**BRIEF ON NEPAL-REPUBLIC OF KOREA RELATIONS**

# BILATERAL RELATIONS

Diplomatic relations between Nepal and the Republic of Korea were established in 1969 at Counsellor's level. However, they were upgraded to Ambassadorial level in **15 May 1974**. The Republic of Korea opened its Embassy in Kathmandu in 1974. The Government of Nepal (GoN) has established its Embassy in Seoul in 2007. The relations between Nepal and ROK are based on mutual cooperation, goodwill and friendship between the two countries. Frequent exchanges of visits at various levels have further strengthened the bilateral relations. The two countries are celebrating the **50th** **anniversary** of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Republic of Korea and Nepal this year (in 2024) with the tagline *‘Everesting Friendship: Nepal-Korea 50th anniversary’*.

**Exchange of Visits**

High-level exchange of visits between the two countries has contributed to strengthening bilateral relations. Visits at the people-to-people level have also contributed to further expanding of the existing relations.

A detail of the Exchange of Visits is listed in the annex below.

**Bilateral Mechanism**

* **Bilateral Consultation Mechanism**

The Government of Nepal and the Government of the Republic of Korea concluded an **agreement for the establishment of Consultation Mechanism** between the two Foreign Ministries in **October 2001**. This mechanism provides an opportunity, on a regular basis, to discuss about the various dimensions of the bilateral relations and to share and learn from each other’s experiences. Regular consultations between the two foreign ministries coupled with exchange of high-level visits from both sides do contribute to further enhance the existing cordial relations and open up new vistas of bilateral cooperation in future.

The **first** **two meetings** of the Mechanism were concluded in Kathmandu and Seoul in **2005** and **2014** respectively.

**The third meeting** of the Mechanism held in Kathmandu on 21 October in 2016 which was led by the relevant division heads of the Foreign Ministries of two countries.

Likewise, a meeting was held between the representatives of Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Nepal and Republic of Korea **on 20 September 2017** in Kathmandu.

**The Fourth Meeting** of the Bilateral Consultation (BCM) was held at the Foreign Ministry of Korea in Seoul on **July 23, 2018**. Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Ganesh Prasad Dhakal, Joint Secretary and Head of North East Asia Division of MoFA. Other members of the Nepali delegation included Mr. Kiran Shakya, DCM/Counsellor of Embassy of Nepal in Seoul, Mr. Dilliram Banstola, Labor Counsellor of the Embassy of Nepal in Seoul and Ms. Roshan Khanal, Under Secretary, North East Asia division.

**The Fifth Meeting** of the Bilateral Consultation (BCM) was held in Kathmandu on 9th November 2021.

Similarly, the **Sixth** **meeting** of the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held in Seoul on 14 April 2023. The Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa, Joint Secretary and Head of North East Asia Division of MoFA.

Nepali Side proposed **Seventh Meeting** of the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism in April in Kathmandu, however, no official response is received from the Korean side.

**Bilateral Agreements:**

* An **Agreement on Korean Youth Volunteers** was signed between Nepal and Republic of Korea in January 1992.
* An **Agreement on Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF)** was signed between Nepal and Republic of Korea in September 1997.
* **Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion** with respect to taxes on income on 5 October 2001.
* A “**Nepal-ROK Parliamentarian Friendship Group**” was established in 2002 consisting of then five members of House of Representatives.
* **Air Services Agreement (ASA)** between two countries was concluded on 21 September 2004.
* Nepal and ROK concluded **Cultural Agreement** on 30 March 2005, envisaging to promote and develop the cooperation between the two countries in the fields of culture, art, education, youths, sports and tourism.
* Nepal and Korea have signed MoU on **Employment Permit System (EPS**) on 23 July 2007 for recruiting Nepali Workers in Korea. More than 65,000 Nepali workers have benefitted from the EPS since 2007.
* The latest (fourth) renewal of MoU was made on 05 October 2015 which is valid for 2 years.
* The Governments of Nepal and the Republic of Korea have signed a **Framework Agreement for Grant Aid on 30 October 2014**. The agreement specifies the terms and procedures of Korean grant aid programs and will serve as the foundation for grant aid from Korea to Nepal, which is also a commitment of the Korean Government to support poverty reduction and the sustainable economic and social development of Nepal. Both the governments have already completed domestic legal procedures to bring this agreement into force.
* **Agreement on Friendship and Cooperation** between the City of Kathmandu of Nepal and City of Seoul of the Republic of Korea was signed on 26 September 2016 in Seoul. The Agreement opens the way for friendly exchanges and cooperation between two cities on the basis of equality and mutual benefit and in conformity with the laws and regulation of the respective countries. Both cities will also share information on policies to promote economic growth, investment and exchange programs in the fields of culture, arts and tourism. The Agreement also encourages both cities to share best practices in the fields of urban planning, public transportation and e-government. The Embassy of Nepal in Seoul actively coordinated in finalizing the agreement and its conclusion.
* **Two Separate Agreements for Stable Reintegration of Korea Returnee Migrants and Strengthening Cyber Bureau of Nepal Police**:

Nepal and Korea Sign two Separate Agreements for Stable Reintegration of Korea Returnee Migrants and Strengthening Cyber Bureau of Nepal Police on 23 September 2022. The Ministry of Finance (MoF) on behalf of the Government of Nepal and the Embassy of the Republic of Korea on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Korea signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for 2 projects “**Strengthening Stage-Wise Support System for the Stable Reintegration of Korea Returnee Migrants in Nepal” and “Establishment of Cyber Bureau with Capacity Building for Nepal Police**” at the Ministry of Finance. For these two projects, Government of Korea agrees to extend a total of US$ 16 million (approximately NRs 2.00 billion) US $ 8 million each as grant assistance to Nepal.

The MoUs to this effect were signed by Mr. Krishna Hari Pushkar, Finance Secretary and H.E. Chong-suk Park, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Nepal. The projects will be implemented by Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) in close collaboration and coordination with respective line ministries and other government agencies. Korea Returnee migrant support project aims to contribute to socio-economic development of Nepal and increase employment through stable reintegration of Korea returnee migrants and enhancement of their entrepreneurship capacity. The project will also create a virtuous cycle and support system for Korea returnee migrants in Nepal for their enhanced information accessibility, and increased access to financial support through Agriculture Development Bank Limited (ADBL).

Similarly, the main objective of the Cyber Bureau project is to strengthen the anti-cybercrime capabilities of Nepal Police wherein, the main component of the project is to construct a state-of-art building of the Cyber Bureau, provide equipment related to cyber-crime investigation and digital forensic lab and capacity building of relevant human resources of Nepal Police.

* With the objective of facilitating the high level visits at the political and government levels, both sides have been working on the early conclusion of the “**Agreement on Exemption of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic and Official (Special) Passports**” between the two countries. The agreement is ready to be signed.

*(Korea has already signed visa waiver agreement with 103 countries. This includes visa exemption agreement for diplomatic passports with 2 countries (Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and for diplomatic and official passports with 35 countries including India and Pakistan in the South Asia.)*

* During the visit of Honorable Minister for Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Mr. Chung Hwang-keun to Nepal on 2-3 November 2023, the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture was signed on November 2, 2023.

**Economic/ Technical Cooperation**

* According to the International Monetary Fund, South Korea is the **4th largest economy in Asia and the 10th largest economy** in the world, in GDP for 2020. The Republic of Korea had started its development cooperation to Nepal **since 1976**.
* Since 2020, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) became the 10th strongest economy in terms of GDP in the current price. Its journey from a poor to a developed country and from the recipient to donor country is seen as a successful development example.
* With the aim of strengthening the friendly and cooperative relationship between Nepal and Korea, the Korean government has extended assistance for socio-economic development of Nepal through various development programs implemented by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (**KOICA) since 1 April 1991**.
* The ROK has been implementing two types of grants in Nepal through KOICA: 1) **Grant Aid**, which includes equipment and project aid; and 2) **Technical Cooperation**, which includes development studies, trainings, volunteers, health and rural development and ICT sector and the like. KOICA has been dispatching middle-level technical personnel to work as volunteers in Nepal. Korea provides bilateral soft loan or loan under Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) to Nepal through Export-Import Bank of Korea.

*(The Republic of Korea has put Nepal in its list as one of the most important ODA recipient countries in 2010. Since then, the South Korean Government has already provided ODA and soft loan of over 100 million USD to the Government of Nepal through KOICA. In the year 2015 alone, KOICA has provided US$ 13 million of assistance to Nepal. KOICA has been assisting Nepal since April 1, 1991, mainly in the sectors such as health, agriculture, rural development and ICT.)*

# DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

From 1978 to 1995, KOICA focused on developing sericulture in Nepal by implementing the Sericulture Development Project and constructing a Khopasi Sericulture Center. The Government of Korea conducted a feasibility study for the Modi Khola Hydroelectric Project (1993-1994), eventually provided a soft loan to the project in 1997.

In 1999, with the financial and technical support from KOICA, the Korea-Nepal Friendship Hospital was established in Bhaktapur to provide access to quality health services to the people of Bhaktapur and adjoining districts.

The Agreements on the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion in October 2001, the Air Services Agreement in March 2005, and the Culture Agreement in April 2005 are remarkable.

Each year KOICA invites more than 100 government officials from Nepal to Korea in order to improve their capacities in a number of fields.

**Korea’s Major Support to Nepal by Sector**

The following are the top five major sectors that received Korean support during the last five-year period.

1. Education
2. Health
3. Planning and statistics
4. Agriculture
5. Earthquake Reconstruction



**Korean aid disbursement during FYs 2016/17 to 2020/21 (in US $)**

Over the last five-year period beginning from FY 2016/17 to FY 2020/21, Korean government disbursed a total of US$ 38 million of ODA to Nepal. The disbursement was the highest, at a level of US $ 8.4 million in FY 2020/21. The average annual disbursement in the five-year period stands at US $ 7.6 million.

During the last five-year period the Korean Government has agreed to provide a total of US $ 46.4 million through separate agreements. The highest level of aid commitment was of US $ 19 million signed in fiscal year 2016/17.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Agreement Amount (US$)** | **Disbursement (US$)** | **Fiscal Year** |  |
| 19,010,000 | 7,638,528 | **2016/17** |  |
| 7,470,422 | 6,874,412 | **2017/18** |  |
| 5,000,000 | 7,652,068 | **2018/19** |  |
| 857,360 | 7,425,546 | **2019/20** |  |
| 14,125,500 | 8,124,983 | **2020/21** |  |

*Source: Aid Management Information System*

**Korea’s Actual Disbursements to Nepal from FYs 2015/16 to 2020/21, in US$**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Country** | **2015/16** | **2016/17** |  **2017/18** | **2018/19** | **2019/20** | **2020/21** |
| South Korea | 11,451,879 | 7,638,528 | 6,874,412 | 7,652,068 | 7,425,546 | 8,124,983 |

*(Source: Development Cooperation Report FY 2020/21;MoF)*

**Development Cooperation Strategy**

* KOICA’s **Country Partnership Strategy for Nepal 2020-2024** states that the Government of Korea aims to contribute to poverty reduction and economic growth. It also advocates for Nepal’s graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status to Middle Income Country status by creating a foundation for fostering competitive future generations that can create social values.
* KOICA is implementing the following major projects:
1. Integrated Rural Development of Nepal through Strengthening Research and Development Capacity of Kathmandu University (2017-2023),
2. Empowering Rural Communities In Nepal through an Integrated Approach to Health and Income Growth (2020-2025),
3. Capacity Building for TVET Model Institute in Province 2 Leading to Cultivate Skilled Workforce in Construction Sector (2021-2026),
4. Establishment of Cyber Bureau with Capacity Building for Nepal Police (2021- 2026) and
5. Project for Strengthening Stage-Wise Support System for The Stable Reintegration of Korea Returnee Migrants in Nepal (2022-2028).

Similarly Dispatch of Korean Volunteer and Capacity Building Program are other two prominent technical assistance to Nepal which KOICA has been implementing since a long time. More than 400 Korean Nationals has worked in Nepal as a volunteer, transferring knowledge, exchanging culture and Korean know how various development sectors. At the same time more than 1900 government officials have participated in various capacity building program in Korea.

* The Government of the Republic of Korea is offering short term and mid-term training courses including scholarships for Master’s Degree and Post-Doctoral Degrees in various disciplines to the officials of the Government of Nepal which have been instrumental in developing human resources.
* **Integrated Rural Development of Nepal through Strengthening Research and Development Capacity of Kathmandu University (KU)**:

Korea/KOICA has agreed to provide US$10 million grant assistance to the project for the Integrated Rural Development of Nepal through Strengthening Research and Development Capacity of Kathmandu University (KU). An MOU to this effect was signed and exchanged at the Ministry of Finance on February 6, 2018. The duration of the project will be from 2018 to 2023 AD.

* **Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Nepal and the Government of the Republic of Korea on the Project for Establishment of Polytechnic Institute for Construction Workforce Development in Province 2, Nepal** :
* The aforesaid MoU was signed between the Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal and the Government of the Republic of Korea, in December 15, 2021.
* The Korean government supports the strengthening of the capacity of Nepal's Technical Education and Vocational Training (TEVT) and nurturing of skilled workforce through the "Establishment of Polytechnic Institute for construction workforce Development in Province 2, Nepal" worth 8.6 million USD from 2021 to 2027. The project will be implemented by KOICA and the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) as a Model polytechnic institute in Bardibas, Mahottari District.
* The duration of the Project will be 84 months from the date of signing of the MoU. The project site will be Khayramara, ward no. 11, Bardibas Municipality, Mahottari, Province 2, Nepal.
* On behalf of the Republic of Korea, KOICA and on behalf of the MoEST, CTEVT will be the implementing agency of the project. KOICA will provide a grant aid of no more than USD 8,600,000 for the project.

**Korean government supports $8.6 million to establish Model Polytechnic in Bardibas**

* Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), in coordination with Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT), organised the groundbreaking ceremony of the **Nirmal Lama Polytechnic Institute (NLPI)** building being supported by the Korean government on September 06, 2022.
* Former prime minister and Chairperson of Maoist Party Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Sunghoon Ko, the country director of KOICA Nepal Office, jointly conducted groundbreaking ceremony at the Polytechnic Institute construction site.
* The memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the project 'Establishment of Polytechnic Institute for Construction Workforce Development in Province 2, Nepal' was signed on December 15, 2021 between the government of the Republic of Korea and the Nepal government and the project shall be completed by 2027.
* The project is worth **$8.6 million** and will be implemented by KOICA and CTEVT at its Model Polytechnic Institute in Bardibas, Mohattarai District.
* **The Government of the Republic of Korea grants US$ 8 million to assist in reintegration project:**

The Government of Nepal has decided to accept a grant of 8 million US dollars (about 1 billion rupees) for the implementation of a project related to the stable reintegration of laborers who have returned from South Korea as per the Cabinet decision on September 06, 2022.

The amount provided by the KOICA will be spent on capacity building of government agencies, access to information on reintegration, capacity building of returnees from Korea on entrepreneurship and financial access.

The amount will be mobilised by integrating it through the budget system of the Government of Nepal. Around 65,000 Nepalis have gone to South Korea through the EPS for work.

KOICA is extending assistance to them for their reintegration and skill-oriented training.

* **Nepal Government requests for ODA Grant:**

The Ministry of Finance has requested the Government of the Republic of Korea for the consideration of ODA grant and forwarded the Project Concept Paper for ODA Grant for the **Project "Standalone Home and Institutional Solar System in Karnali Province of Nepal**, to the Embassy of the Republic of Korea on 27 January 2023.

The project aims to improving the living standard and economic condition in selected area of Karnali province by improving the enhanced access to electric power supply. The project estimates to expense US$ 12.114 million for 4 years starting from January 2023. The project will be implemented by Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC), a government owned institution in close coordination with SEAN Engineering and Construction Co. Ltd.

* **Airfare of Kathmandu-Seoul Route by Korean Air:**

One-way fare In Nepal-Korea route Excessive fare is being taken by Korean Air flying in Kathmandu-Seoul-Kathmandu sector from Nepali citizens selected under EPS going to Korea. There have been complaints from the Nepali citizens that the one-way fare of this sector has been priced up to NRs. 160,000.

In Nepal-Korea route, the Korean Air is the only Airlines that has been operating flights and considering the friendly bilateral relations between Nepal and Korea, this kind of complaint does not seem reasonable. The Korean side has to take necessary steps to maintain fares and arrange flights so that such complaints do not arise in the future.

**Employment Permit System (EPS):**

**Ceiling in 2019:**

* The Korean Government is taking 56,000 foreign workers consisting 43000 newcomers and 13000 returnees under EPS in 2019**. *(This year's ceiling is set at 5,700 and number of the job seekers permitted to be on the roster is set at 17,984 (manufacturing 8550/ agriculture and stock-breeding 9,434*.**
* The Ministry of Employment and Labor (MOEL) of the Republic of Korea has set this year’s (2022) quota covering the five permitted industry sectors, including manufacturing, at 59,000 based on the current domestic and international economic conditions, the national employment trend and the changes in the number of unregistered workers. The quota consists of 35,530 newcomers and 23,470 re-entrants.

**Ceiling in 2022:**

* ***This year’s (2022) ceiling for Nepal is set at 4,649 and the number of job seekers permitted to be on the roster is set at 14,750 (manufacturing 9,324/ agriculture and stock-breeding 5,426***).
* Korea made the quota increment from 3200 in 2017 to 10,100 for the Nepali workers under the EPS system.
* Many Nepali youths, who are working in South Korea through the Employment Permit System (EPS) agreed between the two governments in 2007, are contributing to the economy of South Korea.
* Under the EPS, South Korea has been recruiting workers from 15 countries besides Nepal. South Korea attaches priority to Nepali workers due to their good track record and increasing popularity among the employers.

*(Nepal and the Republic of Korea had signed MoU on Employment Permit System (EPS) on 23 July 2007 for recruiting Nepalese Workers in Korea. The last (fourth) renewal of MoU was made in October 2015, valid for 2 years. The fifth renewal of MoU is in the final stage and ready to be signed.)*

* Nepal’s participation in EPS system has been mutually rewarding to both countries. For Nepali side, it has helped reduce the unemployment problem, allowed Nepali youths to acquire job related knowledge, skills and technologies in Korea and also supported the economy through the receipt of remittances. On the other side, Korea is having an energetic youth labour force from Nepal - known for their diligence, honesty and reliability - who are contributing a lot to the agricultural and economic development of the Republic of Korea.
* The MoU on EPS has been renewed on 27 November 2022 for the period of 2 years. Hon. Minister for Labour Employment and Social Security has signed the MoU on behalf of the Government of Nepal and Hon. Minister for Labour of the Republic of Korea has signed on behalf of Korean side.

**Government of the Republic of Korea has prioritized Nepal and allocated 1900 additional quota in the Employment Permit System (EPS) for the manufacturing sector to our country which has been added for 2024.**

**Inauguration of UBT Building:**

The inauguration ceremony of UBT (Ubiquitous Based Test) building was held on 2nd March 2023. Nepal is the first country to build a UBT building among 16 countries that signed Employment Permit System with Korea.

Nepal is the first country to introduce and implement the Ubiquitous Based Test, which adopted artificial intelligence technology, for the EPS-TOPIK in the process of EPS worker selection. Through the UBT building, the fair and transparent EPS worker selection process is expected to be further improved, which will further contribute to people-to-people exchanges and cooperation between the two countries.

Mr. Park Chong-Suk, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Nepal, Mr. Eaknarayan Aryal, Secretary of the Ministry Of Labour, Employment and Social Security, Mr. Kim Sung-jae, Vice President of Human Resources Development Service of Korea attended the inauguration ceremony.

**Trade and Investment**

Republic of Korea is one of the important trading partners of Nepal. South Korea is one of the top five investors in Nepal. The Korean products such as Samsung, Hyundai, LG, KIA and Daewoo are quite popular brands in Nepal.

**Trade with South Korea**

The volume of Nepal-South Korea trade is growing and so is the remarkably wide trade imbalance. This needs to be corrected to make bilateral trade sustainable in the long run.

**Based on** **First Ten Months** (**Shrawan-Baishakh**) **of** **FY 2079/80** (**Mid July 2022 to Mid May 2023**):

**Bilateral Trade (2022/23)** : $45 million

**Imports** from RoK: $43.6 million

**Exports** to RoK: $1.87 million

Trade Deficit: $ 41.7 million

*Source: Department of Customs*

The ROK's Investment in Nepal : NRs. 9.34 billion

*Source:* *Survey Report on Foreign Direct Investment in Nepal (2020/21), NRB*

The following table shows the status of Nepal's trade with South Korea in the last four years and major tradable items:

#  Last four years' balance of trade with major imports and exports with RoK

**Value in NPR**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S.N.** | **Fiscal Year** | **Export** | **Import** |
| 1 | 2018/19 | 193.84 million(1.48 million USD) | 10.09 billion(77 million USD) |
| 2 | 2019/20 | 271.82 million(2.07 million USD) | 9.37 billion(71 million USD ) |
| 3 | 2020/21 | 141.06 million(1.08 million USD) | 10.43 billion(802 million USD) |
| 4 | 2021/22 | 238.04 million(1.82 million USD) | 15.87 billion(12 million USD) |

*(Source: Foreign Trade Statistics, FY 2021/22; TEPC )*

**Korea’s Disbursements (USD) by Type of Assistance, FY 2019/20**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Country** | **Grant** | **Loan** | **Direct Implementation** | **Total** |
| S. Korea | 1,086,223 | 6,261,501 | 77,822 | 7,425,546 |

*(Source: Development Cooperation Report FY 2019/20;MoF)*

**Establishment of Hyundai Automobile Assembly plant and Samsung TV Factory in Nawalparasi**

Hyundai Automobile Assembly Plant was officially launched in May 2024 in collaboration with Laxmi Group. The plant has started its annual production of 4800 cars for the first time in Nepal.

The foundation ceremony of Samsung Electronics TV factory was held in Nawalparasi on August 24. 2022. Samsung TV Factory Foundation will be operated in coordination with Golchha Group (Him Electronics). This will be the first complete knock-down assembly of electronic goods in Nepal. The size of the factory will be 7000 square feet and the total plant size will be 50 acres. The plant will hold Bajaj assembly factory and solar plants as well. The production capacity is expected to be 30,000 units per month with an employment of 120 people. The total capital investment is approx. $5 million and production is expected to start from February 2023.

Korean government and companies have continued to support Nepal's economic development and the 2026 LDC graduation process. These investments will be representative cases of economic cooperation between Nepal and Korea.

**Tourism and Culture**

Nepal has been one of the most preferred tourist destinations of the Korean people. The reasons behind their choices are mainly to visit the birthplace of Lord Buddha and to explore the trekking in some of the world famous routes. A significant number of tourists arrive in Nepal from South Korea. The following figures show the tourist arrivals from South Korea in the recent years:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
| Number | 19714 | 23205 | 18112 | 25171 | 34,301 | 37218 | 29680 | 6944 |

*Source: Nepal Tourism Statistics, 2020; MoCTCA/NTB*

The number of Korean tourist arrivals is increasing in recent years. Nepali people feel proud to introduce Nepal as birthplace of Buddha, the land of Mt. Everest, the highest peak of the world and home to some of the most preferred trekking routes of the world. Nepal and RoK are linked by direct air services with the operation of Korean Air between Kathmandu and Seoul three times a week.

**Cultural Agreement**

The Government of Nepal and the Government of Republic of Korea have concluded a Cultural Agreement on **30 March 2005**. Since then, both countries have been organizing cultural events in each other's capital regularly. Korean culture, film, drama, fashion, hairstyle, cosmetics, cars, phones, food and music are becoming popular among Nepalese youngsters.

**Nepali Diaspora**

It is estimated that the number of Nepali nationals living in Republic of Korea is more than **62,000** as of January 2024. Nepali community is estimated to be the **10th largest** foreign communities in Republic of Korea.

**Sister City Relations**

Kathmandu Metropolitan City of Nepal and Seoul City of RoK signed an agreement on Friendship and Cooperation on **26 September 2016** by Mr. Won-soon Park, Mayor of the Seoul City and Mr. Rudra Singh Tamang, Chief Executive Officer of the Kathmandu Metropolitan City. The objectives of the agreement are to enhance exchanges and cooperation through information sharing on policies to promote economic growth and investment, exchange program and goodwill visits, and sharing of best practices in the field of urban planning, public transportation and e-governance, among others.

**Humanitarian Assistance**

* Valuable support was received from the Government and the people of the Republic of Korea in response to the April 2015 Earthquake in Nepal. The Korean Government provided tents and blankets and other emergency relief supplies equivalent to US$ 650,000 in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake and also decided to donate US$ 500,000 through UN-OCHA and IFRC in support of the earthquake victims.
* Additionally, for the purpose of Nepal's reconstruction process, the Government of Korea pledged US$ 10 million for post-earthquake rehabilitation of Nepal. It is included 24 excavators and wheel loaders. Similarly, the DOOSAN Group of South Korea handed over 4 excavators and wheel loaders worth US$ 1.6 million for debris clearance. And the rest of the amount is meant to help rebuild a district hospital and health posts. The Embassy of Nepal in Seoul collected about US$ 1.5 million as donations from all sections of Korean society to the Prime Minister Disaster Relief Fund.

**Cooperation under SAARC**

The Republic of Korea was granted SAARC Observer status in 2006. Since then, Korea has been actively undertaking programs to share its development experience with SAARC partners. Korea has been providing training to 100 government officials from South Asian countries every year since 2008 through SAARC Special Training Program and holding RoK – SAARC Partnership Seminars annually since 2010 as a long term mechanism to explore potential of cooperation between Korea and SAARC. RoK has been proposing for RoK-SAARC Foreign Ministers’ Meeting as a mechanism to review current interests between RoK and the South Asian countries.

**Korean Peninsula**

Nepal follows developments in Korean Peninsula with interest. Nepal has a longstanding supportive position for the peaceful reunification of Korea as per the will of the Korean people. Nepal has the earnest wish to see peace, unity and stability in the Korean Peninsula. Nepal, always, deplored the conduct of the nuclear test by Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) defying the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and the repeated calls of international community. In line with Nepal’s constant policy of general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction, Nepal stands against such tests. Nepal called upon the Government of DPRK to refrain from such acts while reiterating her wishes to see peace and stability on the Korean peninsula. Nepal holds firm belief against any acts detrimental to international nuclear non – proliferation efforts and for the global efforts to establish peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

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***North East Asia Division***

***Ministry of Foreign Affairs***

***As of July 2024***

**Annex – I: Exchange of Visits**

**From Nepali side**

* Mr. Gyanendra Bahadur Karki, Minister for Foreign Affairs visited the Republic of Korea in 1983.
* The then Crown Prince Paras Bir Bikram Shah and his Princess Himani paid an official visit to the Republic of Korea from 14 to 17 July 2005. The then Foreign Minister Mr. Ramesh Nath Pandey accompanied them.
* Mr. Mohamad Aftab Alam, Minister for Labour and Transport Management visited the RoKfrom 15 to19 January 2010.
* Then Finance Minister Mr. Barsha Man Pun visited South Korea from 29 November-1 December 2011 to take part in the fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness.
* Mr. Hridayesh Tripathi, the then Minister for Physical Planning, Works and Transport Management, visited South Korea from 20 to 24 August 2012 in connection with the interaction/observation tour to give a focus on overall development made by the RoK mainly in the fields of transport, infrastructure including railway sector and urban rapid transport system.
* A three-member delegation led by Joint Secretary North East Asia Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal visited Seoul, Korea to hold the meeting of bilateral consultation mechanism on 19 – 23 March 2014.
* Mr. Mahendra Bahadur Pandey, the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, visited the Republic of Korea from to attend the program organised by the Nepali Embassy in Seoul, marking the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the bilateral relations between Nepal and the RoK.
* Mr.Tek Bahadur Gurung, the then State Minister for Labour and Employment, visited South Korea from 27-30 August 2015.
* Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi visited Korea from 11-16 June 2016 at the invitation of the Korean Government.
* Mr. Keshari Raj Pandit, Executive Director of National Judicial Academy of Nepal led a 10 member judicial team to RoK from 18-29 September 2016 at the invitation of the Supreme Court of RoK to participate in a program to enhance judicial capacity of Nepal.
* Hon'ble Mr. Surendra Kumar Karki, Minister for Information and Communications visited RoK from 10-13 October 2016 to attend the Global ICT Leadership Forum held in Seoul organized by the Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning along with National Information Society of the RoK.
* Hon'ble Mr. Gauri Shankar Chaudhary, Minister for Agriculture Development visited Korea to participate in Global Saemaul Leadership Forum, 18-21 October 2016 in Pyeongchang, Korea.
* Mr. Krishna Hari Baskota, Chief Information Commissioner visited Korea to participate in the Government 3.0 Global Forum held in Busan on 9-10 November 2016.
* Hon. Justice of the Supreme Court of Nepal Mr. Baidyanath Upadhaya visited Korea from November 17-20, 2016 leading a seven member delegation. The delegation met with the head of the presiding Judge of the Seoul High Court of Korea and exchanged views on the recent cooperation between the two courts.
* Hon. Tapta Bahadur Bista, State Minister for Information and Communication visited the Republic of Korea leading a three-member delegation to participate in the meeting of International Telecommunication Union (ITU) World 2017 held in Busan from 25-28 September 2017, one of the largest UN backed information and communication technology events.
* At the invitation of H.E. You Young Min, Minister of Science and ICT of Korea, Hon. Minister for Communication and Information Technology Mr. Gokul Prasad Baskota visited the Republic of Korea to participate in the ICT Ministerial Meeting 2018 and IOT Korea Exhibition 2018 held in Seoul on 13 September 2018. The meeting had participation of ministers of ICT from more than 10 countries from Asia-Pacific Region.
* Dr. Rajan Bhattarai, Foreign Advisor to the Prime Minister of Nepal, visited the Republic of Korea from December 17 to 20, 2019 as an eminent guest of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea.
* Hon. Mrs. Shashikala Dahal, Vice Chair of the National Assembly, Federal Parliament of Nepal visited the Republic of Korea from 9 to 13 December 2019 to participate in Asia Pacific Parliamentarians’ Meeting on Environment and Development.
* Rt. Honourable Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina, Chairman of the National Assembly, Federal Parliament of Nepal paid an official visit to the Republic of Korea from September 3 to 6, 2019.
* Mr. **Bishnu Paudel**, General Secretary of the ruling Nepal Communist Party and former Minister of Finance of the Government of Nepal visited RoK from 25-28 June 2019 ,as an eminent guest, at the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of RoK .
* Hon. Mr. **Janardan Sharma**, Minister for Finance visited Republic of Korea to participate in Green Climate Fund Global Programming Conference organized by Green Climate Fund-GCF in Incheon, Korea held on September 13-15, 2022. Hon. Minister was accompanied by Finance Secretary Mr. Krishna Hari Pushkar and two other officials of the Ministry of Finance.
* Rt. Hon. Mr. **Ganesh Prasad Timilsina**, Chairman of the National Assembly, visited Republic of Korea to participate in "Peace Summit 2023" held in Korea on 02-06 May 2023.

**From Korean side**

* Mr. Lee Sang Soo, Minister of Labour of RoK, paid an official visit to Nepal from 27-29 January 2007.
* Mr. Yu Myung-hwan, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, visited Nepal on 22 June 2009.
* Chang Nae Sam, Deputy Minister for Construction and Water Resources Policy, Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs, RoK visited Nepal from 25-26 July 2011.
* Congressman Mr. Choi Kyu-sung of the RoK visited Nepal from 8 -11 August 2011.
* Mr. Woo Ken Hag, Director of Planning Department, National Election Commission, leading four-member delegation, visited Nepal from 14-17 July 2013.
* Ms. Kim Jung Im, Assistant Director of the Ministry of Labour of the RoK visited Nepal from 21-23 December 2013 to study the arrangement made by the Nepali government to enter into Korean Employment Permit (EPS) System.
* Mr. Kyung-soo Lee, Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs of the Republic of Korea visited Nepal from 25 – 27 November 2014 to participate in the 18th SAARC Summit.
* Rt. Hon’ble Chung Eui-hwa, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea visited Nepal on 24-26 April 2016on a friendly visit.
* Mr. Jeong-hyun Ryu, Director-General of South Asian and Pacific Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea visited Nepal from 19-20 September 2017 to hold the Consultation meeting with North East Asia Division Chief Mr. Ganesh Prasad Dhakal.
* Mr. **Sangryol LEE**, Director-General for Asian and Pacific Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, visited Nepal from 08 to 09 November 2021 to participate in the fifth Meeting of Nepal-RoK Bilateral Consultation Mechanism (BCM) with North East Asia Division Chief Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa.
* Ambassador H.E. Mr. **Han Dong-man**, Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea and this team visited Nepal and paid a courtesy call on Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba on 2022 July 01. Special Envoy H.E. Mr. Han also met with Dr. Narayan Khadka, Hon. Minister for Foreign Affairs. Various matters pertaining to further strengthening of Nepal-Korea relations and enhancing cooperation between the two countries were discussed.

Ambassador H.E. Mr. Han Dong-man was accompanied by Mr. **Ken Kang**, Corporate Executive Vice President, President & CEO of South West Asia office, Samsung India Electronics Pvt. Ltd. to seek support of Nepal for the World Expo 2030 Busan, Korea.

* Mr. **Hark Kyu PARK**, Global President and CFO at Samsung Electronics Co. visited Nepal and paid a courtesy call on the Right Honourable Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba on August 24, **2022**.
* Delegation comprised of the National Assembly members of the Republic of Korea visited Nepal from 19-22 August 2022 and paid a courtesy call on Rt. Hon. Speaker Mr. Agni Prasad Sapkota on August 21, **2022**.
1. Hon. Mr. **Sang Heon LEE** (Korea-Nepal Parliamentary Friendship Group President; Democratic Party of Korea)
2. Hon. Mr. **Byung Gil AN** (Korea-Nepal Parliamentary Friendship Group Member; People Power Party)
3. Hon. Mr. **Hack Young LEE** (Korea-Nepal Parliamentary Friendship Group President; Democratic Party of Korea)
4. Hon. Mr. **Byung Joo KIM**(Korea-Nepal Parliamentary Friendship Group Vice President; Democratic Party of Korea)
* **Captain Choi Yongseok**, Defence Attache of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in New Delhi visited Nepal from September 21-23, 2022.

During the visit, he paid courtesy calls on following dignitaries of the Government of Nepal.

1. Gen. Prabhu Ram Sharma, Chief of Army Staff

2. Director General Level Officials from the Nepalese Army in charge of bilateral defence cooperation between Nepal and Korea

* A delegation led by the **Special Envoy of the President** of the Republic of Korea, **Mr. Jang Sung-Min** visited Nepal from 12-14 February 2023. The delegation met with Right Hon'ble Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Hon'ble Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Bimala Rai Paudyal, and CPN-UML Chairman & former Prime Minister Mr. K.P. Sharma Oli and discussed ways to strengthen cooperation between the two countries. The delegation of the Special Presidential Envoy was accompanied by a team from Samsung Electronics led by President Mr. Park Seung-Hee.
* The First Deputy Director of the National Intelligence Service of the Republic of Korea, **Mr. KWON Choon Taek** visited Nepal on April 16-19, 2023. The delegation paid courtesy calls on the Chief Investigation Director of the National Investigation Department of the Government of Nepal on April 18, 2023.
* Honorable Minister for Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of the Republic of Korea Mr. Chung Hwang-keun visited Nepal on 2-3 November 2023. During the visit, Honorable Minister and his delegation paid courtesy calls on Rt. Hon. President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel, Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and Hon. Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Development Dr. Bedu Ram Bhusal on 2 November 2023. On the same day, a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture was signed between the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development of Nepal and Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of the Republic of Korea.