नेपाली राजदूतावास
EMBASSY OF NEPAL
Bangkok, Thailand

PRESS RELEASE

NPC-led Nepal Delegation Presents Reform Agenda and Priorities for Cooperation at the Ninth Session of UN ESCAP Committee on Social Development

Hon. Dr. Pukar Malla, Member of Nepal's National Planning Commission (NPC), led Nepal's delegation to the Ninth Session of the Committee on Social Development of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok from 11 to 13 November 2026.

Nepal's interventions presented a connected approach to reducing poverty and sustaining progress: expanding decent, productive employment, strengthening social protection and investing in care. Dr. Malla emphasized that economic growth and inclusion must advance together, enabling excluded communities to participate in and benefit from development. "For citizens, the test is whether protection remains reliable when their circumstances change," he stated.

He outlined Nepal's connected policy reforms, including revision of the National Employment Policy and National Industrial Policy, development of the country's first National Care Economy Promotion Policy, and finalization of its Global Accelerator roadmap on jobs and social protection. He emphasized coordinated financing and implementation across ministries and the three levels of government, alongside decent conditions and stronger skills for care workers at home and abroad. Drawing on Nepal's recent flood experience, Dr. Malla also stressed the need to protect livelihoods and maintain essential services through climate-related shocks.

Ms. Kabita Phuyal, Under Secretary at the Ministry of Youth, Labour and Employment, highlighted Nepal's initiatives and draft National Senior Citizens Policy, emphasizing dignified ageing, accessible services and stronger evidence and data systems.

In separate bilateral meetings with ESCAP Executive Secretary and United Nations Under-Secretary-General Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana and Deputy Executive Secretary Ms. Lin Yang, Dr. Malla discussed opportunities for deeper cooperation.

The discussions explored cooperation on inclusive social development, particularly social protection and care systems, as well as economic transformation through stronger productive capacity, trade integration and technological innovation. Climate resilience and Nepal's preparations for graduation from the least developed country category were also discussed.

Across these areas, Dr. Malla emphasized a practical approach to partnership: conducting policy research, learning from and contributing to regional expertise, and building institutional capability to implement policies and programmes.

H.E. Mr. Dhan Bahadur Oli, Ambassador of Nepal to Thailand and Permanent Representative to ESCAP, and Mr. Moti Bahadur Shrees, Deputy Permanent Representative to ESCAP, also participated in the session.

The full texts of Nepal's statements accompany this release.

Bangkok
13 November 2026

EMBASSY OF NEPAL
Bangkok

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Statement of Nepal Delivered by

Dr. Pukar Malla,

Hon. Member, National Planning Commission, Government of Nepal

At the 9th Session of Committee on Social Development of the UN ESCAP, 11-13 November 2026

Agenda Item 2: Pathways to Ending Poverty in Asia and the Pacific

Madam Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

Nepal welcomes the Secretariat's ***Social Outlook*** and its focus on ending poverty in all its forms. **Poverty alleviation is central to our commitment to rights and social justice.**

Our Constitution recognizes rights to food, housing, employment and social security. Federalism has brought decision-making closer to communities, while affirmative action and proportional inclusion have broadened representation. The Sixteenth Plan targets national poverty of 12 per cent by 2028/29.

Through our annual budget, we are pursuing productive investment and decent employment alongside equitable public services and social protection. These priorities reinforce one another: inclusion enables women, young people and excluded communities to participate in and benefit from growth.

Nepal has made substantial progress. Using the inflation-adjusted 2010/11 poverty line, consumption poverty fell from 25.16 to 3.57 per cent by 2022/23. Under Nepal's higher, revised poverty threshold, 20.27 per cent remain poor.

Our experience, reinforced by the World Bank's assessment, offers an important lesson. **Remittances have improved household welfare, but lasting poverty alleviation requires stronger domestic earning opportunities and resilience against shocks.** We are advancing the National Employment Policy, connecting skills and enterprise development with decent, productive jobs, including for informal and migrant workers.

The recent Rasuwa–Bhotekoshi flood demonstrates how climate-related disasters can destroy livelihoods and reverse progress. Nepal contributes little to global emissions, yet bears a disproportionate human and economic burden.

Our partnerships must address these interconnected challenges.

We invite ESCAP to strengthen cooperation on multidimensional and disaggregated poverty analysis, policy design, monitoring and regional learning, alongside integrated multi-hazard early warning.

We seek technical cooperation on skills, employment and inclusive public services; predictable grants and concessional finance for resilient infrastructure and livelihoods; and accessible grant-based finance for adaptation and loss and damage.

The Dhaka waistcoat I am wearing today was made by a rural woman entrepreneur from a historically excluded community in Nepal. For entrepreneurs like her, stronger global partnerships should mean access to investment, technology and markets—and a fair return for their skills. Connecting such enterprises to regional and global value chains can make poverty reduction tangible. We invite friendly countries to facilitate market access and integration of Nepali producers into regional and global value chains. Communities protecting mountain ecosystems and forests should also receive a fair return for their contribution.

Nepal stands ready to share its experience and work with members and partners to ensure that poverty reduction reaches excluded communities and withstands future shocks.

I Thank you.

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Dr. Pukar Malla,

Hon. Member, National Planning Commission, Government of Nepal

At the 9th Session of Committee on Social Development of the UN ESCAP, 11-13 November 2026

Agenda Item 3: Strengthening inclusive and comprehensive social protection systems that foster resilient societies in Asia and the Pacific

Madam Chair,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

As in other Asia-pacific countries, social protection is a top priority of Nepal. Our Constitution recognizes social security as a fundamental human right. Nepal has progressively expanded contributory and non-contributory programmes supporting older persons, children, persons with disabilities and workers. Our Integrated National Social Protection Framework provides a foundation for greater coherence across these efforts.

We are building on this progress through connected reforms: developing the National Employment Policy, revising the National Industrial Policy and formulating the National Care Economy Promotion Policy. Our Global Accelerator roadmap brings employment and social protection together in support of just transitions.

These reforms recognize a practical relationship. Productive investment and decent employment strengthen household earnings and the contribution base for social security. Reliable protection supports people through interruptions to income, care responsibilities and livelihood transitions, while safeguarding those unable to work.

For citizens, the test is whether protection remains reliable when their circumstances change.

Meeting that test requires institutions to work towards shared outcomes. Ministries and our three levels of government need clarity about responsibilities, sustained commitment and the capacity to deliver. Aligning policies must be accompanied by coordinated financing and implementation.

Recent experience reinforces this priority. Following the Rasuwa–Bhotekoshi flood, government measures included arrangements for temporary shelter, accommodation assistance, targeted cash support and easier access to healthcare.

Our lesson is to connect this response capacity with regular social protection, early warning and livelihood recovery, reaching existing beneficiaries and households newly affected by shocks. Nepal contributes little to global emissions, yet bears disproportionate climate impacts.

We value ESCAP's CRISP initiative and Nepal's contribution as a reference country sharing experience and good practices. We welcome the recent regional dialogue and seek continued cooperation to translate learning into practical reforms.

Our partnership priorities are inclusive delivery systems, stronger institutional capacity and sustainable financing, including closer links between climate finance and protection of livelihoods.

Nepal stands ready to work with ESCAP, United Nations agencies, employers, workers' organizations and development partners to make these reforms deliver greater income security throughout people's lives.

Thank you.

Check Against Delivery

Statement of Nepal Delivered By

Dr. Pukar Malla,

Hon. Member, National Planning Commission, Government of Nepal

At the 9th Session of Committee on Social Development of the UN ESCAP, 11-13 November 2026

Agenda Item 5: Valuing and investing in the care economy in Asia and the Pacific

Madam Chair,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

As a father of two daughters and a son of ageing parents, I see care as a responsibility across generations. That responsibility belongs to men as much as to women.

Nepal's commitment to the care economy is guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action, and regional efforts to strengthen social protection cooperation in Asia and the Pacific.

Nepal must create decent jobs for today's young people while preparing for an ageing society. By 2051, our population aged 60 and above is projected to exceed 7.1 million. Migration is also reshaping family care arrangements. Investing in care can meet growing needs while creating skilled employment.

Care is therefore an economic priority alongside our rights commitments. Affordable, quality services enable people, particularly women, to pursue education and paid work. But everyone deserves care, dignity and choice, regardless of their economic contribution.

Nepal is developing its **first National Care Economy Promotion Policy through a whole-of-government approach.** Under the leadership of the National Planning Commission, ministries, partners and academia are shaping this policy, with technical support from UN Women and ILO. Rapid assessments and a recent co-creation workshop have strengthened its evidence base.

An important achievement is growing collaboration across institutions. Care is increasingly a shared priority across gender equality, planning, labour, health, education and economic policy. We are connecting this work with revision of the National Employment Policy.

Our experience offers two emerging lessons.

First, recognizing unpaid care must lead to investment and a fairer sharing of responsibilities. Evidence must inform sustained financing for accessible services, alongside greater participation of men in care within households.

Second, care policies require coordinated implementation. Childcare, eldercare, disability support and maternity protection serve connected needs throughout

people's lives. Our three levels of government need shared priorities, clear responsibilities and delivery capacity, informed by care recipients, caregivers and workers.

Expanding care must also create decent jobs, at home and abroad. For Nepali migrant care workers, training, certification and recognized qualifications can open pathways to skilled, better-paid employment. These opportunities must be backed by fair recruitment, safe working conditions, social protection and enforceable rights.

The Rasuwa–Bhotekoshi flood reminds us that care systems must withstand shocks. Injury, displacement and interrupted services can increase care needs and unpaid responsibilities, especially for women and girls. Preparedness and recovery must include continuity of essential care and support for caregivers.

We seek continued cooperation with ESCAP, ILO, UN Women and other United Nations agencies, alongside development partners, on care data, regional learning, workforce development and a costed implementation approach with sustainable financing. Regional partnerships should also advance recognition of qualifications and safe migration pathways.

Our measure of success should be practical: people receive the care they need, caregivers retain choices in their own lives, and care workers earn a decent living.

Thank you.

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Statement of Nepal Delivered By

Ms Kabita Phuyal,

Under Secretary, Ministry of Youth, Labour and Employment, Government of Nepal

At the 9th Session of Committee on Social Development of the UN ESCAP, 11-13 November 2026

Agenda Item 4: Active and healthy ageing in Asia and the Pacific: current and future trends

Madam Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

First of all, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the organizers for providing this important platform to discuss about the agenda item 4.

Nepal is experiencing a significant demographic transition characterized by declining fertility rates, increasing life expectancy, improvements in healthcare and changing family structures.

According to the National Population and Housing Census 2021, Nepal has approximately 2.97 million people aged 60 years and above, representing 10.21 percent of the total population. This proportion was only around 5.7 percent in 1991. The rapid increase in the older population clearly indicates that Nepal is gradually transforming into an ageing society.

This demographic transition presents both challenges and opportunities.

On the one hand, older persons are increasingly facing economic insecurity, age-related health complications, social isolation, inadequate care services and various forms of discrimination and neglect.

On the other hand, they represent an invaluable reservoir of knowledge, skills, experience, wisdom and cultural heritage that can contribute significantly to national development.

The Government of Nepal has recognized the rights, welfare and protection of older persons as an important responsibility of the State.

The Constitution of Nepal has guaranteed social protection and social security as a fundamental right of senior citizens. Similarly, the constitutional framework of social justice and social security provides an important foundation for ensuring the dignity and well-being of older persons.

In addition to the constitutional guarantee, Nepal has established several legal and policy arrangements for the enhancement of welfare of senior citizens.

The Government has also introduced various initiatives, including old-age allowances, subsidized healthcare services, geriatric wards in hospitals, health insurance support, and other social protection programs.

These initiatives have made important contributions towards improving the lives of older persons.

Furthermore, the Government has prepared the **Draft of National Senior Citizens Policy,** which seeks to address emerging challenges associated with population ageing and provide a more comprehensive and coordinated policy framework.

The draft policy emphasizes healthy, safe, dignified and respectful ageing; strengthening social security; improving access to healthcare and care services; protecting older persons from violence and neglect; promoting institutional coordination; and utilizing their knowledge, skills and experience in national development.

It also recognizes the growing importance of care services and the care industry in Nepal.

As Nepal is entering a new phase of demographic transition, we believe that stronger partnerships and coordinated interventions will be essential.

Nepal appreciates the UNESCAP for its invaluable efforts in enhancing welfare of aging populations in the Asia Pacific and expect continued support on it.

We expect support for comprehensive research, updated disaggregated data, demographic projections, ageing-related studies and impact assessments of existing programs.

We also need support in developing an integrated information system and database of older persons to ensure that services reach those who need them most.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the real measure of a developed and civilized society is not only how it educates and empowers its younger generation, but also how it respects, protects and cares for its older generation.

I sincerely look forward to continued cooperation and strong partnerships with UNESCAP in the important national endeavor.

Thank you very much!

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Ninth session
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Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the session:
   (a) Election of officers;
   (b) Adoption of the agenda;
   (c) Opening addresses.
2. Pathways to ending poverty in Asia and the Pacific.
3. Strengthening inclusive and comprehensive social protection systems that foster resilient societies in Asia and the Pacific.
4. Active and healthy ageing in Asia and the Pacific: current and future trends.
5. Valuing and investing in the care economy in Asia and the Pacific.
6. Other matters.
7. Adoption of the report of the Committee on Social Development on its ninth session.

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