. Effect of the COVID-19 pandemic response on intrapartum care, stillbirth, and neonatal mortality outcomes in Nepal: a prospective observational study. *Lancet Glob Heal*. 2020;8(10):e1273-e1281. doi:10.1016/S2214-109X(20)30345-4

	immediate health requirements and economic revitalization. Besides, there are no specific gendered policies to deal with such an unprecedented situation from the government.
Long term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target in the long term. The pandemic created a global momentum on uniting women and men worldwide over a digital platform. This momentum can be instrumental in creating a long-term impact on the gender continuum. However, there is a lack of addressing the pressing gender issues related to reproductive health, women's health, education, and violence during the pandemic. This shortcoming can have repercussions in meeting the global target in the next ten years unless the government explicitly formulates gender-sensitive policies and effectively implements them. There are no specific gender policies to deal with such an unprecedented situation regarding policies and the government's response to the pandemic. While Nepal's government envisions inclusive development in its long-term developmental vision, the recent example of <i>manels</i> ⁴ on the COVID-19 task force raises questions regarding its question. However, the recent instructional order passed by the Supreme Court of Nepal, quoting “meaningful participation of women in the COVID-19 response,” is expected to make the decision more inclusive.
5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	
Short term [-3]	The pandemic can have a strongly restricting impact on this target to end all violence against and exploitation of women and girls in the short term. The pandemic's most immediate impact on women, especially marginalized women, is a form of violence and discrimination that has escalated everywhere across Nepal. VAW cases have increased during the lockdown, especially among those who have lost their livelihoods and income, with men turning to alcohol and wife battering to vent their frustrations and anxieties. As of, the National Women Commission (NWC) operated helpline indicates an increase in VAW calls. The statistics of Nepal police within 16 days of the lockdown shows 40 rape cases and 11 cases of incest. Thus, women are forced to tolerate domestic violence, leading to increased levels of stress and desperation. There are three reasons for these increased VAW cases. First, the closure of schools has led many girls to stay home, which has increased their risk of VAW from close kin and prime family relatives. Second, the income shortage has triggered increased family tensions, stress, and strain and, paired with the lock-down and confinement, has led to increased violence. Finally, the already weak system of combating trafficking, reporting, and responding to GBV cases has been rendered further non-functional by the pandemic. Trafficking has dropped, owing to a decrease in the mobility of

⁴ Only male panelists.

	people during the lockdown. Nevertheless, two cases of girls and women being trafficked into Kathmandu in vans used for transporting vegetables have been reported by the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens. With the loss of income and livelihoods, LGBTIQs and sex-workers are resuming sex-work. What becomes a survival strategy may well become a death strategy as they become increasingly vulnerable and risk being victims of violence. The cyclic effect of not completing the academic year, being suppressed by violence at home, and lack of technology and economic empowerment can severely impact women and girls, especially the ability of poor and marginalized rural women girls to seek a job.
Medium term [-2]	The pandemic would have a moderately restricting impact on achieving this target in the medium term. The pandemic may increase income gaps and structural inequities with devastating economic and social implications for women and girls. During the pandemic, women and girls have faced the brunt of increased workload and GBV in private spaces. Trafficking may increase to reconcile economic gaps and long withheld businesses with sex-workers resuming their sex-work.
Long term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target in the long term. The impacts mentioned above on women, girls, and marginalized ones would have cyclic effects on women's empowerment. It hinders women from getting a quality education and jobs after that. The post-pandemic professional job market, which is already competitive, would subordinate comparatively less qualified women.
5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation	
Short term [0]	The pandemic would not influence this target to eliminate forced marriages and genital mutilation in the short term. The measures adopted to tackle the pandemic in lockdown have limited overall social mobility, including mobility necessary for marriages.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target. The pandemic may reverse many of the gains achieved on gender equality. Annual plans and budget allocation, monitoring systems, and attention to the issues of harmful practices such as " <i>Chaupadi</i> " and son preferences have been overshadowed by the urgency to deal with the spread of COVID-19. After easing the lockdown and the current crisis, people may return to a usual way of life and increasingly indulge in such harmful practices. Due to the family's economic burden in the post-pandemic, they may resort to child marriages [marrying off their young daughter(s)] as a coping strategy.

Long term [0]	The pandemic would not influence achieving this target because the government's plans and programs will play a crucial role in achieving this target. For example, the notable schemes and programs of provincial and local governments like <i>Beti Bachau</i> (save our daughters) in Province 2 may help sort out the pandemic's challenges in the longer term.
5.4 Recognize and value of unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate	
Short term [-3]	The pandemic can strongly restrict this target to value unpaid care and promote shared domestic responsibilities in the short term. The lockdown has exponentially increased the burden of unpaid care work due to traditional gender roles. It has resulted in an increased work burden of women because all family members are currently staying at home without sharing the unpaid and domestic work. Family members' expectation for women and girls to do all unpaid work has resulted in women's stress and depression. In most families, widespread masculine norms stop men and boys from sharing domestic work at the household level. Women's time poverty is not counted. Some observe that women's traditional roles are reinforced due to lockdown, preventing regular opportunities to earn, learn, lead, and participate. The main priority of the government at this moment is to create employment. Several projects have been proposed and are under implementation (e.g., agriculture, roads, and infrastructure), including job provisions for a certain percentage of women. However, none of these projects consider unpaid household work and gendered needs at work. Furthermore, women have been further burdened with psychological stress and strain. They are the prime agents to mediate and manage the negative emotional and psychological "moods and mores" of family members at home.
Medium term [-2]	The pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on achieving this target. In the medium term, women would continue to have increased unpaid care and domestic work burden as described above. The decline of informal jobs (e.g., vendors and handicrafts) due to the collapse of market systems amidst the pandemic has severely affected women, negatively impacting this target.
Long term [0]	The pandemic would not influence achieving this target. We can be hopeful for positive change in this target due to increased public awareness of traditional gender roles and their impact on women's and girls' empowerment. The Constitution of Nepal 2015 has also recognized the need for valuing unpaid care work. Suppose all agencies and programs focus on a gender transformative approach to their intervention processes and outcomes as part of the Constitution implementation. In that case, the change in this target will move in a positive direction.
5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life	

Short term [-1]	The pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to ensure full participation in leadership and decision-making. The High-Level Coordination Committee for the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 at the national level lacks women's representation. This lack of representation manifests persistent gender unequal decision-making being practiced in Nepal's governance system. At the local level, Mayors or Chairpersons, mostly men, influence decisions and plan pandemic responses. They undermine the political roles and rights of the Deputy Mayors or Vice-Chairpersons, who are mostly women. Deputies are denied access to information related to the response plan and budget. Their involvement is limited to monitoring roles. Community-women felt comfortable approaching women leaders in local government for support during the pandemic. The latter tries their best to support the former with limited resources and voices in the political spaces being guided by masculine norms and informal power relations.
Medium term [0]	The pandemic would not influence achieving this target in the medium term. The impacts look gloomy in the short term. However, it can be minimized in the medium term by promoting, following, and practicing inclusion, equality, and justice principles articulated in the Constitution of Nepal 2015. Globally, women's leadership has shown positive results in combating the pandemic, creating an enabling environment for women to participate in social, economic, and civic spheres.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target. There is a caveat in the attitudes and behaviors of leadership at all levels that marginalizes women's agency and political roles. However, there is a positive side to achieving this goal in the long term. For this, development programs and projects in Nepal should become gender-responsive from the design stage. They need to focus on transformational changes in attitudes, behaviors, and institutions' actions at all levels. As discussed above, the success stories of women's leadership in combating the pandemic would create an enabling environment towards this end. There is also the hope to enhance women and girls' socio-economic status under the federal system. For this, the country's development strategies need to enable elected women leaders to play political roles effectively and support women's inclusion, including young women in economic activities market systems. We need to look at changes in gender roles and power relations from a historical perspective. Society has rapidly changed globally and so have civil rights in positive aspects. We can be optimistic for substantial change in women's socio-political-economic status in the long term.
5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences	

Short term [-3]	The pandemic can have a strongly restricting impact on this target to universal access to reproductive health and rights. The pandemic hardly hits women in Nepal. Around 30,000 pregnant women (April-July 2020) felt unsafe going to the health facility centers for birth. The maternal mortality rate increased by 200 % during the two months of the lockdown. ⁵ Women and girls have been deprived of essential health services, family planning, maternal health care, and menstrual hygiene. The pandemic's negative consequences might bring down this target's progress to the pre-Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) phase.
Medium term [-1]	Although the GoN budget has focused on health this year, the pandemic can weakly restrict achieving this target because it is not expected to change positively in the medium term. Deeply rooted traditional social and gender norms and masculine mindsets, combined with gender insensitive institutional culture and service delivery practices prevalent in service providers (state and non-state actors), are expected further to limit their access to health and WASH services. Women and girls are struggling for essential sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).
Long term [0]	The pandemic would not influence achieving this target. The health-focused budget of the GoN is expected to strengthen health facilities at the local level and develop regional hospitals.
5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target of equal rights to economic resources, property ownership, and financial services due to reduced access to the market for women entrepreneurs, a highly competitive job market, loss of informal economic sources, and unaddressed gender-neutral budgets from the government. Acknowledging women's contribution to economic recovery, the government has introduced several financial schemes, including loans without collateral and rural women entrepreneurship. However, this could face backlash because of limited access to the market, mobility, networks, information, and support services. There is no government program covering, supporting, and protecting this section of the population. Women's access to land and income may be at risk due to the negative impact on masculinity notions due to losing jobs and income opportunities by men. In the wake of the pandemic, women are losing access to resources. Women had control over livestock and decisions on when and where to sell them. In the pandemic time, men are reportedly selling their livestock to meet their emergency needs. Women are losing control of skills and assets where they used to have legal rights and domains. The pandemic has pushed gender equality issues to a non-priority in budgeting and planning by the government. Everything is centered around the

⁵ <https://tkpo.st/3eq7zuG>

	pandemic; thus, government and development agencies can find the linkages between the pandemic and regular development work.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target. Currently, the government has a greater emphasis on health services, jobs, and employment. The government's efforts in combating the pandemic include investment in agriculture, alternative energy, and forest-based enterprises. Additionally, the government provides incentives for youth and women on agriculture (e.g., Prime Minister Employment Program, President Women Economic Empowerment Program), and irrigation and energy technologies for promoting small and medium enterprises.
Long term [+1]	Like the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target in the long term. The concerned agencies may make an effort to ensure women's rights in the informal sector where most women are employed. This effort includes introducing affirmative policies and practical implementations of policies and reforms. These policies include subsidies, performance-based incentives to be applied by investors focusing on the targeted program for creating jobs and incomes for women and marginalized groups, and subsidies for women enterprises.
5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to promote women's empowerment through technology. The pandemic has revealed that access to technology is not equitable across social groups and regions of Nepal. The intersections of multiple identities determine access in terms of caste, ethnicity, economic status, education, age, and geographic location. Unequal access to technology can have restricting impacts on this target in two different ways. First, women leaders, particularly from rural areas, face obstacles to participate in decision-making during the pandemic. The measures adopted in combating the pandemic in lockdown and physical distancing demand virtual participation may cause negative impacts on their political empowerment. Second, most of those who could not attend the virtual classrooms are girls and women because of unequal access to technology. On the other side, those who have access and are extensively using ICT have increasingly been facing cyberbullying and online harassment.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target. This impact is because the pandemic has provided a learning opportunity to many women and girls as most of the meetings and works are happening virtually. Virtual meetings and work from home have enabled women to improve their ICT skills. The ICT skills gained during the pandemic could play a crucial role in women's empowerment in the future. Additionally, the pandemic has made people more aware of using ICTs, which benefits to be harnessed and appropriately maximized.

Long term [+1]	Similar to the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target. The lesson learned to use ICTs during the pandemic is expected to increase technology access across different social groups and regions in Nepal. Furthermore, it is assumed that civil society and women's networks would cash this lesson learned and assist vulnerable and marginalized women's access to ICT knowledge and services.
5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels	
Short term [0]	The pandemic would not influence this target to adopt and strengthen policies and enforceable legislation for gender equality. In the pandemic context, working towards gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) policies is not a prioritized government's focus. Despite having progressive GESI policies, Nepal has always suffered from weak implementation in all sectors.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target. It would create more vigorous advocacy towards strengthening sound policies and enforceable legislation to promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels in the future. Nevertheless, the new federal structure provides a potential opportunity for a more significant number of women in decision making roles. Currently, only two percent of the Mayors and Chairpersons are women. At the same time, 91% of the Deputy-Mayors and Deputy-Chairpersons are women in 753 local governments. With this disproportionate representation of women, there is a need for clarity on authority, mandates and effective coordination mechanisms.
Long term [+1]	Similar to the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target.
Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	
6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the COVID-19 pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target of safe and affordable drinking water due to the following reasons: (a) the diversion of funds to the immediate actions to address the pandemic; (b) the restriction of movement or complete lockdown as a measure to control COVID-19 transfer rate, which would disrupt the supply chain of water supply and sanitary materials; and (c) the reduction in the collection of government revenue due to travel restriction, implying allocation of less financial resources in water supply sector. The restrictions on the movement of people and the delivery of essential construction materials have hampered ongoing projects. Operation and maintenance of water supply and treatment systems have also faced problems due to the

	shortage of disinfectants in the market. The affordability of basic water supply services has also been a concern for low-income consumers.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target due to increased awareness and commitment at all government and development partners levels. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of water, sanitation, and health (WASH) in controlling communicable diseases like COVID-19, such as frequent hand washing for 20 seconds. Hence, the WASH sector is expected to receive priority. However, there may be a considerable challenge to make investments in the construction of large-scale water supply projects due to resource constraints. On the other hand, with behavioral change and improved practices in total sanitation, local governments may come up with careful planning in the WASH sector. While doing so, there might be feedback from institutional learning.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic is expected to have a similar impact on this target in the medium term.
6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls	
Short term [+1]	In the short term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target of ending open defecation and providing access to sanitation and hygiene. Despite budgetary constraints, the pandemic has enabled sanitation and hygiene activities through increased awareness in hand-wash, behavioral change, and disinfectants. People have become more aware of health and hygiene due to social media and government instructions. As the crisis has highlighted the importance of WASH, local governments have also sensitized the importance of practicing appropriate sanitation and hygiene practices.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact as in the short term on achieving this target. Local governments have started to use water and hygiene-related data in municipal planning, facilitating integrating the WASH sector in municipal plans. It is expected that a particular focus will be given to women and girls.
Long term [+2]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a moderately promoting impact on achieving this target. Integration of water and hygiene data, understanding and a high level of awareness, and local governments' commitment and priority would improve accessibility to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene.
6.3 By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally	

Short term [+1]	In the short term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target of improving water quality, wastewater treatment, and safe reuse. With industries either shut down or running in a reduced capacity due to the pandemic, there has been a reduction in industrial waste production and wastewater, which would have ended up in rivers.
Medium term [-1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target. Gradually, the industries will resume their operation at an increased level to make up for the lost opportunities, leading to increased waste and wastewater production, thereby contributing to rivers' pollution. The government may not monitor water pollution issues due to other pressing issues related to the pandemic.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target because of increased awareness and understanding among stakeholders, including the government agencies.
6.4 By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity suffering from water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity.	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target of increasing water-use efficiency and ensuring freshwater supplies. Because of the disturbances in the development sector, including water supply projects due to the crisis, water scarcity may remain a pressing issue in the short term.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. The importance of water-use efficiency will be felt because of the pandemic experience as frequent handwashing has been recommended as one of the significant precautionary measures to reduce the COVID-19 risk. This experience will motivate concerned agencies and stakeholders to prioritize water-use efficiency and create awareness for the effective use of limited water resources, including groundwater and spring water, through sustainable withdrawals and integrated water resource planning for multiple benefits.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a similar impact on this target as in the medium term.
6.5 By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate	
Short term [0]	In the short term, the pandemic may not influence achieving this target of implementing integrated water resources management (IWRM). This influence is because an integrated water resources management process is still in its infancy.

Medium term [0]	In the medium term, the pandemic may also not influence achieving this target as in the short term for the same reason.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target, particularly regarding the implementation of IWRM at a local level. The pandemic has increased awareness of the importance of available water resources and their proper management at all government levels. This awareness may create an enabling environment for the government to take appropriate progressive steps while formulating related plans and policies.
6.6 By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes	
Short term [0]	In the short term, the pandemic may not influence achieving this target of protecting and restoring water-related ecosystems. However, there might be some negative impact on urban ecosystems due to increased medical waste that may contaminate water-related ecosystems.
Medium term [0]	In the medium term, the pandemic may not influence achieving this target. However, increased awareness of the importance of water and water-related ecosystems led by the increased demand for water (e.g., for hand-washing) might positively impact. This awareness may lead to the conservation of water-related ecosystems and rivers, aquifers, and lakes.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target due to continued awareness on the importance of water and water-related ecosystem led by the increased demand for water (e.g., for hand-washing) and subsequent pressure on the government to improve conditions of water-related ecosystems, rivers, aquifers, and lakes.
6.a By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programs, technologies, efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies	
Short term [0]	In the short term, the pandemic may not influence achieving this target of expanding water and sanitation support. This influence is because the short-term fund allocation has already been made without anticipating cases such as the pandemic.
Medium term [0]	In the medium term, the pandemic may not influence achieving this target. This influence is because funds could be limited due to the economic crisis. There would be competition among the water sector, and other sectors for the funds could be fierce.

Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly enabling impact on achieving this target. This impact is because development partners are expected to realize the need for international collaboration to achieve this target.
6.b Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management	
Short term [0]	In the short term, the pandemic may not influence achieving this target of supporting local engagement in water and sanitation management due to budgetary constraints, restriction in mobility, and participatory consultative meetings.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may weakly promote impact on achieving this target due to increased awareness level and funding possibility in WASH-related activities.
Long term [+2]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a moderately promoting impact on achieving this target. Local communities will demand more water projects because water is critical to deal with pandemics like COVID-19. Collective efforts will be further strengthened through cross-community and cross-country learning campaigns for bringing back community participation in development. As federalism's practice becomes more mature in the long term, an enabling environment could be created for more community participation in sectors such as WASH.
Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	
7.1 By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy services	
Short term [-2]	In the short term, the COVID-19 pandemic may have a moderately restricting impact on achieving this target of ensuring universal access to modern energy. This impact could occur from three different mechanisms. First, the construction of new hydropower and solar plants has been delayed due to the lockdown, slowing down in the labor market and the reduced supply of material resources. Second, since the government has prioritized financial resources and efforts to maintain and up-grade essential health facilities, the energy sector is expected to be less prioritized. Third, because of the financial crunch among independent power producers (IPPs) and the overall sluggish economy, private sectors in the energy business (not only power producers but, entire energy sector) are facing financial difficulties (e.g., access to loans).
Medium term [-1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target via two mechanisms. First, opening up economic activities following a long lockdown period has led to some new normal. Second, the crisis has also created a reverse migration, i.e., from cities to rural areas and from abroad to the country. These returnees are expected to start livelihood activities, which will demand more energy in rural areas. The

	government is likely to launch coping strategies to enable rural areas to meet their demands for goods and services, resulting in reduced negative consequences.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target, primarily via two mechanisms. First, the country's economy is expected to bounce back, filling the economic and livelihood void. Self-reliance, resilience, and the use of local resources would be at the forefront of policymaking. Therefore, the pandemic could result in transformation opportunities, which may increase the government investment to meet this target. This investment will accelerate the construction of new energy projects. Second, economic activities are expected to boost rural areas, increasing rural income, and economic activities. Therefore, there would be increased understanding and resources for ensuring universal access to modern energy.
7.2 By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on increasing the global renewable energy percentage. This impact occurs due to the halt in the construction and maintenance of ongoing hydropower and solar projects or plants. Government focus has diverted from its renewable energy commitments to health and livelihood. Noticeably, the pandemic has led to decreased fossil fuel consumption in the transportation sector. In contrast, unsustainable use of biomass and forest could be at risk.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may weakly promote the achievement of this target via two mechanisms. First, many hydropower projects are under construction, which is expected to start operation in the next few years, increasing renewable energy share. Second, renewable-based distributed energy (e.g., solar and micro-hydro electricity) will be utilized while building health facilities in rural and off-grid locations. These activities will increase the renewable energy share in the energy mix.
Long term [-1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target via three mechanisms. First, the government focus could be diverted so that there might be less budget allocation in renewable energy promotion. Second, when the currently ongoing construction works are completed, there will be enough power for the country. Therefore, there would be less chance of new large-scale hydropower and solar projects.
7.3 By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency	
Short term [0]	In the short term, the pandemic may not influence achieving this target of doubling energy efficiency improvement because of the two reasons. First, the energy consumption in the industrial and transportation sectors, the country's

	primary energy consumption, has decreased. Second, due to the closure of industries, reverse migration from cities to rural areas, and less economic activities, its economic growth rate has decreased. Therefore, there would not be much impact on the national energy intensity in the short-term.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may weakly promote the achievement of this target via two mechanisms. First, reverse migration and overseas returnees will increase economic activities, which will create more demand for commercial energy, which tends to improve energy efficiency. Industries will also resume operation. Second, to provide jobs to returnees, the government will promote small and medium scale industries, which will improve the economic growth compared to that in the short term. Thus, energy intensity would improve, leading to an enabling environment for improvement in energy efficiency.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may weakly promote the achievement of this target via two mechanisms. First, after the completion of current ongoing construction projects, there may be surplus electricity. Second, economic sectors will also bounce back, which will favor establishing new medium and large-scale industries. Self-reliance and a better local economy in rural areas due to reverse migration will demand more commercial energy.
7.a By 2030, enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target of promoting access to research, technology, and investments in clean energy. International cooperation is currently focused on fighting the pandemic, lowering the spreading rate, and developing the vaccine. International development agencies may not prioritize research and development in clean energy technology due to other urgent matters. Such a situation may last for the next few years.
Medium term [-1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target for a similar reason as that in the short term.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may weakly promote the achievement of this target via two mechanisms. First, the situation is expected to come under control soon. The global medical society is exercising to produce the vaccine as early as possible. Second, economic activities need to be boosted to recover the economy, demanding more energy, increasing research, and intervention technology on clean energy. Hence, international cooperation may rise in the long term.

7.b By 2030, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States, and land-locked developing countries, in accordance with their respective programmes of support	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target of expanding and upgrading energy services. Due to the crisis, funding agencies will be allocating funds to the health sector. Due to lack of funding, the completion of ongoing energy projects has been delayed. The pandemic has also caused a delay in infrastructure expansion and technology up-gradation cooperation due to labor and other economic disruptions.
Medium term [0]	In the medium term, the pandemic may not influence achieving this target via two different mechanisms. First, the need and demand for energy in rural areas will increase, necessitating expanding infrastructure and upgrading technology. Second, due to the lack of government funding and less focus on these sectors, there will not be many new projects. Therefore, it is expected that the expansion of infrastructure and up-gradation of technology will remain stagnant.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may weakly promote impact on achieving this target via two mechanisms. First, the increase in economic activities after the pandemic is over, and new industries' establishment will necessitate expanding infrastructure and upgrading technologies. Stalled and delayed international funding, and construction of technology infrastructure will also resume. The economic recovery package could boost technology implementation.
Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all	
8.1 Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries.	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target of sustainable economic growth. In the short term, achieving the annual growth of 7 % per annum seems impossible due to the closure/partial shutdown of manufacturing industries, disruption of global and domestic supply chains, and augmented job losses. The lockdown and restrictions on movement have negatively impacted a range of economic and business sectors like tourism, hospitality, aviation, agriculture, infrastructure building, investment, and arts and entertainment. Due to the pandemic's adverse effects on foreign employment, there would be a significant drop in Nepal's remittance this year. People engaged in the informal sectors have lost their jobs and submerged in debt. They have fallen into a vicious circle of poverty. Nevertheless, the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) estimated that Nepal would witness an economic growth of 2.27 in the fiscal year 2020/2021 due to the pandemic's adverse effects. This growth is low compared to last fiscal year's economic growth of around 7%.

Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target. It is speculated that the negative economic impact of the pandemic would persist for some years. Also, the assumption has been made that the economic recovery would be 'U' shaped or elongated 'W' shaped in Nepal. Thus, sustainable economic growth would be hard to achieve in the medium term.
Long term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term. Suppose appropriate recovery measures are taken and enabling economic conditions are created. In that case, Nepal may meet this target in the longer run. It is also expected that the banks' liquidity and decent foreign exchange level would not be impacted in the future.
8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading, and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labor-intensive sectors.	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target to diversify, innovate, and upgrade economic productivity. The reason is that the government's current priority is to tackle the pandemic, and the state has less interest in technology innovation, diversification, and upgrading for economic productivity. Second, the government ordered the MSMEs and firms to shut down their operations to curb the pandemic's rapid spread. In strict health protocols and nationwide lockdown, these enterprises and businesses are no longer able to sustain their operational costs. Thus, higher levels of economic productivity seem to be unachievable in this economic situation.
Medium term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the medium term. The negative impact would gradually fade away if Nepal devises clear and specific export diversification policies that focus on high-value to weight products.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target. The impacts occur in three ways. First, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of a self-reliant economy so that the state would strongly face calamities and crises in the upcoming days. The self-reliant economy would desire the focus on the high value-added and labor-intensive sectors within national boundaries. Second, the pandemic has raised public awareness of the importance of technology innovations to increase economic productivity. In the future, enterprises and firms would use technologies intensively. Third, the pandemic has increased the feelings of diversifying the exports of goods and services that have a comparative advantage to Nepal.
8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.	

Short term [-2]	The pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target to promote policies to support job creation and growing enterprises. The impacts occur through three different mechanisms. First, the government priority has been shifted towards containing the pandemic's immediate effects, emphasizing promoting the policies to support job creation. Second, the crisis has negatively impacted the implementation of the planned policies. For example, contribution-based social security schemes aimed to include informal sectors as well. Third, launching new enterprises and creating jobs is a daunting task during the pandemic.
Medium term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target. Despite the economic deterioration, the government would formulate development-oriented policies to re-divert to economic development through decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation in the medium term. The government would bring the policies, plans, and schemes for decent job creation to respond to growing underemployment and unemployment. The pandemic has increased the importance of a self-reliant economy, which demands policies to promote entrepreneurship. In a similar line, to increase productivity within the country, the current budget has emphasized agriculture. The digital economy, like e-commerce, e-businesses, digital marketing, and digital banking, has evolved during the pandemic. In this context, the government would bring the appropriate policies to promote the medium term's digital economy. The government would also be under pressure to develop new policies and plans to create a favorable environment to revive the MSMEs in the medium and long run.
Long term [+1]	Like the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target in the long term.
8.4 Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavor to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, with developed countries taking the lead.	
Short term [0]	The pandemic would not influence this target to improve resource efficiency in consumption and production in the short term. It has undoubtedly allowed the environment to 'breathe' globally. It has also reminded us of our vulnerabilities and attracted attention to climate change and environmental sustainability.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target. The countries would gobble up the resources unsustainable to recover the national economy in the medium term. Poverty reduction and job creation would be more of a priority than an environmental agenda.
Long term	Similar to the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target.

[-1]	
8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.	
Short term [-3]	The pandemic can strongly restrict this target to full employment and decent work with equal pay. It has made job availability and its related terms and conditions more elusive and raised the country's unemployment rate in the short term. Around two-thirds of Nepal's workforce is employed in informal sectors across the country. ⁶ Because of the pandemic's higher impacts, the increasing number of informal sector employees has lost their jobs and is partially paid or unpaid. The same is right in the formal sector as well. Among others, women, vulnerable people, disadvantaged groups, and people with disabilities are the forefront victims of job losses, underemployment, and unemployment.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term. In the wake of 'U' shaped economic recovery, it would be difficult to find decent jobs for those who became unemployed during the pandemic for some years. In some sectors like tourism, hospitality, and private education providers, the employer would continue to reduce the remunerations to the employee, citing longer impacts of the pandemic.
Long term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term. The government would develop inclusive and well-developed policies and plans to mitigate the pandemic's adverse effects in the future. These policies may open up the prospects of employment and decent jobs in the longer run.
8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training.	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target to promote youth employment, education, and training. There are four aspects of these impacts. At first, the pandemic has diminished the household income. For supporting the family and their lives, youth would quit education and training to find and join their jobs. Second, the closure or partial shutdown of industries, manufacturing sectors, and service sectors has directly impacted youth gaining relevant skills and techniques required for the jobs and employment. This impact is genuine in youth pursuing vocational and technical education since they are barred from employment as interns and volunteers in various organizations. Third, as discussed above, unemployment and job losses have increased in a pandemic time. Fourth, reverse migration, triggered by the pandemic, has increased the competition among youth in finding already shrunken job opportunities

⁶ MOLE. *Labour Migration for Employment | A Status Report for Nepal: 2015/2016-2016/2017.*; 2018.

http://nepal.iom.int/jupgrade/images/stories/CoM/LabourMigration_for_Employment-A_StatusReport_for_Nepal_201516201617_Eng.PDF.

Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target. The economic impacts of the pandemic would continue to reduce the proportion of youth in employment. Similarly, it would be difficult to bring back the school/university droppers to the education and training institutions.
Long term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term. However, lessons learned from the pandemic, education, and the training sector are likely to start teaching or adopting new technology to avoid or reduce the impact of similar crises in the future.
8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labor, end modern slavery and human trafficking, and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target to end modern slavery, trafficking, and child labor. The economic deterioration caused by the pandemic may impulse increased trafficking, slavery, and child labor. The negative impacts on household income would drive people to join the work in substandard working settings. Human trafficking, at the domestic level, would also be increased to sustain the family lives. However, international human trafficking is somehow controlled during the pandemic because of lockdown, restrictions of movement, and strict social or health protocols to follow. Nevertheless, the children have to find jobs to improve the household economy, which may put them at a greater risk of being the victim of trafficking and labor. This school drop out would be further reinforced by the indefinite closure of schools across the country.
Medium term [-2]	The pandemic would have a moderately restricting impact on this target. Unemployment and poverty, triggered by the pandemic, would increase the cases of slavery, trafficking, and child labor in the medium term. It would force people to work in low paid and high-risk jobs. It is speculated that organized crimes like trafficking and violence would go up due to the adverse effects. Based on past experiences, children and women would comprise most of the victims.
Long term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the longer run.
8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target to protect labor rights and promote safe working environments. At the beginning of the pandemic, labor rights have been violated in many cases, particularly for migrant workers, including women. Such violations are easily explained because the workers get partial or no remunerations

	during the pandemic. The pandemic's onset has required employers to adopt improved hygiene and sanitation practices for ensuring a safe and secure working environment. In Nepal, government health and safety guidelines have not been seriously taken (nor are the employees practicing all safety measures). Also, it has been observed that even prominent employers have not taken all the necessary measures to ensure workers' safety. For example, workplaces are crowded and have not been compliant with government instruction to operate on 50% capacity.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target. The greater resource allocation on tackling the pandemic would fade away the social security aspects of the labor rights in the medium term. More specifically, labor rights' social protection element might fizzle out due to limited fiscal space in the medium term.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target. The lessons learned from the pandemic would promote safe working environments through improved health and sanitation facilities and services in the workplace. Moreover, the pandemic has realized the importance of the social security scheme to withstand the crisis and emergency. With the economic recovery, the social security schemes would be strengthened within the labor rights framework in the long term.
8.9 By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.	
Short term [-3]	The pandemic can have a strongly restricting impact on this target to promote beneficial and sustainable tourism. Due to the pandemic, the most challenging hit sector of the economy is tourism. The postponing of Visit Nepal 2020, suspension of on-arrival visas, and restricted travel (by air and road) have led to the loss of thousands of jobs in the tourism sector. It has been estimated that about seven hundred thousand jobs have directly been lost in Nepal in the last six months. The same numbers have remained unemployed indirectly. With the suspension of mountaineering, around 2000 tour and trek guides and porters have already lost their livelihood sources. For comparison, tourism revenue in the year 2018 accounted for 7.9% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and supported >1.05 million jobs, with the expectation of providing >1.35 million jobs by 2029. Tourism revenues have crippled the nation's finances. According to the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Nepal's tourism industry is estimated to lose over \$330 million due to the government-enforced lockdown in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Medium term [-2]	The pandemic would have a moderately restricting impact on this target. In the absence of health insurance and safety measures, international tourists would not be attracted to visit Nepal for some years. Therefore, it would take time to revive the tourism business in the country.

Long term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term. With the expectation of developing the COVID-19 vaccine, the tourism industry is likely to revive in the long term. Further, this would be supported by government relief packages for tourism industries. The government should focus on better strategies to attract international tourists and boost up the tourism business.
8.10 Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance, and financial services for all.	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target of universal access to banking, insurance, and financial services. During the pandemic, financial institutions are under pressure to deliver better services. The nationwide lockdown, restrictions on movement, and strict social or physical distancing to follow have disrupted the financial institutions' regular business. The financial institutions are forced to close or partially operate their services, particularly during the lockdown. Also, the reduced economic activities across the country have limited the financial services of the institutions. Because of this, the public has experienced difficulty in accessing the services of financial institutions.
Medium term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target. It has given the domestic financial institutions a good push towards adopting digital financial services, increasing access to financial services for the medium and long terms. Also, it has given an opportunity to re-imagine the future of the financial sector across economies.
Long term [+1]	Similar to the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target.
8.a Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular, least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries.	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target to increase aid for trade support. It is anticipated that aid assistance to the least developed countries will be low and would not increase the least developing countries' trade. As every country has been affected by the pandemic, including the USA and Europe's advanced economies, it will affect foreign aid availability and initiatives such as Aid for Trade. The reasons are the economic crisis and changing priorities of advanced economies due to the pandemic.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target. The advanced economics would invest spare money within the national border to revive or rebuild the economy for some years. This impact would continue to reduce foreign aid in the least developed countries in the medium term.

Long term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term.
8.b By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization.	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target to develop a global youth employment strategy. Employment-related to tourism, trade, and foreign jobs have been hardly hit by the pandemic. The remittance, which accounts for almost 25.4% of the GDP, has been very severely impacted. The source of income, a financial lifeline for many low-income families, will decline. In these circumstances, it would be challenging to develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the International Labour Organization's global pact.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target. The countries would struggle to operationalize the global strategy for youth employment and implement the global jobs pact of the International Labour Organization in the face of economic crisis and rising poverty and unemployment caused by the pandemic.
Long term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term. As a part of the recovery plan, the countries would be under pressure to develop and operationalize a global strategy and implement the global pacts in the post-pandemic world.
Goal: 9 Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	
9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all	
Short term [-2]	The COVID-19 pandemic could have a moderately restricting impact on achieving this target of developing sustainable, resilient, and inclusive infrastructures in the short term. The execution of ongoing infrastructure projects has been delayed due to a shortage of materials caused by the lockdown. The allocated budget will not be expended as per the plan. The pandemic has hampered economic activities' smooth functioning, mainly industrial production, tourism services, and imports declined drastically, adversely affecting revenue collection. Governments at all levels are prioritizing their budget on health spending to fight the pandemic. This budget shift will heavily affect the annual gap in infrastructure investments in the short to medium term.
Medium term [-1]	In the medium term, the pandemic could have a weakly restricting impact on this target's achievement. Supply chain interruptions will likely continue, affecting the availability of parts and equipment, and eventually impact the projects'

	<p>performance. There might be a national economic crisis, which badly affects the flow of investments in infrastructure in the medium term. The budget for 2020 focused more on recurrent expenditure; this could affect the annual gap in infrastructure investment in the medium term. Delays in project completion would occur in the coming 2-3 years. However, within one year, people will try to live with the COVID-19 atmosphere, which tends to push them to adjust and synchronize their social and economic activities with the COVID-19 environment. As of immediate and residual lockdown impact, there would be a downward spiral in demand and usage of significant infrastructure assets like transportation. This impact may continue to affect the demand even after the pandemic.</p>
Long term [+1]	<p>Despite delays in the project execution and implementation in the short and medium terms, the pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target in the long term. Policymakers might take an opportunity to invest and create employment in the long term. Once the pandemic is successfully controlled. Measures will be taken to generate revenues and utilize local resources. The economy may bounce back because the Nepalese economy is not closely entangled with the global economy. The focus may shift to create an enabling condition to invest in infrastructure development.</p>
<p>9.2 Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries</p>	
Short term [-2]	<p>The pandemic could have a moderately restricting impact on promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization in the short term. Due to the outbreak of pandemic and lockdown, Nepal has suffered the most abrupt and widespread cessation of industrial operations in the short term. Small-, medium- and large-scale industries are partially closed, destabilizing production cycles and constraining industrial outputs. Additionally, industrial output has fallen due to the lack of imported raw materials, direct supply disruptions, lack of labor mobility, and traffic restrictions. The lockdown directly impacts jobs and incomes of a large segment of society, which reduces the consumers' demand for goods and services. Consequently, many industries are operating below their production capacity. This partial opening will increase waste, thereby reducing operational efficiency and sustainable industrial operations. A surge in unemployment (employee layoffs) in the manufacturing industry will harm the national economy. The pandemic will increase non-performing loans as the borrower struggles to make a scheduled payment of interest, principal, and non-renewal of revolving loans on a timely basis. Thus, it will counteract in increasing the share of employment and manufacturing value-added in GDP in the short term. Additionally, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities would get in trouble as Nepal prioritizes to control the pandemic.</p>

Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic would weakly promote this target. The post-pandemic situation could create an enabling condition after the business resumes in full capacity. The demand for industrial commodities may rise. Disruption of international supply chains may require extensive use of domestic and local materials. As a recovery plan, the government could launch incentive packages intended to create a conducive environment. In the medium term, businesses are likely to adjust their activities to their customers' and suppliers' changing needs while navigating the financial and operational challenges. There may be enough domestic capital and resources to enable inclusive and sustainable industrialization. The declining trend of the manufacturing sector's GDP share, which has been observed in the last decade, might be reversed.
Long term [+1]	Similar to the medium term, the pandemic would weakly promote this target. Favorable conditions created in the medium term are likely to strengthen the country's production capabilities on the path of sustaining long-term growth. The manufacturing sector would absorb many surplus laborers created internally and the return of skilled and semiskilled migrant workers. Domestic industries would also mobilize national human and natural capital (raw materials and workforce) and financial resources. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the manufacturing sector through government favorable and stable policies could enable this target's achievement.
9.3 Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic could have a moderately restricting impact on the target for increasing access to financial services and markets. First, the lockdown has disrupted the production activities, local value chains, and markets. Producers have faced difficulties in selling the products. Besides, collection centers operated by small-scale cooperatives and other private vendors are affected due to cessation in the mobility and market closures. Limited cash flow and remittances would also limit the access of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). There is a potential risk of defaults and insolvencies.
Medium term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact in the medium term. Returnee could have skills and money/savings to invest in the SMEs, thus enabling a suitable environment for increasing the share of agro-based small-scale industries. Their entrepreneurship might be utilized in the promotion of SMEs. Local governments would also take essential steps to promote small industries, enhance economic activities, and create local employment opportunities. The pandemic could also enable the accessibility of local products and the internal value chain. Agro-

	business and other small local resources-based industries could flourish when diaspora back home could initiate entrepreneurship.
Long term [+1]	As in the medium term, the pandemic might also weakly promote to achieve this target by improving the local value chain and competitiveness of local agro-industries. There would be enough financial resources to invest in the local resource-based SMEs through favorable loan and investment schemes.
9.4 By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities	
Short term [-2]	In the short term, the pandemic would have a moderately restricting impact on achieving this target of upgrading all industries and infrastructures for sustainability. Due to less output, part-time operations, and cut down in profits, industries do not have resources for upgrading infrastructure and retrofitting industries. Industries would focus on cutting the costs and immediate profitability in this pandemic situation.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic would weakly promote this target due to increased awareness of the efficient use of resources and environmentally friendly technologies. An increase in FDI flow, including technology transfer, would also enable investment conditions in sustainable technologies. The pandemic would also raise awareness and induce urgency and efficiency in its use. Lessons learned from the April 2015 earthquake for practicing retrofit could also be useful in the post-pandemic situation.
Long term [+1]	Similar to the medium term, the pandemic would weakly promote this target. There would be increased access to much more efficient and environmentally friendly technologies. Government policy would also be favorable in upgrading sustainable industrial infrastructure. The presence of prominent international industries through the FDI in Nepal would also aid in achieving the target.
9.5 Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic could have a moderately restricting impact on enhancing research and upgrading industrial technologies in the short term. It has led to resource crunch and scarcity for scientific research, which will inhibit innovation. Implementation of physical distancing guidelines has led many laboratories and R&D projects to closure. This closure

	requires physical access to the facilities and equipment. Some resources dedicated to ongoing R&D works are also being redirected towards works focused on the pandemic.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic could have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target due to low economic growth, lower demand for research workers, and declining real income of scientific workers in the country. The extent of brain drain is likely to grow in the post-pandemic period further. At the same time, developed countries could attract scientific workers to catch up with their production loss giving more space to developing countries like Nepal. R&D may produce tangible returns only after many years. Therefore, countries might not find interest in investing in R&D if they have limited financial resources. There could be uncertainty on R&D funding due to the government's fiscal situation. The pandemic could also interrupt graduation schedules and career prospects of students, postdoctoral researchers, and early-career faculty.
Long term [+1]	There might be a weakly promoting impact of the pandemic for achieving this target in the long term. Once the economy would begin to bounce back in the long term, research and innovation could speed. Investment in R&D would be increased only when a country's economic situation would get better. In the long-run, the private sector could invest in R&D, and the government could increase its role in encouraging innovation. Nepali researchers might come back from abroad.
9.a Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic has a moderately restricting impact on facilitating sustainable infrastructure development in the short term. It may lead to an economic crisis in most developed countries. They may not be in the position of contributing funds to support the least developed countries like Nepal. This lack of funds will put many infrastructure development projects to a halt, thus preventing Nepal from achieving planned infrastructure development.
Medium term [-1]	As in the short term, the pandemic could have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term. Nepal would have limited financial resources to invest in the infrastructure. Projects initially executed in a foreign currency might face the risk of exchange rate fluctuations, and such existing assets could take a toll for the worse, if not previously hedged or structured

Long term [+1]	The pandemic would weakly promote this target if the economy started to bounce back in the long term. Once the economy would begin to bounce back globally, there would be an enabling condition for facilitating sustainable and resilient infrastructure development for developing countries.
9.b Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for, inter alia, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities	
Short term [-2]	In the short term, the pandemic could have a moderately restricting impact on achieving this target of supporting domestic technology development and industrial diversification. The pandemic could lead to an economic shock. Industrial diversification and value addition to commodities would get in trouble as Nepal prioritizes to control the pandemic. Many visible consequences affect product development, such as reduced engineering capacity, efficiency losses, inept processes, inadequate tools environment and network, and engineering supply chain disruptions. Remittance would also be reduced remarkably.
Medium term [0]	In the medium term, the pandemic might not influence this target. Since the immediate priority would be recovering from the pandemic, Nepal could have a lower focus on domestic technology development. However, there might be a fair and progressive environment in agro-based industries.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic would weakly promote this. Local governments and SMEs would put efforts in operations of domestic resource and technology-based agro-industries with innovative approaches. Value addition to commodities would be increased due to efficient processes and availability of skilled human resources
9.c Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020	
Short term [+1]	In the short term, the pandemic could weakly promote this target for achieving universal access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Currently, online services are becoming more and more popular in restrictions imposed to combat the pandemic. ICT is rapidly penetrating the social and economic sectors of Nepal. Focus is already on the development of ICT and is expected to grow significantly in the days ahead. The pandemic has forced people to work from home and engage more time online. The current practice of teleworking and online services will eventually help to accelerate ICT growth. ICT infrastructure and services have helped both government and private sectors operate their business and services even during the pandemic's difficult time.

Medium term [+2]	In the medium term, the pandemic would have a moderately promoting impact on this target's achievement. The pandemic would increase the importance of ICT services. Thus more investment and better accessibility to internet services for all populations are expected in the future. There would be increased demand for software and social media platforms such as Google Hangouts, WhatsApp Video call, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams. The economy would also blossom because, during these crises, people would understand the importance of the internet and technology as this would help us stay safe and help in the communication between the doctors and the public.
Long term [+2]	Same as in the medium term, the pandemic would have a moderately promoting impact on this target's achievement in the long term. ICT would also help create innovative smart solutions using domestic resources and technologies to tackle the pandemic's challenges and threats.
Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries	
10.1 By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 percent of the population at a rate higher than the national average.	
Short term [-3]	The COVID-19 pandemic can have a strongly restricting impact in the short term on the achievement of this target on reducing income inequalities. The pandemic has a heavy toll on the poor and vulnerable people's employment and livelihoods and shrinking jobs for Nepalese workers overseas and those particularly dependent in the informal sectors tourism, transport, construction, and other enterprises. The pandemic has hit the hardest to those who are the poorest, particularly the daily wage workers and manual laborers. Income growth within this group is quite impossible. During the pandemic, public resources are being diverted to emergency needs. The closure of factories and enterprises has badly impacted the economy and cut down on jobs, especially for those engaged in the informal economy. In particular, the bottom 40% of the population has been severely affected by the pandemic. Most of them lost their jobs due to the lockdown measures. Because of the pandemic, the poor and vulnerable people are the ones who have lost their daily earning and are severely suffering from the food crisis.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact in the medium term. As ordinary people face the pandemics' problems, they may stagnate their income in the medium term. While more and more youths are coming back from abroad. They may involve in the country building. There is some hope. If it happens, the earnings of the lowest layer of people may jump to the next level. The pandemic would also allow people to engage in productive activities and sectors in the medium term. Since the government has prioritized these issues, there is a possibility to progress by the medium

	term. Due to the likely slowdown in the tourism sector for the next years and a weak scenario with the new poor's addition, the impact will likely remain weakly restricting in the medium term.
Long term [+2]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a moderately promoting impact on this target's achievement. If the pandemic comes under control, the results can have a positive impact. In Nepal, public health services are not performing well, and private health services are business ventures. The pandemic provides an opportunity to revisit the health system's policies and programs and find directives for better solutions. The government may attempt to safeguard the livelihoods of the most vulnerable populations. However, it might not be sufficient and adequate. The pandemic's global influence has been most impactful to countries like Nepal, relying heavily on remittance. A majority of Nepali migrants may continue to return home in short to medium terms. In the long term, the same returned human resources could be utilized to better the country in terms of agriculture, life skills, and utilization in other development sectors.
10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.	
Short term [-2]	The COVID-19 pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on achieving this target of promoting universal social, economic, and political inclusion in the short term. It would exaggerate the already existing inequality in gender, caste, geographical location, and religion. The pandemic's disproportionate impact upon marginalized groups, Dalits, indigenous, religious minorities, poor people, and women has become starker than ever before. The current situation of returnees, mostly from marginalized groups and Dalit families, losing their jobs that eventually threaten their livelihoods entrench the gaps between the haves and have-nots. The stigma and shame associated with quarantine and being a COVID-19 positive create a further divide when patients belong to marginalized groups. The pandemic has brought the highest rise in suicide cases in the last few months. Loss of livelihood and income opportunities was one of the primary reasons for these suicides. An increase in violence against women and children also highlight the seriousness of these incidences. The pandemic's impact will create a further divide in Nepali society because of the nature of the virus itself, which has remained relatively elusive (despite the plethora of studies currently being undertaken). Ordinary Nepali people are not that well informed. The fear of the "other" and unknown has made these divisions even starker than before. Also, most of the government efforts have focused on the precaution and control measures of the pandemic. In contrast, the work on empowerment of the poor and marginalized people have been side-lined. It is also noteworthy that economic empowerment is highly interlinked with the opportunities associated with tourism. The collapse of the entire tourism sector has also dropped people's opportunities for socio-economic empowerment.

Medium term [-1]	The pandemic Would have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target in the medium term. Along with pre-existing inequality, a new form of inequality may arise associated with stigma related to the pandemic. Such inequality would be in terms of people with and without access to the vaccine, well-equipped quarantine facilities, digital media, and online education facilities.
Long term [-1]	The pandemic would continue to have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target in the long term too. Inclusion, in the form of gender inclusion index and social inclusion index, is high in terms of numbers but still lacks useful and meaningful inclusion. The nation's weak governance system poses a big question on an already achieved inclusion target. It is yet to decipher if it holds in the real ground. In particular, the pandemic will hit on already poor, vulnerable, and weak by pushing this group to a worse situation. Therefore, the gap between haves and have-nots (Dalits, women, marginalized) will deepen further. Additionally, the gradual rise of violence, deficiency, dissonance, and differentiation will be felt in society. Furthermore, mobilization of economic resources is often in government and private sectors that can be funneled to citizens based on their labor, skill, and qualification. The pandemic has narrowed the opportunities to work. There has not been any proper mechanism to distribute loans and subsidies. Thus, the negative impact will persist in the long term. While the political inclusion index seems quite progressive in Nepal but has so far been only a gateway to representing a specific group of people. Only economic inclusion can bring every individual on board. There is some prospect for the returnee migrants to contribute. However, they are not readily accepted in society (they have been considered a vector of the virus). Similarly, a narration of immunity power and resilience to COVID-19 is often quoted in the society, which will eventually dissect society into different segments based on immune and non-immune people. This dissection might create a new form of social division in the medium to long term.
10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard	
Short term [-1]	The COVID-19 pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to ensure equal opportunities and end discrimination. There are no apparent policies focused on the pandemic. The control measures also do not seem to be sensitive to or targeted towards addressing social injustice issues. For example, no policies, measures, and actions (e.g., provisions of social benefits, subsidies, and loans) targeted at the lowest section of the working force (e.g., wage laborers) were introduced by the government (even into the third month of the lockdown). The pandemic's impact and the measures to control it (e.g., lockdown) are experienced disproportionately (negatively) by the weakest and marginalized groups. Hence the situation has impacted the policy-making processes and outcomes, including the ones focused on reducing inequalities and eliminating discrimination. However, the government perceives that the pandemic affects

	<p>everyone. It does not have time and resources to target specific sections of the society (e.g., Dalits, women, and poor), at least in the short term. With shifting government priorities and perceptions, there is a risk of more 'adverse' policies, measures, and actions rather than them being more 'appropriate and 'sensitive' to the issues experienced by the marginalized people. Without anticipation of an emergency and the pandemic, the government made policies and budgetary allocation - probably friendlier to the marginalized groups. However, the situation has changed after the pandemic. Issues of marginalized groups (e.g., the poor and Dalits) have thus been side-lined, as the government's priority got diverted to the health sector and containing the pandemic. Even pre-COVID-19, the policy landscape was not harmonious and in favor of the marginalized groups. The situation has deteriorated further and will continue to do so, at least in the short term. It is also important to note that most working-class depend on the private sector for their income and livelihoods. It is where the enforcement of safeguards and equality measures lack the most. This dependence has become more evident during the lockdown.</p>
Medium term [0]	<p>The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the medium term. Nepal has been going through legal and policy reform in the past few years. It has been updating and developing laws and policies to make them inclusive and consistent in line with the aspirations and provisions in Nepal's 2015 Constitution and federal restructuring. Accordingly, various laws, policies, and legislation have become more progressive. There are also various social and political movements joining hands to enforce them, including the popular movement of 2006 (<i>Janandolan-II</i>). Once the government can contain the pandemic and deal with its impacts, the situation likely becomes more favorable for equitable and inclusive policymaking.</p>
Long term [+2]	<p>The pandemic would have a moderately promoting impact on this target in the long term. Lessons learned from the pandemic, and the dimension of social inequity are more visible during the pandemic. Nepal may continue with necessary policy and legal reforms towards a more inclusive and equitable society in the pandemic aftermath. However, post-pandemic Nepal needs to sort out the longstanding policy issues in Nepal. One of Nepal's policy issues is a significant gap between policy formulation and its implementation. In other words, policies and measures targeted towards equality are only useful in the paper. There is a lack of proper enforcement and monitoring. Another policy issue is the minimum budgetary planning and investment. The challenge is the biggest (i.e., poverty and social inequality).</p>
10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality.	
Short term [-3]	<p>The pandemic can have a strongly restricting impact on achieving this target focused on adopting fiscal and social policies that promote equality in the short term. The impact occurs through three different mechanisms. First, the financial</p>

	resources have been diverted to combat the pandemic curtailing the necessary resources for adopting fiscal and social policies. Second, many people have lost jobs, particularly those engaged in the informal sector. Measures adopted to combat the pandemic, such as lockdown, shutdown, and physical distancing, resulted in the closure of small and medium-sized enterprises. The situation is further crippled by natural disasters like floods and landslides, directly impacting the poor, disadvantaged, and vulnerable section of the society. Also, reverse migration is likely to increase the market's job competition if the government fails to bring special packages and programs to employ returnee migrant workers in the country. Thus, it would be challenging to adopt wage and social protection policies in the short term. Third, the pandemic has created hurdles in implementing formulated fiscal and social policies because of resource crunch and diverted attention to handling the pandemic. The pandemic has widened socio-economic inequalities among families and increased exclusion, and shrunk social safety nets.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term. The decrease in government revenue and a risk of a cut in foreign aid would be a challenge for the government to address people's needs and priorities below the poverty line and meet all people's social security. However, some favorable government policies such as the Monetary Policy of 2020-21 and a fiscal policy trying to address the pandemic's effect. In the current budget for the Fiscal Year 2020/21, Nepal's Government has allocated a 32 % additional budget for the health sector. Of these, 6 billion Nepalese Rupees (NPR) has been allocated to address the health sector needs associated with the pandemic. The budget also provides for free insurance of NPR 0.5 million to all the health care workers.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target in the long term. As mentioned earlier, the Government of Nepal has responded through monetary and fiscal measures to mitigate the pandemic's adverse effects. The objective of such policy measures is cushioning the effects of lockdown on people and businesses. The fiscal policy has expanded insurance coverage to medical personnel, additional medical supplies, and social assistance to vulnerable people. The provincial governments have also been working towards fighting against the pandemic. Most provinces have focused on health and employment in the budget for the next fiscal year 2020/21. There have been large amounts allocated for infrastructure development to create more employment. In addition to the funds allocated for improving health infrastructure and combating the pandemic, some provinces such as Gandaki and Karnali have also focused on economic recovery and job creation. Gandaki province, for example, has created a 1 billion fund for enterprise recovery and development.
10.5 Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions and strengthen the implementation of such regulations.	

Short term [-3]	The COVID-19 pandemic can have a strongly restricting impact on this target of improved regulation of global financial markets and institutions in the short term. Amid the pandemic, it is apparent that the government has not responded to the challenge effectively and has missed adopting and implementing pro-poor policies. Similarly, financial discipline among the private sector has also become weakly enforced. For example, as the Nepal Rastra Bank report suggests, most businesses were severely affected as 77% of businesses lack operational capital during the pandemic. As a result, there could be a high risk of bank loans payment, creating a risk to financial institutions. However, there would not be any changes in access to microfinance.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term. As the government establishes the easy loan to business people and increases payment time, this may slightly improve the financial market situation. For example, the facility provided by Monetary Policy (2020-21) can help entrepreneurs to revive their business and improve the economic activity and development of the country. The access of microfinance to farmers and vulnerable groups will increase with the growth of financial institutions all over the country (following the government's policy to spread financial institutions at all local levels).
Long term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target. Better plans and enabling government and financial institutions may help achieve this target in the long term. It is noteworthy that the central bank came up with policies to inject more liquidity into the financial system by using various monetary instruments. These instruments lower the cash reserve ratio, reduce interest on standard liquidity facility rate, relax the requirement of building countercyclical capital buffers, and increase the size of refinancing funds. Similarly, the central bank has also instructed the banks and financial institutions to accept the loan repayment deferments and extend need-based working capital loans to the affected business sectors on easy terms. Such policies will reduce the pandemic's long impact and strengthen the financial institution in the long term. Micro-financial institutions in Nepal have a significant impact on Nepalese society. The government aims to cover 40 percent of the farm households under the scheme by 2020. In the long term, the strengthening of financial institutions could help reduce financial risk. The government's easy loans could help establish more businesses.
10.6 Ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions.	
Short term [0]	The COVID-19 pandemic would not influence this target's achievement on enhanced representation for developing countries in financial institutions in the short term. The main reason for this is that there will not be any impact on any

	country's right to vote in international institutions and processes. In other words, no countries will lose right due to the pandemic. Nepal is a member of several global and regional initiatives and networks such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization, Asian Development Bank, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). Nepal can express its views on international platforms and raise its voice accordingly.
Medium term [0]	Like the short term, the pandemic would not influence this target's achievement in the medium term.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on the achievement of this target in the long term. The pandemic has increased global solidarity and cooperation among member countries because humanity is under threat of the pandemic. Thus, the lesson learned from the pandemic would enhance the representation of developing countries in financial institutions.
10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.	
Short term [-3]	The COVID-19 pandemic can have a strongly restricting impact on the achievement of this target on responsible and well-managed migration policies in the short term. The developed countries and destination countries may use health protocols and the pandemic as a mechanism of troubling migrants. This pandemic will have a significant impact on migrants. One can be pessimistic about planned and well-managed policies on migrants from migrants' perspectives. However, there will be a change in such policies favoring states. The governments are not responsible. The private sector that creates jobs for migrants will remain more profit-oriented amid the pandemic's ongoing challenges.
Medium term [-2]	The pandemic would have a moderately restricting impact on this target. The same issues would persist in the medium term. However, most governments already have international policies and standards on responsible and well-managed migration. However, it largely depends on how the pandemic would continue to spread and phases out, what kind of medications and vaccines are developed and available, and when. As Nepal's economic growth of the last two decades was mostly reliant on remittance, it is likely to depend on the development of other countries' migration and labor policies. So, this issue is going to be dynamic, subject to abrupt and unexpected changes. There is a high risk of unemployment in various sectors, including accommodation, food, hospitality, real estate, manufacturing, wholesale, retail, automobile services, and repairs. There is also a medium to high risk in arts and entertainment, recreation and related services, and transport and storage facilities.

Long term [+2]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a moderately promoting impact on this target's achievement. Nepal has an opportunity to revisit its plans, policies, and commitments at the international level in the long run and finetune the ones that deviated from the right track. For example, it has been possible for Nepal to facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people by implementing planned and well-managed migration policies. Nepal has put its strong commitment to abide by the Global Compact on Safe, Regular, and Orderly Migration (GCM) in 2019. Nepal plans to organize a series of multi-stakeholder consultations to develop its position on the GCM. These commitments are also reflected and included in the Constitution of Nepal. Similarly, related laws and regulations are in the process of necessary amendments. Additionally, national policies have started to cover the migrated population under social security and other aspects.
10.a Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization agreements	
Short term [-1]	The COVID-19 pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target on special and differential treatment for developing countries. Although all the countries have been badly affected by the pandemic, there may be new mechanisms to support developing countries like Nepal. These countries are also vulnerable to a range of other issues (e.g., underdevelopment, climate change, and disasters).
Medium term [-1]	Similar to the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target. However, there can be some progress if the mechanisms build on the 2013 Bali Ministerial Conference. The conference focused on reviewing and analyzing the implementation of special and differential treatment provisions.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic's impact would likely revert to weakly promoting in the long term with global efforts in economic recovery and 'build back better' measures. One of the great lessons that we have learned from the pandemic is that global institutions such as the World Trade Organization have an apparent failure. The pandemic has also made the dimension of global inequality more visible.
10.b Encourage official development assistance and financial flows, including foreign direct investment, to States where the need is greatest, in particular least developed countries, African countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their national plans and programmes.	
Short term [-2]	The COVID-19 pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on achieving this target on encouraging development assistance and investment in the least developing countries in the short term. As most countries' economies have been badly affected by the pandemic, it will impact their overseas funding and foreign direct investment opportunities. In

	Nepal, official development assistance made up 24 percent of the national budget in the last fiscal year (2018-19). On this basis, if bilateral funding goes down, there will be an impact on its national budget and GDP. As the aid for INGOs could be reduced, this will likely affect Nepal's local governments' performance. They depend on the INGOs to deliver a range of development services and outcomes. There could also be a cut-off of formal jobs in the development sector too.
Medium term [-1]	In the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target. The multilateral donors have already committed funding for the next three to five years, so the medium term's international aid would not be affected. However, there could be some decrease in bilateral funding. In Nepal, bilateral funding is more on infrastructure development. The cut down of such funds can affect the country's development.
Long term [+2]	The COVID-19 pandemic would have a moderately promoting impact on this target's achievement in the long term. The developed countries may continue their development assistance, financial flow, and direct investment once their economy revives. There would also be a flow of development assistance to Nepal to mitigate the pandemic's adverse effects. At the same time, multilateral and bilateral donors would also come forward to support developing countries. For example, the World Bank has approved a fast-track \$29 million COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Project to Nepal. This project helps prevent, detect, and respond to the pandemic and strengthen its public health preparedness in April 2020.
10.c By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 percent.	
Short term [0]	The COVID-19 pandemic would not influence achieving this target on reducing transaction costs for migrant remittances in the short term. It has led to a rise in unemployment worldwide, and many migrant workers return to their home countries. Thus, there may be a decrease in remittance. There will be less percentage incurred in transaction cost and remittance corridors with the decrease in remittance.
Medium term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target in the medium term. The main reason is that the pandemic awareness and experience on the uses of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) would contribute to achieving this target in the future. Increasing use of ICTs and digital economy and transactions in the post-pandemic context would reduce transaction costs of migrant remittances.
Long term [+1]	Like the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target in the long term.

Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.	
11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums	
Short term [-2]	In the short term, the COVID-19 pandemic may have a moderately restricting impact on achieving this safe and affordable housing target. Employment opportunities in the cities have dwindled due to lockdowns and prohibitory orders with immediate effect on the urban poor and low-income renters' housing situations. The government has no concrete plan regarding affordable housing. Private rental housing has been the primary source of affordable housing in cities. With the tenants' dwindled capacity to pay rents, there is a threat of low-income families moving into slums and informal settlements. Likewise, the government's housing programs for the poor, Janata Awas Yojana, may get derailed in the current changed context, upsetting the target of providing decent housing to all. Along with lockdowns and prohibitory orders, the pandemic has a somewhat restrained influx of rural migrants to cities. Because of this, there is less chance of new informal settlements emerging in cities. However, in rural areas, housing demand is likely to surge because of the reverse migration of workers from cities and foreign lands to their homelands. There could be an increase in slums and informal settlements in peri-urban and towns.
Medium term [-1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on this target. For a few years, the government's priority would be on reigniting the economy, with the housing sector not likely to receive much attention. With the resumption of economic activities in cities, the tenants' rent-paying capacity may also improve. With the situation easing, many rural migrants are likely to re-enter the urban market. However, the pace of rural-urban migration would be slow because of the hardships experienced by many migrants during the pandemic. The demand for rental housing would be moderate, resulting in an affordable rental price. In the semi-urban and urbanizing areas, housing demand would increase, prompting local governments to act. Many local governments have already started emphasizing job creation for returnees. With better access to economic opportunities, housing conditions may improve. Furthermore, Nepal will be holding national, provincial, and local elections in a few years. The pandemic would motivate the new governments to come up with effective housing strategies.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. Lessons learned from the pandemic may guide the regularization and upgrading of slums with a more engaged provincial and local governments' role apart from the federal government. Professionals working in the housing sector may be motivated to develop innovative ideas to efficiently provide adequate housing and essential services. Private investment in urban

	housing and smart services would increase. People are likely to be more conscious of living in sustainable and safe settlements.
11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons	
Short term [-2]	In the short term, the pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on achieving this target of affordable and sustainable transport systems. Because of the lockdowns and prohibitory orders enforced in response to the pandemic, people's movement has declined. Likewise, the increasing practice of online shopping and remote working (working from home) has also reduced commuting needs, resulting in a more manageable traffic situation. The government has formulated strict guidelines for public transport operation, resulting in reduced passenger capacity and high operating costs, hence high commuting fare. Ensuring social distancing in public vehicles could be difficult. Public transportation could be seen as risky, thereby promoting the private mode of commuting. Although the public profoundly feels the need for public transport with safety measures against COVID-19 and similar pandemics, the government's short-term priority would be to improve health infrastructure. On the positive side, the trend of walking or bicycling to work is seen to be gaining momentum. Large-capacity vehicles would replace small vehicles in the public transport sector for the ease of maintaining social distancing if and when needed.
Medium term [-1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target. Because of the pandemic, a safe, convenient, and affordable public transport system is deeply felt. On the one hand, this feeling will pressure the government to prioritize the public transport sector. On the other hand, it will encourage private investment, particularly in the mass transport system. However, affordability may persist as the necessity to maintain social distancing and other safety measures in public transport are likely to stay for some time. Likewise, it will take time to change public perception regarding public transport safety. Despite the possibility of a vaccine for COVID-19 soon, social distancing will remain a habit for some time.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. The federal government and local governments seem to have realized the need to improve the public transport system. The concept of an integrated transport system comprising of bus rapid transit (BRT), bus-only lanes, cycle tracks, and pedestrian walkways, among others, is being widely discussed. Development partners would be eager to support the government for the promotion of the mass transport system.

11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on this target of inclusive and sustainable urbanization. Implementation of urban development plans and study for new towns' planning has suffered a setback due to the shortfall of budget and unconducive environment to work with stakeholders. Many rural migrants have returned to their homelands during the pandemic because urban resources and services have diminished. Simultaneously, many informal workers have been left in limbo with no jobs and no reliable access to adequate food and shelter.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. The government may support municipalities to prepare and implement plans for sustainable and inclusive urban development. Many migrant workers have returned from urban areas and abroad to their homelands because of hardships in the urban areas. Many municipalities have started thinking or planning to absorb those returnees by providing them livelihood opportunities. This migration is also an opportunity for municipalities to adopt inclusive and sustainable urbanization. Many municipalities have hitherto been struggling with out-migration of the economically active population. However, there is also a threat of haphazard urbanization triggered by the surge in housing demand as returnees begin to settle down in their homelands. The pandemic also made all stakeholders realize that public participation, gender equality, and social inclusion are prerequisites for sustainable urban development. Many youth volunteers and community workers have come forward to help those in need. Although these efforts have been spontaneous but sporadic, more integrated, and regular collaboration between people and local governments could be seen soon. Maintaining social distancing in public places is going to be a critical challenge. The intensity of urban land use in favor of high density would decline to some extent, making urban management relatively easier. There will be more emphasis on incorporating safety and inclusivity in designing and constructing urban spaces such as shops, restaurants, and public buildings.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. The crisis has justified the federal structure adopted by promulgating a new constitution in 2015 whereby municipalities have been empowered to exercise constitutional power as local governments. Experience has shown that local governments are better positioned to provide relief to the people in a crisis like the pandemic. Although many municipalities are not resourceful and capable enough to tackle large-scale crises, the pandemic will motivate local governments to sustainably. Societies, as a whole, will have accepted inclusion as the desired value. The pandemic would make

	<p>policymakers and planners rethink urban planning regarding scale, density, housing typology, and public space design. The rethinking needs to consider future pandemic risks, thereby leading to 'human-scale' and pedestrian-friendly cities. Population densities will remain high in urban areas, but people would prefer to have some social distancing. As a result, high-rise apartments could be less appealing to homebuyers. The prevailing trend of construction houses for the sake of rental income could decline. This decline could lead to more manageable population size in cities. The government will also feel pressure to expedite the development of new urban centers across the country to relieve pressure on a few large cities. The concept of the sustainable and inclusive neighborhood (e.g., '15-minute city') and polycentric urban form would be increasingly followed in urban planning.</p>
11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage	
Short term [-2]	<p>In the short term, the pandemic may have a moderately restricting impact on this target of protecting cultural and natural heritage. The impact on cultural and natural heritage should be analyzed separately. Because of the pandemic, natural heritage sites have remained closed for regular visitors. Lockdowns and prohibitory orders have led to a 'temporary respite for nature.' However, illicit extraction (such as logging and harvesting) of forest resources has increased in some national heritage parks during the lockdown period.⁷ Research and monitoring work in the natural heritage sites have been disturbed due to the pandemic. The pandemic has caused further delay in reconstructing many cultural heritage sites destroyed in the Great Earthquakes of 2015. Due to the lockdown and prohibitory orders, age-old cultural rituals and festivals have also been seriously hampered. Celebration of important festivals such as <i>Indra Jatra</i> in Kathmandu and <i>Rato Machhendranath Jatra</i> in Lalitpur, among others, has been compromised this year due to the pandemic.</p>
Medium term [+1]	<p>In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. With the risks of COVID-19 subsiding, natural heritage sites would be adequately protected against illicit activities. Reconstruction of cultural heritage sites would be resumed. People would again start celebrating cultural rituals and festivals. There could be even more interest in protecting and conserving tangible and intangible heritage to make up for the time lost due to the pandemic and revive tourism.</p>
Long term [+1]	<p>In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. The need to respect nature and appreciate culture will have gained value because of the pandemic's lockdown experience. The future</p>

⁷https://tigers.panda.org/news_and_stories/stories/rising_pressure_on_nepal/

	human settlements may be less dense, and urbanization may be less haphazard, allowing nature to thrive. People would use culture as a means of developing social bonding.
11.5 By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations	
Short term [-2]	In the short term, the pandemic may have a moderately restricting impact on this target of reducing the adverse effects of natural disasters. Nepal is one of the most vulnerable countries globally to water-related disasters like floods and landslides, with floods alone killing nearly 150 people every year. In 2020, Nepal experienced the deadliest monsoon season in more than a decade. The country witnessed a total of 256 water-induced disasters, leaving at least 59 dead, two missings, and 106 injured in less than a month since the day monsoon entered the country. ⁸ Now with the pandemic, financial and human resources would be diverted to fight the pandemic. Hence, fewer resources would be available for disaster preparedness and the rescue and relief operations for the disaster victims. Relocation of at-risk settlements is also tricky while the threat of the pandemic is still around.
Medium term [-1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on this target. Because of the pandemic, the economic growth rate has declined sharply, which would reduce resource allocation in the sector of disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM). However, there is also a chance of the economy recovering relatively quickly. An increasing number of local governments have launched economic development programs. The increasing role of local governments in DRRM would help optimize the use of available resources, partially offsetting the pandemic's impact on resource availability for DRRM.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. The pandemic has made the government, local governments, and people realize that threats to humanity can occur at any time from an unknown source. While COVID-19 is an entirely new threat, the risks associated with disasters such as floods and landslides are relatively much more familiar. The experience in responding to the pandemic would help in addressing other disasters more effectively. Disaster preparedness is likely to increase at the local level. People would also be more willing to pay for the preparedness and mitigative measures against disaster risks.

⁸ <https://kathmandupost.com/climate-environment/2020/07/06/after-covid-19-and-locust-invasion-country-braces-for-monsoon-mayhem>.

11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management	
Short term [+2]	In the short term, the pandemic may have a moderately promoting impact on achieving this target of reducing cities' environmental impact. Lockdowns and prohibitory orders enforced in response to the pandemic have reduced industrial activities and vehicular transport with marked improvement in air quality. With businesses, particularly restaurants and hotels closed, waste generation has also gone down. However, as lives return to normalcy, the 'temporary respite for nature' may not last long. Likewise, cities' economic activities are likely to be constrained in the short term due to the departure of migrant workers, thereby resulting in less production of pollutants and waste.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. In other words, the pandemic would have a lesser positive impact on the city environment in the medium term as people are likely to return to the old rather than the 'new' normal. However, it will take time for large industries and factories to operate in full capacity. Likewise, it may take time for the economic activities to resume to the pre-pandemic level because of the departure of migrant workers and the likely continuation of social distancing measures. The pandemic has also reinforced environmental activism in large cities and provided robust evidence of human activities' impact on the environment. For instance, Kathmandu's air pollution data shows a sharp decline in air quality whenever lockdown is lifted or relaxed. Evidence-based activism would pressure the government and local governments to take proactive measures for environmental protection. During the pandemic, a slow and steady trend in terms of environment-friendly behaviors has also emerged. These behaviors include walking or cycling to work, buying locally, and managing organic waste at home through roof-top farming, among others.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. Although industries and businesses would feel an urge to ignore environmental costs of development to make up for the pandemic opportunities, environmental issues would have gained more attention. People would be willing to pay more for clean and safe air. New eco-friendly or pro-environment businesses would emerge, taking leverage of technological advancements.
11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities	
Short term	In the short term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on this target of providing access to safe and inclusive green and public spaces. This impact is because green and public spaces in many cities are few and far

[-1]	between. In many cases, these spaces are far from being safe, inclusive, and accessible, particularly for women, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities. On top of that, the pandemic has added another challenge: enabling social distancing in public spaces. Moreover, the government is likely to use open and public spaces to build temporary quarantine facilities.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. Municipalities would be motivated to include green and open spaces in their master plans. Some municipalities have already started protecting public lands in green parks, motivating other municipalities to follow suit. Investment in green infrastructure would increase.
Long term [+2]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a moderately promoting impact on achieving this target. Although policymakers, planners, and the public have realized the importance of green and public spaces, the shortage of public land will restrict the supply of such spaces in many cities. Purchasing private lands for this purpose would be too expensive. However, land development schemes with public participation (e.g., land pooling) may emphasize the ample provision of green and open spaces.
11.a Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning	
Short term [-2]	In the short term, the pandemic may have a moderately restricting impact on this target of strong national and regional development planning. Because of the pandemic, most informal workers, mostly rural migrants, have lost their jobs and thus access adequate food and shelter. Many workers have returned to their homelands despite economic uncertainties. This migration has highlighted the need for the integration of rural and urban areas. However, lockdowns and prohibitory orders enforced in response to the pandemic have weakened the rural-urban linkage. Inter-district mobility has been disturbed because of which rural products have lost access to big markets. The coordination between the three tiers of government at the federal, provincial, and local levels has been less than satisfactory in managing the pandemic. While the pandemic has highlighted the need for robust regional development planning, all three tiers of government will be occupied with their agenda and priorities in the short run.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target because of the increased realization of regional development planning's importance. The performance of the provincial government in the management of the ongoing crisis has not met expectations. Strategies will be formulated to carve a better role for the provincial governments to strengthen rural-urban linkages and facilitate collaboration and coordination

	between the federal government and local governments. In the Kathmandu Valley, municipalities have been working together as Mayors' Forum to address the COVID-19 challenge, which could serve as an example for other local governments to initiate regional collaboration.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. It will take time to realize the efforts towards strengthening regional development planning. Because of the return of rural migrant workers from cities and abroad to the homelands, the rural economy would transform in the long run. There has been renewed interest in agriculture and other ecosystem services. Rural and peri-urban areas would find economic opportunities in agriculture with a better and secure supply mechanism to the cities through economic partnerships between local governments. Relations between the urban and rural areas and their inter-linkages vis-à-vis ecosystem services would be redefined to eliminate the sharp dichotomy. The difference in the quality of life between rural and urban areas would diminish.
11.b By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on this target of implementing policies for inclusion, resource efficiency, and disaster risk reduction. Adopting and implementing policies and plans towards mitigation and adaptation to climate change and resilience to disasters in line with the Sendai Framework have gained momentum with local governments' increasing involvement. However, with the pandemic's unforeseen challenges, the federal and local governments are likely to prioritize and allocate more resources to manage the pandemic in the short term. This shift will hamper efforts associated with the management of frequently occurring disasters such as floods and landslides. The pandemic has also affected security personnel, which may affect the rescue and relief operations. On a positive note, the governments at all levels will be motivated to adopt a holistic approach to disaster risk management by also considering health risks from pandemics such as COVID-19.
Medium term +1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. The process of internalizing disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) in settlement planning would gain momentum. More local governments would be exercising their constitutional rights to formulate DRRM acts and policies in line with the

	federal laws. While doing so, the local governments would be motivated to adopt a holistic approach to the optimal use of resources.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. There would be increased awareness and motivation for developing and implementing holistic disaster risk management at all levels. More municipalities would be ready to adopt the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.
11.c Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on this target of supporting the least developed countries in a sustainable and resilient building. The importance of sustainable and resilient buildings built with local materials cannot be overstated in an earthquake-prone country like Nepal. The country experienced a massive loss of lives and properties in the devastating earthquakes in 2015. Reconstruction works are still underway in different parts of the country. Several development partners have supported Nepal in "building back better." Sustainable and resilient building construction is a critical component of this mission. However, given the pandemic's global economic impact, Nepal's support for constructing sustainable and resilient buildings may be curtailed in the short term.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. The pandemic has triggered the reverse migration of workers from urban areas and abroad to their homelands. This migration would lead to a surge in housing demand. Development partners would be interested in supporting the construction of sustainable and resilient buildings. Local governments will also be under pressure to satisfy the returnees' housing needs. They may be seeking financial and technical assistance from the development partners.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. The rural economy would transform due to the reverse migration of workers from urban areas and abroad. As a result, the difference in the quality of life between rural and urban areas would significantly diminish in the long run. This migration would lead to a housing boom in rural areas. The need to construct sustainable and resilient buildings will remain important in the long run as well. With the global economy recovering from the pandemic, international support may increase in this sector.
Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	

12.1 Implement the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, all countries taking action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries	
Short term [-2]	The COVID-19 pandemic could have a moderately restricting impact on implementing the 10-year sustainable consumption and production target. Like many other countries, Nepal's government resorted to lockdowns and travel restrictions to contain the virus's spread. These restrictions interrupted the production and supply chains and forced industries to downsize or temporarily halt their activities. This interruption resulted in significant financial losses and made industries not comfortable investing in new Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) initiatives. No concrete policy efforts have been devised or promoted to address this cross-cutting issue that impacts all production and consumption sectors.
Medium term [-1]	In the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on the target. As industrial activities resume with the reopening after lockdowns, businesses may focus on their financial recovery with less priority for SCP initiatives. The government's post-pandemic policy responses are also likely to prioritize economic recovery. These decisions, made in the wake of the pandemic, could have lasting impacts. On the consumption side, although consumers seem more informed and aware, behavioral changes seen during the lockdown are anecdotal and most likely temporary and challenging to become lasting habits.
Long term [0]	The pandemic could impact the priorities of upcoming policies, which will, in turn, have no positive – if not negative – impacts in the long term. Existing national policy frameworks do not prioritize technology-based solutions for cleaner production. Given the lack of an enabling policy environment, there is little ground to assume that the COVID-19 will bring any positive change.
12.2 By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources	
Short term [0]	In the short- term, the pandemic would not influence this target of sustainable production and natural resources use. Because of the pandemic, some resources (e.g., water for handwashing) have increased. In contrast, the use of resources, including fossil fuels and material resources used as raw materials in industries, went down because of fewer economic activities. The direct consumption pattern suggests a reduced use of natural resources during the lockdown. However, achieving increased material sustainability is affected negatively due to the lack of implementation of SCP practices and policies. Similarly, the material footprint (total and per capita) has gone down, but so has the GDP. Thus, the overall resource efficiency with regards to economic and production activities remains consistent without significant changes

Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term. At the national level, the use of some natural resources (e.g., forest and water resources) is of higher priority than other resources, especially mineral resources (e.g., limestone as a raw material for cement production) used in local industries. Nepal's mineral mining industry is in its infancy (0.6% of total GDP), and the sustainability aspect is still not a priority. There are also policy gaps concerning the use of other material resources in manufacturing industries. Overall, there is a lack of country strategy to ensure a low material footprint than economic outputs. The post-pandemic policies and initiatives are not likely to amplify this topic.
Long term [-1]	Like the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term.
12.3 By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses	
Short term [-1 and +1]	The pandemic could have weakly promoted and restricted impacts on achieving this target to halve global per capita food waste. The lockdown imposed to contain the spread of the COVID-19 has decreased commercial activities, which has reduced food waste coming from hotels, restaurants, and even from households. Similarly, due to the restrictions on social gatherings and festivities, food consumption was lower, and so was municipal solid wastes. However, the ratio of organic fraction has gone up. In contrast, the food supply chain's temporary shutdown has caused losses in the pre-consumption stages (e.g., storage, processing, and distribution). ⁹ Vegetables rotted in the farms, and farmers had to spill milk. The price of vegetables at the source was so low that farmers had to dump them rather than sell them.
Medium term [0 and +1]	In the medium term, the pandemic could have both a weakly promoting effect and no influence on this target. Since consumers' consciousness about reducing food waste has gone up, this raised awareness could have a weakly promoting effect on reducing food waste. In general, food waste per person is relatively low in Nepal compared to the global average. However, the food loss problem seems to be linked to many factors, including technologies for production, processing, transportation, storage (e.g., TCL- temperature-controlled logistic), and commercial activities. Therefore, the pandemic may not influence the target of reducing food losses in the medium term.
Long term [0 and +1]	The impacts expected in the medium term are also foreseeable in the long term.

⁹ <http://www.fao.org/sustainable-agricultural-mechanization/resources/news/detail-events/en/c/1294315/>

12.4: By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment	
Short term [-2]	In the short term, the pandemic could have a moderately restricting impact on this target of responsible management of chemicals and waste because of a lack of proper management of healthcare waste arising due to the pandemic. National and international policies, frameworks, and standards on chemical waste (from industrial and other sectors) have not been implemented effectively in Nepal. The National Health Care Waste Management Guidelines are not adopted, and infrastructure and mechanisms for managing these wastes are not in place. Investment in chemical and hazardous waste management has not been a priority for the government or private sector.
Medium term [-1]	Because of the lacking policies and infrastructure for chemical and hazardous waste management, the pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact in the medium term on this target, even with likely new initiatives in this direction. However, there could be a continuing dearth of investment in the chemical and hazardous waste management sector due to the pandemic.
Long term [0]	No influence of the pandemic would be expected in the long term. There is an opportunity to build a system for adequately managing chemicals and other hazardous wastes because of the new, decentralized governing structure. However, such an achievement is uncertain given the experience of the slow progress of past initiatives.
12.5 By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target of substantially reducing waste generation. The reduced economic and consumption and production activities during the lockdown have helped reduce waste (mainly municipal solid waste streams) noticeably. However, this reduction is likely to be a supply-constrained effect and not necessarily a result of more responsible consumption and high waste management standards and prevention. On the contrary, recycling of waste faces hurdles because of market access and disruption in collection and recycling operations due to the pandemic.
Medium term [0]	The pandemic may not influence this target in the medium term. Although the pandemic is likely to increase awareness of waste management practices and a change in consumption patterns and waste disposal habits, this effect may be temporary. It may not help to sustainably reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling, and reuse in the medium and long terms. Moreover, sustainably reducing waste requires policy support and investment in infrastructures, along with changes in consumer habits.

Long term [0]	The pandemic is expected to have no influence on this target in the long term. With the growth of proper waste management and recycling companies in urban Nepal, the practice of sustainably reducing waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse has started. This development might lead to an improved waste management system in the future. However, it is difficult to establish its connection with the pandemic situation.
12.6: Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic could have a weakly restricting constraining impact on the target to encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices and sustainable reporting in the short term. This impact is because of the hardship that many companies are facing due to the lockdown. Strategies and policies to encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices are not effectively implemented at the national level. Some international agencies have their mandatory requirements for international industries. However, similar guidelines, frameworks for sustainable reporting criteria are also not readily available for local companies. There is also a lack of transparency in reporting operational practices in government institutions and private companies. Economic hardship induced by the pandemic is likely to force many companies to constrain their expenses and focus on their survival.
Medium term [0]	In the medium term, no impacts are foreseeable. Therefore, we assume no influence of the pandemic in the achievement of this target.
Long term [0]	Similarly, in the long term, no impacts are foreseeable. Therefore, we assume no influence of the pandemic in the achievement of this target.
12.7 Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic could have a moderately restricting impact on achieving this target of promoting sustainable public procurement practices. Nepal's government is facing corruption scandals concerning COVID-19 related medical supplies, including testing kits. ¹⁰ This example shows the poor situation of public procurement transparency in Nepal. Green public procurement initiatives have not been a priority for public organizations. The situation has worsened due to the pandemic, creating a counteracting impact on promoting sustainable public procurement practices.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic's impacts in this target may last in the medium term, albeit in a weakly restricting manner, because of the lack of transparency in procurement processes and readiness of such initiatives.

¹⁰ <https://www.himalmag.com/indias-crossborder-crises-covid-19-corruption-and-more/#corruption>

Long term [0]	In the long term, however, no impacts are foreseeable. Therefore we assume no influence of the pandemic in the achievement of this target.
12.8 By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic is a barrier with a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target of promoting a universal understanding of sustainable lifestyles in the short term. Although it helped raise public awareness, for example, on sanitation and personal hygiene (e.g., handwashing) practices, it has also put most educational activities on hold. When face-to-face activities are not possible, many institutions and consumers do not have alternate modes to reach out to the public for awareness-raising. The pandemic has also reduced funds that are available for reaching out to beneficiary groups.
Medium term [0]	Meeting this target requires broader changes, in which the pandemic may not have any influence in the medium term. Today many people have access to sustainable development and need to maintain a lifestyle in harmony with nature. There has been a noticeable shift in the lifestyle and behavior of many city inhabitants. Many people have started adopting a healthy lifestyle, like regular physical activities, eating organic food, and green entrepreneurship. However, there are lingering issues such as a lack of transparency and access to sustainable development and lifestyle in the public (open) domain.
Long term [+1]	Suppose the new pro-environmental lifestyle and behavior of people adopted during the pandemic continues in the future. In that case, it could have a weakly promoting impact in achieving the target. There are plans to adopt environmental studies in the school curriculum. In contrast, many of the universities and colleges are promoting environment-related courses. The government is also promoting many policies that promote sustainable consumption and production to advance the SDG goals. Successful implementation of these initiatives at policy and practice levels will have an enabling effect.
12.a: Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production	
Short term [-2]	In the short term, the pandemic could have a moderately restricting impact on achieving this target to support Nepal's scientific and technological capacity for sustainable consumption and production. The pandemic has spread to all countries, developing and developed. It has affected their economic activities, severely affecting their financial capability to finance activities to support developing countries' sustainable patterns. This impact may disrupt the flows of financial and technological support and expertise provided by developed countries.

Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this impact in the medium term. The developed countries may prioritize their post-pandemic recovery over the next few years, which could negatively impact existing support to developing countries like Nepal.
Long term [0]	There is no foreseeable influence of the pandemic on this target as the pandemic would normalize over the coming decade.,
12.b: Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products	
Short term [-2]	The pandemic would have a moderately restricting impact on achieving this target to develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable tourism in the short term. The tourism industry is one of the most negatively affected sectors globally. ¹¹ Lack of tourists and travel-related activities and monetary losses have discouraged the tourism industry from focusing on sustainability-related activities.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic could have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target in the medium term since the Government's effort to restart the tourism sector is less likely to focus on sustainability.
Long term [0]	The pandemic would not influence this target in the long term.
12.c: Rationalize inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions, in accordance with national circumstances, including by restructuring taxation and phasing out those harmful subsidies, where they exist, to reflect their environmental impacts, taking fully into account the specific needs and conditions of developing countries and minimizing the possible adverse impacts on their development in a manner that protects the poor and the affected communities	
Short term [0]	There is no influence of the pandemic in the short term on this target to remove market distortions that encourage wasteful consumption. This influence is the approval and implementation of such policies take some time. The introduction of such policies in the aftermath of the pandemic and their impacts are yet to be seen.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic could have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term. This impact is because post-pandemic policies are likely to focus more on economic revival and less on environmental or sustainability aspects.

¹¹ <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284421893>

Long term [0]	No significant foreseeable impacts in the long term.
Goal 13. Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	
13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries	
Short term [-2]	The COVID-19 pandemic could have a moderately restricting impact on achieving this target of strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related disasters in the short term. Nepal is one of the most vulnerable countries globally when it comes to climate-induced disaster-related risks such as floods, droughts, and landslides. Due to the pandemic, the challenges have increased multifold in allocating financial and human resources for disaster preparedness and rescue and relief operations for the climate disaster victims. Thus, actions for preventing natural disasters (e.g., floods, inundation, landslides) might be on hold and less prioritized due to the shift of priority in human resources, budget, and funding pandemic related actions. The policy momentum and attention to the actions needed to initiate future resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters will also be impeded. Public health concerns could override priority over climate-related hazards, resulting in fewer resources available for capacity strengthening. Also, there might be a budget scarcity to protect immediate preventive measures, e.g., landslides, relocation of the affected people.
Medium term [-1]	In the medium term, the impact of the pandemic would continue to be weakly restricting. The pandemic induced livelihood implications could result in higher incidences of poverty among rural and disadvantaged people. This poverty is likely to accelerate the unsustainable use of natural resources, thereby draining resilience and adaptive capacity. The economic downturn of 2020 could continue until early 2021, which would take some time to recover. As a result, the investment needed in strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards could be impaired. There may also be less attention to climate issues due to a focus on economic recovery plans, delaying climate actions, and plans at all scales. However, some positive experiences are also likely to emerge. The approach to self-reliance, use of local resources for livelihood, and societal experience dealing with the pandemic are likely to create broader societal awareness on the need to preserve and appreciate nature and catalyze resources for resilience and adaptive capacity. There may be efforts to maintain the decreasing level of air pollution in the cities. In contrast, pollution could also increase as the regular activities would resume. There would be a rush to increase economic activities.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic would weakly promote in the long term. Internationally, with the pandemic tackled, there would be an increased appreciation of nature and the need to reduce or stop human activities harming nature. More investments are

	expected to flow, with accelerated operationalization of the Paris Agreement and UNFCCC mechanisms and processes. Government is likely to ensure disaster preparedness and resilience investment, with an increased understanding of natural resources and their efficient utilization, which could help build resilience. Nepal is likely to move to ensure low carbon development due to increased awareness and participation from all levels (local, provincial, federal). Furthermore, necessary fiscal and monetary policy reforms would also stimulate green economic growth, thus addressing the long term environmental and climate risks.
13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning	
Short term [0]	In the short term, the pandemic might not influence this target to integrate climate change measures into policies and planning. This influence is because of policies and plans that are already in place and enshrined. These policies and plans include Local Adaptation Plans of Action (LAPA), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), Long Term Strategies (LTS), and Disaster Risks and Management Act. The challenge might be at the implementation. Due to the slowdown of the economy and the government's attempts to meet the revenue targets, the tax base in a few areas, such as electric vehicle imports, might affect climate mitigation efforts. Currently, the government is updating the NDC and preparing the NAP in order to take climate actions. The process is ongoing amid the pandemic, however, with some delay.
Medium term [+1]	The COVID-19 could weakly promote this target. This promoting impact would mainly come from integrating climate change measures in the agriculture sector for improving crop yields. The agriculture sector got considerable attention during the pandemic in terms of enhancing food self-sufficiency. There would be a new policy to promote agro-based production systems. Additionally, the government could be guided and encouraged by gains such as air quality during the lockdowns.
Long term [+2]	In the long term, the pandemic could have a moderately promoting impact in achieving this target. The pandemic could promote low carbon climate resilient actions in the long term. Local municipalities may put efforts into creating resilient societies with increasing public investments. It is also likely that climate-smart villages could be promoted in the future, with a priority on agro-based production for sustaining local livelihoods. Additionally, increased awareness of the need to protect nature is likely to happen due to advocacy from civil society and a range of other stakeholders. Such awareness among diverse stakeholders, including the politician, policymakers, and communities, would lead to high prioritization of natural resources such as land, water, and forests. Integration of climate change with innovation due to technological

	development and ICTs might reinforce the target's achievement in the long term. SDG implementation would also gain pace, which will positively contribute to the goal.
13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic could have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target to build knowledge and capacity to meet climate change. The opportunity to create national and international awareness and attention through important events such as the “Sagarmatha Sambaad” has been missed. “Sagarmatha Sambaad” is the multi-stakeholder dialogue initiated by the Government of Nepal with the theme “Climate Change, Mountains and the Future of Humanity” scheduled for April 2020 postponed. As a result, climate change-related awareness campaigns might take a back seat during this period. Noticeably, improvements in air quality could provide positive feedback and motivation to the youth while educating them on climate and the environment. However, its real results will be seen only in the medium to long terms. During the pandemic, Nepal has also faced many climate-induced disasters taking away hundreds of people's lives while losing property worth millions of dollars. These disasters have helped to draw attention to the impacts of climate change.
Medium term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target in the medium term. Nature and climate-related awareness and education activities would increase. All academic institutions and civil society organizations start operating normally. There might also be a favorable green development environment based on renewable resources, indigenous knowledge, and local values. Awareness through social media, distance-courses, and development partners' interests would also create enabling conditions for meeting this target.
Long term [+1]	Same as in the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target in the long term. There might be several efforts on how to integrate climate change with innovation. Among others, more students may aim to study climate change and the environment. Due to the pandemic, awareness of climate justice and equity would also increase among the new generation. More research and academic papers would likely be published over the years, giving us more accurate information on climate change impacts. Many academic and research institutions would prioritize these aspects in the future.
13.a Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible.	

Short term [-1]	The pandemic could weakly restrict implementation of the UNFCCC commitments in the short term since the committed amount might be diverted to deal with the public health issues related to the pandemic. This target would depend on the upcoming negotiations' progress to define the new target for climate finance post-2020. However, the COP26 event and climate negotiations under preparation have already been postponed. Delays in the decision could hamper the implementation of the commitment. Thus there is less likelihood of mobilizing the allocated funds. The pandemic may also likely cause political unrest and economic instability globally. Such an economic downturn may constrain fund mobilization in the short term.
Medium term [+1]	The pandemic could have a weakly promoting effect on this target. There could be increased priorities on the environmental and climate risks, which would lead to developing a “consensus” on allocating resources for climate actions in LDCs like Nepal in the medium term. Options for resource generation would be sought. There might also be easy access to green or carbon funds (climate financing). Nepal is likely to access international climate finance from various donors and climate change dedicated funds for its climate actions. The work is currently being undertaken.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic's resultant impact would be weakly promoting this target's achievement in the long term. More efforts and alignment towards the Paris Agreement and related instruments and financing schemes would be possible. However, if anything more, that might be for catching up on lost fund mobilization in short to medium terms. There may be no new and additional resources or efforts in implementing programs and mechanisms under the UNFCCC.
13.b. Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic's overall impact will be weakly restricting in the short term on this target to promote mechanisms to raise capacity for climate planning and management. Priorities and focus of the country might shift from climate action to the pandemic in the short term. There would be a lack of resources for climate issues, as health and employment are the vital prioritized areas. Marginalized people and communities might be more affected due to their vulnerable conditions and lack of access to resources aimed for climate-related capacity building management.
Medium term [+1]	The impact of the pandemic could shift towards weakly promoting in the medium term. New institutional setup at a local level, favorable government policies, promotion of domestic resources and products (instead of remittance through migrant labors) could enable management capabilities to help achieve this target. There could be a high possibility to mobilize returned skilled migrant workers, youth, local, and other marginalized people for capacity building and training.

Long term [+1]	Similar to the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact in the long term. More local human resources are likely to be trained and also have higher education. Currently, some colleges and courses are focused on climate change studies. Focused training and courses are also being offered to increase the capacity of local human resources. Lots of learning will also have been gathered from the experience of ongoing projects and programs as they will have been completed.
Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	
15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the COVID-19 pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target of conserving and restoring terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems. However, some positive signs of the improved environmental condition have been noticed during the lockdown, mainly due to increased pressure on all types of natural ecosystems. Instances of poaching wild animals and illegal harvest of forest products, including timber and non-timber, have been reportedly increased after the late March lockdown. This trend may increase due to youth's mass return from abroad and urban areas. They might find it easier to earn their livelihoods from illegal logging, wildlife poaching, overfishing, and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) collection in the absence of other employment opportunities. Higher incidence of poverty, job losses, and reduced foreign aid can exhibit pressure on natural resources, leading to further degradation of the ecosystems. Additionally, anticipated government funds related to achieving this target have been mainly diverted towards the current fiscal year's health sector. With low investment and less government priority, coupled with limited financial and human resources, the conservation sector is likely to suffer in the short term.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic's negative impact in the short term may reverse with a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. As the pandemic is linked to natural degradation, the governments and development partners may be motivated to bring nature-friendly stimulus packages for enhanced natural conservation. Moreover, the likely creation of many employments in the green sector by different government levels targeting returnee migrants can positively impact. The federal and provincial governments' existing conservation-friendly policies will provide an enabling environment for positive outcomes.
Long term [+2]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a moderately promoting impact on achieving this target. The continuation of the medium-term strategies and initiatives and expected further promotion of green recovery programs by different

	governments' levels provide reasons to be optimistic in the long term. Most returnees may engage in land-based activities, resulting in the restoration of the degraded forests and reclamation of farmlands leading to enhanced conservation and increased productivity. Besides, more enabling policies and legislation are expected in the long-term, which will produce positive conservation outcomes with green stimulus packages and employments.
15.2 By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target of ending deforestation and restoring degraded forests. Despite some positive impacts of the pandemic, there are high chances of increased illegal logging and unsustainable harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products during and immediately after the lockdowns. There are also reported cases of some Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) attempting to harvest a comparatively more considerable amount of the timber to fill the income gap created by drying out other sources of their income (such as ecotourism) due to the pandemic. Job losses, poverty, and weak law enforcement due to the pandemic have reportedly increased poaching of wild animals and illegal harvest of forest products mainly in the tropical lowlands (known as <i>Tarai</i>) and adjoining low mountain (known as <i>Chure</i>) regions.
Medium term [0]	In the medium term, the pandemic may not influence achieving this target. This optimism comes from several green campaigns initiated by the government and civil society groups. The federal Ministry of Forest and Environment has recently put forward an ambitious policy of implementing massive plantation programs across the country. There is a high possibility that the initiative will be further promoted soon by mobilizing returnee migrant workers. These likely positive developments are expected to balance out the short-term negative impacts.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. The government may create more local level green jobs focused on forest conservation, sustainable forest management, and fine-tune supportive policies and practices. Unmanaged forests may be actively managed under the scientific forest management program or alternative active forest management model recommended by the government-formed commission recently. This management will positively impact the resource condition and national and local economies.
15.3 By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target of ending desertification and restoring degraded land. Activities related to this target suffer from low priority and government investment as the

	government funds are diverted mainly towards the health sector. The government's priority to combat soil erosion and land degradation has decreased during the pandemic, resulting in continuing the widespread construction of unplanned and unregulated rural roads. Such unplanned construction may cause severe soil erosion and sedimentation on fertile agricultural lands downstream, particularly in the hills and mountains.
Medium term [0]	In the medium term, the pandemic may not influence achieving this target. There are high chances of shifting towards sustainable land management practices and minimizing the haphazard construction of infrastructures. Besides, the labor shortage in hills and mountains may be by the returnees from cities and abroad. These factors are expected to help neutralize the short-term negative impact.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. Increased availability of labor may provide opportunities for sustainable land management. People may give more importance to managing and enhancing land quality as they have felt insecure from many other sectors, resulting in increased investment in land restoration and management.
15.4 By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target of ensuring mountain ecosystems' conservation. In general, mountain ecosystems and mountain peoples have been experiencing relatively less direct effects of the COVID-19 as compared to those in more accessible lowlands and valleys. There are even likely positive effects as the pandemic has given the natural mountain systems a chance to recover due to decreased human pressure. However, the overall short-term impact may be negative due to the high fragility and sensitivity of the mountain socio-ecological systems to disturbances. There is also likely increased pressure on non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and medicinal and aromatic plants (MAP) due to increased unemployment. Additionally, the pandemic has badly affected tourism, one of the primary sources of high mountain people's income. Activities focused on capacity building, field-based training, and conservation effort have been halted or delayed due to the pandemic.
Medium term [0]	In the medium term, the pandemic may not influence achieving this target. A relatively low level of anthropogenic pressure is expected on the mountain ecosystems as compared to the lowlands. Moreover, capacity building and other conservation activities may resume quickly after the pandemic, positively impacting it. Despite all these likely positive developments, the overall outcomes may not be to the level that can positively impact this target's achievement. One of the reasons behind this is the longer recovery time of natural mountain systems. Nevertheless, the likely positive

	outcomes are expected to be sufficient to neutralize the short-term negative impacts.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. The flow of tourism-generated income will help strengthen the mountain communities' resilience in the long term. Chances of full recovery of natural ecosystems are higher in the mountains due to the pandemic's relatively less severe direct impacts. There is more role for civil society and private actors in capacity building activities and initiatives (e.g., micro-enterprises and value-addition opportunities). Here, returnees could play a crucial role.
15.5 Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target of protecting biodiversity and natural habitats. The restriction in mobility and other conservation organizations' activities and weakened enforcement of the law during the pandemic have led to increased instances of illegal logging and poaching of wild animals, including threatened species. The problem is aggravated by increased unemployment and decreased human resources available to work in the conservation sector.
Medium term [0]	In the medium term, the pandemic may not influence achieving this target. Once the pandemic comes into control and conservation organizations resume their normal activities, the short term problems may go away. The natural habitats can recover and the conservation of threatened species improved through better enforcement, monitoring, awareness, and capacity enhancement programs. These actions, however, may be insufficient to reverse the short-term negative impacts, thereby resulting in a neutral situation in the medium term.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. Continuation and further consolidation of the medium-term efforts may enable achieving the target in the long term. The governance may be substantially improved, and conservation programs' funding will not be a limiting factor in the long term after the pandemic is over. Even if the external funding is reduced, internal funding by the three government levels (i.e., federal, provincial, and local) may suffice the minimum budgetary requirements.
15.6 Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed	
Short term [0]	In the short term, the pandemic may not influence achieving this target of promoting access to genetic resources and fair sharing of the benefits. While the community level exchanges of agro-genetic resources have increased after the pandemic, international exchanges have substantially decreased. Greater competition for resource use during the

	pandemic may lead to inequitable access and use of genetic resources by different society sections, indicating a negative impact.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. In the context of the recent ratification of the Nagoya Protocol by Nepal, we can be cautiously optimistic about achieving the target. However, as the male migrants return to the villages, there might be negative impacts in reinforcing gendered roles. This impact may disadvantage women from their livelihoods opportunities and sharing of benefits.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. Local governments' increased involvement in conservation can be expected. They would have learned the lesson in favor of conserving biodiversity and devising benefit-sharing mechanisms. Although the poor and vulnerable people can still be at risk, the pandemic's enabling impact in the mid-term is likely to continue in the long term.
15.7 Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products	
Short term [0]	In the short term, the pandemic may not influence eliminating poaching and trafficking of protected species. The awareness raised by the pandemic to keep a distance from wild animals can impact positively towards the achievement of the target. Moreover, reduced mobility due to the lockdown and decreased trade due mainly to decreased demand for wildlife products from China and other countries is expected to impact wildlife positively. Simultaneously, the likely increase in poaching of wild animals linked to increased unemployment and poverty and decreased field patrolling and monitoring will negatively impact.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. The existing national, regional, and international initiatives that are in place to control poaching and trafficking of protected species may positively impact the achievement of this target in the medium term. The likely decrease in demand for wildlife products in international markets after the pandemic experience is another reason to be optimistic. China's outlawing the hunting and consumption of all terrestrial wild animals as the COVID-19 spreads is perceived to be an early indication towards that end.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. The enabling impact observed in the medium term may continue in the long term due to similar reasons as in the medium term. Increased awareness in favor of conserving nature and ban on wildlife meat and products is expected to continue and further expanded within the country and globally.

15.8 By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species	
Short term [0]	The pandemic may not influence preventing invasive alien species on land and in water ecosystems in the short term. The restrictions on travel by both air and land transportations imposed by governments after the pandemic have significantly reduced the chance of introducing new invasive alien species to the country and their spread within the country. However, the pandemic has also limitations on site-specific invasive alien species control or management activities of government and non-government agencies and community user groups.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. This impact is mainly due to the increased cultivation of abandoned agricultural lands and afforestation in degraded lands. The migrant may play critical roles in the process.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. The positive impact observed in the medium term is likely to continue in the long term for the same reasons mentioned earlier. Moreover, improvements in governance, including law enforcement, capacity enhancement activities, and climate change mitigation and adaptation activities (such as climate-smart agriculture), are expected.
15.9 By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts	
Short term [0]	In the short term, the pandemic may not influence integrating ecosystem and biodiversity in governmental planning. The current favorable policy context and increased awareness for conserving nature will support and expedite the integration of biodiversity and ecosystems in local development planning and implementation.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target. Expected change in the post-pandemic world economic order with likely promotion or adoption of small-scale conservation-friendly economic development approaches may have an enabling impact on achieving this target in the medium term.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. The scenario and trends observed in the medium term are likely to be continued and further promoted in the long term, which has an enabling impact on the achievement of this target.
15.a Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems	

Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target of increasing financial resources to conserve and sustainably use ecosystems and biodiversity. This impact is because of the overall negative effect of the pandemic on the national and world economies. In Nepal, tourism has been negatively affected by the pandemic. Many conservation organizations have faced a shortage of financial resources due to the diversion of funds towards the health sector.
Medium term [0]	In the medium term, the pandemic may not influence achieving this target. The constraints observed in the short term are expected to gradually fade away in the medium term, which will help neutralize the negative impacts. However, the situation may not improve with the speed required to yield positive impacts in the medium term. It may take more time to return to a normal financial situation.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. Economic sectors, including tourism, are expected to bounce back and further improve, which will have an enabling impact on this target's achievement.
15.b Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic may have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target of financing and incentivizing sustainable forest management. There are inadequate funding and associated limitations to implementing sustainable forest management programs due to transferring a substantial proportion of conservation funds to health and other sectors.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. The financial constraints experienced in the short term are expected to go away in the medium term. This optimism is due to expected green stimulus packages and development partners' support, reversing the constraint to an enabling impact scenario. Closer collaboration and integration of conservation plans and programs with climate change-related programs would strengthen the enabling impact.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target for a similar reason as in the medium term.
15.c Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities	

Short term [0]	The pandemic may not influence achieving this target of combating global poaching and trafficking in the short term. There are both positive and negative aspects of the pandemic, yielding a neutral outcome in the short term. While awareness has increased a lot, poaching and trafficking are commonly happening at the same time due to reduced economic activities.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target. Combined efforts of the government, its conservation partners, local communities, and civil society stakeholders are expected to help combat poaching and trafficking of protected species.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic may have a weakly promoting impact on achieving this target for a similar reason as in the medium term.
Goal 16 Promote Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development, Provide Access to Justice for All and Build Effective, Accountable and Inclusive Institutions at All Levels	
16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	
Short term [-2]	The COVID-19 pandemics can have a moderately restricting impact on this target to reduce violence everywhere. Violence takes place at both the physical and psychological levels during the pandemic. Violence against women, children, and vulnerable populations has increased due to the pandemic adverse effects in society. Similarly, domestic violence against women increases, maternal and child health is at increased risk, and psychosocial health has become a significant public concern. Restrictions on social gatherings, including visits to religious places and prayers, have negatively affected psychosocial and spiritual wellbeing. Because of increasing psychosocial problems, the graph of suicide is going upward during the pandemic. The numbers of protests and demonstrations have gone up despite the peril of the pandemic. One of the main underlying factors of these kinds of violence is economics. In substance, lockdown and physical/social distancing measures have significantly reduced household income and caused job losses of the poor and backward section of the society triggering peace and stability.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic could have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term. The economic devastation and growing unemployment among the youth as consequences of the pandemic may promote the people's physical and psychological violent behavior. As experienced from the past, the victim will comprise women, children, and disadvantaged groups.
Long term [0]	In the long term, the pandemic would not influence the achievement of this target. The target would take the track with the improved economic situation in the post-pandemic context.

16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against and torture of children	
Short term [-2]	The COVID-19 pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target's achievement to protect children from abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and violence. As discussed above, the abuse and violence against children are increasing. The psychosocial and mental health of children has been disrupted with the uncertainty of the opening of schools. The closure of schools has mostly confined children into the home as well as destroyed their social networks. Meanwhile, the violence against children at home is also increasing. The pandemic's economic impacts on households have escalated domestic child trafficking in search of jobs to sustain their family lives. As a result, child labor has been increased. Further, the children are forced to work in the substandard workplace setting, leading to child abuse and exploitation. The pandemic's positive impact is that international child trafficking has decreased because of lockdown and restrictions on movement across the borders, especially with the southern neighbor.
Medium term [-2]	The pandemic would have a moderately restricting impact on this target in the medium term. The reduced household income resulting from job losses, dwindling economy, and shrinking employment opportunities may increase the cases of child trafficking, both at the national and international level, in upcoming days. Although schools' opening may reduce the abuse, torture, and violence against children, the lasting impact of psychosocial issues would persist in the medium term. Further, there is not much hope for improving the situation in the next years because the government is widely engaged in responding to the pandemic, overlooking women and children's issues.
Long term [0]	In the long term, the pandemic would not influence this target.
16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target to promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice. This impact is because the low number of legal cases has been reported due to the limited opening of courts and law enforcement agencies' concentration on responding to the pandemic. With the court's limited functioning and opening, the cases have not been addressed or sorted out promptly.
Medium term [-1]	Like the short term, the pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term. The backlogs of cases escalated by the pandemic would substantially impact the timely administration of justice.
Long Term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term. The barriers caused by the pandemic will be eased with the full-functioning of the court in the future. The law enforcement agencies could also focus on maintaining the rule of law in society in the post-pandemic context.

16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime	
Short term [+1]	The pandemic can have a weakly promoting impact on this target to combat organized crime and illicit financial and arms flow in the short term. The illicit financial and arms flow as well the organized criminal activities have cross border dimension in Nepal. More specifically, the criminals find Nepal's open and porous border as a haven to operate illegal activities across the border. The closure and strict surveillance of southern borders during the pandemic have rendered the illicit financial and arms flows and curbed the cross border crimes in the short term.
Medium term [-1]	In the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on achieving the target to reduce illicit financial and arms flows and combat all forms of organized crime. Because of the economic crisis and increased youth unemployment caused by the pandemic, the demand side of small arms proliferation would be increased. In the absence of a proper reintegration plan for returnee migrant workers and tying up youth with economic activities, organized crime and armed activities may attract dissatisfied youths across the country.
Long Term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term.
16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms	
Short term [-2]	In the short term, the pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on achieving this target to substantially reduce corruption and bribery because of several contemporary issues and cases. During the pandemic, there was a scandal in the health-equipment procurement process. At the same time, public space has been squeezed. Additionally, watchdogs' role and activities like media and civil society have been constrained and limited by the pandemic. Nevertheless, civil society's limited activism has created opportunities for the government to fulfill its petty interest. Further, based on the experience of the 2015 earthquake, the crisis or emergency is an opportunity for the rulers to mismanage the government fund. Corruption is more likely to happen in a country like Nepal, where corruption is attached to the culture. Good governance is not that strong. The financial insecurity caused by the pandemic has given rise to corruption in society.
Medium term [-1]	In the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on achieving this target. The trust and faith of the government have been lost due to the issues and cases discussed above. Therefore, there are not many hopes that corruption and bribery will be reduced within five years. Moreover, the nascent federal structure had already demonstrated the incidence of corruption. The pandemic became a porous environment for corruption that may have longer implications resulting in an institutionalized corruption culture.

Long Term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term. However, there would be immense challenges of trust-building among the public and the institutionalized culture of corruption in the future.
16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions. It has tested where our institutions do stand. The poorly managed quarantine and isolation centers have measured public institutions' effectiveness at all fronts of governance. In this regard, public institutions have garnered negative marking. Further, the government's inability to bring adequate special economic relief packages to the most affected population, such as poor, disadvantaged, and marginalized groups of society, reinforces the narrative of public institutions' ineffectiveness. During the pandemic, the fund management of provincial and local governments illustrates the poor and weak mechanism of accountability and transparency in these two government tiers. More specifically, no database was maintained about how much funds were collected and where it was spent.
Medium term [0]	The pandemic would not influence this target. The growing interest of youth in the politics palpable during the pandemic may bring optimistic hope on this target in the future. During the pandemic, youth have become vigilant over the performance of the government institutions. For instance, with the unfolding of various corruption scandals, they joined the street protest against the scandals despite the lockdown and other restrictions imposed during the pandemic. It is essential to cite the 'Enough is enough' movement here. There would be greater youth consciousness in the post-pandemic period towards this end.
Long Term [0]	Like the medium term, the pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term.
16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to ensure responsive, inclusive, and representative decision-making in the short term. The decision-making process of the pandemic preparedness and response plans and programs is not inclusive. For instance, the composition and working modality of COVID-19 Crisis Management Center, Health Emergency Operation Center, Quarantine and Isolation Center, and hospital management committee are criticized at all fronts of governance for not being inclusive and representative. The justification is further reinforced as these mechanisms could not appropriately address the needs and concerns of women, children, poor, vulnerable, and marginalized groups in the quarantine, isolation, and health emergency operation center in the country. Nevertheless, the meaningful participation of elected representatives, particularly from disadvantaged and marginalized groups of the

	society, is hard to achieve during the pandemic response and recovery efforts and initiatives at the federal, provincial, and local levels.
Medium term [0]	In the medium term, the pandemic would not influence this target. However, there are positive signs observed during the pandemic on this target. For instance, the performance of deputy mayors (mostly of women) and elected women representatives at the local level is satisfactory compared to others during the pandemic. Moreover, the female representatives are actively involved in the distribution of relief materials to needy populations and the process of testing and tracing of infected people. Public awareness and public critique concerning inclusion, participation, and representation have substantially been increased.
Long Term [0]	Similar to the medium term, the pandemic would not influence this target.
16.8 Broaden and Strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to strengthen global governance participation. The impact occurs in three different ways. First, the pandemic has reinforced the wave of hyper-nationalism globally, which hinders global governance institutions. Second, to check the human to human transmission of the infectious disease, the countries have adopted measures like limited international flights, regulated international travel, and international borders' closure. These measures deteriorate the interaction of developing countries in the institutions. Finally, the US and Western countries are highly critical of international institutions, particularly the World Health Organization, for poorly handling the pandemic. The high politicization of international organizations like WHO does not create a healthy environment for developing countries' active participation in these institutions. Undoubtedly, the support in developed countries' human and financial resources is crucial to rejuvenating the institutions.
Medium term [0]	In the medium term, the pandemic would not influence this target.
Long Term [0]	Like the medium term, the pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term.
16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to provide universal legal identity. During the pandemic, people could not access and approach the institutions and authorities for acquiring the legal identity because of restricted

	mobility, limited opening of the municipal and related offices, and prolonged lockdown. Also, birth registration is not the priority of people in fear of the pandemic.
Medium term [0]	In the medium term, the pandemic would not influence this target. The pandemic has taught people about the need and necessity of digital skills and knowledge in their daily lives. This knowledge will facilitate the digitizing process of acquiring legal identity, including birth registration in the medium term.
Long Term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target. The government is aggressively working on digitizing the process of acquiring legal identity across the country. In some districts, the digitization process has already been accomplished. The pandemic's lessons and experiences will aggressively increase the use of ICT and scientific innovation while acquiring legal identity, including birth registration. They may help to best utilize the digitized process of legal identity in the longer run.
16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national and international agreements	
Short term [-1]	The COVID-19 pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms. There are two explanations behind this. First, the pandemic has posed threats to the public's right to information. Print, as well as digital news media, have been shut down across the country. Journalists have lost their jobs, including in the more prominent media houses like Kantipur Publication Group. The closure of local media houses has adverse effects to bring the local issues and problems to the fore. Second, Nepal struggles to meet international Human Rights standards (fundamental freedoms), especially those desiring to return to Nepal, maintaining essential health and sanitation in the quarantine, and providing necessary COVID-19 related health treatments.
Medium term [0]	The pandemic would not influence this target.
Long Term [+1]	The crisis might have a weakly promoting impact on this target in the long term. The increasing use of social media and the growth of digital media would support easing the barriers put by the pandemic on public access to the right to information and fundamental freedoms in accordance with national and international agreements in the longer run. Nevertheless, the lesson and experience of ICT use in the age of pandemic would enable the public to be acquainted with social media and digital media.
16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime	

Short term [-1]	The pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to strengthen national institutions to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime. In the pandemic, health cooperation and humanitarian support among the countries have largely shaped international cooperation. Strengthening the national institutions to deal with violence, terrorism, and crime is not the top priority of the existing mechanism of international cooperation. The rise of hyper-nationalism has been a major stumbling block in the course of international cooperation at present. At the national level, the efforts and resources have increasingly been mobilized to tackle the pandemic.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target. There are two reasons behind this. The economic downturn caused by the pandemic would reduce international aid to strengthen national institutions for some years. Second, health cooperation and humanitarian support may continue to dominate international cooperation.
Long Term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term.
16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies. At the federal level, there are not many obstacles in the law-making process because of the pandemic. However, the pandemic has impacted law enforcement on the ground. Maintaining health protocols, enforcing the lockdown, upholding the principle of social distancing, and fear of spreading the pandemic to the frontline workers have hindered the capacity and diverted law enforcement agencies' priorities to implement the laws during the pandemic. Meanwhile, the pandemic has created obstacles in law-making and policy formulation at the provincial and local levels. It has affected formulating a participatory budget and policy for the current fiscal year at the provincial and local levels. It is hard to participate in all social groups in the provincial and local law and policymaking processes due to the lockdown and physical distancing.
Medium term [-1]	Like the short term, the pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term. It would continue to hinder the law-making and policy-making process at the federal, provincial, and local levels.
Long Term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term. There may not be any problems in the lawmaking process at the federal, provincial, and local levels in the post-COVID-19 context. Based on Nepal's pre-pandemic experiences, law enforcement would continue to remain weak in the long term.
Goal 17 Strengthen the Means of Implementation and Revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development	

17.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection	
Short term [-2]	In the short term, the COVID-19 pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target to mobilize resources to improve domestic revenue collection. It poses tremendous barriers to improving domestic capacity for tax and revenue collection through three ways. First, the economic recession due to the pandemic limits resource mobilization. As predicted by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) in April 2020, Nepal will witness an economic growth of 2.27% in the fiscal year 2020/21. With the prolonging crisis, Nepal may witness a negative growth rate this year. Second, the low percentage of tax and revenue collection during the pandemic would cause domestic resource mobilization problems. The shutdown of economic and business activities has negatively impacted the tax and revenue collection. Further, the recent Nepal Rastra Bank report shows that 15.6% of import has been reduced in Nepal in the current fiscal year. Notably, the import of goods and services is one of the primary sources of revenue collection. Around the corner, increased job losses and unemployment has directly impacted the tax collection. Similarly, the pandemic has posed tremendous challenges to the initiatives and activities to expand the country's tax regimes. For example, the government has brought a contribution-based social security scheme to include the regime's informal and private sectors. The pandemic could interrupt its implementation correctly. Third, contemporary international cooperation may not prioritize the capacity building program for improving the tax and revenue collection in developing countries. Health support and assistance pre-dominates international cooperation at the moment.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term. The economic recovery would be 'U' shaped in Nepal considering the status of economic and physical infrastructure and the lack of a consistent economic system. Thus, the pandemic may continue to affect this target for some years.
Long term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term. Remittance may continue since the infection rate in significant destination countries like Malaysia, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar is under control in recent times. The continuation of remittance may help to recover the economy in the longer run. The pandemic has opened up the opportunity for digital transactions. The digital transaction will be supportive of the revenue and tax generation. Also, it may help to reduce tax fraud.
17.2 Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of ODA/GNI to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries; ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries.	

Short term [-2]	In the short term, the pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target to implement all development assistance commitments. It has negatively affected the economy of developed countries across the world. As a result, the pandemic may block developed countries' road to reach the target of 0.7 percent and 0.20 of ODA/GNI. It is essential to mention here that Western Europe and Northern America, mostly OECD countries, have been widely affected by the pandemic. Nevertheless, the developed countries have failed to reach that destination even during the pre-COVID-19 period. The OECD's recently published report shows that the developed countries did not reach the target of 0.7 percent of ODA/GNI to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 percent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries last year. Further, it states OECD countries reached 0.3 percent of ODA/GNI to developing countries and 0.07 to least developed countries. In the backdrop of this pandemic, many donor countries may strive to protect their ODA budgets.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target. The economic recovery may be elongated 'W' shaped globally. The economic anomalies caused by the pandemic will continue to put the barriers to meet the ODA commitments by developed countries. However, the optimism is that DAC countries have recently pledged to protect their ODA commitments included in the national budget. The past experiences reveal that the developed countries rarely fulfill their commitments.
Long term [-1]	Similar to the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target. The fact is that most of the developed countries have never met the 0.7% and 0.2 % target even before the pandemic. Now the pandemic has further worsened the situation. There is a high chance that it would be negative in the long run too.
17.3 Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources	
Short term [+1]	In the short term, the pandemic can weakly promote impact on this target to mobilize financial resources for developing countries. As discussed above, this year will witness the reduction of ODA flow into the developing and least developed countries because of growing economic crises in the traditional donor countries. As a result, the developing countries would find alternative financial sources to meet their development needs and tackle the pandemic's effects. The multilateral financial institutions would be the best alternative. These institutions have already allocated additional financial resources in order to handle the impacts of the pandemic. In this regard, ADB has announced US \$ 20 billion as expanded assistance to developing countries to mitigate the pandemic's negative impacts in April. Similarly, the World Bank has allocated the US \$70 billion; the IMF has allocated the US \$ 100 billion; and AIIB the US \$ 5-10 billion. Nepal may have a fiscal deficit of about 7-8% due to the pandemic's negative consequence. The strategy, at the moment, would be to get the cheap money wherever it is found. In the same direction, ADB has approved the US \$ 250 million concessional loans to Nepal to assist its fight against the pandemic in May 2020. In the same month, the IMF approved a US \$ 214

	million disbursements to Nepal under the Rapid Credit Facility to mitigate the pandemic's human and economic impacts. Besides, Nepal has received a pledge of about US \$ 600 million for the COVID-19 recovery and green investment. Another alternative to Nepal would be to explore blended financing opportunities. Likewise, the East Asian countries like China, South Korea, and Japan, Asian economic giants, could be approached for financial assistance and support. These countries have successfully managed the pandemic's impacts and are considered the least affected countries at the moment. Nevertheless, Nepal has a long history of diplomatic relations with these countries.
Medium term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target to mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources. The wide range of financial engagements during the pandemic with multiple sources such as multilateral financial institutions, blended finances, and East Asian countries to address the pandemic's impacts may enable this target in the medium term.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target in the long term too.
17.4 Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress.	
Short term [0]	In the short term, the pandemic would have no influence on this target to help developing countries attain debt sustainability. Some welcome initiatives like G20 have postponed the date for the repayment of debt until December 2020 to the developing countries and least developed countries.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term. There are three arguments that the pandemic would limit the options on this target. First, with limited grant priority, increased borrowing of cash to respond to the pandemic will intensify Nepal's external debts. For example, concessional loans are discussed in Target 17.3. Second, the slow or negative economic will increase dependency on external debts escalating debt distress. Moreover, prioritizing the resources to rebuild the national economy may negatively affect the debt's timely repayment. Finally, the policy to attain long-term debt sustainability may not be the main priority of most countries for some years.
Long term [-1]	Like the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the long term.
17.5 Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries	

Short term [-1]	The pandemic can weakly restrict this target to invest in the least developed countries in the short term. This year would be a challenging time for LDC's investment regimes because of the negative economic growth rate and disruption of the global economic supply chain. Suppose the pandemics persist for a longer period. In that case, LDC countries like Nepal may have to comply with the investors' priorities and attract FDI in the country. For example, Nepal has put a lower cap for foreign investment. This means any investors have to invest at least Rs. 5 million in the project. Because of global competition during the pandemic, Nepal may have to accept the project having less than 5 million foreign investments.
Medium term [0]	The pandemic would not influence this target to adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for the least developed countries. Nepal needs to rethink or redefine the existing investment framework to accommodate the pandemic's changed context.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target in the long term. The silver lining of the pandemic is that it has opened up the window of south-south cooperation. It has been speculated that the pandemic may foster south-south countries in the future. The south's economic giant countries would increase their investments in LDC countries like Nepal in the post-pandemic world.
17.6 Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge-sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target of knowledge sharing and cooperation for access to science, technology, and innovation. The unprecedented economic downturn caused by the pandemic has limited the prospects of international cooperation on and access to science, technology, and innovation in the short term. However, the south-south and south-north cooperation have been happening more in-terms of health assistance. For example, the medical items, masks, gloves, PPE and PCR, and RDT testing machines have increasingly been supplied from China and India to southern countries like Nepal and Northern countries. The pandemic has been a big business opportunity for the Chinese and Indian medical industries.
Medium term [+1]	In the medium term, the pandemic could have a weakly promoting impact on this target. The increased health cooperation among south-south and south-north countries during the pandemic would begin to take shape in other areas of science, technology, innovation, and knowledge sharing mechanisms. Learning from the pandemic, the voice and demand of international cooperation and access to science, technology, and innovation would be more robust, ultimately reenergizing the North-South cooperation. The North has both technology and funds to fulfill the demand of southern

	countries like Nepal. However, there would be competition while accessing the technology among the South's receiver countries because of the limited resource availability. Intellectual property rights would be another issue of international cooperation in the post-pandemic world.
Long term [+1]	Similar to the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target. Increased and robust south-south, south-north, north-south, and international cooperation on access to science, technology, and innovation would enable this target.
17.7 Promote the development, transfer, dissemination, and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favorable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to promote sustainable technologies to developing countries. The pandemic poses challenges to the business promotion of environmentally sound technologies at the moment. Also, it has negatively impacted the designed projects of renewable energy and electric vehicles.
Medium term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the medium term.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target in the long term. The pandemic has reinforced the importance of a green economy, low carbon strategy, and green recovery. The new normal demands us to rethink our way of life and emphasizes the necessity of green growth. The awareness of a green economy and growth would create an enabling environment to develop, disseminate, and transfer environmentally sound technologies.
17.8 Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology.	
Short term [-1 and +1]	In the short term, the pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on the on-ground capacity-building program in order to strengthen the science, technology, and innovation capacity for the least developed countries. The strict protocols of physical/social distancing to follow, restrictions of movement, and national borders' closure have hindered on-site capacity-building programs. Meanwhile, the pandemic can have a weakly promoting impact on the online modes of capacity-building activities. The public has realized the need and importance of information and communication technology (ICT) during the pandemic. The use of ICT in education is increasingly happening in LDC countries like Nepal during the lockdown.

Medium term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target in the medium term. The awareness and experiences of using ICT during the pandemic time would enhance ICT use in LDC countries in the future. This impact would also fully operationalize the technology bank and capacity-building mechanism in the future.
Long term [+1]	Like the medium term, the pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target in the long term.
17.9 Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to enhance SDG capacity in developing countries. The international support for capacity building in developing countries like Nepal has been restricted in various ways. First, the unprecedented disruption in the transportation, hospitality, tourism, and service sectors has put tremendous problems for holding capacity building programs like training, seminars, and workshops. Second, the pandemic has directly and indirectly affected every actor and sector of the world. Nobody has remained untouched by it. So, close cooperation is quite skeptical. Third, the pandemic's growing economic impacts have changed the priorities and needs of the developed countries. The spare money, which is meant to support the developing countries, has been spent within the national border in order to address the pandemic. Finally, Nepal cannot benefit from the alternative cooperation mechanism, particularly south-south cooperation until now.
Medium term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the medium term. The virtual capacity building programs would somehow recover on-ground programs/physical activities.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target in the long term. The pandemic experience will enable a blended capacity-building approach, both online and offline programs, in the future. The blended approach would be both practical and cheap (reduce logistic cost). The strengthened south-south cooperation, opened up by the pandemic, may increase the support for implementing capacity-building in developing countries like Nepal to support national plans to implement the SDGs.
17.10 Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda	
Short term [0]	In the short term, the pandemic would not influence this target to promote a universal trading system under the WTO. In the pre-COVID-19 context, the developed countries enjoyed the more significant benefits of WTO compared to the

	developing countries and least developed countries. Further, the WTO has been a medium for developed countries to penetrate developing and LDC countries' markets.
Medium term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the medium term too. During the pandemic, voices have been heard in international affairs about the necessity of the reforms in multilateral institutions or international organizations to address the world's changed realities. However, it would be a rush to predict that the pandemic's voices may impact the future's WTO regimes. Neither does Nepal lobby nor raise the voice to reform the WTO because of the pandemic.
Long term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term too.
17.11 Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic can weakly restrict this target to increase developing countries' exports. The impact occurs in three different ways. First, the pandemic has positively affected the top export destination countries of Nepali goods and services economically. The top destination countries are India (around 2/3 rd of export), the US (11%), Europe (10%), and Turkey (3.5%). Second, the pandemic has hit the modes of transportation of international trade. The closures of borders, restrictions on movements, and social distancing protocols have limited the export of Nepali goods and services via a road covering around 75% of total exports. Around 24% of exports are transported through airways. The cancellation of flights and the closure of airports have halted the exports via airways. Finally, the pandemic has negatively impacted micro-enterprises and non-registered enterprises' daily businesses through various ways such as labor shortages, job losses, and indefinite closure due to lockdown. These enterprises are regularly supplying the products to the big firms which obtained the export order.
Medium term [0]	In the medium term, the pandemic would not influence this target. The economic recovery in the top export destination countries may help to get back to the normal situation. There are rays of hope in the medium term if we look at Nepal's top export items. The top products are food and beverage (47%), Industrial supplies (31%), and others (20%). It is speculated that food and beverage are more resilient than others. Also, this year's budget of Nepal has dramatically emphasized agriculture activities and products.
Long term [+1]	In the long term, the pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target. There are two explanations behind this. As part of digitizing the economy, the paperless solutions and electrical exchange of information (via the internet) will dominate Nepal's export activities, facilitating the increased exports in the longer run. As discussed on the above

	targets, the pandemic may enable south-south cooperation in the future. As a result, the merchandise trade of Nepal with China will go up in the upcoming days. Nevertheless, China holds around a 2% export share of Nepal at the moment.
17.12 Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access	
Short term [0]	In the short term, the pandemic would not influence this target to remove trade barriers for the least developed countries. Nepal is yet to fully utilize the duty-free and quota-free (DFQF) market access provisioned in WTO decisions. The pandemic has revealed that the countries have favored protectionism in international trade despite their commitments in WTO. The reason seems to be political, but it can be considered protectionism in international trade in a larger context.
Medium term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the medium term too.
Long term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term as well.
17.13 Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to enhance global macroeconomic stability. In the pre-COVID-19 context, the macroeconomic situation was not harmonious. There was a tussle among the countries, for example, the trade war between the US and China. Such tension was visible during the visit of 10 members of the managing committee, out of 25 members of the world bank in Nepal last year. The representative of the Trump administration seemed to be having an uncompromising attitude. The global spread of the pandemic has further aggravated the tense situation. The 'war of words' among the great powers on the pandemic has increased the conflict and tensions, negatively affecting the macroeconomic stability. The pandemic's political tensions and a trend toward geopolitical tussles could harden to strengthen international partnerships.
Medium term [-1]	Like the short term, the pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term. The growing tensions among countries would not be settled in the medium term.
Long term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term. The optimism is that the conflict would be minimized in the longer run.
17.14 Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development	

Short term [0]	In the short term, the pandemic would not influence this target to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development. It is difficult to establish a causal relationship between pandemic and policy coherence for sustainable development.
Medium term [0]	Like the short term, the pandemic would have no influence on this target in the medium term. Learning from the pandemic, Nepal may prioritize the development of the agriculture sector in the future. It might take our collective thinking towards this end.
Long term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term too.
17.15 Respect each country's policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development	
Short term [-1]	The pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to respect national leadership to implement sustainable development goals. Nepal needs foreign aid and support to address the pandemic. In this context, the pandemic would increase our dependency on the donor countries. So, there are higher chances of shrinking space for sovereign policy-making and decisions at present.
Medium term [-1]	Similar to the short term, the pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target. Evolving geopolitics because of the pandemic may bring problems for the country's policy space and decision-making. In the pre-COVID-19 context, the donor countries and international organizations had exercised institutional, structural, and productive power in Nepal. With increasing dependence on international actors to tackle the pandemic, Nepal should not rule out the higher possibilities of exercising these powers by donor countries and international organizations in the post-pandemic world.
Long term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term.
17.16 Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries	
Short term [-2]	In the short term, the pandemic can have a moderately restricting impact on this target to enhance the global partnership for sustainable development. The impact occurs because of changed priorities and economic downturn at the global level. The economic downturn has substantially reduced bilateral aid flow, a significant component of the aid regime, in the pandemic. The foreign aid and assistance is mostly channeled through multilateral financial institutions such as the World

	Bank, ADB, and IMF. On the other hand, the achievement of the targets of SDG is not the main agenda of global partnership at the moment. The focus of existing international cooperation has been centered mostly on health issues and social protection.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term. The global partnership would be shaped by how economic recovery takes place in the future. It has been widely speculated that the economic recovery would be either 'U' shaped or 'W' shaped. In this situation, the partnership for sustainable development may not be the main priority of international actors for some years.
Long term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target with the economic recovery in the long term.
17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic can weakly restrict this target to encourage effective partnership. The public-private partnership for SDG was not much encouraged in the pre-COVID-19 context in Nepal. The pandemic has further deteriorated the partnership due to its growing adverse effects on the private sector's daily affairs. More specifically, the prolonging lockdown and social/physical distancing measures have completely/partially shut down private sectors' operation. In contrast to the private sector's expectations, the government brought the fiscal policy and national budget without incorporating any stimulus packages to encourage and revive the private sector. Similarly, it is hard to achieve the civil society partners in diminishing ODA flow, a lifeline for I/NGOs activities in Nepal. The pandemic has revealed the gaps and weaknesses in Nepal's nascent federal structure's collaboration and coordination mechanism.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term. The economic deterioration may continue to restrict this target for some years.
Long Term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term.
17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts	

Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to enhance data availability. There are three explanations behind this. First, the data, monitoring, and evaluation of SDG would be the government's low priority in the ages of the pandemic. Not to forget, there is a poor record of the government about data generation, use, and interpretation during the pre-COVID-19 era. The second reason is that the pandemic has negatively affected the resource allocation necessary for the capacity building support to enhance data availability. International aid and sufficient domestic budget are hardly available for data when the health sectors demand more financial resources. Third, it is almost impossible to generate SDG data from the field because of lockdown, travel restrictions, fear of virus transmission, and strict social/physical distancing measures. In this context, the pandemic is likely to influence the national population census to be completed in 2021. It has seriously impacted the preparatory works for the national census 2021.
Medium term [-1]	The pandemic would have a weakly restricting impact on this target in the medium term too. This target is not included in the priority list of the government even during the pre-COVID-19 context. In the pre-COVID-19 time, Nepal allocates a nominal budget for the data generation, management, use, and interpretation. Overall, the track record of Nepal regarding the availability of data is not good. The pandemic would further possess funding constraints to implement.
Long term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the long term.
17.19 By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries	
Short term [-1]	In the short term, the pandemic can have a weakly restricting impact on this target to develop progress measurements further. This impact is because of changed priority and resources crunch at both the national and international level as discussed on target 17.8.
Medium term [0]	The pandemic would have no influence on this target in the medium term.
Long term [+1]	The pandemic would have a weakly promoting impact on this target. The enabling environment would be created by increased awareness and experience of using ICT during the pandemic. The measurement of progress and statistical capacity would be digitized in the longer run. For example, the government is aggressively working on digitizing birth registration, one of the national indicators of this target, across the country. As a result, the percentage of birth

	registration will dramatically be increased in the longer run. Nevertheless, ICT use's awareness and experience during the pandemic would be crucial for this increment.
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