

Report on
NEPAL'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS
(2021-2022)



Government of Nepal
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Report on
Nepal's Foreign Affairs
(2021-2022)



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This annual report covers the activities of Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 16 July 2021 to 16 July 2022.

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Honourable Narayan Prakash Saud
Minister for Foreign Affairs

MESSAGE

I am happy to learn that the Annual Report 2021-22 is being brought out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs covering major activities of the Ministry during the fiscal year 2078-79.

Nepal pursues an independent foreign policy based on the principles of sovereign equality, non-interference, mutual respect and benefit. The Constitution of Nepal provides basic policy direction to the conduct of our international relations. The principles of Panchasheel, non-alignment, the UN Charter, international law and norms of world peace form the basis of our foreign policy. The present Government has given high importance to political consensus while handling its foreign policy.

The world today is increasingly facing new issues and challenges demanding dexterity in handling of diplomatic affairs. Nepal is cognizant of the changing dynamics of international politics and geoeconomic landscapes in the region and world at large. Thus, our diplomatic efforts take into account of these changes and endeavour to better serve our national interests.

Significant achievements have been recorded in the conduct of foreign policy during the period under review. Despite difficulties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Nepal leveraged its diplomatic machinery to help the country fight against the pandemic and secure lifesaving medicines, medical equipment, and vaccines. Our diplomatic outreach has consistently been growing. Our relations and cooperation with our immediate neighbours India and China have remained as friendly and cooperative as ever. Both our neighbours were there for us when we needed their support during the difficult time of COVID-19 and helped us in many ways. Similarly, our bilateral

relations and economic partnership with major powers and development partners as well as other friendly countries continued to grow and expand. Our interactions and engagements with these countries have consistently been growing in our shared interests. Nepal endeavoured to maintain benign visibility in international arena and play constructive role as an ardent supporter of multilateralism and rule based international order with the United Nations at its centre.

During the reporting period, a number of initiatives have been taken in the fronts of economic diplomacy, diaspora diplomacy, consular services, vaccine diplomacy, and institutional strengthening. In view of the planned graduation from the LDC status by 2026, our focus is on advancing economic interests in a sustained manner through proactive economic diplomacy. Our diplomatic missions have been mobilized to this end. We remain encouraged by the commitments expressed by our development partners to supporting our development endeavors and post-pandemic economic recovery. Our diplomatic machinery continued to work for protecting and promoting the interests of our diaspora community, while trying to bring in their skill, knowledge, and capital to bolster our economy. Thanks to our proactive vaccine diplomacy, Nepal has attained high rate of vaccination against COVID-19. We also voiced the case of climate change disproportionately befalling on the mountainous countries like Nepal and catastrophic impact of melting of the Himalayan glaciers on the environment, humans, and biodiversity. We also laid focus on enhancing the agility of the Ministry and its diplomatic missions to function effectively in the face of emerging challenges and opportunities.

Finally, I thank the Foreign Secretary and his team for this initiative to publish the annual report as a part of proactive disclosure of the activities undertaken by the Ministry. I am confident that this report will benefit all those who are interested in the country's foreign policy and diplomacy.



Bharat Raj Paudyal
Foreign Secretary

FOREWORD

The year 2021-22 remained important in the conduct of Nepal's foreign policy and diplomacy. As with other countries, COVID-19 continued to be a defining phenomenon of the period. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, significant achievements have been recorded in the conduct of our foreign relations.

We continued to increase our engagements with immediate neighbors, development partners, major world powers, countries of destination for our migrant workers and other friendly countries as well as regional and international organizations. Our diplomatic outreach continued to expand as we established diplomatic relations with six more countries.

Many important high-level visits have taken place during this time under review. Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba paid an official visit to India on 1-3 April 2022. And on 16 May 2022, His Excellency Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, paid an official visit to Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha. The fact that this was the first-ever visit by the Indian Prime Minister to this sacred place in Nepal underlines the importance of this visit. In November 2021, Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba led the high-level Nepali delegation to the Twenty-sixth Conference of Parties (CoP26) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Glasgow, the United Kingdom.

At the invitation of Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon. Dr. Narayan Khadka, State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China H.E. Mr. Wang Yi paid an official visit to Nepal on 25-27 March 2022. Foreign Minister Hon. Dr. Khadka led the Nepali delegation to the Seventy-fifth UN General Assembly, held in New York and High-level Commemorative Meeting to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), held in Belgrade. Foreign Minister Hon. Dr. Khadka also represented Nepal in the Antalya Diplomacy Forum in Turkey. Prince

Faisal bin Fahran Al Saud, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia paid an official visit to Nepal on 14-15 March. The visit was an opportunity to highlight bilateral relations, cooperation in the multilateral forums, and further strengthening economic partnership and cooperation between the two countries.

We also continued high-level political engagements with major powers of the world, development partners, and other countries with which Nepal enjoys friendly relations and cooperation.

This year, we held bilateral consultation meetings with a range of countries, namely, China, EU, Finland, Norway, Thailand and South Africa. We also utilized the opportunities provided by virtual platforms to engage with our friends and partners across the globe.

Some new initiatives have been taken in this period. The MOFA has initiated Prof. Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture series and the first edition of the lecture was organized in Kathmandu on 7 June 2022. Similarly, the Ministry initiated observing 10 Jestha as the Foreign Service Day every year in commemoration of the enactment of the first Foreign Service Rules in 2018 BS. Yet another new initiative in promoting economic diplomacy, the Ministry initiated interactive sessions between the Ministry and the diplomatic missions abroad bringing together government and private sector stakeholders on export trade, investment, remittances, tourism, among others. We have also increased our outreach internally to different provinces to leverage synergy of different levels in promoting Nepal's economic diplomacy.

Nepal continued its contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security, including through participation in UN peacekeeping operations. Nepal became the second largest troops-contributing country to the United Nations Peacekeeping Missions. Our participation in the UNGA this year led by Hon. Foreign Minister outlined Nepal's foreign policy priorities and underlined the indispensability of multilateralism with the United Nations at its centre to build global understanding and cooperation, promote shared interests, and secure our common future. On different occasions and in various multilateral forums, Nepal has expressed commitments to democratic values, reiterated our principled position on a host of regional and global issues, highlighted the consequences of global crises like COVID-19 and climate change on peoples, societies, and economies of the least developed countries including Nepal, advocated for just, fair and equitable world order and called for an enhanced level of international support to LDCs in the areas of ODA, FDI, aid for trade, debt relief, climate financing, and technology transfer.

Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba participated virtually in the Fifth Bay

of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Summit held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 30 March 2022. The summit was particularly important as it adopted the BIMSTEC Charter.

I am also happy to state that MOFA has lent its proactive support to different ministries and departments over this period. The Ministry played an important role during the COVID-19 crisis to ensure that we get enough medical items, equipment, and lifesaving COVID-19 vaccines. Thanks to the generous support of our neighbours, development partners and friends, Nepal has been able to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic while it has vaccinated more than 86 per cent of the targeted population by the end of the period under review.

The Ministry and our diplomatic Missions extended consular assistance to many Nepali nationals who were in need of help and support. We successfully rescued our nationals stranded in Afghanistan after the new political developments in that country. In January 2022, the Government of Nepal sent a chartered aircraft with humanitarian relief materials as a goodwill gesture of the people of Nepal to the Afghan people. Foreign Minister Hon. Dr. Narayan Khadka led the efforts in realizing the humanitarian assistance. We also rescued our nationals in Ukraine and brought them to safety during the unfolding crisis in that country. Around 700 such Nepalis were rescued to safety in nearby countries, including Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Spain, Germany, Romania, and Moldova, and they were extended necessary assistance for repatriation.

At home, we have reformed both of our passport and consular services. During the reporting period, we launched the e-Passport (eMRTD). We are consistently trying to improve passport and consular service delivery in prompt, effective, and efficient manner.

I believe this report will be useful to those who have interests in the major foreign policy and diplomatic activities during the fiscal year 2078-79.

I wish to thank the team who helped to put together this annual report in this format. My special thanks also go to all heads of Nepali diplomatic and consular missions abroad, heads of divisions in the Ministry and heads of departments for their support during the preparation of this annual report as well as for their contributions to the service of Nepal's national interests.

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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 interest by strengthening Nepal's foreign relations based on sovereign equality, mutual benefit and respect through the conduct of an independent and balanced foreign policy

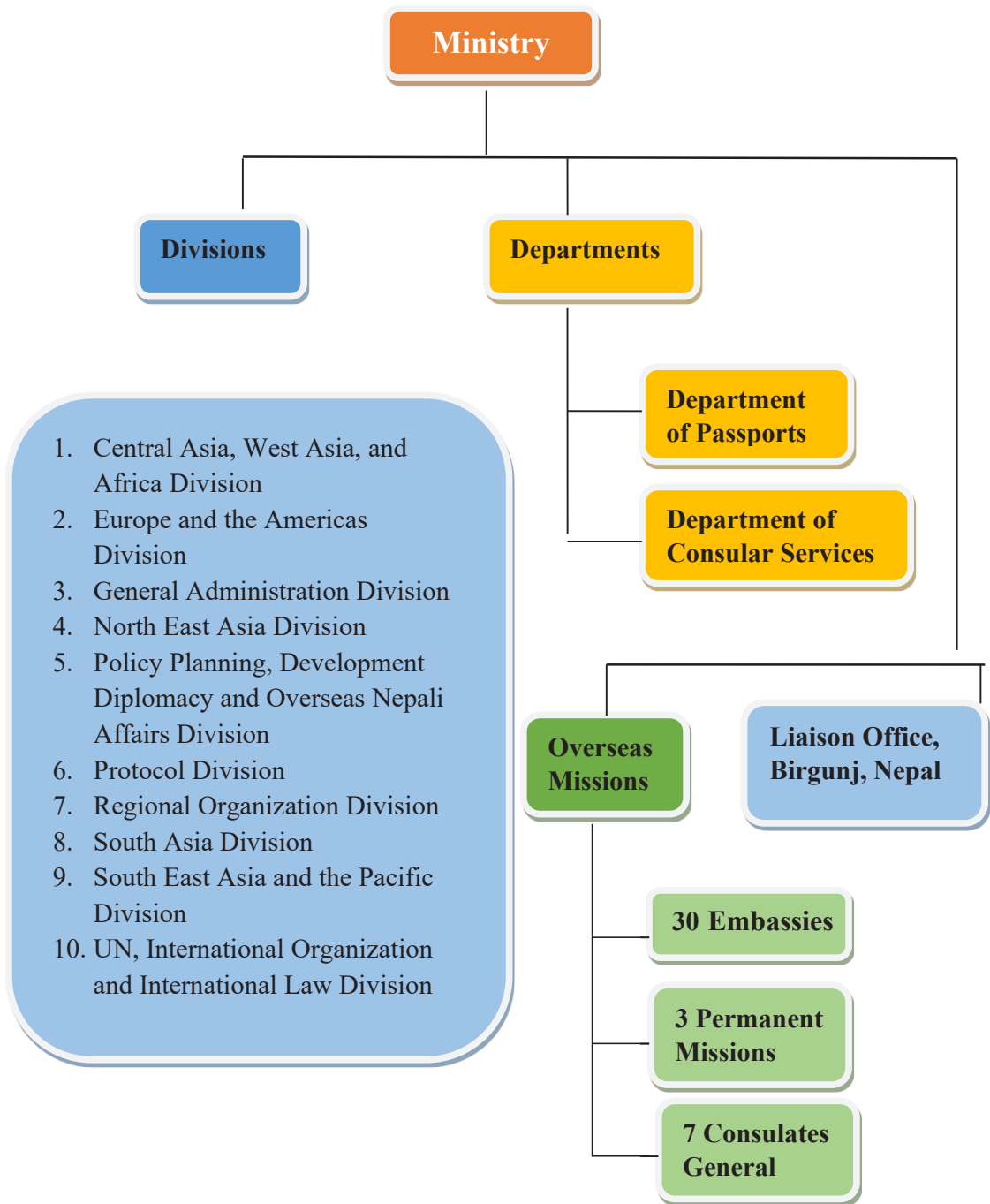
OBJECTIVES

- 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, and fair rules-based world order
- To promote regional cooperation, peace, and collaborations
- 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
- Sovereign equality
- Panchsheel (the five principles of peaceful coexistence)
- Spirit of the Charter of the United Nations
- Mutual respect and benefit
- International law and norms of world peace
- Peaceful settlement of disputes
- International cooperation
- Justice, equality and accountability
- Economic progress and prosperity
- Ecological balance, human security and conservation of the planet

MINISTRY'S ORGANOGRAM



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

- Address by the President at the Annual Conference of the Boao Forum for Asia 2022
- Official Visit to India by the Prime Minister
- Official Visit to Lumbini by the Prime Minister of India
- Prime Minister's visit to the United Kingdom to participate in the World Leaders Summit of the COP26
- Prime Minister's participation in the Summit for Democracy held virtually
- Participation of Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Antalya Diplomacy Forum
- Participation of Minister of Foreign Affairs in the fourteenth Bali Democracy Forum
- Official Visit to Nepal by the State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China Mr. Wang Yi
- Official visit to Nepal by Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- Visit by Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of WHO
- Fourteenth Nepal-China Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism Meeting held virtually
- Fifth meeting of Nepal-Republic of Korea Bilateral Consultation Mechanism held in Kathmandu
- First meeting of Nepal-South Africa Bilateral Consultation Mechanism held in Pretoria
- Thirteenth meeting of the Joint Commission between Nepal and EU held in Kathmandu
- Second meeting of Nepal-Finland Bilateral Consultation Mechanism held in Helsinki
- First meeting of Nepal-Norway Bilateral Consultation Mechanism held in Oslo
- Third meeting of Nepal-Switzerland Bilateral Consultations in Kathmandu
- Fifth meeting of Nepal-Thailand Joint Commission held virtually
- Participation in Fifth BIMSTEC Summit held in Colombo
- Adoption of the BIMSTEC Charter
- Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the establishment of BIMSTEC
- Third BIMSTEC Energy Ministerial Meeting held virtually
- General Cooperation Agreement (GCA) signed between Nepal and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

- Ratification of MCC Compact by the Federal Parliament of Nepal
- Issuance of the Nepal-India Joint Vision Statement on Power Sector Cooperation
- Quantum of power export from Nepal to India increased to over 360 MW
- Joint flagging of passenger railway service between Jaynagar, India and Kurtha, Nepal
- MOU signed between the Government of Nepal and the Government of India for the supply of Urea and DAP from India to Nepal
- Formation of a bilateral committee between Nepal and the United Kingdom for the talks on the grievances of the Gurkha veterans
- MoU between Nepal and United Kingdom on the recruitment of Nepali healthcare professionals in the UK's national health services
- Nepal's election as Vice President for the seventy-seventh session of the UNGA
- Nepal as the second largest troops and police contributing country in the UN Peacekeeping
- Adoption of a resolution on Nepal's graduation from the LDC category
- Membership in the International Solar Alliance
- Participation in the Seventy-sixth UN General Assembly and other high-level multilateral forums
- Participation in the ministerial meetings of NAM and G77
- Evacuation and repatriation of Nepali nationals stranded in Afghanistan and Ukraine
- Delivery of the humanitarian relief materials for the people of Afghanistan from the people of Nepal
- Mobilization of international support of medical items, equipment and vaccines during COVID-19 crisis.
- Repatriation of the lost Nepali artefacts
- Introduction of e-Passport (eMRTD)

Three Flagship Events held

- First edition of Annual Professor Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series
- Started commemorating Foreign Service Day on 24 May
- Annual Interaction Programme on Nepal's Foreign Policy and Economic Diplomacy

The Year Marked:

- Seventy-fifth anniversary of Nepal-India relations
- Seventy-fifth anniversary of Nepal-US relation
- Fiftieth anniversary of Nepal-Bangladesh relations
- Fiftieth anniversary of Nepal-Kuwait relations
- Forty-fifth anniversary of Nepal-Bahrain Relations
- Sixtieth anniversary of Nepal-Turkey relations

Diplomatic relations established with additional six countries:

- Timor-Leste
- Barbados
- Palau
- South Sudan
- Belize
- Trinidad and Tobago

This brings the total number of countries with which Nepal has established diplomatic ties to 177.

HIGH LEVEL ENGAGEMENTS



Address by President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari to the Annual Conference of the Boao Forum for Asia 2022

(President Bhandari virtually addressing the Boao Forum for Asia)



Official Visit to India by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba

(Bilateral Meeting between the Prime Ministers of Nepal and India. Photo Courtesy: RSS)



(Joint inauguration of projects by the Prime Ministers of Nepal and India)

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Official Visit to Lumbini by the Prime Minister of India



*(Arrival of two Prime Ministers at Mayadevi Mandir.
Photo Courtesy: RSS)*

Prime Minister's visit to the United Kingdom to participate in the World Leaders Summit of the COP26



(Prime Minister Deuba addressing the World Leaders Summit of the COP26 in Glasgow)

Prime Minister's virtual participation in the Summit for Democracy

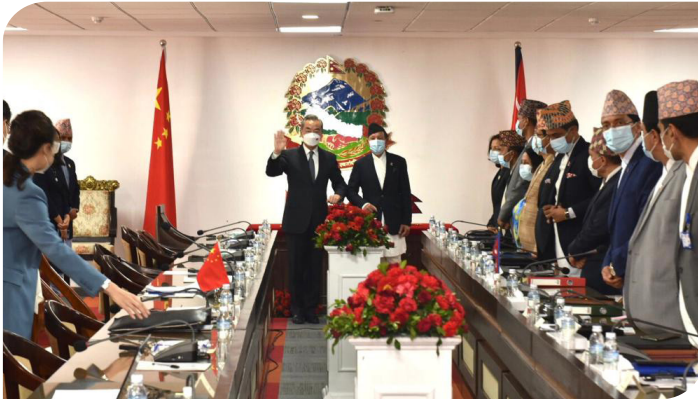


(Prime Minister Deuba addressing the Summit for Democracy virtually on 9 December 2021)

Participation in Antalya
Diplomacy Forum by the Foreign
Minister



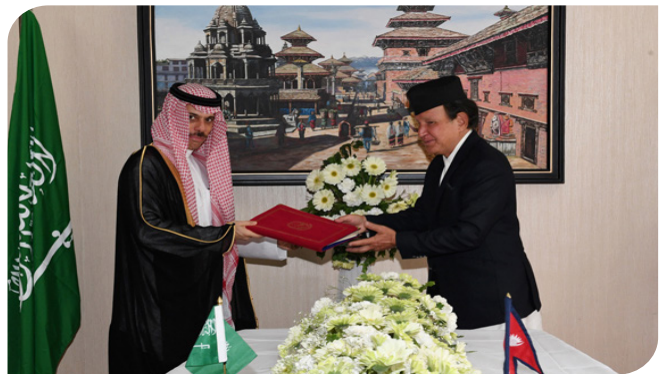
(Foreign Minister Dr. Narayan Khadka meeting with his Turkish counterpart)



Official Visit to Nepal by the State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China Mr. Wang Yi

(State Councilor Wang and Foreign Minister Khadka during the delegation-level talks)

Official visit to Nepal by Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



(The two Foreign Ministers after the signing of the General Cooperation Agreement)



Visit of the US Congressional delegation led by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand to Nepal

(A four-member US Congressional delegation led by Senator Ms. Kirsten Gillibrand call on Prime Minister)



Visit of the Director General of
WHO to Nepal

*(Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of
WHO during call on Prime Minister Deuba in April 2022)*

FACTS AND FIGURES

ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY

Foreign Trade:

- Export: NPR 200 billion
- Import: NPR 1920 billion
- Top five export destination countries: India, US, Germany, Türkiye and UK,
- Top five source countries of import: India, China, Indonesia, USA and UAE

(Source: Department of Customs)

Foreign Investment

- NPR 40,498.20 million
- Top five foreign investors: China, India, USA, South Korea and Japan

(Source: Department of Industry)

Tourism

- Top five source countries of tourists: India, USA, UK, Australia and Bangladesh

(Source: Department of Immigration, Nepal Tourism Board)

Official Development Assistance

- USD: 1,420,458,556
- Top five bilateral development partners: USA, India, UK, Japan and Norway and Japan
- Top five multilateral development partners: WB, ADB, IMF, UN and EU

(Source: Ministry of Finance)

Overseas Employment

- Labour permits and renewals: 6,30,089 persons
- Number of bilateral agreements between Nepal and labour destination countries: 11
- Top five destinations for overseas employment: Saudi Arabia, Qatar and UAE, Malaysia and Kuwait

(Source: Department of Foreign Employment)

SERVICE DELIVERY

Passports Distribution

- Total passports: 8,33,476
- Ordinary passports: 8,31,872
- Official passports: 1,119
- Diplomatic passports: 344
- Service passports: 12
- Travel documents: 129

(Source: Department of Passports)

Consular Services

- Document attested: 4, 13,534
- Visa recommendations issued: 709
- Diplomatic exemptions granted: 4246
- Gratis visas issued: 1317
- Compensation handed over to beneficiaries: NPR 66,16,82,680.26
- Repatriation of dead bodies: 248

(Source: Department of Consular Services)



OVERVIEW

This report features key activities carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the Fiscal Year 2021-22. It is a review of major bilateral, regional and multilateral engagements and initiatives undertaken over the last year on Nepal's foreign policy front. At home, the year was marked by further consolidation of the democratic and federal political system with the successful conclusion of the local level elections in May 2022, the second time since the promulgation of the Constitution of Nepal in 2015. On the external front, Nepal's foreign policy priorities continued to be guided by the constitutional provisions on advancing Nepal's national interests and prestige as well as pursuing national development goals through mutually beneficial cooperation with friendly countries and development partners.

During the review period, the Ministry undertook various activities for

implementing Nepal's foreign policy priorities based on the principles and purposes of the UN Charter, non-alignment, *Panchasheel*, norms of international law and world peace. As the world went through transformative moments marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions, economic hardships and climate crisis, Nepal pursued an independent and principled foreign policy based on the merits of global issues with efforts to enhance its dignity and image as a responsible member of the international community. Addressing the fallouts of the COVID-19 pandemic remained a priority for Nepal. With gradual subsiding of the pandemic, Nepal's engagements at different levels saw a new momentum including through the exchanges of high-level visits.

Nepal made efforts to further consolidate its friendly ties with immediate neighbours, India and China, by building on age-old

contacts through exchange of high-level visits, meetings of bilateral mechanisms, virtual interactions, and consultations at different levels. The exchange of visits at the level of Prime Ministers between Nepal and India generated added momentum in the relationship between the two countries. Bilateral cooperation in the fields of hydropower, power-trade, connectivity and development assistance received further impetus.

Nepal's relations with China over the period featured the exchange of high-level visits as well as bilateral cooperation on education, trade, connectivity, COVID-19 response and recovery among others. The exchange of visits at the level of Foreign Ministers during the year marked the resumption of high-level bilateral contacts as both countries began to recover from the pandemic.

Nepal's relations with other countries in the neighbourhood as well as with major powers, development partners and labour destination countries remained close, cordial and cooperative. Efforts were made to strengthen relations with friendly countries across all continents. Meetings of bilateral mechanisms were conducted with different countries, and several agreements were concluded in areas including trade, connectivity and migrant workers. Nepal established diplomatic relations with Timor-Leste, Barbados, Palau, South Sudan, Belize, and Trinidad and Tobago over the review period.

Nepal took active part in the regional

processes. In pursuit of the goals of regional integration and prosperity, Nepal participated in the activities of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Nepal made every effort in initiating, coordinating, and conducting dialogues among the Member States of SAARC and BIMSTEC.

During the reporting period, Nepal continued to voice its support for just and rule-based global governance, reflecting its commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. Nepal participated in and contributed to the meetings of the United Nations and other multilateral forums. As the world faced a cast of compounding challenges on multiple fronts, Nepal continued to stress on accelerating international cooperation for sustaining and advancing world peace and global development. During the year, Nepal became the second largest Troop and Police Contributing Country (TPCC) to UN peacekeeping operations.

Nepal worked closely with the Groups of least developed countries (LDCs), land-locked developing countries (LLDCs), Group of 77 and China (G77) and the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) on a diverse array of global agenda. As a member, Nepal remained active in the UN Human Rights Council for promoting and protecting human rights. Given the disproportionate impacts of climate change in the country,

Nepal called for global climate action and climate justice. The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution recommending Nepal's graduation from LDC category by November 2026.

The Ministry launched Professor Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series, an annual programme to serve as a platform for dialogue on major issues of contemporary international relations, diplomacy and foreign policy. The Ministry started commemoration of Nepal Foreign Service Day on *10 Jestha* every year. The Ministry and its missions actively pursued economic diplomacy, carrying out various activities for promotion of exports, foreign investment and tourism as well as enhancing development cooperation and protection of overseas Nepali nationals and their interests. Interactions were also held with various provinces on promotion of export, tourism and investment.

The Ministry placed high priority on providing timely and efficient passport and consular services. The Department of Passports introduced e-Passport (eMRTD), which is a more secure, reliable and convenient travel document. The Ministry continued to focus on human resources development, institutional reforms, and upgradation of infrastructures during the reporting period.

NEPAL'S NEIGHBOURHOOD

Promoting friendly and cooperative relations with immediate neighbors, viz. India and China, based on mutual trust,

understanding and good neighborliness remained a major foreign policy priority during the review period. Nepal continued to advance age-old contacts with its neighbours through exchange of high-level visits, virtual interactions, meetings, and consultations both at official and people-to-people levels.

Nepal-India relations witnessed further growth and development. The year marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of the formalization of diplomatic relations between Nepal and India. The official visit to India by Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba on 1-3 April 2022 and the official visit to Lumbini by Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi on 16 May 2022 contributed to further strengthening the multifaceted relations between the two countries.

The review period witnessed an expansion and deepening of cooperation in different sectors including hydropower, power trade, connectivity, and agriculture. Bilateral mechanisms in various sectors including border management, power sector cooperation, flood and inundation control, petroleum, infrastructure and reconstruction remained active.

The two sides signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) on various matters of mutual benefit such as supply of fertilizers, construction of motorable bridge over Mahakali River and railway sector cooperation. Passenger railway service between Jaynagar, India and Kurtha, Nepal was flagged off by the two

Prime Ministers, marking improved rail connectivity between Nepal and India. Nepal-India Joint Vision Statement on Power Sector Cooperation, issued during the Official Visit of Prime Minister Deuba to India, was an important milestone for mutually beneficial cooperation in hydroelectricity generation, transmission and cross-border trade. Building on the cooperation in hydropower sector, the quantum of power export from Nepal to India increased to over 360 MW.

The multi-faceted relations between Nepal and China, based as they are on good neighborliness, cordiality, mutual trust and cooperation, continued to make important strides during the period under review. The year was marked by important high-level visits from China to Nepal. State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of China Mr. Wang Yi paid an official visit to Nepal. Likewise, the Minister of International Liaison Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China Mr. Liu Jianchao visited Nepal. Nepal-China Diplomatic Consultation Meeting and Consultation Meeting on Boundary Affairs were conducted virtually.

China continued to extend valuable support in Nepal's socio-economic development efforts, while also assisting in the country's COVID-19 response and recovery with the provision of vaccines and medical equipment. The year marked the completion of Pokhara Regional International Airport project. China continued to remain a major trading

partner of Nepal and the largest source of foreign direct investment in the country.

SOUTH ASIA

Nepal's relations with countries in South Asia were further consolidated during the review period. Meetings of bilateral mechanisms covering trade, hydropower and investment were held with several countries in the region, enhancing Nepal's cooperative relations with its South Asian neighbors. The Government of Nepal sent a chartered aircraft with humanitarian relief materials to the people of Afghanistan. The year marked the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Bangladesh.

NORTH EAST ASIA

During the reporting period, Nepal's close and cooperative ties with countries in North East Asia continued to grow. People-to-people contacts flourished through the visits of tourists, students and businesspeople. Japan and the Republic of Korea continued to remain important development partners of Nepal, as well as significant source countries of foreign investment. Nepal's collaborative partnership with Japan and South Korea in the areas of human resource development, health and infrastructure continued to strengthen over the year, as did cooperation in combating the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nepal maintained its principled position on the denuclearization and peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula.

SOUTH EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

The relations between Nepal and the countries in the Southeast Asia and the Pacific region were further strengthened during the review period. Emergency medical supplies, medical equipment, and vaccines were received in assistance from various countries in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Foreign Minister Dr. Narayan Khadka addressed, through video message, the fourteenth Bali Democracy Forum held on 9 December 2021. The Fifth Meeting of Nepal-Thailand Joint Commission was held virtually at the Foreign Secretary level on 25 August 2021.

Malaysia and Australia host a significant number of Nepali Diaspora. The Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security of Nepal visited Malaysia at the invitation of his counterpart. The region also continued to be an important source of tourists including Buddhist pilgrims. Nepal established diplomatic relations with Timor-Leste and Palau during the reporting period.

CENTRAL ASIA, WEST ASIA AND AFRICA

Nepal's friendly and cooperative relations with countries in the Central Asia, West Asia, and Africa region continued to strengthen during the review period. The Gulf region remained an important destination for Nepali migrant workers. Nepal received development assistance and COVID-19 related medical aid from several countries in the region. The Ministry and its diplomatic missions worked actively

in ensuring the safety and welfare of Nepali workers in the region while also carrying out activities relating to rescue, relief and repatriation of Nepali citizens affected by the pandemic.

Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al- Saud, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia paid an official visit to Nepal. An Agreement on General Cooperation was signed between Nepal and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during the visit.

Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security Mr. Krishna Kumar Shrestha visited Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), as well as the Seychelles. The Second Joint Committee Meeting on Recruitment, Employment, and Repatriation of Workers was held between Nepal and the UAE. Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal visited South Africa for the first meeting of Nepal-South Africa Bilateral Consultation Mechanism.

EUROPE AND THE AMERICAS

The period under review witnessed further enhancement of Nepal's relations with countries in Europe and the Americas which are among the major partners in terms of Nepal's development cooperation, trade, investment, tourism and people-to-people linkages. Cooperative exchanges with the region gained further momentum through exchanges of visits and bilateral consultations. Nepal received valuable support from countries in the region in the form of critical medical supplies and vaccines in combating the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba participated virtually in the Summit for Democracy hosted by the US President. Speaker of the House of Representatives Mr. Agni Prasad Sapkota visited Spain to attend the 143rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union hosted by the Parliament of Spain. Foreign Minister Dr. Narayan Khadka participated in the Antalya Diplomacy Forum in Turkey and held a bilateral meeting with his Turkish counterpart. A three-member parliamentary delegation led by the Chair of France-Nepal Parliamentary Friendship Group Mr. Véronique Riotton visited Nepal.

Foreign office consultations held during the reporting period included the thirteenth meeting of the Joint Commission between Nepal and the EU in Kathmandu, the second meeting of Nepal-Finland Bilateral Consultation Mechanism in Helsinki, the first meeting of Nepal-Norway Bilateral Consultation Mechanism in Oslo, and the third meeting of Nepal-Switzerland Bilateral Consultations in Kathmandu.

Nepal and the USA exchanged visits at various levels. These included the visit to Nepal by a US Congressional Delegation and the visit to the USA by Chief of the Army Staff Gen. Prabhu Ram Sharma. The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact was ratified by the Federal Parliament of Nepal. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) increased its grant aid commitment in support of Nepal's goal of graduating to a middle-income country.

REGIONAL COOPERATION

Nepal continued to make constructive contributions to the regional processes during the year in achieving economic growth, prosperity and stability. In keeping with the spirit of regional solidarity, Nepal stressed the need for accelerating cooperation under the SAARC and BIMSTEC frameworks. Nepal advocated the importance of revitalizing the SAARC process by convening the nineteenth Summit at an early date.

The fifth BIMSTEC Summit held in Colombo, Sri Lanka in March 2022 adopted the Charter and other regional instruments, materializing the decisions of the 2018 Kathmandu Summit. This was a landmark achievement in the institutional development of the organization, which marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of its establishment during the year. The Nepali delegation to the summit was led by Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba, who addressed the summit virtually.

Nepal actively participated in the meetings and activities of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS

Nepal actively participated in international platforms and made constructive contributions to multilateral and global processes over the review period. Nepal believes in the indispensability of the United Nations in forging multilateral cooperation

and promoting understanding among the Member States based on the principles of sovereign equality, mutual respect, and international law. Nepal continued to voice its support for just and rule-based global governance, demonstrating its steadfast faith in and commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

Nepal participated in several multilateral forums and made substantive contributions across all pillars of the UN system throughout the year. Nepal worked closely with the Groups of LDCs, LLDCs, G77 and NAM on global agenda. The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution endorsing the recommendation of UN Committee for Development Policy for Nepal's graduation from LDC category.

During the reporting period, Nepal became the second largest Troop and Police Contributing Country (TPCC) to the UN peacekeeping operations and reiterated its call for leadership positions for TPCCs in keeping with their level of participation. Nepal pledged to contribute more military and police capabilities, provide regional and international peacekeeping training, increase women's participation, and use renewable energy in peacekeeping missions.

In meetings dedicated to UN reforms, Nepal emphasized the need for a more representative, inclusive, transparent, and accountable Security Council as well as a revitalized General Assembly that would address pressing issues and challenges faced by the international community. As

a member of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), Nepal actively participated in the work of the Council for promoting and protecting human rights.

Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba attended the World Leaders Summit organized during the twenty-sixth Conference of Parties (COP 26) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Glasgow, the United Kingdom. Prime Minister Deuba also addressed the Food Systems Summit and the High-level Dialogue on Energy through video messages. Dr. Narayan Khadka, Foreign Minister and the Leader of the Nepali delegation addressed the seventy-sixth session of the UN General Assembly highlighting Nepal's principle-based position on various issues of global significance. Nepal also participated in the twelfth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) held in Geneva.

Nepal collaborated closely with the WHO during the review period, especially in the context of the critical need to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic at the global level. Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of WHO visited Nepal in April 2022. Commending Nepal's recognition of health as a basic human right in the constitution, Dr. Ghebreyesus appreciated prioritization of health in the country's national budget and noted how the investment had yielded tangible results.

Nepal was elected as one of the Vice-Presidents for the 77th session of the UN General Assembly.

POLICY MATTERS, ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY AND OVERSEAS NEPALIS

Important policy initiatives were launched during the review period. The Ministry benefited from the guidance of both Houses of the Federal Parliament as well as the Parliamentary Committees on issues related to the conduct of foreign policy and diplomacy. The Ministry worked closely with the National Planning Commission, the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Finance on the annual workplan of the Ministry. An in-house study was conducted for identifying the roles of the Ministry and the missions abroad in the process of graduating from the LDC category.

The Ministry initiated several flagship programmes in the field of foreign policy and economic diplomacy. Professor Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series, an annual programme, was launched to serve as a platform for deliberations on major issues of contemporary international relations, diplomacy, and foreign policy. The Ministry began commemorating the Nepal Foreign Service Day.

Considering economic diplomacy as one of the major tools in meeting economic interests of Nepal, the Ministry conducted various activities including interaction programmes with missions abroad and domestic stakeholders. Interactions were held with the relevant agencies of various provinces of Nepal on promotion of export, tourism, and investment.

PROTOCOL, CONSULAR AND PASSPORT

Protocol services featured as a key function of the Ministry during high-level visits. Protocol services and other required facilitation were extended for relevant diplomatic activities. Necessary protection, support and courtesies were extended to diplomatic and consular missions based in and accredited to Nepal.

The Department of Consular Services continued to provide timely and user-friendly consular services to both Nepali and foreign nationals. It provided consular services to the Diplomatic Missions and International Organizations stationed in Nepal as per international law, conventions, practices, and mutual agreements. Consular service delivery was made easier and faster through the use of technology.

The Department of Passports introduced e-Passport (eMRTD) during the review period. The e-passport services have been decentralized, and passport applications can now be made in all 77 districts, as well as 18 *ilakas*. During the reporting period, the Department personalized 354,314 MRPs and 478,729 e-MRTDs. The service delivery was made more user-friendly by initiating online payment system, mobile App, and SMS notifications. A Passport Museum was set up to showcase the history of Nepali passports.

ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

The Ministry continued to focus

on human resources development, institutional reforms, and upgradation of infrastructures. The Department of Passport, the Department of Consular Services and the Institute of Foreign Affairs were relocated in the newly built multi-purpose building in Tripureshwar. Preparatory work was carried out for the

construction of chancery buildings for a few missions abroad.

The Ministry completed classification and sorting of historically and archaeologically important documents. Digitisation and storage of classified documents is currently ongoing.

REVIEW OF NEPAL'S FOREIGN RELATIONS

1

NEIGHBOURHOOD

Nepal accords top priority to neighborhood policy as one of the strongest pillars of its foreign policy and diplomacy. Nepal has always remained steadfast in its principled policy of not allowing any activities on its soil that might be inimical to the core interests of its neighbours.

During the review period, Nepal's multifaceted relations with India and China, based as they are on equality, mutual trust, mutual respect, and shared benefits, continued to strengthen and gain further momentum.

Exchange of high-level visits, virtual interactions, meetings, and consultations both at official and political levels and increasing people-to-people contacts further consolidated the friendly ties subsisting between Nepal and its neighbours.

As trusted development partners, India and China continued to assist Nepal in its socio-economic endeavours as well as in its COVID-19 response and recovery. Nepal received substantial COVID-19 vaccines and other medical equipment from India and China.

1. INDIA

Rooted in the age-old linkages of history, socio-cultural traditions, and people-to-people contacts, relations between Nepal and India witnessed further development during the period under review. The year marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of the formalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The exchange of visits at the level of Prime Ministers was a testimony to the deep and comprehensive relations defined by mutual respect, cordiality and friendship. The official visit to India by Prime Minister

Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba on 1-3 April 2022 and the official visit to Lumbini by India's Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi on 16 May 2022 generated further momentum in the bilateral relations.

The reporting period witnessed an expansion and deepening of cooperation in different sectors including hydropower, power trade, connectivity, and agriculture. Bilateral mechanisms in various sectors including border management, power sector cooperation, flood and inundation control, petroleum, infrastructure, and reconstruction remained active.

The two sides also signed MoUs on matters including the supply of fertilizers, construction of a motorable bridge over the Mahakali River, and railway sector cooperation, among others. Passenger railway service between Jaynagar, India and Kurtha, Nepal was flagged off by the two Prime Ministers, marking the upgradation and improvement of railway connectivity between the two countries. Building on the cooperation in hydropower sector, the quantum of power export from Nepal to India increased to over 360 MW.

Official Visit of Prime Minister of Nepal to India

Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba paid an official visit to India on 1-3 April 2022 at the invitation of Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi. The two Prime Ministers held bilateral meetings on 2 April 2022 during which they took a broad overview of Nepal-India relations in all dimensions with a view to further enhancing close and cordial ties between the two countries.

The two Prime Ministers discussed promoting connectivity and infrastructure through roads, railways, pipelines, transmission lines and air services. The two Prime Ministers jointly flagged off the inaugural passenger railway service between Jayanagar and Kurtha; inaugurated 90-KM long 132 KVDC Solu Corridor Transmission Line Project built under the Indian Line of Credit; witnessed the progress in the construction of 132

health facilities in 10 districts of Nepal and launched the operation of RuPAY cards in Nepal.



(Bilateral Meeting between the Prime Ministers of Nepal and India. Photo Courtesy: RSS)

In addition, the two Prime Ministers also witnessed the exchanges of MOU on Enhancing Technical Cooperation in Railway Sector; Agreement for Supply of Petroleum Products between the Nepal Oil Corporation and the Indian Oil Corporation Ltd.; Agreement for Sharing Technical Expertise between the Nepal Oil Corporation and the Indian Oil Corporation Ltd.; and Framework Agreement of International Solar Alliance (ISA).



(Joint Inauguration of projects by the two Prime Ministers. Photo Courtesy :RSS)

Nepal-India Joint Vision Statement on Power Sector Cooperation was issued during the visit, focusing on mutually beneficial cooperation in hydroelectricity generation, transmission, and cross-border trade.

Prime Minister Deuba also addressed a gathering of the business community in New Delhi organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and urged them to invest in Nepal's productive sectors, particularly in hydropower.

The Prime Minister also visited Varanasi where he was welcomed by Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Shri Yogi Adityanath as well as by the people of Varanasi.

Official Visit of Prime Minister of India to Lumbini

At the invitation of Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba, Mr. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, paid an official visit to Lumbini, Nepal on the auspicious occasion of Buddha Jayanti on 16 May 2022.

The two Prime Ministers, during their bilateral talks, took stock of Nepal-India relations and cooperation and held discussions on matters of mutual interests with a view to further enhancing close and cordial ties between the two countries. The talks focused mainly on cooperation in sectors of culture, education, hydropower, infrastructures, and connectivity.

The two sides discussed promoting cooperation in connectivity; early supply of fertilizers; expeditious conclusion of

the revised Transit Treaty, its Protocols and Memorandum; review of the treaty of trade; additional air entry routes; hydropower generation; culture and tourism including Buddhist circuit and Ramayana circuit; education and academic collaboration; increasing the threshold of carrying Indian currency by individuals; and cooperation at regional and multilateral forums on matters of mutual interest.



(Two Prime Ministers before the bilateral talks. Photo courtesy: RSS)

The Prime Ministers of Nepal and India also visited the sacred Mayadevi Temple and worshipped at the Birthplace of the Lord Gautam Buddha. The two Prime Ministers laid the foundation stone for the construction of the India International Center for Buddhist Culture and Heritage at the Lumbini Monastic Zone.



(Arrival of two Prime Ministers at Mayadevi Mandir. Photo Courtesy: RSS)

The Prime Minister of India together with the Prime Minister of Nepal attended the special ceremony organized by the Lumbini Development Trust in Lumbini International Buddhist Meditation Center and Assembly. In their separate addresses, the Prime Ministers of Nepal and India highlighted the importance of Buddha's teachings of peace, harmony, and mutual respect.

Nepal-India Oversight Mechanism

The ninth meeting of the Nepal-India Oversight Mechanism was held in Kathmandu on 16 August 2021 under the co-chairmanship of Foreign Secretary, Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal and Ambassador of India to Nepal Mr. Vinay Mohan Kwatra. The meeting reviewed the progress of the projects being implemented under bilateral economic and development cooperation.



(Ninth Meeting of Nepal-India Oversight Mechanism)

During the meeting, discussions were held on the status of implementation of all ongoing projects, including Terai roads, cross-border railways, Arun-III hydropower project, petroleum products pipelines, Pancheshwar multipurpose

project, post-earthquake reconstruction, irrigation, power and transmission lines, construction of Nepal Police Academy, integrated check posts, Ramayana circuit, High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs), motorable bridges over Mahakali River, agriculture and cultural heritage, among others.

Both sides underlined the need for the expeditious implementation of the bilateral projects. To this end, they agreed to take necessary measures to timely address problems and obstacles in the course of implementation.

Joint Steering Committee and Joint Working Group on Power Sector

The ninth meetings of Nepal-India Joint Steering Committee (JSC) and Joint Working Group (JWG) on Power Sector were held on 23-24 February 2022 in Kathmandu. The JSC was co-chaired by Mr. Devendra Karki, Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, Government of Nepal and Mr. Alok Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Power, Government of India.

The meetings reviewed various aspects of power sector cooperation including cross-border power flow, transmission lines, coordinated grid operation of India and Nepal grid, and joint development of large-scale hydropower projects in Nepal through collaboration between Nepal and India. It also agreed to form a Joint Hydro Development Committee (JHDC) to explore the joint development of viable

hydro projects. The meeting also reviewed import and export of power between India and Nepal.

Joint Project Monitoring Committee Meeting on Terai Road Projects

The fourth meeting of Joint Project Monitoring Committee on Terai Road Project in Nepal was held on 16 September 2022 through videoconference. The JPMC Meeting reviewed the implementation status of the Government of India (GOI) funded Terai Roads project in Nepal and expressed satisfaction over the progress achieved with the completion of 13 out of 14 road packages.

Joint Project Monitoring Committee Meeting on Reconstruction Project

Nepal-India Joint Project Monitoring Committee (JPMC) Meeting on post-earthquake reconstruction projects was held in Kathmandu on 30 September 2021.

The meeting reviewed the progress of the GOI assisted post-earthquake reconstruction projects in housing, education, health and cultural heritage sectors in Nepal. Both sides expressed satisfaction on the successful completion of 50,000 houses in Gorkha and Nuwakot districts of Nepal, constructed under the GOI's assistance in the housing sector. Similarly, both sides also noted with appreciation the progress achieved in reconstruction projects being undertaken under education, cultural heritage and health sectors in Nepal.

Coordination Meeting between Armed Police Force, Nepal and Sashastra Seema Bal, India

The fifth Nepal-India Coordination Meeting between Armed Police Force (APF), Nepal and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), India was held in New Delhi from 4 to 7 October 2021.

The meeting reviewed the progress made on the security scenario at Nepal-India border and sought for further measures for enhancing coordination and cooperation between APF, Nepal and SSB, India. Both sides also discussed consultations on a regular and routinized basis at all levels from leadership to Border Observation Post (BOP) on the ground.

During the meeting, the two sides also highlighted the importance of continued cooperation to combat illegal activities along the Nepal-India border including stopping the practice of selling psychotropic drugs without prescription; exchanging list of habitual offenders involved in trans-border crimes; checking of the unauthorized movement of third country nationals along Nepal-India borders; continuation and expansion of Help Desks on the border during the major festival seasons to facilitate the movement of citizens of both countries; sensitizing their personnel for smooth and effective conduct of joint patrolling, and participation of SSB in the elite courses conducted in Nepal, among others.

Meetings on Railway Links

The fifth Joint Working Group (JWG) on Nepal-India Cross Border Rail Link Projects and the seventh Project Steering Committee (PSC) for the Implementation of India-Nepal Cross Border Rail Links were organized in New Delhi on 7 and 8 October 2021, respectively.



(Signing of the Agreed Minutes of the fifth JGW Meeting for Cross Border Rail Links)

The meetings discussed various issues facing the projects such as land acquisition, handing over of the completed packages, demobilizing if cost-and-time overrun persists, ROW issues, power supply among others and the ways to resolving them for smooth project implementation and for operationalizing the train services. The two sides also signed the Joint Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Operationalizing Rail Service between Jaynagar (India)-Kurtha (Nepal) Section. On the occasion, the two sides also signed the MoU for Final Location Survey (FLS) of Raxaul-Kathmandu Rail Link.

Hand Over of Jaynagar-Kurtha Rail Section

Handing-taking over ceremony of Jaynagar-Kurtha cross-border rail section between India and Nepal was organized on 22 October 2021. On behalf of the

Government of India, the executing agency for the project, IRCON International Ltd. handed over the completed section to Nepal Railway Company Limited. Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport Ms. Renu Kumari Yadav and Ambassador of India to Nepal Shri Vinay Mohan Kwatra witnessed the handover.

This section covers 34.9 km out of 68.72 km Jaynagar-Bijalpura-Bardibas rail link project built under the GOI's grant assistance. There are a total of 8 stations and halts in this section, including the historic city of Janakpur. The operationalization of this cross-border rail will contribute to enhancing trade and commercial activities and facilitate movement of people.

Nepal-India Bilateral Consultative Group on Security Issues (NIBCGSI)

The fourteenth meeting of the Nepal-India Bilateral Consultative Group on Security Issues (NIBCGSI) was held in Bengaluru, India on 28-29 October 2021. The Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Tirtha Raj Wagle, Chief of South Asia Division and Joint Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal, and the Indian delegation was led by Shri Anurag Srivastava, Joint Secretary (North), Ministry of External Affairs of India.

The NIBCGSI reviewed the progress on previous decisions and discussed various areas of cooperation including capacity development and military training; joint military exercise; defence hardware; disaster management, exchange of high level and functional level visits; and joint

expedition/adventures/ sports, among others.

The delegations on both sides comprised the officials from the respective Ministries of Defence and several Directorates/ Departments of the Nepali Army and the Indian Army, including training and operations.

Nepal-India Joint Committee on Inundation and Flood Management

The fourteenth meeting of Nepal-India Joint Committee on Flood Management (JCIFM) was held on 9-13 March 2022.



(JCIFM team leaders after signing the agreed minutes)

The Joint Committee did site visits to various areas near the India-Nepal border to inspect the works on inundation and flood control in the rivers including Khando, Banganga and West Rapti. The Joint Committee also visited the sites of emergent works proposed to be undertaken by the Committee. The Joint Committee assigned the JCIFM subgroup to monitor the physical and financial progress of works approved by JCIFM and examine other matters.

Implementation of MoU between India and Nepal on cooperation in fertilizers

An MoU between the Government of Nepal and the Government of India was signed on 28 February 2022 for the supply of Urea and DAP from India to Nepal under the Government-to-Government Arrangement. To implement the MoU, the two sides held two meetings of the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) on different dates through video conference.

Nepal designated Krishi Samagri Company Limited as State Trading Entity responsible for procurement and requested for early supply of the first consignment. Similarly, Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizer Limited of India was designated as state trading entity by India. The two State Trading Entities were mandated by the JSC to finalize the financial contracts.

Joint Committee Meeting on Koshi and Gandak Projects

The tenth Nepal-India Joint Committee Meeting on Koshi and Gandak Projects (JCKGP) was held in Patna, India on 12 to 13 April 2022.

The meeting discussed various matters relating to operation and maintenance of Koshi and Gandak Projects including outstanding compensations of land and crop damages due to Koshi and Gandak Projects; erosion of flood embankments on upstream as well as downstream sides of Koshi Barrage; operation of gates in Western Main Canal; maintenance of

western main canal service road (Nepal side), inundation of agricultural land, payment of land tax, among others.

Joint Working Group on Border Management

The twelfth meeting of Nepal-India Joint Working Group (JWG) on Border Management was held on 15-16 June 2022 in New Delhi, India.

In the meeting, both sides agreed for effective coordination and information sharing among agencies of both countries to combat trans-border crimes including fake currencies, smuggling of arms/ammunition and trafficking of narcotics and psychotropic substances, trafficking of persons among others. In addition, the two sides emphasized the need for an early completion of the border infrastructure projects like ICPS, roads, motorable bridges, and rail links.

Discussions were also held on the issues

of encroachment on no-man's land and boundary pillars. Both sides agreed on the need for clearing encroachment of no-man's land and addressing the issues of missing and damaged boundary pillars with priority. Also, the issue of cross-border occupations and ownership was discussed. The Nepali side also expressed that resumption of regular meeting of Boundary Working Group (BWG) and related mechanism under it would ease and support to resolve issues related to no-man's land, among others.

Further, issues related to cross-border vehicular movement, cooperation on disaster management, inundation problem due to border infrastructures including bunds and roads built near the border areas were discussed. The two sides also agreed to enhance screening at the ports/points of entry and exit, as well as for sharing of real time information between the immigration authorities of two countries.

2. CHINA

Nepal and China enjoy excellent bilateral relations based on good neighbourliness, cordiality, mutual respect, and understanding. The close and friendly relations between the two countries were further strengthened during the reporting period. The two countries continued to work together in advancing and further expanding the areas of cooperation across political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions.

The two countries continued to maintain high-level political and diplomatic engagements despite the difficulties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Important high-level visits took place during the period, and a number of agreements were signed between the two sides.

Meetings of several bilateral mechanisms were held virtually. Key achievements during the review period included smooth operationalization of border ports, opening of Rasuwa/Kyerung border port

for two-way trade and Hilsa/Pulang border port for one way trade, return of about one thousand Nepali students to China, and resumption of direct flights between Kathmandu to Kunming, among others.

State Councillor Wang Yi's Visit to Nepal

At the invitation of Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Narayan Khadka, State Councillor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China Mr. Wang Yi paid an official visit to Nepal on 25-27 March 2022. The two Foreign Ministers held delegation-level talks on 26 March 2022 during which they exchanged views on overall aspects of Nepal-China relations and cooperation. Both sides reaffirmed their support for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national independence of each other. Following the bilateral talks, the two Foreign Ministers witnessed the signing and exchange of nine agreements and understanding between the two countries.



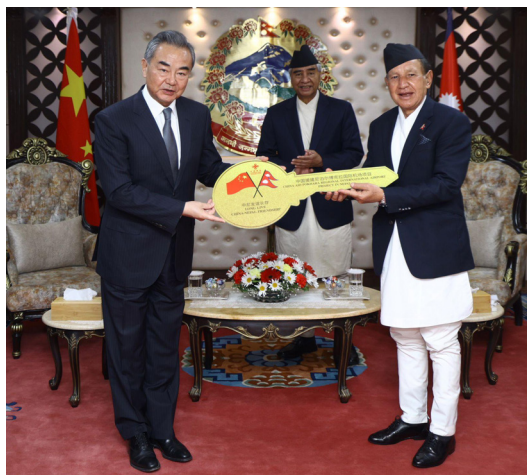
(State Councillor Wang Yi and Foreign Minister Khadka during the delegation-level talks)

During the visit, the State Councillor paid a courtesy call on President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari on 27 March 2022 during which various matters of Nepal-China relations were discussed.



(President Bhandari and State Councillor Wang)

The Chinese State Councillor paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba on 26 March 2022. Following the call on, Mr. Wang handed over a model key of Pokhara Regional International Airport to Foreign Minister Dr. Narayan Khadka amidst a special ceremony held to mark the completion of the construction of the Airport.



(Prime Minister Deuba witnessing the handover of the model key)

Minister Liu Jianchao's visit to Nepal

Minister of International Liaison Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China Mr. Liu

Jianchao visited Nepal from 10-13 July 2022. During the visit, Minister Liu paid courtesy calls on President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari and Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba. He also held a meeting with Foreign Minister Dr. Narayan Khadka during which the two Ministers exchanged views on further strengthening of bilateral relations between Nepal and China.



(Meeting between Minister Khadka and Minister Liu)

President's Message to the Boao Forum for Asia

President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari addressed the Annual Conference of the Boao Forum for Asia 2022 through a video message on 21 April 2022. In her address, President emphasized the solidarity among countries for the control and prevention of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as for economic recovery.



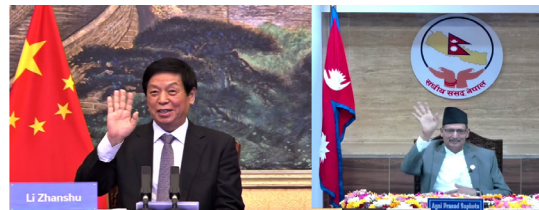
(President Bhandari addressing the Boao Forum for Asia)

Underlining the important lesson drawn from the pandemic, the President stressed the need to invest in innovative and quality health education as well as in the development of health infrastructures. She

also made a special appeal to the world community to come up with generous packages for the economic recovery of developing countries like Nepal.

Virtual Meeting between the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Nepal and the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China

Speaker of the House of Representatives Mr. Agni Prasad Sapkota held a virtual meeting with the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China Mr. Li Zhanshu on 8 April 2022.



(Video Conference between Speaker Sapkota and NPC Chair Li)

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on various aspects of Nepal-China relations and exchanges between the parliaments of the two countries. While underlining the contribution made by Nepal-China Parliamentary Friendship Groups in further promoting the friendly relations between the two parliaments, the Speaker also appreciated the constructive role played by parliamentary delegations of Nepal and China during the 144th General Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) held in Indonesia in March 2022.

Telephone Conversation between the Foreign Ministers of Nepal and China

Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Narayan Khadka and Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Mr. Wang Yi held a telephone conversation on 19 October 2021 during which the two foreign ministers discussed the entire gamut of bilateral relations between the two countries including COVID-19 vaccine cooperation, trade and commerce, development cooperation and border management. The two foreign ministers also agreed to work closely on issues of common interests and to further promote friendly and long-standing bilateral relations and cooperation.

Virtual Participation of State Councilor in ICNR 2021

State Councilor and Foreign Minister of China Mr. Wang Yi delivered a video message titled "Supporting Each Other and Sharing Weal and Woe to Create a Better Future" on 8 December 2021 during the opening ceremony of the International Conference on Nepal's Reconstruction (ICNR) 2021 organized by the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) in Kathmandu, from 7 to 9 December 2021.

While recalling the devastating earthquakes of 2015 and the valuable support to Nepal from the Chinese Government and people, Wang Yi said, "Six years later, the Nepalese have rebuilt their homes on the ruins and the "Country of the Mountains" has risen like a phoenix from the ashes".

Video Conference between Foreign Secretary and Assistant Foreign Minister of China

On 28 January 2022, Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal held a video conference with Assistant Foreign Minister of China Mr. Wu Jianguhao. During the video conference, both sides discussed various aspects of Nepal-China relations including bilateral cooperation in the sectors of trade, investment, tourism, vaccine assistance, and people-to-people contacts.

Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism Meeting

The fourteenth meeting of the Nepal-China Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism was held virtually on 25 May 2022. Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal and Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of China Mr. Wu Jianguhao led their respective delegations to the meeting.



(Fourteenth Nepal-China Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism Meeting)

During the meeting, the two 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 also underscored the need to activate bilateral mechanisms to enhance cooperation and partnership in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Both sides exchanged views on continuing cooperation in various regional and multilateral forums on matters of mutual interests.

Consultation Meeting on Boundary Affairs

Nepal and China held a consultation meeting on boundary affairs virtually on 14 July 2022. During the meeting, various matters relating to the boundary and border management between two countries as well as other issues of bilateral relations, development cooperation, and trade facilitation were discussed.

While underscoring the importance of joint inspection of the Nepal-China boundary, the two sides agreed to initiate the process of activating the existing bilateral mechanism through mutual consultation.



(Nepal-China Consultation Meeting on Boundary Affairs)

The two sides agreed to resume two-way trade through Rasuwagadhi/Keyrung border port, following COVID-19 health

protocol and guidelines. To support the livelihood of people in the northern Himalayan region of Nepal, the two sides also decided to open Hilsa/Purang border port for transportation of goods and construction materials from China, by putting in place necessary pandemic protocols and guidelines.

Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa, Head of North East Asia Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal, and Mr. Hong Liang, Director General of the Department of Border and Ocean Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China led their respective delegations to the meeting.

Meeting on Enhancing Cooperation in Railway Sector

The seventh meeting between Nepal and China on Enhancing Cooperation in Railway Sector was held virtually on 23 December 2021. Mr. Rabindra Nath Shrestha, Secretary, Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport and Mr. An Lusheng, Deputy Administrator, National Railway Administration of China led their respective delegations to the meeting. During the meeting, the two sides discussed the progress made in railway cooperation since the sixth working meeting despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and exchanged views on deepening cooperation in the railway sector in the days to come.

Meeting on Border Law Enforcement

A video meeting on Border Law Enforcement between Mr. Tek Naryan

Pandey, Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs and Mr. Chen Siyuan, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Public Security of China was held on 13 April 2022. The two sides underscored the need to facilitating cross-border flows, ensuring border security, controlling cross border crimes, building capacity in law enforcement among others.

Message by the President to Beijing Winter Olympics

Before the opening of the Beijing Winter Olympics 2022, President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari sent a message to the President of China Mr. Xi Jinping, congratulating China for hosting the XXIV Olympic Winter Games, and extending best wishes for its grand success. In her message, President Bhandari also commended the resolve and commitment of China to host the Winter Olympic Games despite the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Vaccine Cooperation

Nepal continued to receive COVID-19 vaccines from China. Nepal has received a total of 10 million Vero Cell vaccines from China on a procurement basis which arrived in Kathmandu in different batches during July -September 2021.

During the visit of State Councilor and Foreign Minister Mr. Wang Yi to Nepal, four

million vaccines of Sinovac vaccines were handed over to the Ministry of Health and Population.

Resumption of Passenger Air Services

As per the agreement reached between the Foreign Ministers of Nepal and China during the visit of State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Wang Yi in March 2022 on resuming passenger air services between the two countries, a direct passenger flight between Kathmandu and Kunming was re-established on 31 May 2022. Likewise, the air services between Kathmandu and Chengdu were also resumed on 12 June 2022.

The resumption of direct passenger air services is expected to promote people-to-people exchanges between the two countries which remained suspended for more than two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Return of Nepali Students

Following the consensus reached between the Foreign Ministers of Nepal and China in March 2022, Nepali students who could not go back to China due to the restrictive measures in the context of COVID-19 returned to their respective universities to resume their studies.

2

SOUTH ASIA

During the period under review, Nepal's relations with countries in South Asia were further consolidated. Bilateral mechanisms were convened on different areas covering trade, hydropower and investment with several countries in the region, enhancing Nepal's cooperative relations with its South Asian neighbors.

AFGHANISTAN

Nepal stands by the people of Afghanistan in their quest for lasting peace, progress, and stability in the country.

On 16 January 2022, the Government of Nepal sent a chartered aircraft to Kabul with humanitarian relief materials for the people of Afghanistan. The Humanitarian Assistance containing medicines, garments, and household items was handed to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. The assistance reflected the support and goodwill of the people of Nepal for Afghanistan.

The Government of Nepal coordinated the evacuation and repatriation of Nepali nationals stranded in Afghanistan following the developments in the country in August 2021.

BHUTAN

Nepal and Bhutan continued to enjoy friendly relations during the reporting period. As fellow LDCs and LLDCs, the two countries worked closely in the multilateral forums on common agenda including climate change, LDC graduation and sustainable mountain development. Both countries share huge potentials in the areas of trade, tourism and people-to-people ties.

The fourth Bilateral Trade Talks between the Royal Government of Bhutan and the Government of Nepal was held on 20 June 2022 through video conference. Drafts of the bilateral Trade Agreement and the Protocol to the Trade Agreement were reviewed during the meeting. The meeting also discussed the draft text of Rules of Origin.

BANGLADESH

Nepal-Bangladesh relations remained cordial and fruitful during the review period. This year marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Bangladesh. Presidents and Prime Ministers of Nepal and Bangladesh exchanged congratulatory messages on 8 April 2022 on this special occasion.

Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation of Nepal, Ms. Pampha Bhusal visited Bangladesh on 25-28 April 2022. During the visit, she had an observation tour of Barind Multi-Purpose Irrigation Project in Rajshahi at the invitation of Asian Development Bank in Dhaka. She also held meetings with the Minister of Agriculture, the State Minister of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources and State Minister of Water Resources of Bangladesh and discussed the prospects of strengthening bilateral cooperation in the fields of energy, irrigation and agriculture, among others.



(Minister Bhusal in a meeting with the Minister of Agriculture, Bangladesh)

Similarly, a delegation of the Confederation of Nepali Industries (CNI) visited Bangladesh on 19-22 December 2021 at the invitation of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce (DCCI). During the visit, an MOU on Cooperation between CNI and DCCI was signed.

Nepal's hydropower remains an important area with a potential for strengthened bilateral cooperation. The third meeting of Nepal-Bangladesh Joint Working Group (JWG) and Joint Steering Committee (JSC) on Cooperation in the Field of Power Sector was held virtually on 13-14 September 2021. The meeting assigned

Nepal Electricity Authority and Bangladesh Power Development Board for necessary preparation regarding the power trade between the two countries. The meeting also recommended for developing Sunkoshi III project collaboratively.

THE MALDIVES

Bilateral relations between Nepal and the Maldives have remained cordial and fruitful ever since the two countries established the diplomatic relations on 1 August 1980.

Both countries share huge potentials in the areas of trade, tourism and people-to-people ties. Around five thousand Nepalis are working in the Maldives in various fields including healthcare and engineering. Similarly, a few Maldivian students are studying medicine in Nepal.

The Government of the Maldives provided 20,160 vials (2,01,600 doses) of AstraZeneca vaccines to Nepal on 31 October 2021 in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

PAKISTAN

Nepal and Pakistan established diplomatic relations on 20 March 1960. The bilateral relations between the two countries are based on goodwill, mutual cooperation and support. Both countries have been working closely in bilateral, regional and multilateral forums on matters of common interests.

The Government of Pakistan has been providing scholarships for Nepali students

under Pakistan Technical Assistance Programme (PTAP) for higher education in medical, engineering, and pharmaceutical fields. Under PTAP, 11 Nepali students received scholarships for BDS, D. Pharm, and MBBS programmes in 2021. Pakistan also offers training programmes to mid-career and junior diplomats of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as Nepal Army officials. About 200 Nepali students are currently pursuing higher studies in medical, engineering and other subjects in Pakistan.

SRI LANKA

Nepal and Sri Lanka enjoyed friendly and fruitful relations during the review period, which also marked as the sixty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Similar religious and cultural traditions, and Buddhism in particular, have played a vital role in connecting the peoples of the two countries. Lumbini is a favorite destination for Sri Lankan tourists. Sri Lankan Airlines has been operating regular flights in Kathmandu-Colombo sector.

More than 300 Nepali students are currently studying Buddhist Philosophy and other subjects in Sri Lanka. Similarly, around 170 Sri Lankan students are studying medical science and other subjects in Nepal.

BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement

The Meeting of Bangladesh, India and Nepal on the BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement (BBIN- MVA) was held on 07-08 March 2022 in New Delhi, India.

Draft Enabling MoU of BBIN MVA, draft Protocol on Passenger Vehicles and Draft Protocol on Cargo Vehicles were discussed during the meeting, where all the three sides agreed to expedite the preparatory work to finalize the texts. With a view to discussing the issues related to the draft protocols, the meeting decided to create two Working Groups, one on Transport and another on Customs. The Working Group on Transport has been mandated to work on routes, traffic volumes, permits, fees and charges and insurance policies. Similarly, the Group on Customs will work on border crossing points, temporary admission, fees, Electronic Cargo Tracking System (ECTS), internal transit, and other issues of cooperation.

3

NORTH EAST ASIA

Nepal's close and cooperative ties with countries in North East Asia continued to grow during the reporting period. People-to-people contacts flourished through the visits of tourists, students and businesspeople. Cooperation with the countries of this region also continued in the areas of human resource development, health and infrastructure continued to strengthen over the year, as did cooperation in combating the COVID-19 pandemic.

JAPAN

The close and cooperative relations between Nepal and Japan continued to strengthen during the reporting period.

Japan remained one of Nepal's major development partners, extending cooperation in various areas including health, water supply, education, and human resources development in the form of loans, grants, and technical assistance.

The year 2022 marked the one-hundred-twentieth anniversary of the arrival of eight Nepali students in Japan for higher studies. Japan designated 2022 as "Japan-Southwest Asia Exchange Year" with the aim of taking forward Japan's relations with the countries of South Asia including Nepal. Currently, Japan hosts about 130,000 Nepalis who are mostly engaged in the hospitality sector.

Many Nepali students who were stuck in Nepal due to the COVID-19 pandemic returned to Japan to continue their studies. In view of huge potential of cooperation between the two countries in overseas employment, the two countries have agreed to work closely to implement the agreement on specified skilled workers.

Participation of Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan in ICNR 2021

Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Mr. Honda Taro addressed the opening ceremony of the International Conference on Nepal's Reconstruction 2021 through a video message. In his message, Mr. Honda expressed happiness over the progress made in the reconstruction of infrastructures damaged in the 2015 earthquake and assured of Japan's continued support for Nepal's economic development.

Visit of JDS Operating Committee to Japan

Japan continued to support Nepal in human resource development. Under the project for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS) program, Japan provided 20 scholarships for master's degrees and two for doctoral degree for the Nepali Government officials during the review period.

A delegation comprising of the Operating Committee Members for JDS visited Japan from 9 to 18 June 2022 and interacted with the JDS scholars from Nepal, representatives of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) headquarters, and faculties of various Japanese universities, among others.



(The State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan and Nepali delegation)

During their stay in Japan, the delegation paid a call on Mr. Odawara Kiyoshi, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, and had a luncheon meeting with Mr. Kano Takehiro Assistant Minister/Director General of Asia Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. On both occasions, the two sides discussed and exchanged views on further strengthening Nepal-Japan relations and enhancing cooperation between the two countries.

The Nepali delegation comprised Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Narayan Aryal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration, and Mr. Dilli Raj Lekhak, Under Secretary, Ministry of Finance.

National Mourning on passing away of Shinzo Abe

Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba

sent a message of condolences to the Prime Minister of Japan Mr. Fumio Kishida on the sad demise of Shinzo Abe, former Prime Minister of Japan. In his message, Prime Minister Deuba strongly condemned the heinous attack on Mr. Abe. He recalled the late Mr. Abe as a close friend and well-wisher of Nepal and acknowledged his contributions to further promoting and consolidating the friendly ties between Nepal and Japan during his long tenure as Prime Minister of Japan. Foreign Minister Dr. Narayan Khadka visited the Japanese Embassy in Kathmandu and paid tributes to the late Prime Minister by signing the book of condolence.

Nepal announced a day of national mourning on 9 July 2022 to mourn the passing away of Prime Minister Abe.

COVID-19 Assistance

During the period under review, Nepal received about 1.6 million doses of AstraZeneca COVID vaccines provided by the Government of Japan through the COVAX facility. Japan also provided six Japan-made ambulances equipped with a stretcher, an oxygen cylinder, an emergency medical box, and additional 114 Oxygen generators to support Nepal's COVID-19 response and recovery.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

The relations between Nepal and the Republic of Korea remained warm and cordial during the reporting period. Bilateral meetings, cooperation at regional and international forums, growing people-to-people relations, and consistent

development support of the Republic of Korea to Nepal gave impetus to further expand the friendly ties between the two countries.

The Republic of Korea continued to remain a major development partner as well as one of the major destinations for Nepali migrant workers. During the period under review, about 10,000 Nepali workers went to South Korea for employment.

Fifth Meeting of Bilateral Consultation Mechanism

The fifth meeting of the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between Nepal and the Republic of Korea (ROK) was held in Kathmandu on 9 November 2021 during which the two sides took stock of the overall state of Nepal-ROK relations and stressed the importance of exchange of high-level visits and engagements to further promote friendly ties between the two countries.



(Fifth Meeting of Nepal-ROK Bilateral Consultation Mechanism)

Various aspects of bilateral relations between Nepal and the Republic of Korea including cooperation on COVID-19 response and recovery, employment permit system (EPS), trade, investment, energy, technology, education, tourism, culture, and people-to-people contacts were discussed during the meeting.

Likewise, the two sides also exchanged views on possible cooperation in mutually beneficial areas at regional and multilateral levels including the UN and SAARC.

Visit of the Special Envoy

Ambassador Mr. Han Dong-man, Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea visited Nepal and paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba on 1 July 2022. Special Envoy Han also met with Dr. Narayan Khadka, Hon. Minister for Foreign Affairs. Various matters pertaining to further strengthening of Nepal-ROK relations and enhancing cooperation between the two countries were discussed during the meetings.

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Nepal and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have maintained friendly relations ever since the establishment of diplomatic relations on 15 May 1974. Nepal has always supported the peaceful reunification of Korea as per the will of the Korean people and called for maintaining peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula.

MONGOLIA

Nepal and Mongolia have been maintaining friendly and cooperative relations based on strong cultural and historical affinities. Buddhism has remained a strong link in further consolidating people-to-people relations between the two countries. The cordial and friendly relations between Nepal and Mongolia continued to grow over the review period.

4

SOUTH EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Chapter 4

Nepal's relations with countries in the Southeast Asia and the Pacific region continued to grow during the review period. Nepal received the assistance of medical supplies and equipment from Australia, Thailand, Singapore, Cambodia and Viet Nam to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Australia

Nepal and Australia continued to enjoy friendly and cooperative relations over the review period. Nepali Diaspora has become an important pillar of Nepal-Australia relations. More than one hundred thousand people from Nepal have made Australia their home, and around forty-two thousand students are currently pursuing their higher studies in Australian colleges and universities. Nepali students are the third largest group among Australia's international student cohort.

Nepal and Australia remained close partners during the COVID-19 pandemic. A special aircraft carrying emergency medical supplies consisting of masks, gloves and coveralls arrived Kathmandu on 25 November 2021. Medical equipment worth NPR 4.2 million were handed over to the COVID-19 Unified Central Hospital. The equipment, including Intensive Care Unit beds were provided for establishing an

emergency ward in the COVID-19 Unified Central Hospital.

Nepal and Australia have jointly launched a Water Resources Development Strategy for the Kamala River Basin. Australia's Ambassador to Nepal, Ms. Felicity Volk handed over the Australian-funded 'Water Resources Development Strategy for the Kamala River Basin, Nepal' to the Secretary of the Water and Energy Commission Secretariat (WECS), Mr. Maniram Gelal on August 13, 2021.

Through the Australian Government's Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio (SDIP), Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) partnered with WECS to build capacity in water basin planning and water resource management, with a focus on the Kamala River Basin.

Indonesia

Nepal-Indonesia relations continued to grow and strengthen during the period under review.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Narayan Khadka participated virtually in the Fourteenth Bali Democracy Forum held in Bali, Indonesia on 9 December 2021. Addressing the Forum, the Minister called for enhanced international cooperation in

effectively tackling the global challenges of growing socio-economic inequality, climate change and pandemics. He also focused on investing in people's education and health, unleashing the creative and entrepreneurial energies of the youth, and keeping the workforce ready to adapt to technological changes which were key elements in reducing inequality across and within countries.



(Foreign Minister Khadka addressing the Bali Democracy Forum)

Malaysia

Nepal-Malaysia relations remained friendly, cordial and cooperative over the reporting period. Malaysia remains an important destination for Nepali migrant workers. Currently, about 350,000 Nepali workers are working in Malaysia.

In view of the importance of cooperation in foreign employment sector, both countries stressed the need to continue high-level political engagements. Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security, Mr. Krishna Kumar Shrestha visited Malaysia from 27 April to 2 May 2022 at the invitation of Malaysia's Human Resources Minister Datuk Seri M. Saravanan. The visit was focused on effective implementation of the Labour Agreement between the two

countries signed in 2018. Issues including zero cost recruitment, better social security and social welfare, welfare of workers, and digital application system for grievance handling were discussed during the meeting.

Myanmar

Nepal and Myanmar enjoy close and cordial relationship based on cultural affinity and socio-cultural linkages. Around 200,000 people of Nepali origin living in Myanmar serve as an important link between the two countries. Both countries have been stressing the need to further deepen people to people contacts through Buddhist pilgrimage as well as other socio-cultural exchanges.

The Philippines

The bilateral relations between Nepal and the Philippines continued to remain friendly and cooperative. In recent years, the number of the Nepali students going to the Philippines for pursuing studies in various fields has been growing steadily.

Thailand

Nepal-Thailand relations remained cordial and friendly over the review period. The fifth meeting of Nepal-Thailand Joint Commission was held virtually on 25 August 2021. Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal and Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Thailand, Mr. Thani Thongphakdi led their respective delegations. The two sides took stock of overall state of bilateral relations between Nepal and Thailand and exchanged views

on further promoting cooperation between the two countries.

Foreign Secretary Paudyal thanked the Royal Family of Thailand, the Thai Foreign Ministry, the Veerapuchong Foundation, and the Royal Thai Monastery, Lumbini for providing Nepal with medical equipment and supplies to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thailand provided more than 66 different scholarships on Master's degree programme for the year 2022.



(Fifth Meeting of Nepal-Thailand Joint Commission)

Singapore

Nepal and Singapore relations continued to remain friendly, cordial and cooperative over the review period. Singapore's Temasek Foundation International, in collaboration with MiRXES Pvt Ltd and Lotus Life Foundation, provided urgent medical items to Nepal to support its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Medical supplies consisting of gowns, aprons, masks, respirators, test kits, PCR machine and thermometers were provided by the Government of Singapore.

Cambodia

Nepal and Cambodia continued to maintain friendly, cordial and cooperative relations over the period. The first meeting of Nepal-Cambodia Trade and Investment Agreement (TIFA) Council meeting was held virtually on 8 April 2022. Mr. Ganesh Prasad Pandey, Secretary of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies led the Nepali delegation. Both sides discussed ways and means for further strengthening and expanding bilateral ties and cooperation in the fields of commerce, agriculture, and investment. The meeting also agreed to establish a joint work plan and set up a multi-sectoral working group.

New Zealand

Nepal and New Zealand continued to enjoy cordial and cooperative relations. Following the tradition, the New Zealand Parliament hosted a special event in the Parliament House, on 31 May 2022 to commemorate the first ascent of Mt. Everest by Sir Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Tenzing Norgay of Nepal. The Embassy of Nepal in Australia which is concurrently accredited to New Zealand participated in the commemorative event, which was also attended by Hon. Prihandka Radhakrishnan, Minister for Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities and Hon. Michael Wood, Minister for Transport and Workplace Relations and Safety and other members of the Parliament. The number of Nepali Diaspora including students in New Zealand has been growing in recent years.

5

CENTRAL ASIA, WEST ASIA AND AFRICA

Central Asia, West Asia and Africa, which spans over a wide geographical area, remains an important region of focus for Nepal. West Asia is an important destination for Nepali migrant workers. Under the review period, the Ministry and the missions were active in ensuring the safety and welfare of Nepali workers in the region while also carrying out activities relating to rescue, relief and repatriation of Nepali citizens affected by the pandemic.

Bahrain

The year 2022 marked the forty-fifth anniversary of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Bahrain. The Embassy of Nepal in Manama organized, in June 2022, a promotional event to mark the occasion.

Foreign Minister Dr. Narayan Khadka and Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Foreign Minister of Bahrain, had a cordial meeting on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum on 12 March 2022. The two Ministers held discussions on economic cooperation and labour management, among others.

Around 26,000 Nepali are currently working in Bahrain.

Egypt

Nepal and the Arab Republic of Egypt continued to enjoy cordial and friendly relations during the review period. As members of the Non-Aligned Movement and Group of 77, the two countries continued to support each other in international forums.

The Government of Egypt provides scholarships for Nepali students in medicine and agriculture. The Embassy of Nepal in Cairo provided consular and welfare services to Nepali citizens in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and countries in Africa.

Israel

The relations between Nepal and the State of Israel have always been cordial and cooperative. Israel has remained an important development partner of Nepal ever since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1960. Major areas of cooperation are agriculture, education, health, rural development, water resources, and tourism.

Israel has remained a preferred destination for Nepali migrant workers. During the

period under review, around 3,100 Nepali were working in Israel under the G-to-G recruitment system. Additionally, 600 Nepali auxiliary workers have reached Israel under the newly signed Agreement.

The two sides have also given importance to expand the areas of cooperation in different fields including non-governmental and academic sectors.

Kuwait

The year 2022 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Nepal-Kuwait diplomatic relations. The Embassy of Nepal in Kuwait City organized various programmes including promotional events to mark this occasion.

Kuwait is one of the major labor destinations for Nepali migrant workers. Above 60,000 Nepali workers were working in Kuwait in different sectors during the period.

Enhancing connectivity between Nepal and Kuwait remained a priority. Jazeera Airways launched a direct flight between Kuwait City and the new Gautam Buddha International Airport of Nepal on 16 May 2022. Similarly, the Himalaya Airlines of Nepal started its direct flight from Kathmandu to Kuwait since 15 July 2022.

Oman

Nepal and the Sultanate of Oman have continued to enjoy excellent bilateral diplomatic relations. Around 20,000 Nepali nationals reside and work in Oman. With a view to further strengthening and

expanding cooperation in labour sector, the two countries continued to engage in finalizing a bilateral labour agreement.

Qatar

Nepal and the State of Qatar have been enjoying excellent bilateral relations based on friendship and cooperation. Qatar currently hosts nearly 350,000 Nepali migrant workers.

The Nepal-Qatar Fourth Joint Committee Meeting on Labour Matters was held in Kathmandu on 2-3 December 2021. The meeting agreed on the need to upgrade the bilateral labour agreement signed in 2005 so as to include new dimensions of labour migration governance including and in consonance with legislative, structural and labour sector reforms introduced both in Nepal and Qatar over the period.



(Officials of Nepal and Qatar during Nepal-Qatar fourth Joint Committee Meeting on Labour Matters)

High-profile mountaineers from Qatar scaled various mountains in Nepal during the review period. Sheikha Asma Al Thani, a member of the Qatari royal family and a senior official of the Qatar Olympics Committee climbed Mt. Manaslu on 8 September 2021. She also climbed Mt.

Dhaulagiri, Mt. Amadablam and finally Mt. Everest on 27 May 2022 becoming the First Qatari woman to achieve the glorious feat.

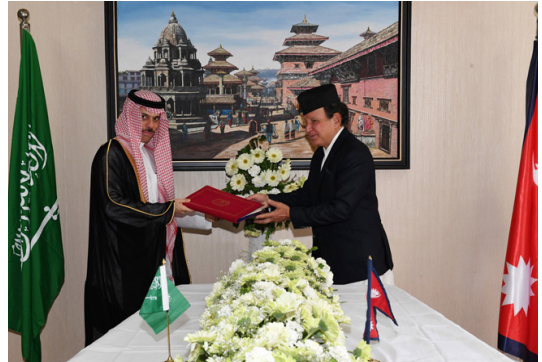
The Embassy of Nepal, Doha held a seminar on 12 November 2021 in collaboration with the Consulate Action plan for Responsible Development Society (CARDS) Corporation, Doha chapter for promoting collective investment from Nepali migrants in agriculture sector of Nepal. Similarly, Nepali products such as drinking water, spices, cardamom, tea and herbal products were promoted in the ninth International Agricultural Exhibition (Agriteq 2022) held at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Center on 10-14 March 2022.

Qatar sent a shipment of medical aid to Nepal on 12 May 2022 to support Nepal in its fight against COVID-19 pandemic.

Saudi Arabia

Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al- Saud, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia paid an official visit to Nepal on 14-15 March 2022. During the visit, Foreign Minister Faisal paid courtesy calls on the President and the Prime Minister during which discussions were held on various aspects of Nepal-Saudi Arabia bilateral relations as well as cooperation in the international fora. The Prime Minister extended best wishes for the success of the Saudi Vision 2030 and discussed the ways and means of further strengthening economic partnership and cooperation between the two countries, including the interest and wellbeing of Nepali migrant

workers. The Foreign Ministers of both countries held a bilateral meeting and signed the General Cooperation Agreement (GCA).



(The Foreign Ministers after the signing of the GCA)

Nepal Airlines started direct flights between the capitals of the two countries in April 2022.

Saudi Arabia is one of the major labor destinations for Nepali migrant workers, where around 400,000 Nepali are working at present.

The Embassy and the Consulate General continued to provide welfare and consular services to the Nepali citizens working in the Kingdom. During the review period, both Missions remained active in repatriation of undocumented workers and distressed workers in jails and detention centers, collection of dues and compensation on behalf of the deceased and repatriation of dead bodies.

A total of 567 Nepali Muslim pilgrims went to Makkah and Madinah to perform the Hajj in 2022.

South Africa

Nepal's relations with the Republic of South Africa witnessed sustained growth in the review period. Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal led a Nepali delegation to South Africa from 9 to 12 March 2022. A Declaration of Intent on Cooperation for the Establishment of a Consultation Mechanism between the Foreign Ministries of Nepal and South Africa was signed on the occasion. Accordingly, the first meeting of the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held. The meeting underscored the need to further strengthen cooperation between the two countries in different areas including trade, tourism, FDI, peacekeeping and climate change.

A video conference was held between the officials of the Nepal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) and the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SACCI) in May 2022. The meeting discussed various ways and means for enhancing bilateral trade between the two countries.

About 2,000 Nepali nationals are estimated to be residing in South Africa. During the reporting period, the Embassy arranged for relief and repatriation of 31 Nepali nationals.

United Arab Emirates

Mr. Krishna Kumar Shrestha, Minister for Labour, Employment, and Social Security, led the Nepali delegation to the Sixth Ministerial Consultation of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue held in Dubai from 25-29 October 2021.



(Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal and Ambassador Nonceba Losi, Acting Director General of DIRCO, signing the Declaration)

In May 2022, Secretary for Labour, Employment and Social Security Mr. Ek Narayan Aryal led a four-member Nepali delegation to the fifth Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour held in Durban, South Africa. Likewise in June 2022, a Nepali delegation participated in the sixth International Symposium on Partnership for Technology in Peacekeeping held in Pretoria.



(Minister for Labour, Employment, and Social Security participating in the Sixth Ministerial Consultation of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue)

Minister Mr. Shrestha paid a separate visit to the UAE from 14-18 March 2022. During this visit, he held talks with his counterpart Dr. Abdulrahman Abdulmannan Al Awar, Minister of Human Resources and Emiratization of the UAE.

Ms. Pampha Bhusal, Minister for Energy, Water and Irrigation, participated in the twelfth session of the IRENA Assembly under the theme "Energy Transition: Commitment to Action" held in Abu Dhabi (in a virtual setting) on 15-16 January 2022. The Embassy of Nepal in Abu Dhabi actively participated in all IRENA Assembly, Council and other Meetings held during the review period.

A delegation comprising the members of the International Relations Committee of the House of Representatives visited the UAE from 29 March to 3 April 2022. During the visit, the delegation attended, among others, a meeting organized by the Nepal Business Council in Dubai and observed the Expo 2020 Dubai.

Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal visited Abu Dhabi to participate in the fifth Indian Ocean Conference from 3-8 December 2021. Ambassador Mr. Krishna Prasad Dhakal attended the Majalis organized by the then Crown Prince of the UAE Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed al Nahyan on 28 December 2021 where Sheikh

Mohammad appreciated the integrity and hard work of Nepali migrant workers in the UAE.

The Second Joint Committee Meeting as provisioned in the MOU between the Government of Nepal and the Government of the UAE in the Recruitment, Employment, and Repatriation of Workers was held from 14 to 18 March 2022 in Abu Dhabi

The UAE has remained a labor destination for Nepali migrant workers, where approximately 300,000 Nepali nationals reside and work. Besides, the UAE is a development partner of Nepal. The UAE continues to support Nepal in health, education, commodity aid, biosphere and biodiversity, water and sanitation, and social service.

The scaling of Mt. Everest by an Emirati woman Nayla Al Baloushi on 14 May 2022, has helped promote Nepal's tourism in the UAE.

The UAE provided medical supplies and equipment to Nepal to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

6

EUROPE AND THE AMERICAS

The period under review witnessed further enhancement of Nepal's relations with countries in Europe and the Americas which are among the major partners in terms of Nepal's development cooperation, trade, investment, tourism, and people-to-people linkages. Cooperative exchanges with the region gained momentum through exchanges of visits and bilateral consultations. In the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, Nepal received valuable support from countries in the region in the form of critical medical supplies and vaccines.

community from both sides. The Chamber aims to serve as a platform to promote business and investment linkages and opportunities.

Denmark

Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal visited Denmark and held a meeting with State Secretary for Development Policy in Danish Foreign Ministry Ms. Lotte Machon on 3 June 2022. Matters relating to bilateral relations cooperation in the areas of climate change, technology transfer, climate financing and investment, people-to-people contact, strengthening Nepal's trade capacity, as well as Nepal's graduation from the LDC status were discussed during the meeting.

Denmark has been extending support to Nepal in the areas of education, rural electrification and green growth. Support of medical items was received from Denmark during COVID-19 pandemic.

European Union

Nepal and the EU maintain excellent relations in different areas, which are reviewed at the annual Joint Commission meeting. The EU is one of the largest development partners of Nepal and an

Canada

The relations between Nepal and Canada, marked by cordiality and friendship, was consolidated further during the reporting period. Canada extended valuable support to Nepal in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic. The vibrant Nepali diaspora in Canada played an active role in advancing people-to-people relations including through Nepali language, art, music, literature and culture.

The Federation of Canada-Nepal Chamber of Commerce (FCNCC) was established in November 2021 with participation of renowned members of business

important export market. Nepal and the EU share the common values of democracy and human rights.

The thirteenth meeting of the Joint Commission between Nepal and EU was held in Kathmandu on 24 November 2021, co-chaired by Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal and Ms. Paola Pampaloni, Deputy Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific of the European External Affairs Service (EEAS).



(Thirteenth meeting of Nepal-EU Joint Commission)

The Joint Commission renewed firm commitment to cooperation and partnerships between Nepal and the EU. Prior to the Joint Commission, a meeting of the Sub-Commission on Development Cooperation was held on 23 November. During the meeting, ongoing EU-financed projects as well as the programming for the new cycle 2021-27 were discussed.

In the meeting, Nepal conveyed its gratitude to the EU for promptly extending the support of life-saving medical items and equipment when Nepal was struggling through the devastating second wave of the pandemic in the summer previous

year. The EU welcomed Nepal's plan to graduate from LDC status by 2026 and expressed its commitment to support Nepal in achieving its development aspirations, including through the Green Resilient Inclusive Development strategy.

The EU finalized this year the new Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2021-27, which is the framework of development support to Nepal, aligned with the priorities of the current 15th Periodic Plan. Its focus areas are inclusive and green growth, human capital development and good governance.

The two sides also exchanged views on the matters of trade, investment, civil aviation and people-to-people connection.

The EU together with Finland, France and Germany announced this year Team Europe Initiative on green recovery for a total amount of EUR 240 million.

Foreign Secretary Paudyal paid an official visit to Brussels on 28-31 May 2022. He held several high-level meetings with senior EU officials including Secretary General of the EEAS Mr. Stefano Sannino, Managing Director for Asia and Pacific at the EEAS Mr. Gunnar Wiegand, as well as Acting Director for Middle East, Asia and Pacific at the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) Mr. Jean-Louis Ville, and Head of Unit for Multilateral Affairs at the Directorate-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA) Mr. Dimitrios Zevgolis of the European Commission.



(Foreign Secretary with the Secretary General of EEAS)

During the meetings, the discussion focused on areas such as socio-economic impact of COVID-19, development cooperation, economic relations and EU market access to Nepali products in the context of the graduation of Nepal from the LDC status, cooperation in climate change and environmental issues, air safety and access of Nepal's airlines to the EU sky, among others.

Finland

Finland is a valued development partner of Nepal which provides support in the areas of education, water supply, sanitation, gender equality and inclusion and other areas aimed at helping Nepal achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The second meeting of Nepal-Finland Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held in Helsinki on 2 June 2022. The meeting, led by Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal from Nepali side and

Permanent State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr. Jukka Salovaara on Finnish side, discussed various matters of bilateral interest including development cooperation, enhancing trade, tourism, investment and people-to-people contacts. The Nepali side thanked Finland for the latter's support and solidarity during the COVID-19 pandemic and appreciated Finnish cooperation in various sectors. Finland assured Nepal of its continued cooperation in socio-economic development. The two sides also discussed matters of regional and global importance including climate change, connectivity and multilateralism.

During the visit, the Foreign Secretary called on Mr. Ville Skinnari, Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade of Finland and held a meeting with Political State Secretary of Finland Ms. Johanna Sumuvuori and discussed various issues of bilateral concern.



Foreign Secretary with Finland's Minister for Development Cooperation

France

Nepal and France enjoy longstanding bilateral relations of friendship and

mutual cooperation, which are reinforced by mutual respect, goodwill, and shared values.

An updated Agreement on the establishment and functioning of the Alliance Française in Kathmandu was signed on 27 December 2022 by the Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal on behalf of the Government of Nepal and the Ambassador of France Mr. Gilles Bourbao on behalf of the Government of France. The Agreement aimed to facilitate the smooth functioning of the French Cultural Centre in Kathmandu (AFK).

A three-member parliamentary delegation led by the Chair of France-Nepal Parliamentary Friendship Group Mr Véronique Riotton visited Nepal on 8-12 March 2022. During the visit, the delegation met with the Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba. Welcoming the guests, Prime Minister Deuba expressed his appreciation for the valuable contributions made by the Parliamentary Friendship Group in promoting Nepal-France bilateral relations and highlighted the need for strengthening cooperation in the sectors of trade and investment, tourism and climate change. Mr. Riotton appreciated Nepal's efforts in promoting women's participation in politics and in combating climate change and expressed the willingness to strengthen Nepal-France co-operation in the fields of sustainable development and agriculture. The delegation also met with the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chairperson of the National Assembly

and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The delegation included Mr. Nicolas Forissier and Ms. Graziella Melchior.



(Nepal-France Parliamentary Friendship Group calls on Foreign Minister)

France provided over 600,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines to Nepal during the year.

Germany

Germany decided this year to extend development cooperation provided to Nepal beyond the year 2030. On 27 June, Germany's Ambassador to Nepal Mr. Thomas Prinz handed over a letter from the Federal Chancellor Mr. Olaf Scholz to the Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba informing about Germany's decision.



(German Ambassador meets the Prime Minister to inform Germany's decision on continuation of development cooperation)

As an expression of goodwill and generosity, Germany provided Nepal with 4.1 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines through COVAX Facility.

Germany has been an important trading partner for Nepal for many years, standing as the fourth largest export destination for Nepali products.

Italy

In order to give further momentum to over six-decade long friendly relations between Nepal and Italy, the two sides took steps this year towards establishing the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism. An MoU to this effect has been finalized by both sides and is expected to be concluded in the near future.

As a friendly gesture during difficult time, Italy provided over 600,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines to Nepal.

Norway

The first meeting of Nepal-Norway Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held in Oslo on 1 June 2022. The meeting, led by Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudel on Nepali side and by Secretary General at the Norwegian Foreign Ministry Mr. Tore Hattrem on the Norwegian side, took up the agendas of development assistance, bilateral trade, foreign direct investment, climate cooperation, and people-to-people contact, among others.



(Nepal-Norway bilateral consultation)

During the visit, Foreign Secretary Mr. Paudyal held a meeting with Ms. Bjørg Sandkjær, State Secretary for International Development of Norway and discussed various matters of bilateral concerns. Norway has been a valuable development partner of Nepal and has been providing development assistance in education, health, climate change and environment, private sector development, agriculture and renewable energy, and humanitarian support.

Romania

Romania is emerging as a preferred employment destination for Nepali youths and the number of Nepali workers in Romania is increasing every year.

With a view to institute a regular forum of engagement on matters of bilateral interest, the Foreign Ministries of the two countries finalized through negotiations this year the MoU on establishment of Bilateral Consultation Mechanism, which is expected to be signed in the near future.

Russian Federation

Nepal and the Russian Federation have a long history of friendly and cooperative relations. A delegation led by the Minister for Youth and Sports Mr. Maheshwar Jung

Gahatraj visited Russia on 13-16 June 2022 at the invitation of the Minister of Sports of Russian Federation Mr. Oleg V. Matytsin. During their meeting, the two Ministers discussed cooperation in the field of sports, including development of sports tourism in Nepal. The two Ministers also signed the Action Plan for the Development of Co-operation in the Field of Physical Culture and Sports between the Russian Federation and Nepal for 2022-2023.

With a view to further facilitate official travels, the two countries concluded this year an Additional Protocol which extends the terms of the Agreement between Russia and Nepal on the Abolition of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports on holders of official passports.

Spain

Nepal and Spain have enjoyed cordial relations that have been marked by mutual respect, cooperation and increasing people-to-people contacts.

Speaker of the House of Representatives Mr. Agni Prasad Sapkota visited Spain on 25 November 2021 to attend the 143rd Assembly of the IPU hosted by the Parliament of Spain. Speaker Mr. Sapkota addressed the Assembly on the theme, "Contemporary challenge to democracy: Overcoming division and building community". He highlighted Nepal's commitment towards strengthening democratic institutions by addressing contemporary challenges to democracy. He appreciated IPU Assembly as an

extraordinary forum for bringing together the legislators and policymakers from across the globe to discuss contemporary issues. He commended the IPU for its activeness even in the testing times of COVID-19.



(Speaker of the House of Representatives Mr. Agni Prasad Sapkota addressing the 143rd Assembly of IPU in Spain)

Speaker Mr. Sapkota also attended the Inaugural Meeting of the Parliamentary Network of NAM on 27 Nov 2021. In his address at the meeting, he reaffirmed Nepal's commitment towards NAM's principles and values. He highlighted the importance of parliamentary solidarity and exchange of experiences in consolidating NAM principles and ideals.

Switzerland

As mountainous and landlocked countries, Nepal and Switzerland treasure unique ties founded on the strength of similarities, goodwill and close people-to-people contacts. Nepal is one of the priority countries for Swiss development cooperation, which has significantly contributed to our socio-economic development, covering rural infrastructure, technical and vocational education, natural

resource management, safer migration and agriculture, among others.

The third edition of Nepal-Switzerland bilateral consultations was held in Kathmandu on 2 May 2022. Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal made opening remarks in the meeting, which was co-chaired by Joint Secretary Mr. Nirmal Raj Kafle and Mr. Andreas Raphael Nageli, Assistant State Secretary for Asia-Pacific in the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.



Third meeting of Nepal-Switzerland Bilateral Consultations

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on matters of common interest, including bilateral relations and cooperation between the two countries, regional cooperation, cooperation within the multilateral frameworks and global issues such as climate change, migration, and human rights. The Swiss side stated that its development cooperation would continue in Nepal through the new Swiss Cooperation Strategy 2023-26. The Strategy would support Nepal's endeavour towards economic recovery, green growth and sustainable graduation from the LDC status.

Turkey

At the invitation of the Foreign Minister of Turkey Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Foreign Minister Dr. Narayan Khadka participated in the Antalya Diplomacy Forum held on 11-13 March 2022 and addressed the panel on 'Democratic Governance and Security'. He shared his perspectives on the role of democratic governance in creating a peaceful, stable and prosperous society. Highlighting Nepal's journey marked by struggles in the institutionalization of inclusive democracy, the FM underlined that 'Democracy is the best guarantor of security'. He stressed that people's aspirations must be met in order to sustain democratic governance.



(Foreign Minister with his Turkish counterpart)

On the sidelines of the Forum, Dr. Khadka held a bilateral meeting with the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Mevlut Cavusoglu. The two Foreign Ministers reviewed the important aspects of the bilateral relations and mutual cooperation. The Ministers agreed to further expand the opportunities of bilateral trade and investment between the two countries.

Foreign Minister Dr. Khadka and his delegation were welcomed by Konysiad,

a business association in Konyaalti District in Turkey, for an interaction with a group of Turkish entrepreneurs. The Nepali delegation interacted with the business community for potential business collaborations between Nepal and Turkey in prospective areas. Minister Dr. Khadka invited the Turkish business community to explore Nepal's untapped business opportunities.

Situation in Ukraine and Rescue of Nepalis

Issuing a press statement on the developments in Ukraine on 24 February 2022, Nepal called on all parties concerned to exercise maximum restraint not to escalate tension. Through the statement, Nepal opposed any use of force against a sovereign country in any circumstance and reiterated the belief in peaceful resolution of disputes through diplomacy and dialogue. As a member of the United Nations, the statement said, Nepal views that the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity as enshrined in the UN Charter are sacrosanct and must be fully respected by all member states.

In the meantime, the Ministry fully mobilized its resources and contacts to rescue the Nepalis living in Ukraine to safety. Over 600 such Nepalis were enabled to move to various countries, including Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Spain, Germany, Romania and Moldova and then to Nepal.

United Kingdom

There were important developments in the over 200-year-old Nepal-UK relationship

during the reporting period.

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba paid a visit to the United Kingdom from 29 October to 3 November 2021 to participate in the World Leaders Summit of the COP26. While in London, the Prime Minister attended and addressed the welcome reception organized in his honour by the All-party Parliamentary Group for Nepal and UK-Nepal Trade and Investment Forum in London. Paul Scully MP, Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister. In Glasgow, the venue of COP26, Mr. Ben Wallace, Secretary of State for Defence called on the Prime Minister, during which matters relating to the grievances and welfare of the British Gurkha veterans as well as the UK's support to Nepal in vaccines were discussed. The Prime Minister attended breakfast reception hosted for select Heads of State and Government by the Prime Minister of the UK and the First Minister of Scotland.



(Prime Minister addressing the World Leaders Summit of the COP26 in Glasgow)



(Prime Minister participating in UN Climate Change Conference UK 2021 in Glasgow)

The Prime Minister visited the Royal Botanic Garden of Edinburgh (RBGE) and addressed a programme organized in his honour there. Lord Provost and Lord Lieutenant of Edinburgh, Councillor Mr. Frank Ross, Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development Ms. Jenny Gilruth and other high-level officials of the Scottish Government were present on the occasion. Dr. Mark Watson, Head of Major Floras and Editor in Chief of the Floras of Nepal presented on collaborative research between Nepal and RBGE.

Mr. Prem Bahadur Ale, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation paid a visit to the UK from 1 to 4 November 2021 to attend the World Travel Mart in London held in London. During the event, Nepal Tourism Board was awarded the Wanderlust Gold Award – Best Response to the Pandemic (Tourist Board) Award, for one of the most prompt and efficient responses to COVID-19 pandemic at the Wanderlust Reader Travel Awards on 2 November.

Nepal and the United Kingdom agreed this year to establish a bilateral committee for the talks on the grievances of British Gorkha veterans. A talk team has been constituted on the Nepali side to be led

by the Ambassador of Nepal to the United Kingdom, which will have representation from the organizations of Ex Gorkha community. The UK delegation will be led by Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for Defense People and Veterans.

A bronze statue depicting Kulbir Thapa carrying a wounded soldier was unveiled in Princes Gardens in Aldershot on 25 September 2021. Kulbir Thapa was the first Nepali Gurkha recipient of the Victoria Cross. The statue was erected with the private donation from Gorkha veterans and their families.

In continuation of the country's national endeavour to recover lost cultural properties from around the world, the Embassy of Nepal in London received from the Metropolitan Police of London two cultural artefacts on 18 March 2022. The artefacts included a carved wooden Torana from the sixteenth century and a carved stone sculpture of a kneeling devotee with the namaskar mudra from the eighteenth century.

Nepal and the United Kingdom finalized an MoU on the recruitment of Nepali healthcare professionals in the UK's national health services. The MoU is likely to be signed in near future and the two sides are working out an implementation protocol to pave the way for recruitment of some Nepali nurses, initially on pilot basis, to be employed in the UK's national health services.

The United Kingdom provided 2.1 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines to Nepal through COVAX facility this year.

The United Kingdom extended cooperation in the repatriation of Nepali nationals from Afghanistan after Taliban takeover.

United States of America

Nepal-US diplomatic relations entered into the 75th year in April 2022. The longstanding close and cooperative relations, which are guided by mutually beneficial agenda and the shared values of peace, development, democracy and respect for human rights, have been further strengthened and deepened through various exchanges and activities both at the government and people's levels during the reporting period. Messages were exchanged at the level of Heads of the State/ Government on the occasion of the seventy-fifth year of formal relations. Telephone conversations took place between Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba and Secretary of State Mr. Anthony Blinken on two occasions, on the Prime Minister's assumption of office on 27 July and on the contemporary matters of mutual interest on 1 March 2022.

One of the highlights in the Nepal-US bilateral relations this year was Nepal's participation in the Summit for Democracy held on 8-10 December 2021. Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba was invited to address the Summit which was a unique opportunity for Nepal to highlight Nepal's historic achievement and remarkable progress on democratic

governance in the recent years.



(Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba in the Summit for Democracy)

Speaking in the Summit, Prime Minister Deuba shared Nepal's experiences in the journey of democracy and democratic transformation. Highlighting the achievements made on the front of Nepal's home-grown peace process, the Prime Minister stated that the democratic and inclusive Constitution was made by the elected Constituent Assembly as part of the peace process. He stated that Nepal's success story is a testimony that even the most complicated political differences could be resolved through dialogue. While expressing Nepal's commitments to and achievements on gender equality, the Prime Minister stressed that democracy must deliver on people's aspirations and that the country has now prioritized economic agendas in order to sustain democracy.

There were a number of official level visits from the US side to Nepal during the reporting period, including the visits by Assistant Secretary of State for Central and South Asian Affairs Mr. Donald Lu and Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights

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Ms. Uzra Zeya. Likewise, a delegation from the US Government's MCC, led by Vice President of Compact Operations, Ms. Fatema Z. Sumar, visited Nepal on 9-12 September 2021.

A four-member US Congressional delegation led by Senator Ms. Kirsten Gillibrand visited Nepal from 22 to 24 April 2022. The delegation was comprised of Senator Mr. Sheldon Whitehouse, Senator Mr. Cory Booker, and Representative Mr. Mondarire Jones, and Senator Mr. Mark Kelly. The visit was significant in deepening the bilateral relations at the legislative level and better communicating Nepal's achievements and challenges on various fronts. Nepali Embassy in Washington D.C. continued to make efforts to further expand interactions with the US lawmakers to better communicate to the Capitol on Nepal's priorities in the bilateral relations, and to revitalize the Congressional Nepal Caucus.



(US Congressional delegation call on Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba)

The Chief of the Army Staff Gen. Prabhu Ram Sharma paid an official visit to the US on 28 June – 3 July and held meetings with Deputy Assistant Secretary of

Defense for South and Southeast Asia Lindsey W. Ford; Vice Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Christopher W. Grady; and Chief of Staff of the Army General James Charles McConville. During these meetings he exchanged views on further strengthening military-to-military cooperation as well as enhancing Nepal's participation in UN peace operations. The third Land Forces Talks (LFT) between Nepal and the US was held in Hawaii from 22 to 24 March 2022. The LFT was focused on strengthening cooperation between the two armies in the areas of UN peace operations, humanitarian assistance, disaster response, professional exchanges and experience sharing between the two armies.

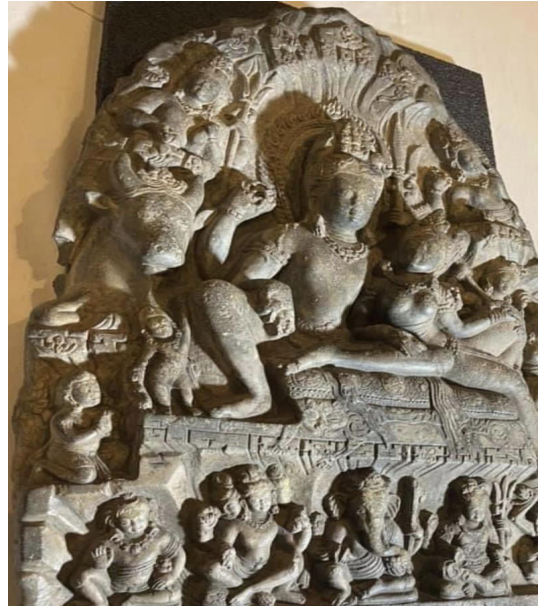
Development partnership occupied larger share of the bilateral agenda in Nepal-US relations during the reporting period. The United States continues to be a major development partner for Nepal since development cooperation started in 1951. The ratification of MCC compact by the Federal Parliament of Nepal on 28 February 2022 marked a major milestone in this development partnership and added a momentum into the bilateral relations. The Country Development Cooperation Strategy of the USAID for Nepal for the period 2020-2025 involved an enhanced level of grant commitment worth \$659 million. The focus of the two countries is on effective and timely implementation of the development projects, under these agreements.

As of 26 July 2022, a total of USD 71 million was disbursed by the US for 30 development projects in Nepal during the fiscal year 2078/79 (15 July 2021 to 16 July 2022). During the reporting period, the US extended substantial cooperation to Nepal in the health sector along with agriculture, women and children and commerce. Support was also received from the US in the form of crucial medical items and vaccines that helped protect lives of the people against COVID-19.

With the total of USD 142.35 million worth of export trade, according to the trade data of FY 2021-22, USA is the third largest trading partner of Nepal in terms of total trade, the fourth largest source of imports into Nepal and second largest export destination country for Nepal. Nepal still stands to benefit from the preferential facilities accorded by the US under its Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act (TFTEA) of 2015, which gives duty free and quota free access to 77 manufacturing goods from Nepal until 2025. This year, the US climbed to the third position among the largest investors in Nepal.

Nepali Embassy in Washington D.C. recovered during the reporting period from various art institutes and private collectors several historically and culturally important artifacts of Nepal which were illegally brought into the US. These include the statue of “Uma Maheshvara” handed over by Denver Art Museum on 13 September 2021 and three historical art objects- statues of “Padampani” (11-

11 century A.D.), “Shakyamuni Buddha” (14-15 century A.D.), and “Nagaraja” (12th century A.D.) – from The Dentons US LLP, a law firm in Chicago, representing the will of a deceased unnamed private collector of the art objects on 28 April 2022. These artifacts have already been brought to Nepal.



(One of the cultural artifacts repatriated to Nepal)

Likewise, our Consulate General in New York signed four art return/handover documents in the reporting period, with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the Rubin Museum of Art, New York; and the Yale University Art Gallery, Connecticut. The Consulate General coordinated to repatriate seven lost works of art of archaeological importance back to Nepal this year, including three stone sculptures (Shiva in Himalayan Abode with Ascetics, Buddhist Goddess Tara/Parvati,

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and Buddha,) and four wooden carvings (upper section of Frieze/Torana, flying Garland bearing Apsara/Gandharva, and a pair of Struts with Male Figures).

The United States extended cooperation in the repatriation of Nepali nationals from Afghanistan after Taliban takeover at Nepal's request.

7

REGIONAL COOPERATION

Nepal took active part in the regional process over the year and continued efforts in fighting the challenges and difficulties posed by COVID-19 pandemic. Nepal maintained solidarity with the Governments and peoples of the Member States of the South Asian Association for Regional Organization (SAARC) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) in fighting and containing the COVID-19 virus and achieving swift recovery through inclusive, resilient and sustainable institutions and socio-cultural, economic, technology-driven, and health-related infrastructures.

Being a committed regional member, Nepal remained effortful in initiating, coordinating and conducting dialogues among the Member States so that discussions among the Member States could take place in an amicable manner and the regional organizations, as an embodiment of our common aspirations for peace, development and prosperity, would get a new momentum and a new lease of life.

As a founding member of SAARC, Nepal has continuously been stressing upon the need for the Member States to deliver

their commitments in actions to bring back the true sense of regional cooperation as envisaged by our leaders during its foundation. Nepal has consistently been advocating to revitalize the SAARC process, including through early convening of the nineteenth Summit.

On another front, BIMSTEC made a much-awaited legal and institutional breakthrough during the year. With the adoption of the Charter and the signing of several other legal instruments during the fifth Summit, BIMSTEC has earned a credibility of a legal personality that will be instrumental in realizing the ambition to achieve regional progress and prosperity through collective endeavors.

In the face of numerous regional and global challenges, Nepal reaffirms its commitment to meaningful contribution and partnership among the countries in areas of common interests and priorities through the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

SAARC

On the Occasion of the Thirty-Seventh SAARC Charter Day, Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba extended his warmest

greetings and best wishes to the people and governments of the SAARC Member States. In his message, Prime Minister Deuba stressed the revitalization of the SAARC process including through an early convening of the Nineteenth Summit and urged all the Member States to recommit for promoting a stronger, more effective and result-oriented SAARC grounded in cooperation, trust, and understanding.

BIMSTEC

Fifth BIMSTEC Summit

Nepal participated in the fifth BIMSTEC Summit which was held in and from Colombo, Sri Lanka on 30 March 2022 in hybrid mode. The Nepali delegation was led by Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba virtually.

In his address, Prime Minister Deuba stressed the need to breathe new life into BIMSTEC by pooling the strengths of resources of its Member States. He stated that future cooperation under BIMSTEC should be framed in such a way that can address the long-term economic, social and developmental consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure that the region builds back better.



(Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba addressing the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit virtually)

The Summit adopted the BIMSTEC Charter following a virtual signing ceremony. Prime Minister Deuba signed the Charter on behalf of Nepal.

Prior to the Summit, the Eighteenth Ministerial Meeting of BIMSTEC was held on 29 March 2022.



(Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Narayan Khadka at the eighteenth Ministerial Meeting of BIMSTEC)

The Summit also endorsed three new instruments. Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Narayan Khadka, who participated in the Summit-in-person in Colombo, signed on behalf of the Government of Nepal, the BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and the Memorandum of Association on the Establishment of Technology Transfer Facility in Colombo. Similarly, Joint Secretary and Head of Regional Organizations Division Mr. Ghanashyam Bhandari signed the MOU on the Mutual Cooperation between Diplomatic Academies/Training Institutions of BIMSTEC Member States.

On the sidelines of the BIMSTEC meetings, Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Khadka paid courtesy calls on President of Sri Lanka Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa, and Prime Minister Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa.



(Foreign Minister of Nepal with the President of Sri Lanka Gotabaya Rajapaksa)

Third BIMSTEC Energy Ministerial Meeting

Nepal hosted the third BIMSTEC Energy Ministerial Meeting virtually on 20 April 2022. Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Ms. Pampha Bhusal chaired the Meeting. The Meeting approved the establishment of the BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Coordination Committee (BGICC) to implement the provisions of the MoU for the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection and its Terms of Reference (ToR).



(Ministers and Leaders of Delegations in the Third BIMSTEC Energy Ministerial Meeting)

BIMSTEC Secretary General's visit to Nepal

The Secretary General of BIMSTEC Mr. Tenzin Lekpell paid a four-day introductory visit to Nepal from 3 to 6 January 2022.

During his visit, he called on President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari, Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba, Foreign Minister Dr. Narayan Khadka, Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal and other high-level dignitaries of Nepal.

Other Major BIMSTEC Activities

On the occasion of the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the establishment of BIMSTEC, Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba extended greetings and felicitations to the peoples and governments of BIMSTEC Member States. In a separate message, Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Narayan Khadka reiterated Nepal's commitment to contribute constructively to the regional process.

Nepal participated in the PANEX-21, a multi-national Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief exercise, held in Pune, India from 20 to 22 December 2021. The program was organized to build regional cooperation among BIMSTEC Member States in responding to various natural disasters.

The first meeting of the BGICC was held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar virtually on 30 June 2021. The meeting discussed the importance of formulating a BIMSTEC Policy for Transmission of Electricity and a BIMSTEC Policy for Trade, Exchange of Electricity and Tariff Mechanism in accordance with the Terms of Reference of the BGICC. The BGICC Members also shared their views the BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Master Plan Study (BGIMPS) among others.

Nepal participated in the first Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Himalayan Science Council which was hosted by India virtually on 12 October 2021. The meeting discussed and negotiated the draft text of the Concept Paper on the Proposal for the Himalayan Science Council (HSC) and agreed to prepare the Memorandum of Association (MoA) on the Establishment of the Council. The sixth meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances, and Precursor Chemicals was hosted by Sri Lanka virtually on 28-29 October 2021. Nepal actively participated in the Ninth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime hosted by Bhutan virtually on 25 November 2021. The twentieth meeting of the BIMSTEC Working Group on Rules of Origin (WG-ROO) was hosted by Bangladesh virtually from 10 to 11 January 2022.

Nepal also participated in the First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Cyber Security Cooperation held in New Delhi from 14-15 July 2022. Discussions at the Meeting included the setting up of a Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) by 2025.

Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD)

Nepal participated in the eighth meeting of the Working Group on ACD Blueprint 2021-2030 held virtually under the chairmanship of the Islamic Republic of Iran in August 2021. The Working Group concluded the negotiation on the draft ACD Blueprint. Nepal proposes the early adoption of the Blueprint. Nepal also attended the informal Senior Officials' meeting of the ACD held virtually on 15 September 2021 under the chairmanship of the Republic of Turkey. The meeting decided to learn from the Rules of Procedure of other regional organizations.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

Nepal joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2015 as a Dialogue partner. Nepal has already expressed its intent to be upgraded to Observer status of the SCO which will pave the way to secure membership in SCO. Nepal is always supportive of the provisions and regulations of the Organization.

8

MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS

Nepal considers the United Nations an indispensable global multilateral platform for forging cooperation and understanding among the Member States based on the principles of sovereign equality, mutual respect, and international law. Nepal strives for a stronger, accountable, transparent, and inclusive United Nations that ensures peace, prosperity, and robust partnership for people and the planet. Nepal repeatedly voiced her support for just and rule-based global governance throughout the year, demonstrating its steadfast faith in and commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. Nepal continued to evaluate issues based exclusively on their merit during the review period. In June 2022, Nepal was elected one of the Vice-Presidents for the seventy-seventh session of the UN General Assembly.

HIGH-LEVEL PARTICIPATION IN MULTILATERAL FORUMS

Food Systems Summit

Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba addressed the Food Systems Summit convened by the UN Secretary-General on the margins of the seventy-sixth

session of the UN General Assembly on 23 September 2021. In his pre-recorded video statement, Prime Minister stressed the need to building a resilient and sustainable food system to achieve zero hunger by 2030. Prime Minister Deuba underscored that the transformative investment in agriculture would be crucial to ensure food security for all. He expressed Nepal's commitment to global collective efforts to ensure that nutritious food is a reality for all.

High-level Dialogue on Energy

Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba addressed the High-level Dialogue on Energy through a pre-recorded video on 24 September 2021. In his address, Prime Minister Deuba stressed the need for a robust and renewed global partnership to build a greener, safer, and more sustainable world. While encouraging a transition to cleaner, greener, and smarter energy, the Prime Minister highlighted the importance of energy in achieving the 2030 Agenda and implementing the Paris Agreement on climate change. The Prime Minister also expressed Nepal's commitment to realizing climate-resilient development pathways and net-zero emissions through

the utilization of Nepal's vast hydropower potential and other renewable energy sources.



(Prime Minister addressing the High-level Dialogue on Energy)

Twenty-sixth Conference of Parties of UNFCCC (COP 26)

Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba attended the World Leaders Summit organized during the twenty-sixth Conference of Parties (COP 26) of UNFCCC in Glasgow, the United Kingdom on 1 November 2021. In his address, Prime Minister Deuba urged the world leaders to recognize the specific climate vulnerability in the mountains and accord high priority to the mountain agenda in all climate-related negotiations. He also encouraged ensuring adequate support for adaptation in the most vulnerable countries by scaling up financial, technological, and capacity-building resources.

In his remarks, Prime Minister Deuba outlined Nepal's commitments to reaching a net zero emission by 2045, ensuring 15 per cent of the country's total energy demand supplied from clean energy sources and maintaining 45 per cent of the country under forest cover by 2030. He shared that, with the abundant water,

forest and biodiversity resources in the country, Nepal could be a leader in sharing clean, green and nature-based climate solutions in the region.



(Prime Minister addressing the World Leaders Summit of the COP26 in Glasgow)

Seventy-sixth UN General Assembly

Dr. Narayan Khadka, Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Leader of the Nepali delegation addressed the seventy-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly on 27 September 2021 in New York. In his address, Minister Khadka reiterated Nepal's principled position on peace, security, disarmament, terrorism, human rights, sustainable development, and climate change. He also emphasized the need for resolving conflicts through peaceful means. In the context of emerging global challenges, democracy and multilateralism have no alternatives, stressed the Minister. He also shed light on Nepal's democratic culture and harmonious way of life characterized by unity in diversity.

High-Level Debate on “Galvanizing Momentum for Universal Vaccination”

Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Narayan Khadka addressed the High-Level Thematic Debate on Galvanizing Momentum for Universal Vaccination, through a pre-recorded video message on 25 February 2022. In his address, Minister Khadka called for a strong push to make vaccines accessible and affordable to all. While highlighting the progress achieved in vaccination in Nepal, he urged for ensuring universal vaccination by promoting vaccine equity.



(The Foreign Minister addressing the General Debate of the seventy-sixth UNGA Session)

Seventy-eighth Session of UNESCAP

Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Narayan Khadka virtually addressed the seventy-eighth session of the UNESCAP held on 23 May 2022 under the theme of “A Common Agenda to Advance Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific”. In his address, Minister Khadka highlighted the need to strengthen regional cooperation and engage in inclusive dialogue on interconnected issues of the world such

as debt management, tax evasion, and environmental sustainability, among others.

Ministerial Meetings of LDCs, LLDCs, and the Community of Democracies

Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal addressed the Annual Ministerial Meeting of LDCs on 17 September 2021 through a pre-recorded video statement. In his address, the Foreign Secretary highlighted the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on peoples, societies, and economies of the LDCs, including Nepal, and called for equitable, affordable, and universal access to vaccines. Additionally, he called for an enhanced level of international support to LDCs in the areas of ODA, FDI, aid for trade, debt relief, climate financing, and technology transfer.



(Foreign Secretary addressing the Annual Ministerial Meeting of LDCs)

Similarly, Foreign Secretary Paudyal also addressed the annual Ministerial Meeting of LLDCs on 23 September 2021, through a pre-recorded video message. Outlining Nepal’s vision to transform the country from a ‘landlocked’ to a ‘land-linked’, Foreign Secretary Paudyal stressed the need for a scaled-up and renewed partnership among LLDCs, transit countries, and development partners.

Similarly, the Foreign Secretary addressed the tenth Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies virtually on 22 September 2021. Speaking at the Conference, Foreign Secretary Paudyal emphasized the importance of strong institutions to protect and promote democracy and freedom.

Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77 and China

Nepal participated in the Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77 and China, held virtually on 30 November 2021. At the meeting, Nepal highlighted the economic and social consequences of COVID-19, particularly in LDCs and LLDCs, and urged the developed nations to pursue globally inclusive economic and trade policies to create an enabling environment for global prosperity.

THEMATIC MULTILATERAL ENGAGEMENTS

International Security and Disarmament

At the multilateral forums, Nepal expressed its concern over the soaring world military expenditure which reached US\$ 2.113 trillion in 2021. It advocated for redirecting the resources for achieving SDGs, tackling the climate crisis, and ensuring universal vaccinations against the COVID-19 pandemic. Nepal also emphasized strengthening multilateral regimes against weapons of mass destruction including the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Nepal urged

the international community to respect the importance of principles of transparency, irreversibility, and verifiability of nuclear weapons for their total elimination. Moreover, Nepal supported strengthening regional disarmament to complement the global disarmament regimes for enhancing international peace and security. Nepal also supported regulating cyber activities and outer space and promoting transparency in cyberspace and outer space. While condemning terrorism, Nepal called for global solidarity against it.

UN Peace Operations

As of June 2022, Nepal became the third largest TPCC. Nepal consistently called for balanced, fair, and equitable opportunities for Troops and Police Contributing Countries (TPCCs) to serve in senior positions in UN peacekeeping. Moreover, Nepal pledged to contribute more military and police capabilities, provide regional and international peacekeeping training, increase women's participation, and use renewable energy in peacekeeping missions. Nepal also advocated for ensuring the safety and security of blue helmets, who devote their lives to fulfilling the mandates of the UN Charter. With the support of the UN, Nepal is hosting the seventh International Partnership for Technology in Peacekeeping Symposium in 2023.

In July 2022, Major General Nirmal Kumar Thapa was appointed by the UN Secretary-General as Head of Mission and Force Commander of the UN Disengagement

Observer Force (UNDOF). Additionally, Nepali peacekeeper Superintendent Sangya Malla serving in the UN Stabilization Mission in Democratic Republic Congo (MONUSCO) was awarded the UN Woman Police Officer of the Year in November 2021.

Sustainable Development and related Issues

The UN General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution in November 2021 endorsing Nepal's graduation from the LDC category with a preparatory period of five years. At multilateral fora, Nepal emphasized that graduating countries should be provided with the necessary support to ensure their smooth and irreversible graduation. Additionally, Nepal advocated for the full compliance of official development cooperation (ODA) commitments from development partners, encouraged increasing foreign direct investment (FDI) and aid for trade in productive sectors, emphasized vaccine equity, urged debt relief, and appealed for action on climate change and the digital divide. Nepal also encouraged expanding investments in health and social protection for building a resilient society against future shocks.

Nepal served as the Rapporteur of the Bureau of the Second (Economic and Financial) Committee of the seventy-sixth session of UNGA, after serving as the Chair of the Committee for the seventy-fifth session. Moreover, Nepal participated in the first part of the Fifth

United Nations Conference on LDC which was held in New York on 17 March 2022. The Conference unanimously adopted the decennial Doha Programme of Action for LDCs from 2022 to 2031.

Human Rights

Nepal actively participated in the forty-eighth session of the HRC in September/October 2021, the forty-ninth session in February/March 2022, and the fiftieth session in June/July 2022. Nepal responded to several communications from Special Procedures requesting inputs for their thematic reports. The Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights visited Nepal from 29 November to 9 December 2021. At the deliberations in the Council and other mechanisms, Nepal focused on the issues of rights of women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons, marginalized communities, migrants, and minorities as well as on the issues like climate change, COVID-19 pandemic, SDGs, and right to development, among others.

UN Reforms

Nepal actively advocated in favour of reforming the Security Council, General Assembly, and development system of the United Nations. In meetings dedicated to UN reforms, Nepal emphasized the need for a more representative, inclusive, transparent, and accountable Security Council as well as a revitalized General Assembly that would address pressing issues and challenges faced by the

international community. Similarly, Nepal actively participated in the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Working Group (AHWG) on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly held from March to June 2022. At the AHWG, Nepal emphasized the full adherence to the UN Charter for effective coordination, coherence, and synergy among the General Assembly, Security Council, and ECOSOC while also ensuring agenda rationalization to avoid duplication of their work. Nepal reiterated that the UN development system (UNDS) reforms should be based on reinforcing national ownership, developing country-contextual responses, and ensuring the effective delivery of development results on the ground. Moreover, Nepal was of the view that the UNDS should be able to comprehensively support all developing countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as per their national plans and strategies.

Climate Change

During the reporting year, Nepal strongly voiced its concern about the climate crisis and urged the international community to fulfill its commitments to increase climate financing and reduce greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions. Nepal also advocated for climate justice while ensuring quick, direct, and easy access to climate finance. Nepal also called for protecting mountains and the mountain economy from the adverse impacts of climate change. Additionally, Nepal expressed its commitment to realizing climate-resilient development

pathways and net-zero emissions through the utilization of Nepal's vast hydropower potential and other renewable energy sources.

ENGAGEMENTS WITH UN SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND INTER-GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

World Health Organization (WHO)

Nepal attended the Second Special Session of the seventy-fourth World Health Assembly held on 22-28 May 2022 under the theme of 'Health for peace, peace for health'. At the invitation of the Minister for Health and Population of Nepal, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of WHO visited Nepal from 21 to 23 April 2022. Nepal supported his re-election as the Director General of WHO for the second term.

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Nepal participated in the 110th Session of the International Labour Conference held from 27 May to 11 June 2022. At the Conference, Nepal emphasized the fundamental human rights of migrant workers and equal treatment in transit and destination countries. Similarly, Nepal highlighted the various measures adopted by the Government of Nepal in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the prioritization of social protection, employment generation, and the structural reform of the labour sector to improve operational capacity and service delivery.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

In the 112th Session of the council of the IOM held from 29 November to 1 December 2021, the Nepali delegation underlined the enhanced importance of the IOM in the current COVID context with increasing vulnerabilities for migrant workers. Nepal also attended the Ministerial meeting of the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) Champion Countries held in Morocco on 25 March 2022. Dr. Narayan Khadka, Minister for Foreign Affairs addressed the event through a pre-recorded video statement. In his statement, Foreign Minister Khadka underlined Nepal's commitment to the GCM and highlighted that partnership and cooperation with sending and destination countries, regional consultative groups and other entities are indispensable to maximizing migration's contribution to securing mutual development benefits. Similarly, Nepal participated in the first quadrennial International Migration Review Forum held in New York on 17-20 May 2022.

World Trade Organization (WTO)

Nepal actively participated in the Twelfth Ministerial Conference of the WTO (MC12) held in Geneva from 12 to 17 June 2022. In its intervention, Nepal urged the international community to provide support in strengthening the productive capacities of LDCs, bridging the digital divide, and building capacity in e-commerce. Nepal also underscored the importance of reforms in the WTO to

ensure a rule-based, fair, transparent, and predictable multilateral trading system that guarantees shared prosperity for all. Nepal also attended separate ministerial meetings of LDCs and LLDCs held on 19 October 2021 and 4 November 2021, respectively. Nepal along with Bangladesh represented the LDC group during the drafting of the MC12 outcome document and Ministerial Declaration on the "WTO's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Preparedness for Future Pandemics". Moreover, Nepal participated in different negotiations at various configurations to secure Nepal's interests and priorities in the MC12 outcome document.

Other Important Multilateral Events

Nepal participated in the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women held on 14-25 March 2022, the UN High-level Meeting of the General Assembly to assess the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons held on 22-23 November 2021, the sixtieth Session of the Commission for Social Development held in New York on 7-16 February 2022 and the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on Population and Development held on 25-29 April 2022.

Nepal participated in the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development organized from 5 to 15 July 2022, the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up (FfD Forum),

convened on 25-28 April 2022, the third Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the International Think Tank for LLDCS, held virtually on 15 February 2022, the twenty-first session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues held from 25 April to 6 May 2022, and the fifteenth session of the Conference of the State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities held on 14-16 June 2022.

Likewise, Nepal participated in the high-level plenary meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of nuclear weapons held on 28 September 2021, a High-level meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action to eliminate all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, organized on 22 September 2021, the high-level forum on Culture of Peace organized on 7 September 2021, the Fourth Session of the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction held in New York on 7-18 March 2022.

Nepal also participated in the eleventh Emergency Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Ukraine organized at the UN headquarters from 28 February to 2 March 2022, following a failure of the Security Council to address the Ukraine

crisis. During the Special Session, Nepal expressed concern about the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and called for an urgent cessation of hostilities and violence. Additionally, Nepal called on all parties concerned to exercise maximum restraints to de-escalate the tension immediately.

In Geneva, Nepal participated in the seventy-second session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's program of UNHCR held on 4-8 October 2021, the fifteenth Ministerial Conference of UNCTAD held on 3- 7 October 2021 and the twenty-fifth session of CSTD held from 28 March to 1 April 2022. Similarly, Nepal attended the sixty-second and the sixty-third WIPO Assemblies held on 4- 8 October 2021 and 14- 22 July 2022, respectively.

In Vienna, Nepal participated in the Fifth World Conference of the Speakers of Parliament held on 6-8 September 2021, the First Meeting of States Parties to Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) held on 21- 23 June 2022, the sixty-fifth session of CND held on 14-18 March 2022, the sixty-fifth Annual General Conference of IAEA held on 20-24 September 2021 and the nineteenth session of UNIDO General Conference held from 29 November to 3 December 2021, among others.

Nepal in Different UN Bodies

During the review period, Nepal held the following positions in different UN bodies and agencies:

S. N.	Organization/ Responsibility	Position	Tenure
1	The seventy-seventh session of the UNGA	Vice-President	2022-23
2	UN Human Rights Council	Member	2021-2023
3	CEDAW Committee	Member	2021-2024
4	Second Committee for the seventy-sixth Session of UNGA	Rapporteur	2021-2022
5	Core Group on Trade Facilitation, WTO	Focal Point	2016-
6	Core Group on Aid for Trade, WTO	Focal Point	2020-
7	Chair of the Committee on Customs Valuation	Chair	2021-2022
8	Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) of WTO	Board Chair	2019-2021
9	ACT-Accelerator Facilitation Council of the WHO	Member & Chair of AARC	2020-
10	UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development	Member	2019-2022

11	Program and Budget Committee, WIPO	Member	2019-2021
12	Commission on Population and Development	Member	2018-2022
13	Preparatory Committee of the Fifth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries	Member	2022-23
14	Commission on Narcotic Drugs	Member	2020-2023

Nepal's current candidatures

During the reporting period, Nepal made efforts to garner the support for Nepal's candidature for membership in the Economic and Social Council for the term of 2024-2026 and for Chair of the First Committee for the eighty-first session of the UN General Assembly (2026). Nepal has also announced its candidature for UN Security Council for the term of 2037-38.

**POLICY MATTERS, ECONOMIC
DIPLOMACY AND OVERSEAS
NEPALIS**

9

POLICY MATTERS

Important policy initiatives including a few flagship activities were unveiled during the review period. The Ministry benefited from the guidance of both Houses of Parliament, and the Parliamentary Committees, on issues related to the conduct of foreign policy and diplomacy. Considering economic diplomacy as one of the major tools in meeting economic interests of Nepal, the Ministry conducted different activities including interaction programmes with missions abroad and domestic stakeholders. Interactions were also held with the relevant agencies of various provinces of Nepal on promotion of export, tourism, and investment.

The Ministry worked closely with the National Planning Commission, the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Finance on implementing the annual workplan of the Ministry. An in-house study was conducted for identifying the roles of the Ministry and the missions abroad in the process of

graduating from the LDC category.

SOME FLAGSHIP PROGRAMS

The Ministry organized some flagship programmes in the areas of foreign policy and economic diplomacy during the reporting period.

Prof. Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series

With an aim to create a platform to deliberate on the issues of national, regional and global importance that have direct bearing on Nepal's national interest and the conduct of foreign policy, the Ministry launched Professor Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series from this year. The first edition of the lecture series was held on 7 June 2022. Professor Surya Subedi, QC, OBE, DPHIL and Professor of International Law at the University of Leeds, United Kingdom delivered a keynote speech on the theme '**Foreign Policy of Nepal: Past, Present and Future**'.

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(First edition of Prof. Yadu Nath Khanal lecture series)

Distinguished personalities including former foreign ministers, policy makers, diplomats, intellectuals, media persons, and practitioners of foreign policy and diplomacy attended the Lecture.



(Distinguished Personalities attending the Prof. Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series)

The annual Lecture Series is expected to serve as a platform for deliberating on and understanding major issues of contemporary international relations, acquiring better insight into the art of diplomacy and foreign policy.

Foreign Service Day

The first ever Foreign Service Day commemorating the establishment of the

Foreign Service as a separate group within the Civil Service of Nepal was celebrated on 10 Jestha 2079 B.S. (24 May 2022). The Ministry honoured nine former foreign service officials who had served in different capacities at the Ministry in the past.



(Foreign Service Day Celebration)

Interaction on Nepal's Foreign Policy and Economic Diplomacy

The Ministry organized an interactive program on 'Nepal's Foreign Policy and Economic Diplomacy' on 30 April 2022. Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Narayan Khadka and Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal addressed the programme highlighting major challenges & opportunities of Nepal's foreign policy and economic diplomacy. Mr. Deepak Dhital, former Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations in Geneva made a presentation on Economic Diplomacy. In his presentation, Mr. Dhital focused on understanding, projection and promotion of the nation's vital economic interests within and beyond borders.



(Interaction Programme on Nepal's Foreign Policy and Economic Diplomacy)

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ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY

In conformity with the Government's policy of conducting economic diplomacy for bringing socio-economic transformation in the country, the Ministry and the Diplomatic Missions abroad have been working to expand bilateral and multilateral economic relationships and partnerships with the friendly countries. Priority has been given in sectors such as infrastructure development, export trade, foreign investment, technology transfer, development assistance, tourism and foreign employment.

A high-level Economic Diplomacy Monitoring Committee is in place to monitor the implementation of country-specific strategies and strengthening inter-agency cooperation and coordination among the Ministry, Missions and the relevant government agencies and private sector organizations in the conduct of economic diplomacy.

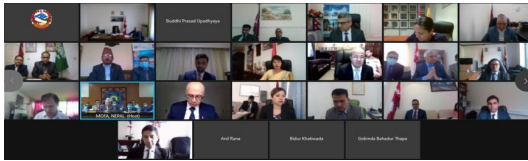
Programmes on promotion of Nepal's economic diplomacy

The Ministry held three separate virtual interactions on economic diplomacy in August 2020, April 2021 and May 2021 focusing on promotion of export trade and

investment by bringing together relevant stakeholders from the Government, private sector and the Nepali Missions abroad.

The Ministry organized a three-day virtual interactive programme on 11-13 August 2021 focusing on export promotion. The event, chaired by Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal, and attended by Ambassadors/Heads of Missions, representatives from the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, Trade and Export Promotion Centre, Federation of Export Entrepreneurs Nepal along with entrepreneurs of exportable Nepali products focused on current state and challenges of Nepali exports, new market opportunities and potentials as well as role of the Ministry and Nepali Missions abroad in facilitating and coordinating export trade.





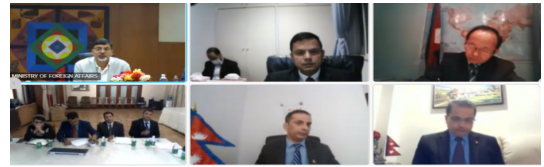
(Interaction Programme on Promotion of Nepali Exports)

As the continuation of the export promotion programme, the Ministry held another interaction between the Government agencies, Nepali missions abroad and the private sector on 19 May 2022. The programme, chaired by Foreign Minister Dr. Khadka, emphasized on the proactive role the private sectors and Nepali missions need to play for enhancing Nepal's trade.

Likewise, on 3-4 May 2022, the Ministry organized an interaction programme on investment promotion among representatives from the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, Investment Board Nepal, Department of Industries, FNCCI, CNI and IPPAN and Nepali missions abroad. The need for developing database of potential investors by Nepali missions abroad and facilitating to connect them with relevant authorities in Nepal was underlined during the programme.

Interaction Programme on Remittances

Finance Minister Mr. Janardan Sharma held a virtual interaction with Nepali missions abroad on 10 April 2022.



(Finance Minister Speaking at the Interaction Programme on Remittance)

During the interaction programme, Finance Minister Sharma gave an overview of the state of Nepali economy. Speaking on various incentives provided by the Government of Nepal on remittance received through formal channel, the Minister emphasized the role of Nepali missions in encouraging Nepali Diasporas to send money through a formal channel. He also stressed the need to attract foreign investment in order to fulfill the resource gap.

Interaction with various provinces on promotion of export, tourism and investment

As yet another new initiative in promoting economic diplomacy, the Ministry reached out to five Provinces this year to understand the issues at the field level and receive inputs on the Ministry's and the Missions' expected roles in promoting trade, investment and tourism.

The Ministry also organized interaction programmes on promotion of Nepal's export trade, investment and tourism at Birgunj in Madhesh Province and Hetauda in Bagmati Province on 23 and 25 August 2021, respectively.



(Interaction Programme in Birgunj)

Similarly, the Ministry organized an interaction programme with the local businesspersons and entrepreneurs in Ilam and Jhapa of Province No. 1 on 4-5 October 2021 for the promotion of Nepali tea. The programme explored opportunities and

challenges related to the promotion of Nepal's tea and also discussed the role of the Foreign Ministry and the Nepali diplomatic missions abroad in facilitating the export of tea from Nepal.

On 26-28 February 2022, the Ministry organized interaction programmes on export, tourism and investment promotion in Pokhara and Bhairahawa of Gandaki and Lumbini Provinces, respectively.

Representatives of the Provincial Government, local entrepreneurs and businesspersons participated in the interactions.



(Interaction with Local Tea Entrepreneurs at Jhapa and Ilam in Province No.1)

11

OVERSEAS NEPALIS

The Ministry has continuously provided services to Non-Residential Nepali as provisioned in the NRN Act 2064 and NRN Rules 2066. During the reporting period, the Ministry together with the Missions abroad issued/renewed 2,989 NRN identity cards. The Ministry also facilitated the NRNs for the purchase of properties for residential purpose in Nepal.

In collaboration with the Nepali Community Organizations, including NRNA, the Ministry and Embassy of Nepal in Berlin successfully launched rescue operation in

Ukraine to relocate the stranded Nepali in conflict affected zone in Ukraine to a safer place. Furthermore, Nepali missions continued partnership with Nepali community organizations for promoting Nepal abroad through various activities.

Nepali community supported Nepal by collecting life-saving medical equipment during the trying time of the COVID-19 pandemic when the country had faced acute shortage of medicines and medical equipment.

**PROTOCOL MATTERS, SERVICE
DELIVERY AND GENERAL
ADMINISTRATION**

12

PROTOCOL MATTERS

The Ministry handled a number of high-level incoming and outgoing visits. Outgoing visits included the visits of Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba to India and the United Kingdom. Similarly, the Ministry extended protocol courtesies and coordination during the visit of Shree Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India. Other incoming visits included the official visits to Nepal by the State Councilor and Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China Mr. Wang Yi and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud.

The Ministry completed procedures for the appointments of 23 Nepali ambassadors and one Honorary Consul during the period under review. Similarly, the Government of Nepal granted agrément to the

appointment of 49 ambassadors of various countries to Nepal. During this period, 35 ambassadors-designate presented their Letters of Credence to the President and seven ambassadors left Nepal upon completion of their tour of duty in Nepal.

Similarly, in this period, approval was given for the appointment of four Honorary Consuls of different countries to Kathmandu. Nepal established diplomatic relations with six more countries, after which the number of countries having diplomatic relations with Nepal reached 177.

Appointment of Nepali Ambassadors

On 28 October 2021, the Government of Nepal decided to appoint the following Ambassadors:

S.No.	Name of the Ambassadors	Residential	Non-Residential Concurrent Accreditation
1.	Mr. Gyanchandra Acharya	United Kingdom	Ireland, Malta, International Maritime Organization, World Energy Council, International Coffee Organization, International Tea Committee
2.	Dr. Shankar Prasad Sharma	Republic of India	Bhutan, Afghanistan
3.	Prof. Sridhar Khatri	United States of America	Panama, Costa Rica, Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Bahamas

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Similarly, the Government of Nepal, on 7 April 2022, decided to appoint the following individuals including Joint Secretaries of the Nepal Foreign Service as Ambassadors of Nepal to the countries mentioned hereunder:

Sr. No.	Name of the Ambassadors	Residential	Non-Residential Concurrent Accreditation
1.	Mr. Bishnu Pukar Shrestha	People's Republic of China	Mongolia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, SCO, INBAR, AIIB
2.	Mr. Bashudev Mishra	Sri Lanka	Maldives, SACEP, Colombo Plan Secretariat
3.	Mr. Dan Bahadur Tamang	South Africa	Botswana, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Mauritius (Non-Credential presenting countries: Congo, Gabon, Lesotho, Seychelles)
4.	Dr. Sharmila Parajuli	Spain	UNWTO
5.	Mr. Milan Raj Tuladhar	Russian Federation	Belarus, Kazakhstan, (Non-credential presenting countries: Moldova, Armenia and Azerbaijan)
6.	Mr. Dilli Raj Paudel	Malaysia	Indonesia, Brunei Darusaalam
7.	Ms. Kanta Rizal	Israel	Cyprus
8.	Mr. Nabaraj Subedi	Saudi Arabia	SDF (Non-credential presenting country: Somalia, Yemen)
9.	Mr. Kailash Raj Pokharel	Australia	New Zealand, Fiji, Papua New Guinea (Non-credential presenting countries: Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Solomon Island, Samoa)
10.	Dr. Naresh Bikram Dhakal	Qatar	-
11.	Prof. Dr. Jyoti Pyakurel (Bhandari)	Republic of Korea	-

12.	Prof. Dr. Ram Swarth Raya	Denmark	Norway, Sweden, Finland, Lithuania (Non-credential presenting Countries: Iceland, Latvia, Estonia)
13.	Dr. Durga Bahadur Subedi	Japan	APO, UNU
14.	Mr. Nirmal Raj Kafle	Brazil	Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Venezuela, Paraguay (Non-credential presenting Countries: Peru, Guyana, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Uruguay)
15.	Mr. Sushil Kumar Lamsal	Egypt	Algeria, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Morocco, Jordan, Nigeria (Non-credential presenting countries: Libya, Syria, Tunisia, Mali, Mauritania, Republic Guyana, Sudan)
16.	Mr. Bharat Kumar Regmi	Austria, UNO Austria, CTBTO, IAEA, UNIDO, UNODC, UNOOSA)	Croatia, Slovenia, Greece, FAO, WFP, IFAD (Non-Credential presenting countries: Montenegro, Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia)
17.	Mr. Tirtha Raj Wagle	Bahrain	-
18.	Mr. Ghanashyam Bhandari	Bangladesh	-
19.	Mr. Harischandra Ghimire	Myanmar	-
20.	Mr. Dor Nath Aryal	Oman	-

Presentation of Letters of Credence to the President

The Government of Nepal granted agréments to 49 nominations received from various countries during the period of review. The following Ambassadors presented their Letters of Credence to the Rt. Hon. President of Nepal:

S.N.	Country	Name of the Ambassador-Designate	Residential/ Non-Residential	Ceremony Date
1.	Egypt	Ms. Noha Hamdy Ahmed Elgebaly	Residential	30 Sept 2021
2.	Germany	Dr. Thomas Heinrich Prinz	Residential	
3.	Norway	Ms. Torun Dramdal	Residential	
4.	France	Mr. Gilles Boubao	Residential	
5.	Brazil	Mr. Carlos Alberto Michaelson Den Hartog	Residential	22 Oct 2021
6.	Italy	Mr. Vincenzo De Luca	Non-Residential	
7.	Malta	Mr. Reuben Gauci	Non-Residential	
8.	South Africa	Mr. Joel Sibusiso Ndebele	Non-Residential	
9.	Singapore	Mr. Simom Wong Wie Kuen	Non-Residential	24 Nov 2021
10.	New Zealand	Mr. David Gregory Pine	Non-Residential	
11.	Holy See	Most Reverend Leopoldo Girelli	Non-Residential	
12.	Turkey	Mr. Firat Sunel	Non-Residential	
13.	Romania	Ms. Daniela Mariana Sezonov-Tane	Non-Residential	
14.	Nigeria	Mr. Ahmed Sule	Non-Residential	10 Dec 2021
15.	Ethiopia	Ms. Tizita Mulugeta Yiman	Non-Residential	
16.	Rwanda	Ms. Jacqueline Mukangira	Non-Residential	
17.	Luxembourg	Ms. Peggy Frantzen	Non-Residential	
18.	Slovenia	Ms. Mateja Vodeb Ghosh	Non-Residential	

19.	Colombia	Mrs. Mariana Pacheco Montes	Non-Residential	23 Feb 2022
20.	Cuba	Mr. Alejandro Simancas Marin	Non-Residential	
21.	Kazakhstan	Mr. Nurlan Zhalgasbayev	Non-Residential	
22.	Mauritius	Mrs. Santi Bai Hanoomanjee GCSK	Non-Residential	2 Mar 2022
23.	Botswana	Mr. Gilbert Shimane Mangole	Non-Residential	
24.	Maldives	Dr. Hussain Niyaz	Non-Residential	
25.	Tunisia	Mrs. Hayet Talbi EP Bilel	Non-Residential	
26.	Austria	Mrs Katharina Wieser	Non-residential	
27.	Hungary	Mr. Andras Laszlo Kiraly	Non-residential	11 Apr 2022
28.	Argentina	Mr. Hugo Javier Gobbi	Non-residential	
29.	Canada	Mr. Cameron Dean Mackay	Non-residential	
30.	Dominican Republic	Mr. David Emmanuel Puig Buchel	Non-residential	
31.	Indonesia	Mr. Heru Hartanto Subolo	Non-residential	9 June 2022
32.	Spain	Mr. Jose Maria Ridao Dominguez	Non-residential	
33.	Chile	Mr. Juan Rolando Angulo Monsalve	Non-residential	
34.	Jamaica	Mr. Jason Keats Matthew Hall	Non-residential	
35.	India	Shri Naveen Srivastava	Residential	30 June 2022

Farewell of Ambassadors

The Ministry facilitated the return of following Ambassadors after the end of their term in Nepal.

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S.N.	Name	Designation	Date
1.	Mr. Lasse Bjorn Johannes- sen	Ambassador of Norway	July 2021
2.	Mr. Roland Schafer	Ambassador of Germany	July 2021
3.	Mr. Francois-Xavier Leger	Ambassador of the French Republic	Aug 2021
4.	Ms. Maria Teresa Mesquita Pessoa	Ambassador of the Federative Republic of Brazil	Sep 2021
5	Ms. Sara Beysolow Nyanti	Resident Coordinator of the United Nations to Nepal	Dec 2021
6.	Mr. Musaid Sulaiman Al Marwany	Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Mar 2022
7.	Mr. Vinay Mohan Kwatra	Ambassador of India	Apr 2022

Appointment, Tenure Extension and Promotion of Honorary Consuls/Consuls General of Nepal

The Ministry completed necessary process for the appointment, re-appointment and upgrading of the following Honorary Consuls, Honorary Consuls General of Nepal to various countries/cities:

S.N.	Name	Designation	City/State (Country)	Decision Taken	Tenure Till
1.	Mr. Dinesh Khadka	Honorary Consul	Auckland, Waikato, Northland	New Appointment	27 June 2026
2.	Mr. Fed- erich Neil Brown	Honorary Consul General	West Australia	Promotion	27 June 2026

Appointment of Honorary Consul for Kathmandu Valley

The Ministry completed necessary procedures for proposal of the following countries to appoint Honorary Consul in Kathmandu valley/Bhaktapur:

Sr. No.	Name	Designation	Country	Tenure Till
1.	Dr. Birendra Prasad Mahato	Honorary Consul	Russian Federation	12 Feb 2025
2.	Mr. Raju Shrestha	Honorary Consul	Lao PDR	4 May 2025
3.	Mrs. Moushumi Shrestha	Honorary Consul General	Sweden	31 Oct 2025
4.	Mr. Surendra Shakya	Honorary Consul	Monaco	18 April 2025

Diplomatic Relations:

Nepal established diplomatic relations with an additional six countries-Timor-Leste, Barbados, Palau, South Sudan, Belize, and Trinidad and Tobago in the year 2021-22, bringing the total number of countries with diplomatic ties with Nepal to 177.

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CONSULAR SERVICES

During the review period, the Department of Consular Services (DoCS) continued to provide consular services to Nepali and foreign nationals. It also catered services regarding privileges, immunities and exemptions to Diplomatic Missions and International Organizations stationed in Nepal as per international law and practice.

The Department launched an integrated consular application service with a view to create a single door system to be used by all Nepali missions abroad, district administration offices, and local level with which the Department has established partnership. Service seekers may apply online the Department's website or through local municipalities, district administration offices. They can also use mobile Application named "Nepal Consular" and check the progress/status of the cases.

Online Police Clearance Certificate (PCC) Attestation

The Department introduced online Application system for PCC and obtained API (Application Programming Interface) from the Nepal Police Server for Police Report Verification and started online PCC attestation service from 29 August 2022.

System of Online Verification of Documents

All the documents attested by the

Department may be verified online from its website to ensure the authenticity of the document. The concerned authorities may directly verify the authenticity of the Power of Attorney issued by the Nepali Missions abroad through the website of the Department.

Collaboration with Department of National Identity and Civil Registration

The Department obtained API of vital registration (birth, death, marriage, divorce and migration) from Department of National Identity and Civil Registration for the verification of the vital documents submitted for consular attestation.

Collaboration with Postal Services Department

The Department signed an agreement with the Postal Service Department to make arrangement to receive and dispatch documents for consular attestation via express postal service of the district post offices.

Publication of Consular Handbook

The Department published a Consular handbook in Nepali language comprising information about the procedures and documents required for various consular services. The hand-book available on the Department's website was also distributed to all the wards of local level with whom the Department has established collaboration.

Operation of consular service toll free 1152 number

The Department has started toll free number 1152 from 31 May 2022 during office hours to provide information regarding consular services.

Online Visa Recommendation System

The Department recommended for visa for Government officials who needed to travel abroad for attending meetings and programs as per the decision of the Government of Nepal. The letters issued

from the Department could be checked and verified online by the concerned authorities.

Online Services to the Diplomatic Missions in Kathmandu

The Department continued to provide systematic and effective services via online system to the Diplomatic Missions based in Nepal. This system has on the one hand brought uniformity while reducing duplication and lengthy process in service delivery and on the other, it has saved time of both the Department and the Missions.

Quantitative Overview of Consular Functions in the Fiscal Year 2021/22

S.N.	Details of Services	Number of Work Performed
A	Attestation section	
1	Total number of attested documents (Document attested online 253022)	413534
2	Revenue collected (in NRs.) Revenue collected from Police Clearance Certificate attestation: 13,12,77,500 Revenue collected from attestation of other documents: 8,07,63,500	21,20,41,000
B	Consular and Legal Counseling Section	
1	Recommendation for issuing Nepali driving license on the basis of foreign driving license held by the Nepali citizen	45
2	Recommendation for Medical treatment, Religious tour, World cycling tour and others	46
3	Recommendation for education certificate attestation and nationality verification	2,465

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S.N.	Details of Services	Number of Work Performed
4	Recommendation letter to Indian Embassy for Police verification report to Nepali citizens of their period of stay in India	546
5	Recommendation for procurement of chemicals and explosives	156
6	Recommendation letter for vehicle permit to enter India	8
7	Citizenship renouncement of Nepali citizens	57
8	Authentication of Power of Attorney issued by Nepali missions abroad	215
9	POA, VOR, H-Form Request (Malaysia), GOSI Form regarding compensation of Nepali citizens deceased abroad	615
10	Search and rescue of Nepali nationals abroad	634
11	Dead body repatriation of Nepali nationals deceased abroad	248
C	Visa and Exemption Section	
1	Issuance of diplomatic/official/gratis visa	1,317
2	Issuance of diplomatic/official ID Card	384
3	Issuance of SAARC visa stickers	4
4	Number of recommendations for exemption	4246
5	Other correspondence and recommendation	2,204
6	Number of visa recommendation to the foreign missions on GON's nominations	709
D	Compensation Amount (NRS)	
	Compensation received from Nepali missions abroad and sent to District administration Offices (Received in FY 2021-2022 Rs. 620,826,587.30 Remaining balance/due of previous FY (to be sent): Rs. 86,228,377.15)	Rs. 707,054,964.45

14

PASSPORT SERVICES

Introduction of e-Passport/eMRTDs

The Department of Passports introduced the e-Passport (eMRTD) on 17 November 2021. E-Passport is more secure, reliable, and convenient than the existing Machine-Readable Passport (MRP) with its distinct security features.

The Procedure Relating to Issuance of e-Passport was issued in 2021 to provide detailed information about the newly introduced e-Passport and its application process. Besides, necessary amendments were made to the Passport Act, 2076, Passport Regulations, 2077 and Passport Procedures, 2078 to incorporate provisions related to e-passports.

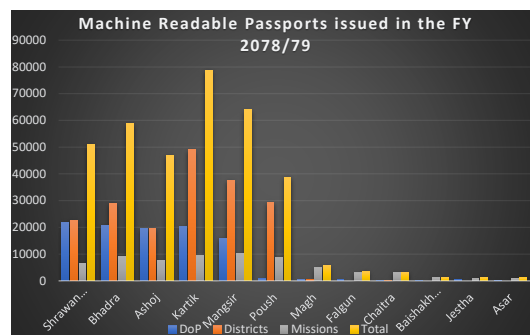
The first e-Passport was issued to Mr. Satya Mohan Joshi, eminent writer and historian. He was a centenarian. The passport was presented to Mr. Joshi by Foreign Minister, Dr. Narayan Khadka, amid the formal inauguration ceremony of the e-passport organized by the Department.

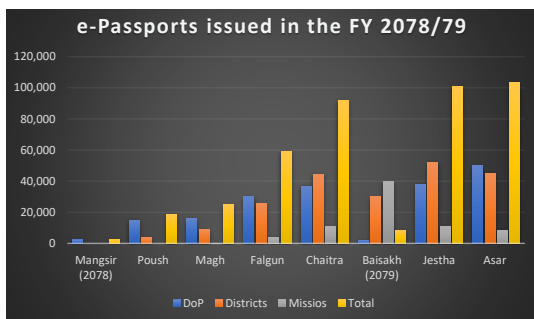
The e-passport service has been decentralized to make it accessible to the public. Applications for e-Passports can be made from all 77 District Administration Offices (DAOs), 18 Area Administration Offices (AAOs), and 32 Nepali Missions abroad. While the DAOs and AAOs provide regular service, the DoP provides urgent

services. The Department has signed an agreement with the Department of Postal Services for the smooth and fast delivery of passports to the concerned DAOs, AAOs and the regional passport distribution centers, whereas passports are sent to the Missions abroad through Diplomatic Mail as per specified schedule. A total of nine regional passport collection and distribution centers have been established to distribute the passports to the relevant districts in the particular area.

Total MRPs issued in the FY 2078-79

The Department personalised a total of 354,314 passports in the fiscal year 2078-79, out of which 101,076 were issued from the DoP and 187,412 and 65,826 were issued from the DAOs/AAOs and Nepali missions abroad respectively. The details of the passports issued from 2078 Shrawan (July 2021) to 2079 Asar (June 2022) is presented below:





Improvements in Service Delivery

- To make the passport application process easy, convenient, fast and managed, the pre-enrollment form was made mandatory. All the applicants must fill out the application form online and book an appointment in advance.
- Online payment system was introduced. Payments can be made online through Connect IPS and E-sewa or at the Global IME Bank's counter in the Department.
- A new user-friendly website was developed with detailed information about the e-Passport application process, <https://nepalpassport.gov.np>.
- Applicants were notified through short messaging services (SMS) or telephone regarding the status of their applications.
- Mobile App- 'Nepal ePassport' was also launched, allowing people to check their application's status via Mobile App.
- Digital displays and notice boards were displayed in the entrance and other visible areas.

- First Aid room and breast-feeding room have been established for the convenience of the customers.
- As per its commitment to making the service delivery process simple, fast, transparent and customer-friendly, and addressing grievances of the public, the department set up a grievance management unit headed by the Director.
- Regular orientation and training were organized for the staffs to develop a positive attitude and friendly behaviour toward the clients.
- Department abided by the tolerance policy for corruption, and other immoral acts or conduct. It requested the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) and the Nepal Police to continue surveillance on the premises and take action, if such cases are found. During this period, a total of 23 persons were sent to the police who were found involved in illegal activities including forgery of application forms.
- CCTV cameras have been installed in major places.

Other activities

Orientation and Training Program

Dissemination, interaction, orientation and training programmes were organized in all seven Provinces to inform them about the newly introduced e-Passport, its technology and the application process.

In the same way, virtual interaction programmes were held with the

missions abroad to address their passport-related queries.

Passport Museum with E-museum facilities

- A Passport Museum was established in the Department which has a collection of old paper passports and booklets. The museum provides the history of the Nepali passport and information about the passport holders in early days. Besides, specimen passports of various countries are also displayed in the museum.

Total Revenue

The department collected revenue of Rs. 3,717,872,994 in the FY 2078/79.

NS/ISO 9001: 2015

The Department is one of the main service providers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It received the certificate of NS/ISO 9001: 2015 for its quality management. In the changing context too, the Department is committed to making improvements in its service delivery.

15

ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Procurement and Construction

For the reporting period 2021-22, the Ministry completed the procurement of furnishing for the newly built multi-purpose building in Tripureswor, which currently houses the Department of Passport, Department of Consular Services and Institute of Foreign Affairs.

The renovation of Ministry's existing building inside the Singha Durbar premises continued. The architectural design for a planned new building in the adjacent area is also in the final stages of completion.

Preparatory works were carried out for construction of chanceries in the recently acquired properties in Canberra, Australia as well as Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. A team led by the head of the General Administration Division and including technical officials from the Department of Urban Development and Building Construction visited Canberra to facilitate the procurement process of constructing the chancery as well as official residences. In line with the Government's policy, the Ministry focused on purchasing new land in a number of different countries where Nepal has resident missions as well as constructing buildings for its missions and staff while also enhancing the management of the existing properties.

Human Resource Development

In an effort to enhance the competence, morale and professionalism of its officials, the Ministry sent its officials to participate in different trainings, seminars and workshops related to international relations, diplomacy and foreign policy.

- Permanent staff – 159 including MoFA, DoP and DoCS
- Contract staff – 110 in total including Departments; 51 (MoFA only)

Archive Management

The Ministry completed classification and sorting of historically and archaeologically important documents. It also sought to work closely with the office of National Archives to manage this task. Digitisation and storage of classified documents continued.

Financial Resource Management

Accountability, transparency, efficacy and efficiency were taken into consideration while mobilising financial resources and outstanding irregularities accumulated over the years have been minimised.

Revenue collection in FY 2078-79 (Rs in 000)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Nepali Missions Abroad	Department of Passports	Department of Consular Services	Grand Total
13,013.90	26,02,694.50	37,17,873.00	2,12,067.50	65,45,649.00

Budget Allocation and Expenditure in the FY 2078/79 (Rs in 000)

Particulars	Budget Allocation	Expenditure	
		Budget	Percentage
Recurrent	53,86,412	47,24,424	87.71
Capital	14,73,700	2,96,937.6	20.15
Total	68,60,112	50,21,362.6	73.20

APPENDICES

I

MAJOR HIGH-LEVEL VISITS

A. OUTGOING

S.No.	Dignitary	Country	Dates	Remarks
1	Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba	United Kingdom	28 October to 4 November 2021	To participate in the World Leader's Summit, 1-2 November 2021, held during the 26 th UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow
2	Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba	India	01 April-03 April 2022	Official Visit

B. INCOMING

S.No.	Dignitary	Country	Dates	Remarks
1.	Shree Narendra Modi, Prime Minister	India	16 May 2022	Official Visit
2.	His Highness Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	14 March 2022	Official Visit
3.	Mr. Wang Yi, State Councilor and Foreign Minister	People's Republic of China	25-27 March 2022	Official Visit

II

AGREEMENTS/MOUs

S.No.	Agreements/MoUs	Date
1.	MoU between the Government of Nepal and the Government of the Republic of India for the Construction of Motorable Bridge over Mahakali River at Darchula (Nepal) and Dharchula (India)	1 February 2022
2.	MoU between the Government of Nepal and the Government of India was signed on 28 February 2022 for the supply of Urea and DAP from India to Nepal under the Government to Government Arrangement	28 February 2022
3.	MOU between the Government of Nepal and the Government of India for Enhancing Technical Cooperation in Railway Sector	2 April 2022
4.	Framework Agreement of International Solar Alliance (ISA).	2 April 2022
5.	MoU between the Government of Nepal and the Government of India Regarding 'Final Location Survey' of the Proposed Broad Gauge Railway Line Between Raxaul and Kathmandu	7 October 2021
6.	Agreement on General Cooperation (GCA) between Nepal and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	15 March 2022
7.	Updated Agreement between Nepal and France on the establishment and functioning of the Alliance Française in Kathmandu	27 December 2022



MEETINGS OF BILATERAL CONSULTATION MECHANISM

S.No.	BCM	Date and Venue
1.	Fourteenth Nepal-China Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism Meeting	25 May 2022 (held virtually)
2.	Fifth meeting of Nepal-Republic of Korea Bilateral Consultation Mechanism	9 November 2021, Kathmandu
3.	First Meeting of Nepal-South Africa Bilateral Consultation Mechanism	10 March 2022, Pretoria
4.	Thirteenth meeting of the Joint Commission between Nepal and EU	24 November 2021, Kathmandu
5.	Second meeting of Nepal-Finland Bilateral Consultation Mechanism	2 June 2022, Helsinki
6.	First meeting of Nepal-Norway Bilateral Consultation Mechanism	1 June 2022, Oslo
7.	Third meeting of Nepal-Switzerland Bilateral Consultations in Kathmandu	2 May 2022, Kathmandu
8.	Fifth meeting of Nepal-Thailand Joint Commission held virtually	25 August 2021, (held virtually)

IV

MAJOR STATEMENTS

**Video Message delivered by the Rt. Hon. President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari at
the Annual Conference of BOAO Forum for Asia 2022
(21 April 2022)**

**Your Excellency Mr. Ban Ki Moon
Your Excellency Mr. Li Baodong
Distinguished Delegates**

Namaskar

I have immense pleasure that the Annual Conference of the Boao Forum for Asia is being organized with the theme “The World in COVID-19 and Beyond: Working Together for Global Development and Shared Future”.

On behalf of the people of Nepal, I would like to extend thanks for inviting me to address this important Conference. The Boao Forum has continuously been exchanging views on economic, social and environmental issues in the Asia region inviting high-level political leadership, private and academic sectors by developing cooperative relations among the countries in the region.

As an initial member of the Forum, Nepal always appreciates this initiative.

Organized in the beautiful city of Boao of China, the Forum will substantially contribute to the sharing of experience and knowledge highlighting the achievements of our friendly neighbour China in attaining economic development through poverty alleviation.

Moreover, China, being the host country of the Forum, can play an important role in further elucidating how the development process could be accelerated and the living standard of people could be raised in the presence of lasting peace and political stability.

In this context, I express my happiness that under the visionary and strong leadership of His Excellency President Xi Jinping of China, the development process with social justice is accelerating in China, spreading the message of lasting peace, stability, and common prosperity of all nations for the happiness of humankind as a whole.

During the last two years, the world has suffered huge human and economic losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has particularly affected the poorest and least developed countries.

The progress made by these countries over the years in achieving sustainable economic development through poverty alleviation has been pushed back due to the pandemic. In this particular context, I am confident that the Boao Forum will make serious deliberations on the measures to be adopted by countries for control and prevention of the pandemic as well as for the economic recovery.

I am confident that this Conference will succeed in spreading the message provided by the COVID-19 pandemic to the world that particular attention need to be paid to innovative and quality health education as well as in the development of health infrastructure. On this occasion, on behalf of Nepal and the Nepali people, I wish to thank the World Health Organization and the member countries for providing assistance bilaterally as well as through the COVAX facility.

Likewise, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to our friendly countries, especially the Government of the People's Republic of China, for providing vaccines and medical equipment to support our fight against the COVID-19. This has greatly helped in gradually smoothing out economic activities while protecting Nepali people from the pandemic.

Through this Forum, I wish to make a special appeal to the world community for the announcement of a program with important strategic packages for the economic recovery of developing countries like Nepal.

Today, the solution to global challenges and problems can be achieved only through partnership, collaboration and mutual cooperation among countries. Therefore, I hope that this Forum will contribute to the pursuit of a common future of human civilization through the concepts of "Whole of Region" and "Whole of the World" encompassing each and every country in the world.

While we make deliberations on our efforts to build a safer world in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, we cannot forget the climate crisis. Mountainous countries like ours and several island countries have been adversely affected by the climate change.

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit those countries even harder. Every country must implement its commitments to reduce carbon emissions to prevent global warming.

Finally, while reiterating Nepal's commitment to play an active role in the common cause of building a beautiful world after COVID-19, I wish this programme a grand success!

Thank You!

**ADDRESS BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER
MR. SHER BAHADUR DEUBA AT CII BUSINESS FORUM
NEW DELHI, INDIA
02 April 2022**

**Chairperson of CII,
Distinguished members of the Indian business community
Members of Nepali Delegation
Friends from Media
Ladies and Gentlemen**

I feel honoured to be among you all here in New Delhi today.

At the outset, I would like to extend my deep appreciation to the CII family for organizing this forum.

It is inspiring to meet the leaders from India's business community, investors and entrepreneurs.

Leaders of Nepali business community are also with me here as part of my delegation.

I hope the deliberations today would be fruitful in exploring and further expanding business and investment linkages between Nepal and India.

Dear Friends

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted every aspect of human life and economies. Not only have we lost our brothers, sisters and citizens but have also been afflicted by the unprecedented economic hardships. Jobs have been lost; businesses collapsed; and livelihoods have become uncertain for many.

We are facing the twin challenges of achieving economic recovery on the one hand and accelerating inclusive and sustainable development on the other.

In this context, the significance of collaborative partnership with private sector is even more critical now.

No country can recover and prosper today without government and private sectors joining hands internally and forging partnerships with countries externally.

Nepal is now set to graduate from the LDC status by 2026. Our aspiration is to emerge as a vibrant middle-income country by the end of this decade.

Nepal seeks to build a closer partnership with the Indian private sector.

We desire to welcome more Indian investors in Nepal and invite them to be a meaningful part of our economic transformation.

We have opened almost every sector of economy for foreign investment. And among these, hydropower, manufacturing, tourism, services, infrastructure, and agro-based industries are our priority sectors.

Our policies envisage to empower the private sector and facilitate businesses. Our tariffs are low; the tax regime is simplified; and trade-related infrastructures are being strengthened.

Incentives for investment in Nepal are no less attractive. Every business that has investment in Nepal has achieved very high rate of return.

The policies as well as procedures for investment have been streamlined.

The Investment Board of Nepal provides one door services for large-scale investors. For example, the Board has facilitated the 900 megawatt Arun-III and the 900 megawatt Upper Karnali hydropower projects—both involving Indian capital.

Lately, SJVN and IBN have entered into an agreement to carry out another mega-project named Lower Arun.

Nepal is not new to Indian investors. Partnership between the businesses and investors of the two countries has quite a long history.

Some of you are already in the hydro energy sector, which will not just help transform the Indian economy but also contribute to mitigating the adverse impacts of climate change.

Though having insignificant carbon footprints, Nepal has also prioritized climate action high in its development agenda. We are now accelerating the development of clean energy through hydropower.

Nepal's rivers have a tremendous potential to contribute to the green and clean energy security in South Asia. We are eager to enhancing collaborative and joint efforts to harness these resources. Investment in the development of Nepal's hydropower has mutual benefits.

It is of paramount importance for us to bridge the financing gap to achieve desired development outcomes.

I, therefore, invite the investors to join hands in mutually beneficial sectors.

Today Prime Minister Modi Ji and I adopted a Joint Vision Statement on Power Sector Cooperation. This Statement has opened avenues for a long term cooperation in hydropower sector. I call upon business community to seize upon this and invest in hydro power development in Nepal.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Economic reform is a continuous process, for which the Government of Nepal has a firm commitment.

We are aware that connectivity infrastructure as well as interconnectedness of economies will have multiplier effects.

Linking Nepal's highlands with the Indian Ocean with seamless 'hardware' and 'software' of connectivity is our priority. These include roads, railways, waterways and power grid interconnection.

Cross-border transmission infrastructure is being strengthened with new and upgraded transmissions lines. There is a tremendous potential in power trade. I am confident that surplus power in Nepal starting from the coming wet season will contribute to the operation of industries in India.

Railway link with India is being scaled up. Roads are being upgraded on both sides of the border. Trade and transit procedures at the border are being improved.

Prime Minister Modiji and I flagged off the passenger railway service between Jayanagar and Kurtha this afternoon. This will be a much-anticipated resumption of cross-border railway service after a gap of many years. Trains will be plying on an upgraded railway track.

The construction of two new international airports in Nepal has also been completed. Gautam Buddha International Airport, Bhairahawa is opening for commercial flights from 16 May 2022.

State-of-the-art infrastructure will ultimately ease trade and businesses.

Regional and sub-regional platforms such as SAARC, BIMSTEC and BBIN have further complemented our bilateral economic engagements.

Dear Friends,

As India celebrates 75th year of its independence, **Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav**, this country has many success stories to share with the rest of world.

India today has emerged as a vibrant economy. It is a major economic powerhouse of the 21st century as well as a pharmaceutical and technology hub.

As a close neighbour with deep and diverse ties, Nepal wishes to benefit from India's economic rise.

I am sure that today's event will build on the strong foundation of the ties between our business communities and help scale up the economic relations between Nepal and India.

Thank you!

**NATIONAL STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER OF NEPAL RIGHT HONOURABLE
MR. SHER BAHADUR DEUBA AT THE FIFTH BIMSTEC SUMMIT
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA, 30 MARCH 2022
(HELD IN HYBRID MODE)**

Theme: BIMSTEC - Towards a Resilient Region, Prosperous Economies, Healthy Peoples

Your Excellency Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka,

Your Excellency Madam Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh,

Your Excellency Mr. Lotay Tshering, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bhutan

Your Excellency Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India

Your Excellency Mr. Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand,

Honourable Ministers

Secretary General of BIMSTEC

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Namaskar and warm greetings to you all from Nepal.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Your Excellency Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa and the Government of Sri Lanka for the successful stewardship of BIMSTEC process over the last three and a half years. Holding of this Summit would not have been possible without your pro-active leadership, commitment, and dedication.

I would also like to commend Secretary-General Mr. Tenzin Lekphell and his team at the Secretariat for their tireless professional service to the Organization.

Thanks are also due to the Honourable Ministers and our Senior Officials for their diligent work in the lead-up to this Summit.

Excellencies,

The world today faces challenges that are both complex and unprecedented in their nature, gravity, and urgency. Inequalities both within and among nations are deepening

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and ideals of cooperation, collaboration and solidarity are wavering. These problems are further exacerbated by emerging threats, primarily climate change, digital divide, and crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like any other part of the world, our region has been fighting an epic battle against the pandemic over the last two years. Hundreds of thousands of people have died, many have relapsed into poverty, and structural vulnerabilities have deepened.

Even if the pandemic curve seems to be flattening gradually, the fight is far from over. Its economic and developmental consequences are sure to play out for quite some time.

Vaccine inequity has become yet another impediment to resilient recovery.

The pandemic has added further strain to the economies of the BIMSTEC countries which are already facing the endemics of poverty, unemployment, and low level of productivity and growth. In this context, our Summit today carries a higher significance. Given the unusual times we are meeting in, it is a true testament to the resilience of our regional spirit, a pledge of unity and solidarity, and a crucial step forward for our cooperation and collaboration.

It is a commitment to the shared goals of peace, progress and prosperity as enshrined in the 1997 Bangkok Declaration.

In fact, the theme of today's Summit - 'BIMSTEC - Towards a Resilient Region, Prosperous Economies, Healthy Peoples' resonates very well with the spirit of the Declaration and the challenges we are facing now.

True, our Organization has made some important achievements over the last 25 years- be it in terms of clarity of mandate, legal framework, formal institutional arrangements, or sector-specific cooperation.

The Fourth Summit held in Kathmandu was a significant marker of the renewed urgency recommitting to build a robust BIMSTEC, particularly through institutional reforms. It mandated the negotiation of the Charter, recommended the rationalization and restructuring of sectors and sub-sectors, and called for strengthening the Secretariat.

We are pleased that, today, we are going to sign the Charter, adopt the important instruments on Mutual Legal Assistance and Establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility, and endorse the rationalization of sectors and sub-sectors.

This will certainly be a key milestone in the history of our Organization, that may usher it into a new era.

But this is not sufficient. An organization of 1.7 billion people and a combined GDP of over 3 trillion US dollars must set higher ambitions for regional integration and cooperation.

We must muster the requisite political will to ensure that BIMSTEC process rekindles hope and reignites imagination.

We must breathe new life into the Organization by pooling the strengths of our natural resources, age-old civilizations, and diverse cultures and heritages.

We must better frame the future of cooperation to translate our ambition into action and leverage these potentials and resources— for our peoples, our countries, and our region.

This will require concrete action on several fronts.

First, our race to resilience must start with a green, flexible, and inclusive recovery plan.

This means action on vaccines, investment in health systems, and expansion of social protection schemes, together with structural reforms and quality investment in physical and human capital.

BIMSTEC must do its part to ensure that the region builds back better from the pandemic and is well-prepared for any future shocks and disasters.

It needs to chart out sustainable and resilient pathways to deal with the long term economic, social, and developmental consequences of COVID-19.

In this connection, I would like to share with you that the vaccination drive in Nepal has been gaining a strong momentum. We have so far received over 47 million vaccines and fully vaccinated close to 68 percent of our target population and about 92 percent of the eligible people have received at least one dose.

This has been possible due to the support and cooperation of our neighbors, development partners, COVAX Facility, and the entire international community. We remain grateful to them for their goodwill and valuable assistance.

Second, with less than a decade left, our region is not on track to achieve any of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The pandemic has further strained our development efforts.

So, we must reverse the regressing trends and accelerate the implementation of these global ambitions.

We must ensure an effective and timely implementation of the BIMSTEC Poverty Plan of Action and early operationalization of BIMSTEC Development Fund. The time-bound implementation of projects and programmes will be critical to uplift people's lives and livelihoods, create economic opportunities, and scale up growth.

It is more crucial for countries like Nepal, which are set to graduate from the LDC category. This is also because preparations for graduation will overlap with the pandemic recovery and will entail upfront cost and loss of international support measures. This will require the development and implementation of sector-specific projects covering the needy countries, if not the entire membership.

Third, connectivity – both in physical and digital spheres – plays a catalytic role for

enhancing an effective regional process. It also helps businesses – especially small and medium enterprises – to link up with global markets and value chains.

BIMSTEC cannot thrive in the absence of deeper integration of our countries, societies and markets through roads, railways, airways, waterways. This calls for investment in and promotion of transportation networks, energy and power grid interconnections, and information highways.

The BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity we are going to endorse today is a big step forward. But an even bigger step will be the implementation of the projects as stipulated in the Plan.

Also, deeper connectivity and sharing of information and technologies will be vital to ensure regional security. It is only through an enhanced level of cooperation that we can combat terrorism, organized crimes, human and drugs trafficking, and money laundering facing the region.

Fourth, greater trade and investment linkages are a *sine qua non* for a robust regional cooperation.

However, the volume of intra-regional trade and investment within BIMSTEC is not that encouraging. The pandemic-induced disruptions have further dampened the trade and investment flows.

This needs to be reversed. BIMSTEC must focus on promoting economic ties, encouraging private sector participation, and facilitating trade and transit.

The success of our Organization will be contingent upon the innovation it inspires, the entrepreneurship it ignites, and the economic partnership it promotes.

An early conclusion of the ongoing negotiations on agreements on trade in goods, trade in services, investment, and mutual assistance in customs matters is a must for us to move ahead.

Fifth, our region is at the sharp end of climate change.

Climate crisis has upset the 'organic link' between mountains and oceans, and even endangered the Himalayan identity and civilization.

We need bold climate action before the crisis passes the point of no return.

We must take strong steps to help the vulnerable communities, make transformative efforts to halt warming at 1.5 degrees, and build climate-resilient development pathways in line with the global ambition of net zero scenario by 2050.

We must make the current crisis a gateway to a greener, safer, and more sustainable Bay of Bengal region.

Finally, our aspiration of a vibrant, forward-looking, and integrated BIMSTEC region will not be realized without the ownership of peoples and communities at the grassroots level.

This requires meaningful cooperation among governments and policy makers, parliamentarians, academics, private sectors, think tanks, civil societies and most importantly the people in a spirit of good neighbourliness. The signing of the MOU on Mutual Cooperation between Diplomatic Training Institutions is an important step.

Nepal welcomes the move to operationalize tourism circuits connecting our temples, archaeological sites, and eco-tourism and adventure sites. We must promote Buddhism as a strong connecting thread. In this regard, we call for an early establishment and operationalization of the Buddhist circuit with Lumbini, the birthplace of Gautam Buddha.

In line with the rationalization of areas of cooperation, Nepal is pleased to lead the people-to-people contact sector. We remain committed to engaging with other member states and contributing towards building strong bonds at the level of the peoples.

To conclude, Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen, regional cooperation is the only route to a more resilient, prosperous and sustainable Bay of Bengal region. In order to realize this regional aspiration, we must promote the BIMSTEC that is clear in both direction and destination. We must enhance its international visibility and build partnership with international organizations and other non-member states. Nepal remains committed, as ever, to contribute constructively to the BIMSTEC process.

I thank you all for your attention.

**STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER OF NEPAL RT. HONOURABLE MR. SHER
BAHADUR DEUBA AT THE FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT
NEW YORK, 23 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**Mr. President,
Excellencies the Heads of State and Government
Mr. Secretary General, and
Distinguished Delegates.**

First, I would like to commend the Secretary-General for convening this Summit.

There is no better time than this to deliberate on food systems. Today one in every ten people on Earth is under-nourished, and the COVID-19 pandemic has further worsened food insecurity.

With disruptions in supply chains and rising food prices, the situation in LDCs and LLDCs is all the more acute.

It is important for this Summit to be bold. We must translate our commitment into building food systems fit for the future.

Mr. President,

A mountainous country, Nepal has a food system that is highly vulnerable to disasters caused by climate change and extreme weather.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further limited our fiscal space, endangered our food chains, and risked reversing our development gains.

Despite these hardships, the Government under my leadership has adopted pro-poor and inclusive policies to tackle poverty and hunger, to save people's lives, and to rebuild the economy to make it better and stronger.

My government aims to protect farmers engaged in food production by adopting a life cycle approach.

These efforts are made in line with our constitution's promise to ensure affordable, healthy, and nutritious food for all Nepali people.

We are determined to achieve zero hunger by 2030.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Transformative investment in agriculture will be crucial to ensure food security for all. This includes harnessing modern technologies and making high yield seed variants available in all countries.

Nepal remains committed to our collective efforts to ensure that nutritious food is a reality for all.

Thank you very much.

**STATEMENT BY RT. HON. SHER BAHADUR DEUBA, PRIME MINISTER AND
LEADER OF NEPALI DELEGATION AT THE WORLD LEADERS SUMMIT DURING
THE 26TH CONFERENCE OF PARTIES (COP 26) OF THE UN FRAMEWORK
CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)
GLASGOW, UNITED KINGDOM, 01 NOVEMBER 2021**

**Mr President,
Excellences,**

Nepal remains firmly committed to the implementation of Paris Agreement. We have submitted an ambitious NDC that plans to decarbonize our economy in all sectors. Nepal aims to reach a net zero emission by 2045. We will ensure that 15% of our total energy demand is supplied from clean energy sources and maintain 45% of our country under forest cover by 2030.

With abundant water, forest and biodiversity resources, Nepal can be a leader in sharing clean, green and nature-based climate solutions in the region.

With temperatures rising higher than global average, glaciers are receding, snowfall is decreasing and permafrost is melting in the Himalayan region. Extreme climate events are increasing, causing huge loss to economy, ecology and human lives. Around 80% of Nepal's population is at risk from natural and climate-induced hazards. During the last 40 years, natural disasters have caused close to US\$ 6 billion physical and economic damages in my country alone.

Mr. President,

Rapid warming in the Himalayas poses serious threat to food, water, energy and human security of the entire region. Glacier melting also contributes to the existential threat to the coastal and island countries due to sea level rise.

I, therefore, urge the world leaders to recognize the specific climate vulnerability in the high mountains and accord high priority to the mountain agenda in all climate-related negotiations. Keeping the global temperature below 1.5° celcius is vital for mountain people. It is an issue of our survival. To raise awareness on the climate crisis in the Himalayas, my government will host Sagarmatha Sambad – a dialogue named after Mt. Everest.

An LDC, Nepal is making sincere efforts to balance the development and climate actions. We have mechanisms to ensure that international climate finance is channelled to support transformational approaches in implementing adaptation, mitigation and disaster management actions together.

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We are engaging with all stakeholders including private sector, indigenous people, disadvantaged communities, women and youth in all our climate actions. Recognizing the value of nature to both adapt and mitigate climate change, we have decided to create a dedicated institution for working on Nature Conservation and Climate Change together.

Mr. President,

Loss and damage has become a key concern due to increased phenomena of climate induced disasters. This subject must find a place under article 4.8 of the Convention. We call upon the Parties to agree on making Loss and Damage a stand-alone agenda for negotiations and support the framework of additional financing for it. The COP 26 must ensure adequate support for adaptation in the most vulnerable counties by scaling up financial, technological and capacity-building resources.

We can deliver on our goals only through quick, direct and easy access to climate finance. We urge the Parties to agree on a clear roadmap for a new collective, quantified and ambitious goal on climate finance before 2025.

In closing, Mr. President, the decisions we make at COP 26 must do justice to those affected now, the future generations and the Mother Nature. The future of our planet depends on what we decide at this conference.

I totally agree with Prime Minister Boris Johnson that this is the last chance to save the earth.

I thank you.

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND LEADER OF NEPALI
DELEGATION HON. DR. NARAYAN KHADKA AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE
76TH SESSION OF UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK, 27 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates.**

I bring warm greetings to this distinguished audience from the people and Government of Nepal, and their best wishes for the success of this Assembly.

I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your well-deserved election. It is so significant to see that a South Asian is chosen to preside over the proceedings of the 76th session of the UN General Assembly at a time when the world is ferment in the midst of COVID-19 and climate crisis.

Please be assured, Mr. President, of Nepal's full support in the discharge of your important responsibilities.

Let me also commend the outgoing President His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkir for successfully leading the 75th session of the Assembly during the trying times.

I would like to place on record our warmest congratulations to UN Secretary General His Excellency Mr. Antonio Guterres on his reappointment for a second term of office and commend his leadership of our organization.

Mr. President

I would like to join world leaders in expressing our deepest condolences to the people across the world, who have lost their loved ones due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 has silently and cruelly claimed over 4.5 million lives. The crisis has brought the world to a grinding halt, devastated the global economy, pushed an additional 150 million people into extreme poverty, and threatened to reverse hard-earned development gains.

The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated pre-existing and perennial challenges such as poverty, hunger, unemployment, inequalities, and climate change.

This has exposed systemic weaknesses, vulnerabilities, and inadequacies in health system around the world. Nowhere is this distinctly visible than in the most weak and vulnerable countries where people remain deprived of access to even basic civic amenities.

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The theme of the General Debate 'building resilience through hope' is both timely and pertinent.

Recovering from COVID-19, rebuilding sustainably, responding to the needs of the planet, respecting the rights of people, and revitalizing the United Nations aptly mirrors the pressing priorities, challenges, and needs.

Reviving hope is critical in times of crisis. We appreciate the efforts made by the international community including the United Nations system to address the challenges posed by COVID-19.

We also welcome the pledges of funds and vaccines. Increased commitment and resources are needed for these initiatives.

Deepening vaccine inequality is leaving adverse socio-economic impacts in many low-income countries.

Fair and equitable access to vaccines must be ensured for everyone, everywhere. People's lives should come first. Vaccines must be declared as public goods for the benefit of people's lives.

In Nepal, saving lives, strengthening the health system, and pursuing economic recovery and transformation underpin our efforts to build a sustainable and resilient recovery. Despite constraints and challenges to access COVID-19 vaccines, we have been able to vaccinate close to 20 percent of our population.

We remain grateful to our immediate neighbours-India and China for their support in fighting the COVID-19 crisis.

We also sincerely thank friendly countries, like United States, Britain, Japan and others for providing vaccines, critical medical equipment, and medicines in our fight against the pandemic.

Mr. President,

Recent developments in Afghanistan are of common concerns to all of us. People of Afghanistan deserve better. We call for an unhindered humanitarian access and full resumption of public services, including health and education for all sections of Afghan society.

We urge all parties involved to ensure peace, security, and stability so that the Afghan people can live in dignity and enjoy their fundamental rights and freedom. We also urge Afghanistan to engage with the international community on the basis of the principles of the UN Charter and norms of international law.

We call on all concerned parties in Myanmar to respect the will of the people, restore the democratic and constitutional process, and uphold the fundamental rights and freedom of the Myanmar's people.

We call for an immediate end to the hardships and sufferings of the common people in Libya, Syria, and Yemen.

In the Middle East, we reiterate our long-standing position and want to see peace and security with a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine living side by side within secure and recognized international borders.

Mr. President,

For over 63 years, Nepal has consistently contributed to the UN peace operations to promote peace, security, and stability in the conflict-ridden parts of the world.

We attach high importance to the safety and security of UN peacekeepers and the need for adequate training, resources, and modern technologies. It is in this spirit that we endorsed the Declaration of Shared Commitments in support of the 'Action for Peacekeeping' initiative.

Nepal has endorsed the Kigali Principles on the protection of civilians and supports the UN Secretary General's system-wide zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse and aims for zero case scenario in peacekeeping.

As one of the largest troop and police contributing countries, Nepal believes that such countries deserve more senior level positions both at the headquarters and in the field based on the level of their contributions.

Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

Nepal condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and denounces all activities aimed to fuel social discord, communal conflicts, and intolerance.

There is a need of robust global cooperation to effectively implement the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, to combat and control financing of terrorism, and to fight the organized trans-border crimes. This underlines the urgency for conclusion of a comprehensive convention against terrorism.

It is worrisome to see new signs of arms race through modernization of nuclear arms, and weaponization of outer space among big powers. We call upon them to divert precious resources from military spending to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and lifting the most vulnerable people out of poverty.

The mechanisms of disarmament as well as the measures of non-proliferation and confidence building have been stalled. Nepal calls for general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction in a time-bound and verifiable manner.

As the host to the UN Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, we are committed to supporting the works of the Centre and reviving the Kathmandu Process for promoting regional efforts on disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation.

Mr. President,

Whether it is the rising of sea levels or melting of Himalayan glaciers, hurricanes, storms, floods or fires, climate change has become an existential threat to humanity. Reports indicate that warmer conditions have even prompted animals and plants to adopt new habits and evolve new traits.

Nepal is home to eight of the world's 14 highest peaks including the top of the world-Sagarmatha, the Mount Everest. Sagarmatha stands as an icon of adventure seekers and Himalayan heritage for us. As the environmental concerns are growing, we need to raise environmental awareness. While we welcome climbers from around the world, we expect climbers' cooperation to bring back the garbage from the high mountains to maintain their sanctity.

Nepal has a number of snow-fed Himalayan rivers that are connected to identity and civilizations and sustain one fifth of the global population. Our efforts have been to accord due ecological diligence while undertaking development activities in the Himalayan region.

Nepal is at the sharp end of climate change despite its negligible share in greenhouse gas emissions. On our part, we reiterate our commitment to delivering climate-resilient development pathways by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050.

The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, equity and respective capabilities should be at the center of the climate agenda to ensure climate justice.

The Glasgow COP26 must provide a breakthrough. Climate ambition of developing countries must be met with easier access to adequate financial and technological support for adaptation and mitigation. It must be a gateway to greener, cleaner, and smarter energy transition.

Mr. President,

With just less than a decade left, the world is not on track to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The pandemic has strained our efforts to realize the SDGs.

As we strive for resilient recovery and building back better and stronger, achieving SDGs should be at the center of our priorities.

Nepal has mainstreamed the SDGs into its national plans, policies, and programmes. Significant progress has been achieved across major sectors, such as education, health, gender equality and women's empowerment.

Changing the lives of people lacking wealth, dignity, and human rights has been our commitment.

The Least developed countries (LDCs) are the most vulnerable group of countries even

at the first quarter of the 21st century. They should be freed from the dehumanizing conditions of poverty and under development.

LDCs and LLDCs need reliable and sustainable financing, partnerships, and technology transfer to overcome their structural impediments to benefit from globalization.

As both an LDC and LLDC, Nepal's structural challenges are unique. We see our plan to graduate from the LDC category by 2026 as an opportunity to bring structural transformation and make the long-held national aspiration of graduation smooth, sustainable, and irreversible.

We look up to the LDC-5 to be held in Doha early next year as an important opportunity to renew the bond of international partnership. It must build on the unfinished business of IPOA, with a commitment to enhanced level of support to the graduating countries.

The development of multi-modal transport infrastructure and unhindered transit rights of landlocked nations are critical to their sustainable development.

We call for the implementation of past decisions and programmes in full synergy and coherence with the 2030 Agenda and expect development partners to increase their support to establish a secure, reliable, and efficient transit transport system for the landlocked developing countries.

The ongoing crisis must not be a pretext for retracting from ODA commitments.

The development potentials of South-South cooperation in terms of trade, investment and technology must be fully exploited.

It is time to reform global economic governance architecture to ensure fair and equitable representation of all. We welcome the steps taken by IMF and G20 on debt relief and debt service suspension. Nepal calls for a reformed and more equitable international debt restructuring to address the debt crisis of low-income countries.

WTO is not only about maintaining rules-based international trading order, it must also be a platform to enable the developing countries benefit from it with an enhanced level of international cooperation in the areas of aid for trade, technology transfer, and capacity building.

Connectivity is lifeline for peace, progress, and prosperity. Connectivity forms a premise for enduring cooperation, deeper integration, building of trust and confidence among nations. Nepal attaches utmost priority to cooperation through connectivity and underlines the need to create a win-win situation between and among countries.

Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

Nepal calls for concerted efforts to ensure the safety, security, dignity, and well-being of all migrant workers. We call for the effective implementation of the Global Compact

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for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and underline the need for a more robust international governance for the protection, safety, and welfare of the migrant workers.

Protection of minorities and their rights makes the world more humane and contributes to world peace and security. Despite not being a party to the Refugee Convention and its Protocol, Nepal has hosted thousands of refugees on humanitarian principles.

Nepal considers the forced eviction of citizens as a grave crime against humanity. We call upon the international community to respond responsibly and act decisively for refugees' right to return to their homeland in safety and dignity.

Mr. President,

Nepal has chosen the democratic path to development. Democracy is about people and therefore democracy is indispensable for people's welfare.

The constitution of Nepal accommodates aspirations of all its citizens. Proportional representation of all sections of the society is at its core. It guarantees a comprehensive set of internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. The constitution establishes powerful commissions to promote and protect rights and interests specific to women, Dalits, Muslims, Madhesi, indigenous people and other disadvantaged communities. It makes it mandatory to have 33% women representation in federal and provincial parliaments and 40% at the local level. This has firmed up their role in politics and development.

We are committed to conclude the transitional justice process through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons. There would be no blanket amnesty in the cases of serious violation of human rights.

As a member elected for the second term in UN Human Rights Council, we continue to add value through apolitical and impartial approach to human rights.

Mr. President,

Nepal's worldview is shaped by our adherence to the principle of 'amity with all and enmity with none'.

Our friendship with both of our neighbors, India and China, remains of paramount importance in the conduct of our foreign policy based on the principles of Panchsheel – five principles of peaceful co-existence, derived from the teachings of Lord Buddha, the enlightened son of Nepal.

The relevance of these principles as a framework for interstate relations cannot be overstated in the present context.

Principles and purposes of the UN Charter, non-alignment, international law and norms of world peace form the basis of our foreign policy.

The present government of Nepal led by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba is committed to conduct the foreign policy on the basis of sovereign equality, mutual respect, and mutual benefit and remains engaged with all friendly countries in the wider international community.

Nepal firmly believes in the indispensability of multilateralism with the United Nations as its centre. We consider this the only way to build global understanding and cooperation, promote shared interests, and secure our common future.

We add our voices in support of the measures and initiatives aimed at UN reforms. Under-representation of developing countries must be addressed in recognition of their growing contributions.

We want to see a more representative, inclusive, and transparent Security Council and a more revitalized General Assembly. Reforms must be inclusive and representative, accountable, and effective in its delivery.

We consider regional cooperation arrangements important for building trust and confidence among nations, managing harmonious relations and making the best use of complementarities for shared prosperity. Nepal's active engagement in SAARC, BIMSTEC and ACD manifests our ardent faith in regional cooperation, connectivity, and integration.

Over the last sixty-five years, Nepal and the United Nations have enjoyed a strong partnership- driven by trust, cooperation, and mutual respect. We thank the United Nations for its continued support in our development endeavors.

Nepal commends the Secretary-General for bringing out a comprehensive report 'Our Common Agenda'. We support the report's focus on the agenda of action designed to accelerate the implementation of existing commitments.

Mr. President,

We live in troubled times. There has been dramatic shift in geopolitics and geo-economics in the post-Cold War era posing unprecedented challenges on all fronts.

The world's economic center of gravity is shifting decisively towards Asia, centered on the economic growth of China and India.

At the same time, the world is becoming more complicated and polarized, with transnational challenges ranging from terrorism to climate change to food security to mass migration to political radicalism and extremism.

Under the cumulative impact of all these factors, we are experiencing with new ways of

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life in the midst of confusion and uncertainty.

We see conflicts in different parts of the world, these conflicts are more within nations than between nations. This has given rise to identity politics. Nations find themselves increasingly divided along lines of race, ethnicity, gender and religion.

We must find a common ground and practice tolerance and harmony to confront these unimaginable problems. My delegation considers that democracy and multilateralism have no alternative to overcome the stresses and strains of the day. It is also the best antidote to the risk of civil conflict in ethnically diverse societies.

I feel happy to share with this august audience that the unity in vast diversity is Nepal's national strength. Thanks to the democratic culture and harmonious way of life, Nepali people's resilience in times of hardships and sufferings has remained exemplary as seen in the aftermath of the devastating earthquakes of 2015, and the COVID-19 pandemic in recent times.

As I stand here today, my thoughts go back to 1960, when the first elected Prime Minister of Nepal, late B.P. Koirala, while addressing the UN General Assembly, said, and I quote,

“As we look at the world, we find that it is the economic disparity between countries, as between the rich and the poor people within the nation, that is the source of much friction and tension. ...The main function of the United Nations at the present moment is the creation or recreation of a climate of confidence and trust.” End of quote.

Creating a climate of confidence and trust is as relevant today as it was in 1960. It is upon us to work together for a more equitable, just, fair, resilient, and sustainable world.

In conclusion, I believe the time is now to turn the crisis into opportunity, despair into hope, and risk into resilience.

The time is now to build a stronger, interconnected, and inclusive multilateral system grounded in cooperation, solidarity and mutual trust.

We must rise to our responsibility to re-build for the sake of the people we serve and the planet we live in.

I thank you for your attention.

**REMARKS BY HON. MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS DR. NARAYAN KHADKA
AT THE FIRST EDITION OF PROFESSOR YADU NATH KHANAL LECTURE SERIES
KATHMANDU, 7 JUNE 2022**

**Honorable Members of Parliament
Chief Secretary of the Government of Nepal,
Foreign Secretary,
Keynote Speaker Prof. Surya Prasad Subedi,
Excellencies the Ambassadors,
Distinguished Guests,
Friends from the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen.
Good evening to you all!**

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all here tonight on the occasion of the very first in the Professor Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series. The need to institute a platform for constructive and insightful deliberations on key foreign policy issues has been discussed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a long time - it is with a great pride that we embark today on the first of the series.

This lecture series is named after Professor Yadu Nath Khanal, who was himself a perfect combination of erudition, expertise, and modesty. It is a fitting tribute to him, and an apt recognition of his seminal contribution to shaping Nepal's foreign policy and diplomacy that it is named in his honour.

Let me begin by thanking Professor Dr. Surya Subedi for accepting our invitation to be the keynote speaker here this evening. Today Prof Subedi joins us in celebration but we also recognize the dedication and readiness he has shown over many years to travel all the way from the United Kingdom to be here in Nepal to share his knowledge and expertise in the service of his home country whenever needed.

Professor Subedi has succinctly encapsulated the evolution of Nepal's foreign policy from its foundation. He has also suggested future outlooks for Nepal's foreign policy. We are thankful for this contribution and dedication since it cannot be overestimated how useful it has been for the practitioners of foreign policy and diplomacy to hear perspectives from an academician with a wide international exposure.

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Prof. Subedi's views have emphasized the safeguarding of our sovereignty, territorial integrity, national independence, protection, and the promotion and advancement of national interest as cornerstones of Nepal's foreign policy.

The foreign policy parameters defined by our Constitution serve as a guiding light for us and define a balanced and independent foreign policy and diplomacy. We strive to maintain friendly relations with our immediate neighbors, extended neighbors, development partners, major powers, the destination countries of our migrant workers, as well as all other countries of the world. The basis of these friendly relations are firmly rooted on sovereign equality and mutual respect; this is an approach that has always benefited us and has served our national interest well.

Rapidly changing dynamics of international politics and shifting power equation among major powers have rendered foreign policy making and practice more dynamic and complex. The world was already facing significant uncertainties in the global social, economic and international peace and security arenas. These uncertainties were further compounded by the ongoing war in Ukraine. The devastating humanitarian crisis that this war unleashed also caused other far-reaching crisis that have affected millions of people globally. Higher inflation, ensuing food and energy security threats, slower economic growth and the drying up of international financial resources is contributing to significant negative supply shocks for the world economy. The growing threats to international peace and security and the escalating tension between world powers are directly linked to these uncertainties. Nepal is certainly not immune to this global tumult. Unlike in the past, today's foreign policy is not limited to a set pattern of bilateral and multilateral institutional engagements alone, it also has to deal with mega challenges, such as, climate change; financial, food and energy crises; international migration; refugee crisis; mass evacuation and repatriation of population; transnational crimes; cyber security; terrorism and so forth.

In light of a rapidly changing global political landscape, the challenges of today's foreign policy can only be addressed through the collective and collaborative efforts of all countries, big or small, operating under accepted norms of rules-based international order and through multilateralism. We consider that respect for and adherence to the principles of sovereign equality and non-interference enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations provide a sound basis for cooperation among nations and will allow us to tackle these challenges on a global scale.

Our present Government, led by Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, remains committed to maintaining Nepal as a democratic, peace-loving, and inclusive nation, where the respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights prevails. Attaining economic development and prosperity for our people stands as the high priority agenda for economic diplomacy.

The recent local governments have consolidated our democratic foundation and forcefully restated the supremacy of the popular will. Nearly 65% of 17.7 million voters peacefully participated and elected over 35 thousand representatives, including over 14 thousand women representatives.

The entire international community has appreciated this successful democratic exercise – it is an extraordinary feat needs to be highlighted and celebrated.

Dear Friends,

The first lecture in the Professor Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series, whose aim was to share insightful assessments of Nepal's foreign policy, now concludes on the positive note that it will continue as an important event in the Ministry's annual calendar in the coming years. We look forward to these regular events as an ongoing opportunity to continue to provide insights on areas of foreign policy.

I would like to close by placing on record my special thanks to Professor Jaya Raj Acharya, a name intimate to Professor Khanal, who was with us throughout the preparation for this event but who unfortunately could not join us this evening due to a commitment outside the country.

I also thank Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal and other colleagues at the Ministry for their contribution and dedication to make this event successful.

Special thanks also go to the media for their coverage of this program so that the insights that have been shared here can reach a wider audience. In addition, I am happy to announce that the lectures will be uploaded on YouTube and the Ministry's website soon.

In closing, I extend sincere thanks also to our distinguished guests for their attendance and active participation. We look forward to getting together again next year to share more topical views.

I thank you.

**STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE DR. NARAYAN KHADKA, LEADER OF THE NEPALI DELEGATION AND MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF NEPAL AT THE HIGH-LEVEL COMMEMORATIVE MEETING TO MARK THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT
BELGRADE, 11 OCTOBER 2021**

His Excellency Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Chairman of NAM and co-host of the High-level Commemorative Meeting, His Excellency Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, President of the Republic of Serbia and co-host of this High-level Commemorative Meeting, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentleman,

Let me begin by expressing our deep gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Serbia for hosting this historic meeting on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Non-Alignment Movement even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. I join other leaders in paying tribute to the founders of the Movement and also in commending the current Chair of NAM and co-host of this event, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, for exceptional leadership in these trying times.

I bring the message of peace from the birthplace of Gautam Buddha and greetings and best wishes of the Government and people of Nepal for the success of this event.

Nepal has enshrined the cardinal principles of NAM in its constitution and these tenets have always been an integral part of our foreign policy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sixty years down the road, the world has undergone profound transformation. The world we live in today is fundamentally more complex than it was 60 years ago and the challenges we face collectively are more profound and intractable.

While NAM has achieved in bringing freedom, independence, democracy and justice for countries around the world, yet today we are witnessing rising ethnic and intra-state conflict, violent extremism, terrorism, climate change, economic recession and financial vulnerability, widening inequality between rich and poor and fuel and food crises of large proportion.

In addition to these challenges, geopolitical tensions are re-surfacing and new fault lines of division are emerging. Modernization of nuclear arms and signs of arms race signal new wave of competition among great powers. The COVID-19 pandemic has emerged

as one of the greatest challenges to mankind. It has exposed the gaps and vulnerabilities of global governance in critical areas of human security which has contributed to a large extent to the inequality in vaccine accessibility. The climate change and its impact on lives and livelihoods is yet another serious challenge that has posed the existential threat to mankind.

Excellencies,

With its numerical and moral strength, NAM should re-claim its rightful place and speak loudly and act decisively for the very poor, weak and vulnerable countries. The Movement can and should, lead the path in pursuit of a more peaceful, prosperous, and just world. It should also work for reform and restructuring of multilateral institutions such as the UN and international financial institutions.

There is also a true need to galvanize South-South cooperation to liberate and uplift countries and peoples from the clutches of poverty, inequality, and deprivation.

For NAM to stand relevant to influence global agendas of common concern, it must forge unity, cohesion, cooperation, and solidarity among its membership. NAM must be internally strong to foster goodwill and cooperation so that division and discord do not surface to undermine the unity of the Movement.

Nepal calls upon all leaders of the world, of the Movement and beyond, to work for the shared future we all want and deserve. Let's pledge to act together and to move forward for the good of all mankind.

I thank you Excellencies.

STATEMENT BY HON. FOREIGN MINISTER AT 14TH BALI DEMOCRACY FORUM
14TH BALI DEMOCRACY FORUM
DEMOCRACY FOR HUMANITY: ADVANCING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
DURING THE PANDEMIC
9 DECEMBER 2021

Honorable Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Mr. Retno L.P. Marsudi,

Honorable Foreign Ministers,

Excellencies, Friends,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Let me begin by expressing my deep appreciation to the Government of Indonesia for hosting the 14th Bali Democracy Forum despite the difficulties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nepal attaches high importance to the role played by the Forum in promoting the cause of democracy.

I hope that this year's Forum will make valuable contributions in advancing the cause of economic and social justice for humanity even as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impede economic growth and development across the world.

Excellencies:

Democracy is about delivering good governance, economic justice, and human rights and freedoms.

A successful democracy is the result of deep economic and social transformations, strong national unity, and inclusive institutions.

In recent times, though, democracy has been facing mounting challenges on various fronts.

Fragile social welfare systems, environmental degradation, corruption, and diseases and epidemics have weakened even robust democracies and hindered their ability to deliver.

None of these challenges is as corrosive and ominous as existing pervasive socio-economic inequality.

Democracies should be capable of taking on the long-term challenges of modernizing societies, resolving social and economic conflicts, and above all, enhancing equality and social justice.

The alternative to democracy, as Nepal's first democratically elected Prime Minister BP Koirala emphasized, can only be an even better democracy – a political system that blends political freedoms with equity and social justice for all.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Nepal's travails with democracy provide useful insights on institutionalizing democratic governance in a country facing complex socio-economic challenges.

The several spurts of democracy in Nepal were short-lived and were undone by one major factor - the absence of social and economic transformation and inclusive representation that meet people's aspirations for peace, prosperity, and justice.

The Constitution of Nepal 2015, which came at the culmination of Nepal's many democratic struggles spanning seven decades, envisions a society where equity leads to equality.

It is guided by the philosophy that political rights and freedoms go hand in hand with economic and social justice, and inclusion.

The lessons we learn from Nepal's democratic journey are equally relevant in ensuring peace, equality, fairness, and justice in the world.

Excellencies,

Three major challenges are hitting democracies hard the world over, all at once: the peril of growing inequality, the specter of climate change, and the scourge of global pandemics like COVID-19.

These three interlocked challenges cannot be addressed without nations acting in concert.

We must fight climate change and pandemics together.

We must also join hands together in the fight against global inequality.

Investing in people's education and health, unleashing the creative and entrepreneurial energies of the youth, and keeping the workforce ready to adapt to technological changes are key elements in reducing inequality across and within countries.

Reducing inequalities requires placing international cooperation and multilateralism at the front and center of inter-state relations, and prioritizing work over wealth, planet

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over profits and people over power.

The COVID-19 pandemic has uncovered the urgency – and our latent capacity – for leveraging global co-operation in implementing that global vision.

The fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic could have been much worse but for the success in forging cooperation among nations in exchanging scientific expertise, procuring medical supplies, and developing and distributing vaccines.

The need for international co-operation in tackling global challenges has never been as compelling as now, and its prospects never as huge.

I hope that the discussions in this Forum will make valuable contributions in advancing the cause of international co-operation for a more prosperous and a more equal world.

Thank you, Excellencies.

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF NEPAL HON. DR. NARAYAN
KHADKA AT THE EIGHTEENTH BIMSTEC MINISTERIAL MEETING HELD DURING
THE FIFTH BIMSTEC SUMMIT
COLOMBO, 29 MARCH 2022**

Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka Prof. G.L. Peiris

Honorable Foreign Ministers

Secretary General of BIMSTEC

Excellencies, and

Distinguished Delegates

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka Prof. G.L. Peiris, on your election as the Chairman of today's meeting. I also congratulate you, and through you the Government of Sri Lanka for effectively steering the BIMSTEC process over the last three and a half years.

I express my sincere appreciation to the Government of Sri Lanka for the warm welcome and generous hospitality accorded to my delegation and me, as well as for the excellent arrangements made for the Summit and this meeting.

I also commend BIMSTEC Secretary-General and his team at the Secretariat for their dedication, commitment, and professionalism, and for the substantive preparations made for today's meeting.

As we continue to embrace new working modalities during these unprecedented times, the value of in-person meetings and interactions is becoming increasingly more evident. We may have become better in using technologies and meeting virtually, but nothing can substitute human touch in diplomacy. It is also in this light that I appreciate the opportunity to meet and interact with you all in this beautiful and historic city of Colombo.

Excellencies,

We have just turned our calendar into Spring season. Spring is a natural harbinger of optimism, purpose, and motivation. With COVID-19 raging across the world, the last two years taught us to moderate our expectations and exercise caution. Now that the virus

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surge seems to be slowing down, we all look forward to brighter prospects of partnership and co-operation among countries in our region and beyond.

The pandemic seriously impaired the work of our Organization over the last two years. It compelled us to defer our Summit and its preceding meetings for some time. However, our resolve for regional unity and solidarity was never dimmed. Our gathering here today is a testament to this shared commitment.

When I talk of hope, purpose, and positivity, I am reminded of the ideals of peace, freedom, and economic well-being the founders of BIMSTEC had envisioned in the 1997 Bangkok Declaration, the very edifice of regional cooperation in the Bay of Bengal region.

Since then, BIMSTEC has developed as our collective identity connecting South and Southeast Asia; embodied our collective desire to tap on the rich natural, cultural, and human resources for socio-economic development; and represented our aspirations for a better integrated and prosperous region. Our age-old civilizations, deep historical linkages and shared values have inspired us to work in unison for our peoples and countries.

BIMSTEC has made some notable achievements over the last 25 years. Establishment of the Permanent Secretariat in Dhaka in 2014, adoption of important legal instruments, and sector-specific cooperation in the areas of agriculture, connectivity, security, trade and investment, technology, tourism, and culture, among others, are some of the key milestones in the history of our Organization.

The Fourth BIMSTEC Summit held in Kathmandu in 2018 was a breakthrough in renewing the focus on much needed institutional reforms and restructuring. It laid a foundation for more result-oriented organization including through the call for drafting of the Charter and reorganization and rationalization of the areas of cooperation.

We are happy that initiatives mandated by our leaders in Kathmandu would culminate, during the Summit tomorrow, through the adoption of the Charter and endorsement of the rationalization of sectors in seven clusters.

In addition, signing of the Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, MOA on the Establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility, and MoU on the Cooperation between Diplomatic Training Institutions will be an important step forward. The adoption of the Master Plan for Transport Connectivity will be critical in promoting transport linkages through land, air, and water.

These new instruments would, for sure, bring fresh momentum into the BIMSTEC process. It is upon us to ensure their honest and time-bound implementation.

Excellencies,

Despite all these achievements, the road ahead remains tough and challenging.

Our region is still plagued by poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Each year, the

region suffers from various forms of natural disasters. Climate change, global warming and environmental degradation pose existential threats to the people and the planet.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only compounded the challenges.

We will not be able to address these challenges with the usual tools in such unusual times. What is needed then is to pivot away from the business-as-usual approach and devise innovative pathways befitting the current unprecedented circumstances.

BIMSTEC must not be left to languish in the absence of sufficient political will.

We must work together to uplift people's lives and livelihoods, create equal opportunities for them, and ultimately realize the aspirations of a peaceful and prosperous region.

We must ramp up our collective efforts to combat the current pandemic. Free, fair, equitable and universal access to vaccines must be ensured for everyone, everywhere.

Promoting the pro-poor, inclusive and equitable growth is a must to eliminate poverty and destitution and to attain the Sustainable Development Goals. We need to update and effectively implement the BIMSTEC Poverty Plan of Action in line our changing priorities in the new context.

An early establishment of BIMSTEC Development Fund (BDF) will help accelerate the development projects and sector-specific activities.

As multidimensional connectivity is a key enabler for regional integration, we must promote deeper integration of our trade and transport networks. Promoting connectivity through railways, airways, waterways, and information ways must be explored.

In view of the region's huge energy requirement for industrial and infrastructural development, we must ensure an early implementation of the BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Agreement. We need to decarbonize energy solutions, ensure a breakthrough on transition to clean and renewable energy, and leverage energy actions for advancing sustainable development.

Building economic ties through nurturing trade and investment linkages paves the way for effective regional cooperation. Greater trade and investment cooperation boosts resilience against shocks of various kinds. Priority should thus be given to finalize the constituent agreements of BIMSTEC Free Trade Area.

The mountains and the oceans are embedded intricately in the collective firmament and identity of the BIMSTEC region. The Himalayas echo the heartbeat of our planet, and the oceans reflect its tide.

However, it is sad to see that our mountains bear the heaviest brunt of climate change. Mountain glaciers are retreating and ice-sheets are losing mass. The depth and extent of snow cover in high mountains has declined.

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Therefore, we need urgent, transformative efforts to protect the mountain ecology and combat climate crisis.

Mr. Chairman,

Nepal attaches high priority to the BIMSTEC process. As the lead country for people-to-people contacts, we remain committed to promoting cultural ties, touristic links and people-to-people contacts in a spirit of mutual benefit and cooperation.

As we wrap up our preparations for the Fifth Summit, we are already on the cusp of 25th anniversary year of our Organization. We must inject the energy necessary to revitalize the BIMSTEC process to make this year a momentous anniversary year. This will require our renewed resolve, collective commitment, and concerted actions. Nepal remains committed to contributing constructively to ensure that BIMSTEC delivers better for our peoples, our countries, and our region.

I thank you very much for your attention.

MESSAGE BY HON. DR. NARAYAN KHADKA, FOREIGN MINISTER OF NEPAL AT THE SEVENTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC ON THE THEME OF “A COMMON AGENDA TO ADVANCE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC”

23 MAY 2022

Chair of the Commission His Excellency Mr. Don Pramuda, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand

Excellencies the Heads of State and Government,

Excellencies, and Distinguished Delegates,

While I am addressing this Session, I fondly remember the 58th Session of the Commission which I had chaired in May 2002. At the outset, let me express my sincere gratitude for steering the Session with high professionalism. I would like to congratulate the UN-ESCAP on its Seventy-fifth anniversary and wish every success of the Commission.

Nepal highly values the work of the Commission and acknowledges its contribution in the region in the field of infrastructure, human development, environment, among others. Nepal has been engaged with the Commission constructively ever since we became its member. I also wish to pay our tribute to the Secretariat for its continuous service to fulfill the goals of the Commission and assure you of my delegation’s full support in the days ahead.

The Commission has worked for over seven decades with profound dedication and expertise even during the challenging times such as COVID-19 pandemic. I am confident that this commemorative event will rekindle new aspirations and provide new directions for regional development and shared prosperity among the membership.

In 2015, we adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for the benefit of people, planet and prosperity. However, the path to timely achievement of the SDGs has been a challenging one. Natural disasters including climate catastrophe, rising commodity and fuel prices, and trade protectionism, among others, have marred the achievements to us all particularly to the countries in special situations, including the LDCs.

The negative impacts of the pandemic, the ongoing global crisis, and dearth of development financing have further deteriorated the situation. Such a situation demands

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global commitment, solidarity, and urgent actions to fulfill our obligations towards posterity. We welcome the global initiatives and support measures taken in response to these challenges. However, we must do more. We need to focus on accelerated and deliberate actions that promote sustainability.

In this connection, the ESCAP's "Reclaiming our Future" report correctly identifies the elements for a common agenda for present and future generations. Nepal welcomes the report of the Commission and holds the view that the global community should work together to protect people and the planet from pandemics and disasters, promote trade and investment, enhance digital capacity, and raise resources to realize development goals.

Excellency,

Nepal has been striving to mitigate the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, health, foreign employment, tourism, and manufacturing sectors. Nepal initiated a nationwide Vaccination campaign in January 2021. We extend our sincere gratitude to all our friends and development partners for supporting us with vaccines, medicines and medical equipment during these trying times. We are on track regarding universal vaccination targets set by the WHO.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Nepal's achievement in SDGs-related goals and targets was significant. Based on this, Nepal is recommended for graduation from the LDC category by 2026. However, the pandemic added new challenges to the existing ones. Moreover, decreasing remittances and trending trade deficits have limited our choices. We have introduced some measures to maintain a healthy economy. We are focusing on strengthening health care systems, reducing poverty, creating decent jobs, and increasing the productive capacity.

We need to strengthen regional cooperation and engage in inclusive dialogue on interconnected issues of the world such as managing debt, tax evasion, environmental sustainability and world trade, among others.

I hope this session of ESCAP provides sustainable and pragmatic policy suggestions that enable people to partake in the collective journey of development, leaving no one behind in true sense. I thank all of you and wish you a successful conclusion of the meeting.

**STATEMENT BY MR. BHARAT RAJ PAUDYAL, FOREIGN SECRETARY AND THE
HEAD OF NEPALI DELEGATION TO THE
FIFTH INDIAN OCEAN CONFERENCE – IOC 2021
ABU DHABI, UAE, 5 DECEMBER 2021**

Theme: Indian Ocean: “Ecology, Economy, Epidemic”

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my honor and privilege to address this Fifth Indian Ocean Conference being held in the beautiful city of Abu Dhabi.

Let me begin by extending our warm congratulations to the Government and friendly people of UAE on the Golden Jubilee celebration of their independence and wish for continued peace, progress and prosperity of this friendly nation.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the India Foundation and the Government of UAE for organizing this Conference and for the warm and generous hospitality.

As we grapple with the challenges of COVID-19, climate change and economic disruptions, I cannot overemphasize the theme: “Indian Ocean: Ecology, Economy, Epidemic”, which is equally relevant for coastal as well as landlocked countries. Gravity of these challenges demands our collective actions more urgently than ever.

I am confident that the ideas we reflect in these two days will contribute towards this endeavour.

Excellencies,

We all have been talking about interconnectedness. The problems today, transcending our borders, have accentuated the rationale of the dictum that we live in one world.

Take for example the question of ecology. Though miles away, the existence of oceans and mountains is inseparably linked. The ecosystems depend on each other.

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The Indian Ocean for long has been a source of nourishment and remained at the centre of hydrological cycles. The weather pattern in this ocean has direct bearing on the mountains, stretching across the Hindu-Kush Himalayas.

The Himalayas instead feed the perennial rivers, serve as a heat sink in summer and sustain the civilizations downstream.

The looming climate crisis has not spared either of them. The sea levels rise and ocean water gets more acidic on the one hand; and on the other, the high mountains are losing their snow covers.

This is jeopardizing the lives and livelihoods of many. Marine as well as terrestrial biodiversity is fast deteriorating. Climate induced disasters have engulfed coastal states and small islands as well as the mountains.

This intrinsic linkage should be well considered while pursuing the goal for healthy oceans –as embodied by UN SDG 14. For any meaningful agenda on the ocean must, therefore, take on board the land-locked countries and mountainous ones.

Excellencies,

With its vast spread, the Indian Ocean is rich in resources. It provides important sea lanes that serve as arteries of international economy. Routes for more than three fourth of the world's sea-borne oil, and one third of the global trade, the Indian Ocean's significance is doubly attested – in economic dimension as well as in its strategic value.

Even for landlocked country like Nepal, the Indian Ocean is a lifeline for majority of its external trade. Peace and stability in the Indian Ocean are, therefore, important for all of us.

Issues such as piracy, marine terrorism, drugs trafficking and interruption in freedom of navigation can erode economic vitality. Addressing these challenges should be an important pillar of the agenda to properly harness the potentials of the 'blue economy'.

An enlightened approach for economic cooperation in the region can enhance intra-regional trade and investments. Such a move will have multiplier effects and make this region a substantial powerhouse of the world economy.

Landlocked developing countries are in need of international and regional support to enhance their capacity for reaping the benefits of the ocean, including in the utilization of the marine resources under the high seas. Realizing the already made commitments in an effective manner is crucial for enabling them in this regard.

Distinguished Delegates,

Epidemics trigger a heavy toll not just on the economy but also on our lives as a whole. In the interconnected world, epidemics are seldom local in nature and can quickly spiral

into a global pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has come as an epochal phenomenon. It has revealed that we may be facing the same tempest, but the countries are in different rafts. Some are better equipped to fend off the crisis, while the poorer one struggle to remain afloat.

With lives lost and livelihoods disrupted, the pandemic has further entrenched poverty, strained public health systems, and exacerbated inequality. Fallouts have been felt in international trade and tourism, the lifelines of many countries in the region. Besides, we are entering the third year of the pandemic with new variants of concern circulating from nowhere.

With therapeutics innovation and capacity to produce vaccine, the Indian Ocean region has the potentials to help save lives in the region and beyond. Impressive advancement of India and the UAE as pharmaceutical and technological hubs has hugely contributed to this end.

A more robust cooperation in vaccination will be a significant deliverable, proving the real prospect of our collective endeavour.

Also, sharing of technical knowhow and capacity enhancement in healthcare should be at the forefront of regional cooperation in the context of the pandemic.

Distinguished Delegates,

Nepal attaches great importance to the Indian ocean: its security, sustainability and economic potentials. Linking our highlands with the Indian Ocean with seamless 'hardware' and 'software' of connectivity is our priority and these include roads, railways, waterways and power grid interconnection.

Nepal is committed to increasing the share of clean energy and achieving net-zero carbon emission by 2045, contributing to the region's ecology. Nepal has vast potentials in generating hydroelectricity to drive economic growth not only in the country but also in South Asia.

Nepal stands ready to work with all countries in the Indian Ocean region to address the challenges pertaining to ecology, economy and epidemic.

I conclude by complimenting the Organizing Committee of the Conference once again for this worthy initiative of creative dialogues on the most pertinent issues of our time. I feel hugely benefitted from these rich deliberations over the two days.

Thank you!

**REMARKS BY FOREIGN SECRETARY MR. BHARAT RAJ PAUDYAL AT IFA BOOK LAUNCH AND SEMINAR ON ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY ORGANIZED ON THE OCCASION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEPAL-BANGLADESH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS
(KATHMANDU, 18 APRIL 2022)**

Executive Director of the Institute of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Rajesh Shrestha

His Excellency the Ambassador of Bangladesh to Nepal,

Former Ambassador of Nepal to Bangladesh Dr. Mishra,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Namaskar and good morning to you all!

At the outset, let me thank the Institute of Foreign Affairs for organizing this program of book launch and seminar on economic diplomacy on the occasion of 50th anniversary of the establishment of Nepal-Bangladesh diplomatic relations.

I commend the efforts of IFA for bringing out different publications to its credit. Out of the two important publications that were just launched this morning, continuity of the peer reviewed Journal of Foreign Affairs to its second volume is worthy initiative to note. I wish IFA will be able to continue this flagship publication in the future as well and congratulate all those involved in making this volume of the journal possible. To my understanding, the quality of the second volume of the journal has also been significantly enhanced.

I also thank previous speakers Ambassador Chaudhary and Ambassador Mishra for their valuable insights.

Nepal and Bangladesh enjoy close and cordial friendship that goes beyond formal diplomatic relations, which were established on 8 April 1972. Nepal was one of the first countries to recognize the independence of Bangladesh.

Our relation is characterized by commonality of development aspiration, goodwill, mutual respect, cooperation and bonds of socio-cultural linkages. The relations between the two countries are as natural as the rivers flowing from the Himalayas meeting the sea in the Bay of Bengal.

Nepal's foreign policy aims at strengthening relations with friendly countries at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. Economic diplomacy has been recognized as a key component in the service of foreign policy, through which we strive for contributing to the achievement of sustainable socio-economic transformation in the country, projecting Nepal's image abroad and safeguarding the welfare of Nepali citizens.

As we prepare for a resilient recovery after a consistent battle with COVID-19 pandemic for the last two years, the significance of economic diplomacy is far more evident than ever.

Collaboration with private sector and think-tanks would help create synergy and provide much needed impetus for enhanced trade and investment and diversify areas of mutually beneficial economic partnership.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Economic partnership is the key area where Nepal and Bangladesh can work together for further expanding and diversifying the relationship. There are at least five areas, and this is not an exhaustive list in any way, that our two countries can instantly reap mutually beneficial economic benefit through greater partnership. Let me briefly touch on them:

First and foremost is in the areas of trade. Even if we trade under the existing regional framework of SAFTA, the two countries do hold potentials to increase the current amount of trade manifold provided we rationalize our tariffs and limit the non-tariff barriers to a minimum. Of this, particularly noticeable has been the high duties levied on Nepali agricultural and primary products. Negotiations on preferential trading arrangements at the bilateral level are on. I hope we would be able to find a mutually agreeable way out to harvest a variety of low-hanging fruits that are lying in the trade sector.

Second, is the energy sector. Nepal's rivers have enormous potential to contribute to clean and green energy security of our region. This sector offers a new vista of sustainable and long term beneficial collaboration between Nepal and Bangladesh. We have signed MOU on Cooperation in the Field of Power Sector in 2018 to increase collaboration in hydro-electricity generation and power trade for mutual benefits. As both our countries are committed champions of climate change agenda, Nepal's hydro-power provides most sought after alternative for clean energy mix for Bangladesh. And, this can make a significant investment opportunity in Nepal from Bangladesh to harness its resources and generate employment as well as increase export to Bangladesh in order to maintain a sustainable and long-term trade balance. There also exists a promising potential in trilateral cooperation for cross-border energy trade between Nepal, Bangladesh and India as we grow and prosper together.

Third, both Nepal and Bangladesh are graduating from the LDC status by 2026. It provides us a unique impetus for further expanding and deepening our cooperation to meet our development priorities. Nepal and Bangladesh will have to address the challenges

in implementation of SDGs, ensure a smooth, sustainable and irreversible graduation process and expand areas of economic development that provide sustained basis for improving lives and livelihoods of our people. While we will have to pave ways for mitigating the erosion of trade preferences in international markets, at the same time, we must also work towards creating sound basis for more robust and comprehensive economic partnership and fully utilize existing complementarities.

Fourth, we are too close a neighbor separated by a narrow stretch of merely 22 kilometers of distance between us. Improved connectivity of transport infrastructures (that includes roads, railways, air connectivity), transmission lines, optic fiber, improved customs facilities is critically important to create a mutually beneficial condition for a long-term and sustainable economic partnership. Connectivity not only facilitates trade, it also connects peoples, cultures, businesses, and promotes investment and economic opportunities. For Nepal, improved connectivity and trade facilitation measures with Bangladesh hold potentials in reducing cost of trade, providing cost-efficient transit facilities and opening yet another viable transit route to the BIMSTEC countries and beyond. We are grateful to Bangladesh for providing an additional transit route via Rohanpur-Singabad railway transit that would facilitate Nepal's access to Chittagong and Mongla Ports and help boost regional and sub-regional trade.

And fifth, travel and tourism sector has vast potentials to strengthen business partnership and share experiences in the promotion of sustainable tourism. Similarly, cultural exchange between the two countries would help foster mutual understanding and strengthen the bonds at the people's level. Both our countries offer unique touristic products to each other. While alluring Himalayan mountains and soothing climatic condition of Nepal might be good touristic attractions to our Bangladeshi friends, Nepali people are naturally keen to see the longest sea beach of Chittagong and mangrove forests of Bangladesh. Tourism between our two countries can be cost and time effective alternative due to our proximity provided that we develop and keep open all modes of connectivity between us.

To conclude, I believe the two substantive sessions of today's seminar dedicated to the LDC graduation and transit facilitation between Nepal and Bangladesh will provide opportunity for further discussion and distilling of ideas on those two important areas for Nepal and Bangladesh today.

I am delighted to see the presence of luminaries and authorities in their own right on those areas of expertise who will contribute to these deliberations. I wish for a constructive and productive discussions and conclude my remarks by thanking, once again, the Institute of Foreign Affairs for hosting this timely seminar and inviting me to be part of it.

I thank you.

**STATEMENT BY MR. BHARAT RAJ PAUDYAL, FOREIGN SECRETARY OF NEPAL,
AT THE 20TH ANNUAL MINISTERIAL MEETING OF LLDCS
NEW YORK, 23 SEPTEMBER 2021**

Theme: Partnering for sustainable recovery and accelerated implementation of the VPoA and SDGs in LLDCs

**Mr. Chairman,
Honorable Ministers,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Mr. Under Secretary- General and the High Representative,
Distinguished Delegates.**

At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for organizing this meeting on such a pertinent theme.

I commend your dynamic leadership in steering our Group as the Chair in these trying times.

I would also like to thank USG and High Representative and his able team at UNOHRLLS for their hard work and contribution in promoting the interests of the LLDCs.

Mr. Chairman,

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everywhere and everyone. But, based on how the countries have responded to it, the world is divided into those who could endure the crisis and those who are still at its mercy.

Unfortunately, most of the LLDCs are in the latter category. The unprecedented impact of the pandemic on these countries is continuing unabated.

This has further compounded the pre-existing challenges such as excessive reliance on transit countries, low productive capacity, and poor connectivity.

With disruptions in the movement of goods and services to and from LLDCs, their trade competitiveness has further declined, poverty and food insecurity intensified, and their vulnerability to external shocks further exacerbated.

The pandemic has threatened to reverse our hard-earned development gains.

So, we must turn this around.

We must safeguard our achievements and strive to build back better and stronger.

But this will not be easy.

This is because the LLDCs are off-track to achieve the goals and targets set by VPoA and Agenda 2030.

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Greater efforts will be necessary for the LLDCs to recover from the pandemic and rally on a growth path.

First and foremost, we must enhance productive capacity, diversify economy, build sustainable and resilient infrastructures, and upgrade connectivity to regional and global markets.

An enhanced level of international support measures in the form of ODA, FDI, aid for trade and technology transfer will be absolutely critical.

The international community must also support LLDCs' efforts to control external shocks and adapt and mitigate the negative impacts of climate change, among others.

The COP26 must take bold actions to address the needs and vulnerabilities of the countries like LLDCs.

Mr. Chairman

Nepal has integrated the 2030 Agenda and VPoA into its national plans and programs with a vision to transform the country from a 'landlocked' to a 'land-linked' one.

The Government has prioritized the implementation of VPOA in synergy with the COVID-19 recovery plan, the 2030 Agenda and the other development frameworks.

We believe that only a scaled-up and renewed partnership between LLDCs, transit countries and development partners will help translate the promises of these internationally agreed development frameworks into reality.

We know, no one is safe until everyone is safe.

A resilient and sustainable recovery plan must therefore constitute the universal access to vaccines as an overarching priority.

LLDCs should not be left behind in this endeavor.

Sadly, only one percent of global COVID-19 vaccine doses have been distributed in LLDCs, the group of countries which are home to seven percent of the world's population.

Vaccine is just one case of how the assistance and support measures provided to LLDCs fall short of the challenges they face.

It is high time that the UN System and broader international community realize this gap and strengthen support to the LLDCs.

Before I conclude, let me reiterate my firm conviction that we, the LLDCs, can change our destiny of being 'prisoners of geography' to 'pioneers of prosperity'.

Our people deserve better, and we must renew our commitment to meet their aspirations.

All we need is a strong solidarity and cooperation among ourselves and greater support from our transit countries and development partners.

I thank you for your attention.

**STATEMENT BY THE FOREIGN SECRETARY OF NEPAL MR. BHARAT RAJ
PAUDYAL AT THE ANNUAL MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE LEAST DEVELOPED
COUNTRIES**

17 SEPTEMBER 2021

**Mr. Chairman
Honorable Ministers,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Mr. Under Secretary-General and High Representative,
Distinguished Delegates.**

At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the Government of Malawi for convening this meeting and for effectively steering our Group during these challenging times.

I would also like to commend Under Secretary-General and High Representative and his able team for their tireless efforts in promoting the interests of the LDCs.

Mr. Chairman,

New and deadly variants of COVID-19 continue their march across the world, wreaking havoc on peoples, societies and economies.

The pandemic has exacerbated economic inequality, exposed the most vulnerable people to job losses, aggravated food and housing insecurity, and pushed millions back into poverty.

Its impact on LDCs has been more acute. In contrast to the massive fiscal stimulus deployed by the developed countries, the policy response of LDCs has remained much more limited. This has been due to their weak fiscal conditions, poor resilience capacity and dwindling global support.

The situation is bleaker when it comes to the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. For LDCs, adequate access to vaccines remains many months away, if not years.

This makes the call for equitable, affordable and universal access to vaccines even more urgent.

Excellencies,

LDCs must build resilient economies with adequate physical infrastructure, advanced industrial and technological capacity, and expanded social protection systems to win the war against the virus, eradicate poverty and ensure the well-being of their people.

The structural transformation of their economy through building productive capacity is critical to propel them towards the higher stage of development.

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An enhanced level of support from the international community in the areas of ODA, FDI, aid for trade, and technology transfer must complement the LDCs' national development efforts.

Debt cancellation and suspension will be equally important to address the LDCs' looming debt crisis.

Given the disproportionate impact of climate change on LDCs, adequate climate financing is a must to address loss and damage, and help them adopt a low-carbon development pathways.

Nepal hopes that the upcoming COP26 will take bold steps in ensuring climate justice and addressing the cause of LDCs.

Mr. Chairman,

Nepal is on the verge of graduation from the LDC category.

As the first and the only country to be recommended for graduation without meeting the per capita income threshold, Nepal's is a unique case.

Of course, graduation is our long-held aspiration and an important development milestone, and we are committed to making it smooth, sustainable and irreversible.

However, we are equally anxious that it will come with upfront cost and loss of support measures. It is more so as preparations for graduation will overlap with our efforts to recover from the pandemic.

The post-pandemic recovery plan must be an integral component of the transition strategies.

As we prepare for LDC5 in Doha, we must focus on the unfinished business of the IPOA and chart out actions for sustainable and resilient recovery of the LDCs thereby enabling them to achieve the SDGs.

Graduation was an overarching motif of the IPOA. This must continue in the new programme of action, with adequate financing, means of implementation, and support measures.

In Conclusion, Mr. Chairman, LDCs can no longer afford another lost decade. We can and must avert this risk. What we need is a unity of purpose, global solidarity and strong and ambitious programme of action. Nepal remains committed to engage constructively in realizing this collective ambition.

I thank you for your attention.

**STATEMENT BY THE FOREIGN SECRETARY OF NEPAL, MR. BHARAT RAJ
PAUDYAL, AT THE 10TH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE OF THE COMMUNITY OF
DEMOCRACIES
(22 SEPTEMBER 2021)**

THEME: DEMOCRACY AND RESILIENCE: SHARED GOALS

**Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

I would like to thank the Government of Romania for organizing this 10th Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies.

Twenty-one years ago, over a hundred countries including Nepal, endorsed the Warsaw Declaration upholding the 19 principles as the foundation to promoting and practicing universal values of democracy in order to offer the best possible governance to our people.

Since then, the world has witnessed the ebb and flow of democratic development including the misrepresentation of democratic values even in matured democracies.

This is a reminder that only through strong institutions we can protect and promote democracy and freedom from occasional temptations to derail it.

Mr. Chairman,

People of Nepal went through arduous struggles spanning over seven decades in pursuit of democracy, equality, justice, dignity and freedom.

The Constitution of Nepal, promulgated in 2015, consolidates those long held aspirations of Nepali people for inclusive multi-party democratic governance that ensures human rights, periodic elections, full press freedom, independent judiciary, and the rule of law.

Equality and non-discrimination constitute the bedrock of our Constitution. Today, women occupy 41 percent of the elected offices of Federal, Provincial and Local Bodies combined.

However, we are nowhere near perfection.

It has been our earnest endeavor to fill up the remaining gap and strive towards substantive equality under a democratic order.

Democratic governance that is inclusive, participatory and equitable can stand resilient

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to any shocks and turmoil including political radicalism, economic down turns, disasters, and the pandemics like COVID-19.

The inherent quality of democracy provides the space for organizing societies in the best possible manner by managing diversity, dissention and differences and promoting tolerance and respect for others.

As a member of this Community, Nepal remains committed to the principles enshrined in the Warsaw Declaration and enable our people to prosper in dignity and larger freedom.

I thank you all.

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STATEMENT FOR UNICEF 75TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT
KEYNOTE STATEMENT BY FOREIGN SECRETARY MR. BHARAT RAJ PAUDYAL ON
‘REIGNITING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN IN SOUTH ASIA’ AT THE EVENT
ORGANIZED TO MARK THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNICEF

KATHMANDU, 9 DECEMBER 2021

His Excellency Secretary-General of SAARC

UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia Mr. George Laryea-Adjel

Country Representative of UNICEF in Nepal Ms. Elke Wisch

Youth Representatives from South Asian Countries

Ladies and Gentlemen

I commend the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia for organizing this event. I feel privileged and honoured to speak a few words in front of you.

Honourable Foreign Minister was keen to attend this event. However, owing to other unavoidable commitments, he could not make it. He has sent you all greetings and best wishes for the success of the event.

I thank you very much Your Excellency the Secretary-General of SAARC for your special address and the Regional Director of UNICEF for the important statement centered on the theme of today's event.

I would also like to acknowledge the participation of high-level officials and other dignitaries and representatives who have joined us in person and through virtual mode.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate UNICEF on the occasion of its 75th anniversary. I commend UNICEF for the tremendous contributions it has made in saving children's lives, helping them unleash their potentials, and defending their rights across the world.

UNICEF's work in the South Asia too has yielded some remarkable results.

Thanks to its collaboration with governments, non-government organizations and communities, important strides have been made in reducing neo-natal deaths, improving nutrition, scaling up school enrollment and promoting sanitation and hygiene practices.

However, our aspirations to ensure rights, choices, and voices to children in South Asia need continuous efforts and robust action to fully realize them.

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Poverty has been the most debilitating factor for the millions of children in South Asia. Discrimination and incidences of violence against them are yet to go away. We need to deploy further efforts to prevent the children from being exposed to malnutrition, child labor and child trafficking. And, we must ensure that millions of children from vulnerable communities are not deprived of basic education and health services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted in the education, recreation, and healthy development of the children. As the report 'Lives Upended' published by UNICEF last year suggests, the pandemic has had disastrous and disproportionate impact on over 600 million children in South Asia.

The crisis appears to be risking the hard-earned progress made in the overall development of children and adolescents.

We must therefore endeavor to cushion the impact of the pandemic on their well-being, especially with a focus on the most vulnerable ones. Access to COVID-19 vaccines must be ensured for all children.

We must act now to prevent and mitigate the risks the children face. Their needs must come first in our plans to recover and rebuild better.

True, the pandemic has taken away 'the normal' from all of us and, more importantly, from our children.

But we need to ask ourselves: was that 'normal' good enough?

Is COVID-19 the only danger to children's safety, security and well-being?

Were all children living in safe, healthy, and peaceful environment before the pandemic?

The answers to these questions are obvious.

So, we must reflect on the gaps, correct our course, and reignite opportunities for the future of our children.

We must bring an end to poverty, abuse, discrimination, violence, and neglect against the children.

Reigniting opportunities for children must start with our endeavour towards creating a condition where they have equal opportunities, where their voices and rights are ensured, and where investments are made not just to help them survive but also thrive.

There is an urgent need to expand and transform education and learning systems. These systems have to be adjusted to lifelong learning for the children of today and adults of tomorrow to enable them stay relevant to the changing techno-professional environment of the future.

Access to health, sanitation and hygiene must be ensured for every child. Digital divide needs to be addressed.

We all know climate change poses an existential threat to the planet and the people. And,

we adults have been failing our children by our inaction. We must act now and reverse the trends of climate change.

We also need to recognize that children and young people are positive change agents. We must listen to them and have their voices reflected in our actions and policies.

We must act together to ensure that 'no child is left behind.'

Above all, a reimagined future must be a just and equitable future for children.

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to note that the five-decade long partnership between Nepal and UNICEF has resulted in many advances in promoting children's development and welfare in Nepal.

UNICEF's support and cooperation has complemented the efforts of the Government of Nepal in addressing the children's needs - be it through the hardware support provided in 1960s and 1970s; or the programmes on early childhood development and child and maternal health in 1980s; or the initiatives aimed at strengthening systems and services for children over the last decade, or through the current renewed focus on investing in children.

I am also pleased to note that UNICEF's Country Programme Action Plan (2018-22) aims at building on the progress achieved thus far and maximizing the potential of Nepal's young population in line with the objectives of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The Plan's focus areas resonate very well with Nepal's priorities.

It is not least in light of such consistent support from UNICEF, that Nepal has achieved some important progress especially in the field of education, and maternal and child health. This has also been acknowledged by various international organizations including the United Nations.

This has helped us further raise our ambition. And, our commitment today is even stronger.

Therefore, to the children in Nepal: I can say, on behalf of the Government of Nepal, that we will spare no effort to promote your interests. We will strive to fulfil your needs. We will not let you down.

To conclude, anniversary is not just an occasion to reflect on what has been achieved or could have been achieved. It is also an occasion to plan for better future. As we mark this landmark 75th anniversary of UNICEF, let's reimagine a future where our children will have better opportunities and choices.

Let's commit to act together and act better. The Government of Nepal remains committed to working more closely with UNICEF in the days ahead.

I thank you for your attention.



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