Report on Nepal's Foreign Affairs (2023-2024)



This annual report covers the activities of Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 17 July 2023 to 16 July 2024.

Editorial Team

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Honourable Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba Minister for Foreign Affairs

MESSAGE

I am pleased to learn that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is publishing its annual Report for the fiscal year 2023–2024. This publication offers general overview of Nepal's foreign policy discourse, and a comprehensive account of its diplomatic engagements as well as the Ministry's institutional initiatives to safeguard core national interests in an increasingly complex global landscape.

Guided by the Constitution, the Foreign Policy of 2077 BS, sectoral policies and international law, Nepal has consistently pursued an independent, balanced, and diversified foreign policy in principle and practice. Our diplomatic engagements with the global community remained firmly anchored in the United Nations Charter, non-alignment, Panchasheel, international law, world peace, and our unwavering belief in the power of multilateralism. Aligning well with Nepal's foreign policy vision, principles and objectives, we continued to work closely with the global community for enhancing Nepal's dignity on the world stage, and building cooperative regional and global partnerships to deliver robust solutions to persisting development and humanitarian challenges. Furthermore, Nepal underscored championing the voices of Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries, advocating for climate justice, and strengthening a peaceful, inclusive, rules-based and democratic global order.

The past year witnessed landmark developments at the national, regional, and global levels. Amid shifting geopolitical dynamics and complex transnational challenges, Nepal remained steadfast in safeguarding its sovereignty, territorial integrity, national unity and independence, while actively collaborating to foster sustainable development, regional integration, and global peace.

This report highlights significant diplomatic milestones achieved across bilateral, regional, and multilateral platforms. It reflects a broad spectrum of Nepal's deepening and multi-faceted relations, particularly with our immediate neighbours, India and China, major powers, and development partners, focusing on high-level visits, political dialogues, economic cooperation, global partnerships, and people-to-people exchanges. During the review period, Nepal further consolidated its friendly ties and cooperative engagements with other regional partners in Asia, Europe, the Americas, and Africa.

In June 2024, the President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel paid an official visit to Germany and held a productive meeting with his German counterpart Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier to enhance bilateral collaboration, particularly in areas of development cooperation, trade, tourism, investment, and vocational training. The Official Visits by the Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' to India on 9-10 June 2024 and to China on 23-30 September 2023 further reinforced Nepal's traditional ties and cooperation with these close neighbours. Adding momentum to the historically rich Nepal-China relations, the Vice President Mr. Ramsahay Prasad Yadav attended the Seventh China-South Asia Expo with Nepal as a 'Theme Country' and the Twenty Seventh China-Kunming Import and Export Fair held in Kunming from 16 to 20 August 2023.

The reporting period saw an uptick in high-level exchanges, strategic dialogues, and institutional mechanism-building processes. Nepal made meaningful contributions to regional forums like SAARC, BIMSTEC, and ACD, and played an active role in multilateral processes including the UN General Assembly, NAM, COP28, and the Human Rights Council. In his address to the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September 2023, the Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' highlighted Nepal's political, social transformation and underlined the need of international cooperation for LDCs, LLDCs like Nepal to respond to development and climate change vulnerabilities.

As Chair of the LDC Group and a trusted partner in UN peacekeeping, Nepal continued to project a principled voice for equity, justice, and prosperity of those furthest behind. Additionally, Nepal enjoyed continued goodwill and valuable assistance from development partners such as the US, Japan, Germany, Switzerland, Australia, World Bank, EU, ADB and more, to complement Nepal's development trajectory.

In parallel, we intensified our policy and programmatic interventions in economic diplomacy, labour diplomacy, development cooperation, and digital innovation in consular services, leveraging diplomacy as a tool for national transformation. Whether

through hosting the Investment Summit or deepening diaspora engagement, our goal remained clear: to translate diplomacy into tangible benefits for our people.

To strengthen institutional and human resource development, the Ministry undertook a groundwork for the Ministry's reforms and organizational restructuring during the reporting period. With a particular focus on knowledge diplomacy, emphasis was placed on making the Ministry, Departments and Nepali Missions abroad fit for purpose in serving the nation with dedication, and responding to global challenges with resilience.

I avail this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation to our bilateral and multilateral partners as well as political leaders, experts and mediapersons at home and abroad for their continued goodwill and cooperation. I also commend the Foreign Secretary and other personnel of our Ministry and Nepali Missions abroad for their professional services—despite their thin number—in furthering Nepal's foreign policy objectives. Our special thanks are due to the editorial team for bringing out this timely Report.

As we look ahead, we recommit to building a foreign policy architecture that is forward-looking, resilient, adequately staffed, well-resourced, and agile enough to live up to the changing realities. I do hope that this publication will serve as a useful reference for policymakers, scholars, and friends of Nepal alike to get acquainted with Nepal's foreign policy and diplomatic intercourses.



Sewa Lamsal Foreign Secretary

FOREWORD

It is with a profound pleasure that I present the annual Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal for the fiscal year 2023-2024. This Report elucidates Nepal's foreign policy priorities, diplomatic engagements and regional as well as international cooperation efforts with state and non-state actors of the global community over the review period.

In dealing with external partners, the Ministry remained further committed to realizing an overarching foreign policy goal of building a strong, prosperous, peaceful and dignified nation by maintaining Nepal's independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national unity. The diplomatic engagements focused on elevating national dignity on the global stage, fostering cooperative relations based on sovereignty equality, mutual respect and shared benefits, and achieving sustained peace, development at home and globally, adhering to a "whole of the world" approach to global challenges.

Nepal embraced both "continuity" and "change" aspects in its foreign policy, anchored in "Amity with All, Enmity with None" philosophy and guided by the Constitution and other domestic policies during the review period. The Ministry upheld a principled policy of the Government of Nepal to maintain an independent, balanced and democratic foreign policy in commensurate with the UN Charter, Panchasheel, non-alignment, international law and norms of world peace. By leveraging a prudent, effective and pragmatic diplomacy, Nepal reinforced its friendly and collaborative ties with the outside world to navigate a fluid global order marked by climate crisis, geopolitical tensions, economic divides, and disruptive technologies including AI.

Throughout the review period, Nepal further consolidated its diplomatic ties and mutually beneficial cooperation on both bilateral and multilateral fronts. The exchanges of high-level visits and interactions helped bolster Nepal's deepening

relations with immediate neighbours- India and China, major powers, development partners, regional and multilateral organizations including the UN.

The President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel paid an official visit to Germany on 16-19 June 2024 and discussed with the President of Germany on various aspects of Nepal-Germany relations. He also addressed inaugural Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice during the High-Level Segment of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva on 13 June 2024.

The Vice President Mr. Ramsahay Prasad Yadav represented Nepal at the Seventh China-South Asia Expo with Nepal as a 'Theme Country' and the Twenty Seventh China-Kunming Import and Export Fair held in Kunming from 16 to 20 August 2023.

The Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' paid an official visit to India to attend a swearing-in ceremony of Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for the latter's third consecutive term on 9-10 June 2024. The visit constituted a historic milestone to elevate the historically close and multifaceted Nepal-India relations. On 17 November 2023, the Prime Minister virtually addressed the Leaders' Session of the Second Voice of Global South Summit hosted by the Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on the theme of "Global South: Together for One Future".

The Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' had an official visit to China on 23-30 September 2023 and held productive meetings with President Mr. Xi Jinping, Premier Mr. Li Qiang and Chairman of National People's Congress Mr. Zhao Leji on further deepening historically rich and multidimensional relations founded on friendship, mutual respect and good neighbourliness.

The Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' addressed the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September 2023, highlighting Nepal's political, social transformation and the need of robust international support to address structural development challenges and climate vulnerabilities faced by LDCs and LLDCs like Nepal.

The Prime Minister participated in the 28th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 28) in Dubai, UAE from November 30 to December 12, 2023 and hosted a high-level side event entitled "Call of the Mountain: Who Saves us from the Climate Crisis?". The Prime Minister attended the 19th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) held in Kampala, Uganda on the theme of "Deepening Cooperation for Shared Global Affluence" on 19 January 2024.

The Foreign Minister Mr. N. P. Saud had official visits to India, USA, Qatar, Australia, New Zealand and other friendly nations, contributing to further deepening bilateral relations through fruitful discussions with his counterparts across multiple areas of mutual interests. During Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar's working visit to Nepal on 4 January 2024 to attend the Seventh Meeting of Nepal-India Joint Commission, Nepal and India signed a historic 25-year power trade agreement to export 10,000 megawatts of electricity to India over the next decade.

During his official visit to China from 24 March to 1 April 2024, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha held a bilateral meeting with his Chinese counterpart Mr. Wang Yi and exchanged views on elevating friendly bilateral ties. He had a telephone conversation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Mr. Sergey Lavrov on 7 March 2024 and discussed various aspects of bilateral relations including issues of Nepali citizens in Russian Army.

The state visit by His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, to Nepal on 23 - 24 April 2024 opened new avenues for expanding Nepal-Qatar relations.

On 5 May 2024, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Ms. KAMIKAWA Yoko paid an official visit to Nepal and held a bilateral meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha to discuss issues of mutual interests and concerns.

The year 2023 represented a special milestone of the centenary of signing of the Nepal-UK Friendship Treaty of 1923. The reporting year marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and the Republic of Korea. The Leaders of the two friendly countries exchanged messages to celebrate this milestone in thriving bilateral relations.

Our proactive climate diplomacy and active engagements in multilateral forums such as UN, NAM, Group of 77, and COP28 have provided us an opportunity to spotlight critical global challenges: from climate change, conflicts to development gaps, disruptive technologies, and global governance reforms. Nepal achieved an unprecedented milestone by becoming the top troop-contributing country to UN peace operations, underscoring its unwavering commitments to global peace and development. The visit of UN Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres to Nepal in October 2023 reflected our leadership in climate action and global peace efforts.

Nepal accorded utmost importance to fostering regional unity, solidarity and

cooperation as well as enhancing integration including people-to-people ties within SAARC, BIMSTEC, ACD and SCO. In its consistent pursuit of foreign policy diversification, Nepal expanded its bilateral relations with 182 countries with formalization of diplomatic relations with Tonga in March 2024.

In pursuing economic diplomacy through a "whole-of-the stakeholders" approach, the Ministry organized several interactions with the participation of government and private sector stakeholders and Nepali missions abroad. Training and orientation programs were conducted for ambassadors and other diplomatic staff through the Institute of Foreign Affairs to keep them informed about Nepal's foreign policy priorities and enhance their professionalism.

The Ministry stressed catering effective and expeditious consular services to Nepali nationals, focusing on their timely rescue and repatriation during emergencies. A number of organizational reforms were undertaken, aimed at institutionalizing Nepal's Foreign Service and enhancing knowledge diplomacy to safeguard core national interests.

I sincerely acknowledge pivotal contributions of political leaders, bureaucrats, diplomats, experts, partners, mediapersons and sovereign Nepali people in advancing Nepal's foreign policy objectives. Looking ahead, our foreign policy orientation and diplomacy will prioritize building on these achievements, deepen global partnerships, and address challenges of the 21st century.

I am confident that this Report will serve not only as a valuable institutional memory but also offer insights to a wide audience of scholars, readers and researchers profoundly interested in Nepal's foreign policy and diplomatic engagements.

In closing, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Foreign Minister for the generous guidance, and also appreciate high officials, ambassadors, Heads of Departments/Divisions and other staff of the Ministry for their consistent support to bring out this Report. The editorial team deserves our special appreciation for their dedicated efforts in publishing the Report in its present shape.

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NEPAL'S FOREIGN POLICY

VISION

To contribute to building a strong, prosperous, peaceful and dignified nation by maintaining Nepal's independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, freedom and national unity.

MISSION

To preserve and promote national interests by strengthening Nepal's foreign relations based on sovereign equality, mutual benefit and respect through the conduct of an independent and balanced foreign policy.

OBJECTIVES

- To expand and strengthen bilateral relations with all countries including neighbouring countries on the basis of sovereign equality, mutual benefit and respect;
- To promote national interest by enhancing Nepal's national identity and representation in international and regional forums;
- To play an effective role in multilateral forums for world peace; disarmament; promotion and protection of human rights; sustainable development goals; mitigation of climate change impacts; controlling pandemics, terrorism and cybercrime; safer migration; and the rights of landlocked countries;
- To collaborate for creating a just, inclusive, fair, and rules-based world order;
- To promote regional cooperation, peace, and collaboration;
- To contribute to socio-economic transformation of the country through the conduct of economic diplomacy in such sectors as mobilization of development cooperation, and promotion of investment, export and tourism;
- To protect interests of Nepali nationals as well as legal persons engaged in occupation, business, and employment abroad;
- To promote soft power by utilizing the country's unique natural beauty, indigenous and rich civilization, culture, lifestyle, diversity, arts, languages, literature and sports.

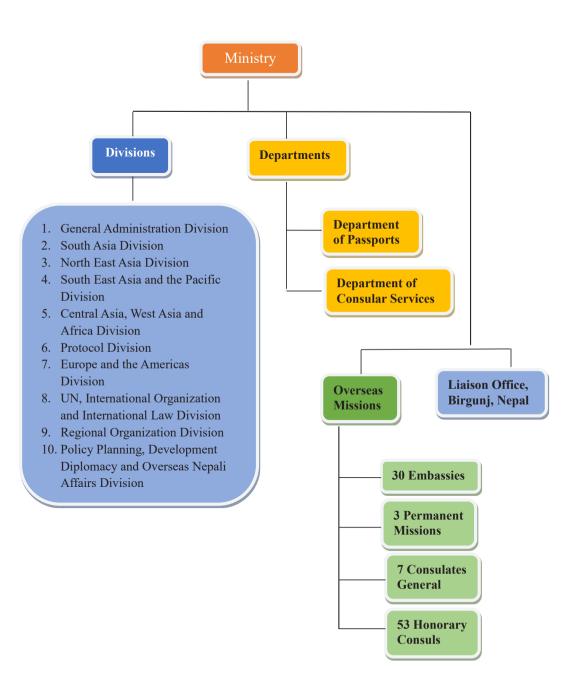
GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND NORMS

- Nepal's independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, freedom; protection of national interest, and promotion of national respect and dignity
- Sovereignty equality

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- Panchsheel (five principles of peaceful coexistence)
- Charter of the United Nations
- Non-alignment
- Mutual respect and benefit
- International law and norms of world peace
- Peaceful settlement of disputes
- International cooperation
- Justice, equality and accountability
- Democracy, human rights and rule of law
- Economic progress and prosperity
- Ecological balance, human security and conservation of the planet

MINISTRY'S ORGANOGRAM



Highlights of the Year

Outgoing Visits

- The President paid an official visit to the Republic of Germany from 16 to 19 June 2024 at the invitation of President of the Federal Republic of Germany Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier.
- The President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel visited Geneva, Switzerland to attend the inaugural Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice that took place during the High-Level Segment of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference on 13 June 2024.
- Vice President Mr. Ramsahay Prasad Yadav visited Kunming of Yunnan province of China to attend the 7th China-South Asia Expo with Nepal as a 'Theme Country' and the 27th China-Kunming Import and Export Fair-Kunming Fair- during 16 to 20 August 2023.
- Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' visited India from 9 to 10
 June 2024 to participate in the swearing-in ceremony of the newly appointed
 Prime Minister of the Republic of India Shri Narendra Modi on 9 June 2024
 in New Delhi.
- Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' visited Italy to participate in the United Nations Food Systems 2023 Stocktaking Moment held in Rome, Italy on 24-26 July 2023.
- Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' paid an official visit to China on 23-30 September 2023.
- The Chief Justice of Nepal Mr. Bishowambhar Prasad Shrestha led a delegation of the Supreme Court of Nepal to the diamond jubilee establishment program of the Supreme Court of India, held in New Delhi on 27 January 2024.
- At the invitation of Chief Justice of Bangladesh Mr. Obaidul Hassan, Chief Justice of Nepal Mr. Bishowambhar Prasad Shrestha visited Bangladesh from 6-9 June 2024 to attend the "International Conference on Judiciary Across the Borders: 21st Century Challenges and Experiences from the Himalayas and Beyond" held in Dhaka on 7-8 June 2024.
- Speaker of the House of Representatives Mr. Devraj Ghimire paid an official visit to Ireland at the invitation of Speaker of the Lower House of Ireland Sean O' Fearghail on 18-23 September 2023.
- Chairperson of the National Assembly Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina visited Australia leading a parliamentary delegation from 27 November to 1 December

2023.

- Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha paid an official visit to the People's Republic of China from 24 March to 1 April 2024 at the invitation of Mr. Wang Yi, Member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.
- Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud paid an official visit to the United States from 30 October to 5 November 2023 at the invitation of the US Secretary of State Mr. Antony J. Blinken.
- Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud visited Australia on 8-13 February 2023 to participate in the Indian Ocean Conference.
- Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud visited New Zealand on 13-14 February 2024.
- Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud led a Nepali delegation to 21st edition of Doha Forum held during 10-11 December 2023 at Doha, Qatar.
- Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud visited the State of Israel in October 2023 to rescue Nepali students stranded due to the Hamas attack on 7 October 2023.
- Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. N. P. Saud participated in the 9th edition of the Raisina Dialogue held in New Delhi, India on 21-23 February 2024.
- Minister of Finance Mr. Prakash Sharan Mahat visited Egypt to participate in the AIIB Board of Governor's Meeting held in Sharm el-Sheikh from 25-26 September 2023.
- Minister of Health and Population Mr. Mohan Bahadur Basnet participated in the Global Congress on Health, Population and Development (5-8 September) held in Cairo, Egypt from 4-9 September 2023.
- Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Mr. Dhan Raj Gurung participated in the Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination held in Sao Paulo on 29 November 2023 on the theme 'Putting racial equity and justice at the forefront of development.'
- Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Mr. Shakti Bahadur Basnet led a Nepali delegation to the "Third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum" held on 19-20 October 2023 in Bangkok.
- Minister for Youth and Sports Mr. Teju Lal Chaudhary visited France to

- participate in the opening ceremony of the Olympic games from 24 to 29 July 2024. Seven athletes from Nepal had competed in the Paris Olympics.
- Chairperson of the Public Service Commission Mr. Madhav Prasad Regmi, accompanied by the Members and senior officials of the Commission, visited Brazil on 27 May-2 June 2024.
- Chief of the Army Staff of Nepali Army, General Prabhu Ram Sharma had paid an official visit to the UK on 8-13 October 2023 at the invitation of his British counterpart.

Incoming Visits

- At the invitation of President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel, Amir of the State of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani paid a state visit to Nepal on 23-24 April 2024.
- A parliamentary delegation led by Mr. Jerry Buttimer, Chairman of Seanad Eireann, the Upper House of the Irish Parliament paid an official visit to Nepal on 8-12 January 2024 at the invitation of Chairman of National Assembly of Nepal Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina.
- An Australian parliamentary delegation led by Milton Dick MP, Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives, visited Nepal on 3-7 October 2023. This is the first ever visit of Australian Parliamentary delegation to Nepal in over six decades of diplomatic ties with Nepal.
- Secretary General of the United Nations Mr. Antonio Guterres paid an official visit to Nepal on 29 October-01 November 2023.
- Minister of State for Development and Africa of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom Mr. Andrew Mitchell, visited Nepal on 19-20 February 2024.
- Foreign Minister of Japan Ms Kamikawa Yoko paid an official visit to Nepal on 5 May 2024 at the invitation of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha.
- Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of the Republic of Korea Mr. Chung Hwang-Keun visited Nepal from 1 to 3 November 2023.
- Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change of Bangladesh Mr. Saber Hossain Chowdhury, visited Nepal from 21-23 May 2024 to address the 'International Expert Dialogue on Mountains, People, and Climate Change' held in Kathmandu on 22-23 May 2024.
- A three-member delegation led by Ms. Maria Stockhaus, Member of Parliament

- of the Swedish Riksdag visited Nepal on 28-30 August 2023.
- General Staff of the British Army, General Sir Patrick Sanders visited Nepal in January 2024.

Bilateral Engagements

- The seventh meeting of the Nepal-India Joint Commission was held in Kathmandu on 4 January 2024. Leading their respective delegations, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud and Minister of External Affairs of India Dr. S. Jaishankar co-chaired the meeting.
- The 15th Meeting of Nepal-India Bilateral Consultative Group on Security Issues (BCGSI) was held on 5 October 2023 in Pokhara. The Nepali delegation, which included officials from the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Home Affairs and Nepal Army was led by Mr. Bhrigu Dhungana, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Indian delegation was led by Mr. Anurag Srivastava, Joint Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs of India.
- The 11th meeting of the Joint Steering Committee on Power Sector Cooperation (JSC) between Nepal and India was held in Chitwan on 5 January 2024.
- The 16th Meeting of the Nepal-China Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism was held on 25 June 2024 at Kathmandu. Ms. Sewa Lamsal, Foreign Secretary of Nepal led the Nepali delegation to the Meeting and Mr. Sun Weidong, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of China led the Chinese delegation.
- The Meeting of Joint Expert Group on Nepal-China border matters was held in Beijing from 18 to 19 June 2024.
- The Third Round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) between Nepal and Bangladesh was held in Kathmandu on 17 April 2024. Nepali delegation to the Consultations was led by Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal while Bangladesh delegation was led by Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh Mr. Masud Bin Momen.
- The first meeting of Nepal-Sri Lanka Joint Commission (JC) was held in Kathmandu on 20 December 2023. Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. N. P. Saud and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka Mr. M.U.M. Ali Sabry, led their respective delegations to the meeting.
- The 15th meeting of the Nepal-EU Joint Commission was held on 19 March 2024 in Kathmandu. The meeting was co-chaired by Ms. Sewa Lamsal, Foreign Secretary of Nepal and Ms. Paola Pampaloni, Deputy Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific of the European External Action Service.

- The second meeting of Nepal-Finland Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held in Kathmandu on 5 June 2024. Mr. Ganesh Prasad Dhakal, Joint Secretary and Head of the Europe America Division of the Ministry and Mr. Pasi Hellman, Under Secretary of State for International Development, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland led their respective delegations to the meeting.
- The fourth meeting of Nepal-France Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held in Paris on 29 March 2024. The Nepali side was led by Mr. Ganesh Prasad Dhakal, Joint Secretary and Head of the Europe-America Division of the Ministry, while the French side was led by Mr. Benoit Guidee, Director for Asia and Oceania, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France.
- The third meeting of the Nepal-Germany Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held on 20 March 2024 in Kathmandu. The Nepali side was led by Mr. Ganesh Prasad Dhakal, Joint Secretary and Head of the Europe-America Division of the Ministry. Mr. Erik Kurzweil, Director for Indo-Pacific Policy, South Asia, Afghanistan of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany led the German side.
- The fourth meeting of Nepal-Switzerland Bilateral Consultations Mechanism was held at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Bern on 2 April 2024. The Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Ganesh Prasad Dhakal, Joint Secretary and Head of the Europe-America Division, while the Swiss delegation was led by Mr. Heinrich Schellenberg, Assistant State Secretary for Asia and the Pacific in the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.
- The second edition of Nepal-New Zealand Foreign Ministry Consultation (FMC) was held on 14 February 2024 in Willington. Ms. Rita Dhital, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal and Ms. Joanna Kempkers, Divisional Manager South Asia and South East Asia of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand led their respective delegations.
- The Bilateral Committee formed between Nepal and the UK in 2022 to address the issues related to British Gurkha veterans held two meetings during the review period.

Multilateral and Regional Engagements

 President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel visited Switzerland to participate in the High-Level Segment of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. The President delivered a keynote speech at the Inaugural Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice that took place during the High-Level Segment on 13 June 2024. The President also had a bilateral meeting with President of the Swiss Confederation Ms. Viola Amherd at the Federal Palace in Bern on 12 June 2024.

- Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' participated in the 78th United Nations General Assembly on 16-23 September 2023.
- Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' participated in the 28th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28) held in Dubai, UAE from 29 November to 3 December 2023.
- Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' led a Nepali delegation to participate in 19th Summit of Non-Aligned Movement from 19-20 January 2024, held in Kampala, Uganda.
- Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud participated in the 18th Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Ministerial Meeting was held on 20 September 2023 at the UN Headquarters in New York.
- Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud attended the BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' Retreat held in Bangkok on 17 July 2023.
- The Programming Committee (PC) of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) held its Fifty-Ninth session at the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu on 6-7 March 2024.
- Dr. Pornchai Danvivathana, Secretary General of Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) visited Nepal from July 31 to 2 August 2023.

Additional Engagements

- The Ministry organized the third edition of Professor Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture series on 14 May 2024 in Kathmandu. Prof. C Raja Mohan, visiting professor and former Director of the Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, delivered a lecture on 'Nepal-India relations: Prospects and Pathways' as the keynote speaker.
- The Ministry organized an interaction programme on the role of Nepali missions in economic diplomacy and Nepal Trade Integrated Strategy (NTIS) 2080 on 30 November 2023 in a hybrid format.
- The Ministry organized an interaction program on 27 June 2024 regarding the role of the Ministry and Nepali Missions abroad in promoting exports and investment.
- The Ministry organized a province-level interaction on economic diplomacy in Dhangadhi, Kailali on 6 June 2024.

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- The Ministry organized an interaction program on "Maximizing Nepal's Benefits from the Rise of India and China" on 16 March 2024 as a part of its annual program.
- The Ministry, in collaboration with the Honorary Consular Corps-Nepal (HCCN), organized Lumbini Conclave on 'Global Peace for Prosperity' on 21-23 March 2024 in Bhairahawa, Rupandehi with the participation of Non-Residential Ambassadors accredited to Nepal.
- Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha held an interaction programme with former Nepali Ambassadors on 20 March 2024.
- In collaboration with the Nepal Tourism Board, the Ministry organized a diplomatic excursion for the diplomatic community in Kathmandu on 2-4 June 2024 in Pokhara.

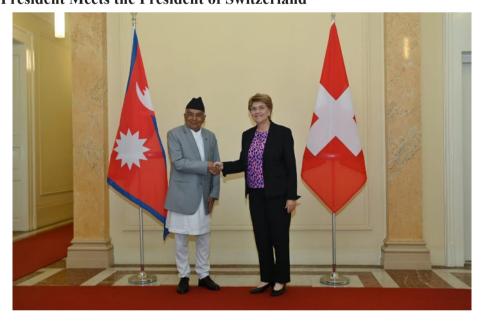
HIGH LEVEL ENGAGEMENTS

Participation of the President in the 112th Session of the International Labour Organization



(President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel addressing the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva on 13 June 2024)

The President Meets the President of Switzerland



(President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel with Swiss President Ms. Viola Amherd)

Official Visit of the President to Germany



(President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel and German President Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier Steinmeier holding a bilateral meeting.)

Visit of the Prime Minister to Participate in the Swearing-in Ceremony of the Prime Minister of India



(Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' with the President, Vice-President and the Prime Minister of India)

Participation of the Prime Minister at the 78th UNGA



(Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' addressing the General Debate of the 78th UNGA Session)

Official Visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the USA



(Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud with US Secretary of State Mr. Antony J. Blinken.)

Nepal and India hold the 7th meeting of the Joint Commission



(Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud with Dr. S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India at the 7th Joint Commission Meeting in Kathmandu)

Visit of the United Nations Secretary General to Nepal



(Secretary General of the United Nations Mr. António Guterres in Kathmandu)

FACTS AND FIGURES

Economic Diplomacy

Trade

- Export: NPR 152.381244 billion
- Import: NPR 1,592.985528 billion
- Top five export destination countries: India, United States of America, Germany, United Kingdom, China
- Top five source countries of import: India, China, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, Ukraine

(Source: Department of Customs)

Foreign Investment

- NPR 44.42 billion
- Top five foreign investors: China, India, Republic of Korea, United States of America, United Kingdom

(Source: Department of Industry)

Tourism

- 1014882 foreign tourists visited Nepal.
- Top five source countries of tourists: India, United States of America, China, United Kingdom, Australia

(Source: Department of Immigration, Nepal Tourism Board)

Official Development Assistance

- USD 1,136,872,709
- Top five bilateral development partners: USA, Japan, United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland
- Top five multilateral development partners: Asian Development Bank, World Bank, IMF, United Nations, European Commission (Source: Ministry of Finance)

Overseas Employment

- Labour permits and renewals:7,41,297
- Top five destinations for overseas employment: United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Malaysia, Kuwait

(Source: Department of Foreign Employment)

SERVICE DELIVERY

Passport Distribution

• Total passports: 14,73,050

• Ordinary passports: 14,64,166

Official passports: 8,284Diplomatic passports: 569

• Service passports: 31

(Source: Department of Passports)

Consular Services

• Documents attested: 7,00,927

Visa recommendations issued:1856

• Diplomatic exemptions granted:3476

• Gratis visas issued: 1457

• Compensation handed over to beneficiaries: NPR 66,21,55,870

• Repatriation of dead bodies: 197

(Source: Department of Consular Services)

• Non-Resident Card: 114

OVERVIEW

This Report provides a synopsis of Nepal's foreign engagements with friendly neighbours, major world powers, development partners, regional and international organizations, and other global actors as well as the Ministry's consular and economic diplomacy related activities during the fiscal year 2023-2024. The Ministry actively pursued and maintained an independent, balanced and diversified foreign policy, guided by the directives and principles of the Constitution of Nepal, 2072 BS and other national policies including Foreign Policy, 2077 BS. In the course of these engagements, the Ministry prioritized safeguarding core national interests of the country and Nepali citizens including sovereignty, territorial integrity, national independence, sustainable development and prosperity.

The 2023-2024 reporting period witnessed pivotal developments at home and in regional, global landscape, unleashing both opportunities and challenges. At national and sub-national level, the by-elections were held to elect members in the House of Representatives, the Provincial Assembly, and Chairperson in the National Assembly-Upper House of the Federal Parliament. Overall, the federal democratic governance system was further strengthened and institutionalized. Globally, a return to normalcy from adverse COVID-19 impacts and renewed commitments to global solidarity and cooperation generated positive momentum to forge ahead with action on post-pandemic economic recovery, Sustainable Development Goals, climate change, global peace, security, human rights and shared prosperity. These joint-up efforts to chart out sustainable solutions to regional and global crises paved the path towards building a better, resilient and sustainable future for humanity amid deepening geopolitical uncertainty.

During this period, Nepal continued to conduct its outward-looking and people-centric foreign policy firmly rooted in the United Nations Charter, non-alignment, Five Principles of Panchasheela, international law and norm of world peace. The foreign policy focus centred around enhancing the nation's dignity and global profile in the international community, fostering mutually beneficial cooperation, and building a favourable global environment conducive to realize fundamental national interests. As a responsible member of the global community, Nepal contributed significantly to various regional and global forums including the United Nations, Non-aligned Movement, LDCs, LLDCS, and Group of 77 towards strengthening a peaceful, just, inclusive, democratic and prosperous world order through ardent advocacy for democratic values, human rights norms and climate justice.

NEPAL'S NEIGHBOURHOOD

Considering a host of imperatives such as geographical proximity, economic ties, shared history, culture and people-to-people linkages, neighbourhood has had its prominent place in Nepal's foreign policy framework. Neighbours as "natural partners" in international relations and diplomacy reflects a raison d'être behind Nepal's according priority to friendly countries in the neighbourhood. In this context, Nepal attached great importance to its traditionally rich and multi-faceted relations with immediate neighbours- India and China. The bilateral cooperation with both neighbours saw a steady growth across various sectors to mutual satisfaction and benefits.

Nepal and India enjoyed excellent bilateral relations underpinned by mutual respect, sovereign equality, economic collaboration, socio-cultural connections, and people-to-people ties. The deepening cooperation in the fields of trade, tourism, FDI, energy, connectivity, infrastructure development, economic partnerships, transit, culture, sports, health and education and frequent high-level visits further cemented bilateral relationships. The Official Visit by the Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' to India on 9-10 June 2024 to attend a swearing-in ceremony of the newly appointed Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for his third consecutive term marked a historic milestone in the historically close Nepal-India relationship. During the visit, Prime Minister Mr. Dahal called on the President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on 10 June 2024, where both dignitaries exchanged candid views on time-tested and multi-faceted bilateral relations.

On 17 November 2023, Prime Minister Mr Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' virtually addressed the Leaders' Session of the Second Voice of Global South Summit hosted by Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on the theme of "Global South: Together for One Future". In his address, he highlighted far-reaching impacts of COVID-19, climate crisis and geopolitical turbulence; underlined the need for the Global South to champion inclusive and sustainable global growth; and reaffirmed Nepal's steadfast commitments to South-South Cooperation and multilateralism under UN's stewardship for shaping a participatory "One Future'.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. N. P. Saud attended the Ninth edition of the Raisina Dialogue held in New Delhi on 21-23 February 2024. In a panel discussion on "Development Deficit: Towards a Post 2030 Agenda", he stressed the need for establishing cooperation mechanisms to address financial disparities among nations and called for enhanced South-South and North-South collaboration to achieve sustainable development goals.

A Nepali parliamentary delegation, comprising members of the Parliamentary Committee on International Relations and Tourism of the House of Representatives and led by Chairperson Mr. Raj Kishor Yadav, visited India from 30 January to 6 February 2024. During their visit, the Nepali delegation called on prominent Indian dignitaries: Speaker of the Lok Sabha Shri Om Birla, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar, Minister of State for External Affairs Shri V. Muraleedharan and Minister of State for Tourism, Shri Shripad Y. Nayak.

Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar's working visit to Nepal on 4 January 2024 to attend the Seventh Meeting of Nepal-India Joint Commission provided a valuable opportunity to review and consolidate ever-expanding bilateral partnerships. On this momentous occasion, Nepal and India signed a historic 25-year power trade agreement to export 10,000 megawatts of electricity to India over the next decade, marking a major milestone in the bilateral cooperation.

A Nepali delegation headed by Nepal's Chief Justice Mr. Bishowambhar Prasad Shrestha participated in the diamond jubilee celebration of the Supreme Court of India held in New Delhi on 27 January 2024.

Further, Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal attended the inaugural session of the Eighth edition of the Asia Economic Dialogue in Pune, India on 29 February 2024. Addressing a session at the Dialogue, she emphasized critical importance of policy initiatives to scale up sustainable regional integration, especially in sectors such as hydropower, agriculture, and tourism. During her visit to India, Foreign Secretary Ms. Lamsal also paid a courtesy call on Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and held discussions with her Indian counterpart Mr. Vinay Mohan Kwatra.

In addition, regular meetings of various bilateral mechanisms created synergies and fostered consensus with a clear focus on issues of mutual interest and sensitivity.

As a close neighbour, Nepal maintained cordial and cooperative relations with China in the review year. Both countries cherished longstanding, historically rich and multifaceted relations, anchored in the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, mutual respect, trust and appreciation of each other's core interests and sensitivities. The bilateral relations reached a newer height with the official visits of Vice-President Mr. Ramsahay Prasad Yadav and Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' to China, and reciprocal visits by high Chinese dignitaries to Nepal. The expanding bilateral cooperation spanned across political, economic, social, cultural, technical sectors and people-to-people linkages.

Vice President Mr. Ramsahay Prasad Yadav visited Kunming in Yunnan province of China to attend the Seventh China-South Asia Expo with Nepal as a 'Theme Country'

and the Twenty Seventh China-Kunming Import and Export Fair (Kunming Fair) from 16 to 20 August 2023. On the occasion, Vice President Mr. Yadav delivered a keynote speech and inaugurated 'Nepal Pavilion' for Nepali traders to showcase their exportable products. He held bilateral discussions with Mr. Wang Yi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of China and the leaders of the People's Government of Yunnan province in Kunming on matters of mutual interests, including trade promotion, investment, education, health and tourism.

Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' paid an official visit to China on 23-30 September 2023, marking the first high-level visit since Chinese President Xi Jinping's State Visit to Nepal in 2019. During the visit, he had productive meetings with President Mr. Xi Jinping, Premier Mr. Li Qiang and Chairman of National People's Congress Mr. Zhao Leji on further consolidating bilateral relations rooted in friendship, mutual respect and good neighbourliness. The Prime Minister also had a delegation-level bilateral talks with the Chinese Premier on a broad array of friendly Nepal-China relations. In addition, the two prime ministers witnessed the signing of twelve agreements in diverse fields such as science, technology and innovation, trade, digital economy, green development, agriculture, development cooperation, and human resource development.

During his official visit to China from 24 March to 1 April 2024, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha held a bilateral meeting with his Chinese counterpart Mr. Wang Yi and reaffirmed commitments to further elevating friendly bilateral ties. The official visits by Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives Ms. Indira Rana, Deputy Chairperson of National Assembly of the Federal Parliament Mrs. Urmila Aryal and other top-notch Nepali leaders to China further reinforced cordial Nepal-China relations.

The high-level visits from Chinese side were instrumental in strengthening cooperative bilateral relations during the review period.

The Sixteenth Meeting of Nepal-China Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism took place in Kathmandu on 25 June 2024. During the Meeting, both sides reviewed a full spectrum of bilateral relations and assessed the progress made in implementing agreements and understanding reached at the highest political level in the past. The Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal and Mr. Sun Weidong, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of China, led their respective delegations to the Meeting.

SOUTH ASIA

Nepal maintained friendly and cooperative relations featuring mutual respect, shared

socio-cultural values and beneficial partnerships with neighbouring countries in South

Nepal-Bangladesh relations continued to flourish in various areas of cooperation including trade, transit, tourism, energy, education and people-to-people linkages. High-level visits at the level of prime ministers, foreign ministers and parliamentary delegations as well as meetings of various bilateral mechanisms played a pivotal role in consolidating these friendly ties. The conclusion of negotiations on a much-awaited tripartite agreement to export 40 MW of electricity from Nepal to Bangladesh via Indian grid opened up a new frontier of bilateral cooperation.

On the sidelines of United Nations Food Systems Summit in Rome on 25 July 2023, the Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and Bangladeshi Prime Minister Ms. Sheikh Hasina discussed expanding bilateral cooperation, especially in agriculture and hydropower sectors as well as within SAARC and BIMSTEC.

Furthermore, a bilateral meeting between the Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud and Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Mr. AK Abdul Momen took place on the margins of Doha Forum on 10 December 2023, which reinvigorated the momentum in growing bilateral relationship. During the third Nepal-Bangladesh Foreign Office Consultations held in Kathmandu on 17 April 2024, Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal and her Bangladeshi counterpart Mr. Masud Bin Momen reviewed multiple aspects of Nepal-Bangladesh relations and signed an MoU between Institute of Foreign Affairs of Nepal and Foreign Service Academy of Bangladesh.

Nepal's bilateral relations with Sri Lanka were further strengthened to mutual satisfaction of both sides. Growing people-to-people linkage founded on Buddhism and shared social and cultural values reflected a special hallmark of the bilateral ties. The first ever meeting of Nepal-Sri Lanka Joint Commission (JC) led by Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. N. P. Saud and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka Mr. M.U.M. Ali Sabry was held in Kathmandu on 20 December 2023. During this meeting, the two Foreign Ministers exchanged substantive views on deepening bilateral cooperation across trade, connectivity, investment, education, tourism, culture, and people-to-people exchanges.

Nepal and Pakistan had had cordial diplomatic relations marked by mutual respect, goodwill and beneficial cooperation. There remained considerable potential to further enhance these ties in areas of education, trade, tourism, and human resource development for mutual benefits. Both the countries worked closely on bilateral and multilateral fronts to promote global peace, stability, and sustainable development.

The friendly relations with Bhutan, the Maldives and Afghanistan grew steadily

during the review year.

NORTH-EAST ASIA

Nepal's relations with its friendly countries in North-East Asia were characterized by strong bonds of friendship, cordiality, and deepening cooperation. The increasing people-to-people linkages, high-level visits, economic partnerships and development cooperation and regular meetings of various bilateral mechanisms contributed to further cementing the hitherto cooperative relations.

On 5 May 2024, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Ms. KAMIKAWA Yoko paid an official visit to Nepal at the invitation of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha. During the bilateral talks, the Foreign Ministers reviewed the progress in bilateral cooperation and stressed enhancing economic, cultural and people-to-people relations. Additionally, two members of House of Councillors, The National Diet of Japan and the members of the Japan-Nepal Parliamentary Friendship League Mr. Kobayashi Kazuhiro, and Mr. Nagai Manabu visited Nepal from 21 to 25 August 2023.

The reporting year marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and the Republic of Korea. The Leaders of the two friendly countries exchanged messages to celebrate this milestone in thriving bilateral relations. The visit of Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of the Republic of Korea Mr. Chung Hwang-Keun on 1-3 November 2023 gained a spotlight with positive outcomes including through the signing of *Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of Nepal and the Republic of Korea on cooperation in the field of agriculture*.

Nepal and Mongolia enjoyed enduring friendship, supporting each other to advance shared interests of Land-locked Developing Countries (LLDCs) in regional and global forums including the UN. A delegation headed by Mrs. Munkhtsetseg Gompildoo, MP, Chairwoman of the Standing Committee on Education, Culture, Science and Sports of the State Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia visited Nepal from 17 to 20 December 2023.

Nepal and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea maintained cordial bilateral relations and forged cooperation in areas of mutual interests in regional as well as multilateral forums.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Nepal consolidated its close ties with the countries of the region based on cordiality,

mutual understanding, shared Asian values, and growing cooperation. Regular high-level visits, increasing presence of Nepali Diasporas for studies, employment and tourism, enhanced air connectivity, shared socio-cultural values founded on Buddhism, development cooperation, and collaboration in regional and global forums stand out as the hallmarks of such multifaceted relations.

From 27 November to 1 December 2023, Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina, Chairperson of the National Assembly of the Federal Parliament of Nepal, visited Australia, leading a parliamentary delegation. In February 2023, the Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud attended the Indian Ocean Conference at Perth, Australia and had a bilateral meeting with his Australian counterpart Ms. Penny Wong on the margins of the conference. He visited New Zealand on 13-14 February 2024 and held a bilateral meeting with Winston Peters, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) of New Zealand at Wellington.

An Australian parliamentary delegation led by Milton Dick MP, Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives, visited Nepal on 3-7 October 2023.

The second Nepal-New Zealand Foreign Ministry Consultation (FMC) was held on 14 February 2024 in Willington and took stock of various aspects of growing bilateral relations. Nepal's relations with Malaysia, Thailand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, the Philippines and Myanmar remained friendly and cooperative.

CENTRAL ASIA, WEST ASIA AND AFRICA

During the review period, Nepal nurtured friendly and cooperative relations with the countries in Central Asia, West Asia and Africa, particularly Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states- major foreign employment destinations for Nepali migrant workers. In engaging constructively with these labour destination countries, Nepal leveraged labour diplomacy with a particular focus on promoting safe, orderly, dignified and productive foreign employment opportunities for Nepali nationals, and protecting their rights and interests.

The Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' attended *COP 28* held in Dubai on 30 November-13 December 2023 and chaired a High-Level Roundtable on "Call of the Mountains: Who Saves Us from the Climate Crisis?" on the sidelines of the event. In his address, the Prime Minister highlighted the critical role of mountains for identity, ecological sustainability and humanity while underscoring collective climate action. His participation and address were instrumental in placing the agenda of mountains at the centre of climate dialogues. He also participated in the 19th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) themed "Deepening Cooperation for Shared Global Affluence" in Kampala, Uganda on 19 and 20 January 2024.

The State Visit by His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, to Nepal on 23 – 24 April 2024 opened new avenues for deepening Nepal-Qatar relations. During the visit, the Amir held bilateral talks with the Prime Minister Mr. Puspa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on various aspects of friendly bilateral relations and witnessed the signing of a host of Agreements and MoUs.

The Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud led a Nepali delegation to 21st edition of Doha Forum held on 10-11 December 2023 at Doha, Qatar. The Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security Mr. Sharat Singh Bhandari represented Nepal in the Ministerial Roundtable of the Global Labour Market Conference (GLMC) held in Saudi Arabia on 13 December 2023 and shared Nepal's perspectives on the important theme of "*Tomorrow's Labour Market: Fit for Growth*". The Minister of Finance Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat visited Egypt to attend the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) Board of Governor's Meeting held in Sharm el-Sheikh on 25-26 September 2023. Meanwhile, the Minister of Health and Population Mr. Mohan Bahadur Basnet participated in the Global Congress on Health, Population and Development held in Cairo on 4-9 September. The Minister of Forests and Environment Dr. Birendra Prasad Mahato attended the Sixth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya from 26 February-1 March 2024.

EUROPE AND AMERICAS

The relations between Nepal and the countries in Europe and Americas were further reinforced on the basis of abiding respect for sovereignty, adherence to international law, democratic values, environmental sustainability and norms of world peace. The regular exchanges of high-level visits, increasing cooperation in trade, FDI, development cooperation, enhanced people-to-people contacts and convening of meetings of various bilateral mechanisms further enhanced these friendly ties.

The year 2024 marked the 77th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and the United States of America. The shared values of peace, development, democracy and respect for human rights, as well as mutually beneficial cooperation remained a cornerstone of excellent bilateral relations. Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud paid an official visit to the United States of America from 30 October to 5 November 2023 at the invitation of the US Secretary of State Mr. Antony J. Blinken. The Finance Minister Mr. Barshaman Pun visited Washington, D.C. on 15-19 April 2024 to attend the IMF and World Bank Spring meetings.

The US Senator Mr. Chris Van Hollen visited Nepal from 1 to 3 September 2023. A significant number of artifacts of historical, cultural and religious importance were repatriated to Nepal with the assistance of the US authorities during the reporting

period.

The year 2023 represented a special milestone of the centenary of signing of the Nepal-UK Friendship Treaty of 1923. The Foreign Ministry organized Commemorative Programmes at Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square and Singhadurbar State Hall, Kathmandu to commemorate the 100 years of Nepal-United Kingdom Friendship Treaty of 1923 in November and December of 2023. On the occasion, Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud, as the chief guest, delivered his remarks highlighting the significance of the Treaty and its contribution to the bilateral relations between Nepal and the United Kingdom. Furthermore, Mr. Andrew Mitchell, Minister of State for Development and Africa of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom visited Nepal on 19-20 February 2024.

Nepal and the French Republic maintained a strong and positive relationship, characterized by friendship, goodwill, mutual understanding, and cooperation. The two countries celebrated 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in the reporting year. The fourth meeting of Nepal-France Bilateral Consultation Mechanism took place in Paris on 29 March 2024, where discussions covered various aspects of Nepal-France relations including trade, tourism, investment, climate change and other pressing issues of global concerns.

The President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel paid an official visit to Germany from 16-19 June 2024 at the invitation of President of the Federal Republic of Germany Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier. During this visit, the President Mr. Paudel held a bilateral meeting with the President of Germany and reviewed the entire gamut of Nepal-Germany relations with a focus on development cooperation, trade, tourism, investment, and vocational training. The third meeting of the Nepal-Germany Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held in Kathmandu on 20 March 2024. Additionally, Nepal and Germany signed a Joint Declaration of Intent (JDoI) on Skilled Labour Migration and Knowledge Transfer on 10 October 2023 during the visit of Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security Mr. Sharat Singh Bhandari to Germany.

The President addressed the inaugural Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice during the High-Level Segment of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva on 13 June 2024. The fourth meeting of Nepal-Switzerland Bilateral Consultations Mechanism was held at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Bern on 2 April 2024.

The relations between Nepal and the European Union (EU) remained cordial and cooperative. The year 2024 marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Nepal-EU diplomatic relations. The 15th meeting of the Nepal-EU Joint Commission was held in Kathmandu on 19 March 2024.

During the visit of Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security Mr. Sharat Singh Bhandari to Romania, a Labour Agreement between Nepal and Romania was signed on 06 October 2023. A three-member delegation led by Ms. Maria Stockhaus, Member of Parliament of the Swedish Riksdag, visited Nepal on 28-30 August 2023.

Nepal's relations with the Republic of Finland, founded on friendship, cordiality and cooperation, were further consolidated. The two countries celebrated 50th anniversary of the founding of their diplomatic relations. The second meeting of Nepal-Finland Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held in Kathmandu on 5 June 2024.

Nepal and the Russian Federation continued to enjoy friendly and cooperative relations over this period. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha had a telephone conversation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Mr. Sergey Lavrov on 7 March 2024 and discussed various aspects of bilateral relations including issues of Nepali citizens in Russian Army.

A parliamentary delegation led by Mr. Jerry Buttimer, Chairman of Seanad Eireann, Upper House of the Irish Parliament, paid an official visit to Nepal on 8 -12 January 2024 at the invitation of Chairman of National Assembly of Nepal Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina. On 18-23 September 2023, Speaker of the House of Representatives Mr. Devraj Ghimire paid an official visit to Ireland at the invitation of Speaker of the Lower House of Ireland Sean O' Fearghail.

Nepal and Brazil strengthened their amicable relations and expanded the areas of cooperation over this period. Mr. Dhan Raj Gurung, Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, participated in the Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination held in Sao Paulo on 29 November 2023 on the theme 'Putting racial equity and justice at the forefront of development'.

REGIONAL COOPERATION

Regional diplomacy and regionalism continued to remain a fundamental aspect of Nepal's foreign policy to foster regional unity, solidarity and cooperation for realizing shared goals of enduring peace, sustainable development and prosperity in the region and beyond. Nepal actively collaborated with fellow Member States within regional and sub-regional frameworks such as South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) to address persisting regional challenges like climate change and improve quality of life of the people through a 'whole of the region' approach.

As a committed founding member and current Chair of SAARC, Nepal participated in various meetings of SAARC mechanisms and remained committed to revitalizing SAARC process. Ambassador Mr. Md. Golam Sarwar from Bangladesh assumed office as the fifteenth Secretary General of SAARC on 25 October 2023. The Fifty-Ninth Session of SAARC Programming Committee was convened at the Secretariat in Kathmandu on 6-7 March 2024, which reviewed the progress of regional cooperation in the identified areas and finalized the budgets and calendars of activities of SAARC entities

Nepal placed great importance to its engagements in BIMSTEC as a new frontier of regional collaboration to leverage synergies of South Asia and South East Asia for peace, integration, and development in the Bay of Bengal. The entry into force of the BIMSTEC Charter on 20 May 2024 marked a new beginning for enhanced regional cooperation within BIMSTEC in shared interests of Member States. The Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud attended the BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' Retreat held in Bangkok on 17 July 2023 and deliberated on pertinent matters of regional cooperation initiatives. Ambassador Mr. Indra Mani Pandey from India assumed office as the Fourth Secretary General of BIMSTEC on 4 January 2024.

Nepal continued its active engagements in various mechanisms of ACD. In addressing the 18th ACD Ministerial Meeting held on 20 September 2023 on the sidelines of the 78th UNGA in New York, Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud highlighted disproportionate impacts of climate change on a Himalayan nation like Nepal and mentioned about national strategies to combat COVID-19, implement climate action and achieve SDGs

As a Dialogue Partner, Nepal participated in numerous meetings and activities of SCO in the review period.

MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS

Multilateral diplomacy remained a pivotal pillar in guiding Nepal's foreign engagements to advance a peaceful, equitable, inclusive, democratic and prosperous regional and global order. Nepal strongly championed for and supported strengthening multilateralism with United Nations at its core to uphold global public goods such as international peace and security, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), democratic values, human rights, disarmament, climate action and rules-based global governance. Nepal contributed significantly to the global efforts for revitalizing the UN General Assembly, and supported various initiatives to reform the UN to make it more effective, representative and fit for purpose.

As the largest contributor of troops and police for UN peacekeeping operations,

Nepal played a crucial role in maintaining global peace and security. Serving a second consecutive term in the Human Rights Council for 2021-2023 period, Nepal remained active in promoting and protecting human rights in accordance with the UN Charter and international law.

During the review period, Nepal actively participated in various high-level UN meetings and conferences at the highest political level, demonstrating its unwavering commitments to the vision, principles and purposes of this global institution. The Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' addressed the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 21, 2023. In his address, the Prime Minister highlighted political, social transformation in Nepal following the promulgation of a democratic Constitution in 2015; stressed progress in the home-grown peace process; and called for robust international support to address structural development challenges and climate vulnerabilities faced by LDCs and LLDCs like Nepal. He also took part in key UN meetings on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response; and Universal Health Coverage on the sidelines of the UNGA.

In his capacity as the Chair of the Group of the Least Developed Countries, the Prime Minister addressed the Plenary of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development and Climate Ambition Summit under the auspices of the UN General Assembly SDG Summit in September 2023. In his statement, he pointed out debilitating impacts of climate-induced natural disasters on LDCS despite their negligible greenhouse gas emissions and urged the development partners and the UN system to support their efforts for a sustained, smooth, and irreversible graduation.

Delivering a statement at the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development on 20 September 2023, the Prime Minister highlighted structural obstacles and climate crises hindering development process of the LDCs. He participated in the 28th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 28) in Dubai, UAE from November 30 to December 12, 2023 and hosted a high-level side event entitled "Call of the Mountain: Who Saves us from the Climate Crisis?".

The Prime Minister attended the 19th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) held in Kampala, Uganda on the theme of "Deepening Cooperation for Shared Global Affluence" on 19 January 2024. In his national statement, he underlined the importance for NAM countries to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, adhere to the Paris Agreement, and enhance concerted efforts to reform global financial architecture and the UN. Prior to the Summit, the Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud addressed the Plenary Session of the NAM Ministerial Meeting. In July 2023, in his address to the UN Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2) in Rome, the Prime Minister called for the need of international support to transform

agri-food systems across LDCs to achieve food security and end hunger.

Mr. Devraj Ghimire, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the federal parliament, participated in the 148th Session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly held on 23-27 March 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Foreign Minister Mr. N P Saud attended the Preparatory Ministerial Meeting for the Summit of the Future on 21 September 2023 on the sidelines of the UNGA78. In his statement, the Foreign Minister reaffirmed Nepal's steadfast commitments to uphold multilateralism under UN's stewardship and hoped that the Summit would reinvigorate multilateral solutions to global crises, restoring mutual trust, solidarity and robust global cooperation. As the chair of the Global Coordination Bureau of the Least Developed Countries, he convened annual Ministerial meeting of the Group, and addressed the 22nd Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries on the margins of the 78th Session of UNGA on 21 September 2023.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Mr. Purna Bahadur Khadka led a Nepali delegation to the United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial held in Accra, from December 5-6, 2023. In delivering his statement, he pledged to the UN peacekeeping efforts and called for improved coordination among stakeholders to accomplish the mandate of the peacekeeping missions.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health and Population Mr. Upendra Yadav addressed general discussion of the 57th session of the CPD and emphasized full implementation of ICPD POA to attain the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Likewise, Minister for Women, Children and Senior Citizens Ms. Bhagbati Chaudhary addressed the 68th session of the Commission on Status of Women on 18 March 2024 and stressed that inclusive and sustainable development is critical for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. The Minister for Health and Population Mr. Pradeep Yadav attended the 77th World Health Assembly (WHA77) held in Geneva from 27 May to 1 June 2024 under the theme "All for Health, Health for All".

Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal attended the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) on 15-16 January 2024, preceding the NAM Ministerial and Summit meetings; Third South Summit of the Group of 77 and China held on 21-22 January in Kampala. She also attended Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) held in St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda from 27 to 30 May 2024.

In keeping with its longstanding position to engage in and contribute to multilateral forums for the good of humanity, Nepal continued to serve in various leadership positions within UN system such as Chair of the Global Coordination Bureau of the Least Developed Countries for 2023-2026; Vice-President of the ECOSOC for 2024-2026; Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee of UN Technology Bank; Bureau Member of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries LLDCs (2021-2024) and more.

Nepal attended various high-level meetings of Human Rights Council (HRC), International Labour Organization (ILO), World Health Organization (WHO), World Trade Organization, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), UN Conference on Trade and Development, International Organization for Migration (IOM), and Colombo Process.

President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel delivered a keynote address at the Inaugural Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice (GCSJ) during the High-Level segment of the 112th International Labour Conference (ILC) in Geneva on 13 June 2024. In his address, the President highlighted major initiatives taken to ensure social justice for workers at home and reaffirmed Nepal's commitments to embrace social justice for all, aligning with the Constitution and International Labour Conventions. The Conference elected Nepal unanimously as the Deputy Member of the Governing Body of the ILO for a three-year term from 2024 to 2027.

The Minister for Labour, Employment, and Social Security Mr. Dol Prasad Aryal addressed the 112th International Labour Conference (ILC) held in Geneva on 03-14 June 2024 and stressed Nepal's commitments to promoting social justice and supporting global efforts to create a fairer and just world.

POLICY MATTERS, ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY AND OVERSEAS NEPALIS

During the review year, the Ministry collaborated with relevant line agencies of the Government of Nepal to enhance coordinated policy cooperation on substantive issues related to international relations, foreign policy and other domestic policies. The Ministry ensured full adherence to constitutional provision of the Government's accountability to the parliament by providing regular briefings, clarification and responses to both Houses of the Federal Parliament and various parliamentary committees.

The Ministry coordinated with Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, National Planning Commission, and Ministry of Finance as well as other governmental and private sector stakeholders to formulate and implement annual work plan (milestones), aligning with the government's annual policy, program and the fiscal budget. Continuing its flagship initiative, the Ministry successfully organized the third

edition of the Professor Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture series in Kathmandu on 14 May 2024. Prof. C. Raja Mohan, visiting professor and former director of the Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, delivered a lecture titled "Nepal-India relations: Prospects and Pathways".

Recognizing paramount importance of development diplomacy for accelerating socio-economic prosperity of the country, the Ministry conducted a host of economic diplomacy related programmes and activities through virtual, in-person and hybrid formats. The Ministry supported a successful organization of the Third Investment Summit in Kathmandu on 28-29 April 2024. As part of the Ministry's annual programme, an interaction program on "Maximizing Nepal's Benefits from the Rise of India and China" was held on 16 March 2024. A consultation program aimed at recommencing preparations for Sagarmatha Sambaad, postponed previously due to COVID-19, was organized under the convenorship of the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha in Kathmandu on 3 July 2024.

In partnership with the Honorary Consular Corps-Nepal (HCCN), Lumbini Conclave entitled "Global Peace for Prosperity" was organized in Bhairahawa, Rupandehi on 21-23 March 2024 for Non-Residential Ambassadors accredited to Nepal. A diplomatic excursion for the diplomatic corps in Kathmandu in partnership with Nepal Tourism Board was organized on 2-4 June 2024 in Pokhara.

The Ministry organized several interaction programmes on collective roles and collaboration of relevant Ministries of the Government of Nepal, Nepali missions and private sector stakeholders. These initiatives focused on promoting Nepal's trade, tourism, Brain Gain Centre and attracting FDI in priority areas of development at home as well as ensuring effective implementation of Nepal Trade Integrated Strategy (NTIS) 2080.

The Institute of Foreign Affairs of Nepal partnered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia to organize a programme entitled 'Dialogue for Democracy in Inclusive Society' in Kathmandu on 20 March 2024.

PROTOCOL, CONSULAR AND PASSPORT

The Ministry extended appropriate protocol facilities to high dignitaries of the Government of Nepal and friendly foreign countries during their incoming and outgoing official visits. In commensurate with prevailing national laws and relevant international law, the diplomatic corps based in Kathmandu were granted diplomatic immunities and privileges. As an authoritative institution on protocol matters, the Ministry ensured strict adherence to protocol formalities during special ceremonies

and events, and offered policy briefings to foreign missions in Kathmandu as well as relevant authorities at the federal, provincial and local levels in this regard.

The Department of Passports- the first Government agency certified with NS/ISO 9001:2015 for its quality passport services- maintained its proud legacy during the review period. The issuance of e-passport services from the Department and Nepali missions abroad was further institutionalized. A total of 1,473,050 passports in all categories were issued, generating revenue of NRs. 382,782,793,401 in the review year.

The Department of Consular Services catered various consular services to Nepali citizens, foreign diplomatic missions and other regional, international organizations based in Kathmandu in commensurate with domestic legal frameworks and international law. These services included document attestation, visa and exemption facilities to diplomatic personnel, legal assistance to Nepali nationals, including their rescue, relief and repatriation during emergencies. The Department coordinated with local foreign missions and Nepali missions abroad to ensure smooth, effective and efficient consular services, leveraging its digital platforms and those of other line agencies. An integrated consular application enabled customers and service providers to access the database for verifying documents and tracking status of services rendered. Advancing further reform initiatives, the Department launched online attestation of Police Clearance Certificate, online grievance handling system, and online demand attestation system.

The Department attested a total of 700927 documents and generated revenue of NRs. 352,140,539 during the review period.

ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

To effectively carry out its mandated functions and responsibilities, the Ministry highly prioritized strengthening both institutional and human resource capacities through various policy initiatives and interventions. The diplomatic and other staff members were provided entry-level and in-service trainings on important aspects of international relations, foreign policy, diplomacy, and public management. Additionally, the staff were nominated to participate in various capacity-building programmes hosted by friendly countries and development partners abroad. With a focus on knowledge diplomacy and effective modern statecraft, the Ministry prioritized the development of competent, dynamic and moral cadres dedicated to building a better nation and the world at large amidst regional and global geopolitical complexities.

Review of Nepal's Foreign Relations

Report on Nepal's Foreign Affairs (2023-2024)

NEIGHBOURHOOD

Neighbourhood represents a paramount significance in Nepal's foreign policy priorities, driven by several compelling factors such as geographical proximity, economic partnerships, interconnected history, common socio-cultural values, resource complementarities and strong people-to-people connections. These natural drivers serve as catalysts, fostering deeper cooperation and engagements among neighbouring countries to promote mutual interests and benefits. To ensure enduring peace, stability and sustainable development at home and in the region, Nepal undersocred forging friendly and collaborative ties with the neighbouring countries across economic, political, socio-cultural, technical, strategic and scientific fields.

During the review period, Nepal maintained traditionally close, cooperative and multi-dimensional relationships, marked by friendship, mutual trust, solidarity, economic partnerships and strong people-to-people linkages, with its neighbours. Good neighbourliness, respect for sovereignty, adherence to UN Charter, international law, beneficial cooperation, and appreciation of each other's interests and sensitivities guided these diverse and deepening relations.

Nepal's multidimensional relations with India and China were further consolidated through the exchanges of high-level visits, conclusion of vital agreements, remarkable growth in bilateral cooperation, business-to-business partnerships, and enhanced people-to-people contacts. In its diplomatic engagements with the immediate neighbours, Nepal maintained a principled stance of not allowing any inimical activities in its territory that could jeopardize their core interests. Nepal continues to value and appreciate both the neighbours for their consistent support and respect for Nepal's sovereignty, territorial integrity and national independence.

INDIA

Nepal and India fostered traditionally close, friendly and multidimensional relationships founded on age-old connections of history, economy, culture, tradition and religion as exemplified by deepening economic cooperation and deep-rooted people-to-people engagements. The multi-faceted bilateral relations are firmly anchored in the principles of Panchasheela, friendship, sovereign equality, mutual trust, solidarity and appreciation of each other's core interests and sensitivities.

The ever-expanding bilateral cooperation focused on important sectors such as trade, tourism, FDI, energy, education, health, infrastructure development, agriculture, and people-to-people exchanges to advance fundamental interests of the two countries and peoples. The regular high-level visits and timely meetings of various bilateral

mechanisms helped strengthen these cooperative ties.

Official Visit of the Prime Minister of Nepal to India

Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' paid an official visit to India on 9-10 June 2024 at the invitation of the Prime Minister of India. The Prime Minister attended a swearing-in ceremony of Shri Narendra Modi who assumed the office of the Prime Minister of India for a third consecutive term on 9 June 2024 in New Delhi.



(Prime Minister Prachanda with the President, Vice-President and the Prime Minister of India)

During the visit, Prime Minister Dahal called on the President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on 10 June 2024. Likewise, Union Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar, who was later assigned the portfolio of the Minister for External Affairs, paid a courtesy call on the visiting Nepali Prime Minister. The bilateral matters of mutual interests featured during these discussions.

2nd Voice of Global South Summit

Prime Minister Mr Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' addressed the Leaders' Session of the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit on 17 November 2023 in a virtual format. The Session was hosted by the Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi on the

theme of "Global South: Together for One Future".



(Prime Minister Prachanda addressing the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit in virtual format)

The Prime Minister stated that the Global South needs to champion inclusive and sustainable global growth, in which the Global South receives a fair share to eradicate poverty and give their people a decent life.

Seventh Meeting of the Nepal- India Joint Commission

The seventh meeting of the Nepal-India Joint Commission was held in Kathmandu on 4 January 2024. Leading their respective delegations, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal Mr. N.P. Saud and Minister of External Affairs of India Dr. S. Jaishankar cochaired the meeting.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed all aspects of bilateral relations in areas of cooperation including connectivity, infrastructure development, economic partnership, trade, transit, investment, power, water resources, culture, tourism, sports, health and education. The two Ministers expressed satisfaction over mutual support in the regional, sub-regional and multilateral forums on the matters of common interest. The Minister Saud raised the issues of additional air entry routes, and matters related to

floods and inundation. Views were also exchanged on the review of Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950, security and boundary related matters.



(The Foreign Minister of Nepal and the External Affairs Minister of India at the 7th Joint Commission Meeting in Kathmandu)

Both the ministers expressed happiness over the momentum generated in further consolidating Nepal-India relations following the meetings held between the Prime Ministers of Nepal and India in 2022 and 2023. They also lauded the progress on Indian assistance for post-earthquake reconstruction in housing, education, health, and culture heritage sectors in Nepal.

The two Ministers also remotely inaugurated the 132 kV cross-border transmission lines between Nepal and India, namely the second circuit of Raxaul Parwanipur line, the second circuit of Kataiya-Kusaha line and the New Nautanwa-Mainhiya line.

The following agreements were signed and exchanged during the Joint Commission:

- I. Agreement between the Government of Nepal and the Government of the Republic of India on Long-Term Power Trade.
- II. Agreement between Government of Nepal and the Government of India regarding Indian Grant Assistance for Implementation of High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) through Governmental Organizations or any Other Organizations.

- III. Memorandum of Understanding for Co-operation in the Renewable Energy Development between Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) and NTPC Limited.
- IV. Agreement by and between Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) and New Space India Limited (NSIL) a CPSE under Department of Space, Government of India on behalf of Indian Space Research Organization, Department of Space, Government of India for The Launch Service for Munal satellite on Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).

The Minister of External Affairs of India Dr. S. Jaishankar paid courtesy calls on the President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel and the Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' during his visit. During the calls on, various issues of mutual interest were discussed

Foreign Minister Participated in the Raisina Dialogue 2024

Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. N. P. Saud participated in the 9th edition of the Raisina Dialogue held in New Delhi, India on 21-23 February 2024. Addressing a panel discussion on "Development Deficit: Towards a Post 2030 Agenda" on 23 February 2024, Minister Saud stressed the need for creating proper platforms and developing inclusive processes to forge cooperation mechanisms that adequately address the financial divide between nations. Among other things, he highlighted the need for both South-South and North-South cooperation to realise the sustainable development goals.

Minister Saud held a bilateral meeting with Minister of External Affairs of India Dr. S. Jaishankar on 23 February 2024. The meeting focused on enhanced cooperation between the two countries, including in the areas agreed upon during the recently concluded Seventh Meeting of the Nepal-India Joint Commission.

The Nepali Foreign Minister also addressed the Global Tourism Meet at the India Habitat Centre on the same day, where he highlighted Nepal's immense tourism attractions, particularly for Indian tourists and emphasised the need for increased collaboration between Nepal and India in the tourism sector.

Foreign Secretary participates in the Asia Economic Dialogue 2024

Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal participated in the inaugural session of the 8th edition of the Asia Economic Dialogue in Pune, India on 29 February 2024. The inaugural session was focused on promoting economic integration in South Asia including expanding all forms of connectivity.



(Foreign Secretary during a call on the External Affairs Minister of India)

Addressing a session in the Dialogue, Ms. Lamsal stressed the need for policy initiatives to enable additional cooperation in the region, particularly in hydropower, agriculture, and tourism sectors. She also focused on the sustainable integration of the region.

During her visit to India, Foreign Secretary Lamsal paid a courtesy call on the Minister of External Affairs of India Dr. S. Jaishankar. She also held meeting with the Foreign Secretary of India Mr. Vinay Mohan Kwatra.

Fifteenth Meeting of Nepal-India Bilateral Consultative Group on Security Issues

The 15th Meeting of Nepal-India Bilateral Consultative Group on Security Issues (BCGSI) was held on 5 October 2023 in Pokhara. The Nepali delegation, which included officials from the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Home Affairs and Nepal Army was led by Mr. Bhrigu Dhungana, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Indian delegation was led by Mr. Anurag Srivastava, Joint Secretary,

Ministry of External Affairs of India.

The meeting was focused on matters of mutual interest including training and capacity building, cooperation in disaster management, joint expeditions in adventure activities. Established in 2003, the BCGSI is an important bilateral institutional mechanism between Nepal and India.

11th meeting of the Joint Steering Committee on Power Sector Cooperation (JSC)

The 11th meeting of the Joint Steering Committee on Power Sector Cooperation (JSC) between Nepal and India was held in Chitwan on 5 January 2024. The meeting followed the signing of the Agreement on Long Term Power Trade between India and Nepal on 4 January 2024. This was preceded by the 11th meeting of the Joint Working Group on Power Sector Cooperation (JWG) held on 3 January 2024 in Kathmandu. These meetings comprehensively reviewed the bilateral power sector cooperation between Nepal and India.

Visit of Nepali Parliamentary Delegation to India

A Nepali parliamentary delegation comprising members from the Parliamentary Committee on International Relations and Tourism of the House of Representatives led by Chairperson Mr. Raj Kishor Yadav, visited India from 30 January to 6 February 2024 at the invitation of the International Committee of the Indian Parliament. The Nepali delegation called on Speaker of the Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla, External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar, Minister of State for External Affairs Shri V. Muraleedharan and Minister of State for Tourism, Shri Shripad Y. Nayak.

The Nepali delegation visited Goa to meet the Tourism Minister of Goa Mr. Rohan Khaunte and discussed greater cultural exchanges and tourist flow between Goa and Nepal. Apart from visiting the Wankhade Cricket Stadium in Mumbai, the delegation also called on Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Shri Yogi Adityanath during their visit to Lucknow.

Visit of Chief Justice to India

The Chief Justice of Nepal Mr. Bishowambhar Prasad Shrestha, led a delegation of the Supreme Court of Nepal to the diamond jubilee establishment program of the Supreme Court of India, held in New Delhi on 27 January 2024.

7th Nepal-India Coordination Meeting

The Inspector General of the Armed Police Force of Nepal, Mr. Raju Aryal, led a Nepali delegation to participate in the 7th Nepal-India coordination meeting between

the Armed Police Force of Nepal and Sashastra Seema Bal of India. During the meeting, both sides resolved to implement additional measures to strengthen coordination and collaboration between the two border forces.

Nepal Country Program at Vibrant Gujarat

A special Nepal country program was organized as part of the Vibrant Gujarat in Gandhinagar, India on 10 January 2024. The Finance Minister Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat spoke on Nepal's investment opportunities and possible economic cooperation between Nepal and India and highlighted significant investment opportunities in Nepal's energy, tourism, agriculture, information technology, education, production, construction, transport, mines, banking, and financial services sectors. The Finance Minister also invited investors to participate in the Third Nepal Investment Summit, scheduled to be held on 28-29 April 2024 in Kathmandu, Nepal. Several investors from Gujarat have shown interest in investing in Nepal.

Visit of National Defence College (NDC), India

A delegation from the 63rd course of the National Defence College (NDC), India visited Nepal for from 27 August to 31 August 2023. The visiting delegation, led by Air Vice Marshal Manish Kumar Gupta, Senior Directing Staff (Air Force), paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Minister for Defence Mr. Purna Bahadur Khadka, Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. N.P Saud and Minister of Home Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha.

CHINA

Nepal and China enjoyed excellent relations as close neighbours and trusted friends. Both the neighbours treasured historically rich, cooperative and multi-dimensional relations based on a rock-solid foundation of Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, mutual cooperation, good neighbourliness, and understanding of each other's sensitivities. Nepal and China kept up the momentum to further broaden the spectrum of cooperation in diverse areas of mutual interests and benefits.

Nepal-China bilateral engagements were steered by good neighbourhood diplomacy based on sincerity, amity, inclusiveness and mutual benefits. During the review period, China remained one of the largest FDI providers, a major trading partner, and a significant source country of foreign tourists to Nepal. China's development cooperation contributed significantly to Nepal's socio-economic development

trajectory, reflecting strong bonds of friendship and genuine partnership.

Visit of Vice President Mr. Ramsahay Prasad Yadav to China

The Vice President Mr. Ramsahay Prasad Yadav visited Kunming of Yunnan province of China to attend the 7th China-South Asia Expo with Nepal as a 'Theme Country' and the 27th China-Kunming Import and Export Fair- Kunming Fair- during 16 to 20 August 2023. The Vice President was accompanied by his spouse Mrs. Champa Devi Yadav, Mr. Ashok Kumar Rai, Minister for Education, Science and Technology, and other senior officials of the Government of Nepal.



(Nepal as a Theme Country in 7th China-South Asia Expo)

Vice President Mr. Yadav delivered a keynote speech during the official opening ceremony of the 7th China-South Asia Expo, along with the inauguration of 'Nepal Pavilion' for Nepali traders to showcase their products.



(Vice President Mr. Ramsahay Prasad Yadav addressing the 27th China-Kunming Import and Export Fair)

Vice President held bilateral discussions with Mr. Wang Yi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China and the leaders of the People's Government of Yunnan province on matters of mutual interests, including trade promotion, investment, tourism, education and health in Kunming on 17 August 2023. The leaders of the People's Government of Yunnan province hosted a banquet following the meeting in honour of the Vice President of Nepal.



(Discussion between Vice President Mr. Ramsahay Prasad Yadav and Mr. Wang Yi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China)

Official Visit of the Prime Minister to China

Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' paid an official visit to China on 23-30 September 2023. This was the first high-level visit since the visit of President H.E. Mr. Xi Jinping to Nepal in 2019. The Prime Minister arrived in Hangzhou city of China on 23 September and had a meeting with H.E. Mr. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China in the afternoon. During the occasion, the two leaders discussed the ways and means of further consolidating the bilateral relations so happily existing between Nepal and China.

The Prime Minister congratulated the people and the Government of the People's Republic of China on hosting the 19th Asian Games. He expressed that as a close neighbor Nepal is keen to benefit through increased trade, investment, connectivity and socio-economic cooperation as Nepal is set to graduate from the LDC status by 2026. President Xi Jinping expressed happiness over the excellent status of bilateral cooperation between Nepal and China based on close friendship, cordiality and good neighborliness.



(Prime Minister 'Prachanda' Meeting with Mr. Xi Jinping, President of China)

Report on Nepal's Foreign Affairs (2023-2024)

Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and his delegation arrived in Beijing from Hangzhou on 24 September 2023. In the afternoon, the Prime Minister addressed the Nepal-China Business Summit jointly organized by the Federation of Nepali Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI) and the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) and interacted with the business leaders, investors and the business community in China.



(Prime Minister addressing the Nepal-China Business Forum organized by FNCCI and CCPIT on 24 September 2023)

Premier of the People's Republic of China Mr. Li Qiang welcomed the Prime Minister with a formal ceremony at the Great Hall of the People on 25 September 2023. After the official welcome ceremony, delegation-level bilateral talks were held with His Excellency Li Qiang, Premier of People's Republic of China and various issues of cooperation and the essential aspects were discussed in detail, which helped to further heighten Nepal-China relations.



(Delegation level bilateral talks between Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and Premier Mr. Li Qiang at Great Hall of the People on 25 September 2023)

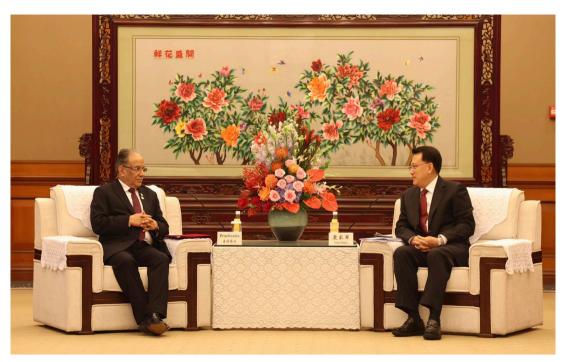
The two leaders witnessed the signing ceremony of the following twelve documents (Agreements, Memorandum of Understanding, Letters of Exchange, and Handover Certificate) between Nepal and China:

- 1. Agreement Between the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Government of Nepal and the Ministry of Science and Technology of the People's Republic of China on Cooperation in the Fields of Science, Technology and Innovation
- 2. Protocol of Phytosanitary Requirements for Export of Plant-derived Medicinal Materials for the Chinese Medicine from Nepal to China Between the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development of the Government of Nepal and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China
- 3. MoU for Cooperation between The National Planning Commission of Nepal and The National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China
- 4. MoU between the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology

- of the Government of Nepal and the National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China Concerning Enhancing Digital Economy Cooperation
- MoU Between the Ministry of Forests and Environment of the Government of Nepal and the National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China Concerning Cooperation on Green and Low-Carbon Development
- 6. MoU on Cooperation in the field of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Between the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development of the Government of Nepal and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the People's Republic of China
- 7. Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of a Joint Technical Working Group for the Review and Modification of the Nepal-China Trade and Payment Agreement, 1981 Between the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies of Nepal and The Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China
- 8. MoU Between the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, the Government of Nepal and the National Administration of Press and Publication of the People's Republic of China on the Translation and Publication of Classics
- 9. MoU on the Hilsa-Simkot Road Project and the Nepal China Power Grid Interconnection Project (Chilime-Kerung) between the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport of the Government of Nepal and China International Development Cooperation Agency, China
- 10. Exchange of Letters for the China-aid Disaster Relief Material
- 11. Exchange of Notes between China International Development Cooperation Agency and relevant department of the Government of Nepal to organize series of training courses for Nepali Government Officials in order to strengthen exchanges and cooperation between Nepal and China in the field of Human Resources Development
- 12. Handover Certificate of the Production and Living Materials for Northern Hilly Region of Nepal (2017) Between the Government of Nepal and the Government of the People's Republic of China

The Prime Minister attended the banquet hosted in his honour and his delegation by the Chinese Premier at the Great Hall of the People. Earlier in the morning of 25 September 2023, the Prime Minister also held a meeting with the Chairman of National People's Congress Mr. Zhao Leji.

The Prime Minister arrived in Chongqing municipality in the afternoon of 26 September 2023. The Prime Minister Dahal had a meeting with Mr. Yuan Jiajun, Member of the Political Bureau of the Chinese Political Party Central Committee and Secretary of the CPC Chongqing Municipal Committee. During the meeting, both leaders exchanged views on consolidating close and friendly relations subsisting between Nepal and China particularly in the areas of agriculture, air connectivity, and tourism and trade promotion. Both sides underscored the need to strengthen cooperation for industrial growth, foreign direct investment and digital technology for shared prosperity of both countries



(Prime Minister during the Meeting with Mr. Yuan Jiajun, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and the Secretary of the CPC Chongqing Municipality Committee 26 September 2023)

In the evening, the Prime Minister Mr. Dahal was paid a courtesy call on by Liu Jianchao, Minister of International Department of CPC Central Committee.

The Prime Minister visited Chongqing Academy of Agricultural Sciences where he observed the use of science and technology for agricultural development as well as ecological preservation.



(Prime Minister during the visit to the Chongqing Academy of Agricultural Park, 26 September 2023)

Prime Minister Dahal reached Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) of China in the afternoon of 27 September 2023. In the same evening, the Prime Minister held a bilateral meeting with Mr. Wang Junzheng, Secretary of the CPC Tibet Autonomous Regional Committee of the People's Republic of China in Lhasa. During the meeting, the Prime Minister expressed satisfaction over the excellent state of bilateral relations between Nepal and China. He highlighted the traditional socio-economic and cultural connection with China's TAR. The two sides discussed matters relating to furthering socio-economic cooperation, enhancing understanding and goodwill through high level of exchanges, consolidating the ongoing cooperation activities and exploring new areas of cooperation.



(Prime Minister during the bilateral meeting with Mr. Wang Junzheng, Secretary of the CPC Xizang Autonomous Regional Committee, 27 September 2023)

The Prime Minister and the entourage reached Chengdu city of Sichuan province of China on 29 September 2023, in course of his official visit to the People's Republic of China.

Mr. Wang Xiaohui, Secretary of the Communist Party of China Sichuan Provincial Committee as well as the Chairman of the Standing Committee of Sichuan Provincial Peoples' Congress paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister 'Prachanda' in the evening. On 30 September 2023, the Nepali delegation flew to Kathmandu in the morning after completing the official visit to the People's Republic of China.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs visits the People's Republic of China

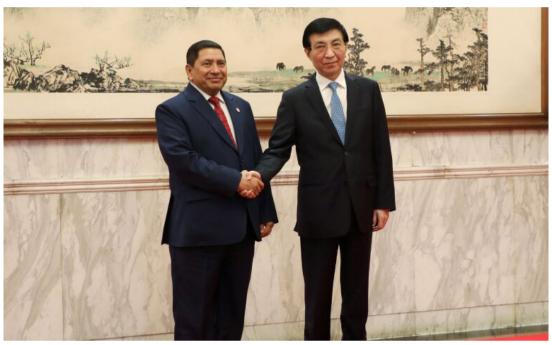
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha paid an official visit to the People's Republic of China from 24 March to 1 April 2024 at the invitation of Mr. Wang Yi, Member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

During the visit, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Shrestha held bilateral meeting with Mr. Wang Huning, Member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo of the CPC Central Committee and Chairman of the Chinese People's

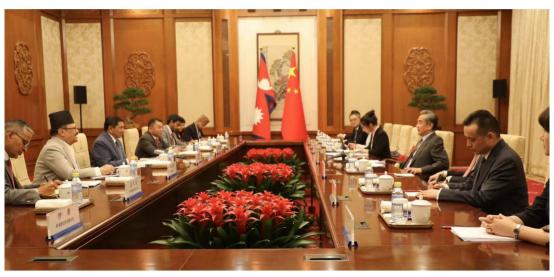
Political Consultative Conference at the Diaoyutai State Guest House, Beijing.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs held a bilateral meeting with his counterpart Mr. Wang Yi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of China while the two leaders assessed the state of bilateral relations and expressed commitments to work together to further elevate the friendly ties between Nepal and China. The Meeting discussed matters relating to reopening of the border trade points, establishing a Joint Commission at the ministerial level, and providing free Chinese Visa to Nepali nationals, among others.

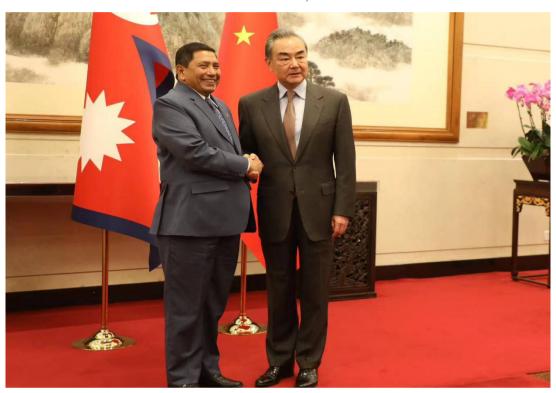
The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs held friendly meetings with Ms. Sun Haiyan, Vice Minister of the International Department of Central Committee of CPC; Mr. Wang Junzheng, Secretary of the CPC Tibet Autonomous Regional Committee; Mr. Yuan Jiajun, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Secretary of the CPC Chongqing Municipal Committee; and Mr. Huang Qiang, Governor of the People's Government of Sichuan Province. Matters relating to further enhancing the relationship and cooperation between Nepal and China and promoting mutual interests were discussed during the high-level meetings.



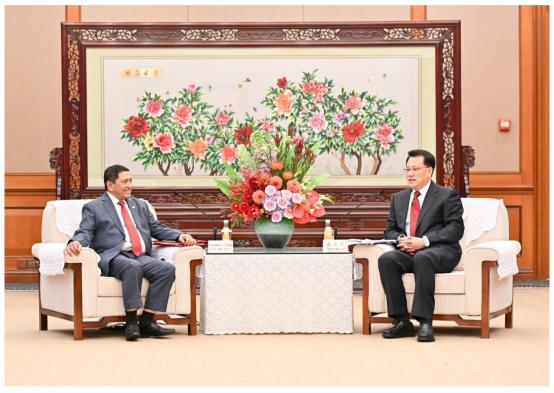
(Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha meeting with Mr. Wang Huning, Member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference)



(Bilateral Meeting between Nepali and Chinese delegation led by the leaders from both sides)



(Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha with Mr. Wang Yi, Member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China)



(Meeting between Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha and Mr. Yuan Jiajun, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Secretary of the CPC Chongqing Municipal Committee)

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha led a Nepali delegation to the 3rd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF) held in Beijing from 16 to 20 October 2023.

The event covered such topics as the policy and progress of the 'High-Level Forum on Green Development,' The Deputy Prime Minister addressed the Forum and highlighted the importance of connectivity for the economic development of a landlocked country like Nepal. He underlined Nepal's all-out effort to strengthen connectivity with China through roads, railways, airway, ports, and grids in an orderly manner as envisaged under the Trans-Himalayan Multidimensional Connectivity Network.

While in China, he held a meeting with his counterpart Mr. Wang Xiaohong, Member of the Secretariat of Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, State Councilor and Minister of Public Security of the People's Republic of China.

Mr. Shrestha attended a dinner hosted by Chinese President Mr. Xi Jinping on the first day of the conference where heads of government and state from nearly three dozen countries took part in.

The Belt and Road Forum reviewed the implementation and progress of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a significant international project initiated by China to foster sustainable development, cooperation among nations, the development of infrastructure, and environmental conservation.

The delegation accompanying the Deputy Prime Minister included Narayan Prasad Bhattarai, Joint Secretary and Spokesperson of the Home Ministry; Amrit Bahadur Rai, Joint Secretary of the Foreign Ministry; Anil Pokharel from the Disaster and Risk Reduction Authority, among others.



(During a Group photo with distinguished guests attending the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, 18 October 2023)

Reopening of the traditional border trade points between Nepal and China

A Nepali delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha attended the reopening ceremony of 14 traditional border trade points between Nepal and China at Chentang, Tibet, China, (opposite to Kimathanka,

Sankhuwasabha, Koshi Province) on 25 May 2024.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Vice Chairman of Tibet Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China Mr. Silang Nima jointly declared reopening of all traditional border trading points between Nepal and China on the occasion.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs stated during the occasion that reopening of all traditional border trading points is a landmark decision which would greatly contribute to make the daily lives of the bordering peoples easier and comfortable, facilitate cross-border trade, foster economic ties, and further elevate the exemplary bilateral relations.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs underlined the need for enhancing cooperation in vital priority areas of Nepal's development such as trade, investment, technology transfer, hydropower, manufacturing, infrastructure development, tourism, agriculture, connectivity, culture, and education. He added that Nepal expects visible results in the fields of economic and development cooperation from China in coming days. He further stressed that both sides need to work to making Visit Nepal Year 2025 in China a success by carrying out result-oriented joint activities, including in the Tibet Autonomous Region.



(Reopening Ceremony of Nepal-China Traditional Border Trade Points)

Visit of Deputy Chairperson of National Assembly to China

A delegation led by Deputy Chairperson of National Assembly of the Federal Parliament of Nepal Mrs. Urmila Aryal visited the People's Republic of China from 4 to 8 October 2023 to participate in the 3rd China Xizang Trans-Himalayan Forum for International Cooperation.



(National Assembly Vice Chairperson Mrs. Urmila Aryal addressing the 3rd China Xizang Trans-Himalayan Forum)

Deputy Speaker of House of Representatives visits Tibet, China

Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives Ms. Indira Rana attended the 4th Trans-Himalayan Forum in Tibet, China during her visit to China from 3 to 5 July 2024.



Deputy Speaker Ms. Indira Rana addressing the Forum)

Addressing at the Forum, she stressed that the Trans-Himalayan Forum has remained important institutional-platform to enhance connectivity, and to develop co-operation among the countries of this region. This Forum will provide the broader prospects and opportunities to exchange ideas, and to pave way for further co-operations among the countries in an open environment. This Forum will support not only the BRI, but also promote the socio-economic interactions including the trade, transit and investment among the countries.

NepaliParliamentaryDelegationParticipates in "Workshop for Parliamentarians" in Beijing

Mr. Hitraj Pandey led a 20-membered delegation of Nepali parliamentarians to Beijing from 20 to 29 December 2023. The delegation participated in the specialized course "Workshop for Parliamentarians of Nepal" organized by the Academy of International Business Officials (AIBO), Beijing.

Foreign Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister attended Boao Forum for Asia 2024

Dr. Rupak Sapkota, Foreign Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister visited Hainan Province of China to participate in the Boao Forum for Asia's Annual Conference 2024 held on 26-29 March 2024. Speaking at a discussion panel entitled 'Supporting High-Quality Belt and Road Cooperation', he stressed that each country's unique development strategy should be respected. Dr. Sapkota emphasized that the capacity of the global south countries like Nepal should be enhanced gradually by implementing medium-sized projects first before undertaking large flagship projects under BRI.

Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal attended and addressed the 4th China-South Asia Cooperation Forum organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China and the People's Government of Yunnan Province of China.



(Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal addressing the 4th China-South Asia Cooperation Forum)

After the conclusion of the 7th China-South Asia Expo and the 27th Kunming Fair, the Vice President of Nepal and the Nepali delegation returned Kathmandu on 21 August 2023.

CPC Delegation's Visit to Nepal

The delegation from the Communist Party of China (CPC) led by Mr. Yuan Jiajun, Member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC of the People's

Republic of China and Secretary of Chongqing Municipal Committee visited Nepal from 23 to 25 July 2023. The delegation paid courtesy calls on Mr. Ramchandra Paudel, President of Nepal and Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Prime Minister of Nepal on 23 July 2023.



(Courtesy call on Mr. Ramchandra Paudel, President by Mr. Yuan Jiajun, Member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPC of the People's Republic of China and Secretary of Chongqing Municipal Committee)

The delegation attended the launching ceremony of the 'Lighting the Future' Nepal-China Political Parties' Livelihood and Poverty Alleviation Action on 24 July 2023 with Devraj Ghimire, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Nepal as the Chief Guest.

Border Defense Delegation of Tibet Military Command visits Nepal

The Border Defense Delegation of Tibet Military Command from Chinese People's Liberation Army, People's Republic of China comprising 8 members led by Maj. Gen. Mr. Yue Ande visited Nepal from 16 to 20 August 2023. The delegation paid a courtesy call on Inspector General of the Armed Police Force Mr. Raju Aryal during the visit. The delegation visited Nepal Army Command and Staff College, Western Division Headquarters, Special Force Brigade and Military Museum, among others.

Visit of Ms. Zeng Yan, Member of the Standing Committee of CPC Yunnan Province

Ms. Zeng Yan, Member of Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Yunnan Provincial Committee, Head of Publicity Department of Yunnan Province, and her delegation visited Nepal from 18 to 20 September 2023. Ms Zeng paid a courtesy call on Vice President of Nepal Mr. Ramsahay Prasad Yadav on 18 September 2023.

Visit of Mr. Li Bingrong from Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region

A Chinese delegation led by Mr. Li Bingrong, Deputy Chairman of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China (Vice-Minister Level) visited Nepal from 16 to 20 October 2023.

Mr. Wang Junzheng's Visit to Nepal

Party Secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China Mr. Wang Junzheng visited Nepal from 08 to 11 November 2023. The delegation paid courtesy calls on President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel, Vice President Mr. Ramsahay Prasad Yadav, Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Chairperson of the National Assembly Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina, Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha, Minister of Federal Affairs and General Administration Ms. Anita Devi, Chief Minister of Gandaki Province Mr. Surendra Raj Pandey, among others.

During the meetings, various aspects of bilateral relations between Nepal and China were discussed. The two sides took stock of Nepal-China relations and exchanged views on further promoting bilateral relations and cooperation for mutual benefit. They underscored the importance of exchanging high-level visits and stressed the need for timely implementation of the agreements concluded and understandings reached between the two countries.

Both sides agreed to promote cooperation in various sectors including trade, transit, connectivity, investment, health, tourism, poverty alleviation, disaster management, education, culture, and people-to-people exchanges, among others. They stressed the need to activate bilateral mechanisms to enhance cooperation and partnership.

Both sides exchanged views on continuing cooperation in various regional and multilateral forums on matters of mutual interests.



(Party Secretary of TAR having a Courtesy Meeting with the Prime Minister on 9 November 2023)

During the visit, two bilateral agreements were signed:

- 1. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Establishment of Sister City Relation between Bharatpur Metropolitan City, Chitwan District, Bagmati Province, Nepal and Shigatse City, Tibet Autonomous Region of Republic of China
- 2. Memorandum of Understanding on Project Aid to Nepal.

Vice Secretary of the Standing Party Committee of Jiangxi Province Ms. Wu Zhongqiong's Visit to Nepal

A delegation led by Ms. Wu Zhongqiong, Vice Secretary of the Standing Party Committee of Jiangxi Province of the People's Republic of China visited Nepal from 19 to 22 November 2023. The delegation paid courtesy calls on Mr. Ashok Kumar Rai, Minister for Education, Science and Technology and Mr. Salikram Jamarkattel, Chief Minister of Bagamati Province. Ms. Wu also attended Jiangxi Province Promotion Conference titled "Introducing Jiangxi to Nepal" with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha as the Chief Guest.



(Ms. Wu Zhongqiong addressing the program "Introducing Jianxi to Nepal")

Mr. Wang Ruijun visits Lumbini

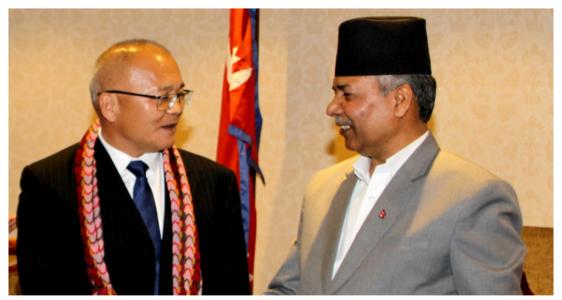
Mr. Wang Ruijun, Member of Standing Committee of CPC Guangdong Provincial Committee, President of Guangdong Overseas Friendship Association and his delegation visited Nepal from 14 to 16 December 2023. The six-membered delegation visited Lumbini and met with Mr. Lharkyal Lama, Vice Chairman of Lumbini Development Trust.



(Mr. Wang Ruijin meeting with Mr. Lharkyal Lama and officials of Lumbini Development Trust)

Mr. Shi Yugang's visit to Nepal

Mr. Shi Yugang, Deputy Secretary of Standing Committee of CPC Yunnan Provincial Committee and his delegation visited Nepal from 4 to 6 January 2024. During his stay in Nepal, he paid courtesy calls on Vice President Mr. Ramsahay Prasad Yadav, Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Development Dr. Bedu Ram Bhusal and Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Mr. Sudan Kirati. During the Meetings, Mr. Shi shed light on the similarities between Nepal and Yunnan Province with special emphasis on agriculture, livestock, tourism, and cultural aspects.



(Mr. Shi Yugang during the courtesy call on Vice President Mr. Ramsahay Prasad Yadav)

Venerable Master Yin Shun's visit to Nepal

A Chinese delegation led by Venerable Master Yin Shun, Member of the National Committee of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Vice Chairman of the Buddhist Association of China, and Buddhist Abbot of Zhong Hua Chinese Buddhist Monastery of Nepal (Minister level) visited Nepal from 14 to 19 January 2024. He attended the Laba Festival at Zhong Hua Chinese Buddhist Monastery in Lumbini.

Ms. Sun Haiyan, Vice Minister of the IDCCCPC visits Nepal

Ms. Sun Haiyan, Vice Minister of the International Department of Central Committee of Communist Party of China led a delegation to visit Nepal from 26 to 29 January 2024. The delegation organized the Communist Party of China (CPC) and Nepali Political

Parties Joint Consultation Conference on 28 January with a view to implementing the consensus reached by the leaders of both sides.



(Ms. Sun Haiyan addressing the Joint Consultation Conference)

CIDCA delegation visits Nepal

A four member delegation of China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) led by Mr. Tian Lin, Chief of Supervision Department visited Nepal from 29 February to 03 March 2024. Mr. Lin held separate meetings with Mr. Krishna Prasad Dhakal, Chief of North East Asia Division and officials at Ministry of Finance. The delegation visited eight different projects of Chinese aid in Kathmandu and Pokhara.



(Meeting between CIDCA delegation and the Head of North East Asia Division, MoFA)

Chairman of China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) Mr. Luo Zhaouhui visits Nepal



(Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and Mr. Luo Zhaouhui)

Chairman of China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) Mr. Luo Zhaouhui and his delegation visited Nepal on 25-28 April 2024 and attended the Nepal Investment Summit 2024. During his visit, Mr. Zhaouhu paid courtesy calls on Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha, and Minister for Finance Mr. Barsha Man Pun. During the occasion, the both Nepali and Chinese side signed two agreements that are related to human resources development cooperation and bone marrow transplant.

Vice Chairman of Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) of the People's Republic of China Mr. Lang Fukuan visits Nepal

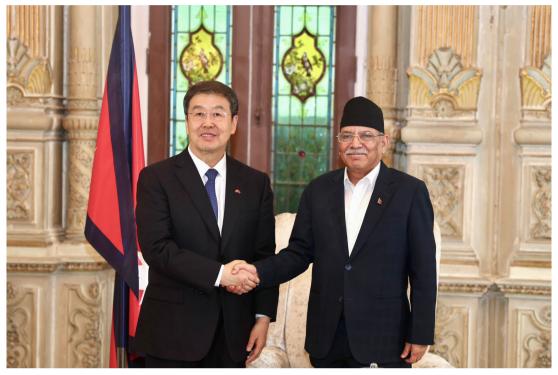


(During the inauguration of 17th Nepal-China (Tibet) Economic and Trade Fair)

The Vice Chairman of Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) of the People's Republic of China Mr. Lang Fukuan leading a delegation visited Nepal from 28 April to 2 May 2024 to participate in the 17th Nepal-China (Tibet) Economic and Trade Fair. During his visit, Mr. Fukuan paid courtesy calls on Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Mr. Damodar Bhandari, Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies.

Vice Chairman of National Committee of the CPPCC visits Nepal

A delegation led by Mr. Bateer, Vice Chairman of National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference visited Nepal from 5 to 7 June 2024 and paid courtesy calls on Vice President Mr. Ramsahay Prasad Yadav, Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha, and Deputy Speaker of House of Representatives Ms. Indira Rana.



(Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and Mr.Bateer)

Visit of Mr. Liu Guixiang, Justice and Full-time Member of the Adjudication Committee of the Supreme People's Court

Mr. Liu Guixiang, Justice and Full-time Member of the Adjudication Committee of the Supreme People's Court of the People's Republic of China visited Nepal from 16 to 19 June 2024. During the visit, Mr. Guixiang paid courtesy calls on Chief Justice of Supreme Court of Nepal Mr. Bishowambhar Prasad Shrestha and Minister for Law Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Mr. Padam Giri. Matters relating to bilateral relations and cooperation in the areas of Administration of Justice between Nepal and China were discussed during the occasion.



(Minister for Law Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Mr. Padam Giri with Mr. Liu Guixiang, Justice and Full-time Member of the Adjudication Committee of the Supreme People's Court of the People's Republic of China)

16th Meeting of the Nepal-China Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism

The 16th Meeting of the Nepal-China Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism was held on 25 June 2024 at Kathmandu. Ms. Sewa Lamsal, Foreign Secretary of Nepal led the Nepali delegation to the Meeting and Mr. Sun Weidong, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of China led the Chinese delegation. During the Meeting, the two sides reviewed the whole gamut of bilateral relations between Nepal and China and assessed the progress made in the implementation of agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) signed and the decisions made in the past. They expressed firm commitment to further promote cooperation in mutually agreed areas and committed to work in realization of economic opportunities for mutual benefits.

Vice Minister Mr. Weidong visited Nepal from 24 to 26 June 2024 to hold delegation level talks. He paid courtesy calls on President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel, Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha.



(16th Meeting of Nepal-China Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism in Kathmandu)

Vice Governor and Commissioner of Public Security Department of Sichuan Province Visits Nepal

Mr. Ye Hanbing, Vice Governor and Commissioner of Public Security Department of Sichuan Province of China visited Nepal from 18 to 20 June 2024. He held delegation level talks with Home Secretary Mr. Eak Narayan Aryal and paid courtesy call on Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs Mr. Rabi Lamichhane.



(Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs Mr. Rabi Lamichhane with Vice Governor and Commissioner of Public Security Department of Sichuan Province of China Mr. Ye Hanbing)

Meeting of Joint Expert Group

The Meeting of Joint Expert Group on Nepal-China border matters was hosted by the Chinese side in Beijing from 18 to 19 June 2024. The Nepali delegation was led by the Director General of Survey Department Mr. Prakash Joshi and included officials from Ministry for Foreign Affairs as well as the Survey Department of the Government of Nepal.

Eleventh Meeting of Nepal-China's Tibet Trade Facilitation Committee (NTTFC)

The eleventh meeting of the Nepal-China's Tibet Trade Facilitation Committee was held in Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China on 25-26 July 2023. The Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Ram Chandra Tiwari, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies while the Chinese delegation was led by Mr. Gao Baojun, Deputy Secretary General of the People's Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region of China. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral trade relations between Nepal and TAR of China. The meeting explored new domains of cooperation in trade, transit, connectivity, trade-related infrastructures, among others.

The Nepali delegation paid a courtesy call on Mr. Wang Yong, Vice-Chairman of the People's Government of the TAR of China followed by a banquet dinner hosted by the Vice-Chairman in honour of the Nepali delegation. Various matters of mutual interest including the promotion of economic cooperation and connectivity enhancement were discussed during the call on.



(Eleventh Meeting of the Nepal-China's Tibet Trade Facilitation Committee)

SOUTH ASIA

Nepal's bilateral relations with the countries in South Asia witnessed positive growth through exchanges of high-level visits, increased cooperation in trade, tourism, FDI, socio-cultural engagements and people-to-people ties. Geographical proximity, connections of history, culture, shared civilizational values, and peaceful worldview remained crucial drivers in enhancing mutually beneficial partnerships across diverse areas of mutual interests. Regular meetings within various bilateral mechanisms served as important platforms to deliberate current state of bilateral affairs, address challenges, and foster mutual understanding for future initiatives.

BANGLADESH

During the review year, Nepal-Bangladesh relations continued to flourish in all areas of cooperation including trade, transit, tourism, energy, education and people-to-people linkages. Exchange of high-level visits, along with interactions at the level of prime ministers and foreign ministers and parliamentary exchanges, played a pivotal role in further consolidating the friendly ties. Meetings of bilateral mechanisms including foreign office consultations and commerce secretary level meetings held in Kathmandu were instrumental in deepening bilateral relations with a focus on economic engagements between the two countries.

A much-awaited tripartite agreement for the export of 40 MW of electricity from Nepal to Bangladesh through the Indian grid was concluded. This beginning of the first ever power trade between Nepal and Bangladesh will pave the way for greater energy collaboration at the (sub)regional level.

Bilateral Meeting between Prime Ministers of Nepal and Bangladesh

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' held a bilateral meeting with H.E. Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, on the sidelines of the United Nations Food Systems Summit in Rome, Italy on 25 July 2023. During the meeting, the two Prime Ministers discussed broader areas of bilateral cooperation with a particular emphasis on strengthening collaboration in agriculture and hydropower sectors between the two countries. They also deliberated on ways to enhance regional cooperation under the frameworks such as SAARC and BIMSTEC.

Bilateral Meeting between Foreign Ministers of Nepal and Bangladesh

Foreign Minister Mr. N. P. Saud held a meeting with H. E. Mr. AK Abdul Momen, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh on 10 December 2023 on the sidelines of Doha Forum. Matters of mutual interests and ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation in areas such as trade, energy, tourism, and connectivity between the two countries were discussed during the meeting.

Visit of Chief Justice of Nepal to Bangladesh

At the invitation of Chief Justice of Bangladesh Mr. Obaidul Hassan, Chief Justice of Nepal Mr. Bishowambhar Prasad Shrestha visited Bangladesh from 6-9 June 2024 to attend the "International Conference on Judiciary Across the Borders: 21st Century Challenges and Experiences from the Himalayas and Beyond" held in Dhaka on 7-8 June 2024.

As the Guest of Honour of the Conference, Chief Justice Mr. Shrestha delivered a keynote address on 08 June 2024. He underscored that the Constitution of Nepal guarantees judicial independence as a core value. While highlighting the crucial components of judicial reform aimed at enhancing fairness, efficiency, and public trust, he stressed the ongoing preparations to formulate the 5th five-year strategic plan of the Judiciary.

The Chief Justice had a meeting with his Bangladeshi counterpart and Justices of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh on 7 June 2024.

Visit of Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives to Bangladesh

Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Federal Parliament of Nepal Ms. Indira Rana Magar visited Bangladesh from 19-23 November 2023. While in Dhaka, the Deputy Speaker had a meeting with the Deputy Speaker of the National Parliament of Bangladesh Md. Shamsul Haque Tuku on 22 November 2023. During the meeting, they exchanged views on matters of mutual interest and discussed the role of parliamentary exchanges in further strengthening the bilateral ties.

Third Round of Nepal-Bangladesh Foreign Office Consultations

The Third Round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) between Nepal and Bangladesh was held in Kathmandu on 17 April 2024. Nepali delegation to the Consultations was led by Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal while Bangladesh delegation was led by Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh Mr. Masud Bin Momen.

During the FOC, the two Foreign Secretaries reviewed diverse aspects of Nepal-Bangladesh relations and discussed different issues of mutual interest and agreed to promote cooperation encompassing various sectors, especially trade and commerce, transit and connectivity, power and energy sector, tourism, culture and education.

Both Foreign Secretaries emphasized on the operationalization of the BBIN MVA framework to contribute to the individual country's economy by expanding trade and connectivity and creating more opportunity to promote people-to-people contacts. Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh Mr. Masud emphasized the need for expeditious conclusion of tripartite power agreement among Bangladesh, India and Nepal in order to import electricity from Nepal to Bangladesh. Expressing his gratitude to the Government of Nepal for allocating land for the construction of a Monastery in Lumbini, he stated that it would be a milestone in bilateral relations and people-to-people interactions.

The two Foreign Secretaries also discussed regional issues of mutual interest including revitalizing SAARC and strengthening BIMSTEC. They agreed to cooperate at various multilateral forums, especially at the UN to pursue common interests especially in the areas of LDC graduation, poverty alleviation, climate change, and safety and security of migrant workers. On the occasion, an MoU between the Institute of Foreign Affairs of Nepal and the Foreign Service Academy of Bangladesh was signed by the two Foreign Secretaries.

Nepal-Bangladesh Commerce Secretary Level Meeting

The seventh Nepal-Bangladesh Commerce Secretary Meeting (CSLM) was held in Kathmandu on 18-19 April 2024. The Nepali delegation was led by Commerce Secretary Mr. Dinesh Kumar Ghimire while the Bangladeshi delegation was led by Bangladesh's Commerce Secretary Mr. Tapan Kanti Ghosh. The delegations made deliberations on economic partnership and commercial linkages between Nepal and Bangladesh and discussed ways to strengthen trade linkages between the two countries. The two sides reiterated the importance of harmonizing and streamlining customs procedures to bolster trade facilitation.

Visit of Parliamentary Delegations

An eleven-member parliamentary delegation, jointly led by Chairperson of Agriculture, Cooperatives, and Natural Resources Committee Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba, and Chairperson of Sustainable Development and Good Governance Committee of the Federal Parliament of Nepal Mr. Prakash Pantha visited Bangladesh from 2 to 7 October 2023. During their visit, the parliamentary delegation called on the Speaker of the National Parliament of Bangladesh Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury where they exchanged views on the role of parliamentarians in further consolidating the bilateral ties.

The visiting parliamentary delegation held a meeting with the Minister for Agriculture

of Bangladesh Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, where the two sides exchanged views on exploring ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in the agriculture sector, including through technology transfer and sharing of best practices. The delegation also had an interaction with the Standing Committee on Ministry of Agriculture of the National Parliament of Bangladesh, chaired by Mr. Md. Qamrul Islam. The delegation also had a separate meeting with the State Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Md. Shahriar Alam.

Likewise, at the invitation of Climate Parliament of Bangladesh, a delegation comprising members of parliament Mr. Pradip Paudel, Mr. Thakur Gaire, Mr. Madhav Sapkota, and Ms. Sobita Gautam visited Bangladesh to attend the Regional Climate Summit-2023 held in Dhaka on 8-10 September 2023. The visiting parliamentarians participated in various sessions of the Summit and deliberated on the role of parliamentarians in shaping climate policies, fostering international cooperation, holding governments accountable, and mobilizing public support for climate action. The visiting parliamentary delegation called on Speaker of the National Parliament of Bangladesh Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury on 11 September 2023. The meeting emphasized the need to have regular parliamentary exchanges and stressed the role of parliamentarians in addressing current crises such as climate change.

Visit of H.E. Mr. Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change of Bangladesh

H.E. Mr. Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change of Bangladesh visited Nepal from 21-23 May 2024 to address the 'International Expert Dialogue on Mountains, People, and Climate Change' held in Kathmandu on 22-23 May 2024. He underscored the critical role of the Hindu Kush Himalayas in the global climate landscape, describing the region as 'ground zero for climate change.' He further stressed the paramount importance of de-carbonization, pointing out the inherent limitations of current adaptation and mitigation measures.

The visiting Minister also called on Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'. During the call on, the overall aspects of Nepal-Bangladesh relationship was discussed with a focus on cooperation on climate change and environment and the scope to increase trade possibilities between the two countries.

Visit of H. E. Mr. Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, State Minister for Shipping of Bangladesh

H.E. Mr. Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury State Minister for Shipping of Bangladesh visited Nepal on 23-24 March 2024. The visiting Minister held a meeting with Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies of Nepal Mr. Damodar Bhandari on 23

March 2024. The two Ministers discussed ways to increase bilateral trade and further improve connectivity, particularly between land ports of Banglabandha in Bangladesh and Kakarbhitta in Nepal. The visiting Minister also visited Mechi Customs Office and Kakarbhitta Inland Clearance depot during his trip.

Engagements of the Embassy of Nepal, Dhaka

During the period under review, the Embassy of Nepal in Dhaka organized a number of economic and public diplomacy programmes with a view to promoting Nepal's trade, tourism, and culture, and enhancing people-to-people linkages. Major programmes organized by the Embassy included, A three-day 'Photography Exhibition' to observe the International Mount Everest Day-2024 on 31 May-2 June 2024, a Pre-event Seminar on the Third Nepal Investment Summit 2024 on 30 March 2024, an event on 'Strengthening Nepal-Bangladesh Tech Relations' on 31 August 2023, an 'Essay Writing Competition-2023' in October/November 2023, Nepal Tourism Promotion event under the theme 'Next Door Nepal: Your Ultimate Travel Destination' in Dhaka on 5 July 2024, and Nepal-Bangladesh Friendship Golf Tournament-2023 organized in collaboration with Tiger Golf Club Bangladesh at Gokarna Golf Course in Kathmandu from 5-9 October 2023.

SRI LANKA

The bilateral relations between Nepal and Sri Lanka continue to be marked by goodwill, mutual understanding and cooperation. There is a close people-to-people connect based on the similarities of culture and religion. Lumbini remains a significant pilgrimage site for Sri Lankan Buddhists. Students from both Nepal and Sri Lanka continue to pursue higher education in various educational institutes of the other country. A small number of Nepali nationals are employed in the construction sector in Sri Lanka.

First Meeting of Nepal- Sri Lanka Joint Commission

The first meeting of Nepal-Sri Lanka Joint Commission (JC) was held in Kathmandu on 20 December 2023. Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. N. P. Saud and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka Mr. M.U.M. Ali Sabry, led their respective delegations to the meeting. The meeting reviewed the overall state of bilateral relations between Nepal and Sri Lanka. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged substantive views on further deepening bilateral relations and expanding cooperation in the areas of trade, connectivity, investment, education, tourism, culture, and people-to-people relations.

The two sides also agreed to continue cooperation in the areas of mutual interest

at regional and multilateral forums including in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral Technical Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and the United Nations (UN). A Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Fields of Science, Technology and Innovation between the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Nepal and the Ministry of Education of Sri Lanka was signed and exchanged at the meeting. During his visit to Nepal, the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'. Discussions were held on matters of mutual interest between Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Engagements of the Embassy of Nepal, Colombo

The Embassy organised a Tourism and Investment Promotion program on 16 February 2024 under the theme of "Discover the Himalaya Wonder: Explore the Cultural Treasures" to provide additional information regarding the Investment Summit in Nepal. Similarly, Sagarmatha Day was celebrated on 28 May 2024. The Embassy also participated in the council meetings of the Colombo Plan as well as in Consultative Committee Meetings of SACEP (South Asia Co-operative Environment Program).

BHUTAN

Nepal and Bhutan continue to cooperate in the areas of civil aviation, tourism, culture, forests and the environment. Both countries share a common landlocked and mountain topography and work closely in the regional and multilateral forum to tackle similar developmental challenges, including climate change.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. N. P. Saud held a bilateral meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade of Bhutan Mr. Dina Nath Dhungyel on 22 February 2024, on the sidelines of the 9th edition of the Raisina Dialogue held in New Delhi, India. The meeting focused on enhancing cooperation between the two countries in mutually beneficial areas.

THE MALDIVES

The bilateral relations between Nepal and The Maldives are marked by goodwill, mutual understanding and cooperation. The two countries continue to work together in the multilateral forum on issues of common interests. There is an increase in people-to-people engagement with a significant number of Nepali medical as well as other professionals working in The Maldives. There are a number of Maldivian students who are pursuing higher education in various educational institutes of Nepal.

Visit of Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of The Maldives

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives Mr. Ahmed Khaleel paid a courtesy call on the Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud and held meeting with Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal on 29 October 2023. On both occasions, various matters of bilateral relations were discussed.

PAKISTAN

During the review period, Nepal and Pakistan maintained their cordial diplomatic relations marked by goodwill and support. There remains considerable potential to further enhance these ties for mutual benefits. Both countries work closely together in bilateral, regional, and multilateral forums, sharing similar perspectives on numerous issues of common interest. This collaboration reflects a shared commitment to advancing peace, stability, and sustainable development.

Visit of Senior Pakistani Civil Servants to Nepal

A delegation of senior civil servants from Pakistan (participants of National Management Course from NSPP, Pakistan) visited Nepal on 18-23 May 2024. The delegation paid a courtesy call on Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal on 20 May 2024. The visiting delegation also had meetings with the Policy Research Institute, Nepal Rastra Bank and the Nepal Administrative Staff College.

Trade Facilitation:

The Embassy of Nepal, Islamabad facilitated export of Nepali tea to the Pakistani market. As a result, 100,000 kg Nepali tea was exported to Pakistan during this period.

Engagements of the Embassy of Nepal, Islamabad

The Embassy held a talk program on 'Nath Tradition in Nepal and Pakistan' in November 2023. Dr Bholanath Yogi spoke on the tradition and its roots in Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Attok and other places in Punjab and Sindh and its influence in Sufism songs and poetry. The event highlighted the strong cultural links and exchanges between Nepal and Pakistan.

On the occasion of the 114th International Women's Day, the Embassy organized a Meditation Programme entitled "Vipassana: Stress Management and Inner Peace for a Better World" in Islamabad. The event saw the participation of many meditation practitioners and enthusiasts. The event fostered greater awareness of stress management and inner peace as pathways to a better world. It also offered participants practical insights into Vipassana practices for personal well-being and stress relief.

The Embassy also shared details of Vipassana centers in Nepal for the participants to visit and explore more in Nepal.

The Embassy organized a special programme on the occasion of the 2568th Buddha Jayanti in Islamabad to highlight major tenets in the Buddhist philosophy like mindfulness, compassion, non-violence. Many Nepali and Pakistani participants attended the programme and interacted on the relevance of these ideals for a peace and meaning in life. The event saw active participation from both Nepali and Pakistani attendees, who engaged in meaningful discussions on the relevance of these principles for fostering peace and purpose in life. Nepal's image as a promoter of peace was reinforced through the event, highlighting its commitment to fostering mindfulness, compassion, and non-violence.

AFGHANISTAN

Nepal and Afghanistan have had historical linkages and a long bilateral diplomatic relationship. Nepal wishes to see lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan, a fellow member of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the continued progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Afghanistan.

NORTH EAST ASIA

Nepal consolidated its cordial and cooperative relationships with the countries of North East Asia, based on principles of amity, mutual trust, mutual respect, and growing collaboration. The multi-faceted relations were further elevated with high-level visits, political dialogues, development partnerships, stronger people-to-people ties and mutual cooperation in various global forums including the UN.

Overall, Nepal and the North East Asia region maintained excellent state of cooperation in diverse areas of mutual interests such as trade, tourism, foreign employment, FDI, development cooperation, health, education, energy, infrastructure development and more. And yet, there exist ample opportunities to harness untapped potential for mutual growth and development.

JAPAN

Nepal and Japan cherished excellent ties with renewed friendship, increased development cooperation and enhanced mutual collaboration. The Foreign Minister of Japan Ms. KAMIKAWA Yoko paid an official visit to Nepal at the invitation of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha.

Japan and Nepal heightened their bilateral relations by fostering impactful development partnerships, and strengthening people-to-people linkages. The Japanese assistance encompassed a wide array of areas such as health, education, transport, and infrastructure development.

A growing presence of Nepali diasporas in Japan remained an important driver in bringing two nations significantly closer than ever.

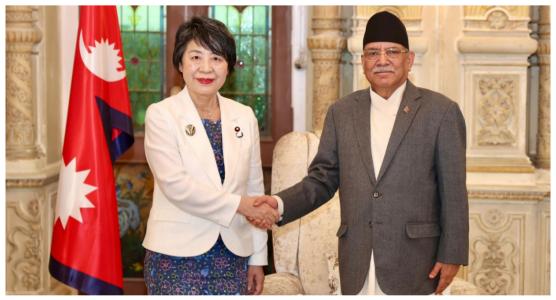
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan visits Nepal

Ms. KAMIKAWA Yoko, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, paid an official visit to Nepal on 5 May 2024 at the invitation of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Shrestha held bilateral talks with Ms. KAMIKAWA at the Ministry. The two leaders reviewed the progress made in bilateral relations and cooperation and discussed the whole gamut of bilateral relations focusing on enhancing economic and development cooperation as well as cultural and people-to-people relations ahead.

Recognizing that the Year 2026 will mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Nepal-Japan diplomatic relations, the two leaders underscored the need to commemorate the milestone with high-level exchanges and various events. The both

sides discussed matters relating to enhancing cooperation between two countries at bilateral, regional as well as multilateral levels in the areas of mutual interests.

During her visit, Ms. KAMIKAWA paid courtesy calls on President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel and Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'. Matters relating to further strengthening the bilateral relations, development cooperation, and mutual interests were discussed on the occasion.



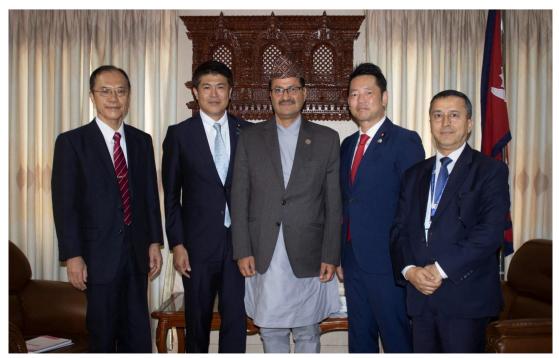
(Ms. KAMIKAWA Yoko with Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda')



(Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha with Ms. KAMIKAWA Yoko)

Japanese Parliamentarians' Visit to Nepal

Two members of House of Councillors, The National Diet of Japan and the members of the Japan-Nepal Parliamentary Friendship League Mr. Kobayashi Kazuhiro, and Mr. Nagai Manabu visited Nepal from 21 to 25 August 2023. The visiting delegation paid courtesy calls on the President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel; Chairperson of National Assembly Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina; Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. N.P. Saud; and other dignitaries of the Government of Nepal.



(Mr. Kobayashi Kazuhiro with Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. N.P. Saud)

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

The reporting year marked the 50^{th} anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and the Republic of Korea. The two countries celebrated the occasion with joy and utmost significance. Leaders of the two countries exchanged messages to mark the momentous occasion.

The friendly and cooperative ties between Nepal and the Republic of Korea were further strengthened during the reporting period. Both the countries maintained the momentum of increased bilateral engagements, development partnership, vibrant people-to-people relations and cooperation in regional and international forums.

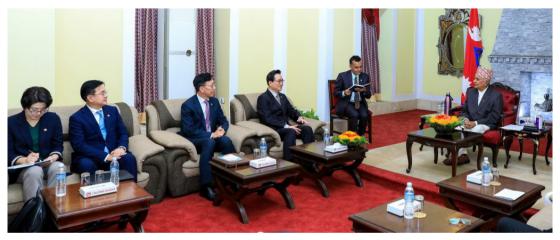
The visit of Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of the Republic of Korea became the highlight of the year as Nepal witnessed the first minister-level visit from the Republic of Korea in more than a decade. The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on Agriculture marked the success of the visit.

In the review year, Nepal received enhanced development assistance from the Republic of Korea, as a priority country in Asia. Through KOICA in particular, the Republic of Korea continued its contribution to Nepal's development in priority areas as such, energy, education, health, rural and human resource development, among others.

It is encouraging that Korean investment, including from Hyundai and Samsung, in Nepal continued to increase in this fiscal year. The increasing number of Nepali diaspora in the Republic of Korea has become a vibrant bridge linking the two economies, peoples and countries.

South Korean Agriculture Minister's visit to Nepal

Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of the Republic of Korea Mr. Chung Hwang-Keun visited Nepal from 1 to 3 November 2023. The delegation had a courtesy meeting with President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel, Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Development Mr. Beduram Bhushal. Various matters of bilateral relations and mutual interests between two countries were discussed during those meetings. Furthermore "Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of Nepal and the Republic of Korea on cooperation in the field of agriculture" was signed on the occasion.



(During the courtesy call on President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel by the delegation)



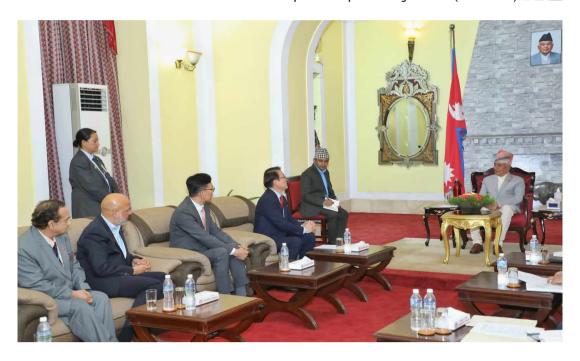
(Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Development Mr. Beduram Bhushal and Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of the Republic of Korea Mr. Chung Hwang-Keun during the MoU signing ceremony on 2 November 2023)

Visit by Chairperson of Culture, Sports and Tourism Committee of the National Assembly and President of Nepal-Korea Parliamentary Friendship Group to Nepal

Mr. Sang-heon Lee, Chairperson of Culture, Sports and Tourism Committee of the National Assembly and President of Nepal-Korea Parliamentary Friendship Group and his team visited Nepal on 16 April 2024. During his visit to Nepal, Mr. Lee paid courtesy calls on various high-level dignitaries of Nepal including Chairperson of National Assembly Mr. Narayan Prasad Dahal; Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security Mr. Dol Prasad Aryal; and Minister for Youth and Sports Mr. Biraj Bhakta Shrestha.

Visit of the Samsung delegation to Nepal

Corporate President of Samsung Mr. Seung Hee Park and his team visited Nepal on 10-11 September 2023. Mr. Park and his team paid a courtesy call on President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel on 11 September 2023. Mr. Park shed light over the areas of possible technological cooperation between Samsung and Nepal during the call-on.



(President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel receives courtesy call by Samsung Corporate President Mr. Seung Hee Park)

MONGOLIA

Nepal and Mongolia enjoyed the long-standing friendship and cooperation during the reporting period. The bilateral relations continued to be guided by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, non-alignment, the *Panchsheel* and the norms of world peace. Both countries extended mutual support for their shared interests, as Land-locked Developing Countries (LLDCs), in regional and international forums including the United Nations. Growing people-to-people contacts encouraged by Buddhism since ancient times remained yet another hallmark of Nepal-Mongolia relations over the review year too.

Parliamentary delegation from Mongolia visits Nepal

A delegation headed by Mrs. Munkhtsetseg Gompildoo, MP, Chairwoman of the Standing Committee on Education, Culture, Science and Sports of the State Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia visited Nepal from 17 to 20 December 2023. Mrs. Gompildoo and her delegation held separate meetings with Mr. Bhanubhakta Joshi, Chairman of Education, Health and Information Technology Committee of the Federal Parliament of Nepal and Mr. Sudan Kirati, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation. Chairwoman Mrs. Gompildoo highlighted the need for a greater cultural

cooperation between Nepal and Mongolia in coming days.



(Mrs. Munkhtsetseg Gompildoo shaking hands with Mr. Sudan Kirati at the latter's office)

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

During the reporting period, Nepal and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea maintained cordial bilateral relations. The friendly ties was enhanced with cooperation in areas of mutual interests in regional as well as multilateral forums. Nepal stood with its long-standing policy for peace and stability in the Korean peninsula.

In addition, the two countries celebrated the golden jubilee of the establishment of their diplomatic ties with exchange of messages.

The Embassy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in Nepal was closed effective from 1 January 2024.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION

Home to over 700 million agile population and covering nearly a quarter of world's land area endowed with natural resources, rich civilizational and cultural heritage and a pivotal role in global economy, the South-East Asia and the Pacific holds a prominent place in Nepal's foreign engagements. This dynamic region serves as key avenues for promoting export trade, tourism, employment opportunities; attracting FDI and acquiring innovative technologies for shared growth and development.

In the review period, Nepal continued its diplomatic efforts to deepen cooperative relations with the countries of the region through greater engagements and partnerships. This economically rising region remained among attractive destinations for Nepali nationals, seeking employment, higher studies and tourism. In this context, the growing Nepali diaspora in the region became a vital bridge to expand the government-to-government cooperation down to the grassroots levels and ensuring that people benefit from dividends of development collaboration.

The common Asian values founded on Buddhism, mutual trust, mutual respect and cooperation in bilateral, regional and multilateral forums including the UN played a pivotal role in strengthening cordial ties between Nepal and the countries of the region.

AUSTRALIA

The close and cooperative relations between Nepal and Australia witnessed sustained, sound and steady growth in the review period. The bilateral visits, conclusion of cooperation agreements and regular meetings of bilateral mechanisms helped cement political understanding, economic partnerships, socio-cultural exchanges and peopleto-people ties.

Visit of the Chairperson of National Assembly to Australia

Chairperson of the National Assembly Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina visited Australia leading a parliamentary delegation from 27 November to 1 December 2023. During the visit, Chairperson Mr. Timilsina held a meeting with President of the Senate of Australia, Senator Sue Lines, and Speaker of the House of Representatives Milton Dick MP in the Parliament House on 30 December 2023. During the meeting, they expressed their pleasure over the happily subsisting bilateral relations as well as growing exchanges of high-level visits and underlined the importance of further consolidating bilateral relations between the two countries.



(National Assembly Chairperson Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina during a joint meeting with Sue Lines and Milton Dick MP)

The dignitaries also exchanged their substantive views on the parliamentary functions and systems in federal set-up both in Nepal and Australia.

Visit of Foreign Minister to Australia

Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud visited Australia on 8-13 February 2023 to participate in the Indian Ocean Conference.



(Foreign Minister Narayan Prakash Saud addressing to the 7th Indian Ocean Conference)

In the margin of conference, the Foreign Minister held bilateral meetings with Senator Penny Wong, Foreign Minister of Australia at Perth on 9 February 2024. While exchanging views on matters of mutual interests, both the ministers expressed their happiness over the steadily growing bilateral relations between Nepal and Australia.



(Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud during a meeting with his Australian counterpart Senator Penny Wong)

Visit of Australian Federal Parliament Speaker to Nepal

An Australian parliamentary delegation led by Milton Dick MP, Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives, visited Nepal on 3-7 October 2023. This is the first ever visit of Australian Parliamentary delegation to Nepal in over six decades of diplomatic ties with Nepal. He held talks with Mr. Devraj Ghimire, Speaker of House of Representatives and Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina, Chairperson of the National Assembly. During the occasion, Nepal also formed a Nepal-Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group.

Signing of Nepal-Australia TIFA

Nepal and Australia signed "Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement between the Government of Nepal and the Government of Australia" (TIFA) on 9 February 2024.



(Assistant Foreign Minister Tim Watts MP and Ambassador Kailash Raj Pokharel signing TIFA)

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Mr. Kailash Raj Pokharel, Ambassador of Nepal to Australia and Tim Watts MP, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, signed the Framework Arrangement on behalf of their respective governments. With the conclusion of TIFA, the bilateral economic relation between Nepal and Australia is expected to grow for mutual benefit.

Launch of Parliamentary Friends of Nepal, NSW

Parliament of New South Wales (NSW) formed 'Parliamentary Friends of Nepal' aiming to enhance connection with Nepali communities living in NSW and serve their genuine interest. Inaugural program to launch parliamentary friends of Nepal, NSW was held on 14 March 2024. Although federal parliament of Australia has formed such friendship group, NSW has become first state to establish such mechanism.



(Nepali Ambassador Mr. Kailash Raj Pokharel and Australian parliamentarians during launching of Parliamentary Friends of Nepal, NSW)

NEW ZEALAND

Visit of Foreign Minister to New Zealand and Bilateral Meeting

Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud visited New Zealand on 13-14 February 2024 and held bilateral meeting with Winston Peters, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) of New Zealand at Wellington. During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on further enhancing cooperation in the areas of mutual interests.



(Nepal-New Zealand bilateral meeting at the level of Foreign Minister)

Nepal-New Zealand Bilateral Consultation Meeting

The second edition of Nepal-New Zealand Foreign Ministry Consultation (FMC) was held on 14 February 2024 in Willington. Ms. Rita Dhital, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal and Ms. Joanna Kempkers, Divisional Manager South Asia and South East Asia of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand led their respective delegations.

During the meeting, the two sides took stock of various aspects of bilateral relations and exchanged views on further promoting cooperation through enhancing economic and cultural engagements between the two countries.



(Second Nepal-New Zealand Foreign Ministry Consultation Meeting)

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The friendly relations between Nepal and Papua New Guinea got further strengthened during the review year. Both the countries have been working closely on bilateral and multilateral fronts including the UN to advance beneficial cooperation and shared interests.

FLII

Nepal maintained cordial and cooperative ties with Fiji in the review period. Mutual respect, understanding and cooperation underpinned the growing bilateral relations and cooperation. The two countries supported each other in the multilateral forums such as the UN and upheld similar views on strengthening a peaceful, inclusive, just and rules-based global order.

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

The bilateral relationship between Nepal and Brunei Darussalam continued to remain friendly and cooperative during the period under review. Ambassador Mr. Dilli Raj Poudel presented his Letters of Credence to His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Muizzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam as a non-resident Ambassador of Nepal to Brunei Darussalam on 19 August 2024.

There are approximately 2,500 Nepalis in Brunei Darussalam, who are working mostly in the manufacturing and service sectors.

INDONESIA

Nepal and Indonesia fostered close relations, marked by friendship, cordiality and cooperation through various multilateral forums. Both countries continued to cooperate on pressing regional and global issues, particularly those related to development and global governance through NAM, G-77 and the UN System. In 2023, 18,807 Indonesians visited Nepal. In the same year, Nepal imported and exported goods worth NRs. 10.65 billion and NRs. 296 million respectively from and to Indonesia.

THE PHILIPPINES

The bilateral relations between Nepal and the Philippines remained cordial and cooperative. As members of the UN, G-77 and Non-aligned Movement (NAM), both countries held identical views on many international issues of common interests.

The Philippines hosted the first meeting of the Nepal-Philippines Bilateral Consultation Mechanism (BCM) in Manila on 6 December 2023. Mr. Krishna Prasad Dhakal, Joint Secretary at South East Asia and Pacific Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal and Assistant Secretary Mr. Meynardo LB. Montealegre of the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs of Philippines led their respective delegations.

Nepal and the Republic of the Philippines had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between Foreign Ministries in Kathmandu on 1 December 2019.

MALAYSIA

The bilateral ties between Nepal and Malaysia have consistently remained harmonious and cooperative. Malaysia continued to be an attractive destination for Nepali migrant workers for employment. Around four hundred thousand Nepali nationals have been working in Malaysia mostly in manufacturing and service sectors.

The Government of Nepal continued its relentless efforts to protect and promote the welfare of Nepali workers, rescue and repatriate distressed Nepalis, and cater effective consular services

Nepal and Malaysia remained important trade partners, with steady growth in bilateral trade. Malaysia stood as one of Nepal's top import sources. In 2023/24, Nepal imported Malaysian goods worth NRs. 17.9 billion and exported goods to Malaysia worth NRs. 240 million.

Four airlines- two each from Nepal and Malaysia- played a crucial role to facilitate tourism cooperation between Nepal and Malaysia. According to Nepal Tourism Statistics, 18,807 Malaysians visited Nepal in 2023.

MYANMAR

Nepal and Myanmar continued to enjoy cordial relations based on amity, mutual trust and cooperation.

The Embassy of Nepal in Yangon made efforts to promote economic, trade, tourism, cultural and people-to-people relations by organizing various programs, meetings and activities.

With a view to promoting banking, and remittance software trade between Nepal and Myanmar, the Embassy organized "Nepal-Myanmar Trade Relations: Promoting Software Business" in Yangon on 31 May 2024. During the event, Nepali IT companies working in core banking software, wallets, compliance solution, KYC management solution, remittance software, Paying-Receiving API, software Microfinance institutions and Cooperatives, and mobile banking software showcased their products.



(Glimpses of Nepal-Myanmar Trade Relations: Promoting Software Business held in Yangon)

In the aftermath of the event, Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between FinTech Alliance Nepal, a pioneer fintech organization in Nepal, and Myanmar Digital Economy Association (MDEA), a premier association of digital, e-commerce and new economy businesses in Myanmar, was signed.

In order to protect and promote Nepali culture, language and tradition in Myanmar, the Embassy closely worked with PNOs - "Myanmari Gurkhali", one of the oldest emigrant ethnic communities in Myanmar, which has been running four Sanskrit Schools in different regions of Myanmar since 1980s.

Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs held a meeting with U Than Swe, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Myanmar on the sidelines of 19th Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) in Tehran in June 2024. The two sides expressed satisfaction over the cordial bilateral relations existing between the two countries.

THAILAND

Nepal-Thailand relations remained cordial and cooperative during the review period. The two countries collaborated in various areas of mutual interests including in regional and global forums like the UN.

Participation in the "Third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum"

Mr. Shakti Bahadur Basnet, Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation led a Nepali delegation to the "Third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum" held on 19-20 October 2023 in Bangkok. The forum was convened under the theme of "Building a Secure, Sustainable, and Interconnected energy future for Asia and the Pacific".



Minister of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Mr. Shakti Bahadur Basnet chairing the Third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum

Formation of Thai-Nepal Friendship Association (TNFA)

The Thai-Nepal Friendship Association (TNFA) was formed on 15 June 2024 under the chairmanship of Mr. Viditnan Rojanapatnit, the first Thai Everest Summitteer and famous film maker/artist. The TNFA aimed at promoting mutual cooperation, understanding and people-to-people linkages among Thai and Nepali nationals through collaboration in social, cultural, economic and academic fields. The Association was established after it was duly registered in Thailand.



(Ambassador Mr. Dhan Bahadur Oli with Mr. Vitidnan, TNFC Chair- second from left)

Economic diplomacy related programmes

The Embassy organized a Thai-Nepali Business-to-Business meeting in order to expand business linkages and partnerships among Nepali and Thai business communities in Bangkok on 28 May 2024. Nepali entrepreneurs, particularly herbal and agro-based industries, participated in the "THAIFEX Anuga Asia 2024" at Impact Exhibition Centre Hall, Muang Thong Thani, Bangkok on 29 May 2024.



Export Promotion B2B event, in Bangkok

The Embassy also organized Tourism Promotion Programme entitled "Experience Nepal: Lumbini to Himalayan Bliss" in association with Nepal Tourism Board, Nepal Airlines, Nepal Association of Tour and Travel Agents, Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal and Nepal Mountaineering Association and Nepal Association of Rafting Agencies. Two promotional events were organized in Bangkok and Phuket respectively on 27 and 29 June 2024.

CENTRAL ASIA, WEST ASIA AND AFRICA

The regions of Central Asia, West Asia and Africa continued to hold paramount importance in Nepal's foreign policy in championing the cause of diversifying diplomatic relations, enhancing regional and global interdependence, and protecting the interests and wellbeing of Nepali migrant workers. During the review period, Nepal further strengthened its friendly and cooperative ties with the countries of this dynamic region, particularly in areas of foreign employment, trade, tourism, FDI, education, UN peace-keeping missions, and people-to-people connections.

The regular exchanges of high-level visits, increasing economic cooperation, labour diplomacy, enhanced mutual understanding and partnerships, along with stronger people-to-people ties featured Nepal's intensifying relations with these countries.

The evolving geopolitical complexities in the Middle East largely shaped Nepal's engagements with these countries in the review year.

BAHRAIN

The cooperative relations between Nepal and Bahrain saw steady progress in advancing mutual interests in diverse areas, most prominently in foreign employment sector. Both countries held similar perspectives on pressing global issues and reaffirmed commitments to promoting global peace, stability, and sustainable development.

Around 25,000 Nepalis working in Bahrain helped further solidify friendly bilateral relations existing both at the state and people-to-people levels. The Bahrain Royal Guard's successful ascent of Mount Manaslu in 2020 and Mount Everest in 2021 sparked great interest among Bahraini tourists for mountain tourism in Nepal.

A Nepali parliamentary delegation led by Mr. Dev Raj Ghimire, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Federal Parliament, attended the 146th Assembly of Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) convened in Bahrain on 11-15 March 2023.



(Speaker of the House of Representatives, Federal Parliament of Nepal Mr. Dev Raj Ghimire addressing 146th IPU Assembly in Manama)

In his address to the Assembly themed "Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance", he highlighted Nepal's socio-economic achievements and firm commitments to enhancing cohesiveness, tolerance and goodwill among diverse communities. While addressing the Second Conference of the NAM Parliamentary Network on 13 March 2023 on the margins of the Assembly, the Speaker underlined the importance of NAM principles, parliamentary democracy and collective action in tackling common challenges and achieving common goals of peace, justice and development.

During the visit, the Speaker had a cordial meeting with Mr. Ali bin Saleh Al-Saleh, Speaker of the Shura Council of the Kingdom of Bahrain on 13 March 2023, and exchanged views on parliamentary affairs. He also attended the Reception hosted by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, at Sakhir Palace on 14 March 2023.

The draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the establishment of a bilateral consultation mechanism between the Foreign Ministries of Nepal and Bahrain has been finalized and is ready for signature at a mutually convenient time.

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

Nepal and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) enjoyed enhanced level of cordial ties and constructive cooperation in multiple areas of shared interests of the two countries and the people. Both the countries worked closely in various regional and global forums on pertinent issues of common concerns such as climate change, global peace and security, money laundering, combating terrorism, and sustainable development.

The Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' attended *COP 28* held from 30 November to 13 December 2023 in Dubai. He chaired a High-Level Roundtable on "Call of the Mountains: Who Saves Us from the Climate Crisis?" hosted by Nepal on the sidelines of COP 28. In his statement, Rt. Hon. Prime Minister underscored the urgent need of bold climate action to protect mountainous countries from the adverse impacts of climate change. Conveying the message of 30 million Nepalis, the Prime Minister said, "Our message is clear: rising temperatures are torturing our mountains. Save them first!" Dr. Mr. Birendra Prasad Mahato, Minister for Forests and Environment, and Mr. Shakti Bahadur Basnet, Minister of Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation, also attended the Roundtable.

The Prime Minister had a brief meeting with **Shri Narendra Modi**, Prime Minister of India, during the opening session of the COP 28. The two leaders discussed the earthquake's devastating impact on Nepal's western region and other issues of mutual interests. The Prime Minister Modi expressed India's readiness to support the earthquake victims in Nepal.

The Prime Minister also held a bilateral meeting with Mr. Miguel Mario Díaz-Canely Bermúdez, Chairman of the Group of 77 and President of the Republic of Cuba. They discussed leveraging opportunities for bilateral and multilateral cooperation, as well as ways to mitigate the impacts of climate change and ensure financial resources for the most vulnerable countries. The Prime Minister attended the Zayed Sustainable Award Ceremony too.

Furthermore, the Prime Minster participated in an event "Delivering Early Warnings for All", jointly organized by IMO, UNDRR, ITU, and IFRC. In his speech, he stressed the need to ensure resources and technology to the Least Developed Countries like Nepal to combat climate-induced disasters. He visited the Future Museum -designed to transport visitors on a journey through the hypothetical future to bring back inspiration and insight to the present day- in Dubai.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell, Minister of State for the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development

Office of the United Kingdom, paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister on the occasion.

Chairperson of the National Assembly of Federal Parliament of Nepal Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina visited the UAE and held a meeting with Mr. Saqr Ghobash, Speaker of the Federal National Council of the UAE, in Abu Dhabi on 20 February 2023. During the meeting, both dignitaries stressed further strengthening bilateral cooperation in such areas as tourism, energy, trade, labour, and parliamentary affairs.

A Nepali delegation led by Mr. Ek Narayan Aryal, Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, participated in the World Government Summit held under the theme "Shaping Future Governments" in Dubai from 13 to 15 February 2023.

Leading a Nepali delegation, Mr. Dinesh Kumar Ghimire, Secretary of the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, participated in the Thirteenth Session of International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) Assembly during 13-15 January 2023.

EGYPT

The bilateral relations between Nepal and the Arab Republic of Egypt, characterized by mutual trust, goodwill, understanding and friendship, grew further and deeper in the review year.

Mr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Minister of Finance visited Egypt to attend the AIIB Board of Governor's Meeting held in Sharm el-Sheikh from 25-26 September 2023. In his address to the annual meeting, he called for strengthened collaboration between multilateral development partners and international organizations for financing development projects in low- and middle-income countries. He expressed the hope that AIIB would be able to provide concessional finance to least developed countries like Nepal to support their development endeavors.

Mr. Mohan Bahadur Basnet, Minister of Health and Population attended the Global Congress on Health, Population and Development (5-8 September) held in Cairo, Egypt from 4-9 September 2023. During the meeting, he discussed Nepal's achievements in the fields of health and population and expressed the view that the conference provided an opportunity for the exchange of expertise and best practices among the participating countries.

SAUDI ARABIA

Nepal and Saudi Arabia consolidated friendly bilateral relations and cooperation in ways that benefitted both sides considerably.

Mr. Sharat Singh Bhandari, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security, represented Nepal in the Ministerial Roundtable organized by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 13 December 2023 and shared Nepal's perspectives on the theme of "Tomorrow's Labour Market: Fit for Growth".

OMAN

Nepal and the Sultanate of Oman cherished cordial and friendly relations during the review year. Mutual trust, understanding, and cooperation in myriad areas of common interests formed a solid basis of steadily expanding bilateral relations.

Oman remained one of major foreign employment destinations for Nepali migrant workers, who acted as an important driver in cementing closer people-to-people relations.

ISRAEL

Nepal and Israel shared a longstanding cordial relationship marked by friendship, goodwill, and growing cooperation. Both the countries leveraged the potential to further expand and deepen cooperation in trade, investment, energy, agriculture, employment, tourism, and people-to-people contacts.

The Foreign Minister Mr. NP Saud, along with two officials from the Ministry, visited the state of Israel in October 2023 to rescue Nepali students stranded due to the Hamas attack on 7 October 2023.

QATAR

Nepal and Qatar shared strong bonds built on mutual trust, mutual respect, and ever-expanding cooperation. A sizable number of nearly four hundred thousand Nepali migrant workers engaged in construction, agriculture and service sectors here contributed not only to Qatar's development trajectory including construction of FIFA World Cup 2022 stadiums, but also brought home hard-earned economic and social remittances in the form of professional skills and know-how.

Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud, Minister for Foreign Affairs, led a Nepali delegation to 21st edition of Doha Forum held during 10-11 December 2023 at Doha, Qatar. On the

occasion, the Foreign Minister met with Dr. Mohammad Bin Abdullahziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs of Qatar and discussed matters of mutual interest including assistance for the release of a Nepali national Bipin Joshi, held hostage by Hamas.

His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, paid a State Visit to Nepal on 23 – 24 April 2024. Apart from bilateral talks with the Prime Minister Mr. Puspa Kamal Dahal Prachanda, His Highness witnessed a signing ceremony of various bilateral Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) between Nepal and Qatar as follows:

- Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation in the Fields of Culture and Arts between the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal and the Ministry of Culture of the State of Qatar;
- Agreement on Cooperation and Exchange of News between National News Agency, Nepal (RSS) and Qatar News Agency (QNA);
- Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation in the Field of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research between the Government of Nepal and the Government of the State of Oatar;
- Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Youth and Sports between the Government of Nepal and the Government of the State of Oatar;
- Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation between the Office of the Attorney General of Nepal and the Public Prosecution of the State of Qatar;
- Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Diplomatic Training and Education between The Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) of the Government of Nepal and The Diplomatic Institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar.

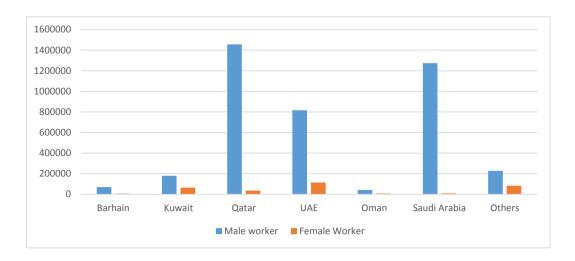
Kuwait

Nepal and Kuwait maintained strong bilateral relations characterized by friendship, mutual respect, understanding and beneficial collaboration.

Both the countries stepped up efforts to enhance bilateral cooperation through conclusion of various agreements, including the Bilateral Labor Agreement. Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) continued with economic cooperation to support Nepal in its development process, especially in hydropower development and irrigation. Kuwait remained one of major destinations for foreign employment for Nepali migrant workers employed across various sectors.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries hosted a significant number of Nepali

workers in foreign employment across various sectors as demonstrated in the table below:



SOUTH AFRICA

Nepal-South Africa relations witnessed positive growth with constructive engagements in trade, tourism, culture, sports, education, and people-to-people ties during the review period.

In a similar spirit, Nepal maintained friendly and cooperative relations with other accredited African countries: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Dr. Birendra Prasad Mahato, Minister of Forests and Environment, visited Nairobi, Kenya to participate in the Sixth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly from 26 February to 1 March 2024. As the world's leading decision-making forum on the questions of environment, this Session deliberated on the triple planetary crises and helped shape global environmental policy discourse.

A growing Nepali Diasporas engaged in foreign employment, peace-keeping operations, and UN jobs further solidified Nepal's bonds with these African countries.

Seychelles and Mauritius hosting over 3000 and 6000 Nepali workers respectively opened up new destinations for foreign employment.

EUROPE AND AMERICAS

Nepal maintained friendly relations with the countries in Europe and the Americas throughout the reporting period. These ties were further strengthened through high-level visits, enhanced development cooperation, economic partnerships, and meetings of the bilateral consultation mechanism.

Nepal accorded great importance to maintaining and strengthening its friendly relations and cooperation with the countries in this strategically important region. Common principles and values-- such as the pursuit of sustainable peace, democractic governance, inclusion, justice, environmental sustainability, and promotion of human rights-- further reinforced both bilateral and multilateral partneships.

BRAZIL

Nepal and Brazil continued to strengthen their amicable relations and expand the areas of cooperation including in international forums on issues of global concerns such as climate change and promotion of multilateralism over this period. The Government of Brazil extended technical assistance to Nepal under the South-South Cooperation initiative.

On 20-26 April 2024, a Brazilian delegation led by Project Analyst for Africa, Asia and Oceania of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) visited Nepal to explore the prospects of cooperation in the diary development in Nepal. The Brazilian team comprising technical experts from the State of Minas Gerais interacted with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, the Dairy Development Board, entrepreneurs and farmers to work out mutually beneficial project.

Visit of the Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs to Sao Paolo

Mr. Dhan Raj Gurung, Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, participated in the Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination held in Sao Paulo on 29 November 2023 on the theme 'Putting racial equity and justice at the forefront of development.'

Visit of the Chairperson of the Public Service Commission to Brazil

Mr. Madhav Prasad Regmi, Chairperson of the Public Service Commission, accompanied by the Members and senior officials of the Commission visited Brazil on 27 May-2 June 2024. During the visit, the delegation exchanged experiences and best practices with the senior officials of Brazil's Ministry of Management, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Rio Branco Institute on various aspects of human resource

development in the public sector.

EUROPEAN UNION

The relations between Nepal and the European Union (EU) remained cordial and cooperative. The EU continued to remain one of the largest development partners of Nepal in the review period. The year 2024 marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Nepal-EU diplomatic relations.

Meeting of the Nepal-EU Joint Commission

The 15th meeting of the Nepal-EU Joint Commission was held on 19 March 2024 in Kathmandu. The meeting was co-chaired by Ms. Sewa Lamsal, Foreign Secretary of Nepal and Ms. Paola Pampaloni, Deputy Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific of the European External Action Service. During the meeting, various aspects of bilateral relations between Nepal and the EU, including the EU's support to Nepal, bilateral trade and investment, multilateralism, human rights, climate change, people-to-people relations. were discussed.



(15th Nepal-EU Joint Commission Meeting held in Kathmandu)

FINLAND

The relations between Nepal and the Republic of Finland, based on friendship, cordiality and cooperation, further consolidated, with the celebration of the 50th anniversary of their diplomatic relations. Finland remained one of important development partners, supporting Nepal bilaterally as well as through the EU, NGOs and multilateral agencies.

Meeting of Nepal-Finland Bilateral Consultation Meeting:



 $(Second\,Nepal-Finland\,Bilateral\,Consultation\,Mechanism\,meeting\,held\,in\,Kathmandu)$

The second meeting of Nepal-Finland Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held in Kathmandu on 5 June 2024. Mr. Ganesh Prasad Dhakal, Joint Secretary and Head of the Europe America Division of the Ministry and Mr. Pasi Hellman, Under Secretary of State for International Development, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland led their respective delegations to the meeting. During the meeting, the two sides discussed different aspects of Nepal-Finland relations including development cooperation and other matters of global concern such as climate change and multilateralism.

FRANCE

Nepal and the French Republic continued to enjoy excellent state of relations, characterized by friendship, goodwill, understanding, and cooperation. The two countries celebrated seventy-fifth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations this year.

Meeting of Nepal-France Bilateral Consultation Mechanism

The fourth meeting of Nepal-France Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held in Paris on 29 March 2024. The Nepali side was led by Mr. Ganesh Prasad Dhakal, Joint Secretary and Head of the Europe-America Division of the Ministry, while the French side was led by Mr. Benoit Guidee, Director for Asia and Oceania, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France. The meeting was held in the backdrop of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Various aspects of Nepal-France relations including trade, tourism, investment. as well as matters of global concerns such as climate change were discussed in the meeting.



(Fourth Nepal-France Bilateral Consultation Mechanism Meeting held in Paris)

Visit of Youth and Sports Minister to France

Minister for Youth and Sports Mr. Teju Lal Chaudhary visited France to participate in the opening ceremony of the Olympic games from 24 to 29 July 2024. Seven athletes from Nepal had competed in the Paris Olympics.

GERMANY

Bilateral relations between Nepal and the Federal Republic of Germany remained friendly, cordial and cooperative during the reporting period. Over the past 66 years of diplomatic ties, Nepal-Germany relations has grown multi-dimensionally with enhanced level of development cooperation and exchange of high-level visits.

Official Visit of the President to Germany:

President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel paid an official visit to Germany from 16-19 June 2024 at the invitation of President of the Federal Republic of Germany Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier. During the visit, President Paudel held bilateral meeting with the President of Germany reviewing the entire gamut of Nepal-Germany relations with focus on development cooperation, trade, tourism, investment, and vocational training. It was the first official visit to Germany from Nepal at the level of the Head of State since 1986. While in Berlin, President Paudel also met with representatives of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), scientific research institutes in Potsdam and Nepali community.



(President Paudel and German President Steinmeier holding bilateral meeting)

Nepal Visit of FES Global Head and former President of the European Parliament

Dr. Martin Schulz, Global Head of FES and former President of the European Parliament visited Nepal to attend the Asia Pacific Conference of the FES in Kathmandu on 31 January 2024. During his visit, Dr. Schulz paid a courtesy call on President Ramchandra Paudel, and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud on 31 January.

Joint Declaration of Intent on Skilled Labour Migration

Nepal and Germany signed a Joint Declaration of Intent (JDoI) on Skilled Labour Migration and Knowledge Transfer on 10 October 2023 during the visit of Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security Mr. Sharat Singh Bhandari to Germany.

This instrument provided legal framework for Nepali youths aspiring to pursue vocational trainings /internships in various companies in Germany.

Meeting of the Nepal-Germany Bilateral Consultation Mechanism



(Third Nepal-Germany Bilateral Consultation Mechanism Meeting held in Kathmandu)

The third meeting of the Nepal-Germany Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held on 20 March 2024 in Kathmandu. The Nepali side was led by Mr. Ganesh Prasad Dhakal, Joint Secretary and Head of the Europe-America Division of the Ministry. Mr. Erik Kurzweil, Director for Indo-Pacific Policy, South Asia, Afghanistan of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany led the German side. Various aspects of Nepal-Germany bilateral relations were discussed in the meeting which included German cooperation to Nepal, exchange of high-level visits and regional and multilateral affairs, among others.

IRELAND

Relations with the Republic of Ireland was marked by friendship, cooperation and high-level exchanges during the reporting period. The two countries also marked the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and

Ireland this year.

Visit of the Chairman of the Upper House of the Parliament of Ireland

A parliamentary delegation led by Mr. Jerry Buttimer, Chairman of Seanad Eireann, the Upper House of the Irish Parliament paid an official visit to Nepal on 8-12 January 2024 at the invitation of Chairman of National Assembly of Nepal Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina. During the visit, the delegation paid courtesy calls on President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel, Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Speaker of the House of Representatives Mr. Devraj Ghimire, and Chairman of the National Assembly Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina. The delegation also had a courtesy meeting with Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud.



(Meeting between parliamentary delegation of Ireland and the Foreign Minister of Nepal)

Earlier, on 18-23 September 2023, Speaker of the House of Representatives Mr. Devraj Ghimire had paid an official visit to Ireland at the invitation of Speaker of the Lower House of Ireland Sean O' Fearghail. Speaker Ghimire had a meeting with the Speaker of Ireland O'Fearghail at the Leinster House, with Jerry Buttimer, Chairman of Ireland's Upper House, Seanad Eireann. Irish Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage Mr. Darragh O'Brien paid a courtesy call on Speaker Ghimire at Leinster House. On 22 September 2023, Speaker Devraj Ghimire had a meeting with the President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins.

ROMANIA

The relations between Nepal and Romania remained cordial and friendly during the reporting period. Romania continued to remain a major destination for the Nepali nationals, especially as labour migrants. During the visit of Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security Mr. Sharat Singh Bhandari to Romania, a Labour Agreement between Nepal and Romania was signed on 06 October 2023.

RUSSIA

Nepal and the Russian Federation continued to enjoy friendly and cooperative relations over this period. The government of Nepal appointed new Honorary Consul to St. Petersburg this year.

Nepalis in Russian Army

Following the report of Nepalis being recruited in Russian Army, the Ministry issued public notice stating that the Government of Nepal long pursued a policy of not allowing its citizens to join any foreign national army except those countries which recruited Nepali citizens to their national army under the agreement concluded traditionally with them. The Ministry also raised this issue with the Russian side and requested to stop recruiting Nepali nationals in their army, repatriate those who were serving in the Russian Army to Nepal and provide compensation to the victims' families.

Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud discussed about this issue with Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia Mr. Sergey Vershinin on the sidelines of NAM Summit in Kampala.

Telephone conversation with the Russian Foreign Minister

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha had a telephone conversation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Mr. Sergey Lavrov on 7 March 2024. The two foreign ministers discussed on various aspects of Nepal-Russia relations including issues of Nepali citizens in Russian Army. In the sidelines of Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), the Deputy Prime Minister also had talks with Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia Mr. Andrey Rudenko about the issue.





(Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Nepal and Russian Foreign Minister)

SWEDEN

Nepal and Sweden enjoyed friendly and cooperative relations in this period. Sweden has been channelling its aid to Nepal through the EU as well as through Swedish International Development Agency, BITS (Swedish Commission for Technical Cooperation), NGOs and UN agencies.

Visit of the Swedish Members of Parliament to Nepal

A three-member delegation led by Ms. Maria Stockhaus, Member of Parliament of the Swedish Riksdag visited Nepal on 28-30 August 2023. The delegation paid a courtesy call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud at his office. Matters of bilateral and multilateral cooperation between Nepal and Sweden were discussed during the meeting.



(Swedish Parliamentary delegation meeting with Foreign Minister Saud)

SWITZERLAND

Visit from the Head of State level to Switzerland gave new momentum to the bilateral relations between Nepal and Switzerland during this period. As one of the oldest and largest development partners of Nepal, Switzerland continued to play an important role in the socio-economic development of Nepal.

Visit of the President to Switzerland

President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel visited Geneva, Switzerland to attend the inaugural Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice that took place during the High-Level Segment of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference. The President delivered a keynote speech at the inaugural Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice held in Palais des Nations, Geneva on 13 June 2024.

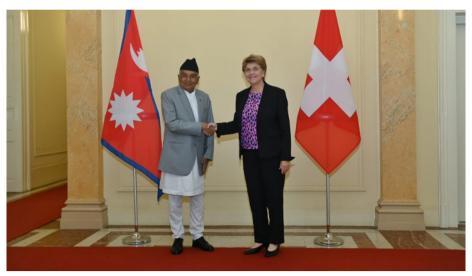


(President Mr. Paudel addressing the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference)

During his visit, President Paudel also had a bilateral meeting with President of the Swiss Confederation Ms. Viola Amherd at the Federal Palace in Bern on 12 June 2024. The two Presidents reviewed the full spectrum of Nepal-Switzerland relations including development cooperation, exchanges of high-level visit, cultural and people-to-people exchanges. President Paudel also extended invitation to the Swiss President

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to pay an official visit to Nepal at mutually convenient date.



(President Paudel with Swiss President Amherd)

Meeting of the Nepal-Switzerland Bilateral Consultation Mechanism

The fourth meeting of Nepal-Switzerland Bilateral Consultations Mechanism was held at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Bern on 2 April 2024. The Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Ganesh Prasad Dhakal, Joint Secretary and Head of the Europe-America Division, while the Swiss delegation was led by Mr. Heinrich Schellenberg, Assistant State Secretary for Asia and the Pacific in the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the entire aspects of Nepal-Switzerland relations including economic ties, development partnerships, multilateral cooperation, and contemporary global issues such as climate change, and human rights, among others.



(Fourth Nepal-Switzerland Bilateral Consultation Mechanism Meeting held in Bern)

UNITED KINGDOM

Nepal and the United Kingdom (UK) maintained the long-standing and cordial relations cemented by rich historical relations, support, and cooperation with each other in this period. During this period, Nepal-UK bilateral relations experienced significant progress, reinforced by the centenary celebrations of the Nepal-UK Friendship Treaty of 1923. Both the Governments of Nepal and the UK organized various programmes to celebrate the landmark anniversary.

Programmes organized to mark the centenary of 1923 Friendship Treaty

A special programme was organised by the Ministry at Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square, Kathmandu to commemorate the 100 years of Nepal-United Kingdom Friendship Treaty of 1923 on 26 November 2023. On the occasion, Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud, as the chief guest, delivered his remarks highlighting the significance of the Treaty and its contribution to the bilateral relations between Nepal and the United Kingdom. Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Nepal Mr. Rob Fenn also spoke on the importance of the Treaty in the bilateral relations. Keynote speaker historian Prof. Dr. Tri Ratna Manandhar delved into a comprehensive discourse on the Treaty and highlighted the context and consequences of the Treaty. A collection of rare photographs and documents related to the 1923 Treaty were also displayed during the Programme.



(Programme on the celebration of the centenary of Nepal-UK Friendship Treaty 1923)

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Similarly, the Ministry organized a Commemorative Programme to mark the centenary of the Nepal-UK Friendship Treaty of 1923 at Singha Durbar State Hall on 21 December 2023, the exact day and place of the signing of the Treaty one hundred years ago. Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud graced the occasion as chief guest and highlighted the significance of the Treaty. British Ambassador Rob Fenn and Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal also spoke on the occasion.

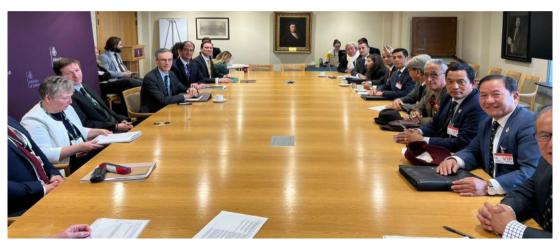


(Commemoration of the centenary of Nepal-UK Friendship Treaty of 1923 at the State Hall of Singha Durbar)

To commemorate the centenary of the signing of the 1923 Friendship Treaty, British Prime Minister Mr. Rishi Sunak hosted a special reception at his office at No. 10 Downing Street on 20 May 2024.

Meetings of the Bilateral Committee on the issues of British Gurkha Veterans

The Bilateral Committee formed between Nepal and the UK in 2022 to address the issues related to British Gurkha veterans held two meetings during the review period.



(Fourth Meeting of the Bilateral Committee)

The third meeting of the Bilateral Committee on Gurkha issues was held at the Ministry of Defence of the UK in London on 22 November 2023. Similarly, the fourth meeting was also held at the Ministry of Defence of the UK on 27 March 2024. Minister for Defence People and Veterans of the UK Mr. Andrew Murrison and Ambassador of Nepal to the UK Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya led their respective delegations along with the Ex-British Gurkha representatives, that included Major (Retd.) Jud Bahadur Gurung and other delegates. Joint Secretary and Head of Europe America Division Mr. Ganesh Prasad Dhakal participated in both the meetings as a representative of the Ministry.

The meetings discussed extensively on the issues of unequal pension and facilities to the British Gurkha veterans but failed to reach a consensus for agreeable solution. As all the issues couldn't be discussed, it was agreed to continue discussions at a mutually agreed date including at the working level.

Interaction Programme with Nepali Diaspora

Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud addressed an interaction programme with the Nepali diaspora professionals in the UK organized by the Embassy of Nepal in London through a video message. He stated that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will play an important role in mobilizing the enthusiasm, willingness and expertise of the Nepali diaspora to contribute in Nepal's development.

The two-day interaction program, held on 24-25 February 2024, brought together technical experts and professionals from the UK to engage in discussions with officials, counterpart institutions, private sector representatives, and other stakeholders in Nepal.

Visit of the UK's Minister for Development and Africa to Nepal

Mr. Andrew Mitchell, Minister of State for Development and Africa of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom visited Nepal on 19-20 February 2024. The British Minister witnessed the signing of two different MoUs on grant assistance namely 'Nepal in Business' and 'Green Growth Nepal' between the Governments of Nepal and the UK at the Ministry of Finance of Nepal. The Minister of State paid courtesy call on Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and also met with Minister for Finance Mr. Prakash Sharan Mahat. Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud had a constructive discussion with the British Minister on 20 February 2024 at his office.



(Meeting between Foreign Minister Saud and British Minister Mitchell)

Visit of the British Chief of General Staff to Nepal

Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud received Chief of the General Staff of the British Army, General Sir Patrick Sanders at his office on 30 January 2024. The British Chief of the General Staff was on a visit to Nepal to attend that year's British Gurkha recruit intake 'Attestation Parade'. During his visit, the British Chief of General Staff also paid courtesy calls on Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Mr. Purna Bahadur Khadka.

Earlier, Chief of the Army Staff of Nepali Army, General Prabhu Ram Sharma had paid an official visit to the UK on 8-13 October 2023 at the invitation of his British counterpart.



(British Chief of the General Staff with the Foreign Minister of Nepal)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The United States has remained Nepal's longstanding, close and cooperative partner in its development journey since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1947. Shared values of peace, development, democracy and respect for human rights, as well as mutually beneficial interests have remained the cornerstones of the bilateral relations between the two countries. These relations further deepened and expanded during the reporting period not least through exchange of high-level visits, continuation of development cooperation, and enhanced people-to-people relations. The year 2024 marked the 77th year of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Official Visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the USA

Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud paid an official visit to the United States from 30 October to 5 November 2023 at the invitation of the US Secretary of State Mr. Antony J. Blinken. During his visit, Minister Saud held a bilateral meeting with Mr. Blinken in Washington D.C. on 30 October. In the meeting, the two dignitaries

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exchanged views on topics of mutual interest across the range of Nepal-US bilateral relations, as well as matters of common concern on the regional and global affairs.

Minister Saud also met with Senator Chris van Hollen in the Capitol Hill. Similarly, he met with Administrator of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Ms. Samantha Power, the Chief Executive Officer of Millenium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Ms. Alice Albright, Under Secretary of the Department of State for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights Ms. Uzra Zeya, National Security Council Senior Director for South Asia Ms. Eileen Laubacher, and Chief Executive Officer of Development Finance Corporation (DFC) Mr. Scott Nathan. Besides highlevel meetings, he participated in a talk program on Nepal's foreign policy priorities at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and interacted with various groups of Nepali-American community in Washington, D.C. and Boston.

He also held an interface with the Nepali students and community representatives at MIT, Boston. Another important business engagement of the Minister was at the US Chamber of Commerce Headquarters where he attended the ceremony related to AmCham-Nepal Chapter's accreditation from the US Chamber of Commerce (AmCham).

The historic visit was significant in renewing the commitment of the two sides in further strengthening and expanding the ever-deepening bilateral ties.



(Foreign Minister Saud with US Secretary of State Blinken)



(Foreign Minister Saud with USAID Administrator Power)

Visit of the Finance Minister to the US

Finance Minister Mr. Barshaman Pun visited Washington, D.C. on 15-19 April 2024 in connection with his participation in the IMF and World Bank Spring meetings. During his meetings at both institutions he discussed Nepal's development priorities, need for enhanced financing on better terms and financing modality for several hydro projects. He held bilateral meetings with the USAID, the MCC and the DFC, and addressed a business round-table hosted by the US Chamber of Commerce.

Visit of Senator Van Hollen to Nepal

US Senator Mr. Chris Van Hollen visited Nepal from 1 to 3 September 2023. Senator Van Hollen paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on 1 September. The Senator also paid a courtesy call on Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud. Various matters of mutual interests including Nepal-US cooperation were discussed during the meetings.



(Prime Minister 'Prachanda' with the U.S. Senator Van Hollen)



(Foreign Minister Saud with U.S. Senator Van Hollen)

Nepal Visit of MCC CEO

Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud received the Chief Executive Officer of MCC, Ms. Alice Albright at his office on 2 October 2023. The two sides discussed about Nepal-US cooperation with particular focus on implementation of MCC projects in Nepal.



(Foreign Minister Saud receiving the CEO of MCC and her team)

Visit of the Commander of the United States Indo-Pacific Command to Nepal

Admiral John C. Aquilino, USN, Commander of the United States Indo-Pacific Command visited Nepal to observe the fourth edition of 'Shanti Prayas' exercise held in Shree Birendra Peacekeeping Operation Training Centre, Panchkhal. During his visit, the Admiral paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and the Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Mr. Purna Bahadur Khadka on 25 February 2024.



(US Admiral with the Prime Minister of Nepal)

Repatriation of stolen idols/artefacts of Nepal

Significant number of artifacts of historical, cultural and religious importance were repatriated to Nepal during the reporting period. 40 wooden artifacts received from the Homeland Security Investigations of the US Department of Homeland Security were sent to Nepal in August 2023 with the support of the Embassy of Nepal in Washington DC. Similarly, 24 pieces of artifacts received from Ms. Susan Bradford, Hawaii were sent to the Department of Archaeology of Nepal in May 2024.









(A stone idol received from Ms. Bradford, Hawaii)

 $(Ambassador\ Khatri\ is\ receiving\ the\ artifacts\ from\ Homeland\ Security\ Investigations)$

REGIONAL COOPERATION

Nepal engaged proactively in regional cooperation process as part of its overarching foreign policy goal of achieving sustained peace, development, and prosperity at home and in the region. Regional and sub-regional collaboration within SAARC, BIMSTEC, ACD, SCO and BBIN provided synergies in addressing persisting and emerging challenges including climate change, underdevelopment, connectivity, natural disasters, transnational organized crimes and AI regulation. Additionally, these forums remained crucial to building on regional unity, solidarity and partnerships among Member States in diverse areas of mutual interests and shared benefits.

During the review period, Nepal played a pivotal role within these regional organizations to forge beneficial cooperation; foster amity, mutual understanding; and enhance connectivity including people-to-people linkages in the region. As a founding Member and current Chair, Nepal continued its diplomatic efforts to revive and reorient SAARC process in the spirit of the Charter featuring mutual trust, mutual respect and consensus. The Meetings of Programming Committee, SAARC Regional Centres, Specialized Bodies, and Working Groups as well as other workshops kept the SAAR process moving forward.

As a committed member and a Lead Country in People-to-People Contact sector comprising sub-sectors of culture, tourism, poverty alleviation and people-to-people contact forums, Nepal prioritized consolidating mutually beneficial collaboration in these and other agreed areas of cooperation with Member States. The increasing institutionalization, conclusion of vital legal instruments and entry into force of BIMSTEC Charter in May 2024, inter alia, added impetus to harness immense potential of the world's two vibrant regions: South Asia and South-East Asia.

Subsequent to joining ACD as a Member and SCO as Dialogue Partner in 2016, Nepal further enhanced its active participation in these regional bodies. Overall, Nepal's engagements in SAARC, BIMSTEC, ACD, SCO and BBIN reflected our unflinching commitments to multilateralism and regional collaboration to tackle common challenges and achieve shared prosperity by leaving no member nation behind.

SAARC

Fifty-Ninth Session of SAARC Programming Committee

The Programming Committee (PC) of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) held its Fifty-Ninth session at the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu on 6-7 March 2024. Foreign Secretary of the Government of Nepal

and Chairperson of SAARC Standing Committee Ms. Sewa Lamsal addressed the Inaugural Session as Chief Guest. In her address, Foreign Secretary underscored the need to hold regular meetings of SAARC Charter Bodies, including the Programming Committee and applauded Member States for demonstrating regional unity, solidarity and cooperation amidst COVID-19 difficulties. She also called for concerted efforts to address common challenges including climate change and stressed tapping economic potential and realizing the vision of Economic Union for shared prosperity.

In his inaugural address, Secretary General Mr. Md. Golam Sarwar highlighted the need to make the SAARC more people-centric and promote public-private partnerships to complement inter-governmental efforts for attaining the Charterial objectives. Ms. Rita Dhital, Joint Secretary/Head of the Regional Organizations Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal, chaired the two-day meeting.



(Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal, Secretary General Mr. Md. Golam Sarwar and National Focal Points of SAARC Member States during an inaugural ceremony of the 59th Session of SAARC Programming Committee in Kathmandu)

The Programming Committee Meeting finalized the budgets and calendars of activities of the SAARC Secretariat, Specialized Bodies and Regional Centres for 2024.

Secretary General of SAARC Paid Courtesy Farewell Calls on High Dignitaries of Nepal

Mr. Esala Ruwan Weerakoon from Sri Lanka, who assumed the office of the Secretary General of SAARC on 01 March 2020 as the fourteenth SAARC Secretary General,

completed his tenure on 31 August 2023. He was succeeded by the newly appointed Secretary General of SAARC, Mr. Md. Golam Sarwar from Bangladesh.

Before his departure, Mr. Weerakoon paid farewell calls on President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel, Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal, 'Prachanda' and Foreign Minister Mr. N.P. Saud. Outgoing Secretary General, Mr. Weerakoon also held meetings with the Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal and National Security Advisor Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi. Issues relating to the further rejuvenation of SAARC process were discussed during the meetings.



(Secretary General of SAARC during a farewell call on the President)

New Secretary General of SAARC Calls on Foreign Minister:

Newly appointed SAARC Secretary General Mr. Md. Golam Sarwar from Bangladesh called on Foreign Minister Mr. N.P. Saud at the latter's office in the Foreign Ministry on 9 November 2023.

During the meeting, Foreign Minister Saud congratulated Mr. Sarwar on his appointment as the Fifteenth Secretary General of SAARC and wished him all the success in his tenure. The Secretary General appreciated Nepal's role as the chair of SAARC during these challenging circumstances and expressed his gratitude for endorsement of his nomination for the post.



(SAARC Secretary General during a call on the Foreign Minister)

Prior to this meeting on 3 November, the Secretary General paid an introductory courtesy call on Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Poudyal. During the meeting, a wide array of issues including regularizing the meetings of SAARC bodies were candidly deliberated. Ambassador Mr. Sarwar assumed office as the fifteenth Secretary General of SAARC on 25 October 2023.

Seventh Governing Council Meeting of SAARC Development Fund

The Seventh Governing Council Meeting of SAARC Development Fund (SDF) was held on 02 May 2024 in Tbilisi, Georgia on the side-lines of 57th ADB annual Meeting.



(Delegates from Member States attending SDF Governing Council Meeting in Tbilisi)

The participating Finance Ministers, Secretaries and representatives of SAARC Members discussed the criteria for funding projects in Member States, modalities of SDF functioning and other relevant matters. Representing the Government of Nepal, Mr. Shreekrishna Nepal, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Finance attended the Meeting. The Governing Council serves as an apex policy-making body of the SDF.

Thirty-First Governing Board Meeting of the SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC)

The SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre convened its Thirty-First Governing Board Meeting virtually on 22-23 January 2024. In his capacity as the Chairperson of the Governing Board, Dr. Rajendra P. Joshi, Deputy Director General (DDG), National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare of Government of India chaired the Meeting. The Meeting recommended the budget and a calendar of activities of the Centre for consideration of higher SAARC Bodies.

Eleventh Governing Board Meeting of South Asian University (SAU)

The South Asian University held its Eleventh Governing Board Meeting in Kathmandu on 18-19 December 2023. The Chairperson of the SAU Governing Board Prof. Dev Raj Adhikari, current Chairman of the University Grants Commission of Nepal, chaired the two-day meeting.

In addressing the Meeting as the Chief Guest, Ambassador Mr. Md. Golam Sarwar, Secretary General of SAARC, hailed South Asian University as one of the significant accomplishments of SAARC and underlined its contribution to enhancing the welfare and quality of life of the people of the region through education.

The Board approved the appointment of Prof. K. K. Aggarwal from India as next President of SAU as well as its budget for 2023-24 and academic calendar for 2024-25.

Overall, the Meetings of Governing Boards of SAARC Cultural Centre, SAARC Agricultural Centre, SAARC Energy Centre, SAARC Arbitration Council and SAARC Regional Standards Organization were also convened to discuss the budgetary and programmatic activities of these SAARC bodies.

SAARC-ADB Consultation Workshop on Climate Change

SAARC-ADB Consultation Workshop on Climate Change was held on 10-11 July 2024 in Thimphu, Bhutan to review the status of the implementation of the Thimphu Statement on Climate Change 2010 (TSCC 2010). The Workshop dwelt on various national initiatives and best policy practices to foster regional cooperation in the fight

against climate crisis.

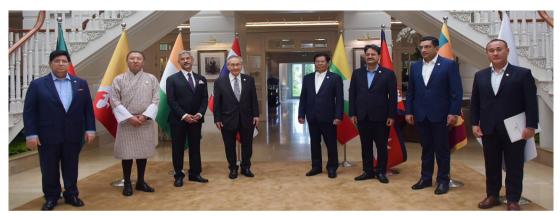


(Delegates from SAARC Member States during SAARC-ADB Consultation Workshop on Climate Change in Thimpu)

BIMSTEC

Foreign Minister attends BIMISTEC Foreign Ministers' Retreat

The Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud attended the BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' Retreat held in Bangkok on 17 July 2023. During the Retreat, Foreign Ministers of BIMSTEC member states deliberated on various aspects of regional cooperation within BIMSTEC framework.



(BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers during collective courtesy call on Prime Minister of Thailand)

The Foreign Minister joined his BIMSTEC counterparts in the joint calls on Mr. Prayut Chan-o-Cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand on 17 July 2023. While in Bangkok, the Foreign Minister held a number of meetings with his counterparts from the BIMSTEC region and discussed both bilateral and regional matters of mutual interests.

As a committed Member, Nepal led the BIMSTEC process with a whole of region approach to promote people-to-people contacts in the region and beyond.

Special Meeting of BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee

A Special Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (S-BPWC) comprising national focal points of BIMSTEC Member States was held in Paro, Bhutan on 05-06 October 2023.



(National Focal Points from BIMSTEC Member States and officials from Secretariat during a Special Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee in Paro)

The Meeting had extensive discussions on several issues of regional cooperation within BIMSTEC and finalized draft Sixth BIMSTEC Summit Declaration, draft MoUs with UNESCAP, UNOPS, the World Bank, UNODC, IORA, and administrative, financial matters related to the Secretariat for 2024.

Tenth Meeting of BIMSTEC Expert Group on Agricultural Cooperation

The Tenth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Agricultural Cooperation (10th EGMAC) was held virtually on 18-19 December 2023 in Kathmandu.



(BIMSTEC delegates attending Tenth Meeting of BIMSTEC Expert Group on Agricultural Cooperation)

The Meeting reviewed the status of progress made in agriculture cooperation, especially in implementation of Plan of Action (PoA) on strengthening BIMSTEC Agricultural Co-operation (2023-2027) and made policy recommendations for charting out scalable solutions to regional challenges in agricultural space.

New BIMSTEC Secretary General Appointed

Ambassador Mr. Indra Mani Pandey, a senior diplomat from India, assumed charge as the Fourth Secretary General of BIMSTEC on 4 January 2024. His predecessor Ambassador Mr. Tenzin Lekphell from Bhutan completed his tour of duty on 5 November 2023.

Prior to taking over the office as Secretary General, Ambassador Mr. Pandey served as the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva.



(Ambassador Mr. Indra Mani Pandey taking charge as Secretary General at BIMSTEC Secretariat in Dhaka)

Second Meeting of BIMSTEC Expert Group on Tourism

As a Lead country for People-to-People Contact sector, Nepal hosted the Second Meeting of BIMSTEC Expert Group on Tourism in Kathmandu on 17-18 January 2024 with the participation of delegates from all BIMSTEC Member States. Chaired by Mr. Gobinda Bahadur Karkee, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal, the Meeting discussed and finalized the updated draft Plan of Action on Tourism and recommended, inter alia, to operationalize the Virtual BIMSTEC Tourism Information Center and BIMSTEC Tourism Fund.



(BIMSTEC Delegates attending Second Meeting of BIMSTEC Expert Group on Tourism in Kathmandu)

BIMSTEC Aquatic Championship 2024

The BIMSTEC Aquatic Championship 2024 was held in New Delhi from 6-9 February 2024. Mr. Anurag Singh Thakur, Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports of India and Mr. Dig Bahadur Limbu, the Minister of Youth and Sports of Nepal, attended the opening ceremony.

Nepal won a bronze medal in the tournament while India came first with 54 medals. It was the first sports event organized under the BIMSTEC banner, with over 400 athletes from BIMSTEC Member States in attendance.

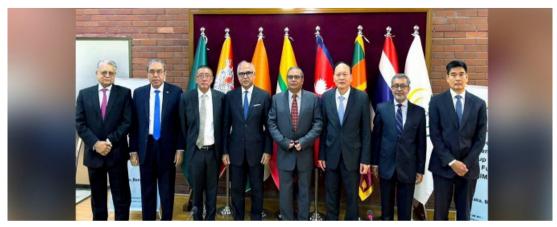


(BIMSTEC Aquatic Championship 2024 Opening ceremony)

Meeting of Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) on the Future Directions of BIMSTEC

The First and Second Meetings of the Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) on the Future Directions of BIMSTEC was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 25 January 2024 and 11-12 March 2014 respectively. Dr. Soonthorn Chaiyindeepum, a member of EPG from current Chair Thailand, presided over both Meetings.

In line with its mandates, the EPG deliberated on developing a forward-looking BIMSTEC 2030 Agenda; reviewing existing BIMSTEC activities and institutional mechanisms; and making pragmatic recommendations to reorient BIMSTEC process in the shared interests of Member States.



(BIMSTEC EPG Members at Secretariat in Dhaka)

Nepal hosts 2nd BIMSTEC Expert Group Meeting on Cultural Cooperation

Nepal convened the Second Meeting of BIMSTEC Expert Group on Cultural Cooperation in Lalitpur on 31 March 2024. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Suresh Suras Shrestha, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal.

The Meeting discussed and finalised the *Draft Plan of Action on Culture* which laid out specific action plans for promoting and preserving both tangible and intangible cultural heritages of the Member States. The Meeting also finalised Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Expert Group for its submission to the upcoming BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting.



(Delegates from BIMSTEC Members participating in 2nd Meeting of BIMSTEC Expert Group on Cultural Cooperation in Lalitpur)

BIMSTEC Charter Enters into Force

The Charter of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) came into effect on 20 May 2024. This marked a new beginning for fostering regional unity, solidarity and cooperation within BIMSTEC for a sustainable and prosperous future in the Bay of Bengal region. Additionally, BIMSTEC Charter added renewed momentum to BIMSTEC's growing institutionalization and broadened the leeway for enhanced collaboration with Member States and external development partners. The Charter was signed by the Heads of State and Government of BIMSTEC Member States during the Fifth Summit held virtually from Colombo, Sri Lanka on 20 March 2022.

BIMSTEC Secretary-General Indra Mani Pandey Visits Nepal

Report on Nepal's Foreign Affairs (2023-2024)

Ambassador Mr. Indra Mani Pandey made an introductory visit to Nepal from 19-22 May 2024 following his assumption of the post of Secretary-General of BIMSTEC. During his visit, he called on the President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel, Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachandra', Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha, Minister of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation Mr. Hit Bahadur Tamang, and other high officials of the Government of Nepal. On these occasions, Nepali dignitaries reaffirmed Nepal's commitments to the vision, principles and objectives of BIMSTEC for realizing a peaceful, resilient, and prosperous BIMSTEC region.

Besides these official meetings, the Secretary-General delivered a keynote address on "Harnessing Regional Synergies for Development and Prosperity in the BIMSTEC Region" at an event organized by the Centre for Economic Development and Administration (CEDA) at Tribhuvan University on 20 May 2024.



(Secretary-General of BIMSTEC during calls on President [Left] and Prime Minister [Right])

BIMSTEC Celebrates 27th Anniversary

BIMSTEC observed its Twenty-Seventh anniversary of its establishment on 6 June 2024. On this special occasion, the Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' conveyed a Message of felicitation to the Governments and people of BIMSTEC Member States. In his message, the Prime Minister stressed the implementation of agreements, broader political commitments, and people-centred development for ensuring peace, prosperity and collective well-being of the people in region while reaffirming commitments to BIMSTEC's principles and objectives.

In a separate message, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon. Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha underscored BIIMSTEC's pivotal role in enhancing stability, fostering economic prosperity, and promoting regional solidarity in the Bay of Bengal. Furthermore, he highlighted vast potential of this dynamic region to alleviate poverty, address gaps in connectivity, boost energy cooperation, and enhance trade, investment, and tourism for shared growth.

ASIA COOPERATION DIALOGUE (ACD)

ACD Secretary General Visits Nepal

Dr. Pornchai Danvivathana, Secretary General of Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) visited Nepal from July 31 to 2 August 2023. During his visit, he paid a courtesy call on Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud and Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal. During these calls-on, they discussed matters related to regional cooperation within this forum and upcoming Third ACD Summit.



(ACD Secretary General during a courtesy call on Foreign Minister at the Foreign Ministry)

In addition, the Secretary General paid courtesy calls on Mr. Ashok Kumar Rai, Minister, and the Secretary of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation in Singhadurbar.

During the meetings, views were exchanged on further enhancing regional cooperation and people-to-people exchanges within ACD membership.

Eighteenth ACD Ministerial Meeting in New York

The 18th Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Ministerial Meeting was held on 20 September 2023 at the UN Headquarters in New York. The Meeting was chaired by Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain, with ACD Foreign Ministers and delegates from Member States, including the ACD Secretary General Dr. Pornchai Danvivathana in attendance.

Addressing the Meeting, Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud welcomed the Bahrain Declaration, highlighted disproportionate impacts of climate change on mountainous countries like Nepal and shared views on Nepal's Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID) strategies. Further, he stated that the six pillars of cooperation identified in ACD Blueprint 2021-2030 aligned well Nepal's development priorities and expressed happiness over adoption of ACD Vision for Asia Cooperation 2030.

ACD Senior Officials' Special Review Meeting Meeting

The Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Senior Officials' Special Review Meeting was held virtually on 20 December 2023 at the ACD Secretariat, Kuwait City. It was the first meeting chaired by Iran since taking over the Chairmanship in September 2023 in New York.

The meeting agreed to finalize the Chairship of six Working Groups, Guiding Principles for Functioning of ACD Secretariat, ACD Rules of Procedures, and implement ACD Blueprint 2021-2030 for strengthening regional cooperation.



(ACD Delegates in discussions during a virtual Senior Officials' Special Review Meeting)

ACD Chambers of Commerce Meet in Isfahan

Isfahan Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture of Iran organized the 2nd conference of Chambers of Commerce of Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Member States in Isfahan on 29-30 April 2024. Themed as "A More Empowered and Unified Asia through Modern Technologies", the conference aimed to build solidarity, business partnerships and linkages among business communities of the member states.



(Business delegates from Members attending 2nd ACD Conference of the Chambers of Commerce)

ACD Senior OFFICIALS Deliberate on Policy Agenda

In an effort to give new impetus to institution-building processes within the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) framework, the ACD Senior Officials Meetings (SOM) held positive discussions on 18 April and 18 March of 2024 in a virtual format. Chaired by Islamic Republic of Iran, the Meetings deliberated on pertinent matters relating to finalization of draft Guiding Principles for Functioning of ACD Secretariat, appointment of next ACD Secretary-General, and the establishment of an Eminent Persons Group (EPG), among others.



(Senior Officials from ACD Members during virtual discussions)

SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION

As a dialogue partner, Nepal participated in a number of meetings and initiatives within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization during the review year.

Nepal remained committed to the principles, values and purposes of the SCO for further strengthening a peaceful, stable, inclusive, prosperous and democratic regional and global order.

To play a larger role within this dynamic regional forum, Nepal continued its diplomatic engagements with SCO Member States for upgrading its status to a full membership ahead.

MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS

A robust multilateral system has its pivotal role in bolstering a peaceful, stable, resilient, equitable and democratic global order amidst evolving geopolitical complexities. To address polycrises- from climate catastrophe, conflicts, economic and digital divides to debt distress, food insecurity and more- a reformed and reinforced multilateralism under the UN stewardship remains not to be a choice but an imperative.

Nepal reposed abiding respect for the UN Charter and adhered to the principles of Panchasheel and international law in the conduct of its international relations. During the review year, Nepal strongly advocated for a more effective, accountable, transparent and representative UN as an indispensable global forum for ensuring international peace, security, sustainable development and promotion of human rights norms as well as strengthening of a democratic and equitable global governance.

Reaffirming its unwavering commitments to sustained global peace and security, Nepal remained the topmost troop contributing country to UN peace missions in 2024.

While upholding the vision and overarching goals of the UN, Nepal actively contributed to substantive discussions and outcomes of the high-level UN conferences and Meetings. On this score, Nepal prioritized promoting a prosperous, just, inclusive and rules-based world order, not least by amplifying the voice and core interests of LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS.

78th UNGA General Debate

The Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' led a Nepali delegation to the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly themed 'Rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity: Accelerating action on the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals towards Peace, Prosperity, Progress, and Sustainability for all' at the UN Headquarters in New York on 19-26 September 2023.

In his address to the General Assembly, the Prime Minister highlighted political and social transformation in Nepal after the promulgation of Constitution in 2015, which enshrined human rights, periodic elections, proportional representation and inclusivity, full press freedom, independent judiciary, and the rule of law.



(Prime Minister Mr. Dahal addressing the General Debate of the 78th UNGA Session)

The Prime Minister also stated that Nepal was in the final leg of a home-grown peace process, the conclusion of which would set a rare example of successful conflict transformation.

The foreign policy of Nepal underlined the indispensability of multilateralism with the United Nations at the core, he emphasized, while also calling for enhanced support from international community for the LDCs and LLDCs like Nepal. He reiterated Nepal's principled position on peace, security, disarmament, terrorism, human rights, sustainable development, and climate change, in addition to expressing Nepal's support for a more representative, inclusive, and transparent Security Council and a more revitalized General Assembly.

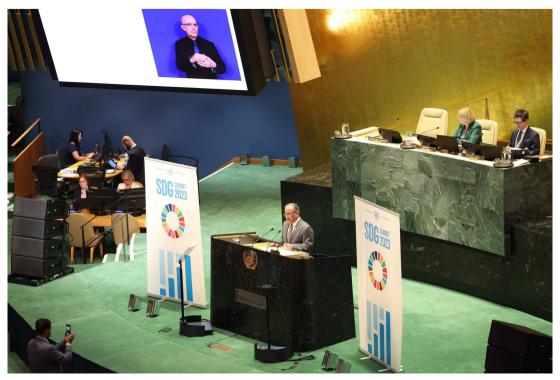
During the high-level segment, the Prime Minister also addressed high-level meetings on pandemic prevention, and on universal health coverage.

SDG Summit

The 2023 SDG Summit, formally the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development organized under the auspices of the General Assembly every four years, took place on 18-19 September 2023 in New York.

Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' addressed the Plenary of the

Summit on September 18, 2023 in his capacity as the Chair of the Group of the Least Developed Countries (LDC). In his address, he expressed concerns over the lack of progress in SDGs across the LDCs, worsened by geopolitical tensions and conflicts, dwindling FDIs, growing external debt and climate crisis. The Prime Minister called for an urgent rescue plan for the SDGs, while also urging the development partners and the UN system to support sustained, smooth, and irreversible graduation of LDCs by reinvigorated and coordinated cooperation.



(Prime Minister Mr. Dahal addressing the SDG Summit)

High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development

On September 20, 2023, Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' delivered a statement in the roundtable on innovative solutions to unlock SDG investments at the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development. The subtheme of the roundtable was scaling up affordable and accessible international public financing for sustainable development and ensuring efficiency. As the LDCs' Chair, he highlighted the structural impediments along with climate-induced crises hindering the development of LDCs. He called for enhancing the flow of concessional and grant-based resources from multilateral development banks, international financial system and climate funds to the LDCs.



(Prime Minister Mr. Dahal addressing the High-level Dialogue on Financing for development)

On the sidelines of the UNGA 78, the UN held a High-Level Dialogue (HLD) on Financing for Development on September 20 under the theme 'Financing the SDGs for a world where No One is Left Behind'

19th Summit of the Non-aligned Movement (NAM)

Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' led a Nepali delegation to the 19th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), held in Kampala, Uganda on 19 and 20 January. The theme of the Summit was "Deepening Cooperation for Shared Global Affluence".

At the Summit, the Prime Minister underlined Nepal's longstanding commitment to the principles and values of non-alignment along with independent, objective, balanced and non-aligned foreign policy rooted in sovereign equality, mutual respect and peaceful settlement of disputes. He also called on NAM Members to prioritize the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals and implementation of the Paris Agreement while underscoring solidarity among global south for realizing a just, equitable and peaceful world order, with requisite reforms in the United Nations as well as international financial and trade systems.



(Rt. Hon. PM addressing the 19th NAM Summit, Kampala, 19 January 2024)

The Summit adopted the NAM 'Outcome Document', 'Kampala Declaration and 'Declaration on Palestine'.

In the lead up to the Summit, Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud and Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal respectively led the delegations of Nepal to the ministerial and senior officials' meetings of NAM, held on 17-18 January and 15-16 January.

CLIMATE CHANGE

COP28

Nepal has been actively participating in all the Climate Change negotiations. The 28th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 28) was held in Dubai, UAE from 30 November to 12 December 2023 in Dubai.

Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda, lead the Nepali delegation to COP28. He delivered a national statement on 2 December 2023, in which he drew a stark picture of Nepal suffering direct, disproportionate, and damaging effects of climate change as a mountainous country. The Prime Minister called on developed countries to raise ambition and fulfill their commitments, particularly with respect to financial and technological support to the developing countries, including the LDCs.

Climate Ambition Summit

The 2023 Climate Ambition Summit was held on September 20, 2023, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

In the capacity of the Chair of the Group of the Least Developed Countries, Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' addressed the Summit on September 20. He pointed out that LDCs faced climate-induced disasters the most when their contribution to the greenhouse gas emission remained the least. He emphasized that the international community must provide necessary support to the LDCs to help build resilience and a green economy. He also urged them to fulfill their commitments to climate finance.



(Prime Minister Mr. Dahal addressing the Climate Ambition Summit)

Inaugural Forum of Global Coalition for Social Justice

President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel delivered a keynote address at the Inaugural Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice (GCSJ) during the High-Level segment of the 112th International Labour Conference (ILC) on 13 June 2024. The President highlighted the major initiatives of Nepal to ensure social justice for workers, while also reaffirming the commitment of the Government of Nepal to embrace social justice for all as envisioned in the Constitution of Nepal and International Labour Conventions. He appealed to all countries of the world to treat migrant workers fairly and with respect. He also drew the attention of the international community to the

adverse effects of climate change on ensuring social justice.

The President's keynote address set the tone for the forum, emphasizing the intersection of climate justice and social justice from the perspective of a non-emitter country.

During the visit, the President also held a meeting with the ILO Director General Gilbert F. Houngbo at Palais des Nations on 13 June 2024. The Inaugural Forum also featured an address by President of Brazil Mr. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, also a cochair of the coalition.

Participation in the 112th International Labour Conference

The 112th International Labour Conference (ILC) was held on 03-14 June 2024 in Geneva. Mr. Dol Prasad Aryal, Minister for Labour, Employment, and Social Security of Nepal, addressed the Conference on 11 June. In his statement, the Minister highlighted Nepal's commitment to promote social justice and its solidarity with international efforts at creating a fairer and more just world.

Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2)

Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' led a Nepali delegation to the UN Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2) organized in Rome from 23 to 27 July 2023. He addressed the official opening of the Moment as the LDCs' Chair, calling for international support, including scaling up investments, for transforming agri-food systems across LDCs to achieve food security and to end hunger and malnutrition.

He also addressed the plenary on school meals, in which he highlighted Nepal's efforts to ensure healthy meal for all school children. Besides, he delivered a keynote address in the plenary session on food systems transformation, emphasizing innovations for transforming food systems while shedding light on food rights in Nepal and the strategy for food system transformation.

Third South Summit

Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal led Nepali delegation to the Third South Summit of the Group of 77 and China held on 21 and 22 January in Kampala, Uganda.

Addressing the Summit, the Foreign Secretary reiterated Nepal's support to the Group of 77 and China in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Paris Agreement, and other internationally agreed goals and frameworks including Doha Program of Action. She expressed Nepal's strong commitment to fostering solidarity,

harmony, and cooperation among countries of the Global South and called for deeper cooperation among countries of global south to confront myriad global challenges.



(Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal, addressing the 3rd South Summit, Kampala, 21 Jan 2024)

4th SIDS Conference

The Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) was held in Antigua and Barbuda from 27 to 30 May 2023. Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal led the Nepali delegation to the Conference, organized under the theme "Charting the Course Toward Resilient Prosperity". The Foreign Secretary delivered a statement on behalf of LDCs during the General Debate, where she mentioned that LDCs, LLDCs and SIDs are the countries hit hardest by various crises like pandemic, climate change, conflicts, geopolitical tensions and inflation. She expressed the need for stronger and enhanced global support to address their challenges, strengthen their sustainability and resilience, and build back better from persistent shocks.

148th Session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly

Mr. Devraj Ghimire, Speaker of the House of Representatives, led a Nepali parliamentary delegation to the 148th Session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly held on 23-27 March 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland. Delivering a statement during the general debate, the Speaker emphasized the vital role of parliaments in holding governments accountable, resolving conflicts, reducing tensions, and fostering

peace and understanding.

77th World Health Assembly

The 77th World Health Assembly (WHA77) was held in Geneva from 27 May to 1 June 2024 under the theme "All for Health, Health for All". Mr. Pradeep Yadav, Minister for Health and Population and leader of Nepali delegation, called for global partnership to transform health systems, effectively implement universal health coverage, and work together for making 'all for Health, Health for all' a reality in his address to the Assembly.

57th Session of the Commission on Population and Development

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health and Population Mr. Upendra Yadav, who led the Nepali delegation to the 57th Session of the Commission on Population and Development, at its general discussion, emphasized the full implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development to attain the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



(DPM and Minister of Health and Population Mr. Upendra Yadav addressing the CPD session)

The session was held in New York from 29 April to 3 May 2024.

68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68)

Minister for Women, Children and Senior Citizens, Ms. Bhagbati Chaudhary, leading the Nepali delegation, addressed the CSW68 on 18 March 2024, stressing that inclusive and sustainable development is critical to achieving gender equality and empowerment of women.



(Minister of Women, Children and Senior Citizens Ms Bhagbati Chaudhary addressing CSW68)

The CSW68 was held in New York from 11 to 22 March 2024.

THEMATIC MULTILATERAL ENGAGEMENTS

International Security and Disarmament

Nepal has consistently maintained its principled position in international forums calling for general and complete nuclear disarmament in a time-bound manner. Nepal continued to raise concerns in multilateral forums regarding increasing trend of military spending, lack of progress in the negotiation of disarmament initiatives, prolonged inter-state conflicts in some regions, threats of usage of nuclear weapons and the impacts of new technologies on security and disarmament issues.

Nepal recognizes the importance of regional disarmament initiatives as a means to complement global disarmament regimes. It supports the participation of women, youth, and civil society actors in all disarmament fora and acknowledges their contribution in disarmament education. Nepal emphasizes regulation of cyber and space activities and supports fostering transparency and confidence-building measures to address emerging security challenges.

Nepal actively follows the deliberations of the Security Council, particularly on peace operations, arms control, issues related to women, youth, and children, human rights, and other issues impacting international peace and security. Nepal utilizes all available opportunities to participate in the open debates of the Security Council and share national views and positions.

Demonstrating its commitment to global peace, Nepal co-sponsored several key resolutions aligned with its national interests and the broader goals of international peace. As the host country of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD), Nepal provides steadfast financial, moral, and political support to the Centre to ensure its effective operation.

UN Peace Operations

Nepal has a long history of serving in the UN peacekeeping missions and has remained a top contributor. Nepal was the largest troops and police-contributing country this year (as of September 2024).

Nepal actively participated in and contributed to the substantive session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations commonly known as C34 held in February-March 2024, calling for improvement in safety and security of the peacekeepers as well as adequate resources and enabling environment.

Nepal has consistently called for balanced, fair, and equitable opportunities for troopand police-contributing countries to serve in senior positions of UN peacekeeping.

A special event was organized at the UNHQ on 30 May 2024 to mark the International Day of Peacekeepers. On that occasion, the UN Secretary-General presented the Dag Hammarskjold Medals to Permanent Representatives of respective missions whose peacekeepers had lost their lives in 2023. Accordingly, Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa received the medal award posthumously to the Nepali fallen peacekeeper, L/CPL Bhupajit Rai (MONUSCO).

On behalf of the Nepal Government, Permanent Representative/Ambassador Thapa offered condolences to the family and loved ones of Late Rai.

UN Peacekeeping Ministerial

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Mr. Purna Bahadur Khadka led the Nepali delegation to the United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial held in Accra, on 5-6 December 2023. The Deputy Prime Minister pledged Nepal's steadfast commitment to the UN peacekeeping endeavors and called for improved coordination among stakeholders to accomplish the mandate of the peacekeeping missions.

United Nations Chiefs of Police Summit (UNCOPS) 2024:



(Home Secretary Mr. Eaknarayan Aryal addressing the UNCOPS 2024)

Home Secretary Mr. Eaknarayan Aryal led a Nepali delegation to the fourth UNCOPS 2024 held from 26 to 27 June 2024 in New York.

Delivering a national statement at the Summit, Mr. Aryal highlighted the growing complexity of conflicts with emergent technologies and underscored the need to address the root causes of conflicts. He expressed Nepal's unwavering commitment to contributing to global peace and security through UN Police (UNPOL).

Fourth Review Conference of the POA on Small Arms and Light Weapons:

The 4th United Nations Conference (RevCon4) to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPOA- SALW) was held from 18 to 28 June 2024. The conference reaffirmed the centrality of the UNPOA and International Tracing Instrument (ITI) in preventing and combating illicit trade. The conference adopted a political declaration and recommendations on combatting illicit small arms and light weapons. It also established an open-

ended technical expert group to address developments in small arms, light weapons manufacturing, technology and design.

Nepal participated actively in the conference. Elected from the Asia and the Pacific region, Nepal also served as a bureau member, and vice-president of the Conference.

Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)

The Meeting of States Parties (MSP) 2023 to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) was held in Geneva on 11-13 December 2023. Nepal participated in the meeting and reiterated its firm position on general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction. Nepal also emphasized the need of strengthening international cooperation to share advancements and achievements in life sciences and biotechnologies with a view to peaceful use of it such as preventing various diseases, increasing agricultural productivity, and ultimately contributing to global peace and prosperity.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED ISSUES

High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development 2024

Participation in HLPF

The High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) under the auspices of the ECOSOC was held from 08 to 17 July, 2024 under the theme 'Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and Eradicating Poverty in Times of Multiple Crises: the Effective Delivery of Sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions.' The HLPF reviewed SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

A Nepali delegation led by Dr. Min Bahadur Shrestha, Vice-Chairman of the National Planning Commission, participated in the Forum this year. As the LDCs' Chair, he addressed the town hall and general debate of the Forum. In his statements, he lamented slow, insufficient, and uneven towards SDGs despite the clear call of the SDG Summit 2023 for accelerating efforts and decisive actions.

He further stressed that the LDCs bear the hardest burnt of the existing and emerging challenges and crises, calling for close partnership, enhanced cooperation, fulfilment of existing commitments, and elevated support from the development partners to assist LDCs in the achievement of SDGs and implementation of DPoA.

Presentation of Nepal's VNR

During this year's High-Level Political Forum, Nepal presented its third Voluntary National Review (VNR), in which Nepal showcased its progress, challenges and ways forward in achieving the SDGs. The VNR highlighted its achievements in poverty reduction and SDG integration but noted challenges like climate change, financial gaps and institutional weaknesses. A total of thirty-six countries including Nepal presented their VNRs during this year's HLPF.



(Permanent Representative of Nepal Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa presenting VNR)

During the HLPF, Nepal also co-hosted a side event with Armenia titled 'Armenia and Nepal, Perspective from land locked mountainous countries on Sustainable Development and Climate Change' that focused on challenges faced by landlocked mountainous countries, with regards to climate change emphasizing the need for climate finance, disaster risk reduction and digital cooperation in context of sustainable development and climate change. Nepal also co-hosted a side event with ESCAP, ADB and UNDP with regards to addressing the interconnected challenges of climate change, poverty and food insecurity in the Asia-Pacific region.

L/LDC Ministerial Meetings

Minister for Foreign Affairs Narayan Prakash Saud, in his capacity as the Chair of the Global Coordination Bureau of the Least Developed Countries, convened the annual ministerial meeting of the group of Least Developed Countries on 21 September 2023 under the theme "Translating the Ambitious Doha Commitments into Tangible Actions to Accelerate the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda". The meeting is organized

annually at the margins of the high-level segment of the General Assembly.

In the opening statement, the Foreign Minister stressed that cascading and intersecting crises creating spin-off impacts on food and nutrition, health, education, peace and security, and the environment are disproportionately affecting LDCs in the implementation of SDGs. In this context, he urged the development partners to massively scale up affordable, long-term financing for development, especially through multilateral development banks, rechanneling special drawing rights and aligning all financing flows with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Likewise, the Foreign Minister also attended the 22nd Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries on the margins of the 78th Session of UNGA was held on 21 September 2023. He highlighted the challenges landlocked developing countries face and called for robust international support to LLDCs in terms of ODA, FDI, aid for trade, debt relief, and climate financing to enable LLDCs to cope with the rising stress in the meeting.

In addition, the Foreign Minister also led the Nepali delegation to the ministerial meeting of the Landlocked Developing Countries, jointly organized by the Government of Armenia and the UN Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, held in Yerevan, Armenia on 14-15 December 2023. The meeting was focused on transport connectivity in LLDCs, and was meant to be an important event ahead of the LLDC3 Conference. In the meeting, the Foreign Minister delivered a statement that stressed the need for robust transport connectivity for them.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Sessions of the Human Rights Council

Nepal participated in the 54th, 55th and 56th sessions of the Human Rights Council held respectively in September-October 2023, February-April 2024, and June-July 2024. Nepal also participated in the 44th, 45th, and 46th sessions of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group November 2023, January- February 2024 and April-May 2024, respectively.

Nepal remained engaged with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Human rights bodies and mechanisms, OHCHR and the Secretariat of the Human Rights Council. Nepal responded to a few communications from Special Procedures requesting inputs for their thematic reports.

In its deliberations in the council and other mechanisms, Nepal focused on critical themes, including rights of women, children, persons with disabilities, minorities,

marginalized communities as well as on the issues like climate change, the digital divide, sustainable development goals (SDGs), the right to development among others.

75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) organized Human Rights 75 high-level event to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on 11-12 December 2023.

Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud led a Nepali delegation to participate in the event. During the pledging session on 11 December, Nepal's pledged to become a party to the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention 1948 (ILO Convention No. 87) within next five years.

UN REFORMS

Security Council Reform

Nepal has continuously participated in Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) on Security Council reform which started in 2009 and has rolled over to subsequent sessions of the General Assembly until now. Nepal has maintained its consistent position on UN Security Council reforms to make it more representative, transparent and accountable to meet the needs and realities of contemporary world.

Engagements with UN Specialized Agencies and Inter-Governmental Bodies

WTO and Trade Related Matters

Nepal remained actively engaged in the World Trade Organization (WTO) during the review period. The Mission participated in negotiations on the draft outcome document of the WTO's 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13) held from 26 February to 02 March 2024 in Abu Dhabi, focusing on LDC-specific issues such as market access, technical assistance, application of special and differential treatment in various WTO agreements including in the dispute settlement procedures, and other support measures for graduating LDCs, which culminated in the Ministerial Decision on WTO Smooth Transition Support Measures at MC13.

United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

74th and 75th Executive Sessions of Trade and Development Board

The 74th and 75th Executive Sessions of Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD were held on 20-23 November 2023 and 12-14 February 2024, respectively.

Nepal, as the LDCs' Chair in Geneva, delivered statements and the key points included were need for SDG funding, improved climate finance, and addressing LDC's low representation in global financial institutions. Nepal called for reforms in the international financial system, alignment of financial flows with climate goals, and replenishment of UNCTAD's LDC Trust Fund. Emphasizing sustainable finance, Nepal highlighted debt relief, fair trade, and structural transformation.

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION (WIPO)

WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge adopted by consensus

The Diplomatic Conference to conclude an International Legal Instrument Relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge Associated with Genetic Resources (GRATK) was held from 13 to 24 May 2024 at the WIPO headquarters in Geneva. The conference concluded with the adoption of the first WIPO treaty to include provisions specifically for indigenous peoples and local communities. An eight -member Nepali delegation led by Dr. Ganesh Prasad Pandeya, Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation participated in the conference.

NEPAL'S ELECTION TO UN BODIES AND OTHER FORUMS

ECOSOC Vice-President

The ECOSOC Organizational Session elected the Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations H.E. Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa has been elected as one of the Vice-Presidents of ECOSOC from Asia-Pacific States. Ambassador Thapa will be leading the Management Segment during the session.

Nepal's Election to the Executive Board of UN-Women

Nepal has been elected as a member of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) for a three-year term beginning on 01 January 2025 and expiring on 31 December 2027.

Nepal's Candidate Elected to the CEDAW Committee

During the twenty-third meeting of the State Parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women held in New York on 7 June 2024, Nepal's candidate to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Ms. Bandana Rana, has been re-elected for the term of 2025-2028. She obtained 146 votes, the highest among 20 candidates.

Nepal elected as a Deputy Member to the ILO Governing Body

The 112th International Labour Conference elected Nepal unanimously as the Deputy Member of the Governing Body of the ILO for a three-year term from 2024 to 2027 on 7 June 2024.

Election to the Chair of the Committee on Trade and Development of WTO

On 12 January 2024, Nepal was unanimously elected as the Chair of the WTO Committee on Trade and Development (CTD) for the first time since Nepal's accession to the WTO in 2004 for one year from March 2024 to March 2025.

Nepal's entry into IAEA's MESA Group

Nepal has officially joined the Middle East and South Asia (MESA) Group within the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Current position Held in the UN

In line with its meaningful engagement and substantive contribution to multilateralism through the UN, Nepal continued to contribute to the UN in the following roles/positions during the reporting period:

- Chair of the Global Coordination Bureau of the Least Developed Countries, 2023-2026
- Member of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) (2024-2026), Vice-President of the ECOSOC from July 2024 to July 2025.
- Bureau of the Preparatory Committee of the 4th UN Conference of Financing for Development (FfD4)
- Bureau of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee of the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries
- Member of Peacebuilding Commission (2023-2024)
- Bureau of the Preparatory Committee and Vice Chair of the 4th United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (2024)
- Bureau Member of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries LLDCs (2021-2024)
- Member of the Advisory Board on Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States (LLS Advisory Board of UNGA 78th Session)
- Member of the Executive Board of the UN-Women for the term 2025-2027
- Member (independent expert Ms. Bandana Rana) of the CEDAW Committee

- (2021-2024, reelected for 2025-28)
- Mr. Suresh Raj Sharma as a member of Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC) for the term of 2023-2025

Nepal's Current Candidatures (during the reporting period)

Nepal has presented its candidature for the following roles in the UN:

- Non- Permanent Seat of the United Nations Security Council for the term 2037-2038, election will be held in June 2036
- Chair of the First Committee for the 81st session of the UNGA, election will be held in June 2025
- Member of the Human Rights Council for the term 2027-2029, election will be held in October 2026
- Member of the Economic and Social Council for the term 2029-2031, election will be held in June 2028
- Commission on Narcotics Drug, 2028-2031
- Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 2028-2030
- Executive Board of the United Nations Children Fund, 2027-2029

Diplomatic Relations

Nepal and the Kingdom of Tonga established diplomatic relations on 1 March 2024. Likewise, Nepal and the Republic of Kiribati Islands established diplomatic relations on 17 July 2024. With this, the number of countries with which Nepal has diplomatic relations reached 183.

Report on Nepal's Foreign Affairs (2023-2024)

Policy Matters, Development Diplomacy and Nepali Diaspora Affairs

Report on Nepal's Foreign Affairs (2023-2024)

POLICY MATTERS

The Ministry prioritized regular and pragmatic assessment of both existing and new policy frameworks related to Nepal's foreign policy, external engagements and evolving international relations. Guided by the Constitution of Nepal, 2015, periodic plans, sectoral policies, and the Government's annual policies and programmes, the Ministry ensured effective and expeditious implementation of these policy instruments to safeguard Nepal's core national interests and promote overall welfare of Nepalis.

To achieve these ends, the Ministry collaborated with government and private sector stakeholders to deliver results-driven implementation, evidence-based appraisal and forward-looking reforms in foreign policy and diplomatic initiatives. In fully complying with the principles of accountable and people-centric governance, the Ministry provided policy briefs, responses and clarifications to both House of the Federal Parliament and relevant parliamentary committees on pressing foreign policy issues.

Furthermore, the Ministry actively coordinated with National Planning Commission, Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, Ministry of Finance and other line agencies to develop and implement the annual work plan (milestones) aligned with the government's overarching policies, programmes and the budget statement.

The Ministry carried on with its flagship Prof. Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series and organized various annual interactions and consultation programs on pertinent foreign policy issues including Nepali diaspora affairs.

THIRD EDITION OF YADU NATH KHANAL LECTURE SERIES

The Ministry organized the third edition of Professor Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture series on 14 May 2024 in Kathmandu. Prof. C Raja Mohan, visiting professor and former Director of the Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, delivered a lecture titled "Nepal-India relations: Prospects and Pathways".



(DPM and Foreign Minister Shrestha alongside Former Ministers, Prof. C. Raja Mohan and the Foreign Secretary (left), Participants at the program (right)

The event was attended by dignitaries including ministers, former foreign ministers, members of parliament, diplomats and academicians, among others. The lecture, speeches and video of the program are available in the Ministry's website.

ANNUAL FOREIGN POLICY INTERACTION

The Ministry organized an interaction program on "Maximizing Nepal's Benefits from the Rise of India and China" on 16 March 2024 as a part of its annual program. Following the Address by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha and Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal, Mr. Shankar Das Bairagi, National Security Advisor, deliberated on the topic. Mr. Bairagi highlighted the opportunities for Nepal vis-à-vis the rapid economic growth and the rise of India and China in recent times. In his presentation, Mr. Bairagi stressed the need to adopt appropriate policies and strategies to benefit from arising opportunities.



(Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister addressing the interaction programme)

PREPATORY CONSULTATION MEETING ON SAGARMATHA SAMBAAD

The Ministry organized a consultation program on preparations for Sagarmatha Sambaad on 3 July 2024 in Kathmandu. The consultation aimed at recommencing preparations for the Sagarmatha Sambaad which was previously postponed due to unanticipated consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The program was organized under the convenorship of the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha. Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal, Heads of the Divisions of the Ministry and Directors General, National Security Advisor, former Foreign Ministers, former foreign secretaries, former Ambassadors, the Executive Director of the Institute of Foreign Affairs, the Executive Chairperson of the Policy Research Institute participated in the consultation and provided their inputs and feedback.



(DPM and Foreign Minister Narayan Kaji Shrestha and Foreign Secretary with the participants of the program)

INTERACTION WITH FORMER NEPALI AMBASSADORS

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha held an interaction programme with former Nepali Ambassadors at the Ministry Hall on 20 March 2024. Following the welcome remarks by Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal, the former Nepali Ambassadors shared their experience and suggested constructive inputs for pragmatic, practical and productive approaches of international relations and diplomacy Nepal could pursue. They also reiterated the need for continuity, consistency and reliability in foreign policy and international relations space.



(Former Ambassadors of Nepal participating in the interaction)

DEVELOPMENT DIPLOMACY

The Ministry accorded great priority to development diplomacy and its associated activities to accelerate overall socio-economic development of the country. The Ministry collaborated with relevant domestic stakeholders and global partners including Nepali missions abroad to enhance Nepal's export trade, attract foreign investment and technology transfer, and promote tourism, among other initiatives.

The Ministry facilitated for hosting the Third Investment Summit 2024 with positive outcomes. It also organized interaction programs with Nepali missions abroad and other business communities on different aspects of development diplomacy with synergetic collaboration.

FACILITATION FOR THE THIRD INVESTMENT SUMMIT 2024

The Ministry actively contributed to a successful hosting of the Third Investment Summit in Kathmandu in April 2024 from its preparatory phase.

During the Summit, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha chaired a Session on 'Investment Opportunities in Green Climate-Resilient Businesses in Nepal' during the Summit. In his remarks, he called on foreign partners and prospective investors to bring in greener and climate resilient businesses and investments to Nepal. At the Closing Session of the Summit, DPM and Foreign Minister Mr. Shrestha delivered the concluding address. In his address, he underscored the highlights of the two-day event and reiterated the Government's commitment to facilitate all-potential investment proposals.



(DPM and Foreign Minister Mr. Shrestha delivering the concluding address in the Summit)

Prior to the Summit, the Ministry held a series of preparatory virtual meetings involving Nepali Missions abroad. Virtual Meetings were held with all Nepali missions on 'Role of Nepali Missions in Third Investment Summit' on 8 January 2024; 26 February and 29 March 2024.



(Foreign Secretary chairing the virtual interaction with Nepali Missions abroad)

The first two interaction meetings were chaired by Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal and joined by CEO of Investment Board Nepal Mr. Sushil Bhatta and officials from the Board as well the Ministry. The last preparatory meeting was addressed by Minister for Finance Mr. Barsha Man Pun, Chief Secretary Dr. Baikuntha Aryal, Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal and CEO of Investment Board Mr. Sushil Bhatta.



(Finance Minister, Chief Secretary, Foreign Secretary and CEO of IBN in the Program)

INTERACTION PROGRAM ON ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY AND NTIS 2080

The Ministry organized an interaction programme on the role of Nepali missions in economic diplomacy and Nepal Trade Integrated Strategy (NTIS) 2080 on 30 November 2023 in a hybrid format.



(Participants in the interaction programme)

The programme chaired by Acting Foreign Secretary Mr. Amrit Bahadur Rai was held to have in-depth understanding and experience-sharing in executing annual programs of economic diplomacy vis-à-vis trade promotion activities. Ambassadors/Heads of Mission as well as officials of Nepali Missions abroad participated virtually in the program. Joint Secretary from the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supply Mr. Lila Prasad Sharma, CEO of Trade and Export Promotion Centre Mr. Sharad Bikram Rana and officials of both the ministries participated in person.

INTERACTION PROGRAM ON PROMOTION OF EXPORT AND INVESTMENT

The Ministry organized an interaction program on 27 June 2024 regarding the role of the Ministry and Nepali Missions abroad in promoting exports and investment. The program was attended virtually by the Ambassadors and embassy officials of Nepali missions abroad and physically by senior government officials as well as senior officials of the relevant agencies and private sector. Senior officials from the Investment Board Nepal and Trade and Export Promotion Centre (TEPC) made presentations on trading and investment opportunities in Nepal and shared updates on recent policy reforms. The officials from FNCCI, CNI, NCC and FEEN delivered remarks on their strengths and expectations from Nepali missions in promoting trade and investment.



(Participants in the interaction (left), participants from Nepali Missions abroad [right])

Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal addressed the program highlighting the need to forge synergy among all stakeholders to promote Nepal's potentials in trade and investment sector. Delivering concluding remarks, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha stressed the growing need of the promotion of national interest and economic development by Nepali missions abroad, in collaboration with government agencies and private sector in Nepal.

PROVINCE LEVEL INTERACTION PROGRAM ON ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY



Attendees of the Program on Economic Diplomacy

The Ministry organized a province-level interaction on economic diplomacy in Dhangadhi, Kailali on 6 June 2024. The program focused on the promotion of exports, investment and tourism in relation to Sudurpaschim Province. The program was attended by senior officials from the provincial government, and representatives from the industrial and tourism sectors of the province.

ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY NEPALI MISSIONS ABROAD

Throughout the review year, Nepali missions abroad conducted various programs related to promoting economic diplomacy, focusing primarily on Nepal's image-branding, promotion of trade, investment, tourism and migrant workers' awareness-raising. They also collaborated with Nepali communities and local stakeholders for organizing and participating in such activities and programs such as fairs, exhibitions, talks programs, and interaction programs. During the reporting period, Nepali missions abroad conducted 355 programs and activities related to economic diplomacy in various countries around the world.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY INITIATIVES

LUMBINI CONCLAVE ON PEACE FOR PROSPERITY

The Ministry, in collaboration with the Honorary Consular Corps-Nepal (HCCN), organized Lumbini Conclave entitled "Global Peace for Prosperity" on 21-23

March 2024 in Bhairahawa, Rupandehi with the participation of Non-Residential Ambassadors accredited to Nepal.



(DPM and Foreign Minister Mr. Shrestha addressing the business session during the Conclave)

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha addressed the official inaugural session in the evening of 21 March 2024 at Tiger Resorts in Bhairahawa. In his address, the DPM and Foreign Minister highlighted the message of global peace and harmony. The inaugural session included presentation on Lumbini Museum, the culture of Buddhist arts and more. The evening was complemented with Nepali traditional cultural dance, music and exhibition on Buddhist arts.

The Business Session on the second day was focused on upcoming Investment Summit in Kathmandu. CEO of Investment Board Nepal (IBN) Mr. Sushil Bhatta made a statement highlighting the preparations and importance of the Summit. Addressing the session, DPM and Foreign Minister called on the non-resident Ambassadors and their Honorary Consuls to encourage their investors and business leaders to participate in the Summit.

The participants also toured Lumbini, the birthplace of Gautam Buddha and availed the opportunity to offer prayers.



(Participants attending the prayers in Lumbini)

DIALOGUE FOR DEMOCRACY IN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

The Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) Nepal, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, organized a programme entitled 'Dialogue for Democracy in Inclusive Society' on 20 March 2024 in Kathmandu.



(Foreign Secretary with the Panellists of the Dialogue)

Policymakers, members of think tanks, academia, civil society and members of the media attended the program. The dialogue included speakers and moderators from Nepal and Indonesia and involved two panel discussions on: 'Revitalizing Pluralistic Democracy: Collaborations Between Government and Non-State Actors in Democracy' and 'Democracy in Digital Age'. The Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal addressed the opening session of the Dialogue

EXCURSION FOR THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY IN KATHMANDU

In collaboration with the Nepal Tourism Board, the Ministry organized a diplomatic excursion for the diplomatic community in Kathmandu on 2-4 June 2024 in Pokhara. Residential Ambassadors of foreign diplomatic missions, Heads of United Nations, and International Organizations in Kathmandu along with their spouses participated in the programme.



(Attendees at the Eco-Village in Astam)

The first day included activities such as a brief hike around Dhampus, a subsequent dinner hosted by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and a cultural program. Also attended by Foreign Secretary, the participants celebrated the Annapurna Day, commemorating the first successful ascent of Mt. Annapurna next day. Addressing the program, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs highlighted the importance of Annapurna Day and emphasized Nepal's potential for tourism development. Post celebration, participants enjoyed the excursion: boating on Fewa Lake and a cable car ride to Sarangkot for panoramic views.



(Cultural performances during Annapurna Day Celebration)

NEPALI DIASPORA AFFAIRS

INTERACTION ON BRAIN GAIN CENTER

The Ministry organized an interaction program on the Brain Gain Center in Kathmandu on 5 July 2024. Convened with a view to rejuvenating the Centre, the consultation session was led by the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha. It was attended by the Foreign Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal, along with Joint Secretaries and Under Secretaries of the Ministry. It featured a presentation by Mr. Santosh Gautam, former facilitator of the Center. The presentation elucidated the concept of the Center, its current status, and a future roadmap to effectively revitalize the initiative. This was followed by deliberations among the participants on strategies to propel this initiative forward and formulate recommendations.



(DPM and Foreign Minister Mr. Shrestha and Foreign Secretary with the participants)

ISSUANCE OF NRN ID CARDS

During the reporting period, the Ministry and Missions issued/renewed 114 Non-Resident Nepali (NRN) identity cards, in line with the provisions of the NRN Act 2064 and NRN Rules 2066. Nepali Missions worked in collaboration with Nepali community organizations for promotion of tourism, trade, investment opportunities both on national and global fronts.

Protocol Matters, Service Delivery and General Administration

PROTOCOL MATTERS

The Ministry administered protocol-related responsibilities, including coordinating incoming and outgoing high-level visits, facilitating presentation of credentials by foreign and Nepali ambassadors, and managing diplomatic as well as consular immunities and privileges. Several initiatives were also undertaken to enhance coordination and collaboration with governmental agencies and foreign missions based in Kathmandu, ensuring effective communication and compliance with Nepal's diplomatic code of conduct and related laws.

Appointment of Nepali Ambassadors

S.N.	Ambassador	Country	Residential/Non- Residential	Appointment Date
1	Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa	UN Permanent Mission, New York	Residential	7 August 2023
1	1	Republic of Nicaragua	Non-Residential	10 June 2024
	Mr. Dan Bahadur	Republic of Mauritius and Republic of Zambia	Non-Residential	7 August 2023
2	Tamang	Republic of Botswana and Republic of Kenya	Non-Residential	4 February 2024
		Republic of Mozambique	Non-Residential	30 November 2023
3	Mr. Bishnu Pukar Shrestha	D e m o c r a t i c Republic of Korea	Non-Residential	7 August 2023
		Mongolia	Non-Residential	1 October 2023
4	Mr. Nirmal Raj Kafle	Republic of Paraguay	Non-Residential	7 August 2023
	Mr. Sudhir	Republic of France	Residential	28 August 2023
5	Bhattarai	Monaco	Non-Residential	4 July 2024
6	Mr. Tej Bahadur Chhetri	United Arab Emirates	Residential	28 August 2023

S.N.	Ambassador	Country	Residential/Non- Residential	Appointment Date
	Mr. Ghanshyam	State of Kuwait	Residential	28 August 2023
7	Lamsal	Republic of Iraq	Non-Residential	24 May 2024
	Mr. Ram Prasad Subedi	S w i s s Confederation, UNPM Permanent Representative	Residential	8 September 2023
8	Subcar	The Italian Republic	Non-Residential	30 November 2023
		Republic of San Marino	Non-Residential	10 June 2024
9	Prof. Dr. Ram Swarth Ray	Republic of Finland	Non-Residential	1 October 2023
10	Mr. Dhan Bahadur Oli	Kingdom of Thailand	Residential	18 December 2023

Credential Presentation Ceremony

Residential and Non-Residential Ambassadors-designate of the following countries presented their credentials to the President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel at a special ceremony held in Rastapati Bhawan, Maharajgunj during the reporting period:

S. N.	Country	Name of the Ambassador-Designate	Residential/ Non- Residential	Ceremony Date
1	United Kingdom	H.E. Mr. Robert Dominic Russel Fenn	Residential	17Aug 2023
2	The Socialist Republic of Vietnam	H.E. Nguyen Thanh Hai	Non-Residential	17 Aug 2023
3	State of Qatar	H.E. Mr. Mishal Mohammed Ali Alansari	Residential	04 Sept 2023
4	Republic of Peru	H.E. Mr. Javier Manuel Paulinich Velarde	Non-Residential	04 sept 2023

S.	Country	Name of the Ambassador-Designate	Residential/ Non- Residential	Ceremony Date
5	Kingdom of Cambodia	H. E. Mr. Koy Kuong	Non-Residential	04 Sept 2023
6	Swiss Confederation	H.E. Ms. Danielle Meuwly Monteleone	Residential	05 October 2023
7	European Union	H.E. Ms. Lorenzo Veronique	Residential	05 October 2023
8	Kingdom of Sweden	H.E. Mr. Jan Thesleff	Non-Residential	05 October 2023
9	Republic of Hungary	H.E. Mr. István Szabó	Non-Residential	05 October 2023
10	Czech Republic	H. E. Dr. Eliška Žigová	Non-Residential	05 October 2023
11	Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka	H.E. Sudharshana K. Pathirana	Residential	14 December 2023
12	Kingdom of Belgium	H.E. Mr. Didier Anna L. Vanderhasselt	Non-Residential	14 December 2023
13	Republic of Panama	H. E. Mrs. Yasiel Alines Buillo Rivera	Non-Residential	14 December 2023
14	Kingdom of Thailand	H.E. Mr. Suwapoing Sirisorn	Residential	14 March 2024
15	The Portugees Republic	H.E. Mr. Joao Manuel Mendes Ribeiro de Almeida	Non-Residential	14 March 2024
16	The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela	H.E. Ms. Capaya Rodriguez Gonzalez,	Non-Residential	14 March 2024
17	The Mongolian People's Republic	H.E Mr. Ganbold Dambajav	Non-Residential	14 March 2024
18	Republic of Cyprus	H.E. Mr. Evagoras Vryonides	Non-Residential	13 May 2024

S. N.	Country	Name of the Ambassador-Designate	Residential/ Non- Residential	Ceremony Date
19	Republic of Lithuania	H.E. Ms. Diana Mickeviciene	Non-Residential	13 May 2024
20	Kyrgyz Republic	H.E. Mr. Askar Beshimov	Non-Residential	13 May 2024
21	Ireland	H.E Mr. Kevin Kelly	Non-Residential	13 May 2024
22	Republic of Ghana	H.E. Dr. Winfred Nii Okai Hammond	Non-Residential	30 May 2024
23	Republic of Bulgaria	H.E. Mr. Nikolay Yankov	Non-Residential	30 May 2024
24	Eritrea	H.E. Mr. Alem Tsehaye Woldemariam	Non-Residential	30 May 2024
25	Republic of Philippines	H.E. Mr. Josel Francisco IGNACIO	Non-Residential	30 May 2024

Outgoing Resident Foreign Ambassadors:

S.N.	Name	Country	Date
1.	H.E. Gilles Bourbao	Republic of France	11 June 2024
2.	H.E. Mr. Yousef Mohammed Al-Hail	State of Qatar	20 July 2023
3.	H.E. Ms Nona Deprez	European Union	16 August 2023
4.	H.E. Mr. Esala Ruwan Weerakoon	Secretary General	31 August 2023
5.	H.E. Mr. Jo Yong Man	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	November 2023

Appointment of Nepali Honaray Consuls:

S.N.	Name	Designation	Country/Consular District	Cabinet Decision Date	
	New Appointments				
1	Mr. Damodar Poudel	Honarary Consul	Ohio State, USA	12 April 2024	

S.N.	Name	Designation	Country/Consular District	Cabinet Decision Date
2	Ms Helen Campos	Honorary Consul	Singapore city, Singapore	16 May 2024
3	Mr. Nadav Ben Yehuda	Honorary Consul	Rehovot city, Israel	16 May 2024
4	Mr. Pralhad Bahadur K.C.	Honorary Consul	Massachusetts State, USA	16 May 2024
5	Mr. Y.V. Gusev	Honorary Consul	St. Petersburg, Russian Federation	16 May 2024
6	Mr. Nirajan Gauli	Honorary Consul	Victoria State, Australia	24 June 2024
7	Mr. Sanjeev Kumar Sharma	Honorary Consul	New South Wales, Australia	24 June 2024
		Tenure Exte	nsion	
8	Mr. Dipak Dhamala	Honorary Consul	South Australia, Australia	1 February 2024
9	Ms. Ana Victoria Badilla Villanueva	Honorary Consul General	San Jose, Costa Rica	1 February 2024
10	Mr. El Cheikh Mohamed Ghouzayel	Honorary Consul General	Beirut, Lebanon	1 February 2024
11	Mr. Ludwig Alexander Greissl	Honorary Consul	Munich, Germany	1 February 2024
12	Mr. Knutur Okarsson	Honorary Consul	Reykjavik, Iceland	1 February 2024
13	Dr. Jose Paulo E. Campos	Honorary Consul	Manila, Philippines	1 February 2024
14	Mr. Ram Jiwan Panjiyar	Honorary Consul	Nikosia, Cyprus	1 February 2024
15	Mr. Mushtaq K. Chhapra	Honorary Consul General	Karachi, Pakistan	1 February 2024

S.N.	Name	Designation	Country/Consular District	Cabinet Decision Date
16	Mr. Ram Pratap Thapa	Honorary Consul General	Germany, North Rhine Westphalia, Bremen and Lower Saxony city	4 April 2024
17	Mr. Rishi Punakhar Dhakal	Honorary Consul General	California, USA	4 April 2024

Honarary Consuls Appointed by Foreign Nations:

S.N.	Name	Designation	Exequatur Issued Date
1	Mr. Pajwal Jung	Honarary Consul General	11 October 2023
	Pandey	of Ruwanda for Nepal	
2	Mr. Manish Thapa	Honarary Consul General of	1 January 2024
		Costa Rica for Nepal	
3	Ms. Bidhusi Rana	Honarary Consul General of	3 January 2024
		Iceland for Nepal	
4	Mr. Ramesh Sharma	Honarary Consul General of	7 April 2024
		Kyrgyz Republic for Nepal	

CONSULAR SERVICES

The Department of Consular Services provided a range of consular services such as attesting documents, providing visa and exemption facilities to foreign missions and international organizations in Nepal, and catering legal assistance including rescue and repatriation of Nepali nationals living abroad during emergencies. To deliver consular functions better with a multistakeholder approach, the Department worked closely with relevant authorities of the Government of Nepal, foreign missions and international organizations based in Nepal, and Nepali missions abroad to ensure efficient, seamless and results-focused service delivery.

Through consistent optimization of its digital service platforms, the Department focused on leveraging digital governance tools to make consular services more customer-friendly and transparent. The integrated consular application enabled the clients to verify authenticity of documents and track the progress of the services rendered. Building on its e-governance initiatives, the Department introduced new digital platforms to futher improve consular services through ICTs innovation during the review period.

Online Attestation of Police Clearance Certificate (PCC)

The Department commenced online attestation of the Police Clearance Certificate on 29 August 2022. This has enabled the applicants to process the Police Clearance Certificate using online platforms and download the attested copy of the Certificate without visiting the Department in person. 482 thousand people availed this service under the review period. This platform is working as a paperless and faceless module for attestation through integration with the system of Nepal Police Headquarters via API.

Online Grievance Handling System

The Department introduced online grievance-handling platform for Nepali missions abroad on 4 April 2024. This enabled the users to lodge their problems to Nepali missions abroad round the clock and track its progress. A total of 445 issues were processed through the system during the review period.

Online Demand Attestation System

The Department extended technical support to the Embassy of Nepal, Abu Dhabi, to introduce online demand attestation system on 6 June 2024. The system is gradually expanded to other Nepali missions as well. It facilitated the users to process the

applications for demand letter attestation from Nepali missions digitally.

Orientation programmes

The Department organized two orientation programmes in the fiscal year 2023-24 in the month of May 2024. The first programme was focused on further strengthening the consular works at the local levels while the other event was convened with the participation of representatives from diplomatic, consular and other international organizations.

Quantitative Overview of Consular Services

S.No.	Details of Services	Number of Works Performed
A	Attestation	
1	Total number of attested documents	700927
	(482447 Documents attested using online application system)	
2	-Revenue collected from police clearance certificate attestation: NRS 242900539	NRs 352140539
	-Revenue collected from attestation of other documents: NRS 109240000	
В	Consular and Legal Counselling	
3	Recommendation for Medical treatment, Religious tour, World cycling tour and others	104
4	Recommendation for education certificate attestation and nationality verification	1604
5	Recommendation letter to Indian Embassy for Police verification report to Nepalese citizens during their period of stay in India	742
6	Recommendation for procurement of chemicals and explosives	178
7	Recommendation letter fbr vehicle permit to enter India	16
8	Citizenship renouncement of Nepalese citizens- processed	168

S.No.	Details of Services	Number of Works Performed
9	Authentication of Power of Attorney issued by	16
	Nepalese missions abroad	
10	POA, VOR, SoSCO (Malaysia), GOSI Form	356
	regarding cornpensation of Nepalese citizens died	
	abroad	
11	Search and rescue of Nepalese nationals abroad	940
12	Bringing back the dead body of Nepalese nationals	197
C	Visa and Exemption	
13	Issuance of diplomatic/official/ Gratis visa	1457
14	Issuance of diplomatic/official ID Card	429
15	Issuance of SAARC visa stickers	42
16	Number of recommendation for exemption	3476
17	Other correspondence and recommendation	3052
18	Number of visa recommendation to the foreign	1856
	missions on GON's nominations	
D	Compensation Amount	
19	Compensation received from Nepalese missions	662155870
	abroad and send to District administration Offices	

PASSPORT SERVICES

The Department of Passports further streamlined and improved the modus operandi to deliver e-passport services to Nepali nationals at home and abroad in an effective, efficient and customer-friendly manner. Launched in November 2021, the e-passport services have since been expanded to all 77 District Administration Offices, and Nepali missions abroad.

The Department continued to offer only urgent passport services while other government agencies processed regular passport applications.

As the sole government Department recognized with NS/ISO 9001:2015 standards for its quality public service delivery, the Department remains committed to upholding this significant milestone with a focus on accountability, innovation, and peoplecentric approach.

Issuance of Passports and Travel Documents

During the review period, the Department issued a total of 1,473,050 passports: 1,464,166 ordinary passports, 569 diplomatic passports, 8284 official passports, 31 service passports. With its passport services, the Department generated a revenue of NRs. 382,782,793,401.

Mobile Passport Service

To address the critical demand of passport services by Nepali nationals abroad, the Department as well as Nepali missions abroad conducted a number of mobile passports services during the review period.

Interaction Programmes

With a view to further enhancing the quality of passport services and addressing technical as well as administrative issues thereof, the Department held consultations and interactions with the relevant government offices and Nepali missions abroad in person, virtual and hybrid format.

Other Services

The Department also coordinated with the authorities of the Government of Nepal as well as foreign countries to verify the authenticity of the submitted and issued documents.

ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Human Resource Management

In an effort to enhance the capacity and expertise of its personnel, the Ministry implemented a number of policy initiatives, including their nominations to participate in different training programmes on diplomacy, foreign policy, international law, and international relations. Additionally, the Ministry organized specialized training sessions and comprehensive seminars in collaboration with the Institute of Foreign Affairs, Nepal.

To address increasing workload vis-à-vis limited workforce, the Ministry initiated the Organization and Management (O & M) survey. This would enable the Ministry, Department of Passports, Department of Consular Services and Nepali missions abroad to foster constructive diplomatic engagements with global community and enhance effective delivery of the consular services.

Procurement and Construction

The Ministry renovated its existing building within Singha Durbar premises and made arrangements for relocating several of its divisions therein. Additionally, preparatory works were undertaken for the construction of chancery buildings for the Embassies of Nepal in Canberra and Riyadh.

The routine procurement processes for office operations and the acquisition of goods and services were carried out in accordance with existing legal frameworks. Furthermore, the Ministry reviewed and revised standard operating procedure related to procurement by Nepali missions abroad. This initiative aimed to enhance the efficiency and compliance of procurement activities within the context of international diplomatic operations.

Archive Management

With due emphasis on digitization and storage of documents, the Ministry initiated implementing a Personnel Information System (PIS) within a digital archive. Furthermore, policy initiatives were undertaken to ensure digital security of historically important documents in close collaboration with National Archives offices.

The Ministry implemented the Government Integrated Office Management System (GIOMS) to streamline office management processes, enhance operational efficiency, and foster a cohesive and integrated administrative environment between and among government offices.

Financial Resource Management

Given the allocated budget for its diplomatic, administrative and economic diplomacy related programmes, the Ministry consistently ensured a rational approach to budget distribution across its domestic and international offices. Transparency, accountability, and scope of programmes and activities were duly considered in the budget allocation as well as implementation process.

In the reporting period, the budget allocated to the Ministry accounted for 0.34 percent of the total national budget. The budget allocation, expenditure and revenue collected in Fiscal Year 2080/81 is presented in the table below.

Revenue Collection (NPRs in 000)

Ministry of Foreign	Nepali Missions	Department of Consular	Department of Consular	Grand Total
Affairs	Abroad	Passports	Services	
14,962.307	5,946,825.498	2 927 927 024	352,159.539	10,141,773.278

Budget Allocation and Expenditure (NPRs in 000)

Particulars	Dudget Allegation	Expenditure	
raruculars	Budget Allocation	Budget	Percentage
Recurrent	6,700,827.300	6,385,833.538	95.30
Capital	424,400.000	197,704.848	46.58

Appendices

I MAJOR HIGH-LEVEL VISITS

A. OUTGOING

S.No.	Dignitary	Country	Dates	Remarks
1	President Mr. Ramchandra Paudel	Switzerland	11 to 15 June 2024	To participate in the High-Level Segment of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference
		Germany	16 to 19 June 2024	Official visit
2	Vice President Mr. Ramsahay Prasad Yadav	China	16 to 20 August 2023	To attend the 7 th China-South Asia Expo and 27 th China- Kunming Import and Export Fair
3	Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'	India	9 to 10 June 2024	To participate in the swearing-in ceremony of the newly appointed Prime Minister of the Republic of India
		Italy	24-26 July 2023	To participate in the United Nations Food Systems 2023 Stocktaking Moment
		United States of America	16-23 September 2023	To participate in the 78th United Nations General Assembly
		United Arab Emirates	29 November to 3 December 2023	To participate in the 28th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28)
		Uganda	19-20 January 2024	To participate in 19th Summit of Non-Aligned Movement
		China	23-30 September 2023	Official visit
4	Chief Justice Mr. Bishowambhar Prasad Shrestha Chief Justice Mr.	India	27 January 2024	Led a delegation of the Supreme Court of Nepal to the diamond jubilee establishment program of the Supreme Court of India
	Bishowambhar Prasad Shrestha	Bangladesh	6-9 June 2024	To attend the "International Conference on Judiciary Across the Borders: 21 st Century Challenges and Experiences from the Himalayas and Beyond" held in Dhaka

S.No.	Dignitary	Country	Dates	Remarks
5	Speaker of the House of Representatives Mr. Devraj Ghimire	Ireland	18-23 September 2023	Official visit
6	Chairperson of the National Assembly Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina	Australia	27 November to 1 December 2023	Leading a parliamentary delegation
7	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha	China	24 March to 1 April 2024	Official visit
8	Minister for Foreign Affairs	United States of America	30 October to 5 November 2023	Official Visit
	Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud	Thailand	17 July 2023	To attend the BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' Retreat
		Australia	8-13 February 2023	To participate in the Indian Ocean Conference
		New Zealand	13-14 February 2024	
		Qatar	10-11 December 2023	Leading a Nepali delegation to 21st edition of Doha Forum
		Israel	October 2023	To rescue Nepali students stranded due to the Hamas attack on 7 October 2023
		India	21-23 February 2024	To participate in the 9th edition of the Raisina Dialogue
9	Minister of Finance Mr. Prakash Sharan Mahat	Egypt	25-26 September 2023	To participate in the AIIB Board of Governor's Meeting
10	Minister of Health and Population Mr. Mohan Bahadur Basnet	Egypt	4-9 September 2023	To participate in the Global Congress on Health, Population and Development

S.No.	Dignitary	Country	Dates	Remarks
11	Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Mr. Dhan Raj Gurung	Brazil	29 November 2023	To participate in the Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination
12	Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Mr. Shakti Bahadur Basnet	Thailand	19-20 October 2023	Leading a Nepali delegation to the "Third Asian and Pacific Energy Forum"
13	Minister for Youth and Sports Mr. Teju Lal Chaudhary	France	24 to 29 July 2024	To participate in the opening ceremony of the Olympic games
14	Chairperson of the Public Service Commission Mr. Madhav Prasad Regmi	Brazil	27 May-2 June 2024	
15	Chief of the Army Staff of Nepali Army, General Prabhu Ram Sharma	United Kingdom	8-13 October 2023	

B. INCOMING

S.No.	Dignitary	Country	Dates	Remarks
1.	Amir of the State of	Qatar	23-24 April	State Visit
	Qatar Sheikh Tamim		2024	
	bin Hamad Al Thani			
2.	Mr. Jerry Buttimer,	Ireland	8 -12 January	Official Visit
	Chairman of Seanad		2024 2022	
	Eireann, the Upper			
	House of the Irish			
	Parliament			
3.	Milton Dick MP,	Australia	3-7 October	
	Speaker of the		2023	
	Australian House of			
	Representatives			

S.No.	Dignitary	Country	Dates	Remarks
4.	Secretary General of the United Nations Mr. Antonio Guterres	United Nations	29 October-01 November 2023	Official visit
5.	Minister of State for Development and Africa of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom Mr. Andrew Mitchell	United Kingdom	19-20 February 2024	
6.	Foreign Minister of Japan Ms Kamikawa Yoko	Japan	5 May 2024	Official visit
7.	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of the Republic of Korea Mr. Chung Hwang-Keun	South Korea	1 to 3 November 2023	
8.	Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change of Bangladesh Mr. Saber Hossain Chowdhury	Bangladesh	21-23 May 2024	To address the 'International Expert Dialogue on Mountains, People, and Climate Change'
9.	Ms. Maria Stockhaus, Member of Parliament of the Swedish Riksdag	Sweden	28-30 August 2023	
10.	General Staff of the British Army, General Sir Patrick Sanders	United Kingdom	January 2024	

II AGREEMENT/MoUS

S. No.	Agreements/MOUs	Date
1	Agreement between the Government of Nepal and the Government of the Republic of India on Long-Term Power Trade	
2	Agreement between Government of Nepal and the Government of India regarding Indian Grant Assistance for Implementation of High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) through Governmental Organizations or any Other Organizations	
3	Memorandum of Understanding for Co-operation in the Renewable Energy Development between Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) and NTPC Limited	4 January 2024
4	Agreement by and between Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) and New Space India Limited (NSIL) a CPSE under Department of Space, Government of India on behalf of Indian Space Research Organization, Department of Space, Government of India for The Launch Service for Munal satellite on Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)	
5	Agreement Between the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Government of Nepal and the Ministry of Science and Technology of the People's Republic of China on Cooperation in the Fields of Science, Technology and Innovation	
6	Protocol of Phytosanitary Requirements for Export of Plant- derived Medicinal Materials for the Chinese Medicine from Nepal to China Between the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development of the Government of Nepal and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China	25 September 2023
7	MoU for Cooperation between The National Planning Commission of Nepal and The National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China	

S. No.	Agreements/MOUs	Date
8	MoU between the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology of the Government of Nepal and the National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China Concerning Enhancing Digital Economy Cooperation	
9	MoU Between the Ministry of Forests and Environment of the Government of Nepal and the National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China Concerning Cooperation on Green and Low-Carbon Development	
10	MoU on Cooperation in the field of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Between the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development of the Government of Nepal and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the People's Republic of China	
11	Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of a Joint Technical Working Group for the Review and Modification of the Nepal-China Trade and Payment Agreement, 1981 Between the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies of Nepal and The Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China	25 September 2023
12	MoU Between the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, the Government of Nepal and the National Administration of Press and Publication of the People's Republic of China on the Translation and Publication of Classics	
13	MoU on the Hilsa-Simkot Road Project and the Nepal China Power Grid Interconnection Project (Chilime-Kerung) between the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport of the Government of Nepal and China International Development Cooperation Agency, China	

S.		
No.	Agreements/MOUs	Date
14	Exchange of Letters for the China-aid Disaster Relief Material	
15	Exchange of Notes between China International Development Cooperation Agency and relevant department of the Government of Nepal to organize series of training courses for Nepali Government Officials in order to strengthen exchanges and cooperation between Nepal and China in the field of Human Resources Development	25 September 2023
16	Handover Certificate of the Production and Living Materials for Northern Hilly Region of Nepal (2017) Between the Government of Nepal and the Government of the People's Republic of China	
17	Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation in the Fields of Culture and Arts between the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal and the Ministry of Culture of the State of Qatar	
18	Agreement on Cooperation and Exchange of News between National News Agency, Nepal (RSS) and Qatar News Agency (QNA)	
19	Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation in the Field of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research between the Government of Nepal and the Government of the State of Qatar	24 A 1 2024
20	Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Youth and Sports between the Government of Nepal and the Government of the State of Qatar	24 April 2024
21	Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation between the Office of the Attorney General of Nepal and the Public Prosecution of the State of Qatar	
22	Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Diplomatic Training and Education between The Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) of the Government of Nepal and The Diplomatic Institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar	

S. No.	Agreements/MOUs	Date
23	Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of Nepal and the Republic of Korea on cooperation in the field of agriculture	2 November 2023
24	Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement between the Government of Nepal and the Government of Australia	9 February 2024
25	Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between FinTech Alliance Nepal and Myanmar Digital Economy Association (MDEA)	31 May 2024

III MEETINGS OF BILATERAL CONSULTATION MECHANISM

S.No.	BCM	Date and Venue
1	Seventh meeting of the Nepal-India Joint Commission	4 January 2024, Kathmandu
2	15th Meeting of Nepal-India Bilateral Consultative Group on Security Issues (BCGSI)	
3	11th meeting of the Joint Steering Committee on Power Sector Cooperation (JSC) between Nepal and India	5 January 2024, Chitwan
4	16 th Meeting of the Nepal-China Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism	25 June 2024, Kathmandu
5	Meeting of Joint Expert Group on Nepal-China border matters	18 to 19 June 2024, Beijing
6	Third Round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) between Nepal and Bangladesh	17 April 2024, Kathmandu
7	First meeting of Nepal-Sri Lanka Joint Commission (JC)	20 December 2023, Kathmandu
8	15 th meeting of the Nepal-EU Joint Commission	19 March 2024, Kathmandu
9	Second meeting of Nepal-Finland Bilateral Consultation Mechanism	5 June 2024, Kathmandu
10	Fourth meeting of Nepal-France Bilateral Consultation Mechanism	29 March 2024, Paris
11	Third meeting of the Nepal-Germany Bilateral Consultation Mechanism	20 March 2024, Kathmandu

S.No.	BCM	Date and Venue
13	Fourth meeting of Nepal-Switzerland Bilateral Consultations Mechanism	2 April 2024, Bern
13	Second edition of Nepal-New Zealand Foreign Ministry Consultation (FMC)	14 February 2024, Wellington
14	The Bilateral Committee formed between Nepal and the UK in 2022 to address the issues related to British Gurkha veterans held two meetings during the review period.	

IV. MAJOR STATEMENTS

Keynote address by Rt. Hon'ble Mr. Ramchandra Paudel, President of Nepal at the High-Level Event of the 112th International Labour Conference and the Inaugural Session of the Global Coalition for Social Justice, Geneva, 13 June 2024

Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government, Director-General of the International Labour Organization, Colleagues of the Global Coalition for Social Justice, Representatives of Workers and Employers, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Namaskar!

- 1. I bring greetings and best wishes from the people of Nepal, the land of Mount Everest, and the birthplace of Buddha, for the success of this conference.
 - Likewise, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the ILO fraternity on the inauguration of the Global Coalition for Social Justice.
- 2. I express my gratitude to the ILO Director-General for inviting me to address this conference as keynote speaker. I feel honored to address this international labour parliament.
- 3. A century ago, in the aftermath of the first world war, ILO was born with the premise that universal and lasting peace can be achieved through social justice. A century later, the ILO continues standing firmly on the foundation of social dialogue and carry forward the legacy of tripartite cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

4. Today's labour market is rapidly changing. It demands new skills, new technologies, and creative ways of doing things. Be it industrial production, service sectors, or IT-based banking services, or machine learning, and artificial intelligence, all areas are experiencing transformative changes. In order to accommodate the changes in the world of work, we need greater adaptability and innovative work styles.

- 5. We have embraced new challenges such as the digital economy, care economy, and gig economy. In all these areas, we are committed to implement the 'Decent Work Agenda'. For that, we must prepare ourselves for new jobs, learn new skills, and adapt to new workplaces.
 - We need to make assessments of the institutional, legal, and operational aspects of the ILO and reform so as to address the challenges of the changing world.
- 6. However, one core value remains unchanged. That is our collective effort to achieve sustainable peace through social justice.

This is as relevant today as it was a hundred years ago.

When discussing sustainable peace, we must remember that it cannot be achieved without justice and economic gains to the poor and downtrodden.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

- 7. Nepal's constitution has fully embraced the provisions of social justice such as equal rights, equal opportunities, and equal treatment, which is at the core of the ILO.
- 8. We are happy to participate in the Global Coalition for Social Justice, to reaffirm our commitment to social justice, to reaffirm faith in multilateralism, and to renew the social contract.
- 9. As a resident of a mountainous country, I need to speak about climate change and its impacts to the lives of the Nepali people while discussing social justice at present and climate justice for the generations to come.
- 10. Despite Nepal's negligible contribution to carbon emissions, we are bearing the brunt of climate change. We are not at fault. In recent years, the Himalayas, including Mount Everest, are losing their snow cover and turning silver white mountains into black rocky peaks while glaciers are retreating in an unprecedented scale and rate.
- 11. Climate change has severely affected supply of drinking water, crop patterns, biodiversity, and public health, pushing millions into marginal poverty and adding to stark inequality. Climate induced disasters have compounded problems by severely affecting livelihoods and causing displacement of families and

communities from their homelands.

- 12. Therefore, I believe that adequate funding, compensation, and necessary technology should be provided to countries in order to ensure climate justice. The global community, especially major emitters, should not fail to shoulder this responsibility. While talking about social justice, we must not forget to ensure climate justice globally.
- 13. A significant amount of money that should be spent on development is being invested in deadly weapons for useless wars. The international community should reverse this path and mobilize resources for the prosperity of humanity. Sustainable peace can be achieved through shared prosperity and a sense of global brotherhood, not through weapons.

Mr. President.

- 14. Nepal is a federal democratic republic. We are one of the ancient civilizations of South Asia. On our political journey from monarchy to a federal democratic republic, we have placed social justice at the center of change in labour, employment, and social security sectors.
- 15. Nepal's constitution has enshrined labour rights, the right to employment, the right to form trade unions, and the right to participate in collective bargaining as fundamental rights. To implement these constitutional provisions, we have made legal and institutional arrangements such as the Labour Act, Trade Union Act, Employment Rights Act, Contribution-based Social Security Act, and National Employment Policy.
- 16. Nepal has a huge demographic dividend. Out of our 30 million population, over two-thirds are in the productive age group. However, we have not been able to provide employment to them. Therefore, we have started the 'Shramadhan' plan to create employment within the country.
- 17. There is an increasing trend of young people from developing countries seeking employment in labour destination countries. Considering this fact, I appeal to all countries of the world to treat migrant workers with respect and treat them equally and abide by the principle of decent work.
- 18. We are actively engaged in the 8.7 Alliance, standing against child labour, forced labour, and modern slavery. We are also actively involved as a pathfinder

country for employment and social security for a just transition. Currently, we are implementing the Decent Work Program (2023–2027) in Nepal, which includes employment, rights, and social dialogue.

Mr. President,

- 19. The Global Coalition for Social Justice announced today is our noble initiative and shared commitment to embrace social justice for all and in all areas, as envisioned by the ILO. Ensuring equality and justice for workers is our collective resolve. I appeal everyone to develop a culture of respecting labour.
- 20. As the one who dedicated entire youth to defend democracy, human rights, freedom and social justice and spent 15 years in prison, I say people in all countries and societies of the world must receive justice, and they must be freed from hunger and fear.
- 21. It is the world of work that has made the world prosperous. Ensuring a fair share of the fruits of labour to reach the hands of workers is our shared responsibility; and this is social justice.
- 22. In conclusion, I believe the Global Coalition for Social Justice will continuously inspire everyone to unite through social dialogue to maintain social harmony and tolerance and achieve economic development and prosperity.

With these words, I wish the 112th International Labour Conference all success.

Thank you!

Statement by the Prime Minister and the Leader of Nepali Delegation Rt. Hon. Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' at the General Debate of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (New York, 21 September 2023)

Theme-"Rebuilding Trust and Reigniting Global Solidarity: Accelerating Action on the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals towards Peace, Prosperity, Progress, and Sustainability for All"

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates.

I congratulate you, Mr. President, and members of the Bureau, on your respective elections

I also express my deep appreciation to the UN Secretary-General Mr. Antonio Guterres for his unremitting efforts to strengthen the United Nations and promote the cause of multilateralism.

There could be no better time to deliberate on the theme 'Rebuilding Trust and Reigniting Global Solidarity', particularly when trust and cooperation are in short supply and crisis of confidence reign the world.

Today, due to the resurgence of geopolitical competition, power polarization and economic nationalism, maintenance of world peace and security, the foremost goal of the UN Charter, have come under serious strain. Spending on arms is on the rise, but resources for the realization of the 2030 Agenda have become scarce.

We must correct this course and focus on our common goals of peace, prosperity, and progress.

It is time to build trust, promote partnership and collaboration, and work in solidarity when the world is facing the challenges of unprecedented scale and nature.

Mr. President,

I have fond memories of addressing this august Assembly back in 2008 as the Prime Minister of a country that had just made a transformation of historic proportion- a

transformation from armed conflict to an inclusive and nationally owned peace process; a transformation from centuries old feudal monarchical rule to a democratic republican order; and a transformation to a multi-party democratic polity where participation of all sections of our society is ensured.

Fifteen years on, we have come a long way. We successfully transitioned through a nationally led peace process. We promulgated a democratic Constitution in 2015 by an elected constituent assembly, which has consolidated the universally recognized values of human rights, participatory democracy, periodic elections, inclusive proportional representation, full press freedom, independent judiciary, and the rule of law.

The successive two cycles of federal, provincial, and local elections have resulted in increased participation of women, dalits, youths and under-represented communities at all levels of governance. We have been able to ensure 41% representation of women in local assemblies. A minimum of 33% representation of women is constitutionally guaranteed in the provincial assemblies and federal parliament.

We have firmly established that the sovereignty lies in Nepali people, and they are the real source of state power.

We are now closer to logically concluding our unique, nationally owned, and homegrown peace process. Completing the remaining task of transitional justice is top on my political agenda. As Prime Minister and a co-signatory of the Comprehensive Peace Accord, I have been making serious efforts to bridge the gaps and build consensus among the key stakeholders.

An Amendment Bill related to the transitional justice has been tabled at the Federal Parliament to address the concerns of the victims, strike a right balance between peace, justice and reparation, and to make the transitional justice process broadly owned by our society. The proposed Bill, evolved through a wider consultative process, takes a victim-centric approach and recognizes reparation as victim's right.

In the process, there will be no blanket amnesty for the serious violation of human rights. The ultimate objective is to establish an enduring peace in the country and foster harmony in society through peace, justice, and reconciliation.

I appeal the international community for their goodwill and support to the conclusion of the final leg of our peace process and to duly recognize this rare example of successful conflict transformation.

Mr. President.

As Nepal's political course has taken a stable shape, our focus is now on the agenda of economic transformation. We are aware that political achievements can only be sustained by socio-economic growth and development.

It is not least in this light that the central focus of the current government is on mobilizing all its energy and resources to accelerate development works and ensure good governance.

We are graduating from the LDC status by 2026; and we are committed to making our graduation smooth, sustainable, and irreversible.

We are currently in the process of finalizing the smooth transition strategy of graduation.

We have put SDGs at the center of our development vision and priorities. However, crises such as COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and heightened geo-political competition have threatened our hard-earned progress in SDGs.

We, therefore, call for an enhanced level of international support in the form of development assistance, foreign direct investment, export promotion, SDR allocation, technology transfer and technical assistance.

Nepal welcomes Secretary General's call for an increase in SDG financing by US Dollar 500 billion per year.

As the current LDCs chair, we remain actively engaged in collaboration with fellow LDCs in all relevant forums including in the UN system to protect and promote our collective interest.

We stress the need to mainstream the Doha Program of Action into all important UN processes and development system, and the development cooperation framework of our partners.

We call for a fair and equitable international trading regime that benefits the LDCs.

Coordinated policies aimed at debt relief, debt restructuring, and debt swap as envisaged by the DPoA must be translated into reality.

Mr. President.

Climate change has assumed a crisis proportion and the clock is ticking. Our inaction or little action will surely invite disastrous consequences for humanity. We must, therefore, set higher ambitions and commit ourselves to achieving those ambitions in a time-bound manner.

Climate vulnerable mountainous countries like Nepal have been bearing the severe brunt of climate change.

The Himalayas are the source of fresh water for over two billion people. Global warming has induced rapid receding of ice in our Himalayas. It has not only eroded the health of our mountains but also endangered the lives and livelihoods of millions of people living downstream.

The human and financial toll due to floods, droughts, and other extreme climate induced events is terrifying.

On our part, we remain fully committed to the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement and achieving its goals.

Nepal has set an ambitious target of reaching a net-zero scenario by 2045. We have already submitted our updated NDC and aligned our national policies and plans with it.

Our priorities include conserving and sustainably managing land, forest, and water resources; undertaking effective adaptation and mitigation measures; and promoting a green and resilient economy.

To this end, we are working to ensure access to clean energy for all citizens. Easy access to climate finance will be the key to low-carbon and climate resilient development pathways.

Equally crucial are the early operationalization of the loss and damage fund, fulfilling the target of the 100 billion US Dollars commitment as well as doubling up of the adaptation climate finance.

It is an irony that my country Nepal, with 45 percent of its area as forest with rich biodiversity and 15 percent of its land as high mountains, releases least Green House Gas Emission but contributes significantly to ecological preservation, has unfairly

suffered from climate crisis. This kind of mismatch must be addressed through a compensation mechanism to the countries that positively contribute to the greening of the planet.

Excellencies.

It is quite distressing that conflicts within and between countries are on the rise. Nepal opposes any use or threat of use of force against the territorial integrity, political independence, and sovereignty of any country.

People of Libya, Syria and Yemen continue to bear the brunt of protracted crises. Their suffering must end. We believe that the UN brokered truce in Yemen must be allowed to transition to a sustained peace. The protracted stalemate in Libya must give a way to peace and reconciliation.

The Palestinian people deserve peace ending the prolonged conflict. Nepal reiterates its support for a two-state solution with Israel and Palestine, living peacefully side by side, within recognized international borders based on the relevant UN resolutions.

We continue to support nationally owned, peaceful, just, and lasting solutions to conflicts around the world. Peace founded on inclusion, empowerment, economic prosperity, and justice stands a better chance to last longer.

Mr. President.

Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continues to threaten peace and security in the world.

Constant stockpiling of nuclear arsenals, growing arms race and ever-increasing military expenditure are worrisome.

Nepal reiterates its call for total and time-bound disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction including biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological weapons.

As the host country to UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Nepal believes that regional processes, including the Kathmandu Process, reinforce the global disarmament regime.

The void of international governance on cyberspace and artificial intelligence demands multilateral regulation. Dual use of artificial intelligence urgently calls for informed deliberations on preventing its potential misuse and strengthening of international cooperation.

Nepal condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We call for an early conclusion of a comprehensive global treaty against terrorism.

Mr. President.

Nepal's commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights is total and unflinching. We believe in an integrated approach to democracy, development, and human rights.

Nepal attaches great importance to the safety, security, dignity, and wellbeing of migrant workers. We call for effective implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration to ensure that migration works for all.

Excellencies,

The principles of Panchasheel, non-alignment, the UN Charter, international law, and norms of world peace continue to guide Nepal's foreign policy.

Amity, cordiality, and fraternity are the underlying ethos of our international engagements.

We want to promote relations with our neighbours and all other friendly countries on the basis of sovereign equality, non-interference, and mutual respect.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to multilateralism, with the United Nations at its centre.

True to our commitment, Nepal continues to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security through our consistent participation to the UN mandated peacekeeping operations for the last 65 years.

Currently the second-largest troops and police contributing country, we have always deployed our peacekeepers at every call and without any caveat, even in the most challenging situations.

Our peacekeepers have earned distinct repute of dedication, professionalism and competence which has been widely acknowledge by the United Nations, the host governments, and societies alike.

We reiterate our call for fair share of leadership positions at the headquarters and in the field to the troops and police contributing countries.

We know today's global governance architecture largely reflects yesterday's world. Timely reform is essential for the multilateral institutions to remain relevant and to reflect today's realities.

Nepal supports the reform of the UN Security Council to make it broadly representative, democratic, transparent, and accountable. We call for the revitalization of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council with greater role to these vital organs.

We need an inclusive and effective multilateralism to better respond to and deliver on the needs of the people and the planet.

Structural reform to the international financial architecture is long overdue. The voice of the countries in special situation, including the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, must be heard. Their meaningful representation must be ensured.

Only a more democratic, inclusive, fair and representative international financial architecture can be an antidote to the deep-rooted inequities and gaps.

In conclusion, Mr. President, it is our collective responsibility to ensure peace and prosperity for everyone, everywhere and to ensure that no one is left behind.

I thank you for your attention!

Statement by Prime Minister of Nepal Rt. Hon. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' as the Chair of the Group of LDCs at the 2023 SDG Summit New York, 18 September 2023

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General, Excellencies, and Distinguished Delegates,

I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this SDG Summit.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of the Least Developed Countries.

Mr. President,

Halfway to the 2030 deadline, we are seriously off-track in achieving the SDGs. The global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and geo-political tensions are further pushing our heard-earned progress into peril.

According to the UN Secretary General's SDG Report, more than half of the world is left behind, most from LDCs.

The SDGs are in dire need of a rescue plan.

We all know, twelve of the seventeen goals and at least 18 of the 169 targets refer explicitly to LDCs, recognizing the importance of addressing their development challenges.

And yet, foreign direct investment flows to LDCs saw a decline of about 30% in 2022, as compared to 2021.

Investments in infrastructure, renewable energy, water and sanitation, food security, health and education suffered a significant blow.

The average external debt of LDCs rose from 41% in 2011 to 54% in 2022. The high

cost of borrowing facing these countries has not only inhibited investments in SDGs but also raised the risk of debt crisis

However, we have not lost our faith, nor have we derailed our commitments. We have continued to make maximum effort to strengthen and mobilize our domestic resources and institutions

But, acting alone will not be enough.

Commitment and support of international community for adoption of the Doha Program of Action was significant. More investment in people, support for structural transformation, and achieving rapid and sustainable recovery from the COVID pandemic will be necessary for achieving the SDGs.

Massive scaling up of affordable finance to LDCs including through the SDG stimulus package is crucial.

Addressing the debt distress of LDCs by 2025 and providing coordinated and appropriate debt solutions in a timely manner must remain an urgent priority.

We also urge the developed countries to scale up and fulfil their commitments to providing 0.7 percent of GNP as ODA to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent to the LDCs.

This is critical as finance is the fuel that drives the SDG progress. And the achievement of SDGs in LDCs defines its success or failure.

Mr. President,

Speaking in my national capacity, I would like to share with this august gathering that materializing SDGs is Nepal's top development priority. The SDGs have been integrated into our national policies and plans.

We are committed to eradicating poverty and reducing inequality in line with the 2030 Agenda and the principle of leaving no one behind.

We remain committed to ensuring a smooth, sustainable, and irreversible graduation from the LDC category by 2026.

Our commitment to the Paris Agreement is steadfast, and so is our goal to reach net

zero scenario by 2045.

We call for adequate support from our development partners to complement our national efforts.

To conclude, we must ensure that this Summit renews and revitalizes our SDG promise.

We must reinvigorate the sense of hope and optimism and accelerate action for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Thank you.

Statement by Prime Minister of Nepal Rt. Hon. Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' at the High- Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly On 'Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response' New York, 20 September 2023

Theme: Making the world safer: Creating and maintaining political momentum and solidarity for pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General, Excellencies, and Distinguished Delegates,

I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this High-Level Meeting.

The world is still struggling to cope with the upsets caused by one of the deadliest pandemics in history- the COVID-19.

The far-reaching impacts of the pandemic are sure to remain for quite a long time. The world lost too many lives. Our societies were disrupted, and economies distressed.

Despite the unprecedented developments in the field of science and technology, the pandemic exposed the fragile nature of the international health system.

Serious shortcomings were visible in preparedness for timely and effective prevention of and response to potential health emergencies.

For the most vulnerable and resource-constrained countries, including LDCs, the burden was even more severe. These countries were unable to enact effective response, due to the limitations in resource base, in social protection and in health systems.

Now, the world is moving ahead in the phase of post-pandemic recovery and revival. But the road to recovery is not uniform. While the developed countries have largely returned to the pre-pandemic growth paths, the poorer ones are struggling hard to catch up with the pace.

This warrants that we need to be better prepared for future disasters and pandemics.

We need to work in solidarity together with matching provision of more financial and human resources commensurate with the scale and magnitude of the crises.

Mr. President.

Nepal is effortful to strengthen its public health architecture.

Increased investments in health infrastructure made during the pandemic have augmented our national capacity.

We are now better equipped to handle possible health emergencies than we were at the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have reinforced our national Health Emergency Operation Centre and ensured that it is automatically operationalized during such emergencies.

We have also established similar mechanisms at the local and provincial levels for coordinated and integrated action.

Having said this, however, we need enhanced level of international support measures to complement our national efforts.

Multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral, and the whole of society approach to pandemic prevention and response is necessary.

We need a robust, resilient, and effective global health architecture for health emergency preparedness, response, and resilience.

To that end, we must make earnest endeavors to revitalize the World Health Organization and make it more capable and responsive.

The most vulnerable countries such as LDCs must be ensured easy and affordable access to finance.

International support for national capacity building as well as for research and development in these countries should be prioritized.

We must better frame the future of collaborative partnership, with furthest behind first at the core.

To conclude, the post-pandemic times provide us with a window of opportunity to reset our priorities and rebuild better.

The Political Declaration adopted a while ago guides us in the right direction to prevent, prepare for and respond to future pandemics.

We must now ensure real, robust, and responsible actions.

We must work together to build a resilient future for our children and grandchildren.

Thank you for your attention.

Statement by Prime Minister and Leader of Nepali Delegation Rt. Hon. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' at the High- Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage New York, 21 September 2023

[Theme- Universal health coverage: expanding our ambition for health and well-being in a post-COVID world.]

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this High-Level Meeting.

Universal health coverage is critical for meeting health-related SDGs and targets as well as in realizing health as the fundamental right.

The UHC is not just about health and well-being. It is also about ensuring social inclusion and equality, unleashing human potential, ensuring economic growth, and enhancing human dignity.

Soon after the first Political Declaration on Universal Health Coverage was adopted in 2019, we faced health challenges unseen in recent history due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This left a huge gap in the implementation of the Declaration.

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the universal health service coverage index has just increased marginally. And components of UHC related to non-communicable diseases, health service capacity, and access have seen minimal or no progress.

Our commitment to provide quality essential health services and affordable essential medicines to billions of people remains unfulfilled.

Our promise of addressing the out-of-pocket health expenditure and eliminate impoverishment due to health-related expenses has remained unmet.

In the absence of sustained financing, challenges facing the least developed and low-income countries are more acute.

Mr. President,

Nepal recognizes health as a fundamental human right and provides free basic health services to Nepali people as a part of social security program.

We remain committed to ensuring access of poor and disadvantaged groups to universal and primary health services and prevent them from falling into poverty due to health care costs.

Nepal introduced the National Health Insurance Program in 2016.

Access to the insurance programme has been expanded across the country. We are facilitating the access of low-income groups and communities to micro-insurance through the local level.

The government aims to bring half of the population under the insurance scheme within this year.

We are implementing the Nepal Health Sector Strategy (2023-2030) that aims to ensure equitable access, quality health services and health system reform.

Even with limited resources, we have achieved good progress in reducing child and maternal mortality, controlling communicable disease, and preventing neglected tropical diseases.

WHO in 2019 placed Nepal among the countries to have achieved the highest relative change in the previous two decades in terms of UHC.

Yet, this is not sufficient to realize health-related goals of the 2030 Agenda. Therefore, financing healthcare with innovative and modern technology and infrastructure remains our top priority.

The whole-of-society and health-in-all-policies approaches guide our efforts to achieve SDGs and UHC by 2030.

However, our success will be contingent upon an enhanced level of support and

cooperation from the international community, development partners, and the UN agencies.

To conclude, Mr. President, the Political Declaration on UHC is a comprehensive blueprint for us all to accelerate action and realize the UHC and SDG by 2030.

We must renew our resolve and work collectively to recover better and build resilience against future health threats.

Thank you for your attention.

Intervention by Prime Minister of Nepal Rt. Hon. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' as the Chair of the Group of LDCs at the High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development 2023 New York, 20 September 2023

[Roundtable 2: Innovative Solutions to Unlock SDG Investments Subtheme 2: Scaling up affordable and accessible international public financing for sustainable development and ensuring efficiency.]

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am making this intervention in my capacity as the Chair of the Group of LDCs. This year's High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development takes place against the backdrop of the confluence of multiple crises, including COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, conflicts in different parts of the world and intense geopolitical contest.

Offshoots of these crises, we are facing increased food and energy prices, economic and financial severity, slow pandemic recovery, low economic growth, debt unsustainability, increased unemployment, rising poverty, and widening inequality, among others.

Poorer countries face higher constraints of development financing.

The commitments made in the Adis Ababa Action Agenda have remained unfulfilled. The SDG financing gap continues to be widening.

LDCs are hit the hardest by this gap.

They are falling far off the required resources to provide essential services to their people, to invest in SDGs and climate action.

Mr. President,

The need for greater public resource mobilization in difficult times cannot be undermined.

We need to mobilize more resources to achieve our development goals.

The Doha Programme of Action has aptly highlighted that the LDCs are largely dependent on public resources to finance development.

External financing and international assistance remain our vital lifelines. Therefore, I would like to make the following recommendations:

It is important to meet the commitments of enhanced financial flows to help implement the SDGs.

The ODA commitments to LDCs by our development partners must be met. We call for urgently realizing the target of 0.2 percent of GNI as ODA to LDCs, and for increasing the grant component in it.

Support in the form of concessional financing should be scaled up.

Multilateral development banks need to bolster their capital base and increase their grant assistance and concessional lending to LDCs.

IMF issued SDRs worth 650 billion US Dollars in 2021, out of which LDCs got 17 billion only, which is less than 3%. This stark inequity must be corrected to increase the financial safety net of LDCs.

IMF's concessional and sustainability-oriented lending facilities must be adequately resourced, and their focus of operation should be the LDCs.

Many of the LDCs also need international support to address their debt distress. The climate finance goal must be met. The adaptation finance should be doubled, and the Green Climate Fund should be replenished.

Besides, the loss and damage fund should be operationalized as soon as possible and LDCs need to get easy access to the climate finance resources.

Finally, Mr. President, realization of sustainable development goals is and must be our collective undertaking. While the world in general has become wealthier and more prosperous than ever before, we cannot let some section of the people live in dehumanizing poverty and hunger.

The SDGs were our common pledge to ensure that each one of the 8 billion people on this planet have access to the minimum decent living condition.

Financing commitments must be met if we are not to fail in this historic mission.

Thank you for your attention.

Statement by Prime Minister of Nepal Rt. Hon. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' in his capacity as the Chair of the Group of LDCs and in his national capacity at the Climate Ambition Summit 2023

New York, 20 September 2023

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General, Excellencies.

I thank you, Mr. Secretary-General, for turning me the floor.

Let me first respond to you as the LDC Bureau Chair, highlighting some important issues from my full statement submitted for records.

As the most vulnerable countries, LDCs have been bearing the brunt of climate change, despite accounting for only 3.3 percent of greenhouse gas emissions.

For LDCs to tackle climate crisis:

First, we call for effective implementation of Doha Program backed with adequate resources and technology, as it comprehensively addresses climate change, environmental degradation, and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, putting resilience and risk-informed development at the core.

I thank you for prioritizing LDCs in the Early Warnings Initiative.

Second, I join your call to double adaptation finance by 2025 and urge for devoting half of climate finance to adaptation.

Third, we urge for the fulfilment of 100 billion climate finance commitment, replenishment of Green Climate Fund, and operationalization of loss and damage fund, with simple and easy access procedures for the LDCs.

Fourth, we commend your initiatives and efforts for a just transition, urging for enhanced support and investment to meet SDG-7 in LDCs, as 48% their population lack access to electricity.

And fifth, the Global Stock-take during COP 28 must be a moment of critical course correction to keep alive 1.5-degree target.

Now, let me turn to my national capacity.

We are a highly vulnerable country with our economy heavily reliant on climate sensitive sectors such as agriculture, tourism and hydropower. We are facing frequent and highly damaging climate disasters.

Despite challenges, Nepal is committed to the Paris Agreement and to our national goal to reach net-zero by 2045.

To this end, we have already submitted an updated NDC and aligned our national policies and plans with it.

Recently, my government has approved a detailed NDC Implementation Strategy to achieve various targets across sectors.

Let me share some critical progress:

In 2020, we set a target to maintain 45% of our territory under forest cover by 2030. We have already achieved this target with our forest coverage now standing just over 45%.

Against our target of clean energy generation from 1400 Mega Watts to 15,000 Mega Watts by 2030, we have already reached nearly 3,000 Mega Watts, and with ongoing hydro and solar projects, we are well on track to achieve the target.

Our efforts to promote electric vehicles are progressing well. Recently we have added over 50 charging stations, and we are installing an additional 500 charging stations shortly mostly for public vehicles.

We pursue locally led adaptation approach and involve local communities, indigenous people, women, and young people in climate actions. Our top priorities include promoting a green and resilient economy.

We are pleased to be part of your Adaptation Pipeline Accelerator and Early Warnings Initiatives and assure my government's full support and commitment to them.

To conclude, let us ensure that this Summit and COP28 become true turning points in our fight against climate crisis.

Thank you for your attention.

Rt. Hon. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Prime Minister of Nepal, at the Opening Session of the Food Systems Summit + 2 Stocktaking Moment

Rome, Italy, 24 July 2023

Time: 5 Minutes

Your Excellency the Prime Minister of Italy Madame Giorgia Meloni Secretary-General of the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Antonio Guterres Director-General of FAO Dr. Qu Dongyu Excellencies, and Distinguished Delegates.

I feel honoured to address the opening session of this Summit as the Chair of the Global Coordination Bureau of the Least Developed Countries.

I thank the Prime Minister of Italy, UN Secretary-General, and the UN System in Rome for bringing us together for the cause of healthier, equitable, and resilient food systems.

Excellencies,

Through the agenda 2030, we envisioned a world where food is sufficient, safe, affordable, and nutritious and we are able to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

We also committed ourselves to double the agricultural productivity, ensure sustainable food production systems, implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, help maintain ecosystems, strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change and other disasters, and to increase investment in agriculture in the least developed countries.

Perhaps this is a right time for us to take stock of the progress and shortfall and clear our path for more robust implementation.

The food insecurity is fueled by extreme weather events, economic shocks, and a variety of threats to human, animal, and crop health. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on livelihoods, incomes, and food prices has been devastating.

The LDCs continue to be the hotspots of acute food insecurity. According to the FAO,

over 251 million people in the LDCs suffer from severe food insecurity with some experiencing over 50% chronic under-nourishment. Surging food inflation threatens destabilizing societies.

We are the countries where the needs are higher, but the capacities are limited.

Our agri-food systems operate under a perpetual cloud of risk and uncertainty. We can no longer ignore this escalating food insecurity and nutritional crisis.

We need a collective commitment to give hope to the people living in the LDCs. This calls for scaled-up investment in transforming our food systems, means to adapt to climate change, and the resources to help build resilience of the LDCs.

Now, more than ever, we need to band together and focus our energy on bolstering our emergency response capabilities.

To minimize risks, we need to increase investment in early warning systems that can help identify areas where food insecurity is likely to escalate.

Coping with risks, on the other hand, requires us to establish well-targeted social protection measures to support the most vulnerable.

This includes implementing cash transfers and food-for-work programs, as well as prioritizing investments in the most vulnerable communities.

Our ability to take the right interventions demands accurate and up-to-date data and information.

Building resilience and increasing productivity in the face of climate change calls for ensuring small holding farmers access to technology, fertilizers, markets, crop diversification, finance, and resilient infrastructure.

We must ensure that the most vulnerable people are safeguarded from the threats of food insecurity, malnutrition, and associated health implications.

We thank the UN Secretary-General and FAO Director-General for their leadership to leverage collective action on food security, food system transformation, and to address food insecurity in the LDCs.

The Doha Programme of Action envisions a food stock-holding system for LDCs to channel this vital aid to the poorest and most vulnerable, leveraging the expertise of the UN system and supported by development partners. We commend the Office of the High Representative for the LDC, LLDCs and SIDS for leading this initiative.

I urge multilateral development banks, international financial institutions, and our development partners to step up their support for this critical initiative.

We have an opportunity to ensure a world free from the anguish of hunger and malnutrition.

Let us realize it and act now.

Thank you.

Statement by Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' at High Level Session on School Meals United Nations Food Systems 2023 Stocktaking Moment

24 July 2023 Italy, Rome

Time: 4 Minutes

Madam Moderator, Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen.

I thank the UN Secretary-General, Rome based UN agencies, and the Government of Italy for hosting this meeting.

Transforming food systems is crucial not only for food security, but also for full realization of all sustainable development goals. In this regard, UN Food Systems Summit in 2021 galvanized global ambitions.

Today, I have come with a hope that this first biennial stocktaking moment will focus on means of implementation to match those ambitions and pledges.

It is important that we address the bottlenecks in every sector for making a leap towards zero hunger. School meal is such an area that has tremendous transformational impact.

In the first part of 2020, more children had access to school meals globally than at any time in human history. However, this progress was derailed by the COVID-19 pandemic, supply shocks and shrinking fiscal space.

As we are recovering from the pandemic, it is important that we redouble our efforts to scale up school feeding programmes.

Special attention needs to be given to the countries with smaller resource base.

Excellencies,

School meals programs play a critical role in promoting students' health, academic performance, and overall well-being. They go beyond providing nourishment, acting as a catalyst for positive change in food systems.

In developing countries, including LDCs and LLDCs, they have also contributed to reducing the dropout rates from school.

Nepal's experience with school feeding is a success story. It has integrated agriculture, education, food security, nutrition, health, and sanitation in the best way. As such, 3.3 million children, including girls, all over the country are directly benefitting every day from the programme. We have seen impressive results of school nutrition in boosting enrollment, attendance, and learning outcomes.

We have quadrupled the budget in last five years for this purpose. In the current fiscal year, we have allocated 6 percent of total education budget on school meals. We are committed to further scale up investment and resources for this important safety net.

Following the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021, we organized national and provincial level food systems dialogues with relevant stakeholders to examine the existing food systems, understand vulnerabilities, and design pathways to transform them.

We then prepared Food Systems Transformation Strategic Plan (2022-2030), to streamline and link the actions with Sustainable Development Goals. Nepal also joined the School Meals Coalition in 2021 to improve the quality, adequacy, coverage and sustainability of the school meals programme.

We are also strengthening the capacity of local government to implement and monitor the programmes.

Madam Chair.

As we gear up to graduate from LDC by 2026, my government is striving towards establishing a sustainable home-grown school feeding model and expand local food production to ensure a diversified and nutritious food supply to School Meals.

In doing so, we support small-scale local agriculture development and also help improve the health, nutrition and education of our children.

We sincerely appreciate the UN System, our development partners and key stakeholders for their strong commitments to assist us transform our food systems and achieve SDGs by 2030.

Together, let us embrace this transformative journey, working hand in hand to provide our children with nutritious meals, quality education, and a sustainable future.

I thank you.

Keynote Address by Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Prime Minister of Nepal, at Plenary Session on Food Systems Transformation in Practice

25 July 2023 Rome, Italy

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen, Dear friends.

At the outset, let me thank you, Mr. Chair, for holding this plenary session on this important theme.

This provides us valuable opportunity to assess the progress made so far since the Food Systems Summit in 2021 and chart a way forward with scaled up innovations.

Affording healthy diet was difficult for almost 3 billion people in 2020. Millions were suffering from acute hunger. The COVID-19 pandemic only worsened this scenario, while the climate crisis and conflicts on different parts further accentuated the problem.

While we are now in the phase of recovery from the pandemic, achieving SDG 2 on zero hunger still looks uncertain. We need to fight the battle against hunger and food insecurity more resolutely.

And transforming our food systems is akin to building a fortress against hunger.

Mr. Chair,

Modern food systems fall short in providing a pathway for a sustainable future. Current food systems have eroded biodiversity, exacerbated inequality, and propelled unsustainable production and consumption. Moreover, such systems have worsened climate change by contributing to greenhouse gas emissions and loss of indigenous practices.

In many cases, we have also seen worsening of public health with increasing incidences of non-communicable diseases.

Therefore, our endeavour to transformation of food system should be able to address

such multiple challenges.

It is equally important that food system contributes to improving livelihoods, advancing economic development, and enhancing quality of life. Such transformation would lead to more equitable, resilient and sustainable food systems.

Mr. Chair.

Let me share few specific measures that Nepal has taken to transform the food systems.

We are steadfast to the implementation of the Right to Food and Food Sovereignty Act, 2018 which is a strong legal framework for sustainable food systems in Nepal. It is an important instrument for improving food governance and policy coherence in health, agriculture, food security and nutrition.

Following the UN Food Systems Summit 2021, we organized national and provincial level food systems dialogues with relevant stakeholders to examine the existing food systems, understand vulnerabilities, and design pathways to transform them.

We, then, prepared Food Systems Transformation Strategic Plan (2022-2030) to streamline and link the actions towards 2030 agenda for achieving all Sustainable Development Goals.

Nepal remains committed to develop a sustainable food chain for affordable, safe, healthy, and nutritious diets.

We are also focusing on improving agriculture productivity, supporting local farming, and investing in better storage system for minimizing waste. We encourage better public-private partnership for improving infrastructure and value chains.

Revitalizing local indigenous food systems is our priority and there is increasing investment and interest in indigenous food grains like millet.

Mr. Chair,

Transforming food systems faces a myriad of challenges including low productivity, high post-production losses, frequent climatic shocks and weak climate resilience.

As an LDC we also face additional challenges such as lack of adequate storage, markets, cold chains, low levels of mechanization, high production costs, weak market linkages, and uneven distribution systems.

Funding gap is the biggest challenge to implement planned activities for the capacity development of government and other stakeholders at different levels of food systems transformation.

In conclusion, I urge all to join hands in our collective endeavor to transform the food system that not only sustains our physical well-being but also empowers our communities, preserves our environment, and ensures sustainable future for all.

Thank you.

Remarks by the Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' at the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS 2.0) 17 November 2023

(Theme: "Global South: Together for One Future")

Your Excellency Shri Narendra Modi ji, Prime Minister of India

Excellencies.

At the outset, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Prime Minister of India His Excellency Shri Narendra Modiji for inviting me to join this important 2nd Summit on Voice of Global South.

The theme of this Leaders' Session of the Summit "Global South: Together for One Future" is timely and relevant in the present context especially as we grapple with a multitude of challenges in a world beset with turbulence.

We appreciate the successful organization by the Government of India of the first Voice of the Global South Summit earlier this year which recognized that growth and development must focus on the most vulnerable. It further helped place the concerns of developing countries on the G20 agenda.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate India on its successful G20 Presidency under which substantial achievements were made by the group.

Excellencies.

We are facing unprecedented crises generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and deepening geo-political complexities. They have impacts on food and nutrition, health and education, economy and environment, and peace and security.

The developing countries especially the LDCs are the most affected ones by these crises. Rising food and energy prices, tightening financial conditions, and persistent cycles of vulnerabilities continue to add to their worries.

Many countries of the Global South are under unsustainable debt burden which is straining investments in health, education, social justice, and other pressing national priorities.

We believe that in order to address the challenges facing the world, the international community must focus on common goals of peace, progress and prosperity. For this, building of trust, promoting partnership and collaboration and working in solidarity remain crucial.

We need to champion inclusive and sustainable global growth, in which the Global South receives a fair share to eradicate poverty and give their people a decent life.

Nepal remains steadfast in its commitment to multilateralism, with the United Nations at the centre. Nonetheless, we believe that the existing global governance architecture needs a timely reform for making it relevant and reflective of today's realities. At the same time, reform of the international financial architecture should be a top priority with full consideration to the voice of the countries in special situation, including LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

Climate change remains a grave threat to humanity. Climate vulnerable countries like Nepal have been bearing the burden of climate change. The effect of climate change on the Himalayas has posed severe threat to the lives and livelihoods of millions of people living in our region. We all must commit ourselves to achieving the set ambitions in a time-bound manner.

With full commitment to the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement, Nepal has set a target of reaching a net-zero emission by 2045 through, among other things, conserving and sustainably managing natural resources, undertaking effective adaption and mitigation measures, and promoting a green, resilient and inclusive economy.

In this context, we believe that easy access to climate finance is prerequisite to a low-carbon and climate resilient development.

Excellencies.

Talking about our national priorities, I feel happy to share that Nepal is graduating from the LDC status by 2026 and we are committed to making this process smooth, sustainable and irreversible.

Sustainable Development Goals remain at the centre of our development vision and priorities with integration into national policies and plans. But even the progress that we achieved so far has been threatened by the multitude of global crises.

Hence, we have been calling for an enhanced level of international support from our partners such as development assistance, FDI, trade facilitation, technology transfer and technical assistance. The South-South cooperation should also be forthcoming to lifting the most needy countries.

Excellencies,

To conclude, while expressing our sincere commitment to work closely with the international community for advancing the cause of developing countries, I wish this Summit every success in sketching a path ahead for meaningful cooperation and coordination in order to help shape a participatory 'One Future'.

Thank you!

Statement by the Rt. Hon. Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda,' Prime Minister of Nepal and Chair of LDC during the event "Delivering Early Warnings for All" organized on the margins of the COP 28 in Dubai Sunday, 3 December 2023 10:30-12:00, MR 10, Blue Zone

H.E. Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Namaste and good morning.

I am pleased to address this side event both on behalf of the group of the Least Developed Countries as well as in my national capacity.

I thank the organizers for hosting this important event and providing me with this opportunity to draw global attention to reflect on the plight of LDCs on the Early Warnings for All (EW4ALL).

I deeply commend the Secretary-General for spearheading the EW4ALL initiative which calls for every person to be protected by an early warning system by the end of 2027.

I also appreciate the UN and other relevant agencies for their valuable work and support for this initiative.

Excellencies,

Despite contributing nearly zero to global carbon emissions, the LDCs are bearing the brunt of climate change. They are on the frontline of this existential crisis, with highly unpredictable weather patterns, increased events of natural disasters, and environmental crises.

Due to such disasters, they face huge challenges in life and livelihoods resulting in livelihood disruptions, deaths, displacement, economic losses, and infrastructure damage.

One UNCTAD report revealed that 69 percent of worldwide deaths caused by climaterelated disasters occurred in LDCs in the last five decades.

LDCs suffered 19% of the total number of climate, weather, and water-related hazards

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that accounted for 29% of the globally affected population between 2017 to 2021. On the contrary, the LDCs lack resources in terms of adaptation, mitigation, and adequate early warning systems to minimize the risks that impact the lives and livelihoods of our people.

Over the years, human-induced climate change has caused extreme weather patterns leading to substantial damage to physical infrastructures and properties and financial losses.

Against this backdrop, I underline that an early warning system is critical to save precious lives, prevent disruptions and displacement, and reduce economic losses and infrastructure damage.

The Doha Program of Action accords high priority for building resilience in LDCs by improving their early warning capacity to respond to shocks and vulnerabilities.

However, the LDCs are lacking resources and technological capacity. Therefore, I strongly urge the UN agencies and other development partners to scale up the resources for the LDCs.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Like other LDCs, Nepal is also highly vulnerable to disaster and climate change. We have been encountering a recurrence of soil erosion, landslides, flash floods, and droughts with increased intensity and impacts.

Likewise, Nepal's energy, agriculture, water resources, forestry, biodiversity, and health sectors are at high risk of climate change impacts.

Therefore, the implementation of EW4ALL is critical in high-risk countries like Nepal where the disasters are intensifying, expanding, and getting more complex. Establishing a robust Early Warning System to address the risks of climate-induced disasters is the top priority of the Government.

I highly appreciate the UN Secretary-General for including Nepal in the list of this initiative which aligns with our national priorities.

Nepal is committed to implementing the EW4ALL initiative of the Secretary-General which is instrumental in saving the lives of the most vulnerable people.

Nepal's National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority has been

working on the Multi-Hazard Early Warning System with a dedicated task group. The Authority is preparing a roadmap for the effective implementation of the EW4ALL initiative in collaboration with the UN agencies and development partners.

I also request the development partners to extend their maximum support and coordination for this initiative.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Statement by the Right Honourable Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Prime Minister of Nepal, and Leader of the Delegation to the 19th Summit of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) under the theme of "Deepening Cooperation for Shared Global Affluence"

Kampala, Uganda, 19-20 January 2024

Your Excellency Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda,

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government, Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I feel honoured and privileged to lead the Nepali delegation to the 19th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement being convened in this beautiful country, Uganda, the Pearl of Africa under such an important theme "Deepening Cooperation for Shared Global Affluence."

I bring the message of peace from the birthplace of Gautam Buddha for the success of this Summit at a time when peace is much needed element for shared prosperity.

Let me first extend my heartfelt congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, on assuming the great responsibility of steering our historic Movement. Under your dynamic leadership, I am confident that NAM will achieve newer heights of strength, solidarity, and cooperation.

I also express my sincere gratitude to the Government and the people of the Republic of Uganda for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to us since our arrival to this beautiful city of Kampala.

I join fellow leaders in acknowledging the commendable work of the outgoing Chair, the Republic of Azerbaijan, for successfully hosting the 18th NAM Summit and advancing the Movement despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Chairman,

NAM has come a long way since 1955 when the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference was held, and the seed of NAM was sown.

The Movement had been instrumental in achieving political independence, freedom, decolonization, and sovereignty for many countries in the world. It has remained a beacon of hope for our dignity, pride, solidarity, and cooperation.

Though the Movement has continued to struggle for a just, equitable, inclusive, peaceful, and prosperous world order, today's world is full of injustice, inequality, division, discord, and exclusion.

Moreover, protectionism, violent extremism, and war and conflict are on the rise. Likewise, military expenditures and the arms race are soaring.

Since the last Summit, enormous challenges befell humanity with deaths, deprivation, displacement, and destitution of millions of people due to the COVID-19 pandemic, among others.

Indeed, post-pandemic recovery has remained slow, skewed, and uneven, hitting hardest the poorest and weakest segments of society. This is further exacerbated by the triple planetary crisis.

Similarly, the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals, which are critical to our people in ushering in an era of hope, dignity, and decent life, seems mission impossible.

Likewise, the Global Financial Architecture must be reformed to enable countries in special situations to secure finance in achieving their development visions and goals. To provide development justice to these countries, the developed countries must fulfill their financing commitment without delay.

Similarly, international trade must be just, fair, and inclusive which benefits the bottom billions.

Globalization, as we believe has not lifted all boats uniformly, rather it has increased income disparities and the concentration of wealth in the hands of few countries.

Global North must understand that it is not only unethical and immoral but is also unsustainable to leave half of humanity excluded from the journey of prosperity.

NAM must stress on the economic development and prosperity of its members through the timely achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other Internationally Agreed Development Goals.

To overcome the resource deficit, along with North-South and Triangular cooperation, we should also enhance South-South cooperation as many fellow NAM members have made significant progress both in socio-economic development as well as technological advancement.

Similarly, NAM should accord high priority to addressing the institutional and capacity constraints being faced by developing and least developed countries on 'Science, Technology, and Innovation', which have become a game changer in today's world.

NAM should play a greater role in reforming the United Nations. Our multilateral institutions should be inclusive, transparent, and democratic to ensure enduring peace and shared prosperity.

NAM must take the lead to address common and contemporary challenges we are facing.

Mr. Chairman,

The history of human civilization has abundantly taught us that it is only the 'cooperation' through which humanity can achieve greater and better. NAM itself stands for deepening solidarity, fraternity, and cooperation. We must strive to achieve shared affluence through stronger collaboration among ourselves.

Prosperity cannot be the privilege of a few. It must be for everyone and every country. We must create a level playing field within and among the comity of nations so that global affluence will be shared as equitably as possible.

The consequences of old and new conflicts have engulfed not only the region but also the entire world, particularly the Global South. This is high time that we find an enduring solution for peace and security through political dialogue and diplomacy with respect and dignity for all.

As the most representative organization after the United Nations, the Movement must play a defining role in establishing a just, equitable, and prosperous world for security, stability, and prosperity.

NAM's timeless values and principles have remained sacrosanct to us; and adherence to which has been guiding us to achieve a peaceful, harmonious, and prosperous world.

Mr. Chairman.

Nepal pursues independent, objective, balanced, and non-aligned foreign policy. Our foreign policy is based on sovereign equality, mutual respect, mutual benefit, and peaceful settlement of disputes. Principles of non-alignment constitute one of the fundamental tenets of Nepal's foreign policy.

Nepal believes in the eternal truths of Peaceful Coexistence as taught by the icon of peace, Gautam Buddha. Likewise, Unity in Diversity, and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam meaning 'the world is one family' have been the way of our daily lives. These values are deeply rooted in our socio-cultural ethos since time immemorial.

As a peace-loving nation, Nepal deplores all kinds of conflicts and geo-political rivalries in the world. The conflict situation in Ukraine and Gaza is deeply distressing.

Nepal looks forward to seeing peace and stability in the Middle East with a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within secure and recognized international borders based on relevant United Nations resolutions.

At home, Nepal is close to concluding its unique, nationally owned, and homegrown peace process. We are determined to secure enduring peace through resolving transitional justice once and for all.

As a leader who emerged from conflict, I believe that peace is possible and so is addressing historical, socio-cultural, and economic injustice both within nations and globally, provided our strong faith and willingness.

As a graduating LDC, Nepal is facing multitudes of challenges in her development efforts. As the Chair of LDCs, I call upon the international community for an enhanced level of cooperation to support the LDCs in letters and spirits of cooperation to get them out of the vicious cycle of poverty and to drive them to the path of prosperity.

Mr. Chairman,

Coming from a mountainous country, I must say something about the mountains amidst this august gathering here. Mountains are the home of 15% of the global population and 50% of Earth's biodiversity.

These mountains offer global services to all living beings, but they are suffering

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tremendously. Nepal has been advocating for the protection of mountains, biodiversities, and mountain ecosystems, and people living therein.

We have witnessed the disastrous impact of climate change on the Himalayas in the form of receding glaciers at an alarming rate and the untold misery it would bring to the lives and livelihoods of billions.

Protecting the mountain ecosystem, mountain civilization, and biodiversity is in our shared interests. For this, I call upon fellow NAM members to support our call- the call of the Himalayas.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, let us reaffirm our commitment to the values and principles of non-alignment and avoid any double standards amongst ourselves.

Let's work together with utmost sincerity, harmony, solidarity, and cooperation for our shared affluence.

Let us reinvigorate NAM to make it a force to be reckoned with to build a just, equitable, peaceful, sustainable, and prosperous world leaving no one behind.

Finally, I appreciate the fruitful deliberations and adoption of 'Final Document' and 'Kampala Declaration' produced by the Ministerial meeting.

Thank you for your attention.

148th IPU Assembly Geneva, Switzerland 23-27 March, 2024

General Debate

"Parliamentary Diplomacy: Building Bridges for Peace and Understanding"

Statement by the head of the Nepalese delegation the Right Honorable Mr. Dev Raj Ghimire.

Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Federal Parliament of Nepal

Excellency President of the Assembly, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank the Honorable President of the 148th IPU Assembly for an opportunity to address this assembly on behalf of the Federal Parliament of Nepal.

Mr. / Madam President,

Being able to and desiring to solve differences peacefully through dialogues is an excellent example of the supremacy of humankind. Diplomacy, which initiated through treaties for the purpose of forming alliances in war and ending the war, has grown be quite comprehensive in scope today. To manage international relations through dialogue, negotiation and other peaceful means is diplomacy. Only through diplomacy which promotes cooperation and advances common interests through timely resolution of differences is it possible to create dialogue, cooperation and respect between nations for the success of the consolidated global effort to march for the utmost welfare of the entire humankind.

The traditional thought was that diplomacy is a matter of government-to-government relations and the right and responsibility of solely the government. But this narrow approach has changed, and its area has become much wider. Parliamentary diplomacy has developed as an important instrument of alternate diplomacy.

Mr. / Madam President,

Parliamentary diplomacy is an important complement to traditional diplomacy. It promotes the interests of the participating nations. Parliament in itself is the outcome of democracy and public mandate. Thus, parliamentary diplomacy adds a democratic dimension as well as legitimacy to international relations. It builds trust and goodwill

at people's level. Because the diplomatic actions of parliamentarians who are consistently in close contact with the people will be aimed towards the benefit of the public and supported by the public, it produces sustainable as opposed to temporary results. The involvement of parliamentarians in diplomacy is indispensable to ensure that the voices and aspirations of the citizens are reflected in decision making in the matters of international affairs

Mr. / Madam President.

Nepal has always remained a proponent of peace and coexistence. At different times in history, we have witnessed the consequences of larger and powerful nations not tolerating the existence of smaller and less powerful nations. A founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Nepal is adamant in its belief that every nation must respect each other's existence. Nepal's constitution has laid down a foreign policy based on the Charter of the United Nations, non-alignment, principles of Panchsheel, international law and the norms of world peace. This policy enshrined in the constitution has been inherited by the Federal Parliament and our initiatives in parliamentary diplomacy are inspired by the same policy.

Mr. / Madam President,

In the present, there are situations of tensions and conflicts in various parts of the world. Many of these tensions are the result of action taken by the authorities of the state without taking into consideration the intent of the people and the parliament. Parliaments, who are in the role to scrutinize the actions of the government, must put a stop to such discretionary acts and maintain peace and understanding in the international community.

The scope of diplomacy is not limited to preventing wars and ending ongoing wars. The cooperation and a consolidated effort of the nations with similar interests is necessary to face the burning challenges of the world. The UN Secretary General Mr. Antonio Gueterres, during his visit to Nepal in October 2023, pressingly called the attention of international community towards the challenges brought by climate change.

Mr. / Madam President,

Nepal is a country whose carbon emission is very low. But it is facing a disproportionately large harm by the impacts of climate change. As the snow in the high Himalayas of Nepal are melting rapidly, the ecosystems below it are in grave danger. This has also put many nations close to the sea level, mainly the island nations, at risk. The nations impacted by this serious threat must raise a united voice in international forums. The

nations that contribute most to global warming must fulfil their commitments to the nations that are most affected by it. Urging our governments to honestly execute the nation's promises is a duty of us parliamentarians. I call upon all the honorable parliamentarians of all nations present here, let's diligently fulfil this duty.

Mr. / Madam President.

Inter-Parliamentary Union has been practicing parliamentary diplomacy for world peace since the last 135 years. This has been providing a forum for discussion, brainstorming and cooperation to parliamentarians for relevant issues such as peace, international security, democracy, human rights and sustainable development. IPU has succeeded in maintaining the glory of its two cofounders Passey and Cremer being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in the very first and third years of the award's history. I wish the IPU moves forward in the days to come with the same motivation. I pledge my and my parliament's solidarity and support in this regard.

At last, I thank the Swiss government and people for the warm hospitality to me and my delegation. I also congratulate the IPU Secretariat for the impeccable management of this Assembly.

I thank everyone for the kind attention. Thank You.

Statement by Hon'ble Upendra Yadav, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health and Population at the Fifty-seventh Session of the Commission on Population and Development

New York, 29 April-3 May 2024

Theme: Assessing the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.

Madam Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

I welcome the adoption of the political declaration on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the ICPD.

The ICPD Program of Action and the 2030 Agenda are mutually reinforcing. The full implementation of the ICPD Program of Action is critical to attaining the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The priority theme of this session could not be more timely and pertinent as multiple crises and challenges have created obstacles in our efforts to attain the 2030 agenda and sustainable development goals.

I am confident that our deliberations will contribute to finding ways and means to accelerate the implementation of both the program of action of ICPD and get the SDG back on track before it is too late.

Madam Chair,

Nepal has been giving utmost priority and importance to the implementation and attainment of the ICPD Program of Action since its adoption in 1994.

Human rights, women's rights, gender equality, safe motherhood and reproductive rights of woman are enshrined in the Constitution as fundamental rights.

Various policies, plans, and programs are being implemented to increase the quality of life of every citizen, creating a just, inclusive, equitable, and egalitarian society. The long-term Population Perspective Plan (2010-2031) aims at an integrated and

multi-sectoral approach to develop the quality of the population.

The periodic plans have given impetus to the utilization of productive demographic resources and managing population and migration for development including through gender equality and inclusion.

A new population policy with a rights-based approach is being launched shortly.

Nepal has taken measures to address harmful social and gender norms and provide survivor-centered response services.

Nepal has established a robust legal framework to ensure free, accessible, and safe abortion as a fundamental human right.

We are committed to ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health rights in line with the ICPD POA.

We have stronger partnerships with UN agencies as well as other development partners to this end.

Madam Chair.

With a stronger constitutional and legal base as well as targeted interventions, we have made significant progress in poverty reduction, improved health systems, reduced fertility and mortality, increased life expectancy, access to primary education, promoting gender equality, and advancing health and reproductive rights.

Yet, much needs to be done.

There is a need:

- -To address evolving population dynamics;
- -To leverage the demographic dividend;
- -To mitigate pressing challenges posed by rapid urbanization, internal and external migration, and;
- -To address the huge challenges being posed by climate change impacts and natural disasters.

We need to provide every citizen with opportunities to live in dignity and realize their full potential.

Further, our continued efforts to achieve progress in the implementation of the ICPD Program of Action as well as SDGs, have seriously been hampered by multiple crises and challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic, growing conflicts and geopolitical tensions, and numerous external shocks.

Climate crises and disasters have deeply impacted the lives and livelihoods of our people across the country.

Nepal possesses the youngest and most dynamic working population in history now.

Yet, massive investment in education, health, technology, entrepreneurship, capacity building, and employment opportunities is critical to reap the benefits from this demographic dividend.

Similarly, as an LDC, LLDC, and climate-vulnerable country, Nepal is facing multiple structural and other challenges in development.

I would, therefore, call upon the development partners and international community to enhance their support

- -to accelerate our development endeavours,
- -to bridge policy, institutional, technological, resource, and capacity gaps and constraints facing us, and
- -to help achieve both the SDGs and ICPD POA.

Madam Chair,

To conclude, I reiterate the commitment of the Government of Nepal towards a rights-based, inclusive, innovative, and sustainable approach to population and development.

Nepal is looking forward to working together with the international community to fully realize the goals of ICPD, leaving no one behind.

Together, we can make a change.

I thank you.

STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE N.P. SAUD, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF NEPAL AND CHAIR OF LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDCs), AT THE ANNUAL MINISTERIAL MEETING ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2023 NEW YORK

Theme: Translating the Ambitious Doha Commitments into Tangible Actions to Accelerate the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda

His Excellency President of the General Assembly Mr. Dennis Francis His Excellency UN Secretary General Mr. António Guterres, Her Excellency President of the ECOSOC Ms. Paula Narváez, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates

At the outset, I would like to welcome you all to this Meeting.

Since this is the first Ministerial Meeting after Nepal assumed the Chairmanship of the Group, I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to all of you for the trust and confidence reposed on Nepal to steer the LDCs Group for the next three years.

I assure you that we will carry out the mandate with all sincerity, dedication, and diligence.

I commend Malawi for the successful stewardship of the Group over the last four years. Malawi's leadership including in producing the Doha Programme of Action was remarkable.

I deeply appreciate the UN Secretary-General for his consistent support to mobilize the entire UN system for the cause of LDCs.

I also commend USG and High Representative Madam Rabab Famita for her dynamic leadership and contribution to promoting the interests of LDCs.

My sincere appreciation goes to the Government of the State of Qatar for hosting the UN LDC5 and providing continued support to the Group.

We remain grateful to the Friends of LDCs and all our development partners for their goodwill, support, and cooperation.

Excellencies.

We are now living in a world beset by turbulence.

We are facing unprecedented crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and deepening geo-political competition.

They are creating spin-off impacts on food and nutrition, health and education, ecology and environment, and peace and security.

No doubt, we, the LDCs are at the sharp end of these crises. Rising food and energy prices, tightening financial conditions, and unrelenting cycles of vulnerabilities continue to add woes to our worries.

The development trends in LDCs are far from satisfactory. The Secretary General's report on SDG states that half the world is left behind, with LDCs pushed further to the precipice.

The FDI inflows to LDCs, which are just about 3% of the total inflows to the developing countries, have fallen by 16% in 2022.

LDCs have been denied debt relief and concessional financing. Extreme debt service burden is severely straining investments in health, education, social justice, and other pressing national priorities.

High risk of failing to service the debt is in the offing for several LDCs.

Despite record-breaking increases in global trade in recent years, the share of exports from the least developed countries has stagnated and is far off the target.

Against this backdrop, we adopted an ambitious Doha Program of Action earlier this year. The DPOA renewed commitment for leaving no one behind and accelerating the action on sustainable development goals.

Now, the need is to ensure its effective and smooth implementation.

Its five key deliverables must be translated into action with high priority.

In this context, please allow me to highlight a few points:

First, we welcome the Secretary General's proposal of at least US\$500 billion a year as SDG Stimulus Package for developing countries. In the meantime, we call for

dedicated allocation of SDG Stimulus fund for LDCs.

Second, we urge our development partners to massively scale up affordable, long-term financing for development, especially through multilateral development banks, re-channeling special drawing rights and aligning all financing flows with the SDGs.

Contingency financing to the countries in special situations must be expanded.

Third, we call for immediate action to tackle the high cost of debt and the rising risks of debt distress, including by converting short-term, high interest borrowing into long-term debt at lower interest rates.

Fourth, we welcome the Secretary-General's call to double adaptation finance by 2025 as the first step towards devoting at least half of the total climate finance to adaptation.

The developed countries must honor their commitment to provide US\$100 billion a year as climate support.

We emphasize the need to expeditiously reach an agreement on the modality for the operationalization of the loss and damage fund.

Finally, we urge the international community to support the graduating LDCs to ensure their smooth, sustainable, and irreversible graduation.

Graduated countries must also be provided with specific support measures so that they do not backslide.

We request our development partners to turn their commitments into actions.

Excellencies,

Every challenge comes with an opportunity. As the world grapples with multiple crises, let us renew our commitment to end poverty and inequality and make the 2030 Agenda achievable for all.

Building on the achievements of the Istanbul Program of Action, we must work hard to accelerate progress in this decade of the Doha Programme of Action.

Let us turn our promises into progress.

I thank you for your attention.

Concluding Remarks by Hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha at the Third Edition of Prof. Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series Kathmandu, 14 May 2024

Honorable Members of Parliament,
Foreign Secretary,
Keynote Speaker Prof. C. Raja Mohan,
Distinguished Guests,
Friends from the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen!
Good evening to you all!

I am delighted to witness the presence of respectable personalities of various walks of life in this third edition of Professor Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series. This is a platform envisioned by the Ministry for constructive and insightful deliberations on foreign policy matters of vital national interest. Your valuable presence added significant value to this event.

From what I saw today during the interaction, I am confident that this YNK Lecture Series will contribute remarkably as a platform for generating knowledge and sharing ideas, stimulating thoughts, and expanding the horizon of understanding on the issues of Nepal's foreign policy and diplomacy in the ever-evolving situation and complex dynamics of world affairs.

This time, we had the privilege of pursuing through analysis and thought-provoking ideas from Professor C. Raja Mohan on the theme of 'Nepal-India Relations: Prospects and Pathways.'

As a renowned professor and a proficient foreign policy analyst, Professor Raja Mohan made succinct analysis of the current global and regional issues amidst which we need to chart our course ahead. He also subtly suggested forward-looking strategy and pragmatic ways of strengthening the bilateral relationship between Nepal and India to forge a harmonious, collaborative, and progressive path for shared prosperity.

Distinguished Participants,

As you all know, Nepal is one of the oldest independent States in Asia and was never ever colonized. Our recorded history even before the unification of modern Nepal speaks volumes about the legacy of our foreign policy with neighbouring countries.

Our foreign policy conduct is based on non-alignment, *Panchasheel*, the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and norms of global peace.

Nepal's foreign policy is directed towards maintaining international relations based on sovereign equality, protecting sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, and national interest of the country, and promoting national prestige in the international community.

We aim to establish Nepal's credentials as a peaceful, inclusive, and democratic country while striving for sustainable economic growth and development through mutually beneficial partnerships.

Apart from expanding and consolidating bilateral relations with all friendly countries, we also give importance to regional cooperation and multilateral affairs. We believe that today's global problems call for global solutions and that the UN is the best place to play its role.

Our relations with all countries are guided by the theme of friendship, mutual respect, and cooperation.

Nepal has always maintained friendly and cooperative relations with her neighbours. Maintaining close and cordial relationships with immediate neighbours is our top priority while placing the national interest at the core. These relations have expanded manifold in the sphere of political, economic, cultural, and people-to-people relations, among others.

The time-tested wisdom, vision and pragmatism of our predecessors and the magnitude of insights of the person like the late Professor Yadu Nath Khanal are guidelines of the conduct of Nepal's foreign policy towards these objectives.

Dear Friends,

The last two decades have witnessed momentous transformation in Nepal's political system. The promulgation of the Constitution in 2015 was a culmination of our sustained

struggle for democracy and peoples' rights. We are now a federal democratic republic essentially with socialism oriented inclusive democracy. This has finally settled the political course for which we fought for long. Democracy and democratic institutions are being strengthened and we remain fully committed to realize the objectives set by the Constitution. People of Nepal deserve the fruits of peace and democracy. We must deliver this.

After the democratic political change, Nepal's main historical task is socio-economic transformation to fulfill the long-held aspirations of Nepali people for tranquility, progress, and prosperity. People of Nepal deserve a better living standard and a dignified life, free from poverty, hunger and backwardness. We are convinced that political gains cannot be sustained without a strong base of economic development.

Our constitution incorporates economic wellbeing and prosperity of Nepali people as a major component of our national interest. The Government has been pursuing economic and development policies to realize this objective.

We are effortful to graduate from LDC status by 2026 and we aim to become a middle-income country by 2030. We also need to meet internationally committed development agendas including SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

These all require rapid economic growth in the country. Resources at our disposal will not be sufficient to materialize these goals and targets. This naturally calls for our deeper engagement with our neighbours and other development partners. We are fortunate that both of our neighbours are among the world's economic powerhouses. Nepal stands to get benefit from their phenomenal growth and prosperity through beneficial collaboration in the high potential areas of trade, investment, tourism, and productive value chains.

Distinguished Participants,

Nepal and India are close neighbours, enjoying a long history of friendship and cooperation.

Geographical proximity; religious, cultural, and linguistic affinity; economic engagements and closely-knit people-to-people connection are the hallmarks of Nepal-India relations. These relations are nurtured by nature and tied by cultural affinities and are, thus, comprehensive, multidimensional and hardly comparable to any others.

But there are some issues between our two countries left over by history that need

to be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy on the basis of historical facts and in the spirit of good neighborliness. This will pave the way for bringing Nepal-India relations to a newer height. The government of Nepal is committed towards this end.

Our two countries have set up different bilateral consultation arrangements to promote various aspects of bilateral relations. These arrangements serve as the facilitating instruments of our ever evolving and progressing collaboration and partnership. Exchange of high-level visits has contributed a lot in cementing ties and promoting and deepening partnership in a number of areas.

There exist huge potential for mutually beneficial cooperation in different sectors. Common efforts to realize these potentials would benefit our two countries and peoples.

Cooperation in the field of energy is highly important. Proper utilization of Nepal's huge hydropower potential can change the development landscape of our region with clean energy.

Connectivity network is being expanded across the border to facilitate trade and transit. We need to further expand and improve the connectivity network.

Both countries will have to find ways to make trade beneficial to both countries. Nepal's export base is very limited. Nepal's trade deficit continues to rise. We need more investment in productive sectors to expand our trade with India and other countries.

Investment in Nepal is secure and profitable. Multinational companies operating in Nepal have been able to repatriate handsome amount from their investment.

Cross border digital connectivity and payment system will facilitate greater flow of tourists from India to Nepal. Rich socio-cultural assets and nature's unmatched treasures make Nepal a-round -the-year destination for all and more so for our Indian friends. Both countries can cooperate to further develop this sector.

IT is a promising sector for partnership between our two countries. Collaboration in education, science and technology will also be required to tap the talents of dynamic and burgeoning young population.

Nepal's development and economic prosperity will also be in the interest of our

neighbours. We need to visualize a big picture to accommodate legitimate interest of all countries irrespective of their size and strength. After all, we need a peaceful and stable neighborhood. Without economic development and prosperity this cannot be achieved. Partnership flourishes when benefits are judiciously shared. Given its level of development, Nepal needs focused support and cooperation from our neighbours and the international community.

In these lines, Prof. Mohan's advice on pragmatism and interest-based approach could be the propellants towards more harmonious and productive relations for our countries and peoples.

Distinguished guests,

Before closing, I would like to extend special thanks to Professor C. Raja Mohan for his highly engaging and forward-looking presentation. I would also like to thank the participants for their active participation through their constructive comments and creative queries during the Q and A session.

Let me also extend sincere thanks to Professor Jaya Raj Acharya for his contribution as an expert member in the Steering Committee which is mandated to guide the process of this lecture series.

Foreign Secretary and other colleagues in the Ministry who have worked hard to bring this Lecture to you also deserve my compliments.

Special thanks go to the media for their coverage of this program. Through their coverage they have helped disseminate the message of this lecture to a wider audience.

I want to conclude this episode with the assurance that the Ministry will continue this platform both as tribute to Professor Yadu Nath Khanal and a platform to facilitate deliberations on Nepal's foreign policy and international relations.

I thank you all once again.

Have a good evening.

परराष्ट्र नीति तथा कूटनीतिको पछिल्लो अवस्था कार्यक्रम अन्तर्गत "Maximizing Nepal's Benefits from the Rise of India and China" विषयमा आयोजना हुने अन्तर्क्रिया कार्यक्रमका लागि माननीय उपप्रधान तथा परराष्ट्रमन्त्री श्री नारायणकाजी श्रेष्ठज्यूले दिनुहुने मन्तव्य ३ चैत २०८०

गोकर्ण फरेष्ट रिसोर्ट, काठमाण्डौ।

श्री सचिवज्यू, राष्ट्रिय सुरक्षा सल्लाहकार ज्यू, मन्त्रालय एवम् विभागका सम्पूर्ण कर्मचारी साथीहरू,

जिम्मेवारी बहन गरेको छोटो समयमै मन्त्रालयको वार्षिक कार्यक्रम अन्तर्गत आयोजित आजको यस कार्यक्रमका अवसरमा मन्त्रालय तथा विभागका सबै कर्मचारीहरुलाई एकै ठाउँमा भेट्ने र अन्तर्क्रिया गर्ने अवसर मिलेकोमा मलाई खुशी लागेको छ । नेपालले अवलम्बन गर्दै आएको परराष्ट्र नीति, यसका उद्देश्य र नेपालको अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय सम्बन्ध समेतका विषयहरुमा अध्ययन तथा व्यवहारिक रुपमा प्राप्त कार्यानुभवको कारणले यहाँहरु अवगत नै हुनुहुन्छ। यहाँहरूबीच परराष्ट्र नीति प्राथमिकता तथा परराष्ट्र मन्त्रालयले खेल्नुपर्ने भूमिकाका बारेमा संक्षिप्त रुपमा आफ्नो भनाइ राख्न चाहन्छ।

नेपालको संविधान २०७२ ले राष्ट्रिय स्वतन्त्रता, सार्वभौमसत्ता, भौगोलिक अखण्डता, राष्ट्रियता, स्वाधीनता, स्वाभिमान, नेपालीको हक हितको रक्षा, सिमानाको सुरक्षा, आर्थिक समुन्नति र समृद्धिका लागि नेपालको अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय सम्बन्ध निर्देशित हुने व्यवस्था गरेको छ।

राष्ट्रिय हितको रक्षा गर्दै सार्वभौमिक समानताका आधारमा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय सम्बन्ध कायम गरी विश्व समुदायमा राष्ट्रिय सम्मानको अभिवृद्धि गर्नेतर्फ परराष्ट्र नीति तथा कूटनीति सञ्चालन हुने व्यवस्था रहेको छ। संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघको बडापत्र, असंलग्नता, पञ्चशीलका सिद्धान्त, अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय कानून र विश्वशान्तिको मान्यताका आधारमा राष्ट्रको सर्वोपिर हितलाई ध्यानमा राखी स्वतन्त्र परराष्ट्र नीति सञ्चालन गर्ने र विगतमा भएका सन्धिहरूको पुनरावलोकन गर्दै समानता र पारस्परिक हितको आधारमा सन्धि सम्झौता गर्न संविधानले नीतिगत मार्गदर्शन गरेको छ।

संवैधानिक मर्म अनुसार राष्ट्रिय हितको रक्षा गर्ने एवं जनताको समृद्धिका लागि स्वतन्त्र र सन्तुलित परराष्ट्र नीति अवलम्बन गर्ने वर्तमान सरकारको नीति रहेको छ। राष्ट्रिय हित तथा सुरक्षालाई केन्द्रबिन्दुमा राख्दै अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय जगतमा नेपालको प्रतिष्ठा र राष्ट्रिय सम्मानको अभिवृद्धि गर्ने उद्देश्यले छिमेकी लगायत सबै मित्रराष्ट्रसँग सार्वभौमिक समानता, पारस्परिक सम्मान र लाभका आधारमा द्विपक्षीय सम्बन्ध विस्तार र सुदृढ गर्न परराष्ट्र मन्त्रीको हैसियतमा मेरो निरन्तर प्रयास रहने छ।

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दिगो शान्ति, सुशासन,विकास र समृद्दिका लागि पारस्परिक हित र लाभका आधारमा छिमेकी, विकास साझेदार, श्रम गन्तब्य मुलुक लगायत विश्वका सबै मित्र राष्ट्रहरुसँगको मैत्रीपूर्ण सम्बन्धलाई थप मजबुत बनाउने, समन्वय र सहकार्यलाई बढावा दिई आपसी सहयोगका क्षेत्रहरु विस्तार गर्ने सरकारको नीति रहेको छ।यसमा छिमेकीलाई उच्च प्राथमिकता दिने सरकारको कार्यनीति रहेकछ।

परिवर्तित विश्व परिवेशमा देखापर्ने र देखा नपर्ने सबै प्रकारका भूराजनीतिक प्रतिस्पर्धा र त्यसले ल्याउने असहज र अनिश्चित परिस्थितिबीच हामी गुज्रिरहेका छौं। समग्र विश्व नै त्यही अवस्थाबाट गुज्रेको छ।विश्व शक्ति समिकरणमा एशियाको भूमिका क्रमश: अगाडी आउन थाले सँगै उदीयमान र स्थापित शक्तिहरूबीच स्वाभाविक रूपमा प्रभाव र स्थानका लागि प्रतिस्पर्धा भइरहेको हामी अनुभृति गर्न सक्छौं। रूस-युक्रेन संकटले भूराजनीतिक प्रतिस्पर्धालाई सोचेभन्दा तीव्र गति दिएको छ।इजरायल- प्लेष्टाइन द्वन्द्वले नयाँ रूप लिएको अवस्था छ। नयाँ नयाँ समिकरणहरू बन्दै गरेका छन् र यीनै समिकरणले अन्तराष्ट्रिय सम्बन्धमा जटीलताहरू थपेको छ। परम्परागत विकास साझेदार तथा शुभेच्छक मित्रहरूले पनि भूराजनीतिक नीतिगत प्राथमिकताहरूलाई पुर्नपरिभाषित गरेको प्रतित हुन्छ।

यो अवस्थामा हाम्रो मुलुकले सन्तुलित, परिपक्व, consistent र विश्वासिलो परराष्ट्र नीति मार्फत आफ्ना आधारभूत स्वार्थहरू (core interests) लाई संयमित तरिकाले प्रवर्द्धन गर्नुपर्ने भएको छ। असंलग्न परराष्ट्र नीतिको कुशल कार्यान्वयनबाट नै हामी सन्तुलित तवरबाट अगाडी बढ्न सिकन्छ भन्ने मलाई लाग्दछ। यसै परिदृश्यमा संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघको वडापत्रका सिद्धान्त, असंलग्नताका मान्यता तथा पंचशीलका सिद्धान्त हाम्रो परराष्ट्र नीतिका मार्गदर्शन भएका छन् र हाम्रो कुटनीति संचालनको मेरूदण्डको रुपमा रहेका छन्।

अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय मुद्दामा विषयवस्तुको गुणवत्तताको आधारमा राष्ट्रिय धारणा अवधारणा बनाउने तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय सम्बन्धलाई न्यायपूर्ण, निष्पक्ष, उत्तरदायी र सहयोगात्मक एवम रचनात्मक बनाउने दिशामा हाम्रो कूटनीतिक क्रियाशीलता जारी रहनेछ।

अतिकम विकसित देशबाट स्तरोन्नति भएपश्चातको अवस्थामा गर्नुपर्ने तयारी, भूपरिवेष्ठित मुलुकहरूको हित प्रवर्द्धन, निशस्त्रीकरण, वातावरण संरक्षण, जलवायू परिवर्तन, दिगो विकास, अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय सहायता जस्ता विषयहरूमा संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघ र अन्य बहुपक्षीय मञ्चहरूमा सिक्रय भूमिका निर्वाह गरी नेपालको राष्ट्रिय हित, अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय छवी र शाख प्रवर्द्धन गर्ने हाम्रो प्रयास रहनेछ। विधिमा आधारित न्यायपूर्ण, समावेशी, मानवकेन्द्रीत र निष्पक्ष विश्व व्यवस्थाका लागि अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय सहयोग र सहकार्यलाई प्रबर्द्धन गर्ने वहुपक्षीय संघ संस्थाहरूमा नेतृत्वदायी भूमिका लिने तथा नेपालको हितको लागि वहस पैरवी गर्न प्रयत्न गरिनेछ। संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघीय शान्ति मिसनमा नेपालले हालसम्म पुर्याएको योगदानले मुलुकको छवी उच्च पार्न मद्दत मिलेको छ।

कोभिड महामारीको समयमा खोप कूटनीतिलाई Global South को पक्षमा वकालत गरी WHO, COVAX Facility जस्ता संयन्त्रबाट खोप दिलाउनमा समेत नेपालले महत्वपूर्ण कार्य गरेको थियो।

संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघीय मानव अधिकार परिषद्को सदस्य राष्ट्रको रूपमा दोश्रो कार्यकालमा नेपालले मानव अधिकार परिषद्को सत्रहरूमा सक्रिय सहभागिता जनाई मानवअधिकार प्रवर्द्धन र संरक्षणमा योगदान पुर्याएको छ। युद्ध र द्वन्द्वको कठिन समयमा नेपालले विश्व शान्ति र मानव अधिकार प्रवर्द्धन गर्न विचार निर्माण – विनिर्माणमा महत्वपूर्ण योगदान पुर्याएको छ।

जलवायु परिवर्तनको चुनौती र त्यसका नकारात्मक प्रभाव न्यूनीकरण तथा अनुकूलनका लागि UN Climate Change Conference जस्ता बहुपक्षीय मंचहरुमा सिक्रय रुपमा सहभागी भै नेपालले जलवायु परिवर्तनका क्षेत्रमा गरेका अग्रणी कार्यहरू विश्व समुदायसमक्ष राख्न र अनुकूलन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तनबाट हुने क्षित न्यूनिकरण गर्न नेपाललाई वित्तीय र प्राविधिक सहायता जुटाउन महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका रहन्छ। यस्ता सम्मेलनहरुमा नेपालको पर्वतीय क्षेत्रको वातावरण जोखिमलाई प्राथमिकतासाथ उठाउनुपर्ने नीति नेपाल सरकारले लिएको छ।यस विषयमा UNGA तथा CoP28 लगायतका बहुपक्षीइ मन्चहरूमा सम्माननीय प्रधानमन्त्रीज्यूले बुलन्द गर्नुभएको पर्वतीय मुलुकहरुको आवाजलाई जलवायु परिवर्तन सम्बन्धी सबै सम्मेलन र प्रक्रियामा मुलप्रवाहीकरण गर्नु अपरिहार्य रहेको छ।

सार्क, बिमस्टेक, एशियाली सहयोग संवाद (ACD) जस्ता क्षेत्रीय संगठनको सहयोगलाई थप प्रवर्द्धन गर्नका निमित्त SAARC, BIMSTEC, BBIN, ACD, SCO लगायतका क्षेत्रीय संगठनहरुमा सदस्य राष्ट्र भएकोले नेपालको भूमिकालाई प्रभावकारी बनाउन पर्दछ। व्यापार प्रवर्द्धन, उर्जा, यातायात र पूर्वाधारका क्षेत्रमा लगानीका सम्भावनाहरू पहिल्याउँदै क्षेत्रीय सहकार्य मार्फत मुलुकको आर्थिक सामाजिक रुपान्तरणका निम्ति सरोकारवाला निकाय तथा पक्षसँग सहकार्य एवं सहयोग जुटाउन आवश्यक कार्य गर्नुपर्ने देखिन्छ।

लगानी प्रवर्द्धन, निर्यात व्यापार विस्तार तथा पर्यटन प्रवर्द्धन गरी मुलुकको विकासमा टेवा पुर्याउने उद्देश्यले परराष्ट्र मन्त्रालय र विदेशस्थित कूटनीतिक नियोगहरुबाट प्रभावकारी आर्थिक कूटनीतिको संचालन अपिरहार्य देख्दछु।यसमा हामीले प्राथमिकताका साथ काम गर्नुपर्ने भएको छ। यही वैशाख १६ र १७ गते आयोजना गर्न तयारी भईरहेको तेश्रो लगानी सम्मेलन सफल बनाउन आवश्यक समन्वय र सहकार्य गर्नुपर्ने देखिएको छ।

व्यापार घाटा न्यूनीकरणका लागि आयात प्रतिस्थापन र निर्यात प्रवर्द्धनमूलक औद्योगिक विकासमा जोड दिने सरकारको नीति रहेको छ। यसका लागि निर्यातमुखी उद्योग, व्यवसायमा स्वदेशी तथा विदेशी लगानीलाई आकर्षित गर्ने रणनीति सरकारले लिएको छ। लगानीमैत्री वातावरण निर्माणका लागि आर्थिक क्षेत्रसँग सम्बन्धीत ऐन, कानून, नीति नियम समयानुकुल परिवर्तन गर्ने र औद्योगिक सुरक्षाको व्यवस्था गर्ने क्रममा रहेका छन्।

परराष्ट्र मन्त्रालयले आर्थिक कूटनीतिसम्बन्धी नियोगका कार्यक्रमहरूलाई नितजामुखी बनाउन सरोकारवाला सबै निकायहरूबीच प्रभावकारी समन्वय तथा सहकार्य अभिवृद्धि गर्ने उद्देश्यले विदेशस्थित नेपाली नियोगहरु, उद्योग वाणिज्य तथा आपूर्ति मन्त्रालय, व्यापार तथा निकासी प्रवर्द्धन केन्द्र, लगानी बोर्ड, उद्योग विभाग, पर्यटन बोर्ड लगायत निजी क्षेत्रका निर्यात व्यवसायीहरूको सहभागितामा भर्चुअल तथा भौतिक उपस्थितिमा अन्तर्किया कार्यक्रम आयोजना

गर्दै आइरहेको मलाई जानकारी प्राप्त भएको छ।आर्थिक कूटनीतिलाई देशगत रणनीति बनाएर प्रभावकारी कार्यान्वयन गर्न् अपरिहार्य देखिन्छ।

त्यसैगरी आर्थिक कूटनीतिका प्रदेशस्तरीय छलफल तथा अन्तर्क्रिया कार्यक्रमहरुमा मन्त्रालयले निर्यात व्यापार, लगानी प्रवर्द्धन र पर्यटन प्रवर्द्धनमा केन्द्रीत रही अन्तर्क्रिया एवं छलफल कार्यक्रमहरू आयोजना गर्दै आएको जानकारी पाएको छु। यी कार्यक्रमलाई आगामी वर्षहरूमा पनि निरन्तरता दिइनेछ।

धेरै नेपाली युवा रोजगारी, पेशा तथा व्यवसायका सिलसिलामा नेपाल बाहिर रहेको तथ्य यहाँहरूलाई विदितै छ। वैदेशिक रोजगारीलाई व्यवस्थित र मर्यादित बनाउन तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय आप्रवासनलाई सुरक्षित, भरपर्दो, व्यवस्थित र मर्यादित तुल्याउने प्रयासमा सहकार्य गर्न मन्त्रालय तथा विदेशस्थित सम्पूर्ण नियोगहरू परिचालित हुन आवश्यक हुन्छ।

वैदेशिक रोजगारीका लागि विदेशमा रहेका नेपाली नागरिकहरूको हक र हितको रक्षा गर्नु दूतावासको प्रमुख दायित्व हो। अतः हाम्रा नियोगहरूलाई नेपालीहरूका समस्यामा थप संवेदनशील भई काम गर्न अभिप्रेरित गर्न आवश्यक देख्दछु।

नेपालको विकास र समृद्धिका लक्ष्यहरू पुरा गर्ने सिलसिलामा गैरआवासीय नेपालीहरूको पूँजी, सीप, प्रविधि र ज्ञानलाई अधिकतम उपयोग गर्नुपर्ने हुन्छ। यसको लागि मन्त्रालय तथा विदेशमा रहेका नियोगहरूको भूमिका समेत बढाउनुपर्नेछ।

सार्वजनिक कूटनीतिको माध्यमबाट मुलुकको छवि र विशिष्ट पहिचानलाई सफ्ट पावरको रूपमा प्रवर्द्धन गरी अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय जगतको समर्थन, सहयोग र सद्भाव आर्जन गर्ने सरकारको नीति अनुरुप विभिन्न मुलुकमा फैलिएर रहेका नेपाली डायस्पोरामार्फत् नेपालको भाषा, कला र संस्कृतिलाई विश्वमाझ चिनाउन आवश्यक सहकार्य गर्नुपर्ने हुन्छ।

राहदानी तथा कन्सुलर सेवालाई सरल, सहज एवं झन्झट मुक्त बनाउन परराष्ट्र मन्त्रालय र अन्तर्गतका विभाग तथा नियोगहरूले अझ बढी प्रविधिमैत्री हुनुपर्ने र उत्तरदायी रूपमा काम गर्नुपर्ने भएको छ। जनतासँग प्रत्यक्ष रूपमा जोडिएका यी सेवाको प्रभावकारिताले हाम्रो छवी बढाउनेछ। तसर्थ राहदानी, कन्सुलर सेवा प्रवाहलाई सहज, सरल र व्यवस्थित बनाउन अझ बढी तत्पर रहन म यहाँहरु सबैलाई आग्रह गर्दछ।

परराष्ट्र मन्त्रालय र मातहतका निकायलाई विश्व परिवेश सुहाउँदो प्रतिस्पर्धी, व्यावसायिक र सक्षम तुल्याउनेमा हाम्रो प्रयास रहनुपर्छ। परराष्ट्र नीति र नेपालको कूटनीतिको सफल संचालनको लागि सबल संस्था र उत्प्रेरित कर्मचारी हुनु आवश्यक हुन्छ। संस्थागत सुदृढिकरण तर्फ मेरो प्रयास रहने नै छ।

अन्त्यमा, नेपालको विकासका लागि अनुकूल अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय परिस्थिति निर्माण गर्ने, छिमेकी लगायत सबै मित्रराष्ट्रबाट अधिकतम सद्भाव, समर्थन र सहयोग प्राप्त गर्ने एवं अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय समुदायमा मुलुकको छविलाई उच्च बनाउने हाम्रो सामृहिक प्रयासमा मेरो ध्यान सर्वथा रहने छ।

परराष्ट्र नीतिको सञ्चालनमा राष्ट्रिय सहमति कायम गर्न सबै राजनीतिक दलहरूसँग संवाद एवम् छलफललाई उच्च महत्वकासाथ मैले लिनेछु।

परराष्ट्र नीतिको लागि नितिगत पृष्ठपोषण हुने "प्रोफेसर यदुनाथ खनाल प्रवचन श्रृंखला" र आजको यस छलफल जस्ता मन्त्रालयले आयोजना गर्ने कार्यक्रमहरूले समसामयिक अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय परिस्थितिमा कुशल अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय सम्बन्ध सञ्चालनमा सहजता हुने मैले विश्वास लिएको छु। आजको यस कार्यक्रमको लागि चयन भएको विषयवस्तु Maximizing Nepal's Benefit from the Rise of India and China अत्यन्त उपयोगी रहेको छ । यसैगरी यसको लागि आमन्त्रित वक्ता समेत अत्यन्त अनुभवी कूटनीतिज्ञ तथा सुरक्षाविद हुनुहुन्छ। यसर्थ सहभागी सबैलाई यस कार्यक्रमलाई प्रभावकारी र उपयोगी बनाउन सिक्रय सहभागिताको लागि अनुरोध गर्दै आजको अन्तिक्रया र छलफल फलदायी हुने अपेक्षाका साथ बिदा हुन्छ।

धन्यवाद ।

Remarks by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon. Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha at the Business Session of the HCCN Lumbini Conclave Lumbini, 22 March 2024

Excellencies the Ambassadors,
The CEO of Investment Board of Nepal,
The Vice Dean and members of Honorary Consular Corps Nepal,
Distinguished Participants,
Friends from the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel honored to be amongst you this morning in course of the Lumbini Conclave organized by the Honorary Consul/General Corps.

I thank Mr. Sushil Bhatta, CEO of IBN and his team for arranging this session to highlight a very important event that Nepal will be hosting in a month's time, the Third Nepal Investment Summit.

I would like to thank the non-residential ambassadors to Nepal for sparing your time to visit Nepal for this conclave. We are grateful to Honorary Consul Corps for this great endeavor.

The Ministry looks forward to further opportunities for similar collaboration so as to get closer to non-residential ambassadors to Nepal.

I wish you all visiting ambassadors and your spouses a pleasing, and hopefully a memorable, stay in Nepal. We wish to welcome you frequently in the days to come on different occasions.

As this session has progressed, we have listened to the previous speakers and seen the presentation from the Investment Board as well as Tourism Board. They display the distinct potentials for Nepal to be an investment hub and a touristic hub in coming days.

I might be echoing them, just to reinforce them.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me touch briefly on the glorious history of Nepal.

Nepal stands as an ever-independent country that thrived economically and culturally when many other countries in the world had not even taken shape. It was the land for ancient sages who led ascetic peaceful lives.

Not far from here and not a long time ago, Prince Siddhartha was born. He achieved sainthood and pioneered Buddhism in the world.

In old times, Nepal used to be a trade hub, an entrepot between the northern highlands and the southern plains.

Two main versions for the origin of the country's name have deep connection with its cultural and entrepreneurial richness.

The first assuming that Nepal was derived from two words, 'Ne' meaning wool and 'Pal' meaning tented house, hence, a tented house stored with wool from yak and sheep.

The second assumes that the name is derived from 'Ne' a sage who meditated in the land and became a protecter 'Pala' later on.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the course of our recent history, we have settled much of our political aspirations. We have set up an inclusive federal republican governance system, after decades of long struggles.

Our governance system is slowly and steadily taking proper shape. We will continue to further refine it.

Next, we aim to venture on the path of economic progress and sustainable development to realize the long held aspirations of Nepali people.

While doing so, we aim to find a complementary beneficial proposition where our partners benefit as much as we do.

We aim to share the dividends of growth in our country with our friends and partners. Hence, we aim to invite our partners and friends to explore investing in Nepal. We have continued to foster a dynamic investment landscape in the country, with easily available resources, access to huge market and economies as well as evolving investment friendly regime.

We offer four major strengths for potential investors and partners: 1) abundance of natural and human resources, 2) sizable domestic consumer market, 3) strategic location between two of the largest markets in the world, and 4) and ever evolving investment friendly policy regime.

First of all, Nepal is a harmonious blend of nature and culture.

Our natural resources range from fertile soil, diverse landscapes, heterogeneous climatic conditions and abundance of forest and water resources.

Nepalis are known for their warm and hospitable nature around the world. *Atithi Devo Bhava* (Guests are like gods) and *Vasudaiva kutumbakam* (The world community is a single family) are deeply ingrained in our tradition.

These resources harbor a range of lucrative investment possibilities.

Investment in agribusiness, tourism based enterprises, hospitality establishments, health care centers for long-term health patients, high altitude and adventure sporting facilities should be low hanging fruits in such environment.

We have abundant and relatively cheap human resource. Nepal has around 30 million population; it is one of the top 50 populous countries.

We have a young and dynamic population, the median age hovering around 24.5 years. Our workforce is gradually developing into skilled workforce.

This work force could be employed cheaply for manufacturing, infrastructure development and service sector, especially in IT.

Secondly, Nepal is a sizable consumer market in itself. Our middle class is growing.

With its population larger than many countries like Australia, Netherlands, Belgium, and Romania, domestic consumption base in Nepal is rapidly on the rise. This provides a solid basic market for products and services based in Nepal.

The most important of all is Nepal's strategic location.

We have the fastest growing economies and World's two most populous countries as our two immediate neighbours.

Nepal has outreach to a combined 3 billion population and its market base within the reach of its borders.

Within the extended neighbourhood, with a periphery of 3000 kilometers, it can cover half of the global population.

Prof. Danny Quah of London School of Economics has theorized that the world's center of economic gravity is moving eastward since 1980. He has calculated that the center of economic gravity in 2050 will be between India and China.

In this calculation, we can see that the gravity point will traverse Nepal in the 2030s. Hence, now should be the best time to invest in Nepal.

Not least important of these all is our continuous endeavors commitment to create and maintain an investment friendly regime in the country.

The Government is committed to become a facilitator to propel economic growth in the country.

We are aware that investment, both internal and external, is crucial to achieve this.

Hence, the Government has decided to host the Third Investment Summit on 28 and 29 April 2024 in Kathmandu.

In the lead up to the Summit, the Government is in the process of amending 11 various rules and regulations to further liberalize investment and industrial policies.

Investment Board Nepal is a dedicated agency to cater to large-scale investments.

We are committed to ensure policy stability and business-conducive environment for all investors.

We have offered various attractive incentives.

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Furthermore, we are finalizing bankable projects to showcase them in this Summit.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I take this opportunity to request you all to recommend names of high dignitaries of the Governments you represent, investors and businessmen for participation in the Summit.

Though you represent our friendly countries, we are assigning you the role as our Ambassadors (smile) for this task.

You may directly communicate these names to the Investment Board or to our Ministry.

We will send these dignitaries and businesspersons invitations to the Summit at the earliest.

We will be pleased to welcome some of them as our valued impact speakers.

The Summit will also facilitate B2B, G2B meetings as well as business networking.

As you might be aware Nepal is graduating from LDC status in 2026 and we aim to achieve middle-income country status in 2030, economic growth is the topmost priority of the country.

This Investment Summit is our effort to bring our partners and friends aboard in a spirit of mutual benefit and complementarity.

Hence, we expect as much participation from the countries you represent in the Summit, not necessarily to make investment commitments, but to explore the potentials.

The Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' has stated that 'Nepal Investment Summit 2024 stands as a testament to the Government's unwavering commitment to transforming Nepal into a premier global investment destination'. **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I will conclude by quoting the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' who stated that 'Nepal Investment Summit 2024 stands as a testament to the Government's unwavering commitment to transforming Nepal into a premier global investment destination'.

I am confident that we will receive full support and cooperation from Your Excellencies and esteemed members of the Honorary Consul Corps in our endeavors directed towards taking engagements of Nepal and respective countries to newer heights. I wish you all again pleasant stay and fruitful engagements during this conclave.

I thank you all.

Statement by Honourable N.P. Saud, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal and Chair of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) at the Annual Ministerial Meeting on 21 September 2023

[Theme: Translating the Ambitious Doha Commitments into Tangible Actions to Accelerate the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda]

His Excellency President of the General Assembly Mr. Dennis Francis His Excellency UN Secretary General Mr. António Guterres, Her Excellency President of the ECOSOC Ms. Paula Narváez, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates

At the outset, I would like to welcome you all to this Meeting.

Since this is the first Ministerial Meeting after Nepal assumed the Chairmanship of the Group, I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to all of you for the trust and confidence reposed on Nepal to steer the LDCs Group for the next three years.

I assure you that we will carry out the mandate with all sincerity, dedication, and diligence.

I commend Malawi for the successful stewardship of the Group over the last four years. Malawi's leadership including in producing the Doha Programme of Action was remarkable.

I deeply appreciate the UN Secretary-General for his consistent support to mobilize the entire UN system for the cause of LDCs.

I also commend USG and High Representative Madam Rabab Famita for her dynamic leadership and contribution to promoting the interests of LDCs.

My sincere appreciation goes to the Government of the State of Qatar for hosting the UN LDC5 and providing continued support to the Group.

We remain grateful to the Friends of LDCs and all our development partners for their goodwill, support, and cooperation.

Excellencies.

We are now living in a world beset by turbulence.

We are facing unprecedented crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and deepening geo-political competition.

They are creating spin-off impacts on food and nutrition, health and education, ecology and environment, and peace and security.

No doubt, we, the LDCs are at the sharp end of these crises. Rising food and energy prices, tightening financial conditions, and unrelenting cycles of vulnerabilities continue to add woes to our worries.

The development trends in LDCs are far from satisfactory. The Secretary General's report on SDG states that half the world is left behind, with LDCs pushed further to the precipice.

The FDI inflows to LDCs, which are just about 3% of the total inflows to the developing countries, have fallen by 16% in 2022.

LDCs have been denied debt relief and concessional financing. Extreme debt service burden is severely straining investments in health, education, social justice, and other pressing national priorities.

High risk of failing to service the debt is in the offing for several LDCs.

Despite record-breaking increases in global trade in recent years, the share of exports from the least developed countries has stagnated and is far off the target.

Against this backdrop, we adopted an ambitious Doha Program of Action earlier this year. The DPOA renewed commitment for leaving no one behind and accelerating the action on sustainable development goals.

Now, the need is to ensure its effective and smooth implementation.

Its five key deliverables must be translated into action with high priority.

In this context, please allow me to highlight a few points:

First, we welcome the Secretary General's proposal of at least US\$500 billion a year as SDG Stimulus Package for developing countries. In the meantime, we call for

dedicated allocation of SDG Stimulus fund for LDCs.

Second, we urge our development partners to massively scale up affordable, long-term financing for development, especially through multilateral development banks, re-channeling special drawing rights and aligning all financing flows with the SDGs. Contingency financing to the countries in special situations must be expanded.

Third, we call for immediate action to tackle the high cost of debt and the rising risks of debt distress, including by converting short-term, high interest borrowing into long-term debt at lower interest rates.

Fourth, we welcome the Secretary-General's call to double adaptation finance by 2025 as the first step towards devoting at least half of the total climate finance to adaptation.

The developed countries must honor their commitment to provide US\$100 billion a year as climate support.

We emphasize the need to expeditiously reach an agreement on the modality for the operationalization of the loss and damage fund.

Finally, we urge the international community to support the graduating LDCs to ensure their smooth, sustainable, and irreversible graduation.

Graduated countries must also be provided with specific support measures so that they do not backslide.

We request our development partners to turn their commitments into actions.

Excellencies,

Every challenge comes with an opportunity. As the world grapples with multiple crises, let us renew our commitment to end poverty and inequality and make the 2030 Agenda achievable for all.

Building on the achievements of the Istanbul Program of Action, we must work hard to accelerate progress in this decade of the Doha Programme of Action.

Let us turn our promises into progress.

I thank you for your attention.

Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal Hon. Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud in the Capacity of the Chair of LDCs at the Preparatory Ministerial Meeting for the Summit of the Future

New York, 21 September 2023

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General, Hon. Ministers, and Distinguished Delegates,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of LDCs.

LDCs continue to face both traditional and emerging development challenges. Eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, providing health and education to their people, and ensuring them decent living condition remain daunting tasks for all LDCs.

On top of this, crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and geopolitical competition have imperilled their hard-earned development gains. Debt vulnerabilities and debt distress have added further woes to their worries.

Against this backdrop, we hope that the Summit of the Future to be held next year will be able to adopt an action-oriented Pact for the Future. The outcome must make significant headways in addressing the challenges facing the LDCs, building resilience, and getting the world back on track for accelerated implementation of SDGs.

Mr. President,

The decision we are going to adopt today rightly puts us in this course. It stipulates that the Pact of the Future will build on the SDG Summit, and features SDGs implementation and financing for development as top priorities.

The Summit must take decisive steps to achieve the objectives of sustainable development. It should also be guided by the norms and aspirations as envisaged in the Doha Programme of Action for LDCs.

We must also commit to harness the power of science, technology, and information through a Global Digital Compact and tap the potential of youths through a Declaration of Future Generations.

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The Summit will be a crucial occasion to demonstrate our collective commitment to a revitalized and reinforced multilateral system, which is capable to tackle the unprecedented challenges that threaten the very future of humanity.

It will indeed be a 'once-in-a-generation opportunity' for making reforms to and strengthening global governance architecture.

It is important to level-up the playing field for all poorer countries. The LDCs must be ensured substantial development assistance and investment to help them realize their development aspirations and better prepare for the future.

Special support measures for LDCs need to be put in place for building resilience with risk-informed development pathways.

Debt relief measures for LDCs must be ensured.

Finally, the global governance and financial system must not be a prisoner of the past. Timely reforms are critical to make it fair, inclusive, and credible.

The true success and relevance of reforms will be contingent upon the impacts they make on the most vulnerable peoples and countries.

If the rules-based international order is the world's best 'insurance policy', it must ensure a 'comprehensive cover' to the furthest behind first.

The Summit of the Future must make significant advances towards this end.

Thank you for your attention.

Statement by Hon. Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Government of Nepal at the 18th Ministerial Meeting of Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) on the sidelines of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA),

New York, 20 September 2023

Mr. Chairman, Hon. Ministers, Excellency, the Secretary General of ACD Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, I extend my sincere appreciation to the Government of Bahrain for convening the 18th Meeting of ACD here in New York and for the kind invitation. We welcome the theme of the Meeting "Post-Pandemic Sustainable Recovery," which is timely and relevant.

COVID-19 has been an unprecedented challenge for all governments. The disruption in the supply chain of foods, fertilizers, fuel and other essential goods has hit all of us, and more particularly the poorest and vulnerable countries.

Multiple crises have rendered realization of the SDGs even more challenging.

However, if managed well, times of disruption can also become watershed for innovation and progress.

Mr. Chairman

Our region holds a high potential for socio-economic development, technological advancement, and prosperity.

Many of us are landlocked countries and connectivity is naturally the top priority for smooth and cost-effective linkage to the world market, reduced transaction costs, improved export competitiveness, and increased FDI opportunities.

It is also at the core for promoting socio-cultural and people-to-people contacts in the region.

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Trade, tourism, investment and innovation are some promising areas for bringing visible change in the lives of our people.

As a country situated in the Himalayan region, Nepal is bearing disproportionate burden of climate change. With a view to addressing impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, meeting the climate ambition, and accelerating the implementation of SDGs, Nepal has adopted Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID) strategy.

Mr. Chairman

Nepal attaches high priority to regional processes, including the ACD.

We are happy to see the ACD process continuously evolving with adoption of core instruments like ACD Vision for Asia Cooperation 2030, and ACD Blueprint 2021-2030.

We stand ready to work together with all ACD member countries in realizing the objectives of ACD and in successful implementation of the adopted core instruments.

The six pillars of cooperation identified in ACD Blueprint 2021-2030 are in line with our development priorities.

Connectivity; Science, Technology and Innovation; Education and Human Resource Development; Interrelation of Food, Energy and Water Security; Culture and Tourism, and Promoting Approaches to Inclusive and Sustainable Development are all promising areas for bringing change in the lives of people in the region.

Nepal is happy to be one of the co-prime movers in the culture and tourism sector and we are working together with the prime mover and co-prime mover countries for identifying and implementing result-oriented activities.

As we prepare for the 3rd Summit to be held in Qatar in October this year, Nepal welcomes the Bahrain declaration that we have just adopted and looks forward to work jointly with the fellow Member States to achieve the goals of ACD.

I thank you all.

Statement by Hon'ble Bhagbati Chaudhary, Minister for Women, Children and Senior Citizen, Nepal at the sixty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women

New York, 11-22 March 2024

General Discussion

Theme: Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective

Mr. Chair,

It is an honor and a privilege for me to address the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women under a priority theme that is timely and relevant.

At the outset, let me congratulate you on your election as the Chair of this session. While reposing our trust in your able leadership to successfully steer the session, I assure you of my delegation's full support to discharge your crucial responsibilities.

Mr. Chair,

Women comprise half of the global population with half of its potential.

Yet, achieving global gender equality has remained a chimera (Kaimera).

Poverty is a formidable barrier to gender equality.

Women experience higher poverty rates than men around the globe.

Multiple challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts, cost of living crisis, current food, fuel and fertilizer crises, geopolitical tensions, and debt distress have disproportionately affected women and girls.

Climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation have further exacerbated our efforts to address poverty and gender inequality.

The Secretary General's report has further alarmed us divulging huge gaps between men and women in working hours, employment, financial inclusion, access to financial resources, and social protection among others.

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Achieving inclusive and sustainable development for all is, therefore, critical to achieving the SDGs including gender equality and empowerment of women.

Mr. Chair.

Nepal has always accorded the highest priority to the rights and issues of women and girls.

The Constitution of Nepal guarantees the fundamental rights of women and girls, including the rights to family matters and property.

It guarantees 33 percent seats in Federal and Provincial parliament and 40 percent seats in local government for women representation.

We have enacted policies and plans to address gender inequalities.

We have established institutions to look after the issues of women, girls, and minorities.

We have given priority to gender equality and women empowerment in our development efforts.

We are committed to fostering a 'gender accountable' governance system, ensuring equitable access to resources, opportunities, and benefits for women's leadership in economic development.

We aim to establish a gender-friendly governance system at all levels.

We have introduced different women-targeted schemes to generate employment, support women's entrepreneurship, and reduce poverty.

We have ensured equal pay for equal work for both women and men.

Mr. Chair,

With these institutional, legal, administrative, and other reforms, Nepal has made notable progress in narrowing gender disparities with:

- A five-fold increase in women's literacy rates that stands now at 69.6 percent.
- Halved their fertility rate.
- Increased their longevity of life by 11 years;

- A four-fold rise in direct gender-responsive budgeting from 11 percent in 2007/8 to 42.16 percent in 2023/2024.
- One-third of the women having their ownership over the land and property;
- Increased participation of women in micro-small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs); almost 45 percent of small and cottage industries are run by women) and -Reducing multidimensional poverty.

In cooperatives, 56% are women. It has contributed substantially to economic independence.

Despite this progress, Mr. Chair, our efforts in addressing poverty and gender inequality have been severely affected due to resource constraints.

Since domestic resources are not enough to accelerate progress, we need an enhanced level of external support.

We need to ensure the availability, accessibility, and affordability of finance for women and girls to address the multiple challenges they are facing.

For this, we request the international community and development partner to fulfill their ODA commitment, along with support to the developing countries in the form of climate financing, technology transfer, and capacity building.

Nepal is committed to working together with the international community in:

- Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls
- Providing them with equal access to education, employment, entrepreneurship, resources and properties;
- Addressing institutional and capacity gaps;
- Investing in women and girls; and
- Creating an inclusive, equal, just society, and egalitarian society!

Thank you.

Statement by Ms. Sewa Lamsal, Foreign Secretary and Leader of the Nepali Delegation to the Third South Summit of the Group of 77 and China

Kampala, Uganda, 21-22 January 2024

Your Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda and Chair of the Third South Summit Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government, His Excellency Mr. Dennis Francis, President of the General Assembly His Excellency Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations Honourable Ministers.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I feel privileged and honoured to attend and address this august gathering today.

At the outset, I congratulate the Government of Uganda for successfully hosting the 19th Summit of the Non-aligned Movement and the third Summit of G77 and China consecutively. With this, Uganda has made a history of hosting two important Summits consecutively.

I wish to express my profound gratitude to the Government and people of Uganda for the gracious hospitality extended to us ever since our arrival in this beautiful city.

I also extend my deep appreciation to the Republic of Cuba for its dynamic leadership during its chairmanship in 2023.

Mr. Chairman,

We assemble here at a time when the world is facing multiple global challenges such as pandemics, conflicts, climate change, and geopolitical rivalry, among others.

Many of us are bearing the brunt of these multifaceted yet intersecting challenges which have seriously undermined our development efforts.

As such, many countries, specifically the LDCS, have been left behind in the pursuit of their development aspirations.

They are grappling with extreme poverty, hunger, inequality, and growing debt.

They are far behind in providing their citizens with access to basic services such as education, health, drinking water, electricity etc.

On top of these problems, mountainous countries like Nepal are extremely vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change despite their negligible emissions.

They are also deprived of the benefits of the technological and digital revolution.

Against this backdrop, the theme of the Summit 'Leaving no one behind' could not be more timely and pertinent.

Mr. Chairman.

Nonetheless, the silver lining is on the horizon.

The Global South is gradually emerging as an economic powerhouse.

Today, the Global South contributes to more than half of the world's growth. Its share in the global GDP expanded from 19% in 1990 to 42% in 2022.

South-South trade has soared to hit \$5.3 trillion in 2021.

With 134 member countries comprising over two-thirds of UN membership and 80% of the global population, the G77 and China is a strong force to be reckoned with.

The Group is a treasure trove of diverse cultures and resilient communities with rich history and traditions transcending through generations in shaping the world views in many ways fostering cooperation, solidarity, and harmony.

Mr. Chairman,

As per the global conflict tracker, inter- and intra-state conflicts continue to dominate the Global South. We are living in the crossroads of crisis and are suffering from various intertwined challenges.

Climate catastrophe is adding deeper woes to the Group. Inequality is growing within and between our countries.

With increased geopolitical tensions, commodity prices have become more volatile than ever.

Millions of people are left without food and shelter.

Millions of people are pushed back to extreme poverty due to the COVID-19 pandemic and conflicts.

The post-pandemic recovery remained slow and uneven. And it appears increasingly out of reach for countries in special situations.

The achievement of the goals and targets of the SDGs seems mission impossible, particularly to the LDCs.

Mr. Chairman.

In this context, Nepal reiterates its vows that strong solidarity and deeper cooperation among the countries of the South are warranted more than ever.

We need sincerity, pragmatism, perseverance, and fairness in our collective efforts to foster cooperation and collaboration.

Together, we can deliver better and greater.

We must push for the fulfillment of the promises and commitments made by the developed countries in terms of ODA, climate financing, and technology transfer.

We must make continuous efforts to strengthen North-South, South-South, and Triangular Cooperation and consolidate progress achieved thus far in socio-economic development as well as technological advancement.

We have proven to ourselves during the COVID-19 pandemic the vitality and tenacity of our cooperation and solidarity. We must continue to foster and nurture such fraternities in a multitude of areas of South-South cooperation.

We must give due priority to helping LDCs enhance their trade, infrastructure, and productive capacity through renewed GSP and preferential trade facilities.

Moreover, the Group should take the lead in 'decision-making and norm-setting' inside the global development and economic architecture.

The Group should play a decisive role in making an inclusive and judicious multilateral system with stronger United Nations at its center.

The international financial architecture must be inclusive, innovative, and responsive

to the specific needs and challenges of the developing countries including LDCs. A reformed global financial architecture must ensure the commensurate role of the Global South in decision-making and norm-setting.

Mr. Chairman.

Nepal, as a founding member of both the NAM and G77 and China, has remained committed to fostering solidarity, harmony, and cooperation among the members.

Nepal continues to increase its constructive and cooperative engagement with all countries in the world.

As the Chair of the Global Coordination Bureau of the LDCs, Nepal is striving to promote the overall interests of LDCs at all multilateral forums, including the G77 and China.

As the Chair, Nepal calls on all development partners to enhance their support to LDCs for the effective implementation of Doha Program of Action.

Nepal strongly supports the Group in advancing its common vision and shared interests to ensure the effective implementation of internationally agreed development goals, including the SDGs, and the Paris Agreement.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, let us reaffirm our steadfast commitment to the strong unity, solidarity, and cooperation among us.

Let us unite in addressing common challenges of development.

Let us commit to leaving no one behind and putting the last first.

Let us stand together for our people, planet, and shared prosperity.

Thank you.

Statement by Ms. Sewa Lamsal, Foreign Secretary, and Leader of the Nepali Delegation to the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) on Behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) 27-30 May 2024 St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda

Madam Chairperson,

His Excellency Mr. Gaston Browne Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda Their Excellencies Heads of State and Government, Excellencies.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me begin by expressing our profound condolences to the Government and people of Papua New Guinea during this difficult time caused by the devastating landslide.

I am deeply honoured to bring a message of solidarity and togetherness from the Group of Least Developed Countries to the fellow SIDS Member States.

Let me begin by expressing our sincere and deepest gratitude to the Government and people of Antigua and Barbuda for a warm welcome and generous hospitality accorded to us since our arrival in this beautiful island country.

I commend the Co-Chairs, the Maldives, and New Zealand for their able leadership of the SIDS4 Conference preparatory process and for making this Conference a success.

I would also like to appreciate the Secretary General of the Conference and Special Advisor for the Conference, High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDs, for their diligent efforts and unwavering support.

Excellencies,

Vulnerabilities define the countries in special situations.

LDCs, LLDCs and SIDs are among the countries hardest hit by the impacts of compounding and intersecting crises from the pandemic to climate change, conflicts to geopolitical competition and rivalry, and ever-rising cost of living due to external shocks.

The context of SIDS is unique due to their structural vulnerability emanating from the

geographical situation, lack of alternative energy sources, and burgeoning impacts of elevated frequency and intensity of climate disasters impacting them the most.

Despite the unprecedented advancements we have made in technology, innovation, and skills, countries in special situations have not received enough attention to address the vulnerabilities they face.

To our utter consternation, vulnerabilities, risks, and challenges facing SIDS are ever worsening.

Excellencies,

SIDS are in need of stronger and enhanced global support to address the challenges they are facing.

We must help strengthen the sustainability and resilience of SIDS.

We must support SIDS to build back better from persistent shocks.

We must ensure urgent global action to the rise of sea level caused by the melting of snow in the polar regions including mountains all over the world.

SIDS deserve stronger attention and should not be left behind. We the LDCs wholeheartedly support the cause of SIDS and also underline the fact that there is an organic link between sea-level rise and melting of glaciers.

As we prepare for the Summit of the Future and the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, it is imperative that the needs and priorities of SIDS be reflected and addressed properly.

It is only through stronger global solidarity, harmony, cooperation, and collaboration that we can address the global-level systemic problems. We must stop carbon emissions first, the main cause of the sea-level rise and melting of glaciers before it is too late for the existence of human beings.

We, the countries in special situations, are paying a very high cost of climate change despite our negligible contribution to it.

Excellencies,

The successful adoption of the Fourth Programme of Action the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) is yet another opportunity for not only SIDS but also for

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the entire global community to help address multidimensional vulnerabilities and challenges facing these fellow countries.

On this, I take this opportunity to extend our sincere congratulations to SIDS on the adoption of this ambitious yet achievable outcome document.

I also reiterate the commitment expressed by the LDCs at the inception of this process to engage constructively in pursuit of a successful implementation of the new 10-year mandate for the SIDS.

ABAS makes a good diagnosis of the problems SIDS face. It is an action-oriented document. It is a transformative agenda for SIDS for the coming decade.

In light of this successful Conference, we must not forget that effective implementation is of paramount importance to translating this ambitious document into action. Only actions, not lofty plans will serve the interests of SIDS as well as of the entire global community.

Excellencies,

As our stakes are common in terms of sustainable economic development and threats of the climate crisis, we LDCS and SIDS must work together with a sense of strong partnership to make this world more sustainable, equitable, inclusive, and just.

In this critical juncture, we LDCs would like to join our voice with fellow SIDS members to call upon development partners, multilateral stakeholders, the UN development system, and the entire global community to stand with SIDS with a robust and enhanced level of support to bring ABAS into action.

I once again, express our strong solidarity with SIDS and wish the Conference a grand success!!!

Thank you.

Professor Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series Third Edition, 2024 Nepal-India Ralations: Prospects and Pathways Professor C. Raja Mohan

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kathmandu 14 May 2024

This is full text of the lecture delivered by Professor C. Raja Mohan at the third edition of Professor Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series 2024.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this lecture text are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

NEPAL INDIA RELATIONS: ROSPECTS AND PATHWAYS

--Professor C. Raja Mohan

INTRODUCTION

It's a special honour to deliver this year's Prof. Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture. Let me thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for offering me this privilege.

I am, however, daunted by the fact that I am an Indian citizen talking about our bilateral relationship to Nepal's foreign policy community and its leadership. The complex history of our relationship, the multiple sensitivities in the discourse on the relationship, and the range of issues in contention today make my task challenging. But as a scholar of Indian foreign policy, long-time observer of Delhi's neighbourhood policy and South Asia's international relations, I hope I can offer a dispassionate analysis of the prospects and pathways for a more productive Nepal-India relations. My focus today is not on the minutiae of the immediate issues of the bilateral relationship; I would disappoint those looking for me to respond to the headlines these days on Nepal-India relations. I would like to focus instead on the broad structural challenges of the relationship and offer an assessment of how we might be able to transcend them.

I will begin with a brief review of the global order and follow it up with an assessment of the changing regional dynamics. I will then reflect on the burden of history on our relationship, the geography that binds us, the challenges of managing proximity and deep interdependence, and conclude with a reflection on the importance of putting pragmatism above ideology in resetting our relations.

CHANGING GLOBAL ORDER

I would like to present the possibilities for a deeper relationship between Nepal and India in the broader context of the changing global order--political, economic, and strategic. Why do we want to look at the global situation in a session to discuss bilateral relations between Nepal and India? No bilateral relationship, however intense and close it might be, can be pursued in isolation from the rest of the world. To be sure local specificities, of history and geography, are entrenched and enduring in any bilateral relationship. But they acquire an ever-changing expression and character under the influence of the global trends. Even a preliminary refection of the situation suggests how central was the changing relationship between the United States, Soviet Union, and China in shaping the relations between Nepal and India. Today we are, arguably, in a similar moment of major shifts in great power relations. Similarly, the regional dynamic in Asia continues to provide critical context for the engagement between Kathmandu and Delhi.

The last few years have seen a profound change in the international system. Three features stand out. The first is the return of great power rivalry. The fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact at the turn of the 1990s marked the end of the Cold War and an important inflexion point in the history of great power relations. For more than four decades, the rivalry between the US and the Soviet Union enveloped all dimensions of human activity in the second half of the 20th century. The demise of the Soviet Union marked a profound shift in the global balance of power in favour of the United States that had no peer competitor in the 'unipolar moment'. The collapse of the Soviet Union marked the disintegration of a great power that had great influence not only in Europe but across the world. The Soviet collapse also discredited the communist economic and political ideas which had powerful appeal since the middle of the 19th century. The triumph of liberal democracy and capitalism was viewed as the end of history and political contestation over the organization of modern societies.

But it did not take long for the unipolar moment to dissipate. The rapid rise of China in the 21st century and its assertion has presented the United States a peer competitor in Asia and the world. Although Russia is much weaker than the United States, it has demonstrated sufficient capability to destabilize the security order in Europe and challenge the Western powers in multiple global theatres, including Africa. Moscow continues to be an attractive partner for India and others in Asia. To make matters complicated, China and Russia announced a 'partnership without limits' in 2022 and are testing the Western ability to manage the global order. The contest between the West on the one hand and the Sino-Russian entente on the other are compelling much

of the world to rethink their great power relations. Nepal and India have operated in a relatively stable international system since the turn of the 1990s. We had the luxury of taking the world for granted. Today Kathmandu and Delhi have no option but to recalibrate their worldview and adjust their foreign policies to deal with a rapidly changing great power relations.

Adding to this challenge is a second factor—growing strain on the framework of globalization that decision makers in Kathmandu and Delhi have thought was irreversible. Irrespective of their traditional ideologies, all political groups that have governed the two countries since the dawn of the 1990s had adapted, willy nilly, to the imperatives of economic globalization. They must now come to terms with a new phase in the global economy in which the first and second largest economies—the US and China—are retreating from globalization and rearranging their economies. This in turn has put enormous pressure on the World Trade Organization (WTO) that was set up in 1995 with great expectations to move the international system towards an agreed set of rules governing trans-border commerce. China's entry into the WTO in 2001, championed by the US, had set the stage for a rapid economic integration of the world. Today the US and China are locked in an economic conflict that reinforces their geopolitical rivalry. Countries like India and Nepal, that would prefer a single set of global economic rules, will now have to deal with an increasingly fragmented global economic system that will demand making hard political choices on preferred commercial partnerships.

Reinforcing the first two challenges is a third global development, the technological revolution-especially in the domains of artificial intelligence, outer space, and biotechnology—that promises to profoundly alter the structure of the global economy. AI and the digital revolution are also promising to make a number of traditional professions, including white collar ones, unsustainable as it helps automate a large number of functions. AI meanwhile is changing the nature of political organization and mobilization making open and plural democracies like Nepal and India far more vulnerable to technological manipulation. This in turn forces countries, large and small, to make major decisions on restructuring their economies and protecting them from the new challenges of disinformation and fake news.

The return of great power rivalry, resurgence of geoeconomics, and the revolution in technology does not necessarily mean we face a bleak international environment. It is certainly different from the world that emerged in the 1990s; but it also offers interesting possibilities for those nations that are conscious of the changing global dynamic, are flexible enough to adapt to the new possibilities arising from the changing global order. We now turn to the regional order that is rapidly evolving under the

influence of global changes.

THE NEW REGIONAL ORDER

Most regions of the world and their institutional structures have been deeply affected by the new global dynamic we have reviewed. South Asia is no exception. Several broad changes in the region are easily identified. First is the impact of the new great power rivalry on the region. For centuries now, it is the dynamic of conflict and cooperation among the European powers that shaped the political and economic evolution of the rest of the world. The twentieth century saw the rise of the United States and the Soviet Union as superpowers that overshadowed the European powers of the nineteenth century. Europe, however, remained the principal theatre of the geopolitical contest between the United States and the Soviet Union in the second half of the twentieth century. To be sure, there was vigorous superpower rivalry in other regions of the world, including the Subcontinent; but they were not the decisive theatres in the conflict.

Today, the situation is different. Despite the return of war to the heart of Europe, it is Asia that is now the principal theatre of conflict in the world. This is not surprising since the rise of China as a great power has profoundly altered the hierarchy of global power and put Beijing as the dominant power in Asia and a global competitor to the US and the West. Although Russia has challenged the territorial order in Europe established after 1991, the US National Security Strategy of 2022 sees China as the main challenger to the US-led world order. For more than four decades since the early 1970s, the relationship between the US and China had steadily expanded; their common interest to counter Moscow endured until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Deng Xiaoping's second wave of reforms in the 1990s led to an explosive expansion of commercial and technological cooperation between China and the United States.

That era has now come to an end as Washington seeks to de-risk its economic ties and is encouraging its allies in Europe and Asia to do the same. To counter an increasingly powerful and assertive China, the US is boosting its military presence in the Western Pacific, revitalising its traditional alliances with Australia, Japan, and the Philippines. It is also building new strategic partnerships with non-allies like India, Vietnam, Indonesia and other regional actors as part of an effort to build a regional coalition to balance China. With Asia emerging as the main arena of great power rivalry, the Subcontinent is being drawn in more directly into the conflict between the United States and China. Unlike Russia that was not a physical neighbour of South Asia, China is. This turns the Subcontinent and its waters a contested frontline zone between

the US and China.

A second major change is the fact that the unfolding rivalry between the United States and China has been accompanied by a renewed conflict between Delhi and Beijing in recent years. America's deepening conflict with China has coincided with Delhi's deteriorating relations with Beijing. A series of military crises—in 2013, 2014, 2017, and 2020—have led to the dismantling of the regime of peace and tranquillity on the disputed frontier that was established in the early 1990s following Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China in 1988. In this era—a structure of stable border provided the basis for the steady expansion of bilateral relations. That period is now behind us, thanks to the breakdown of the border management mechanisms and the growing distrust between Delhi and Beijing. The armed forces of India and China are locked in a military stand-off in eastern Ladakh for nearly four years. Even more important, there is a semi-permanent military build-up all along the Indo-Tibetan frontier that could result in clashes at any point and time.

The intensifying contradictions with China have seen India recalibrate its great power relations and finesse its traditional strategy of non-alignment. India today is closer than ever before to the United States; yet, Delhi has a substantive and growing trade ties with Beijing. India has also sought to retain a strong relationship with Russia and has stepped up its engagement with Europe and Japan. As India deals with the principal contradiction between US and China, its South Asian neighbours must deal with the twin rivalries—Sino-US and Sino-Indian. Any assessment of these rivalries will suggest that they are here to stay and coping with them will be a major preoccupation for all the countries of South Asia. Pakistan, which has had good relations with both the US and China has to deal with the conflict between them as well as the surprising strategic bonhomie between Delhi and Washington. Land-locked Nepal has had to engage with the new maritime geography called the Indo-Pacific and the strategies associated with it. The island states of South Asia, Sri Lanka and Maldives, are spending considerable part of their diplomatic and political energies in coping with the shifting triangular dynamic between the US, China, and India.

Finally, the return of great power rivalry presents a paradox for South Asia. Contestation between US and China has made it difficult for the main regional forum ASEAN—the Association of South East Asian Nations—to fulfil its mandate for regional security and stability. New institutions have come up in Asia. The Quad, the AUKUS, the Chip 4, and the 'squad' are a few examples of the proliferating minilateral institutions that are now rising in our region. Unlike the ASEAN, the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation has not been an effective forum in promoting regional integration. Yet the intensifying great power rivalry and the breakdown of the global economic order built

after 1991 demand greater regional cooperation. The institutional format is perhaps less important today than the practical expansion of regional cooperation through whichever means possible—bilateral, sub-regional and trans-regional. Rather than bemoan the failure of SAARC and lament the lack of regional cooperation in South Asia we could cheer the slow but certain expansion of regional connectivity and trade volumes. Bangladesh and Nepal for example are among the top trade partners for India. It would seem entirely possible to build practically on these emerging possibilities.

BILATERAL CHALLENGES

The review of the changing global and regional orders brings us to assessing the present challenges and future possibilities of the Nepal-India relationship. As I mentioned earlier, I do not wish to get down into the weeds of the bilateral relationship. The range of issues at hand are diverse and some of them have proved to be intractable. What I hope to do in the rest of the lecture is to examine the structural challenges in several domains—including history, geography, economics and ideology.

BURDEN OF HISTORY

History is always a good teacher in understanding the current state of any phenomenon. But history can also be a burden that shackles our thinking and prevents us from responding to contemporary challenges. Learning the right lessons from history must be balanced with a capacity to unlearn some of the history to make progress. History has long been a major constraint on Nepal-India relations, especially for Delhi. A lot of it has to do with the legacy of the British Raj that was premised on an 'exclusive relationship' with the Kingdom of Nepal. This framework was reaffirmed in the 1950 Treaty of eternal friendship by India and Nepal. That approach, however, was unsustainable in the post-British era. A growing sense of national identity and reduced fears of a threat from Maoist China made the treaty less acceptable to Nepal's leaders. But India clung onto the notion of an 'exclusive sphere of influence' in South Asia even as the ground reality made it impossible to realise.

The partition of the Subcontinent, India's quarrels with the West on regional issues, and the emergence of a coherent China after a prolonged fratricidal civil war fundamentally altered the regional geopolitics that made it impossible to preserve the Raj legacy in the Himalayas. That legacy involved three security treaties signed during 1949-50 with Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal. The ambiguity about India's relationship with Sikkim was resolved with its integration into India in 1975. India revised the treaty with Bhutan in 2006 to make it modern and in sync with the 21st century realities. But the treaty with Nepal remains in a limbo, despite the demand in Nepal for its revision

if not abrogation and Delhi's apparent willingness to review it. Here we are with an instrument, whose security provisions have long become inoperative, but remains the symbol of an unequal relationship between Kathmandu and Delhi.

On the face of it, there is a strong case, indeed, for a new treaty between the two nations that reflects the contemporary shared interests of the two countries. Since the two governments are not negotiating a new version, I have a suggestion. May be some of the think tanks in the two countries could get together and draft a treaty from first principles. That could provide a more practical discussion of the kind of formal arrangement that could benefit both countries. But others would say a treaty by no means is a pre-requisite to good relations. The question is not about drafting a new text, but learning to build a live and productive relationship that is in the interest of the two peoples.

Meanwhile, in Delhi there is a growing recognition among realists that India's regional influence in the region will come from material capabilities and effective policies rather than holding to a piece of paper. It is also acutely conscious that the Subcontinent-which is globalized and widely connected—can no longer be India's exclusive sphere of influence. It sees the growing role of China is a natural consequence of its rise as a great power and its proximity to South Asia. India has no desire to wish away this reality. Although some current global literature on geopolitics does talk about the return of 'spheres of influence', maintaining such exclusive zones has become increasingly hard. Moscow, for example, is trying to reconstruct the lost sphere of influence in Central Europe; but its war against Kyiv has turned Ukraine into a real nation that is unlikely to ever go back into the fold of Moscow. Other states in Central Europe are drawing closer to the West in trying to secure themselves against Russian expansionism. Protectorates is a notion from the era of empires and has little relevance in the 21st century.

BORDERS—OPEN AND CLOSED

Some view geography as tyranny and others as destiny. Instead of perceiving geography as an unalterable constraint, sensible statecraft will try and work with it to maximize the opportunities for progress. Bad policies can make an even favourable geography into a problem. Sensible policies in contrast can help overcome the limitations of geography. Consider for example India. Although it had a long coastline, it had little use for sea until the 1990s. Having chosen inward-oriented state socialism as its developmental policy after independence, Delhi turned India into a 'land-locked' nation at the heart of the Indian Ocean. Kathmandu, in contrast, was among the first in the Subcontinent to experiment with an open economy, for a while at least.

In Nepal, there is much angst about its 'land-locked' nature and its location between two large Asian giants. This condition is not unique to Nepal; the history of international relations is replete with examples of nations that have felt squeezed by its neighbours. South Korea, for example, sees itself as a 'shrimp among whales.' It has done quite well for itself despite the precarious geography it lives in. Singapore, a city state, with no resources of its own has turned its location at the maritime junction of the Indian and Pacific Oceans into an enormous business opportunity. Mongolia, sandwiched between Russia and China, has built a vast network of international relations by reaching out to what it calls a 'third neighbour policy'—centred around conscious diversification of foreign policy interaction.

As we look ahead, Nepal and India must pay attention to the idea of geo-economics. Across the world, the idea of uncritical globalization is yielding to a focus on 'economic security' 'near-shoring' and 'friend shoring', and the development of trusted geographies. As the global economic system erected after the Cold War goes through major change, trading with neighbours has become more important than ever. In Delhi at least there is growing recognition of this as Bangladesh and Nepal emerge as major markets for India. This underlines the extraordinary importance of an open border for the future of our relationship. Not all legacies, such as the 1950 treaty are worth preserving. Some are and the open border is one of them. Its benefits have become more important in the current global context. Many in the world are eager to create open borders but struggle with the task.

Delhi and Kathmandu must not only value the legacy of an open border but also build on it. India, I believe, has a special responsibility. Independent India's economic strategy had for decades focused on import substitution and under-emphasized the importance of trade for national development and prosperity. The situation reversed three decades ago; India is eager to expand its economic footprint globally and there is a special emphasis on trade and connectivity. But India's agenda on transforming the open border with Nepal into a zone of commerce and the people-to-people interaction remains unfinished; recent years have seen some improvement; but there is a lot that can be done on the front of trade promotion, trade facilitation and the modernisation of the border infrastructure on the Indian side.

In both countries, there often have been temptations to weaponize the border; either consciously or unconsciously, with terrible consequences. Helping adversaries of the other misuse the open border raises calls for closing the border on one side; and closing the border to extract political concessions has produced enormous backlash against the 'blockade' and deepened the mistrust of India. It is also important to note the asymmetric nature of Nepal's two frontiers. If Nepal's north is sparsely populated,

its southern frontier is one of the most densely populated zones in the world. The question then is not about choosing between the two. But build on all the available opportunities on both frontiers. For Kathmandu and Delhi, transforming border on the southern slopes and foothills of the Himalayas into a genuine zone of connectivity should be at the top of national priorities.

GEOPOLITICS OF PROXIMITY

Managing relations with neighbours is always the essence of foreign policy. After all, borders are where one nation's sovereignty ends and another's begins. Even with the best of intentions, the challenge of managing territorial disputes, border security, river-water sharing, minorities with links across the border, sub-national interaction, and environmental protection, is a demanding one. Neighbourhood ties demand continuous tending that involves resolution of issues and preventing the emergence of new disputes. This involves building trust through sustained interaction at all levels—from the highest political level at the federal level to the local authorities. No one in Delhi or Kathmandu can claim that we have excelled at this task. I want to underline two inter-related issues that have continuously complicated the Nepal-India relationship and deepened distrust. One is about the small state imperative of seeking autonomy from a large and overwhelming neighbour. The other is the responsibility of the larger state for reassuring the smaller neighbour, respecting its political sensitivities and concerns over sovereignty and intervention.

Living in the shadow of a large neighbour inevitably produces the demand for a measure of strategic autonomy in the smaller state. And when the bigger state is seen as threatening, the logical next step is to try and balance the larger power with the help of a third. This is not the condition unique to India's neighbours, but quite common to all major regions. Through much of Latin America, resentment against the US domination has been endemic. In Europe, the fear of Germany and Russia through the last two centuries has seen their neighbours seek autonomy and or balance. In Asia, fear of an expansionist China drives many into the arms of the US.

But the art of seeking autonomy and balance is a complicated one. India, whose territorial disputes with China have been reignited, is careful in choosing how far to go with the United States. While Delhi seeks to enhance its security against Beijing, India is careful to stay within limits and avoid provoking China. That is one reason, India is not willing to make the Quad a military alliance or seek greater US support in managing its border security in the Himalayas. Ukraine caught between EU and NATO on the one hand and Russia on the other is paying a high price for mismanaging this delicate dance between two large and competing powers. We could argue endlessly

about whether Ukraine provoked Russia to intervene, or If Moscow's policies nudged Kyiv closer to the West. The fact, however, is the damage to both sides has been extensive. Probing the limits of what is permissible then is a recipe for disaster.

It will be interesting to see how the current conflict between China and the Philippines works out. Is President Ferd Marcos making his situation worse by turning to the US for help or is it building longterm deterrence against Beijing? The situation in the Philippines also tells us there is no single national perspective to the problem of managing disputes with a larger neighbour. Marcos's predecessor Duterte chose to embrace Beijing rather than fight China over the territorial dispute in the South China Sea. In other words, internal political divergence on how to address external challenges could be quite consequential. We have seen this go to the extreme in the case of Maldives, where the domestic political leadership has oscillated wildly from 'India First' to 'India Out'. To be sure, Maldives has the sovereign right to make its choices, but violent swings in foreign policy orientation produce costs of their own; they also increase the incentive for external powers to align with 'friendly formations' within the small state. Building a domestic consensus on how to deal with the world is critical for stability and progress of small states.

IMPORTANCE OF REASSURANCE

Small countries do pay a big price for mismanaging the relationship with a larger neighbour, especially when they seek the help of another power to balance it. In the end the margin of error for the larger power is big and can afford to take risks. Even more important the big powers have other interests and will be happy to sacrifice the interests of the smaller states in pursuit of other or larger goals. When it chose to confront Russia, Ukraine was probably confident of enduring Western support. Two and a half years into the war, there are deep divisions within the West and within each of them on how far to go on Ukraine. This does not mean the big powers do not have costs. A large state that fails at reassuring its neighbours could push them into a countervailing coalition. Prudence is a virtue not only for the smaller state but also for the larger one.

In occupying eastern Ukraine, Russia has helped expand the NATO alliance. It is also paying a huge price in terms of manpower, military equipment, and loss of friendly partners in Europe. Similarly, whenever China was assertive, it pushed its East Asian neighbours into the US arms. Fear of Mao's China drove many Asian states into anticommunist alliances in the first decades of the Cold War. When China's rise was seen as benign under Deng Xiaoping there was little imperative to counter Beijing. But as the assertive era under Xi began, we have seen China's neighbours turn to the United

States for protection.

Regional institutions have often helped larger powers avoid this problem of neighbours seeking balance. After the Second World War, Germany and Japan subordinated their sovereignty to larger institutions—the European Union in the case of Germany and the US bilateral alliance in the case of Japan—to rebuild their ties with the neighbours. In South East Asia, the largest country, Indonesia chose to adopt a low profile to make the ASEAN work. In Latin America, Washington opted for greater economic integration with its immediate neighbours to transcended at least some of the challenges arising from its dominance over the region. Russia's effort to build a Eurasian Economic Union consisting of the former republics of the Soviet Union has not worked. Variations in history and politics in different regions produce varied outcomes in the efforts to create regional institutions that mitigate the natural tensions between neighbours.

In South Asia for a variety of reasons, the SAARC has not taken off. Pakistan's reluctance to facilitate regional economic integration until its bilateral issues with India are sorted out is one of those. This is not to criticise Pakistan, which has a sovereign right to choose its economic trajectory, but to suggest that SAARC is unlikely to become effective any time soon. To reassure its neighbours, who would welcome any regional format to engage with India, Delhi must develop other institutional mechanisms. The trans-regional BIMSTEC forum in which both Nepal and India are members is one; the sub-regional BBIN is another. While the former has some distance to go, the latter seems to have more promise.

But in the end, India will have to find bilateral and unilateral means to reassure its neighbours. One important measure would be to end the intervention in the internal affairs of neighbours. One reason the Raj policy succeeded in the region was a clear bargain with the smaller neighbours-a policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs while collaborating on external security. The conditions today are vastly different; but the cost benefit calculus of these interventions suggests avoiding them might be more prudent. An Indian policy of non-intervention is not a favour to its neighbours, but to itself. Because by meddling in the internal affairs, Delhi becomes a party to the local disputes and takes its focus away from building mutually beneficial and long-term relationships. Experience with India's interventions in the neighbourhood are making Delhi aware of the limitations of external actors in shaping the complex internal politics of even the smallest states.

To be sure, the deep interpenetration of two societies makes it hard for Delhi to resist the pressures to intervene. While Delhi must avoid interventions, its neighbours must do more to 'intervene' in India. I believe it is in the interest of Kathmandu to widen the interface of engagement with the Indian society. Over the last few years, the interface has narrowed down to a few government officials in the Embassy, MEA and the PMO. Nepal must begin to focus on a broader engagement with the Indian society, including its armed forces, business community, political parties, state governments, media, and civil society groups. This precisely is what India does in the United States to develop a broader constituency of support for Delhi's ties with Washington. Like the US, India too is self-referential with much less bandwidth in the government to devote full attention to any bilateral relationship, however important. A more intensive and wider outreach from Nepal would be beneficial for India by acting as a potential balancer against impulsive and ill-considered activity by a small set of decision makers in Delhi.

IDEOLOGY AND INTERESTS

In conclusion, I would emphasize the importance of discarding ideology in favour of a pragmatic pursuit of national interests by Nepal and India to elevate their ties to a higher level. Ideologies have often done much damage to the ability of Delhi to judge the external world, especially the great power relations and their consequences for India. Commitment to a specific type of developmental ideology led to India's relative economic decline in the first decades after independence. Independent India's expansive idealism and the internationalist ideology led to profound miscalculations in Delhi's international relations in the second half of the twentieth century. Some of them have persisted into the 21st century Indian foreign policy. Consider the heavy weather that the UPA government made of the historic civil nuclear initiative with the US during 2005-08. In Nepal too internationalist ideology has often come in the way of the pragmatic pursuit of external relations. Recall the political turbulence in approving the US millennium challenge grant in Nepal.

Both Delhi and Kathmandu have much to learn from Beijing, whose record since the creation of the People's Republic of China has shown an overall tilt towards putting pragmatism above proclaimed communist ideology. Beijing has shifted effortlessly from one close alignment to another-with Russia in the 1950s and 2000s and the US in the 1970s, 80s and 90s. Even as it challenges US primacy in Asia today, Beijing continues to engage the US and Europe and woo Western capital and technology for its growth. Beijing had no problem welcoming investments from Japan, its former coloniser, in transforming its infrastructure in the last two decades of the twentieth century.

Today, Nepal and India are facing a perilous moment in global affairs that is being

sucked into a great power rivalry. It is also a moment of opportunity. It promises greater political agency for smaller countries and rising powers with the will to take advantage through careful diagnosis and pragmatic engagement. Marxists often call us to dispassionately assess the concrete conditions of the external world. It is a valuable instruction that could facilitate a better appreciation of the correlation of global and regional forces without the blinkers of preconceived ideological notions. India can't build a productive relationship with Nepal on the basis of sentiment—religious or otherwise—or a nostalgia for the Raj legacy in the Subcontinent. It has every incentive to modernise the bilateral relationship with Nepal on the basis of pragmatism. An interest-based approach in Kathmandu could cut through a lot of accumulated clutter on its relations with Delhi. It is possible to imagine that a 'Nepal First' strategy in Kathmandu and a "neighbourhood first" policy in Delhi can be brought into greater harmony and produce vast benefits for our peoples. Whatever might be our current challenges, there is much room for Kathmandu and Delhi to travel together, hopefully, into the future.

Many thanks for your kind attention.

Joint Statement between the People's Republic of China and Nepal

Beijing, September 26, 2023

- 1. At the Invitation of H.E. Li Qiang, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Rt. Honorable Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Prime Minister of Nepal, is on an official visit to China from September 23 to 30, 2023 and attended the Opening Ceremony of the 19th Asian Games.
- 2. During the visit, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' met with President Xi Jinping, held talks with Premier Li Qiang, and met with Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress Zhao Leji. In a warm and cordial atmosphere, leaders of the two countries had in-depth exchange of views and reached extensive consensus on deepening China-Nepal traditional friendship, expanding mutually beneficial cooperation. They also shared views on regional and international issues of mutual interest.
- 3. The Nepali side extended its congratulations on the success of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), and the important outcomes of the annual sessions of China's National People's Congress and National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. The Nepali side commended China's achievements in its economic and social development in recent years under the able leadership of President Xi Jinping, and wished the Chinese people greater development and progress. The Chinese side congratulated Nepal on its successful local, provincial and national elections and the formation of the new government, and wished the Nepali people enjoy development and prosperity at an early date.
- 4. The two sides recalled President Xi Jinping's historic state visit to Nepal in 2019, during which the bilateral relationship was elevated to a Strategic Partnership of Cooperation Featuring Ever-lasting Friendship for Development and Prosperity, underlining the special significance of high-level exchanges to the development of bilateral relations. The two sides will maintain the momentum of high-level exchanges, deepen political mutual trust, and expand exchanges and cooperation at all levels between the two countries.
- 5. The two sides agreed that since the establishment of diplomatic relations between

the two countries in 1955, China and Nepal had withstood changes of the international situation, always upheld mutual respect, equality, solidarity, mutual assistance and win-win cooperation, setting a fine example of friendly interaction between countries with different social systems and of different sizes. The two sides agreed to further accelerate the implementation of the instruments signed and the important consensus reached between the leaders of the two countries, and, on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the principle of good neighborliness and friendship, strengthen strategic communication, pursue high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and deepen and expand mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields.

 Acknowledging the history of mutual support in difficult times, the two sides reiterated their commitment to respecting and accommodating each other's concerns and core interests.

The Nepali side reiterated its firm commitment to the one-China principle. Recognizing that the Government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal Government representing the whole of China, and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory, the Nepali side is against "Taiwan independence."

The Nepali side reiterated that Tibet affairs are China's internal affairs, that it will never allow any separatist activities against China on Nepal's soil.

The Chinese side reaffirmed its commitment to the principle of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness and the policy of forging friendship and partnership in the neighborhood. China firmly supports Nepal in upholding its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and respects and supports Nepal's independent choice of social system and development path that suits its national conditions.

7. The two sides, while acknowledging the signing of the MoU between the Government of Nepal and the Government of the People's Republic of China on bilateral cooperation under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative on 12 May 2017, expressed their commitment to accelerate the consultations to finalize the text on the BRI Implementation Plan at an early date. They expressed readiness to exchange experiences on their development strategies, deepen practical cooperation in such fields as infrastructure connectivity, trade, tourism, production capacity and investment, and further deepen and solidify Belt and Road cooperation to deliver greater benefits to their peoples. The two

sides agreed to strengthen connectivity in such areas as ports, roads, railways, airways and grids in an orderly manner, jointly build the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network, work together to ensure the safety of the cooperation projects and company personnel of the two countries, and contribute to Nepal's realization of its development agenda including graduating from the least developed country status at an early date.

The two sides welcomed the successful opening of the Lizi-Nechung port and the reopening of the Zhangmu-Khasa port to passenger services. The two sides applaud the smooth and orderly operation of passenger and cargo services at Pulan and Jilong ports. The Chinese side will extend its support to improve the facilities on the Nepali side of the Lizi-Nechung port at the earliest possible time. The Chinese side agreed to work for the early reopening of eligible traditional China-Nepal border trade points. The two sides agreed to maintain communication for the opening of Chentang-Kimathanka, Riwu-Olangchungola ports at an early date.

The two sides agreed to continue to implement the signed cooperation documents concerning transit transport and utilization of highways in China to help turn Nepal from a land-locked country to a land-linked country. In light of Nepal's needs, the Chinese side is ready to start the fourth phase of the Araniko Highway maintenance project. The Chinese side is ready to start repairing the Syaphrubesi-Rasuwagadhi Highway as soon as possible after the Nepali side completes its demolition work.

Both sides agreed to accelerate the feasibility study of the Tokha-Chhare Tunnel project, recognizing that the project will elevate the level of connectivity between the two countries. The two sides agreed to expedite the implementation of the second phase of the Kathmandu Ring Road project.

The two sides expressed satisfaction over the progress of the feasibility study of the Jilong/Keyrung-Kathmandu Cross-Border Railway, and planned to hold the 8th Working Meeting on China-Nepal Railway Cooperation as early as possible. The Chinese side is ready to help Nepal train railway professionals.

The two sides welcomed the consensus reached between the civil aviation authorities of the two countries on expanding the air rights arrangements, and expressed satisfaction over the completion and operation of the Pokhara International Airport. The two sides support and encourage their airlines to resume and open more flights and air routes, including ones connecting Pokhara, in

accordance with bilateral air rights arrangements and in light of market needs, so as to facilitate trade and economic interactions and people-to-people exchanges.

The two sides will further promote cooperation in the field of energy, particularly the development of hydropower and cross-border transmission lines and associated substations. The two sides will continue working toward the finalization of China-Nepal Electric Power Cooperation Plan by convening the second meeting of the Joint Implementation Mechanism at the earliest. The two sides will launch the construction of the Jilong/Keyrung-Rasuwagadhi-Chilime 220 KV Cross-Border Power Transmission line at an early date. The two sides will continue to make good use of the platform of the China-Nepal Joint Implementation Mechanism. The Mechanism will carry out exchanges and cooperation in the field of hydropower, wind power, solar power, biomass power and hydrogen.

The Chinese side agreed to positively consider the request made by the Nepali side for supplying grid power to electrify northern remote villages of Nepal from Xizang Autonomous Region of China, and take overall consideration of providing equipments or technology on commercial terms.

8. The two sides expressed satisfaction over bilateral cooperation in all areas, and agreed to further deepen mutually beneficial cooperation in such fields as economy and trade, investment, agriculture, tourism, production capacity, poverty alleviation, health and education to promote common development.

The two sides expressed satisfaction over the Second Working Group Meeting on Trade Facilitation recently held in China, which they view as conducive to facilitating bilateral economic and trade exchanges. In order to promote trade and investment between the two countries, both sides pledged to provide a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory business environment for each other's business community operating in either side.

The two sides welcomed the arrival of the first batch of transit cargo on 7 September 2023 from the third country to Nepal by utilizing Chinese transit facilities under the Transit Protocol signed between Nepal and China.

In terms of the Project Development Agreement of China-Nepal Friendship Industrial Park, Investment Board of Nepal and Lhasa Economic and Technological Development Zone Investment Development Company have both unanimously agreed to accelerate the negotiation process and complete the signing of the PDA as soon as possible so as to commence construction and operations at an early

date.

The two sides signed MoU to establish a joint technical working group to review and modify the Trade and Payment Agreement.

The two sides agreed that Nepal's participation as a theme country in the 7th China-South Asia Expo in August 2023 injected fresh vigor and vitality into their bilateral economic and trade cooperation. The Chinese side welcomed Nepal's participation in the 6th China International Import Expo to be held in Shanghai in November 2023.

The two sides welcomed the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries between the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development of Nepal, and believed that the MoU would elevate the level of agricultural cooperation between the two countries, and agreed to hold the 4th Joint Commission Meeting on Nepal-China Agricultural Cooperation as early as possible. The two sides are ready to explore the joint development of an Agriculture Industrial Demonstration Park to further promote cooperation on agriculture. The Nepali side will actively work on the location and cooperation proposal of the Demonstration Park.

The Nepali side expressed its appreciation to the Chinese side for granting zero-tariff treatment to 98 percent of taxable products from Nepal. The Chinese side is ready to continue taking active measures to facilitate the export of Nepali products to China. The two sides welcomed the successful export of Nepali haylage to China and the signing of the Protocol of Phytosanitary Requirements for Export of Plant-derived Medicinal Materials for the Chinese Medicine from Nepal to China between the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development of the Government of Nepal and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China, and expressed readiness to speed up the approval process for the export of cooked buffalo meat products from Nepal to China, which the two sides view as a positive step forward to reducing trade imbalances between the two countries. The Chinese side is ready to assist the Nepali side in meeting the phytosanitary requirements for the export of Nepali citrus fruits to China and in establishing a multifunctional quarantine laboratory in Nepal.

The Chinese side has agreed to carry out exchanges and cooperation with the Nepali side on variety breeding and standardized scale culture of Yak, Nak and mountain goats (Chyangra).

The two sides welcomed the launch of the "Lighting Up the Future" China-Nepal Political Parties' Livelihood and Poverty Alleviation Action in Nepal, and the unveiling of "Vibrant Village," a demonstration project of the China-South Asian Countries Poverty Alleviation and Cooperative Development Center, and expressed readiness to expand exchanges and cooperation in such areas as poverty alleviation, development, livelihood improvement and rural revitalization.

The two sides commended their mutual support in fighting COVID-19 together. The two sides expressed satisfaction over the completion and handover of the China-aided project of upgrading and renovating the Civil Service Hospital in Nepal, and are ready to further strengthen health and medical cooperation, including expediting the installation of a Bone Marrow Transplant Service at the B.P. Koirala Memorial Cancer Hospital in Nepal. The Chinese side expressed its willingness to actively consider further requests for assistance programs made by the Nepali side.

The Chinese side is willing to explore methods with Nepal to gradually expand the scale of cooperation on the basis of joint education, in an effort to support Madan Bhandari University for Science and Technology.

The two sides welcomed the establishment of the China-Nepal Traditional Medicine Cooperation Commission in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding on Traditional Chinese Medicine of People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Health and Population of Nepal. Both sides will continue to support the China-Nepal Traditional Chinese Medicine Center in providing free medical treatment, personnel training, medical services, etc. in Nepal, and support the Chinese medical team in Nepal in establishing a new medical facility in Kathmandu.

9. The Nepali side expressed its appreciation for China's valuable support for the economic and social development of Nepal. The two sides agreed to expedite the implementation of the post-earthquake reconstruction projects that had been agreed upon.

The two sides are ready to further discuss expanding cooperation on emergency management and disaster prevention, reduction and relief. The Chinese side is ready to advance the project of offering technical assistance to the information platform of the National Emergency Operation Center Project in Nepal, and work for the sound operation and maintenance of the China-aided Earthquake Monitoring Network Project in Nepal. The two sides agreed to carry out exchanges

in such fields as seismology, seismic zonation and earthquake resistance of historic buildings. The Chinese side will provide technical training to the Nepali side on disaster prevention and reduction.

10. The two sides agreed to undertake joint inspection of China-Nepal boundary. The two sides agreed to bring into force the Agreement Between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of Nepal on the Boundary Management System as soon as possible. The two sides agreed to continue consultations on the Protocol between the Ministry of Public Security of the People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Home Affairs of Nepal on the Establishment of Boundary Contact System at Three Levels, so as to elevate the level of border management and cooperation between the two countries.

The two sides maintained that law enforcement cooperation is of great significance to the security of the two countries, and agreed to further strengthen information exchange, capacity building and cooperation on training between their law enforcement institutions. The two sides agreed to expedite the ratification of the China-Nepal Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters.

The two sides are ready to step up exchanges and cooperation at all levels in such areas as education, science and technology, telecommunication, culture, tourism, radio and television, think tank, and youth. The two sides expressed satisfaction over the signing of the Agreement between the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Government of Nepal and the Ministry of Science and Technology of the People's Republic of China on Cooperation in the Fields of Science and Technology and Innovation. The two sides agreed to discuss cooperation in such areas as digital economy, digital infrastructure and artificial intelligence, among others.

The two sides support more friendly exchanges and cooperation between their scholars, students, artists and private sector entrepreneurs.

The Chinese side will continue to support Nepal's cultural and tourism institutions at various levels in participating in flexible formats in the cultural and tourism exchange activities held by China and organizing tourism promotion events in China, and will encourage more Chinese tourists to visit Nepal. The two sides agreed to declare the Year 2025 as the Nepal Visit Year in China with a view to promoting Chinese tourists in Nepal. The Chinese side welcomed Nepali friendship organizations' participation in the 8th China South Asia Friendship Organizations' Forum. The two sides look forward to establishing a sister city

relationship between various cities of the two countries to promote and deepen the people-to-people contacts.

The two sides expressed satisfaction over the signing of the MoU between the National Administration of Press and Publication of the People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of the Government of Nepal on the Translation and Publication of Classics.

The Nepali side pledged to provide the Chinese side a pair of Ek Singhe Gaida (unicorn rhino) as a gift from the Government and people of Nepal to the Government and people of China, as a symbol for the long-lasting friendship between the two countries

The Chinese side is ready to support Chinese language education in Nepal by providing more Chinese language testing services and sending Chinese language teachers and volunteers to Nepal. The two sides will continue to give play to the role of China Cultural Centre, Confucius Institutes, and Confucius Classroom in Nepal promoting China-Nepal cultural exchanges and cooperation.

11. The two sides stressed the importance to uphold true multilateralism, promote greater democracy in international relations, and make global governance more just and equitable. The two sides agreed to strengthen cooperation within the framework of the United Nations and other multilateral mechanisms to uphold the common interest of developing countries. The two sides support the multilateral trading system, and oppose protectionism. They will work together to make economic globalization more open, inclusive, balanced and beneficial for all, promote global and regional peace, security, development and prosperity, and build a community with a shared future for mankind.

The Nepali side supports the Global Development Initiative (GDI) proposed by China, and will consider to join the Group of Friends of the GDI. The Chinese side is ready to strengthen experience sharing on development with the Nepali side.

12. The two sides expressed satisfaction over the outcomes of Prime Minister Prachanda's visit to China, and agreed that the visit is of great significance to advancing the China-Nepal Strategic Partnership of Cooperation Featuring Everlasting Friendship for Development and Prosperity. Prime Minister Prachanda expressed appreciation to the Chinese Government and people for their warm

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and friendly reception, and invited Chinese leaders to visit Nepal. The Chinese leaders thanked Prime Minister Prachanda for the invitation, and the two sides will maintain communication via diplomatic channels.