

***Statement by H.E. Mr. Dhan Bahadur Oli on “Trade and Investment for Food Security and Nutrition in Nepal: Challenges and Opportunities” at the Policy Dialogue on Agrifood Systems Transformation in Asia and the Pacific, organized by the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok on 6 October 2026 to mark World Food Day 2026***

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished Participants,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great honour for me to participate in this timely and highly relevant policy dialogue, which strongly resonates with our shared priorities and common aspirations. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the FAO Regional Office for organizing this important dialogue and for providing this valuable platform for exchange and collaboration.

From Nepal’s perspective, **one of the greatest opportunities to make nutritious food more available and affordable is to increase investment in the logistics infrastructure that connects farmers and agricultural production to consumers.**

When it comes to trade and investment for food security, there is significant scope for investment in cold-chain systems, collection and storage facilities, agro-logistics, food processing infrastructure, and efficient transport connectivity. These investments can help reduce post-harvest losses, improve the availability, quality, and safety of food, enable farmers to capture greater value from their produce, and ensure that consumers have reliable access to safe, nutritious, and high-quality food.

As a Landlocked Developing Country, Nepal also faces high transportation and transit costs, while climate change is adding pressure through floods, extreme weather and changing rainfall patterns. This makes investment in **climate-resilient agricultural and logistics infrastructure** even more important.

But I would like to make one point very clear: **Nepal is not asking for charity. Nepal is offering an investment opportunity.**

We see opportunities for commercial and climate-aligned investment that can generate economic returns while strengthening food security, creating jobs, supporting farmers and building resilience.

**First, climate-resilient agricultural production.**

From the low land Terai plains to the hills and high Himalayas, Nepal’s diverse agro-ecological conditions provide opportunities for climate-smart agriculture, irrigation,

protected cultivation, improved planting materials, efficient water management, digital agriculture and other technologies that increase productivity and resilience.

### **Second, high-value and nutritious agricultural products.**

For a landlocked country, competing through large volumes of low-value commodities is difficult. Our opportunity is therefore to generate **higher value per unit of volume**.

Nepal is the world's leading producer of **large cardamom**, accounting for around **68 percent of global production**, and is also among the world's major producers of **ginger**.

We also have substantial potential in **lentils, rice, maize, mustard and other oilseeds**, which are important for food and nutrition security while offering opportunities for improved productivity, processing, branding and regional trade.

Beyond these, Nepal has significant opportunities in **specialty tea and Himalayan Arabica coffee; high-value fruits and vegetables such as apples, oranges, kiwi and avocado; medicinal and aromatic plants and essential oils; and distinctive natural fibers such as Allo and hemp**.

The opportunity is to build integrated value chains—from production and aggregation to **processing, packaging, certification, branding and export**.

### **Third, food processing and value addition.**

Rather than exporting primarily raw commodities, Nepal can produce higher-value and longer-shelf-life products domestically. Investment in fruit processing, drying and preservation, tea and coffee, essential oils, medicinal and aromatic plants, natural fibers and nutritious food products can reduce losses, increase domestic value addition and create rural employment.

### **Fourth, cold-chain and agro-logistics.**

Investment in refrigerated storage, warehouses, collection centers, distribution systems and agro-logistics hubs connected to dry-ports and major transport corridors can make nutritious food more affordable domestically while strengthening Nepal's ability to supply regional markets.

And this leads to another opportunity: **our strategic location**.

Nepal lies between **two of the world's largest markets—India to the south and China to the north**. With better connectivity, logistics, standards, certification, technology and trade facilitation, we can turn our geographical position into a strategic economic advantage and develop Nepal as a platform for specialized, high-value agricultural products for regional markets.

Finally, Nepal's investment proposition also includes our **contribution to climate protection and global environmental sustainability.**

Nepal contributes only a very small share of global greenhouse-gas emissions (Less than 0.1%), yet our communities have made significant contributions to conserving forests, biodiversity, watersheds and mountain ecosystems whose benefits extend far beyond our borders, our forest coverage has increased around 29 % in early 90s to nearing 50% now.

Nepal is therefore **not only seeking investment; Nepal is also contributing to a global public good.**

This is where **climate justice** becomes important. Conservation carries real economic and opportunity costs for local communities. Climate finance should recognize these contributions, but climate justice should also be reflected in **fair and predictable market access.**

As Nepal is in process of transitions from LDC status, we encourage our trading partners to explore preferential and predictable market access for Nepalese climate-resilient and sustainably produced agricultural and agroforestry products, together with improved transit facilitation and streamlined sanitary, phytosanitary and other trade requirements.

In this way, **trade and investment can become part of the climate solution—**creating economic returns for sustainable production and incentives for communities to continue protecting ecosystems.

So, our message is simple:

**Nepal is not asking the region to invest out of charity. Nepal is inviting the region to invest in opportunity.**

An opportunity to invest in agriculture, processing, cold chains, logistics, technology and regional market connectivity—and an opportunity to invest in climate-resilient and nature-positive businesses.

Our ambition is to move from **raw commodities to higher-value products, from fragmented production to integrated value chains, and from climate vulnerability to resilient and sustainable growth.**

Ultimately, we want to make Nepal a **competitive regional hub for high-value, climate-resilient and sustainable agrifood products, connecting South Asia and China.**

That is the partnership Nepal is seeking: **not charity, but investment; not dependence, but partnership; and not only economic returns, but shared value for food security, climate resilience and sustainable development.**

I Thank you.