

Diversity in Dialogue

An equal and inclusive society demands the inclusion of voices from all paths and experiences. It demands that we do not give center stage to the loudest and most visible voices, but recognize the diverse expertise and experience held across our society, including differing views.

Women, and those from historically marginalized groups, such as gender minorities, persons with disabilities, persons from the Dalit community, youth and ethnic minorities, continue to be underrepresented in public forums. Panels that are largely homogenous, often all male and of similar socio-economic backgrounds perpetuate the under and misrepresentation of women and other marginalized groups. It results in the silencing of multiple arguments and expertise, reinforcing singular narratives and beliefs. It is also diminishing the diversity of role models that the public sees as legitimate experts. **Now is the time to make a conscious choice for better representation, join us in a commitment to create diversity in dialogue.**



✓ Checklist for organizers

- 01 Increase women's representation in panels by saying no to manels (all-male panels).
- 02 When planning events, check the below list to increase the representation among both speakers and participants. Some of the aspects for consideration are:
 - Gender
 - Caste, ethnicity and minority indigenous community representatives
 - Socio-economic status
 - Different types of disabilities
 - Age
 - Geographical location
 - Minorities such as gender and sexual minorities and religious communities
- 03 Explore ways of bringing in diverse voices and relevant perspectives of individuals who have limited access to public platforms.
- 04 Where possible, aspire to facilitate the use of native languages to enable inclusive participation in panels / conferences / meetings to foster inclusivity both in panels and the audience.
- 05 Use sign language interpretations, closed captioning and other accessibility measures to facilitate access to persons with disabilities.
- 06 Use and maintain a database of experts in different fields to improve gender balance and diversity. A free database with women experts in Nepal has been developed by Balance the Panel which is updated regularly.
- 07 To create a conducive environment for diverse panelists to participate, ask the panel members if they need any support to be part of the event. Some tips are below:
 - When planning the timing of the event, exercise flexibility when deciding the time of the meeting to accommodate care responsibilities.
 - Extend needed support to speakers to enable access to meetings and the required preparation to strengthen the voice and agency of women and marginalized groups.
- 08 Ensure fair publicity of women and marginalized groups that does not perpetuate gender stereotypes and allows them to be on an equal footing.
- 09 Promote the use of gender-sensitive language and preferred pronouns.
- 10 Consider prioritising procurement of services and goods from women and minority owned business when organising events.

✓ Checklist for panelists

- 01 If panels are not promoting diversity, encourage organizers to reflect on bringing in diverse voices and perspectives to enrich discussions. Point out resources and tap on to your network to identify diverse speakers.
- 02 Consider withdrawing from an event if no actions are taken to achieve diversity.
- 03 If required, use your voice to point out lack of diversity in the forum, and caution the audience on how the discussion will not be holistic without fair representation.
- 04 Promote the use of gender-sensitive language and preferred pronouns.

