

Report on  
**Nepal's Foreign Affairs**  
(2019-2020)



**Government of Nepal**  
**Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

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**Nepal's Foreign Affairs**  
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**Pradeep Kumar Gyawali**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

## Message

Nepal's foreign policy is characterised by both continuity and change. As guided by the Constitution, the time-honoured principles of Pachasheel, non-alignment, the UN Charter, international law and norms of world peace make the fundamental basis of Nepal's foreign policy.

In pursuit of national interest, policies have to adapt to the changing political or economic contexts as well as the unforeseen exigencies relating to public health, ecology or technology. The second half of the period under review in this Annual Report saw a similar shift, with the outbreak of COVID-19 impacting on the country's priorities and resources.

In support of the national fight against the pandemic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs geared all its efforts towards ensuring safety, security and wellbeing of Nepali nationals living abroad. In these efforts, the specific concerns and vulnerabilities of migrant workers continue to be high on our agenda. The Ministry initiated virtual conversations with high-level leaders of the Gulf region and other countries with sizeable numbers of Nepali migrant workers.

I am pleased to mention also that the Ministry has initiated compiling national policies relating to Nepal's foreign relations. The draft, prepared after inter-agency consultations, will come out in a consolidated form as 'the Foreign Policy of Nepal' upon approval of the Government of Nepal.

Also during the reporting period, important achievements have been made towards diversifying and strengthening Nepal's bilateral relations as well as in regional and multilateral engagements. Our relations with immediate neighbours, India and China, have expanded manifold in political, economic, social and cultural spheres. The relations with extended neighbourhood, development partners and destination countries for migrant workers have remained cordial and cooperative.

It goes without saying that our interactions with the neighbouring India and China

date back to time immemorial. As in the past years, the multi-faceted cooperation founded on civilizational linkages and people-to-people contacts witnessed a steady growth during the year under review.

The Prime Ministers of Nepal and India accelerated the friendly exchanges that they had set in motion since the assumption of their respective offices. Telephone conversations and virtual inauguration of the Indian-assisted Motihari-Amlekhgunj petroleum pipeline and the Integrated Check Post in Biratnagar are the examples. Minister for External Affairs of India S. Jaishankar and I co-chaired the fifth Joint Commission in August last year, in which we reviewed the overall status of our bilateral relations and agreed to enhance cooperation in trade, transit, investment and development partnership. I am confident that the outstanding border issue will be resolved soon through constructive dialogue and on the basis of historical treaty, evidences and facts.

Similarly, our relations with China have further strengthened with the historic visit of President Xi Jinping to Nepal, presenting new opportunities for expanding and deepening the areas of cooperation. The elevation of the relationship to Strategic Partnership of Cooperation Featuring Ever-lasting Friendship for Development and Prosperity marks the beginning of a new era in Nepal-China relations. The Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network will offer an important platform to Nepal to pursue its development endeavours.

The visit of President Rt. Hon. Bidya Devi Bhandari to Myanmar and Japan added a new dimension to our relations with these countries. Relations with Bangladesh were further consolidated with the incoming visit of the President of Bangladesh. Engagements with other friendly countries including development partners and labour destination countries also remained broad, vibrant and cooperative. As the official visit of a foreign minister, my own tour of the Russian Federation in November last year had taken after a long gap.

On the regional front, as the current Chair to the SAARC, we have consistently emphasized how important it is to revitalise the stalled SAARC processes. I am encouraged by the sentiments echoed by fellow foreign ministers, during the Informal Meetings held every year on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, that there should be no delay for the next Summit. SAARC and BIMSTEC are the principal vehicles for regional cooperation in our region. Following the successful Kathmandu Summit, we look forward to a productive outcome in the next BIMSTEC Summit to be held in Sri Lanka early next year.

Nepal's commitment to multilateralism is total. The Prime Minister reaffirmed Nepal's trust on the Bandung Principles at the 18th NAM Summit. In the 74th UN General Assembly, my stress as the leader of Nepali delegation was towards reaffirming Nepal's positions on peace and development. Nepal's solidarity to major

agendas, including peacekeeping, universal health coverage, climate action and financing for development, is unreserved.

The Government of Nepal continued to assume important responsibilities in various global processes, most importantly in the UN Human Rights Council. It has lived up to the commitments made in multilateral forums by translating them into action. Such engagements have enhanced the nation's visibility and credibility in the international arena.

*Sagarmatha Sambaad*, a global dialogue forum, was created for deliberations on the world's pressing issues. Its first edition was scheduled for April 2020 under the theme 'Climate Change, Mountains, and the Future of Humanity'. In spite of overwhelming support, the Sambaad had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry is working on rescheduling it once the situation becomes normal.

Due to the deadly virus, our immediate focus is on repatriation of Nepali nationals facing difficulties abroad. The Nepali missions abroad have remained assiduous in discharging their duties for safety and wellbeing of the Nepali diaspora. At the same time, Nepal participated in a number of virtual high-level meetings for mustering political will at the global level and pooling requisite resources in fighting the pandemic and minimising its impacts.

The pandemic has tested our ability and shown us the fragility of the existing world order. It has exacerbated polarization, jeopardising the multilateral institutions that have been the bedrock of international peace and common prosperity. Protectionist tendencies and narrow nationalism appearing occasionally on the horizon have not subdued even during these trying times.

But for building on international solidarity, we have not lost the hope. The commitment and response from global leaders have been encouraging, while the regional and global initiatives continue to strengthen. Nepal views that the pandemic and its impacts can only be addressed through stronger and collective efforts. Our intense participation in and contributions to international deliberations are a reflection of the national commitment for the global cause.

With these notes, I thank the Foreign Secretary and the team in the Ministry for bringing out this report. I hope this report will be useful to academics, policymakers, students and general readers in gaining insights into the foreign policy of Nepal. Through this publication, I express my gratitude to all friendly nations, institutions and individuals for the support and solidarity extended to Nepal in every way.



**Shanker D Bairagi**  
Foreign Secretary

## Foreword

In keeping with our commitment to transparency and the tradition of providing an account of our activities through the year, I am pleased to present this annual report, 2019-20.

While the first half of the reporting period was marked by a wide range of diplomatic activities, the second half was and continues to be under the shadow of COVID-19 pandemic that is expected to have a profound effect on humankind, and consequently on global governance and diplomacy. I am hopeful that this report, while serving as a record of the Ministry's initiatives, engagements and achievements of the year, will also provide insights into new, innovative ways of conducting diplomacy and service delivery in these trying times.

Relations with the immediate neighbours, India and China, continued to remain at the forefront of priority in our foreign policy and external engagements. On both fronts, there were notable developments.

This year, the Prime Ministers of Nepal and India remotely inaugurated the Motihari-Amlekhgunj Petroleum Pipeline, the first cross border pipeline in the region, and the Integrated Check Post in Biratnagar. Earlier, we hosted the External Affairs Minister of India Dr S. Jaishankar for the fifth meeting of the Joint Commission. The meeting made a comprehensive review of the entire set of bilateral matters and agendas and provided guidance on the course of action in all specific sectors. We underscored the importance of, and sought India's engagement in, resolving boundary issues through dialogue based on historical treaty, facts and evidences in the lasting interest of the two countries.

With China, the momentum of active engagements continued in the reporting period. The visit of the State Councillor Wang Yi and various other exchanges culminated in the historic State Visit of the Chinese President Xi Jinping, marking a new high in bilateral relations. A number of agreements and MoUs were signed and

exchanged during the visit aiming to boost connectivity, transit, trade, investment, agriculture, tourism as well as several other areas of development. Our two countries have made good progress in implementing the vital components of trans-Himalaya multi-dimensional connectivity network for mutual benefit.

In our fight against COVID 19, generous support was received from both our neighbours as well as friends around the world.

We continued to extend our engagements beyond the immediate neighbourhood and these include the President's State Visits to Myanmar and Japan as well as the official goodwill visit by the President of Bangladesh to Nepal. In the reporting period, we further expanded the horizon of our diplomatic relations. With the establishment of such relations with St. Lucia and Ghana, the number of our formal diplomatic ties has reached 168.

Affirming our commitment to multilateralism with the United Nations at its centre, we participated with great enthusiasm at the 74th UN General Assembly along with important engagements on its sidelines that include the annual ministerial meetings of LDCs and LLDCs. We were also active participant in other multilateral forums such as NAM Summit in Azerbaijan and COP-25 in Spain as well as in regional processes of SAARC and BIMSTEC. In November, Nepal successfully hosted the UN's Scaling-up Nutrition Global Gathering in Kathmandu.

Safety, security and welfare of our nationals in foreign countries remained a top priority of the country during the difficult time of the pandemic. The President, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister held telephone conversations with the leadership of various countries with particular focus on the countries in the Middle East, where a significant number of our nationals live and work. The Ministry actively coordinated the works related to the evacuation of the Nepali nationals stranded abroad and facilitated the repatriation of foreign nationals who were stranded in Nepal due to COVID-19 related travel restrictions.

On the front of promoting healthy debates and exchange of insights on national, regional and global issues, we laid the groundwork for Sagarmatha Sambaad, a flagship dialogue forum initiated by the Government of Nepal, the first edition of which was supposed to be held in April, 2020. The forum had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are making preparations for holding it during the first half of 2021.

The Ministry is at the advanced stage of finalizing the draft of the foreign policy. The policy document is being prepared with an objective of spelling out, in a coherent manner, the norms, values and perspectives of Nepal's external engagements.

As this is my final year in office as Foreign Secretary, I take this opportunity to express gratitude to the Right Honourable President, the Right Honourable Prime



Minister and Honourable Foreign Minister for their continued guidance and the trust they reposed on me. I also thank the colleagues in the Ministry whose support was invaluable during my seven years in this important role. Memory of working together as one fraternity to protect and promote the country's national interest will be long cherished!

I thank the Divisions, Departments, Offices and Nepal's diplomatic Missions overseas for their valuable inputs to this report and the editorial team for bringing it all together. The aim of this report is to inform and engage and I welcome constructive feedback and suggestions to improve our work and help us serve our country and the people even better.

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### *Vision of Nepal's foreign policy*

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

### *Mission of Nepal's foreign policy*

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

### *Guiding principles and norms of Nepal's foreign policy*

- Nepal's independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, freedom; protection of national interest, and promotion of national respect and dignity
- Sovereign equality
- *Panchasheel* (the five principles of peaceful coexistence)
- Spirit of the Charter of the United Nations
- Non-alignment
- Mutual respect and benefit
- International Law and norms world peace
- Peaceful settlement of disputes
- International cooperation
- Justice, equality and accountability
- Amity with all, enmity with none
- Democracy, human rights and rule of law
- Economic progress and prosperity
- Ecological balance, human security and conservation of the planet

### *Basis for the conduct of Nepal's foreign policy*

- The Constitution of Nepal
- Prevailing laws of Nepal
- National security policy and other policies directly related to foreign policy
- Sectoral policies, periodic plans and programmes of the Government
- The Charter of the United Nations
- Treaties, agreement and bilateral, regional and multilateral commitments/declarations to which Nepal is a party
- Charters/statutes of regional and sub-regional organizations of which Nepal is a member
- International law, including the Vienna Conventions on diplomatic and consular relations, customs, practices and the established norms and values

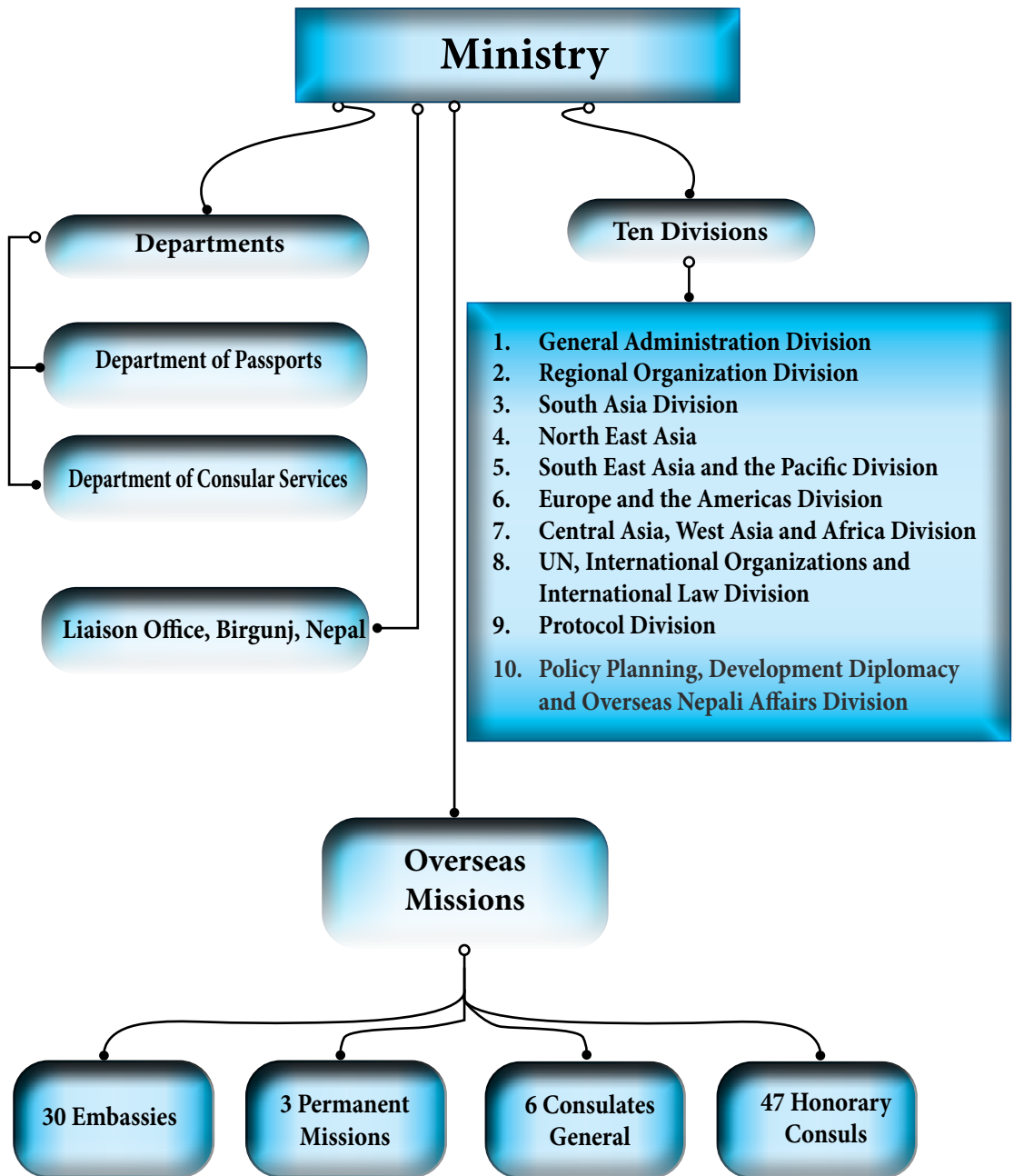
### *Objectives of Nepal's foreign policy*

- To expand and strengthen bilateral relations with all countries including neighboring 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 contribute to the realization of the national aspiration of 'Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali'
- 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

### *Scope of Nepal's foreign relations*

- Immediate neighbourhood
- Extended neighbourhood
- Development partners and major powers
- Destination countries for overseas employment
- Other friendly countries
- Regional and multilateral cooperation
- Service delivery

# ABOUT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

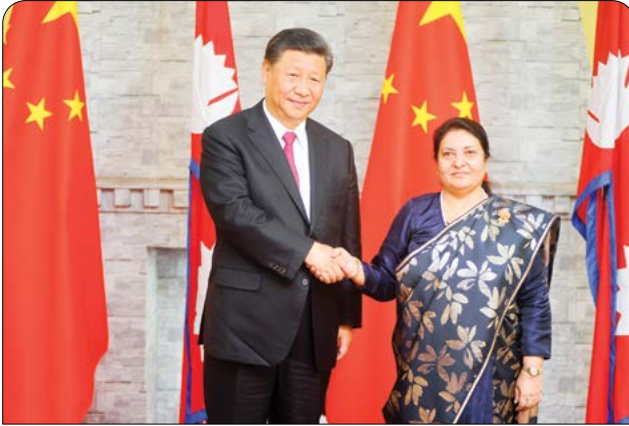
- Publication of the new political map of Nepal
- Drafting of an integrated Foreign Policy Document
- Initiation of Nepal-India boundary demarcation works
- Completion of major projects including cross-border Petroleum pipeline and ICP under cooperation of India
- Exchange of high-level visits including the State Visit of the Chinese President to Nepal
- The signing of important agreements and MOUs
- Deeper engagement with development partner countries and institutions
- Establishment of bilateral consultation mechanisms with three countries (France, Norway and the Philippines) and the holding of eight such meetings
- Establishment of diplomatic relations with Saint Lucia and Ghana, bringing the number of countries with diplomatic relations to 168
- Celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Australia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines and Serbia
- Active participation in multilateral bodies, such as the UN, NAM, G77 and WTO
- Productive regional engagements (SAARC, BIMSTEC, SCO and ACD)
- Continued contribution to UN peace operations (4<sup>th</sup> largest TPCC)
- Contribution to protection and promotion of universal human rights as a Member of the UN Human Rights Council
- Effective consular services for safety, security and welfare of Nepali migrant workers, particularly after the outbreak of COVID-19
- Facilitation in rescue and repatriation of Nepali nationals from overseas facing difficulties due to the pandemic

- Leadership to the Colombo Process for the protection of the interest of countries of origin of migrant workers in Asia
- Constructive engagement at the ILO as Deputy Member of its Governing Body for the protection of workers in general
- Elected in the Board of the Enhanced Integrated Framework of WTO for the year 2019-21
- Nepal's Permanent Representative to the UN in New York elected as Chair of the Second Committee of UNGA-75
- Elected as member of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs for the term 2020-23
- Completed groundwork for *Sagarmatha Sambaad*
- Strengthening of the Brain Gain Centre (BGC)
- Provided effective consular services and introduced advanced passport services (E-MRTD)

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# HIGH-LEVEL ENGAGEMENTS





*President Bidya Devi Bhandari and President Xi Jinping during the State Visit of the latter to Nepal, Kathmandu, 12 October 2019*

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*President Bidya Devi Bhandari with President U Win Myint during her State Visit to Myanmar, Nay Pyi Taw, 17 October 2019*

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*President Bidya Devi Bhandari being received by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Tokyo, 22 October 2019*

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*President Bidya Devi Bhandari greets Bangladeshi President Hamid in Kathmandu, 12 November 2019*

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*The President with Belgian Princess Astrid at the President's Office, Kathmandu, 21 January 2020*

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*President Bidya Devi Bhandari with First Lady of Germany Elke Bűdenbender at the former's Office, Kathmandu, 3 February 2020*

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*President Bidya Devi Bhandari inaugurating the NRN Global Conference in Kathmandu, 15 October 2019*

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*Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli speaking at the virtual inauguration of the Nepal-India cross-border Petroleum Pipeline, 10 September 2019*

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*President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli during the former's State Visit to Nepal, Kathmandu, 13 October 2019*

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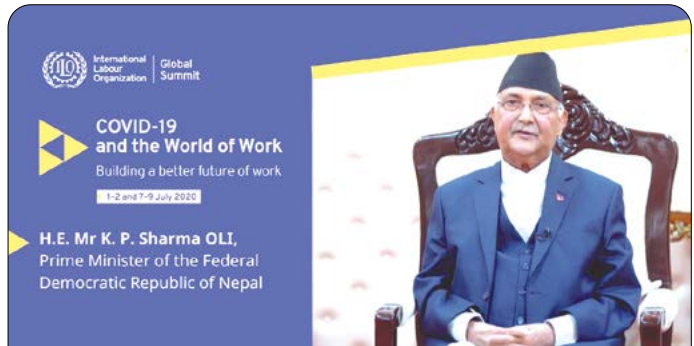


*Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli addressing the 18th Summit of NAM, Baku, 26 October 2019*

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*Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli at the ILO World of Work virtual Summit, 8 July 2020*

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*Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli addressing the SAARC Leaders' Virtual Conference on COVID-19, Kathmandu, 15 March 2020*

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*Speaker of Canada George J. Furey with National Assembly Chairperson Ganesh Prasad Timilsina at the latter's office in Kathmandu, 10 February 2020*

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*Foreign Ministers of Nepal and India leading their respective delegations to the Joint Commission, Kathmandu, 21-22 August 2019*

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*Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov during the Nepal-Russia bilateral talks, Moscow, 25 November 2019*

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*The Foreign Minister addressing the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 27 September 2019*

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*Foreign Minister Gyawali convening the Informal Meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers on the sidelines of the UNGA-74, New York, 26 September 2019*

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*The Foreign Minister delivering his statement at the HRC, Geneva, 25 February 2020*

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*Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali unveiling the Sagarmatha Sambaad logo, Kathmandu, 9 February 2020*

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*Foreign Ministers of Nepal and Luxembourg holding bilateral talks in Kathmandu, 29 January 2020*

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*Nepali Peacekeepers at work in Masteri, West Darfur, Sudan (Photo: UN)*

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## NEPAL: FACTS AND FIGURES

### *Economic diplomacy*

#### ***Foreign trade:***

- Export NPR 97,109 million; Import NPR 1,418,559 million (TEPC)
- Top five export destination countries: India, USA, Germany, Turkey, China
- Top five source countries of import: India, China, Indonesia, USA, Canada

#### ***Foreign direct investment:***

- NPR 332,832 million (Ministry of Industry)

#### ***Top five foreign investors:***

- China (Mainland), India, China (Hong Kong SAR), USA, South Korea

#### ***Tourism:***

- yearly tourist arrival: 1,197,191 (Immigration Department)
- Top five tourist source countries: India, China, USA, Sri Lanka, UK

#### ***Official development assistance:***

- US\$ 1,979,564,312 (MOF, AMIS)
- Top five bilateral development partners: US, UK, India, China, Japan
- Top five multilateral development partners: WB, ADB, EU, UN, GAVI
- Monetary unit: Nepali Rupee (NPR) US\$ 1=approximately NPR 115
- GDP: NPR 3,767,043 million (US\$ 32 billion)
- GDP per capita: US\$ 1,085 (Economic Survey 2019/20)

#### ***Overseas Employment:***

- labour permits and renewals: 3,68,433 persons (Department of Foreign Employment)
- Number of bilateral agreements between Nepal and labour destination countries: 9
- Top five destinations for overseas employment: Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Qatar, UAE and Kuwait



## *Service Delivery*

### *Passports distributed*

- Total passports: 398,842
- Ordinary passports: 397,053
- Official passports: 1,260
- Diplomatic passports: 443
- Travel documents: 86

### *Consular services*

- Documents attested: 229,295
- Visa recommendations issued: 1,089
- Diplomatic exemptions granted: 3,062
- Gratis visas issued: 1,736
- Rescue and repatriation: 28,000
- Compensation handed over to beneficiaries: NPR 696,500,374
- Repatriation of dead bodies: 533

# OVERVIEW

## Overview

This Annual Report includes major engagements and activities carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the period starting from 16 July 2019 to 15 July 2020, featuring major outcomes of those engagements and activities with a focus on their implications for and contributions to Nepal's foreign policy objectives. This edition of the Report also features Nepal's response to combat the outbreak of COVID-19 and mitigate its impacts.

The Ministry, being responsible for formulating and implementing Nepal's foreign policy and thereby protecting and promoting Nepal's vital interests, streamlined and conducted all engagements and activities towards achieving foreign policy objectives of the nation. The Ministry advanced its efforts to strengthening bilateral, regional and multilateral relations, projecting the country's image in international arena, promoting development diplomacy and protecting the rights and interests of Nepalis living abroad during these difficult times.

Nepal's foreign policy is guided by the principles and purposes of the UN Charter, non-alignment, international law and the norms of world peace. Conduct of a principled, consistent and independent foreign policy continues to guide our diplomatic engagements. 'Amity with all

and enmity with none' continues to guide Nepal in advancing its relations with other countries and to enhance its image as a mature and responsible member of the comity of nations. Likewise, the aspiration of 'Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali' continues to motivate us to pursue Nepal's national interest in achieving growth and development in line with all national, regional as well as global goals.

The world faced an unprecedented challenge to respond to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in the latter part of the reporting period. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinated, facilitated and undertook rescue and repatriation of Nepali nationals facing problems in many countries, ensuring smooth supply of essential medical logistics. Likewise, Nepal continued to work together with relevant countries in bilateral, regional and multilateral platforms in order to combat COVID-19 crisis. As the world grapples with the disease, it also includes activities carried out in a virtual manner to adapt to a 'new normal'.

Regular activities undertaken by the Ministry and its missions abroad during the reporting period include: the continuation of Nepal's bilateral, regional and multilateral engagements, including through high-level visits, meetings of regular mechanisms and establishment of new mechanisms and various promotional

activities directed towards boosting trade, tourism and investment as per the policies and programmes of the Government of Nepal.

The first half of the review period saw a steady rise in Nepal's bilateral, regional, and multilateral engagements. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted the engagements and activities of the Ministry in the latter half of the period, which are either postponed or cancelled or conducted virtually.

Nepal continues to place top priority to its relations with the neighbours. Nepal's engagements with its immediate neighbours remained deep and productive during the period under review. Nepal's relations with countries in the extended neighbourhood, major powers, development partners and labour destination countries continued to be friendly and cooperative. Efforts were made towards further enriching the cordial relations with other friendly countries.

Nepal's regional engagement continued to be meaningful. Such an engagement is guided by the fact that Nepal lies in the least integrated area of the world, in terms of trade, investment, tourism as well as the mobility of people. This year too, Nepal played an important role in the regional processes to make them more effective and productive. Nepal worked closely with fellow Member States of SAARC, BIMSTEC, ACD and SCO for achieving regional integration, development and prosperity.

Nepal continued to advocate for a stronger

UN for maintaining international peace and security and addressing the challenges of global scale. Supporting multilateralism and a rules-based international order; ending conflicts and terrorism; addressing poverty, hunger and climate change; and promoting universal values of human rights are high on the agenda of Nepal. Nepal participated in a host of UN meetings this year asserting its positions for a better world by creating a fair and enabling environment for developing countries.

The impact of COVID-19 is no less pronounced at the multilateral settings. Multilateral forums are replete with myriad of agendas full of contending interests. In such a situation, Nepal continued to highlight the need for more solidarity, dialogue, cooperation and support. Nepal also continued to highlight challenges facing LDCs and LLDCs. Nepal's plan to graduate from the LDC status also figured with a focus on smooth and sustainable graduation.

Nepal's engagements at multilateral forums were further enhanced. Nepal continued to advocate for strengthening multilateral rules and architecture and for making them fit-for-purpose to deliver on the global agenda, including goals under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. Nepal continues to contribute to international affairs and global processes, including through peacekeeping and taking up new roles and responsibilities. Re-election bid to the Human Rights Council and presentation of candidature to Security Council non-permanent membership are in this line.

Engagement with Nepali communities aboard was further consolidated through more interactions. Establishment of the Brain Gain Centre at the Ministry

is in keeping with the need to mobilise resources and expertise of diaspora intellectuals, professionals and experts.

## Nepal's neighborhood

Nepal's immediate neighbours, India and China, continued to receive global attention and focus this year. Both the countries registered achievements in economic, technological, medical research, social, and other spheres of development.

Nepal maintained its policy of not allowing its territory to be used against its neighbours and reiterated its same expectation from them. Sovereign equality, mutual trust, shared benefits and respect for and understanding of each other's concerns and sensitivities continued to shape our bilateral relations. Bilateral relationship with both the neighbours remained productive and mutually beneficial.

The momentum gained in all dimensions of bilateral interactions and exchanges with India and China were slowed by the outbreak of COVID-19 and the public health emergency that followed. The engagement with the neighbours mainly focused on assisting each other in mitigation, prevention and control of the pandemic as well as strengthening cooperation in the health sector. Both countries assisted Nepal in its fight against the disease.

Nepal and India continued to enjoy age-old, cordial, multi-dimensional and friendly relations. Nepal's relations with India were marked by significant developments

during the reporting period. Exchange of high-level visits and engagements further enriched the relations. Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held several rounds of telephone conversations and remotely inaugurated Motihari-Amlekhgunj petroleum pipeline in September 2019. The two Prime Ministers inaugurated, also virtually, the Integrated Check Post in Biratnagar and post-earthquake reconstruction of housing under the Indian support in January 2020.

India continued to be the largest trading partner as well as source country of tourists. The revised text of Nepal-India transit treaty and its protocol was finalised. Matters relating to the demarcation of boundary in the remaining segments also figured prominently during the period.

Nepal's relationship with China was marked by cordiality, friendship and cooperation. The reporting period remained historic in terms of substantive growth in the bilateral relations with the exchange of high-level visits, bilateral consultations and people-to-people exchange. The State Visit of the President Xi Jinping to Nepal took place in October 2019. Twenty agreements were signed or exchanged on the occasion. Apart from being Nepal's major development partner, China continued to remain the largest source-country for foreign investment.

## South Asia

Nepal's relations with the countries of South Asia were further consolidated during the review period. High-level visits were exchanged between Nepal and countries in the region. Meetings of bilateral mechanisms covering trade, transit, tourism and investment were held giving boost to Nepal's relations with these countries in respective areas

## North East Asia

North East Asia continued to remain an important region for Nepal. Nepal shares friendly and cooperative relations with the countries of North East Asia. People-to-people contacts, through tourists, students and business partnership remained important features in Nepal's relations with these countries. There were important exchanges of visits, including

of cooperation. President of Bangladesh paid an official goodwill visit of Nepal. Countries in the region came together to fight COVID-19 collectively, as India took initiative for a video conference among the leaders of the SAARC member States and create an emergency fund in response to the pandemic in March.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari's visit to Japan and the Chinese President's visit to Nepal, both in October. The region, Japan and the RoK in particular, continued to remain an important source of foreign investment and a preferred destination for foreign employment. Nepal maintained its principled position for peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula.

## South East Asia and the Pacific

Relations between Nepal and the countries of South-East Asia and the Pacific remained cordial and cooperative during the period under review, which were widened and consolidated through the exchange of visits and conclusion of bilateral agreements. It is one of important regions in terms of trade, investment and foreign employment. This region hosts around half a million Nepali migrant population. Air connectivity has helped

strengthen people-to-people contacts. Nepal's engagements with this region were highlighted by the state visit of President Bidya Devi Bhandari to Myanmar and celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of diplomatic relations with Australia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar and the Philippines. The MOU between Nepal and Malaysia on migrant workers came into force this year.

## Central Asia, West Asia and Africa

Nepal and the countries in the Central Asia, West Asia and Africa region continued to cooperate and interact on

matters of common interest. Diplomatic engagements with countries in the region further strengthened the bilateral relations.

As the Gulf region alone hosts more than one million Nepali migrant workers, deepening bilateral relations with them receives Nepal's high priority with a view to ensuring the safety, security and welfare of the Nepali workers. In the context of COVID-19 outbreak, conversations were held with labour destination countries at the levels of President, Prime Minister

and Foreign Minister. The Foreign Minister held rounds of video conferences with Nepali Ambassadors and NRN representatives to discuss the situation of migrant Nepalis and the measures to be taken. These engagements were important in taking appropriate measures for safeguarding their safety and wellbeing.

## Europe and the Americas

Nepal's engagements with the countries in Europe and the American continents further strengthened during the review period. The region continued to remain a priority for Nepal as major development as well as trading partners. In terms of amount of foreign investments and tourist arrivals, they rank among the major source countries. The much-needed COVID-19 related supports were received to Nepal

from the region. Foreign Minister Gyawali paid official visits to the Russian Federation and Serbia in November 2019. High-level dignitaries, including the parliamentary Speakers of Canada and Ireland, Belgian Princess, first lady of Germany and Foreign Minister of Luxembourg, visited Nepal. The Ministry held bilateral consultations with four friendly nations in the region.

## Regional Cooperation

Regional Cooperation remains an important component of Nepal's foreign policy. Nepal placed high priority for deepening and widening of regional cooperation and partnership for the promotion of collective well-being of the peoples of the region. This year witnessed steady development in regional cooperation.

The SAARC Leaders' Video Conference of March 2020 re-energised regional partnership in the wake of COVID-19. The virtual meetings of health ministers, health officials and trade officials contributed to facilitating cooperation

in fighting COVID-19. Four Ministerial and technical level meetings were held, including the SAARC Council of Ministers, and the meetings of finance, education and health ministers. Nepal hosted the sixth Inter-Governmental Group on Transport meeting. In line with the decisions of the 2018 Kathmandu Summit of BIMSTEC, Nepal emphasised the need for developing its institutional frameworks. Important meetings, such as that of BIMSTEC Senior Officials and the Permanent Working Committee were also held. Nepal also continued its engagements with the Asian Cooperation Dialogue and Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

## Multilateral Engagements

The year 2019-20 reminded us of the need for further strengthening multilateralism. In the face of emerging challenges, Nepal continued to focus on rules-based, just and inclusive international order. As the UN commemorates its 75th anniversary, the agenda such as climate change, geopolitical tensions, demographic shift and impacts of emerging technologies call for concerted efforts of the Member States.

On top of these challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic required an enhanced level of global cooperation. COVID-19 has now been the agenda-setter of multilateral interactions. Intergovernmental forums were conducted remotely. Nepal participated in a number of multilateral forums and made substantive contributions across all pillars of the UN system. Its engagements in the UN General Assembly, UN reforms and on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were further intensified. Nepal worked closely with the Groups of LDCs, LLDCs, G-77

& China, and NAM on the global agenda.

As the fourth largest troops and police contributing country (TPCC) to the UN peace operations, Nepal made substantive contributions to the 2020 Review of Peacebuilding Architecture and negotiations on peacekeeping. Nepal presented its second Voluntary National Review report on SDGs in July 2020.

As the member of the Human Rights Council (HRC), Nepal remained active to promote and protect human rights through its constructive approach. Nepal continued to add value to the work of the Council with a unique perspective of the nationally led and owned peace process. Nepal submitted its candidature for the non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council for the term of 2037-38. The Permanent Representative of Nepal to the UN in New York was elected the Chair of the Second Committee of the 75th session of UNGA.

## Policy, Planning, Development Diplomacy and Nepali Diaspora

During the period, major policy initiatives were undertaken with a view to ensuring better articulation of Nepal's foreign policy and further strengthening its institutional capacity by streamlining the planning and reporting processes. A consolidated and unified foreign policy document was drafted with wider stakeholder consultation. As an exercise to facilitate the global dialogue on burning contemporary issues and consensus making processes, preparatory works for launching the first edition of *Sagarmatha Sambaad* as a global

dialogue forum were completed.

New laws and regulations were enacted/drafted and reforms were undertaken in the planning and operational processes. The Ministry pursued the country's economic interests by putting economic diplomacy at the fore, while facilitating Nepali diaspora across the world to enhance their contribution to Nepal's development. Operationalisation of the Brain Gain Centre is an initiative towards this end.

## Protocol, consular and passport

Protocol services were accorded to a number of high-level visits that took place during the reporting period. The Ministry performed its ceremonial role, including the presence of diplomatic corps at the state ceremonies, airport courtesies to official guests, protection of visiting dignitaries, and arrangement of state banquets. 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 consular services to diplomatic and consular posts, businesses and individuals. The Department strengthened online service delivery, while giving continuity to its 'service in half an hour'.

The Department of Passports, the first government agency to have been certified with ISO/9001:2015, personalised a total of 398,842 Machine Readable Travel Documents in the reporting period. The Department continued to focus on an efficient service delivery.

## Administration and human resource development

The Ministry laid its focus on human resource development and institutional reforms with a view to enhancing its public service delivery. A standard for administrative and managerial efficiency was maintained throughout while ensuring a fair approach in personnel management and establishing efficiency and economy in financial management. The Ministry continued to prioritise

public accountability and transparency, efficiency, training, property management, use of technologies, internal reforms, compliance, updating laws etc. The Code of Conduct for Nepal Foreign Service and other staff serving in Nepali Missions abroad and International Organization, 2019 has been implemented.

## COVID-19 response

With the outbreak of COVID-19 in the later part of the period, the Ministry coordinated with line ministries as well as with the Nepali missions abroad and foreign governments for controlling the pandemic and mitigating its impacts. The Ministry and the missions extended necessary protection, provided relief to Nepali nationals and assisted those who wished to return home during the pandemic. Repatriation flights were

arranged to accommodate rising demand of inbound Nepali nationals, migrant workers in particular. Virtual meetings and conversations were held at the levels of the President, Prime Minister and Ministers with their counterparts in the countries hosting sizable Nepali communities for safety, security and protection of each other's nationals. The Ministry also facilitated repatriation of foreign nationals stranded in different parts of the country.



The Ministry is working in coordination with relevant agencies on longer-term policies and plans for the affected sectors. Nepal is also collaborating with countries with similar situations for

sharing best practices and exploring solutions. A total of 28,125 Nepali nationals returned home in evacuation flights during the reporting period.

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# REVIEW OF NEPAL'S FOREIGN RELATIONS

# 1. Neighbourhood

## India

Relations between Nepal and India documented significant developments, with high-level engagements enriching its substance. Economic relations continued to grow as India ranked among the major development partners, top source of tourists, largest trading partner and the second biggest investor.

**Inauguration of Petroleum Pipeline and ICP:** Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi jointly inaugurated Motihari-Amlekhgunj Cross Border Petroleum Pipeline through video conference on 10 September 2019. As the pipeline came into operation, it became the first cross-border petroleum pipeline in South Asia.

Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli said that the project will not only save time, reduce cost, lessen road traffic and reduce air pollution but also open avenues for expanding similar pipelines across the country. Prime Minister Modi said that such projects would contribute to the further strengthening of the relations

between India and Nepal.

Likewise, Prime Ministers of Nepal and India jointly inaugurated the Integrated Check Post (ICP), Biratnagar, and the post-earthquake reconstruction of private housing in Gorkha and Nuwakot Districts under the financial support of India through video conference on 21 January 2020.

In his remarks, Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli stated that the timely completion of the ICP and reconstruction of private housing under the Indian grant assistance symbolised the close relations between Nepal and India. He expressed confidence that the operationalization of ICP would enhance cross border trade and movements.



*The Prime Ministers of Nepal and India during the Inauguration of the ICP, Biratnagar*

**Telephone Conversation between Prime Ministers:** The Prime Ministers of Nepal and India held telephone conversation on 10 April 2020. During the conversation, the Prime Ministers touched upon the multi-dimensional friendly relations existing between the two countries and stressed on further

strengthening of the relations for mutual benefit. Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the supply of essential medicines and logistics to Nepal. They agreed to intensify efforts for fighting COVID-19 and to take care of the people of the two countries living in each other's territory.

**Joint Commission:** The 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of Nepal-India Joint Commission was held in Kathmandu on 21-22 August 2019. The Nepali delegation was led by Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali. The Indian delegation was led by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. The Commission reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations with specific focus on connectivity and economic partnership, trade and transit, power and water resources, culture and education. The two sides exchanged views on the review of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship and submission of the report of the Eminent Persons Group on Nepal-India Relations.

The Joint Commission reviewed the progress of major bilateral projects and agreed to expedite an early completion of remaining projects.

Both sides agreed to review treaties and agreements related to trade, transit and rail services. They also agreed to continue upgradation and maintenance of infrastructure and logistic facilities at major border crossing-points for facilitating trade and transit. The Commission underlined the need for addressing inundation problems and agreed to take action on the recommendations made by the joint team in this regard.

During the meeting, an MoU on Food Safety and Standards between Department of Food Technology and Quality Control of Nepal and Food Safety and Standards Authority of India was signed and exchanged.

**Meetings on Nepal-India Power Sector Cooperation:** The 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) on Nepal-India Power Sector Cooperation was held in Bengaluru, India on 15 October 2019. Co-chaired by the Energy Secretaries of both the governments, the meeting agreed to implement new Butwal-Gorakhpur 400 KV transmission line, a priority project for Nepal for transmission of power to India. It also agreed to upgrade power transmission capacity of Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur, Raxual-Parwanipur, new Nautanwa-Mainhiya and Nanpara-Kohalpur transmission lines. They underlined the need of synchronizing the grid systems of the two countries. The 7<sup>th</sup> Joint Working Group meeting at the Joint Secretary-level preceded the JSC meeting which discussed bilateral cooperation on a number of projects relating to transmission lines, hydropower projects, energy banking etc.

**Boundary demarcation works:** Nepal-India boundary demarcation works have been completed in all segments except Susta and north-western sectors. Nepal has consistently stressed on the completion of the remaining work of the boundary demarcation as early as possible. On 2 November 2019, India published a new political map, depicting Nepal's Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura areas in its map. Nepal maintained that these territories lying in the east of Kali

River belong to Nepal according to Article 5 of the Treaty of Sugauli. Nepal requested India to rectify the map and proposed twice for holding of talks at the Foreign Secretary level in order to complete the pending boundary demarcation works.

Meanwhile, the Government of India inaugurated the 'link road' to LipuLekh of Nepal via Nepali territory on 8 May 2020. In response, the Government of Nepal called upon the Government of India to refrain from carrying out any activity inside the territory of Nepal. Nepal conveyed that such unilateral acts run against the understanding reached between the two countries including at the level of Prime Ministers that a solution to boundary issues would be sought through negotiation. Nepal maintains that boundary issues should be resolved through negotiation on the basis of the treaty, historical documents, facts and maps.

As India did not rectify the map, the Government of Nepal published on 20 May 2020 the new administrative and political map of Nepal, depicting the Nepali territories of LipuLekh, Kalapani and Limpiadhura within it.

Meanwhile, the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of Nepal-India Boundary Working Group (BWG) was held in Dehradun, India in August 2019. The Director-General-level delegations of both the countries reviewed the implementation of the agreed minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> BWG meeting, while approving the recommendations of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> meetings of Senior Officials' Committee (SOC). Discussions were held on finalization of plan and technical

specifications for undergoing large scale mapping using UAV and clearance from both Governments for its pilot project. Similarly, the 11<sup>th</sup> SOC meeting held in September 2019 finalised the work plan for inspection, repair and reconstruction of boundary pillars during the field season 2019-2020.

Similarly, the 4<sup>th</sup> Nepal-India Coordination Meeting between the Armed Police Force, Nepal and Sashastra Seema Bal, India was held in Pokhara, Nepal on 20-22 November 2019. The two sides discussed various matters, including assessment of security scenario along the border, joint patrolling/inspection of border pillars and exchange of information on trans-border crimes.

**Exchange of visits:** Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health and Population Upendra Yadav visited India on 2-7 September 2019 to participate in the WHO ministerial meeting of the region. During the visit, the Deputy Prime Minister had a bilateral meeting with his Indian counterpart and discussed cooperation in the health sector. Deputy Prime Minister Yadav also visited India in November 2019 to participate in the World Conference on Access to Medical Products.

Finance Minister Dr Yuba Raj Khatiwada visited India to participate in the Indian Economic Summit held in New Delhi on 2-4 October 2019. He emphasised connectivity and financial and economic integration for regional prosperity. The Finance Minister also had a bilateral meeting with the Indian Finance Minister. Similarly, Minister for Forests

and Environment Shakti Bahadur Basnet visited India in September 2019 to participate in the 14<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. On the sidelines, the Minister met with his Indian counterpart.

Minister of State for Tourism of India Prahlad Singh Patel visited Nepal to participate in the inauguration of the Visit Nepal Year 2020. Similarly, Minister of State for Power, New and Renewable Energy of India Raj Kumar Singh visited Nepal to attend Nepal Infrastructure Summit held in Kathmandu on 11-12 September 2019.

Attorney General Agni Prasad Kharel visited India in August 2019 to study functions and relations between Attorney General and Advocates General of the two countries. The Attorney General had meetings with the Chief Justice and the Attorney General of India.

**Meeting of Nepal-India IGC on Trade and Transit:** The Commerce Secretary level meeting of Inter-Governmental Committee (IGC) on trade, transit and

## China

The period witnessed a substantive growth in Nepal-China relations with the exchange of high-level visits and an enhanced level of economic partnerships. Apart from being Nepal's major development partner, China continued to remain the largest source-country for investment.

**Exchange of High-level Visits:** At the invitation of President Bidya Devi Bhandari, President of China Xi Jinping paid a State Visit to Nepal on 12-13 October 2019. In the meeting of the two Presidents, views were exchanged on further strengthening and consolidating

cooperation was held in Kathmandu on 26-27 November 2019. Discussions during the meeting included amendment to Nepal-India Transit Treaty integrating the provisions of the Letters of Exchange (LoEs), provisions of the proposed LoEs of inland waterways, and the opening of additional cross border points for the movement of bulk cargo, among others. The meeting finalised the revised text of Nepal-India Transit Treaty and its protocol. It also discussed matters relating to the Electric Cargo Surveillance System.

**Meeting of BBIN Nodal Officers of Nepal:** A meeting of the BBIN nodal officers of Nepal, Bangladesh and India was held in New Delhi on 8 February 2020 to discuss the implementation of BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA). Bhutan participated in an observer capacity. While the draft Protocol for the movement of passenger vehicles was finalised in 2018, the text of the Protocol on Cargo Vehicles was discussed for the first time. The meeting also deliberated on the draft text of the proposed MoU that enables Nepal, India and Bangladesh to implement MVA.

cooperative friendship between Nepal and China. President Bidya Devi Bhandari hosted the State Banquet in honor of the visiting President of China on 12 October 2019.

The Chinese President held delegation



*President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli at the delegation-level talks*

level talks with Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli on 13 October 2019. During the meeting, both leaders exchanged views on further consolidating the multidimensional relationship between the two countries and emphasised the need to elevate cooperative partnership for development and prosperity.

The two leaders agreed to continue the momentum of high-level visits and intensify implementation of MOU on Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) within the overarching framework of Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network. The two sides agreed to conduct feasibility study for the construction of cross-border railway; construct tunnels along the Kyerung-Kathmandu road; establish Madan Bhandari University for Science and Technology; and expand air connectivity, among others.

Following the meeting, the two leaders witnessed exchanges of twenty different Agreements, MoUs and Letters of

Exchange signed during the visit.

State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of China Wang Yi paid an official visit to Nepal on 8-10 September 2019. In the delegation level talks, the two Foreign Ministers reviewed all aspects of bilateral relations, prepared the ground for the high-level visit from China to Nepal and reached understanding to further promote cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

Following the meeting, the two Foreign Ministers witnessed the signing of the Exchange of Letters on the Hospital Recovery Project in Manang, the Exchange of Letters on 5,000 pieces of emergency shelter tents, the exchange of MOU on Volunteer Chinese Teachers in Nepal.

Chairman of the People's Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region of China Qizhala paid an official visit to Nepal on 2-6 December 2019. During the visit, Chairman Qizhala met with Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali

and discussed matters of bilateral cooperation between Nepal and China's Tibet. Chairman Qizhala paid separate courtesy calls on the President and the Prime Minister of Nepal and met with Chief of Gandaki Province Amik Sherchan and Chief Minister of Bagmati Province Dormani Poudel.

Governor of the Yunnan Province of China Ruan Chengfa visited Nepal in November 2019. During his visit, the Governor called on Vice President Nanda Bahadur Pun and Minister for Energy, Water Resource and Irrigation Barshaman Pun separately and exchanged views on issues of mutual interests.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Ishwar Pokhrel visited China to participate in the inaugural ceremony of the 7<sup>th</sup> Military World Games at Wuhan on 18-22 October 2019. During the visit, DPM Pokhrel held a meeting with State Councilor and Minister of National Defence Wei Fenghe and discussed the ways to enhance bilateral cooperation.

Minister for Home Affairs Ram Bahadur Thapa 'Badal' paid an official visit to China on 5-10 January 2020 and held bilateral meeting with State Councilor and Minister of Public Security Zhao Kezhi. Similarly, Minister of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation Padma Kumari Aryal visited China to attend Global Poverty Reduction and Development Forum



*Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali with State Councilor of China Wang Yi*

held in Beijing on 17 October 2019.

**Virtual meetings and consultations:** President Bidya Devi Bhandari held a telephone conversation with President of China Xi Jinping on 27 April 2020. Recalling the successful State Visit of the President of China to Nepal in October 2019, the President of Nepal spoke of the longstanding close ties between the two countries. On the occasion, the two Presidents shared views on the global fight against COVID-19 and its impacts.

Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali participated in the High-Level Video Conference on Belt and Road International Cooperation: Combating COVID-19 with Solidarity on 18 June 2020 convened by the Chinese Foreign Minister. Minister Gyawali appreciated the role of BRI in the development of partner countries. He also underscored the importance of cooperation in the health sector among them. Likewise, he held telephone conversation with



Foreign Minister Wang Yi on 13 April 2020 and shared views on the measures taken by their respective governments in the fight against COVID-19.

A video consultation was held between the Foreign Ministries of Nepal and China at the Director General level on 3 June 2020. The two sides shared views on cooperation on epidemic prevention and control and reviewed progress on bilateral cooperation and the reconstruction projects, among others.

A meeting between the representatives of the aeronautical authorities of Nepal and China was held in Beijing in July 2019. Both sides discussed issues of bilateral air transportation under the Air Services Agreement and agreed to utilise and expand the opportunities in the civil aviation sector through joint collaboration. Meanwhile, Himalayan Airlines commenced direct flights from Kathmandu to Beijing from 27 October 2019.

**Trade, Culture and Consular Activities:** China continued to remain Nepal's second largest trade partner during the review year with a total bilateral trade volume of NPR 183 billion. The growing trade deficit of Nepal has remained a matter of concern for Nepal. In the review period, the trade deficit widened to NPR 180.7 billion. Nepal has requested for expanding special treatment to Nepali products in the Chinese market.

The Embassy of Nepal in Beijing, Consulates General of Nepal in Lhasa, Hong Kong and Guangzhou conducted promotional and exchange activities related to tourism, trade, investment and public diplomacy. They provided consular services to the business people and Nepali diaspora. Nepal participated in the International Import Expo held in Shanghai in November 2019. The Embassy co-hosted Nepal Day at the Horticultural Expo in Beijing and organized photo/painting exhibitions, including one at the historic Summer Palace. *Sur Sudha* from Nepal performed in Beijing and Zhejiang of China.

## 2. South Asia

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With high-level visits and meetings of bilateral mechanisms covering productive sectors, Nepal's relations with the countries of South Asia were expanded further during the review period. Nepal and the countries in the region supported each other to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Afghanistan

Nepal and Afghanistan continued to enjoy friendly relations during the reporting period. Nepal is always in favour of sustainable peace in Afghanistan. The Government of Afghanistan

extended cooperation in the rescue and repatriation of Nepali nationals stranded in Afghanistan. The two countries also coordinated efforts in international forums for the cause of LDCs and LLDCs.

## Bangladesh

Nepal-Bangladesh relations remained cordial and friendly. At the invitation of President Bidya Devi Bhandari, President of Bangladesh Md. Abdul Hamid paid an official goodwill visit to Nepal from 12 to 15 November 2019. The two Presidents held talks during which they expressed satisfaction over the excellent state of bilateral relations and agreed to further

expand and consolidate them in the days ahead. They also discussed matters such as promotion of cooperation in the areas of trade, investment, energy, tourism and connectivity. Both Presidents also underlined the importance of continuing their collaborative work at the regional and multilateral forums.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali paid an official visit to Bangladesh on 17-19 February 2020 at the invitation of Foreign Minister of Bangladesh A. K. Abdul Momen. At the bilateral meeting, the ministers discussed such matters of mutual interests as trade, transit and investment. They underlined the importance of strengthening cooperation in the fields of tourism, energy and education. Minister Gyawali also paid courtesy calls on the President and Prime Minister of Bangladesh. In his meeting with the Bangladeshi Commerce Minister, bilateral trade and connectivity



*The Foreign Ministers of Nepal and Bangladesh at the bilateral meeting in Dhaka*

issues were discussed.

Chief of Army Staff Gen. Purna Chandra Thapa visited Bangladesh from 12 to 15 January 2020 and met with his Bangladeshi counterpart General Aziz Ahmed. General Ahmed came to Nepal on a return visit in February 2020. On both the occasions, the two sides discussed cooperation between the two institutions.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Nepal-Bangladesh Commerce Secretary-level meeting was held in Dhaka in March 2020. The meeting discussed ways and means for promoting trade and investment, starting direct bus service and flights between regional capitals of the two countries and cargo movement. The meeting also agreed to the initial draft of Preferential Trade Agreement. Earlier, the 4<sup>th</sup> Joint Secretary-level Technical Committee meeting on bilateral trade was held in Kathmandu in October 2019.

## Bhutan

Nepal and Bhutan continued to enjoy friendly relations. Nepal-Bhutan Commerce Joint Secretary level talks were held on 29 August 2019 in Kathmandu. During the meeting, the two sides discussed the ways and means

for expanding trade relations, including finalizing a list of products for duty-free access in both countries. The meeting also finalised a draft trade agreement between the two countries.

## The Maldives

The relations between Nepal and the Maldives remained cordial. Over the years, people to people contacts have significantly increased. Few thousands Nepalis are currently working in the Maldives in various sectors. Foreign Minister Gyawali attended the 4<sup>th</sup> Indian Ocean Conference held on 3-4 September 2019 in Male. Addressing the conference, he emphasised the need of an architecture based on inclusiveness and utilization of marine resources. Minister Gyawali called on the Maldivian President and met with the Foreign Minister. On the occasions, matters of mutual interests, including tourism, employment for Nepali nationals in the Maldives and climate change, were discussed.

Former Prime Minister and Member of Federal Parliament Madhav Kumar Nepal



*Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali being received by President Solih of the Maldives in Male*

visited the Maldives from 27 August to 1 September 2019 to attend as Chief Guest at the convocation ceremony of MI College. During the visit, he met with Speaker of the Parliament of the Maldives.

## Pakistan

Nepal and Pakistan continued to enjoy friendly relations during the review period. Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination and the Chairperson of the Pakistani Sports Council Fehmida Mirza

visited Nepal to attend the inauguration of the 13<sup>th</sup> South Asian Games held in Kathmandu in December 2019. During the visit, she had a meeting with Minister for Youth and Sports Jagat Bahadur

Bishwakarma. Nepal handed over to Pakistan the responsibility of hosting the 14<sup>th</sup> SAG in 2021.

The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of Nepal-Pakistan Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held on 25 February 2020 in Islamabad. Co-chaired by Foreign Secretary Shanker Bairagi and his Pakistani counterpart Sohail Mahmood, the meeting reviewed the status of bilateral co-operation and agreed to further enhance the relationship between the two countries in the areas of trade, tourism, education, culture and people-to-people relations.



*Nepal-Pakistan Bilateral Political Consultation, Islamabad*

Secretary Bairagi called on Foreign Minister of Pakistan Shah Mahmood Qureshi and exchanged views on further strengthening the bilateral relations.

## **Sri Lanka**

Friendly relations between Nepal and Sri Lanka saw a steady growth during the review period. Minister for Youth of Sri Lanka Duminda Dissanayake visited Nepal in December 2019 to attend the 13<sup>th</sup> South Asian Games ceremonies. Minister for Education, Science and Technology Giriraj Mani Pokharel visited Sri Lanka on 11 October 2019 after the completion

of the meeting of the SAARC Ministers of Education held in Male. During the visit, he met with experts of traditional medicine. Similarly, Chairperson of the Finance Committee of the Federal Parliament Krishna Prasad Dahal visited Sri Lanka in February 2020 and met with the officials of the Securities and Exchange Commission and Colombo Stock Exchange.

## **3. North East Asia**

During the period under review, Nepal's relations with the countries in North East Asia were marked by exchange of high-level visits, development cooperation, business partnerships and people-to-people contacts. President Bidya Devi Bhandari paid an official visit to Japan in October 2019.

## Japan

This year Nepal-Japan relations witnessed a significant progress with the high-level bilateral engagements and increasing people-to-people contacts. Japan continued to remain one of the major development partners of Nepal. There is significant number of Nepalis, including students, engaged in various professions in Japan.



*President Bidya Devi Bhandari, joined by Minister-in-attendance Ram Bahadur Thapa Badal and the President and Members of the Nepal-Japan Parliamentary Friendship League, at a welcome reception hosted by Ambassador Pratibha Rana*

President Bidya Devi Bhandari paid an official visit to Japan on 20-22 October 2019 to participate in the Enthronement Ceremony of Emperor Naruhito. The President held meeting with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on 21 October 2019. On the occasion, President Bhandari appreciated Japan for its goodwill and support towards Nepal. Prime Minister Abe assured Japan's continuous cooperation to Nepal's socioeconomic development.

Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Barsha Man Pun visited Japan on 21-27 September 2019 and met with Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Taku Etou and other senior officials. Vice-Foreign Minister Norihiro Nakayama visited Nepal on 16-17 January 2020 and called on the Foreign Minister Gyawali and Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Yogesh Bhattarai.

Japanese Vice-Minister of Land,

Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Hideyuki Tanaka visited Nepal in June 2019. The Vice Minister met with Minister for Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation Padma Kumari Aryal. Similarly, a Japanese delegation of women parliamentarians visited Nepal in August 2019 and called on the President, Foreign Minister and Minister for Women, Children and Senior Citizens. A delegation of Japanese Agriculture Ministry visited Nepal in November 2019 and had meetings at the concerned ministries. Nepal Agriculture Research Council and Japan International Research Center for Agriculture Sciences signed an MoU on agricultural technologies.

The third meeting of Nepal-Japan Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held in

Kathmandu on 7 February 2020. The Joint Secretary-level meeting discussed various ways of enhancing cooperation in trade, tourism, investment, agriculture, infrastructure and human resources.

Nepal received Japanese cooperation in infrastructure development, disaster risk reduction, water supply, agriculture and human resources development, among

others. Japan remained an important trade partner and one of the major investors in Nepal. Resumption of direct air connectivity between Kathmandu and Osaka is a milestone in aviation cooperation. The Embassy of Nepal in Tokyo remained active in promoting Nepal in Japan by organizing various events.

## Republic of Korea

Nepal and the Republic of Korea (RoK) continued to enjoy excellent relations based on mutual cooperation, goodwill and friendship. Exchange of visits at various levels, continued development cooperation, growing people-to-people contacts and cooperation at regional and international forums contributed to further strengthening the bilateral relations. The RoK has become a preferred destination for foreign employment under EPS arrangement.

Chairperson of the National Assembly Ganesh Prasad Timilsina paid a visit to the RoK on 3-6 September 2019. The Chairman held bilateral meetings with Speaker of National Assembly of the RoK Moon Hee-sang and discussed matters of parliamentary cooperation. National Assembly Vice Chairperson Sashikala

Dahal participated at the Parliamentarians' Conference on Environment and Development in December 2019. A delegation of National Assembly of the RoK paid a return visit to Nepal in January 2020. KOICA President Lee Mikyung also visited Nepal. In addition to her meetings with Nepali counterparts, she called on President Bidya Devi Bhandari on 17 December 2019.

Economic cooperation between Nepal and the RoK continued to grow this year. KOICA provides development assistance to Nepal. Korean investment and bilateral trade have increased in recent years. The Embassy of Nepal in Seoul remained active in promoting Nepal's trade, tourism and culture. The Embassy also provided counselling for Nepali workers in need.

## 4. South East Asia and the Pacific

Nepal continued to attach importance to its relations with the countries in South-East Asia and the Pacific. High level visits including the State Visit of the President of Nepal to Myanmar further consolidated these relations. Nepal's cooperation in areas such as trade, foreign employment, education and connectivity was further expanded with the countries in the region.

## Australia

The relationship between Nepal and Australia remained cordial, friendly and cooperative during the review period. The two countries marked the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. On 2 October 2019, Australia-Nepal Parliament Friendship Group was relaunched in the Australian Parliament to promote exchanges between the two legislatures. As Australia hosts a sizeable Nepali diaspora and number of Australians visiting Nepal continues to grow, people-to-people relations have strengthened.

Tourism Minister Yogesh Bhattarai visited Australia from 5 to 9 January 2020 to

launch Visit Nepal Year 2020 Campaign. During the visit, he had meetings with high officials at the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development of Australia. Australia provided cooperation in Nepal's energy, education, livestock, and forest sectors. Foreign Minister Gyawali and Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne held telephone conversation on 6 April 2020 to discuss repatriation and support for each other's nationals. Nepal Airlines operated chartered flights to evacuate stranded Nepali and Australian nationals, while the Embassy of Nepal in Canberra provided necessary consular services.

## Indonesia

Relations between Nepal and Indonesia remained friendly and cooperative during the period under review. Nepal continued participating in the annual Bali Democracy Forum, the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of which was held on 5-6 December 2019.

This year, the Nepali delegation to the Forum was led by Ambassador of Nepal to Indonesia Uday Raj Pandey. There are increasing prospects for an enhanced level of bilateral trade, investment and tourism with Indonesia.

## Malaysia

Nepal and Malaysia continued to enjoy friendly and cooperative relations. This year marked the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Malaysia.

The presence of a large number of Nepali migrant workers in Malaysia remained one of the major areas of bilateral cooperation as well as an important people-to-people link.



*Ambassador Uday Raj Pandey receiving Country of the Year Award in Kuala Lumpur*

The two Governments jointly undertook new measures to provide better terms of employment for Nepali workers. The MoU on the Recruitment, Employment and Repatriation of Workers signed in 2018 in Kathmandu came into effect. Implementation of the MoU is an important development that allowed resumption of sending Nepali workers

to Malaysia. With a view to providing social security coverage to Nepali migrant workers, the Malaysian side has proposed a Memorandum of Cooperation.

Nepal received the Country of the Year Award 2019 in mountaineering category in an event organised by the Research House of Asia in November 2019.

## Myanmar

Nepal and Myanmar continued to enjoy cordial and friendly bilateral relations defined by shared culture and traditions. The significant presence of people of Nepali origin in Myanmar and a large number of Myanmar tourists visiting Lumbini further strengthen people to people relations. Nepal-Myanmar relations reached a new height this year with the state visit of President Bidya Devi Bhandari from 16 to 20 October 2019 at the invitation of the President of Myanmar U Win Myint.



*President Bidya Devi Bhandari with State Counsellor Daw Suu Kyi, Nay Pyi Taw*

The visit was the first at the Head of State level in 39 years, adding another milestone in the relations. The two Presidents held a bilateral meeting, exchanging views to further promote bilateral relations as well as to forge collaboration in regional and multilateral spheres. State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi called on the President

during the visit. MoUs on culture and tourism were also signed.

The year 2019 also marked the 60th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

## The Philippines

Nepal's relations with the Philippines remained friendly and cordial during the

review period. Cooperation between the two countries continued on matters of



common interests in bilateral, regional and global forums. Nepal and the Philippines signed an MoU to establish Bilateral

Consultation Mechanism between the two Foreign Ministries in Kathmandu on 1 December 2019.

## Thailand

Relations between Nepal and Thailand continued to be friendly and cooperative over the period. Both the countries worked closely in bilateral, regional and multilateral forums on matters of mutual benefit and common interests. The year 2019 marked the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Thailand. Thailand

remained a major market of inbound and outbound tourism for Nepal. Direct air connectivity and cultural linkages helped increase the tourism flows on both sides. Lumbini continued to attract a large number of Thai tourists and pilgrims. Trade remained another important dimension of Nepal-Thai bilateral relations.

## Singapore

Nepal and Singapore continued enjoying cordial relations based on goodwill, mutual understanding and cooperation. Trade, tourism and people-to-people contacts between the two countries remained important dimensions of the bilateral relations. High level contacts between the

leaders of the two countries took place on the sidelines of major international forums. Foreign Minister Gyawali had a bilateral meeting with the Foreign Minister of Singapore Vivian Balakrishnan in the Maldives in September 2019.

## New Zealand

The friendly, cordial and cooperative relations between Nepal and New Zealand were further strengthened during the review period. Nepal-New Zealand first Bilateral Consultations were held on 2

October 2019 in Kathmandu. The two sides took stock of various aspects of bilateral relations and exchanged views on further promoting cooperation especially through enhancing economic engagements.

## 5. Central Asia, West Asia and Africa

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The review period saw increasing engagements with the countries of Central Asia, West Asia and Africa. The Gulf region continued to remain the largest destination for Nepali migrant workers. Exchange of visits at various levels and meetings of bilateral consultation mechanisms contributed to further strengthening the relations and cooperation, including in the protection of interests of migrant workers.

## Saudi Arabia

Nepal and Saudi Arabia continued to maintain cordial and cooperative relations over the period. The friendly relations between the two countries have been further complemented by growing people-to-people contacts, mainly facilitated by the presence of a large number of Nepali migrant workers in the country.

Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali met with Saudi Foreign Minister Ibrahim bin Abdulaziz Al-Assaf on the sidelines of the 74<sup>th</sup> UNGA in New York. Similarly, Minister Gyawali and Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud held telephone conversations twice on 9 April and 14 May 2020 to discuss the ongoing COVID-19 situation and protection of Nepali nationals.

A parliamentary delegation led by Chairman of the Industry, Commerce, Labour and Consumers Welfare Committee of the House of Representatives, Bimal

Prasad Shrivastav visited Saudi Arabia on 2-5 March 2020. The delegation met with Saudi authorities including the Shoura Council, Ministry of Labour and Social Development. The delegation also visited Immigration and Deportation Centres in Riyadh and Dammam. The Vice Chairman of the Saudi Fund for Development visited Nepal in October 2019 during which an agreement was signed to support the post-earthquakes reconstruction.

Saudi Arabia is one of the major trade partners of Nepal, with the total volume of annual bilateral trade above \$100 million. The Embassy of Nepal in Riyadh organized various events including a familiarization trip of Saudi-based journalists to Nepal. The Embassy and the Consulate General in Jeddah continued to organise awareness programmes. They made several on-site and company visits to address problems faced by Nepali workers.

## Qatar

The existing friendly and cooperative relations between Nepal and the State of Qatar were further strengthened during the review period. With a large number of Nepali nationals working in Qatar, Nepal's relations with the country assume greater significance.

On behalf of President Bidya Devi Bhandari, a hand-woven Nepali carpet and a set of children's books on Nepali folk stories were presented to the National Museum and the Qatar National Library respectively. Prime Minister K P Sharma

Oli held a telephone conversation with the Prime Minister of Qatar Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz Al Thani on 23 April 2020 during which the two Prime Ministers shared views on strengthening cooperation in the fight against COVID-19.

Minister for Education, Science and Technology Giriraj Mani Pokharel visited Qatar on 20-22 November 2019 to participate in the World Innovation Summit for Education. During the visit, Minister Pokharel held a meeting with the Minister for Education of Qatar.

A delegation from Qatar Fund for Development visited Nepal in November 2019 to explore avenues for further cooperation in various areas.

The Agreement on Abolishment of Visa Requirements for the Holders of

Diplomatic, Official and Special Passport and the MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture and Food Security entered into force this year. The Embassy of Nepal organised promotional events as well as awareness programmes for Nepali migrants.

## United Arab Emirates (UAE)

The friendly and cooperative relations between Nepal and the UAE continued to strengthen in the reporting period marked by regular engagements and exchanges of visits at high levels. Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli held a telephone conversation with Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi on 6 April 2020. During the call, the two leaders discussed bilateral cooperation including the safety and security of Nepalis during the pandemic.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Ishwar Pokhrel visited the UAE on 16-20 November 2019 to attend the Dubai Airshow. During the visit, DPM Pokhrel held a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan and discussed matters of mutual interests. He also attended a talk programme on business opportunities in Nepal in Dubai.

Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security Gokarna Raj Bista visited the UAE to participate in the 5th Abu Dhabi Dialogue. He addressed the High-level



*National Flag of Nepal on Burj Khalifa, Dubai*

Panel on Inter-Regional Cooperation on 17 October 2019 in capacity of the Chair of the Colombo Process. Minister Bista met with the Minister for Human Resources of the UAE and discussed matters related to

the welfare of Nepali workers. Similarly, Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Barshaman Pun led a Nepali delegation to the 24th World Energy Congress held in Abu Dhabi in September 2019. He also attended the 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) later in January 2020.

State Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies Motilal Dugar visited the UAE in February 2020 and met with Minister of Energy and Industry of the UAE. Similarly a parliamentary delegation led by Bimal Prasad Shrivastav, Chairman of the Committee on Industry, Commerce, Labour and Consumer Welfare, visited the UAE in March 2020 and met with high officials of the Ministry of Human Resources to discuss matters related to the security of Nepali workers.

Foreign Secretary Shanker Bairagi visited the UAE from 26 to 29 February 2020.

## **Kuwait**

Nepal and Kuwait continued to enjoy cordial and cooperative relations during the period under review. With a significant number of Nepali nationals working in Kuwait, people-to-people relations constitute an important aspect of the overall bilateral relations. Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli held a telephone conversation with Prime Minister of Kuwait Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on 7 April 2020 and discussed bilateral relations, particularly matters related to welfare of Nepali nationals during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, Foreign Minister Gyawali and

During the visit, the Foreign Secretary held separate meetings with Assistant Minister for Political Affairs, among others. Matters of bilateral relations and cooperation including welfare of Nepali migrant workers and economic cooperation were discussed.

The first Joint Committee meeting as provisioned in the bilateral MoU on Recruitment, Employment and Repatriation of Workers was held in Kathmandu. The Embassy of Nepal in Abu Dhabi participated in the meetings of IRENA, while. Ambassador Krishna Prasad Dhakal represented Nepal to the 8<sup>th</sup> LDCs Conference and the 18<sup>th</sup> General Conference of UNIDO, both held in November 2019.

In addition to promotional events, the Embassy of Nepal organised awareness programmes. Nepal and the UAE also signed the Air Services Agreement.

Kuwait's Foreign Minister Ahmad Al-Sabah held a conversation on 1 June 2020.

The Embassy of Nepal in Kuwait represented Nepal to the meetings of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue in Kuwait. The Embassy organised Nepal promotion events including a familiarization trip from Kuwait in coordination with Nepal Tourism Board. Kuwait-based Jazeera Airways started its direct flight between Kuwait and Kathmandu. The Embassy of Nepal conducted awareness activities for the migrant Nepali workers.

## Oman

Nepal and Oman continued to enjoy friendly and cooperative bilateral relations. Oman is home to a large number of Nepali migrant workers. Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli held a telephone conversation with Sayyid Fahad bin Mahmood Al-Said, Deputy Prime Minister of Oman on 8 April 2020. During the call, discussions were held on bilateral relations and also about the safety and welfare of Nepali nationals in Oman during the pandemic. Similarly, Foreign Minister Gyawali met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Oman Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah on the sidelines of the 74<sup>th</sup> UNGA in New York.

On behalf of the President and the Prime Minister of Nepal, Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Barshaman Pun visited Oman on 14-15 January 2020 to pay condolences on the passing away of Sultan of Oman. A Parliamentary delegation led by Bimal Prasad Shriwastav, Chairman of the Industry, Commerce and

## Bahrain

The relations between Nepal and Bahrain continued to remain friendly and cooperative during the review period. As Bahrain currently hosts a significant number of Nepali migrant workers, people-to-people relations have further strengthened.

Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli held telephone conversation with Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, Prime Minister of Bahrain, on 4 April 2020. Matters

Consumers Welfare Committee of the House of Representatives, visited Oman in March 2020.

Foreign Secretary Shanker Bairagi visited Oman on 14-16 December 2019. During the visit, the Foreign Secretary held separate meetings with the Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry and the Minister of Oil and Gas. Issues pertaining to the promotion of bilateral relations including the welfare of Nepali migrant workers, and investment were discussed. A meeting with Ambassadors of Nepal in the Middle East and North Africa region was organised on the occasion.

The National Museum of Nepal and the National Museum of Oman signed an MoU on cooperation between the institutions on 2 December 2019. The Embassy of Nepal continued to organise promotional as well as awareness programs in Oman.

regarding bilateral cooperation as well as safety and protection of Nepali migrant workers in the context of COVID-19 were discussed during the talk. Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa on the sidelines of the 74<sup>th</sup> UNGA in New York. The Embassy of Nepal organised promotional events and conducted awareness programmes including a free medical checkup for Nepali workers.

## Israel

The friendly and cooperative relations between Nepal and Israel continued to strengthen this year. Few thousands Nepali nationals currently working in Israel and increasing number of Israeli tourists visiting Nepal are important link in people-to-people relations between the two countries.

Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli held a telephone conversation with President of Israel Reuven Rivlin on 30 April 2020 and discussed matters related to bilateral relations as well as cooperation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Prime Minister also had telephone conversation with the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on 1 June 2020 on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Messages were also exchanged between the Foreign Ministers of the two countries.

Exchange of high-level visits between Nepal and Israel contributed to further strengthen the bilateral relations. Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Yogesh Bhattarai visited Israel to participate in the Mediterranean Tourism Market. On the occasion, the Embassy in collaboration with Nepal Tourism Board organised 'Nepal Evening 2020' on 13 February 2020.



*Head of MASHAV Gil Haskel being received by Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at the latter's office*

Minister for Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation Padma Kumari Aryal visited Israel from 16 to 21 July 2019. From the Israeli side, Head of Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation-MASHAV Gil Haskel visited Nepal on 8-12 December 2019. Israel has been assisting Nepal in capacity development in various sectors. A few hundred Nepali students have been receiving agriculture training in Israel. An MoU was signed between Nepal Academy and the Hebrew Writers Association in Israel in January 2020 to enhance cooperation among academicians.

The Embassy of Nepal in Tel Aviv provided consular services to Nepali nationals and organized various Nepal promotional events.

## Egypt

Nepal and Egypt continued to enjoy cordial relations over the review period. The two countries continued their cooperation on matters of mutual concern in international forums including the UN, NAM and G-77. The Embassy of Nepal in Cairo remained active in promoting Nepal as well as providing consular services to Nepali citizens. The Embassy organised a number

of events to promote Nepal's culture, tourism, trade and business relations as well as investment potentials. Lumbini World Peace Forum of Nepal and Museum of Egypt organised an Art Exhibition in Cairo bringing together artists of both Nepal and Egypt in January 2020. The Embassy also coordinated the visit of a Nepali business delegation to Cairo in September 2019.

## South Africa

Bilateral relations between Nepal and the Republic of South Africa continued to remain cordial during the review period. A delegation of National Human Rights Commission of Nepal led by its Member Prakash Chandra Sharma Osti visited South Africa from 24 to 31 August 2019. The delegation held discussions with the

South African Human Rights Commission on issues such as human rights, transitional justice and reconciliation system adopted in South Africa. The Embassy of Nepal in Pretoria provided consular services to Nepalis and organised promotional programmes in the region.

## Mauritius

Existing friendly relations between Nepal and Mauritius continued to strengthen over the reporting year through exchange of visits and people-to-people contacts. Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security Rameshwar Ray Yadav visited Mauritius from 26 February to 1 March 2020. During the visit, Minister Yadav called on the Prime Minister,

Minister of Labour and Minister for Agro Industry and Food Security of Mauritius. Matters including promotion of labour relations were discussed during the meetings. The first meeting of the Joint Working Group as per the bilateral MoU on the Recruitment and Employment of Workers from Nepal was held in Mauritius on 27 February 2020.

## 6. Europe and the Americas

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Nepal continued to maintain its close and cooperative relations with the countries of European and the American continents. Exchange of visits, meetings and regular consultations enriched the substance of bilateral relations. Nepal continued to receive development cooperation from the partners in the region, while maintaining business partnership and people to people contacts.

## Austria

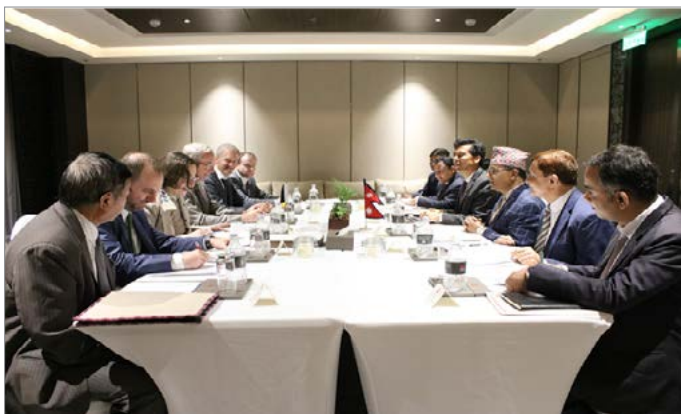
The relations between Nepal and Austria remained cordial and cooperative. In March 2020, the Austrian Development Agency was formally authorised by the Austrian Government to continue the project of restoration works at the Patan Durbar Square. The first meeting of the Joint Working Group as per the MoU on

closer cooperation with Austria in the area of hydropower was held in Kathmandu on 9 October 2019 agreeing on several projects. The Embassy of Nepal in Vienna engaged itself in several promotional activities on tourism and economic cooperation.

## Belgium

The relations between Nepal and Belgium have been marked by goodwill, trust and mutual respect. This year saw a historic visit from Belgium to Nepal, which has contributed in consolidating the bilateral relations. Princess Astrid of Belgium visited Nepal in January in 2020. During her sojourn, the Princess called on President Bidya Devi Bhandari. She had separate meetings with DPM and Defence Minister Ishwar Pokhrel, Foreign Minister Gyawali and Minister for Health and Population Bhanu Bhakta Dhakal.

The first meeting of the Nepal-Belgium Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held in Kathmandu on 19 September 2020. Foreign Secretary Shanker Bairagi and Director General of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of Belgium Anick Van Calster led their respective delegations.



*Nepal-Belgium Bilateral Consultations meeting, Kathmandu*

During the meeting, the two sides took stock of all aspects of bilateral relations and exchanged views on further promoting cooperation.

The Nepali community in Belgium is an important link in the growing people-to-people relations. In view of increasing interests of the Belgians in tourism and investment in Nepal, the Embassy of Nepal in Brussels organised and participated in various promotional programs.



## Brazil

Nepal and Brazil continued to enjoy friendly and cordial relations. Building on the ratification and coming into effect of the bilateral technical cooperation agreement, both countries have also come closer to promote South-South and Triangular Cooperation. Mutual

cooperation between the two countries has also been evident in the international forums. The Embassy of Nepal in Brasilia participated promotional events in Brazil including Annual Business Fair and Culinary Festival, and published Nepal's tourism attractions in tourism magazines.

## Canada

The existing cordial relations between Nepal and Canada continued to consolidate and expand. Speaker of the Senate of Canada, George J. Furey paid an official visit to Nepal on 10-11 February 2020. During the visit, the Canadian Speaker called on Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and held meetings with Chairperson of the National Assembly Ganesh Prasad Timilsina, Foreign Minister Gyawali and Education Minister Giriraj Mani Pokhrel.

Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Yogesh Bhattarai visited Canada from 23 to 29 September 2019 in connection with his participation

in the 40th Assembly of the ICAO. Besides addressing the ICAO Assembly, he attended the VNY 2020 Promotion Programme in Toronto.

Foreign Minister Gyawali and his Canadian counterpart François-Philippe Champagne held a telephone conversation on 11 June 2020 during which they agreed to continue to extend support to each other's nationals in their respective countries. A business delegation led by 'Embassy Connection' visited Nepal in October 2019 and interacted with Nepali businesspersons.

## Cyprus

The cordial relations between Nepal and Cyprus were marked by goodwill and cooperation. Of late, it has been a favoured destination of Nepali youths for foreign employment and study. On 22 April, Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli held a telephone conversation with the President of Cyprus Nicos Anastasiades and exchanged views on matters of common interests including cooperation in the context of the pandemic.

Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal Yogesh Bhattarai launched the VNY 2020 in Nicosia on 14 February 2020. The programme was organised by the Embassy of Nepal in Tel Aviv, concurrently accredited to Cyprus, in collaboration with Nepal Tourism Board, Honorary Consulate and NRNA-Cyprus. The visiting Minister also called on the President of the House of Representatives of Cyprus.

## Denmark

Nepal and Denmark enjoyed friendly relations during the year. Both the countries continued working together in international fora on many important issues of common concern such as strengthening multilateralism, development cooperation, and addressing climate change. The Embassy of Nepal in Copenhagen was engaged in promoting

Nepal's trade, investment and tourism potentials by organizing cultural programs and diaspora events. The Embassy engaged friends of Nepal, such as Ole Ejnar Hansen, the author of "Himalaya-The Enlightened Yak" and Soren Godmann, the author of "Top Fever, the seven peaks in record time" for Nepal's promotion.

## European Union (EU)

Relations between Nepal and EU have remained cooperative and constructive. EU as a bloc has been an important development and trading partner of Nepal. Both sides increased their collaboration in various international fora sharing similar views for strengthening multilateralism and a rules-based world order and working towards achieving landmark global goals, such as the Paris Agreement and SDGs.

The 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Nepal-EU Joint Commission was held on 8 November 2019 in Kathmandu. In the meeting, Foreign Secretary Shanker Bairagi led the Nepali delegation, while Paola Pampaloni, Deputy Managing Director for Asia and Pacific at the European External Action Service led the EU delegation.

Both sides took stock of the progress achieved and lessons learned in the implementation of ongoing cooperation programs. Nepal and the EU agreed to work closely in areas of mutual interests.



*The 11th Meeting of Nepal-EU Joint Commission, Kathmandu*

In April 2020, the EU announced a €75 million aid package to Nepal to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigate its impact. Apart from the development cooperation, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has expressed its commitment to increase its support in the fields of climate change and infrastructure development. The EU's support to enhance Nepal's export capacity, particularly in the context of the Everything But Arms (EBA) scheme, has given priority to trade facilitation measures and product development for products like coffee and pashmina.

## France

Relations between Nepal and France remained cordial, characterised by goodwill, mutual understanding and cooperation. The two countries established a Bilateral Consultation Mechanism by signing an MoU on 13 December 2019. Following the signing of the MoU, the first meeting of the Mechanism was held at the Ministry. The Meeting discussed all aspects of bilateral relations for further promoting mutual cooperation.

## Georgia

This year marked significant development in Nepal-Georgia relations. The First Nepal-Georgia Bilateral Consultations were held on 22 July 2019 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kathmandu. During the Consultations, the two sides reviewed diverse aspects of bilateral relations and

## Germany

Nepal-Germany relations remained close, cordial, and cooperative within the review period. Multifaceted relations between the two countries have grown from strength to strength over the years. Germany has remained a major partner for Nepal's economic development through implementation of various development projects in Nepal. Establishment of Bilateral Consultation Mechanism at the Foreign Ministry level in 2019 was a landmark development.

Symbolizing the growing Nepal-Germany

Minister of Education, Science and Technology Giriraj Mani Pokharel visited Paris leading the Nepali delegation to participate at the 40<sup>th</sup> General Conference of UNESCO. The growing number of French tourists visiting Nepal and the presence of Nepali diaspora in France have contributed to strengthen the relations at people's level. The Embassy of Nepal in Paris organised promotional programmes on trade, tourism and investment.

exchanged views on further promoting cooperation between the two countries at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. The Agreement on Visa Waiver for Holders of Diplomatic, Official or Service Passports was signed on the occasion.

relations, First Lady and Patroness of the UNICEF Germany Elke Beudenbender visited Nepal on 3-5 February 2020. In addition to her other engagements, she called on the President of Nepal and met with Foreign Minister Gyawali during the visit.

Germany has remained a major trading partner and important tourist source country for Nepal. The Embassy of Nepal in Berlin participated in and organised a number of events for promoting Nepal's trade, investment and tourism potentials.

## Ireland

The relations between Nepal and Ireland were strengthened further through various exchanges of visits during the year. A delegation of Irish Parliament led by Speaker of Parliament Seán Ó Fearghaíl paid an official visit to Nepal from 7 to 12 September 2019. The delegation paid a courtesy call on President Bidya Devi Bhandari and held meetings with Speaker Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Chairman of National Assembly Ganesh Prasad Timilsina and DPM and Defence Minister Ishwar Pokhrel, among others.



*President Bidya Devi Bhandari with the visiting Irish parliamentary delegation at the former's office in Kathmandu*

## Luxembourg

Nepal and Luxembourg have been enjoying excellent bilateral relations guided by friendship, mutual respect and cooperation. Nepal and Luxembourg celebrated 45<sup>th</sup> year of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2019. Foreign Minister of Luxembourg Jean Asselborn

visited Nepal from 29 to 30 January, 2020. During the visit, Minister Asselborn paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli. He held bilateral talks with Foreign Minister Gyawali, during which matters of mutual interest were discussed.

## Norway

Nepal and Norway enjoyed friendly and cooperative relations during the period under review. Minister of International Development of Norway Dag-Inge Ulstein visited Nepal in connection with the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Conference held in Kathmandu. On 4 November 2019, he had a meeting with Foreign Minister

Gyawali during which various aspects of bilateral relations including cooperation in the areas of energy, trade and investment were discussed. An MoU establishing bilateral consultation mechanism between the Foreign Ministries of Nepal and Norway was signed on the occasion.

## Russian Federation

Nepal and the Russian Federation enjoyed friendly relations underpinned by mutual respect, goodwill and cooperation. Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali paid an official visit to Moscow on 24-27 November 2020 at the invitation of

Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov. This was the first visit of a democratically elected Foreign Minister of Nepal. The visit helped to strengthen Nepal's relations and cooperation with the Russian Federation.

During the bilateral meeting, both Ministers agreed to harness potentials to enlarge the scope and substance of bilateral cooperation in the areas of trade,

## Serbia

The relations between Nepal and Serbia have been further strengthened by the exchange of visits. Chairman of the National Assembly of the Federal Parliament Ganesh Prasad Timilsina participated in the 141<sup>st</sup> session of Inter-Parliamentary Union in Belgrade from October 13-17 2019. Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali paid an official visit to Serbia on 27-28 November 2019 to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. He held bilateral talks with First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia Ivica Dacic.

## Spain

Nepal and Spain enjoyed cordial relations that have been marked by mutual respect, cooperation and increasing people-to-people contacts. Minister for Forest and Environment Shakti Bahadur Basnet visited Madrid to participate in CoP25 from 10-14 December, 2019. Foreign Minister Gyawali held a telephone conversation with Minister for External

## United Kingdom

The historical and multi-dimensional bilateral relations between Nepal and the UK continued to remain cordial, cooperative and fruitful. The exchange of visits at different levels and consultations between the two countries further

investment, tourism, education, energy, infrastructure, culture and people-to-people contacts.



*Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali and Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic in Belgrade*

Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain Arancha Gonzalez on 15 July 2020 and shared experiences of their national efforts to curb the spread of the COVID-19. The Embassy of Nepal in Madrid organised a promotional events for trade, investment and investment promotion in various cities.

consolidated the already excellent state of Nepal-UK relationship. Among the major visits from the UK to Nepal this year was the visit of Lord Mayor of London, Peter Estlin in September 2019. The Lord Mayor paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister K.



*Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli with Lord Mayor Peter Estlin of London*

P. Sharma Oli on 15 September 2019.

Permanent Secretary of the Department of International Development Matthew Rycroft visited Nepal in September 2019. Chief of the General Staff of the British Army Sir Mark Carleton-Smith visited Nepal in February 2020. Visits from Nepal to the UK included the visit of the

Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Yogesh Bhattarai in November 2019. The Gorkha Municipality of Nepal and the Rushmoor Borough Council of the UK established sister-city relationship.

The UK remained major development partner and one of the largest sources of visitors to Nepal. Nepal and the UK continued to collaborate in the areas of trade, tourism and investment. The Embassy

of Nepal in London organised a number of events to promote trade, tourism and investment opportunities in Nepal. Some of the important events include the Nepal Development Conference; Tea Festival; Bespoke and bus advertisement events; and Cuisine and Culture.

## United States of America

Nepal and the US continued to enjoy their longstanding friendly and cooperative relationship this year. The existing excellent state of bilateral relations was further strengthened by exchange of visits and virtual interactions that took place throughout the year at different levels. A number of US officials representing the State Department, Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), and USAID, among others, visited Nepal during



*The Foreign Minister, on the sidelines of the UNGA-74, joined a reception hosted by the U.S. President Donald J. Trump in New York on 24 September 2019.*

the reporting period. These delegations held meetings with the concerned Nepali Ministries on matters of mutual interests.

Finance Minister Yuba Raj Khatriwada visited Washington, D.C. to participate in the IMF and World Bank Group Annual Meeting for 2019. He attended various formal programs alongside a number of bilateral meetings with the MCC, DFID, IFC, and MIGA. The Embassy of Nepal, together with the Nepali staff working in these institutions, organised an investment promotion event which was addressed by the visiting Finance Minister

and Ambassador of Nepal to the US Dr. Arjun Karki.

The US is Nepal's one of the major development partners as well as export destination countries of Nepal. Cooperation in tourism and investment continues to expand, as the US is one of the major source countries for tourist inflow and FDI. With a view to capitalise on these prospects, the Embassy as well as the Consulate in New York organised a number of promotional events in various US cities during the period under review.

## 7. Regional Cooperation

Nepal continued to engage in the activities of regional organizations, and significantly contributed to the regional cooperation processes. As the current Chair of SAARC and active member of BIMSTEC, our engagements and deliberations in these regional mechanisms were mainly focused to promoting the agenda of deeper regional integration and cooperation.

### South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)



*Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli at the SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu*

Nepal actively participated in various meetings of SAARC and its activities over the year. Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli,

accompanied by his spouse Mrs. Radhika Shakya and Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, visited SAARC Secretariat

on 7 February 2020. Speaking at a function at the Secretariat, Prime Minister Oli stated that the neighborhood relations and regional cooperation are the priorities of Nepal's foreign policy. The Prime Minister also planted a *Rudraksya* sapling in the premises of the Secretariat.

In the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, the SAARC leaders held a video conference on 15 March 2020 in order to chalk out a regional strategy to combat the spread of coronavirus as well as to mitigate its impact. The conference was hosted by the Prime Minister of India. Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli, in his address, underlined the importance of regional efforts to contain the spread of the pandemic and shared Nepal's experiences in this regard.

As an immediate response, the leaders agreed to create a SAARC COVID-19 Emergency Fund through voluntary contributions from the Member States. The amount in the consolidated fund has reached USD 21.6 million, with Nepal's contribution of NPR 10 Crores.

Nepal hosted the Informal Meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers in New York on 26 September 2019, on the sidelines of the 74<sup>th</sup> session of the UNGA. Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, as the chair, addressed the meeting stressing the need for holding the next SAARC Summit in the near future. He stated that the Member States had envisioned a peaceful, prosperous and

happy South Asia 34 years ago, and that they established SAARC as a vehicle to reach that destination.

The Meeting reviewed the progress on the decisions of the earlier meeting. It also agreed on effective implementation of the provisions of the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) and early operationalization of SAARC Agreement on Trade in Services (SATIS). The Council appointed former Foreign Secretary of Sri Lanka Esala Weerakoon as the next Secretary-General of SAARC.

Minister for Education, Science and Technology Giriraj Mani Pokharel attended the Third Meeting of SAARC Ministers of Education in the Maldives on 10 October 2019. The Ministers agreed to strengthen cooperation to achieve Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. SAARC Framework for Action was launched to implement SDG 4 Education 2030. Similarly, Finance Minister Yuba Raj Khatriwada chaired the Informal Meeting of the SAARC



*Foreign Secretary Shanker Bairagi at the 57<sup>th</sup> Programing Committee held in Kathmandu*



Finance Ministers in Washington DC on 17 October 2019. In his statement, the Finance Minister urged the Member States to adopt trade facilitation measures.

State Minister for Health and Population Nabaraj Raut attended SAARC Health Ministers' video conference held on 23 April 2020 in which delegations from the Member States shared national experiences in combating the COVID-19. Similarly, the health professionals of the SAARC countries also met in March 2020 to discuss the impact of COVID-19 in the region.

The 57<sup>th</sup> session of the SAARC Programming Committee was held in Kathmandu on 19-20 December 2019. Foreign Secretary and Chair of the SAARC Standing Committee Shanker Bairagi in his inaugural speech expressed hope that the Member States will forge consensus to convene the 19th SAARC Summit at an early date. The Committee reviewed the progress in all areas under the framework

of cooperation.

Nepal hosted the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of IGGT in Kathmandu on 19 November 2019. The Meeting considered matters relating to finalization of SAARC Railways Agreement and SAARC Motor Vehicles Agreement. It took note of the draft Air Services Agreement and reviewed the progress in the implementation of the prioritised recommendations of the SAARC Regional Multi-modal Transport Study.

SAARC Trade Officials' Meeting was held virtually on 8 April 2020 to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on trade and explore ways to facilitate intra-regional trade. The Governing Board Meetings of SAARC Regional Centers and Specialised Bodies and meetings of Energy Regulators, Chief Veterinary Officers' Forum, Food Bank Board, Handicraft Exhibition and Workshop were also held during the reporting period.

## **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)**

Nepal actively engaged in the BIMSTEC meetings this year. The Member States have decided that the next BIMSTEC Summit will be held in Sri Lanka in January 2021.

The 20<sup>th</sup> session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 3 March 2020. The SOM reviewed the progress of BIMSTEC since the Fourth Summit held in Kathmandu in 2018. The Meeting considered the recommendations of the

third meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) regarding finalizing the BIMSTEC Charter, restructuring and reviewing the areas of cooperation, among others.

The 20<sup>th</sup> SOM was preceded by the Third Meeting of BPWC, also held in Colombo on 1-2 March 2020. The Committee discussed the finalization of the BIMSTEC Charter and modalities for BIMSTEC Development Fund, among others. The second meeting of BPWC of October 2019



*Participants at the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting in Colombo*

negotiated the draft text of BIMSTEC Charter.

The Second Meeting of the Track 1.5 BIMSTEC Security Dialogue Forum was held in Dhaka in July 2019. The meeting discussed emerging security challenges. The 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism was held in Bangkok in September 2019. Similarly, the BIMSTEC Working Group on Trade Facilitation met in Dhaka in September 2019.

Nepal organised the Third Meeting of the BIMSTEC Task Force on Traditional Medicine on 4-5 February 2020 in Kathmandu. The Meeting finalised the Plan of Action for Development of Traditional Medicine. Similarly, The BIMSTEC Ports Conclave was held in Visakhapattanam in November 2019. The Nepali delegation at the Conclave stressed trade and transit issues for the landlocked countries. Similarly, at the First Coastal Security Workshop held in Gurugram, India in November 2019, Nepal highlighted the importance of cross-border transport infrastructure.

## **Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD)**

Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali attended the Ministerial Meeting of ACD held on the sidelines of the 74<sup>th</sup> UNGA in New York on 27 September 2019. During the meeting, the Foreign Minister highlighted the importance of pan-Asian cooperation for common benefit, taking into account the strength of the region

in terms of economic growth, knowledge base, technology, natural and human resources and civilizational richness. Earlier, the High-Level Working Group Meeting of ACD was held in Bangkok in July 2019, which recommended the criteria for appointment of Secretary-General of ACD.

## 8. Multilateral Affairs

While making contributions to international peace and security through peace operations, Nepal continued to advocate the centrality of the UN for a rule-based, fair and inclusive world order. Nepal contributed substantively to the norms setting processes of various UN mechanisms, including through its leadership roles in a number of bodies. On agenda such as SDGs, LDC, LLDCs, climate change, human rights and gender equality, among others, Nepal remained active throughout.

### Theme Specific Multilateral Engagements

**Peace operations:** Nepal continued to make notable contributions to UN peacekeeping and peace-building efforts. In the year 2019-20, Nepal was placed as the fourth major TPCC. Contributing to the international norms setting on peacekeeping, Nepal participated in the substantive sessions of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, known as C34 and emphasised fair and equitable opportunities for TPCCs. Nepal also suggested measures to ensure the safety and security of the peacekeepers and called for added resources for the effective discharge of their mandates. Nepal offered to provide its Peacekeeping Training Centre to enhance the professional capability of TPCCs.

Nepal has been serving as a member of the PBC for the term of 2019-20. This forum has been useful to share its experiences of a successful home-grown peace process. Participating in the review of the Peace-building Architecture, Nepal emphasized the importance of building stronger State institutions and ensuring the national ownership and leadership in peace process.

Major General Ishwar Hamal of Nepal Army was appointed as the Head of the

Mission/Force Commander of the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in Syria in February 2020.

**Disarmament and International Security:** In line with its longstanding position, Nepal continued to advocate for general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction, including chemical, biological, nuclear and radiological weapons. Nepal engaged constructively with the international community to chart out multilateral action against terrorism. In this context, Nepal supported the UN Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire in responses to the COVID-19, endorsed later by the UN Security Council. Nepal also called for regulating cyber activities.

As the host country, Nepal continued to support and facilitate the smooth functioning of the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD). UNRCPD, in support of the Foreign Ministry, conducted a regional Seminar on "Gun Violence and Illicit Small Arms Trafficking from a Gender Perspective" on 4-6 March 2020 in Kathmandu.

Nepal participated in the meeting of the

National Authorities of the Organization of the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) held in the Hague in November 2019. Nepal also attended the meeting of the State Parties of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), held in Geneva in December 2019. Nepal followed the deliberations of the UN Security Council on various topical issues, such as on women, transitional justice, youth, peace operation, climate and human rights.

**Development matters:** Nepal continued its active international engagements towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and other development objectives throughout the year 2019/20. Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli addressed the virtual 'High-level Event on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond' on 28 May 2020. He voiced for designing an inclusive global economic order which would help lift every economy of the world, big or small. Nepal also participated in the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development organised virtually in July 2020 and presented its Voluntary National Review of the progress.

**The 75<sup>th</sup> UN anniversary:** The delegation of Nepal actively participated in the process to finalise the Declaration for the Commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the UN. Nepal made its contributions on topics such as peacekeeping, climate action, poverty and inequality, rights of women and girls, digital technology, and role of youth.

**UN reforms:** Nepal continued its call for a more effective and inclusive UN that would meet the contemporary needs. Nepal supported the recent repositioning of UN

Development System in anticipation of enhanced performance, accountability, transparency and national ownership of the UN development programmes. In the inter-governmental negotiations on UN Security Council reforms, Nepal stressed that such reform should reflect the representative character of the global community.

**Human Rights:** As a member of HRC, Nepal has been playing an objective role on human rights agenda. Nepal took part in the 42<sup>nd</sup>, 43<sup>rd</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup> sessions of HRC. At the 34<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> sessions of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group, Nepal presented recommendations to the States under the review. Nepal served as the troika member for the review of Madagascar and Armenia. In the year 2019, Nepal served as the Regional Coordinator of the Asia and the Pacific Group in the Council. Nepal looks forward to serving in the Council for the second term (2021-23). In the UN treaty bodies, Nepal emphasised the importance of strengthening National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow up along with National Human Rights Institutions.

On the occasion of 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), Nepal participated in various commemorative programmes. Nepal is one of the 30 countries making national pledge to take concrete action for the future of the child. This year, Mikiko Otani, member of UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, visited Nepal to participate at the High-Level Dialogue on Child Rights Situations and Relevance of third Optional Protocol to the CRC.

**Biodiversity:** Nepal participated in the Third Session of the Intergovernmental Conference on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biodiversity

of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) held in New York on 19-30 August 2019.

## **Engagements with Specialised Agencies/Inter-governmental bodies (in chronological order)**

**Colombo Process:** Nepal has been the Chair of the Colombo Process since 2017. Nepal played a leading role as the Chair during the negotiation process of GCM. Nepal chaired its 14<sup>th</sup> Ambassadorial level meeting in Geneva which decided, among others, to handover the Chairmanship to Afghanistan.

2016. Nepal attended a virtual regional meeting on evacuation of migrants during COVID-19 organised on 9 July 2020 by India and ILO.

**IAEA:** Nepal participated in the 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference (September 2019) and the Special Session of the IAEA General Conference. Nepal also participated in the Third International Conference on Nuclear Security (February 2020) organised to enhance international cooperation on nuclear security.

**OHCHR:** Nepal continued to engage with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Foreign Minister Gyawali held meeting with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet in Geneva on 26 February 2020 and appreciated the role the OHCHR has been playing in protecting human rights and its focus on SDGs. The High Commissioner commended Nepal for its contribution as HRC member and achievements made in the field of human rights.

**ILO:** Nepal remained constructively engaged with ILO this year participating in the meetings of the Governing Body and International Labour Conference. Nepal is currently a Deputy Member of the ILO Governing Body. Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli delivered a statement at the Global Leaders' Day of ILO World of Work Summit held on 8 July 2020. In his statement, the Prime Minister mentioned that the protection of migrant workers and adequate social security are key to minimise the impact of COVID-19. Earlier in the 337<sup>th</sup> session of ILO, Nepal highlighted the progress made since the adoption of the Bali Declaration in

Nepal participated in the virtual meeting of OHCHR in April 2020 on the outbreak of COVID-19 and its implications on human rights. Similarly, Nepal also responded to various communications from special procedures.

**WHO:** Nepal continued its collaborative partnership with WHO both in its normative process at the headquarters as well as in the implementation of health related programs and projects at the country level. Nepal actively participated and contributed in important high-level health events. Nepal also attended the 73<sup>rd</sup> World Health Assembly held virtually

in May 2020. Based on the Global Fund Board's decision, US\$ 51,639,112 was allocated to Nepal for fighting HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and building resilient systems for health for 2020-22. Nepal is one of the 92 countries eligible for COVAX facility.

**WIPO:** Nepal was elected to the Programme and Budget Committee of WIPO for the period of 2019-2021. In the 59<sup>th</sup> Assembly of WIPO, Nepal stressed the need for orienting the priorities and budget allocation towards reaching development outcomes.

**WTO:** Nepal remained fully engaged with WTO activities such as WTO Councils, thematic Committees and Trade Policy Review Body and LDC Group. Nepal expressed its commitment to an inclusive and rules-based multilateral trading system and stressed on the need to strengthen the objectives of the Marrakesh Agreement. Nepal stressed the importance of WTO reforms in a transparent, participatory and members-driven approach.

Nepal also underlined the need to ensure just and equitable share of benefits to all members, particularly LDCs and LLDCs, through the Aid for Trade and Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF); duty-free, quota-free market access; technical support. Being elected as the chair of the EIF Board for the year 2019-2021, Nepal became the first Asian LDC to assume the role.

**UNCTAD:** Nepal was elected as a Vice President of the Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD for the period until July 2020. Nepal chaired the 3<sup>rd</sup> session

of the Intergovernmental Group of Expert on Financing for Development and participated in the 11<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Investment, Enterprises and Development. The follow-up mission from UNCTAD visited Nepal this year for the Review of the Investment Policy.

**UNHCR:** Nepal participated in the 70<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme. Nepal also participated in the first Global Forum on Refugee convened in Geneva in December 2019 which discussed comprehensive global partnership, understanding and cooperation to address refugees' plight. Nepal called for a solution to the longstanding problem of Bhutanese refugees.

**UNIDO:** Nepal participated in the eighth UNIDO Ministerial Conference on the LDCs and the eighteenth session of the General Conference held in Abu Dhabi. Nepal also took part in the Bridge for Cities 4.0 event held in association of UNIDO with the aim to explore the role of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in fostering urban innovation.

**UNODC:** Nepal has been an elected member to the Commission of Narcotic Drugs (CND) since January 2020. Nepal participated in the 63<sup>rd</sup> session of the CND held in Vienna in March 2020 and reiterated its commitment to all three UN Drug Control Conventions to which Nepal is party and highlighted the legal and institutional frameworks existing for effective implementation of the Conventions with focus on demand reduction and supply control.

## High-level participation in multilateral forums

**NAM Summit:** Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli attended in the 18<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) held in Baku, Azerbaijan from 25-26 October 2019. Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli was elected the Vice-President of the Summit representing the Asia Pacific region. In this capacity, the Prime Minister chaired the afternoon session of the Summit on 25 October.

The Prime Minister addressed the general debate of the Summit on 26 October under the theme “Upholding the Bandung Principles to ensure concerted and adequate response to the challenges of contemporary world”. Referring the NAM as a synonym for peace, security, justice and development, the Prime Minister highlighted its time-tested value and appeal. He also underscored the role of the Movement in ensuring prosperity for all so that no one would be left behind. The

Prime Minister said that non-alignment makes one of the fundamentals of Nepal’s foreign policy.

While in Baku, the Prime Minister met with President of Pakistan Arif Alvi, Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina, the President of Azerbaijan and Vice President of India Venkaiah Naidu, among others.

**NAM Summit on the COVID-19:** Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli addressed the Virtual Summit of the NAM on the COVID-19 on 4 May 2020. The Prime Minister said that the NAM, as a group of 120 countries, must use its numerical and moral strength to unite the world at this critical moment of human history. Stressing that the human health must be our topmost priority, the Prime Minister shared with the NAM member States the measures taken by Nepal to respond to the crisis. He underlined that the NAM must consolidate the voice of the most vulnerable; scale up South-South Cooperation; and work for a robust post COVID-19 recovery package.



*Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli addressing the Virtual NAM Summit on COVID-19*

**Financing for Development:** Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli, speaking at the “High-Level Event on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond” held on 29 May 2020 in a virtual format, stated that the severest brunt of the pandemic is upon the developing countries, especially the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS as these countries

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need to confront with inadequate resources, limited social protection and under-developed health infrastructures. He also underscored the importance of investing in social security.

**World of Work:** The Prime Minister addressed the virtual “Global Summit on COVID-19 and the World of Work: Building a Better Future of Work” convened by ILO on 8 July 2020. He stressed that protection of the most vulnerable, including the migrant workers and those in informal sectors, and provision of adequate social security, are critical to minimizing the impact of COVID-19. He also highlighted Nepal's efforts in this regard.

**74th UN General Assembly:** Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali led the Nepali delegation to the



*The Prime Minister speaking at the High-level Event on Financing for Development*

74<sup>th</sup> session of the UNGA. Addressing the Assembly on 27 September 2019, the Foreign Minister stressed the need for galvanizing multilateral efforts and reiterated Nepal's abiding faith in multilateralism with the UN at the centre. Minister Gyawali highlighted Nepal's focus on economic agenda to sustain political gains under an overarching national aspiration of ‘Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali’. He highlighted the disproportionate and unjust burden of climate change on the LDCs, while highlighting ‘Sagarmatha Sambaad’.



*Foreign Minister being received by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres at the latter's office in New York*

Minister Gyawali held bilateral meeting with the Secretary-General on 30 September and discussed various important matters related to further strengthening Nepal-UN cooperation.

The Foreign Minister addressed the annual meeting of LDCs, High-Level Meetings on the International Day for the





*Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at the Preparatory Meeting of the NAM Summit, Baku*

Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, Universal Health Coverage and the NAM Ministerial Meeting. He also attended the annual meetings of the G-77; Asia Cooperation Dialogue; High-Level Dialogue on Peace Operations; and the UN Group of Friends of Mediation.

**NAM Preparatory Meeting:** Foreign Minister Gyawali led the Nepali delegation to the Preparatory Ministerial Meeting for the 18th NAM Summit in Baku on 23 October 2019. In his statement, the Minister underscored the responsibility of NAM to ensure adequate resources for preventing conflicts and help member states achieve peace and stability. He also underlined the importance of NAM for equal rights, equal opportunities, equal protection and equal respect for all countries.

**43<sup>rd</sup> Session of the HRC:** Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar

Gyawali led the Nepali delegation to the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of the HRC in Geneva. Addressing the High-level Segment of the Council on 25 February 2020, the Foreign Minister mentioned that the world is commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> year of multilateralism; 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN; and 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which remind us of our determination to maintaining world peace, protecting human rights and embracing socio-

economic progress. He highlighted that the Constitution of Nepal is founded on universally recognised human rights and such other principles as inclusive democracy, pluralism and the rule of law.

On the sidelines, the Minister met Special Representative for Human Rights of the EU Eamon Gilmore; Foreign Minister of



*The Foreign Minister and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva*

Ireland Simon Coveney; Foreign Minister of Latvia Edgars Rinkēvičs; and High Commissioner of Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, among others.

### **Voluntary National Review of SDGs:**

Nepal participated in the HLPF on Sustainable Development held in the virtual format from 7 to 16 July 2020 under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council. This year's theme was 'Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development'. Nepal presented its second VNR on the SDGs during the event. Vice-Chairman of the National Planning Commission

Dr. Pushpa Raj Kadel presented Nepal's achievements and challenges vis a vis SDGs. Earlier, a Nepali delegation led by Member of National Planning Commission Krishna Prasad Oli participated in the first ever SDG Summit on 24-25 September 2019.

**COP25:** COP25 was held in Madrid, Spain from 2 to 13 December 2019. Participating in the Conference, Minister for Forests and Environment Shakti Bahadur Basnet highlighted Nepal's priorities for implementing climate change agenda and urged the international community for more effective climate action.

## **Treaties/Agreements acceded/signed**

### **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene:**

President Bidya Devi Bhandari joined the group of Head of States and Governments to endorse "Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: World Leaders' Call to Action on COVID-19" on 14 May 2020. The Call highlights the need for coordinated efforts in making water, sanitation and hygiene for all, eliminating inequalities and leaving no one behind.

**Appeal for Global Ceasefire:** Nepal expressed its support to the "Appeal for Global Ceasefire" made by the UN Secretary General António Guterres on 23 March 2020, amidst the global crisis of COVID-19 pandemic.

**Trafficking in persons:** Nepal ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Conventions against Transnational Organised Crime on 2 March 2020.

**Disaster Resilient Infrastructure:** Nepal joined the Coalition of Disaster Resilient Infrastructure as its founding member on 27 January 2020. CDRI is an Indian initiative for global partnership to promote the resilience of infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks. Its Secretariat is based in New Delhi.

## **Nepal's Election to International Organizations**

Nepal continued its efforts to amplify its positive visibility in the international arena by assuming leadership positions in

various multilateral forums. The following table shows Nepal's incumbent positions on UN bodies:

S.N.	Body	Term
1	Chair of Second Committee of the UNGA-75	2020-21
2	Member, Advisory Board of the UN Democracy Fund	2020-21
3	Member, Bureau of the LLDCs in the United Nations	2020-21
4	Member, UNGA Credentials Committee	2019-20
5	Chair, Enhanced Integrated Framework	2019-21
6	Member, Programme and Budget Committee, WIPO	2019-21
7	Vice-Chair of Council, International Bamboo and Rattan Organization	2019-21
8	Member of Council, Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology	2020-23
9	Member, Commission on Population and Development	2018-22
10	Member, Executive Board of UN-Women	2018-20
11	Member, Commission on Science and Technology	2019-22
12	Member, Peace-building Commission	2019-20
13	Member, Commission on Narcotic Drug	2020-23
14	Member, Human Rights Council	2018-20
15	Deputy member, Governing Board of ILO	2017-20
16	Member, Committee on CEDAW	2017-20

Similarly, Nepal has submitted candidatures for following UN bodies:

S. N.	Body	Term	Election	Status
1	Non-permanent Member, UN Security Council	2037-38	June 2036	Candidature
2	Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)	2024-26	June 2023	Candidature
3	Human Rights Council	2021-23	Oct 2020	Re-election
4	Vice-President, 77th Session of UNGA	2022-23	June 2022	Candidature
5	Member, Committee on CEDAW	2021-24	Dec 2020	Re-election

## High level visits to Nepal

**UNICEF:** Executive Director of UNICEF Henrietta Fore visited Nepal from 4 to 7 November 2019. During the visit, she called on President Bidya Devi Bhandari and Foreign Minister Gyawali. The achievements made by Nepal in the areas of the rights of children along with enhancing the cooperation between Nepal and UNICEF were discussed during the meetings.



*President Bidya Devi Bhandari receiving Executive Director of UNICEF at her office*

**UNFPA:** Executive Director of UNFPA Dr. Natalia Kanem visited Nepal from 20 to 22 October 2019. During her visit, she paid a courtesy calls on Prime Minister

K P Sharma Oli and Foreign Minister Gyawali. During the meetings, matters related to enhancing cooperation between Nepal and UNFPA were discussed.

## Diplomatic Relations

Nepal established diplomatic relations with Saint Lucia and Ghana in the fiscal year 2019/20. As of 15 July 2020, Nepal has established diplomatic relations with 168 countries.



*Foreign Ministers of Nepal and Ghana after formalizing the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, New York, 25 September 2019*

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# **PUBLIC DIPLOMACY, SERVICE DELIVERY, PROTOCOL MATTERS AND GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

## 9. Policy, Planning, Development Diplomacy and Nepali Diaspora

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The Ministry undertook important policy initiatives aiming at better articulating Nepal's national interests by compiling foreign policy document, institutional strengthening and streamlining planning and reporting processes. Priority was given to economic diplomacy and diaspora engagement, including through Brain Gain Centre, with a view to contributing to development objectives. Preparatory works for holding *Sagarmatha Sambaad* were completed.

### Policy Initiatives

The Ministry prepared a draft of integrated Foreign Policy document drawing upon the outcomes of the National Dialogue on Foreign Policy held on 29 June 2019. Opinions and views were taken from the leaders of major political parties, foreign policy experts, think-tanks, academia, media, civil society and the business community.

The Ministry effectively implemented the Ministerial Plan of Action for the fiscal year 2019/20, which was formulated in accordance with the priorities of the annual policies, programmes and budget of the Government. The Ministry prepared progress reports on the implementation status of the provisions of Article 53 of the Constitution for the year 2018/19 and

on the implementation of annual plan of action. Similarly, reports were prepared regarding budget implementation, and annual progress report as required by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministerial Development Action Committee and National Development Action Committee. Three major multi-year programmes of the Ministry are included in the 15<sup>th</sup> plan of Nepal.

The Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) and Policy Research Institute (PRI) jointly organised a seminar on the theme of 'International Border and Its Effective Management' on 2 December 2019 to suggest policy feedback to the Ministry on border control and management.

### Sagarmatha Sambaad

The Ministry, in partnership with IFA and PRI jointly undertook preparatory works to organise the first episode of *Sagarmatha Sambaad* on the theme of "Climate Change, Mountains, and the Future of the Humanity". The dialogue was scheduled to be held in Kathmandu on 2-4 April 2020. The Ministry organised a national consultation in

Kathmandu on 18 September 2019 and two regional consultations in Pokhara and Janakpur to gather views from various stakeholders at local and provincial levels on the proposed theme.

In preparation of the *Sagarmatha Sambaad*, the Ministry organised

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*Sagarmatha National Sambaad* on 9 February 2020 with an objective of developing a national perspective on the theme. DPM and Minister for Defence Ishwar Pokhrel inaugurated the National *Sambaad* which was attended by a cross-section of stakeholders.



*DPM Ishwar Pokhrel inaugurating the Sagarmatha National Sambaad by planting saplings of Bar and Pipal*

The logo of *Sagarmatha Sambaad* and its Secretariat was unveiled amid a ceremony at Narayanhiti Palace Premises, Kathmandu on 21 November 2019. A briefing was held where Minister Gyawali highlighted the objectives of the dialogue with focus on the theme of the first edition.

While preparations for the programme were at the final stage, the *Sambaad* had to be postponed, just one month prior to its scheduled launching, in response to the

global outbreak of COVID-19. Given the importance of the dialogue forum, new dates will be announced at a later date. *Sagarmatha Sambaad* is a permanent multi-stakeholder global dialogue forum established by the Government of Nepal with the objective of deliberating on the issues of national, regional and global importance, promoting global understanding for collective well-being.

## Economic Diplomacy

The Ministry continued its efforts to pursue Nepal's economic interests abroad through various promotional activities as part of economic diplomacy. Nepali missions abroad organised a total of 420 promotional events, including National Day celebrations, and events organised in coordination with government agencies, private sector and Nepali diaspora.



*Tourism Minister Yogesh Bhattarai receiving the Tourism Minister of Jamaica Edmund Bartlett*



On 1 January 2020, Visit Nepal Year (VNY) 2020 was inaugurated amid a special function at the Dasharath Stadium, Kathmandu in the presence of the President of Nepal and other high-level dignitaries. Tourism ministers from India, China, Myanmar and Jamaica as well as high-level government representatives from Qatar, Bhutan and Cambodia were present on the occasion to attend the inauguration ceremony.

The participating ministers, together with other stakeholders, attended 'the Tourism Ministerial Conclave' on the

theme 'Sustainable Tourism through Preservation of Natural and Cultural Heritages'. The Conclave was organised in conjunction of the VNY inauguration. The Conclave discussed wide a range of matters pertaining to tourism for sustainable development.

Nepali diplomatic missions, in coordination with the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Nepal Tourism Board and VNY 2020 Secretariat, organised promotional activities in many cities abroad. However, the campaign had to be postponed due to the pandemic.

## **Non-Resident Nepalis (NRNs) Affairs**

The Ministry continued extending various facilities and concessions to the NRN communities in order to enhance their role in Nepal's development efforts. Over the period under review, the NRN communities invested in a number of projects, supporting initiatives of the government, and undertaking humanitarian works at institutional and individual levels. In the review period, a total of 483 NRN identity cards were issued.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari

inaugurated the 9<sup>th</sup> Global Conference of NRNA in Kathmandu on 15 October 2019. In her inaugural address, the President recognised the role of NRNs in Nepal's development efforts through investment and transfer of technology.

Foreign Minister Gyawali in his address at the inaugural session spoke about foreign investment opportunities in Nepal. He encouraged NRNs to utilise their worldwide network for development of Nepal, while assuring them of the Government's cooperation.

## **Brain Gain Center (BGC)**

BGC saw an increased interest in this review period with the number of professionals joining the initiative reaching 932, up from around 600 last year. The Centre, in coordination with the diaspora community, organised four webinars on various themes related to the socio-economic development of

Nepal. Two project proposals received at the BGC were recommended to relevant agencies. BGC was established as a unit in the Ministry in 2018 with the objective of identifying, recognizing and encouraging Nepali diaspora scholars, experts and professionals for their contribution to Nepal's socioeconomic development.

## 10. Protocol Matters

During the reporting period, the Ministry facilitated a number of high-level visits—including five at the Heads of States/Government levels, arranged ceremonies for presentation of Credentials, prepared letters of Recall and Credence. The Ministry facilitated the process in granting agrément of the Government of Nepal to foreign ambassadors-designate. Twenty-two foreign ambassadors-designate were granted agrément last year.

The Ministry performed its ceremonial role such as airport courtesies to official guests, protection of visiting dignitaries, and arrangement of state banquets, official luncheon and dinners in honour

of various dignitaries. The Ministry ensured that diplomatic representatives receive courteous treatment; appropriate protection for diplomatic persons and chanceries; immunities and privileges. The Ministry organised six ceremonies for presentation of Credentials. Twenty-two foreign ambassadors presented their letters of credence to the President. The Division prepared letters of Credence for Nepali ambassadors and letters of Recall of their predecessors. During the period, seven Heads of Diplomatic Missions and international organizations completed their tour of duty and five Heads of Missions assumed their duties.

## 11. Consular Services

The Department of Consular Services provided consular services to Nepali and foreign nationals, Government officials and Diplomatic Missions and International Organizations stationed in and accredited to Nepal. The Department strengthened the online service delivery, providing services such as document attestation, visa recommendation and online verification of attested documents, among others, within half an hour. The Department initiated Digital Diary system

to enhance service delivery. The processes of ISO certification and upgradation of Consular Services Procedure has also been started. The Department coordinated with the Ministry of Home Affairs for commencing online registration for Police Clearance Certificate. The Department on average attested 1,000 documents each day. The table below shows the numbers of major consular services provided by the Department during the period under review:

S.N.	Work Details	Quantity
A	<i>Consular and Legal Consultation Services</i>	
1	Recommendations for medical treatment, pilgrimage, tours and other issues	21
2	Recommendation for attestation of educational documents	1334

3	Recommendation for Indian Pension related matters	7
4	Recommendation regarding driving licenses	285
5	Recommendation for Character Verification Reports for those who lived temporarily in India	363
6	Recommendation for import of chemicals and explosives	132
7	Recommendation for Vehicle Permit to India	25
8	Processing renunciation of Nepali Citizenship	74
9	Verification of Power of Attorney for Land Revenue Offices	246
10	Authenticity verification of citizenship	233
11	POA, VOR, H-Form Requests, Correspondences to districts relating to repatriation of dead bodies and compensation	422
12	Cases forwarded to Nepali Embassies/Consulates abroad regarding search and rescue of Nepali nationals	560
13	Cases forwarded for repatriation of dead bodies	533
14	Compensation from Malaysia handed over to next of kin	129
16	Compensations received from Nepali Missions abroad and sent to the respective District Administration Offices	579
<b>B</b>	<b><i>Visa and Exemption Services</i></b>	
1	Issuance of Gratis/Official/Diplomatic visa	1736
2	Issuance of Diplomatic and Non-Diplomatic Identity Cards	358
3	Issuance of SAARC Visa Stickers	51
4	Exemption works	3062
5	Letters sent to different government authorities	1576
6	Issuance of Visa Notes and Recommendations	1089
<b>C</b>	<b><i>Attestation Services</i></b>	
1.	Number of attested documents	229,295
<b>Total Revenue Collected</b>		<b>NPR.11,46,47,500</b>

## 12. Passport Services

The Department of Passports provided services in an efficient, effective and transparent manner, keeping people at the center. It has maintained its position as the first government agency to have certified ISO/9001:2015. A total of 398,842 Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTDs) were personalised in the year 2019/20. These

include 397,053 ordinary passports, 1,260 official passports, 443 diplomatic passports and 86 Travel Documents. A total of 6,456,142 MRTDs have been issued as of 15 July 2020. Services were provided from the Department, 77 District Administration Offices, 19 Area Administration Offices and 38 Nepali Missions abroad.

The Department prioritised the launching of e-Passport in line with the policy of the Government. The new Passport Act, 2076 was published in Nepal Gazette on 14 October 2019. The Department also worked for the Passport Regulations, 2077 which was approved by the Government on 13 July 2020. An Information Guidebook on MRP and e-Passport too was published.

The Department signed an MoU with the Department of National Identity Card and Civil Registration for the use of

e-Services of National ID Management Information System, enabling it to verify the identification of applicants. The Department introduced an online payment system through 'Connect IPS', which is linked to the Revenue Management Information System. It is linked with the Nagarik Adhikar App, helping the users to track the status of their applications. An e-portal is developed to verify authenticity of the Citizenship Certificates of applicants.

### **13. Administration and human resource development**

Apart from its regular administrative works related to personnel management, including appointments and transfers of the staff, the Ministry took initiatives on administrative and institutional strengthening. The Code of Conduct for Nepal Foreign Service and other staff serving in Nepali Missions abroad and International Organization, 2019 has been implemented.

Construction works of residence buildings

in the Embassy of Nepal, New Delhi were completed, while necessary procedures for procurement and construction of chancery and residences in Canberra, Beijing and Geneva were initiated. In addition, the construction of a multi-purpose building complex at Tripureshwar, Kathmandu for the Department of Passports, Department of Consular Services, and Institute of Foreign Affairs has reached the final phase. Likewise, the renovation, interior design



*The multipurpose building under construction at Tripureshwar, Kathmandu*

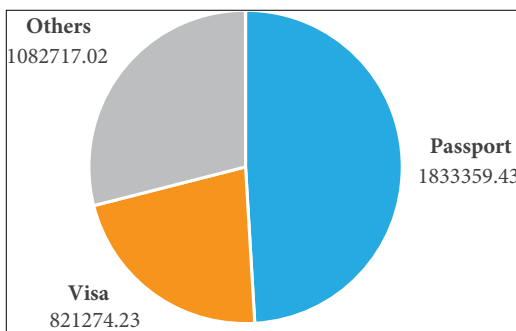
and landscaping works of the Ministry’s new building were accomplished.

Recognizing the importance of virtual meetings in the context of COVID-19, a well-furnished video-conference facility was installed. A committee was formed for the auction of non-used old inventories as per the recommendations of Ministry’s Inventory Inspection Report. The committee completed the tasks of determining the price of the assets. Sorting out of historical and archival documents, such as agreements, boundary maps, and diplomatic correspondences

and documents was initiated.

While adhering to the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, the Ministry mobilized financial resources to meet the stipulated objectives within its jurisdiction. Salary and other facilities for private staff of ambassadors and local staff serving in Nepali missions abroad were reviewed. A major thrust was given to clearing the irregular amounts accrued over the past years, achieving progress of settling 60.58 percent during the reporting period.

**Revenue Collection in FY 2019/20**

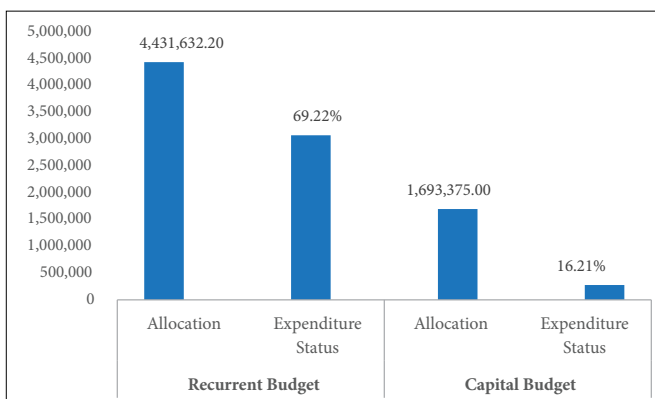


\* Revenue figures in ‘000 collected by the Ministry, Departments and Missions abroad

The Ministry initiated procuring twin software on Revenue Collection and

Financial Reporting System, and Inventory Management System.

**Budget Allocation and Expenditure Status in FY 2019/20**



\*In‘000, budget allocation and expenditure of the Ministry, and Departments

As part of capacity building measures, the Ministry deputed young diplomats in different training and higher studies held at home and abroad. French language training was provided to the staff of the Ministry in partnership with the French Cultural Centre, Kathmandu. The Ministry, in coordination with IFA,

organised an Orientation Programme for Ambassadors-designate. Similarly, the Ministry, in partnership with the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), hosted 'Workshop on Effective Writing in Multilateral Diplomacy' in Kathmandu.

## 14. COVID-19 response

*Overview:* The world was brought to a standstill due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic during the latter half of the review period. Responding to the crisis, the Government, in view of the difficulties faced by Nepali nationals abroad, mobilised Nepali diplomatic missions for necessary protection, relief, and care to the affected Nepalis and facilitated chartered flights to enable those who were in pressing needs to return home. The Ministry coordinated high-level engagements for international cooperation and coordination to address the challenges of the pandemic.

The WHO declared the outbreak of COVID-19 as a pandemic on 11 March 2020. Within a period of next few months, the deadly virus had spread over the world. In Nepal, the first confirmed COVID-19 case was reported on 23 January 2020, and the first case of COVID-19 related death was registered on 14 May 2020. The nation-wide lockdown was imposed on 24 March 2020. On 15 July 2020, at the end of the review period, a cumulative total of 17,177 infections, 116 new daily infections and cumulative total of 39 death cases were recorded in Nepal.

As the number of infections and casualties

increased, governments across the world responded to the pandemic by taking preventive measures such as closure of businesses/government offices, lockdowns and travel restrictions. With the situation further aggravating, the need was felt for the repatriation of Nepali nationals, particularly the migrant workers who had to live in precarious conditions with loss of jobs, expiry of visas and contract terms. COVID-19 restrictions put local as well as migrant population in these countries under unprecedented health, socio-economic and psychological hardships. Nepali migrant workers were also severely affected. The Government decided on 25 May 2020 to bring the neediest Nepalis back home on a priority basis, keeping in view the country's capacity for additional quarantine and health facilities for the returnees.

*High-level engagements:* From the early days of the pandemic, the Ministry and diplomatic missions abroad coordinated with the foreign governments and Nepali diaspora community organizations to support the Nepali nationals in distress. The Ministry coordinated with the governments of the countries with large presence of Nepali nationals at the higher

political levels in order to garner support and protection for Nepalis during the difficult times.

The President, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs spoke over telephone with their counterparts in different countries, including the major labour destinations, to ensure safety, protection and welfare of Nepali nationals. President Bidya Devi Bhandari held telephone conversation with the President of China on 4 April 2020. Similarly, Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli held telephone conversations with his counterparts and leaders of India, Qatar, UAE, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Cyprus and Israel. Foreign Minister Gyawali spoke with his counterparts in Pakistan, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Spain, the UK, Ireland and Canada. Nepal also continued to engage at the regional and multilateral levels to promote cooperation and collaboration to deal with the pandemic. Details of these engagements are covered in the respective sections of this report.

Foreign Minister Gyawali held several rounds of video conferences with the Nepali Ambassadors and leaders of Non-resident Nepali Associations in the labour destination countries to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the employment of Nepali migrant workers and the measures to be taken to ensure their wellbeing during the difficult times.

*International cooperation:* The Ministry coordinated with the line Ministries and relevant agencies as well as foreign governments to facilitate procurement, transportation of medical supplies. Several friendly governments, including India, China, Japan, the RoK, Bangladesh,

Switzerland, the US, UAE and Qatar, expressed their solidarity to Nepal by providing medical equipment and supplies. Development partners, including Germany, the UK, EU, UN agencies, ADB, World Bank and INGOs announced additional support to the health sector of Nepal. In the initial outbreak of COVID-19, the Government of Nepal had supported China with face masks.

The Ministry facilitated the movement of diplomats and foreign nationals across the country, and facilitated their evacuation to home countries through chartered flights.

*Consular services and repatriation of Nepalis:* During the pandemic, the focus of the Nepali missions remained entirely on providing emergency consular services to Nepali nationals, particularly those stranded at various places due to travel bans and movement restrictions. The missions assisted needy Nepalis in testing the virus, and availing the quarantine and treatment facilities. The Embassies, in collaboration with NRNAs and Nepali community, coordinated distribution of relief, providing counselling services, disseminating information and awareness on COVID-19 to the Nepali communities.

During the initial phase of the pandemic, 175 Nepali nationals, mostly students, from Wuhan of China were evacuated on 16 February 2020 by a charter flight of Nepal Airlines. As the pandemic prolonged, the hardships faced by the Nepali nationals in the labour destination countries and elsewhere continued to worsen. The Ministry and the Nepali diplomatic missions coordinated with the host governments to operate chartered flights to repatriate Nepali nationals.

By the end of the reporting period, more than 28,000 stranded Nepalis were safely brought home from 25 countries. More than 180 charter flights were operated for this purpose. The returnees from Malaysia and the Gulf countries alone comprised more than 80% of the total Nepali repatriated, including about 6,000 from UAE; 5,500 from Kuwait; 4,000 from Saudi Arabia; 3,200 from Malaysia; 3,000 from Qatar; 700 from Bahrain; and 500 from Oman. More than 700,000 Nepalis returned from India via land route. Over 160 dead bodies were also repatriated to Nepal following the pandemic.

*Reporting mechanisms:* Considering the urgent need to assist Nepali nationals abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry developed software to be used by Nepali missions for collating and sharing necessary information virtually

among relevant agencies. The Ministry coordinated with the Nepali diplomatic missions to gather information on the best practices in the control and prevention of the epidemic in the form of daily updates. Information so collected proved to be useful in charting out rescue and repatriation plans and also served as valuable reference while dealing with the situation in the national context. The reports were shared with the COVID-19 Crisis Management Center (CCMC) and relevant Ministries.

In addition to the daily reporting mechanism, in order to provide inputs to other relevant agencies, the Ministry prepared a number of reports including on situation of migrant Nepali workers, exit strategies adopted by countries in similar situations, and post-COVID economic recovery plans around the world.



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# APPENDICES

## I. Major high-level visits

### A. Outgoing

S. N.	Dignitary	Country	Dates	Remarks
1.	President Bidya Devi Bhandari	Myanmar	16-20 October 2019	State Visit
2.		Japan	20-22 October 2019	Enthronement Ceremony
3.	Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli	Azerbaijan	24-27 October 2019	18th NAM Summit
4.	Chairperson of the National Assembly	Serbia	16 October 2019	Interparliamentary Union
5.	Ganesh Prasad Timilsina	RoK	3-6 September 2019	Parliamentary exchange
6.	Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali	Russian Federation	24-27 November 2019	Official visit
7.		Serbia	27-28 November 2019	Official visit
8.		Bangladesh	17-19 February 2020	Official visit
9.		Maldives	1-6 September 2019	4th Indian Ocean Conference
10.		USA	20 September-1 October 2019	74th UNGA
11.		Switzerland	21-26 February 2020	43rd session of the HRC

### B. Incoming

S. N.	Dignitary	Dates	Remarks
1.	President Xi Jinping, China	12-13 October 2019	State Visit
2.	President Md. Abdul Hamid, Bangladesh	12-15 November 2019	Official Goodwill Visit
3.	External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar, India	21-22 August 2019	5th meeting of Nepal-India Joint Commission
4.	State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi, China	8-10 September 2019	Official visit
5.	Minister for Foreign and European Affairs Jean Asselborn, Luxembourg	29-30 January 2020	Official visit

6.	Speaker of the Senate George J. Furey, Q.C., Canada	10-11 February 2020	Official visit
7.	Speaker of the Parliament Sean O Fairghail, Ireland	10 September 2019	Official visit

## II. Joint Statements

### JOINT STATEMENT BETWEEN NEPAL AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

**Kathmandu, 13 October 2019**

At the invitation of Rt. Hon. Bidya Devi Bhandari, President of Nepal, H.E. Mr. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, paid a state visit to Nepal from 12 to 13 October 2019.

During the visit, President Xi met with President Bhandari, held talks with Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and attended the welcoming banquet by President Bhandari. In a warm and cordial atmosphere, leaders of the two countries reached broad understanding through in-depth exchange of views on bilateral relationship and regional and international issues of common concern.

1. The two sides expressed satisfaction over the fact that since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1955, Nepal-China relationship has withstood changes of the international situation and has been growing in a consistent, steady and healthy manner, which sets a model of peaceful coexistence between the two countries of different size. Both sides recognized that the bilateral relationship between the two countries is characterized by equality, harmonious coexistence, ever-lasting friendship and comprehensive cooperation.

Nepal and China take the Belt and Road Initiative as an important opportunity to deepen mutually-beneficial cooperation in all fields in a comprehensive manner, jointly pursue common prosperity and dedicate themselves to maintaining peace, stability and development in the region. The bilateral relationship between Nepal and China has entered a new phase. Both sides decided to, on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, Charter of the United Nations and principles of good neighbourliness, elevate Nepal-China Comprehensive Partnership of Cooperation Featuring Ever-lasting Friendship to Strategic Partnership of Cooperation Featuring Ever-lasting Friendship for Development and Prosperity.

2. The two sides agreed to respect each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and respect and accommodate each other's concerns and core interests. The two sides will adhere to good neighboring policy and deepen overall cooperation in a win-win manner, so as to achieve mutual benefit and pursue stability and development together.

The Nepali side reiterated its firm commitment to One China policy, acknowledging

that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the Chinese territory and Tibet affairs are China's internal affairs, and the determination on not allowing any anti-China activities on its soil. The Chinese side reiterated its firm support to Nepal in upholding the country's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and its firm support and respect to Nepal's social system and development path independently chosen in the light of Nepal's national conditions.

3. The Chinese side congratulated Nepal on the historic and epoch-making political transformation and its rapid economic and social development. It believed that the Nepali people would unite as one and keep marching towards the vision of 'Samriddha Nepal, Suhki Nepali' ('Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali'), so as to achieve political stability, social harmony and rapid economic development. The Chinese side expressed willingness to continue interacting with the Nepali side on the experience of governance.

The Nepali side congratulated on the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China and expressed its admiration to China's miraculous achievement in development over the past 70 years and sincerely wished that under the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, the Chinese people would keep striving to realize the two centenary goals and build China a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful.

4. Both sides underlined that high-level contacts are of special importance to the development of bilateral relations. The two sides agreed to maintain the momentum of high-level visits, deepen political mutual trust and expand exchanges and cooperation between government ministries, departments, legislatures and political parties at all levels.
5. The two sides agreed to intensify implementation of the MoU on Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative to enhance connectivity, encompassing such vital components as ports, roads, railways, aviation and communications within the overarching framework of trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network with a view to significantly contributing to Nepal's development agenda that includes graduating from LDC at an early date, becoming middle income country by 2030 and realizing the SDGs by the same date.

The two sides, while recalling the MoU signed between the two countries on 21 June 2018 on Cooperation in Railway Project, agreed to conduct the feasibility study as outlined in the MoU signed on 13 October 2019, which will lay an important foundation to launching the construction of the Cross-Border Railway. Both sides also reiterated their commitment to extend cooperation on Kathmandu-Pokhara-Lumbini Railway Project.

The two sides welcomed the reopening and restoration of the freight functions of the Zhangmu/Khasa port, and will optimize the functions of the Jilong/Keyrung port and open the Lizi/Nechung port at the earliest possible time and build necessary infrastructure on the Nepali side of the border.

Both sides would keep implementing the Protocol concerning the Utilization of Highway in Tibet, China by Nepal for Cargo Transport and the Protocol to the Agreement on Transit Transport. On the basis of maintaining the long-term operational condition of the Araniko Highway, both sides agreed to cooperate on upgrading and reconstructing the highway on a priority basis in a step-by-step manner. The Chinese side conveyed its readiness in initiating the repair of Syaphrubesi-Rasuwadhi Highway.

Realizing the importance of enhanced level of connectivity between the two countries, the two sides agreed to proactively cooperate on the feasibility study for the construction of tunnels along the road from Jilong/Keyrung to Kathmandu.

The Chinese side noted the request made by the Nepali side for the construction of Kimathanka-Leguwadhi section of the Koshi Highway and agreed to consider this project in future cooperation plan and requested the Nepali side to submit a detailed proposal.

The two sides reiterated their commitment to undertake study on the possibility of cooperation, as reflected in the Joint Statement issued in Beijing on 21 June 2018, for the development of the three North-South corridors in Nepal, namely Koshi Economic Corridor, Gandaki Economic Corridor and Karnali Economic corridor in order to create jobs and improve local livelihood, and stimulate economic growth and development.

The Chinese side will extend assistance for training Nepali technical human resources in the field of railway, road and tunnel engineering as well as inland waterways and shipping.

Both sides welcomed the consensus reached by the civil aviation authorities of the two countries on expanding the air rights arrangements, under the framework of which the airlines of both countries are encouraged to launch/operate more direct air services. Both sides will coordinate closely to speed up the construction of the Pokhara International Airport so that it would start operation at an early date.

The two sides expressed satisfaction over the successful commercial operation of Nepal-China cross-border optical fiber cable and agreed to further strengthen cooperation on information and communications for mutual benefit.

6. The two sides agreed to strengthen cooperation in various fields of economy including trade, tourism, investment, capacity of production and improving people's livelihood so as to promote mutual development.

Under the framework of Nepal-China Joint Commission on Economy and Trade, the two sides will establish a working group on investment cooperation and a working group on trade led by secretary/vice minister-level officials or their designates so as to facilitate bilateral investment and trade. The Chinese side welcomed the Nepali side to participate in the National Exhibition of the Second China International Import Expo to be held in Shanghai in November 2019.

Both sides will hold comprehensive discussions with a view to strengthening trade

relations between the two countries. The Chinese side will take positive measures to expand Nepal's export to China. The Chinese side will consider providing technical support for the establishment of a multifunctional laboratory in Nepal and extend necessary cooperation to make Tatopani Frontier Inspection Station at Larcha fully functional. Nepal will facilitate the Chinese banks to open their branches and other financial services in Nepal with a view to facilitating trade and investment between the two countries. Both sides will complete their internal procedures at the earliest time for the operationalization of the Protocol to the Transit Transport Agreement and try their best to implement it at an early date.

Both sides welcomed the signing of the Protocol on Phytosanitary requirements for the Export of Citrus Fruits from Nepal to China and agreed to conclude MoU on Cooperation on Import and Export of Food Safety at the earliest.

The two sides will continue cooperation on production capacity and investment according to the principles of 'dominated by enterprises, respecting business principles, adhering to market-orientation and following international common practice'.

On the basis of the MoU on Energy Cooperation between the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation of Nepal and the National Energy Administration of the People's Republic of China signed on 21 June 2018, both sides will bring into full play the Joint Implementation Mechanism (JIM) on Nepal-China Cooperation in energy sector, to carry out exchanges and cooperation in the fields of hydropower, wind power, solar power, biomass energy and other kinds of new energy as well as grid systems, etc. Both sides agreed to jointly carry out Nepal-China Electric Power Cooperation Plan and complete it within one year. Both sides agreed to take this Plan as an important reference for the next step of bilateral electric power cooperation and promote its implementation.

The Nepali side extended its deep appreciation to the Chinese side for the valuable support it has been providing in Nepal's development efforts and for the timely, spontaneous and generous support extended to Nepal's reconstruction after the earthquake in 2015.

The Chinese government will continue to provide assistance to Nepal's economic and social development within its capacity with an emphasis on strengthening cooperation in the field of improving people's livelihood.

The Chinese side attached great importance to the aspiration of the Nepali side to establish a multidisciplinary Madan Bhandari University for Science and Technology as a mark of respect to People's Leader Late Madan Bhandari and will extend support at the earliest date after the Nepali side chooses a suitable site for the university. Both sides will continue their discussion on the basis of the report to be submitted by the site visit working group of the Chinese side.

The Chinese side is willing to expedite the project of improving the quality of supplied water in Kathmandu.

7. The Chinese side noted Nepal's proposal on Integrated Development, including

- resettlement of scattered population in the Himalayan Region of Nepal. The Chinese side is willing to share experiences and consider cooperating with the Nepali side on this proposal.
8. Recognizing that Mount Sagarmatha/Zhumulangma is an eternal symbol of the friendship between Nepal and China, the two sides will promote cooperation in different fields, including addressing climate change and protecting the environment. They will jointly announce the height of the Mount Sagarmatha/Zhumulangma and conduct scientific researches.
  9. Both sides expressed satisfaction with the signing of the Agreement between the Government of Nepal and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Boundary Management System, which will improve the level of boundary management and cooperation for both sides. They were also satisfied with signing the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and expressed hope for an early conclusion of the Treaty on Extradition. The two sides agreed to strengthen cooperation between the law enforcement agencies on information exchanges, capacity building and training. In the next 3 years, China will offer 100 training opportunities to the Nepali law enforcement officers each year. With a view to promoting cooperation in security sector, the two sides will continue to strengthen cooperation in the exchange of visits of the security personnel, joint exercises and training, disaster prevention and reduction and personnel training.
  10. The two sides agreed to promote exchanges and cooperation in education, culture, tourism, traditional medicine, media, think tanks and youth at different levels. The Chinese side will offer the Nepali side 100 Confucius Institute Scholarships. The Chinese side supports the Nepali side to hold the activity of Visit Nepal Year 2020, welcomes the Nepali side to participate in the travel marts held in China and is willing to facilitate Nepal's promotion on tourism in China. The Chinese side will hold the 9<sup>th</sup> China Festival and the 4<sup>th</sup> Kathmandu Cultural Forum in Nepal, and continue to encourage the Chinese Cultural Centre and the Confucius Institute to promote Nepal-China cultural exchanges and cooperation. The two sides welcomed that Kathmandu of Nepal and Nanjing of China and Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City of Nepal and Xi'an city of China had developed friendship-city relations.
  11. The Chinese side consented to the establishment of Nepal's Consulate General in Chengdu, Sichuan Province of China.
  12. Both sides agreed to revitalize the existing mechanisms between the two countries to further strengthen relations and advance mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields.
  13. Both sides agreed to strengthen cooperation in the United Nations and other multilateral fora and to safeguard common interests of developing countries. Both sides exchanged fruitful views on promoting collaboration and strengthening cooperation in regional issues and agreed to support each other on matters of mutual interest. The two sides expressed firm commitment to the multilateral trading regime and work for a more open, inclusive and balanced economic globalization



with shared benefits.

14. Both sides held that President Xi Jinping's State visit, on the historic occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, to Nepal marked the beginning of a new era in Nepal-China relations and served as an important milestone in the history of friendly cooperation between the two countries. The Chinese side would like to extend its sincere gratitude to the Government of Nepal and its people for their warm and friendly reception.

President Xi Jinping sincerely invited Nepali leaders to visit China again at the convenience of both sides. The two sides will stay in touch via diplomatic channels.



### **Myanmar-Nepal Joint Statement issued on the occasion of the State Visit of the Bidya Devi Bhandari, President of Nepal, to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Nay Pyi Taw, 20 October 2019**

1. At the invitation of His Excellency U Win Myint, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Right Honourable Bidya Devi Bhandari, President of Nepal, paid a State Visit to Myanmar from 16 to 20 October 2019. She was accompanied by a high-level Nepali delegation comprising of the Honourable Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs and high-ranking government officials.
2. This visit, the first by a Head of State to Myanmar in the past 39 years, reinforces the bonds of friendship and the tradition of high-level interaction between leaders of the two countries. It is also a historic, important milestone in the bilateral relations reflecting the hallmark of the close and friendly ties between the two countries.
3. A ceremonial welcome was accorded to President Bhandari at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw on 17 October, 2019. Following the ceremony, President U Win Myint and President Bhandari held a bilateral meeting where both leaders had cordial discussions and exchanged views on the promotion of bilateral relations and cooperation as well as closer collaboration in regional and multilateral spheres. President U Win Myint hosted a State Banquet in honour of the visiting Nepali President and her entourage.
4. Her Excellency Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar called on the President Bhandari on the same day. They held discussions in a friendly atmosphere, exchanging views on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of common interest. The State Counsellor and the President of Nepal also witnessed the signing of the following Memoranda of Understanding:
5. Tourism Cooperation between Myanmar and Nepal;
6. Cultural Cooperation between Myanmar and Nepal.
7. During the meetings, the leaders extolled the commonalities, culture and traditions which have established close affinities between the two peoples and countries. Both sides discussed matters pertaining to the enhancement of bilateral cooperation,

- particularly in the areas of tourism, trade and investment, transportation, industry and culture. Noting the existing potential for investment, the two sides agreed to work together to facilitate the promotion of bilateral trade and investments.
8. On the same day, Senior-General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services, also called on the President of Nepal.
  9. Myanmar reaffirmed its readiness to render support for the success of the Nepali Government's "Visit Nepal Year (2020)" and for the National objective of "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali".
  10. Bearing in mind that the establishment of diplomatic relations will mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020, both sides agreed to commemorate the celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Myanmar and Nepal by jointly hosting a series of events in both countries.
  11. The leaders also acknowledged with great pleasure the role of Nepali diasporas in Myanmar in forging the existing bonds of friendship between Myanmar and Nepal by integrating well into Myanmar society, sharing in a peaceful, happy and harmonious life.
  12. The two sides reaffirmed their commitments to work closely, not only in the bilateral context but also in regional and multilateral fora, including BIMSTEC and the United Nations, based on shared views on a number of issues of common interest.
  13. While in Myanmar, the delegation led by the Nepali President visited cultural and historical sites of significance and met with the people of Nepali origin.
  14. President Bhandari expressed her deep appreciation to President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho for the warm welcome and exceptional hospitality extended to her and the Nepali delegation during their stay in Myanmar.

### III. Agreements/MoUs

S.N.	Agreement/MoU	Date
1.	Treaty between Nepal and the People's Republic of China on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters	13 October 2019
2.	Agreement between the Government of Nepal and the Government of China on the Boundary Management System	13 October 2019
3.	MoU between the Governments of Nepal and China on the Exchanges and Cooperation on Governance capacity building	13 October 2019
4.	MoU on Mount Sagarmatha/Zhumulangma Protection Cooperation	13 October 2019
5.	MoU on Promoting Key Projects of Investment and Cooperation on between National Planning Commission of Nepal and National Development and Reform Commission of China	13 October 2019

6.	MoU between the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport of Nepal and the Ministry of Transport of China on Cooperation in Feasibility Study of China-Nepal Cross-Border Railway Project	13 October 2019
7.	Agreement between Kathmandu and Nanjing Sister-city Relationship	13 October 2019
8.	Agreement between Butwal and Xi'an Sister-city Relationship	13 October 2019
9.	MoU on Traditional Medicine Cooperation between Ministry of Health and Population and National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine	13 October 2019
10.	MoU between the Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Emergency Management of China regarding Cooperation in Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Response	13 October 2019
11.	MoU on Cooperation between the Office of the Attorney General of Nepal and Supreme People's Procuratorate of China	13 October 2019
12.	Agreement between Tribhuvan University and Confucius Institute on the Establishment of Confucius Institute at Tribhuvan University	13 October 2019
13.	Protocol of Phytosanitary Requirements for the Export of Citrus Fruits from Nepal to China between Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development of Nepal and General Administration of Customs of China	13 October 2019
14.	Exchange of Notes for Establishment of Consulate General of Nepal in Chengdu	13 October 2019
15.	MoU between the Ministry of Commerce of China and the Ministry of Finance of Nepal on the Establishment of the Investment Cooperation Working Group	13 October 2019
16.	MoU on the Establishment of the Nepal-China Joint Working Group on Trade	13 October 2019
17.	Delivery and Acceptance Certificate for the China-Aid Earthquake Monitoring Network Project in Nepal	13 October 2019
18.	MoU between Ministry of Finance of Nepal and China International Development Cooperation Agency on Tunnels Construction Cooperation	13 October 2019
19.	Exchange of Letters of Border Security Equipments and Office Furniture Project	13 October 2019
20.	Minutes of Meeting for Feasibility Investigation of China-Aid Municipal Water Supply Improvement Project in Kathmandu Valley	13 October 2019

21.	MoU on Food Safety and Standards between Department of Food Technology and Quality Control of Nepal and Food Safety and Standards Authority of India	21 August 2019
22.	MOU between the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal and the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism of Myanmar on Tourism Cooperation	17 October 2019
23.	MoU between the Government of Nepal and the Government of Myanmar on Cultural Cooperation	17 October 2019
24.	Agreement on Visa Waiver for Holders of Diplomatic, Official or Service Passports between Nepal and Georgia	22 July 2019
25.	MoU establishing the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between Foreign Ministries of Nepal and Norway	4 November 2019
26.	MoU establishing the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between Foreign Ministries of Nepal and France	13 December 2019
27.	MoU to establish Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between Foreign Ministries of Nepal and the Philippines	1 December 2019
28.	MoU between Nepal Agricultural Research Council and Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences	13 November 2019

#### **IV Meetings of bilateral consultation mechanisms**

<b>S.N.</b>	<b>BCM</b>	<b>Venue and date</b>
1.	5 <sup>th</sup> meeting of Nepal-India Joint Commission	Kathmandu, 21-22 August 2019
2.	4 <sup>th</sup> meeting of Nepal-Pakistan Bilateral Consultations	Islamabad, 25 February 2020
3.	3 <sup>rd</sup> meeting of Nepal-Japan Bilateral Consultations	Kathmandu, 7 February 2020
4.	1 <sup>st</sup> Nepal-New Zealand Bilateral Consultation	Kathmandu, 2 October 2019
5.	1 <sup>st</sup> Nepal-Georgia Bilateral Consultations	Kathmandu, 22 July 2019
6.	1 <sup>st</sup> meeting of Nepal-Belgium Bilateral Consultation Mechanism	Kathmandu, 19 September, 2020
7.	1 <sup>st</sup> meeting of Bilateral Consultations with France	Kathmandu, 13 December 2019
8.	11 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of EU-Nepal Joint Commission	Kathmandu, 8 November 2019

## **V Major statements**

1. Statement delivered by the President at the Global Vaccine Summit
2. Statement of the Prime Minister during the Joint Remote Inauguration of Motihari-Amlekhgunj Nepal-India Petroleum Products Pipeline
3. Statement of the Prime Minister during the inauguration of the Integrated Check Post, Biratnagar and the post-earthquake reconstruction of private housing projects supported by India
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16. Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs at a Seminar on “Nepal's Foreign Policy: Orientation and Priorities” organized by UN Association of Nepal
17. Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs at a Workshop on “The Belt and Road Initiative in Nepal: Opportunities and Challenges”
18. Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs on Nepal-India Relations: Development and Dynamics

## **1. Address by President Bidya Devi Bhandari at the Global Vaccine Summit, London (virtual) 4 June 2020**

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I congratulate and thank Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson for taking this timely initiative to organise the Global Vaccine Summit.

I appreciate the contribution of GAVI (Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation) in the health sector through research, development and distribution of vaccines. I hope developing countries' partnership with GAVI will be significant in achieving health-related SDGs.

Immunisation has saved the lives of millions in the world. Child mortality rate has declined significantly. However, we still confront with myriads of challenges. A large segment of the population still does not have access to vaccine. Vaccination service remains ineffective in many least developed countries. Despite this, scientists have been making significant contribution by inventing life-saving vaccines. Even today, they are engaged relentlessly in research for the development of vaccine against COVID 19. I extend my best wishes for the success of this mission at the earliest.

In the present context, the theme of this discussion, 'Level the Vaccine Playing Field, Ensuring Equitable Access to COVID 19 Vaccine', stands highly relevant.

Nepal attaches high priority to vaccination and remains committed to providing equitable access to all basic immunization. Due to the successful immunization program, the coverage of vaccination in Nepal is over 90 percent of the population.

GAVI has made significant contribution for the development of vaccine and protection of human lives. The COVID 19 pandemic has presented additional challenges to the global campaign for the development of vaccine. It becomes equally important to ensure equitable access to vaccine as the global pandemic is posing threat to humanity. We should combine efforts and multiply cooperation to ensure that no one is left behind of health services.

Through this platform, I call upon the entire international community, including international financial institutions, development partners, philanthropists and business community, to come forward with renewed commitments in support of the initiatives of GAVI.

Nepal's commitment and solidarity will continue to be there in all global initiatives for shared happiness and well-being.

I wish for good health of all in the midst of this pandemic.

In closing, I wish for the success of the Summit in achieving its objectives.

I thank you.



## **2. Statement by Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli during the Ceremony of Joint Remote Inauguration by the Prime Ministers of Nepal and India of Motihari-Amlekhgunj Petroleum Products Pipeline, Kathmandu, 10 September 2019**

His Excellency Prime Minister  
Shri Narendra Modiji,  
Honourable Ministers,  
His Excellency Ambassador  
Manjeev Singh Puri,  
Friends from Media,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:  
Namaskar!

I have great pleasure to speak on this occasion of the inauguration of the flagship project of Motihari-Amlekhgunj Petroleum Products Pipeline completed under Nepal-India cooperation.

I remember it was just last year in April during my visit to India that Prime Minister Modiji and I attended the ground-breaking ceremony and formally launched this Project.

It is heartening to note that the Project has been completed so early- within half of its scheduled time-frame, enabling both of us to inaugurate for its operationalization today.

This pipeline Project is the first of its kind between Nepal and India and in South Asia.

I believe, it will not only save time, reduce cost, lessen road traffic, and reduce air pollution in transporting petroleum products from India to Nepal but also open avenues in Nepal for expanding similar pipelines across the country.

As I talk here about the positive impact of the Pipeline on consumer price, I am happy to share with you that Nepal Oil Corporation has already reduced both diesel and petrol prices by 2 Rupees per liter effective from today.

Moreover, this Project will, without any doubt, enhance interconnectedness and interdependence between our two countries. It is one of the best examples of connectivity in terms of trade and transit infrastructure of Nepal and India.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Prime Minister Modiji and the Government of India for the support and cooperation to bring into operation such an important project.

Prime Minister Modiji, Distinguished Audience,

Nepal-India cooperation is not limited to a few projects alone. Many more bilateral projects covering various areas of cooperation, such as roads, hydropower generation, Integrated Check Posts, bridges, agriculture, tourism, railways and inland waterways are

in the pipeline.

Early completion of them, with similar pace and efforts, I believe, will enormously benefit both of our countries and peoples.

And, I am happy to note that implementation of various India-aided projects has gathered momentum in recent years following the understanding reached between Modiji and myself in our previous meetings.

At this moment, I would also like to appreciate the works relating to the post-earthquake reconstruction of about fifty thousand houses in Gorkha and Nuwakot Districts of Nepal under India's financial assistance. These houses stand as a symbol of India's support and friendly gesture to the people of Nepal.

Such development works, many of which directly benefit the people, contribute to make our relationship stronger and fruitful.

Nepal attaches great importance to its relations with India. The relationship between our two countries is so deep and dense that no area of cooperation is left untouched. There is always a scope of expanding it further.

We are now at an important juncture of history. Today, both Nepal and India are in a better situation of political stability with strong majority governments. Rising economic growth rates, availability of dynamic and capable human resources and rich natural resources endowments offer promising environment for development and prosperity. This has also created an enabling environment for further strengthening partnership and cooperation between our two countries for mutual benefit.

Besides, we have similar visions of development, prosperity and happiness of our peoples, backed up by solid political commitment and strong determination to realize them. Modiji's *sab ka sath sab ka bikas* and *sab ka bishwas* and my vision for Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali, capture the essence of our commitment, determination and efforts to transform the development landscape of our respective countries.

In this context, what I believe is that we need to inject new vigor, dynamism and direction to Nepal-India relationship so that it could continue taking new heights in the days ahead.

I am ready to work hand in hand with Prime Minister Modiji towards attaining this objective.

While recalling the exchange of successful visits in the past, I take this opportunity to extend a cordial invitation to you, Prime Minister Modiji, to pay a visit to Nepal at your earliest convenience.

Finally, I would like to extend sincere thanks to the government officials, local authorities and the institutions concerned of Nepal and India, who worked tirelessly in bringing into operation this important pipeline project of Nepal-India cooperation.

Thank you!





### **3. Statement by Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli at the 18<sup>th</sup> Summit of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Baku, Azerbaijan, 25-26 October 2019**

Your Excellency Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Chairman of this Summit,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates:

Namaste, Salam and Good Morning/ Good Afternoon!

I congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your assuming the Chair of our Movement. I am confident that the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) will reach a new height under your able leadership.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to us.

The outgoing chair, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, deserves our appreciation for successfully steering the Movement for the last three years.

I have brought with me greetings and best wishes from the land of Buddha and Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) for the success of the Summit.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Sixty-four years ago, the leaders from Asia and Africa assembled in the Indonesian town of Bandung.

They assembled for a specific purpose and that was the need of the hour.

They developed new set of principles to govern relations among nations. Those principles were:

- about respecting and observing in good faith the principles of UN Charter,
- about supporting national independence,
- about upholding of sovereign equality, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs, and
- about settlement of all disputes through peaceful means.

These principles are so sacrosanct and have timeless value that if we fail to observe them the world order will turn into anarchy.

And, this is certainly not the objective of humanity.

The objective is to respect them, which makes the world peaceful, safer, stable and prosperous.

The Non-aligned Movement (NAM) was conceived as a decisive response to unjust and unfair world, a dehumanizing world where the basic essentials of human being- the freedoms were denied and brutally suppressed.

It was conceived to defend fundamental rights of the peoples and the nations in the South. It was a thoughtful decision to practice an independent foreign policy based on objective analysis of the worldview, away from biased judgment in an international environment that was characterized by intense east-west rivalry, the Cold War.

In doing so, we wanted to preserve our autonomy in decision-making, which is the soul of sovereignty.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The Bandung principles, which are eloquently manifested in the objectives of the NAM, form the fundamentals of our foreign policy as enshrined in our Constitution.

We take immense pride in saying that the five principles of peaceful co-existence better known as Panchasheela, were derived from the teachings of Buddha, the immortal son of Nepal.

They make a perfect sync with the essence of Nepal's foreign policy principle that believes in 'Amity with all, enmity with none'.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Nepal's experience presents a testimony of how peace, democracy, development and human rights are closely interlinked.

Human rights can find true meaning only in a condition of comprehensive democracy.

One would ask what is the essence of comprehensive democracy?

I stand for a holistic empowerment of individual so that he/she enjoys freedom from poverty, access to equal opportunity, right to life, security and dignity.

I would say the political rights alone are not sufficient to empower individual in the true sense of the term. They remain useless if a person remains hungry and homeless, which threatens his most fundamental right – the right to life.

Being cognizant of the fact, we in Nepal have crafted social security system to cover the entire cycle of human life so that no one dies due to lack of food and shelter.

Beyond the borders, comprehensive democracy must be practiced at the global level as well.

How do we promote this?

We promote this by ensuring sovereign equality, non-use of threat or force, non-interference in internal affairs, respect and dignity of all nations, non-exploitation, and fair opportunities for all countries to grow and develop.

Comprehensive democracy demands a world order:

- that is democratic,
- that is inclusive,
- that is just, and
- that is fair.

Unless and until we achieve it, the NAM will continue to be relevant for us. The NAM is

a synonym for peace, security, justice and development.

It has time-tested value and appeal.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Mother earth is common to all and has bestowed enough to fulfil human needs in a rational way.

We cannot live in a situation where excessive greed and intolerable destitution stand in two opposite extremes. Excessive greed is the primary reason for environmental catastrophe as well as the social conflict.

We must therefore ensure:

prosperity for all so that no one is left behind as the SDGs have underlined; and

protection of mother earth so that the needs of the future generations are not compromised.

How we achieve this?

We achieve this by ensuring global justice in such a manner that all states enjoy their rights and fulfil their obligations in a balanced manner.

However, in judicious utilization of natural resources, there should not be any restriction on the sovereign choice of the people.

Climate change has assumed crisis proportion.

Being acutely aware of this fact, the Government of Nepal has decided to host the 'Sagarmatha Sumbad', a global dialogue, under the theme of 'Mountains, Climate Change and the Future of Humanity' in April next year.

**Mr. Chairman,**

In the interval of every three years we meet to make the assessment of the Movement. In every Summit we take decisions and define a new course of action. Our collective wisdom finds space in a comprehensive declaration that we adopt at the end of our gathering.

But let's seriously ponder:

- Have we ever developed the system to ensure that the decisions we made are implemented in good faith?
- Have we ever tried to reach broad consensus that the political message of the Movement needs to be translated into action on the ground?
- Have we ever analysed the deep rooted conflicts and differences among ourselves and tried to resolve them in the spirit of solidarity?

The time has come to seriously reflect on how could we collectively make the Movement more dynamic and effective.

Here are my humble suggestions:

- We want to see a NAM that is internally cohesive, united, strong and externally influential so that entrenched global inequalities are uprooted for once and for all.
- We want to see a NAM that fosters goodwill, understanding and cooperation so that

division and discord do not surface to undermine the unity of the Movement.

- We want to see a NAM that helps leverage the strength and capability of the South so that all developing nations build collective strengths to address development challenges to achieve shared prosperity.
  - We want to see a NAM that takes up burning global issues in a systematic manner and devises concrete solutions to address them.
  - We want to see a NAM that contributes to strengthening multilateralism with the United Nations at its centre.

I believe that the consideration of these suggestions will make a difference in the way our Movement functions in making the NAM truly a force to respond adequately to the contemporary challenges and to advance development journey for collective prosperity.

As a founding member of NAM, Nepal stands firmly to shoulder its responsibilities from the forefront.

I thank you all for your kind attention.



#### **4. Statement by Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli during the Joint Remote Inauguration by the Prime Ministers of Nepal and India of the Integrated Check Post, Biratnagar and the post-earthquake reconstruction of private housing projects in Gorkha and Nuwakot Districts, 21 January 2020**

Dear Prime Minister  
Shri Narendra Modiji,  
Friends from Media,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:  
Namaskar!

I am pleased to speak on this occasion of the inauguration of the two important projects under Nepal-India cooperation- the Integrated Check Post (ICP) in Biratnagar and the Post-earthquake Reconstruction of Private Housing in Gorkha and Nuwakot Districts.

Before I speak further, I would like to express my gratefulness to you, Prime Minister Modiji, for your message of best wishes for my speedy recovery. I have been deeply touched by your thoughtful sentiment.

Four months ago, Prime Minister Modiji and I had similar opportunity to remote inauguration of the completion of the flagship project of Motihari-Amlekhgunj Petroleum Products Pipeline.

Likewise, we both had jointly inaugurated the first ICP in Birgunj during my state visit to India in April 2018.

Today, we are going to jointly inaugurate the completion of another ICP in Biratnagar as well as the post-earthquake reconstruction of private housing project.

These projects are the symbols of close friendly relations between Nepal and India.

The timely completion of such bilateral projects has not only delivered tangible outcome but also brightened the prospect for even deeper cooperation between our two countries for mutual benefit.

The operationalization of the ICP in Biratnagar with customs, immigration, quarantine, and other facilities under one roof, I believe, will bring positive outcomes in facilitating trade and cross-border movement of the peoples.

Prime Minister ji, Distinguished Friends,

Nepal was hit hard by the devastating earthquake in 2015. It resulted in loss of lives and properties and the destruction of important physical infrastructure and historical and cultural sites.

I recall how promptly and spontaneously the Government of India under your leadership deployed resources for rescue and relief of the affected people in the aftermath of the earthquake.

I am happy to know that about fifty thousand private houses have been reconstructed in Gorkha and Nuwakot districts under the grant assistance of the Government of India for the quake affected people.

For the support of these projects, I express my sincere thanks to you, Modiji, and your Government.

### **Prime Minister Modiji**

Nepal and India have remained close neighbours and friends since time immemorial. Geography, history, culture and traditions bind our two countries and peoples. Close friendship and understanding between political leaders and peoples have nurtured our friendly ties.

Moreover, timely completion of development projects, especially those providing a direct benefit to the peoples, has added a momentum to our relationship.

We need to continue our close cooperative relationship and partnership in the days ahead for the benefit of our two countries and people. My Government is always ready to work with India for this purpose.

The current Government of Nepal has the aspiration of समृद्ध नेपाल, सुखी नेपाली (Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali); your Government has a vision of sab ka sath sab ka bikas and sab ka bishwas. Let's work together to make our countries prosperous and our peoples happy.

### **Dear Modiji,**

Our relations have scaled new height and acquired dynamism in recent years. I am of the view that by working together in a spirit of friendliness and accommodation we can expand the scope and enrich the substance of bilateral relations.

The time has come to resolve all pending issues through dialogue in the lasting interest of our two countries and peoples. Stable and majority government in both countries is an opportune moment. My Government remains committed to working closely with the Government of India towards this end.

Our ministers and respective officials could meet to sort out differences and advance the partnership agenda.

Before I conclude, I would like to renew my cordial invitation to you to pay a visit to Nepal at your earliest convenience. I am eagerly looking forward to receiving you in Nepal. Your visit will provide us an excellent opportunity to review the achievements made and chart the course of action for the future.

With these words, I thank all government officials, local authorities and the institutions concerned of Nepal and India, who have contributed to the successful completion of these important bilateral projects.

Long-live Nepal-India friendship!

Thank you!



## **5. Statement delivered by Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli at the SAARC Leaders' Video Conference, Kathmandu, 15 March 2020**

Dear Prime Minister Modi ji and the  
Distinguished Heads of State and Government of SAARC Member States  
Namaste! Good Afternoon,

First of all, I would like to thank Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji for taking this important and timely initiative, which I warmly welcome. Our collective wisdom and efforts will help us devise a sound and robust strategy for the SAARC region as we fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

I take this opportunity to thank distinguished colleagues for your best wishes for my speedy recovery. Though I was taking rest after the successful surgery, I could not resist myself from joining this important event involving fellow SAARC leaders.

Our region is at a high risk of COVID-19. The epidemic knows no boundary, no nationality, and no region; therefore, we need to devise ways to combat this pandemic collectively. It is a common challenge; and it demands common efforts.

Now, I would like to share with you the present status of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nepal and the measures that we have taken so far to prevent it.

A high-level Coordination Committee has been formed under the chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Minister to lead the government efforts. To support this committee, there is an Action Team headed by the Chief Secretary. Provincial and local bodies have been

tasked to take up the matter with urgency and work in coordination with the central government agencies.

Community-based organizations and volunteers have been mobilized in raising awareness and supporting the local authorities. We have appealed our people to avoid mass-gatherings and non-essential foreign travels.

On international travel, we have suspended visa-on-arrival facility for all foreigners from 14th March to 30th April 2020. We have made it mandatory to present a swab test PCR health Certificate to obtain a visa for essential travels to Nepal. Submission of such a certificate has also been made mandatory at the immigration entry points.

Visas for the tourists entering Nepal via land routes have also been suspended. The only immigration-point currently open for foreigners to enter Nepal is the international airport in Kathmandu.

Likewise, all the permits issued previously for mountaineering expeditions for Spring 2020 have been suspended.

We have postponed all the major international conference to be hosted in Nepal such as Sagarmatha Sambaad until further notice.

On preparedness, a health desk has been established at the Kathmandu international airport. The desk is well equipped with the screening and testing facilities as per the WHO standards. It is mandatory for all incoming international passengers to go through the screening process.

There are provisions for quarantine for certain categories of travelers. Hospitals have arranged isolation-wards and intensive wards as well for treatment.

Similarly, we have strengthened hospitals and quarantine facilities in all seven provinces.

To fight this pandemic, we are enhancing the capacity of the hospitals and medical centers. Health workers are being provided with personal protective equipment and the necessary incentives to motivate them. Whatever resources are at our hands are not enough. We need support and assistance from friendly countries.

Even though we had detected one suspected case but the COVID-test proved negative. Yet we are aware of the risk of an outbreak at any time. We remain alert for preventing it.

The economic cost of this pandemic is yet to be assessed. I sure it is going to cost us dearly. Regional discussion on reviving our economies and supporting each other would be critically important.

Talking about our collective strength to fight it, I believe that our region holds a good stock of emergency medical supplies, well trained medical professionals and laboratory facilities. They could be deployed at the call from any Member State of SAARC in urgent need.

Our region is rich in traditional medicine. We can utilize this asset for the prevention and treatment of diseases like this.

The hospitals in the bordering areas could best be utilized for the screening as well as

treating infected the patients coming from across the borders.

At this hour of emergency, we need to share our experiences, information, and best practices.

Let us ask the medical centers, research institutions, hospitals, and health workers to build a good network for sharing experiences in critical areas associated with the prevention and treatment of this deadly disease.

We need to develop a SAARC-level mechanism to deal with critical health issues such as this. Imperatives for regional cooperation in this area cannot be overemphasized.

As the current Chair of SAARC, Nepal stands for meaningful regional cooperation in all important areas of human interactions.

The significance of regional cooperation becomes prominent especially at the time of difficulties. And today's initiative amply justifies it. I am confident that this will pave the way for the greater interactions at the leadership level.

I am extremely happy to have this opportunity to talk to fellow leaders. I must thank once again Prime Minister Modi ji for this great initiative.

I thank you very much.



## **6. Statement by Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli at the Online Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Contact Group, Kathmandu, 4 May 2020**

Your Excellency Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement,

Your Excellencies the Heads of State and Government,

Distinguished Participants

At the outset, I would like to thank Your Excellency President Ilham Aliyev for this timely initiative to bring us together.

Nepal welcomes your initiative to establish the NAM Contact Group for our collective fight against the COVID-19.

The Pandemic has shaken the world in a magnitude not experienced in our lifetime; yet it has reminded us how deeply our fate is interwoven in this global village.

The humanity is at stake now.

Close to two hundred and fifty thousand lives are lost. Our health facilities have been overwhelmed. The virus has tested our ability and exposed our vulnerability.

Global trading and travel linkages are disrupted. Businesses have collapsed.

Jobs are vanished. Education systems are disrupted, and millions risk relapsing into



poverty making the realization of SDGs even harder.

We are now fighting a common but invisible enemy.

In such a situation, I believe that there is nothing more important than the protection of human life and saving of humanity. This is the supreme duty of Governments.

We can revive economic loss. We can reinvent technology. We can build a prosperous society. But, we cannot revive the loss of precious human life, which is also the loss of human capital, talents, expertise and ideas. So, life comes first of all other considerations.

Humanity must prevail, not the virus. For this, health must be our topmost priority.

Mindful of this, in Nepal, we have deployed all political, economic, human and technological resources at our disposal to contain the spread of the virus.

Our focus has been on both the prevention and mitigation of the pandemic. We have marshalled all resources and state machinery at federal, provincial and local level to manage and respond to the crisis in a coherent way.

We have upgraded health facilities, incentivized health care workers, and ensured accessible health services for all. We have installed additional facilities for quarantine and isolation.

We have pursued combination of measures, such as, testing, contact-tracing, quarantine and social distancing. At the same time, we have enforced temporary measures, such as, nation-wide lockdown, suspension of international flights and restriction in cross-border movement of the people.

I am happy to share that, as of today, there is no death from Covid-19 in Nepal.

I must underline though the unprecedented economic hardship that we are facing. The whole economy is in standstill. Understandably, small enterprises, peasants and daily wage earners are the hardest hit. Remittances and revenue sources have declined. Tourism has shattered. The pace of development will suffer, so will the sources of livelihood of the people.

While we are determined to face the challenge, we believe that crisis of this proportion calls for robust global response. National endeavors must be complemented by international support measures.

Here comes the indispensable role of the United Nations and its specialized agency, WHO. They must be strengthened and supported to promote cooperation, collaboration and synchronize global response against the pandemic.

Non-Aligned Movement, as a group of 120 countries, must use its numerical and moral strength to unite the world at this critical moment of human history.

If the world unites, we will win the war. If the world divides, virus will defeat us. And there is no other choice, but the virus must be defeated. In this context, I would like to highlight the following points:

First and foremost, NAM must remain united at this critical hour and support

multilateralism and global cooperation to defeat COVID-19 and to help achieve the shared aspiration of peace, stability and prosperity.

Second, NAM must coordinate actions to help its Member States and consolidate the voice of the poorest and most vulnerable population around the world in the spirit of global solidarity.

In this regard, Nepal welcomes the proposal to establish the NAM Task Force to work out a database that will include requirements of NAM Member States.

Third, NAM must do its part to ensure that the world bounces back to normal. While galvanizing global unity, we need to scale up South-South Cooperation by way of sharing experience, transfer of technology, medical logistics and equipment.

Fourth, NAM must coordinate and advocate for launching of a robust recovery package from the international community to address the looming economic recession. The impacts are already massive worldwide and they are disproportionate to the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDs in particular. The crisis should not provide an excuse to retreat from existing commitments to the developing countries.

Fifth, NAM must promote regional initiatives as building blocks for global efforts. In South Asian region, leaders of SAARC countries came together for a summit level video conference to promote cooperation and find solution to the challenges posed by COVID-19.

Sixth, humanity must come together to fight against the challenges of poverty, illness and under-development. This is not a time to engage in insurgencies and wars. Therefore, Nepal supports UN Secretary General's Appeal for Global Ceasefire.

Finally, the pandemic has exposed the inadequacies and fragility in existing economic system. We must ensure that states reorient economic arrangements and redeploy resources for building and maintaining of basic social protection, health care and education. Pro-people policies stand better to deal with the crisis like this.

Before I conclude, Mr. Chairman, let me express my profound condolences to the countries and families for the loss of lives and wish for speedy recovery of those undergoing treatment.

Together we will rebound; and rebound better.

I thank you for your attention.



## **7. Address by the Prime Minister of Nepal to ILO Global Virtual Summit on COVID-19 and the World of Work – Building a Better Future of Work, Geneva, 8 July 2020**

Mr. President,  
Excellencies the Heads of State and Government,  
Director General of ILO Mr. Guy Ryder,  
Employers' and Workers' Representatives,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me commend the Director General of ILO for taking this timely initiative.

The world is now seized by an invisible enemy, the pandemic of COVID-19.

Over five hundred thousand people have lost their lives. It is uncertain how it will unfold further. Invention of vaccine and making it judiciously accessible to all remains unclear.

In such a situation, protecting the lives of people becomes extremely important. Loss of human life cannot be replenished.

The pandemic has thrown millions of workers and enterprises vulnerable. Overall economy has suffered with global decline in investment, trade and disruption in travel industry. As a consequence, people are losing jobs.

Economists project a bleak scenario for global growth in 2020.

When labour-intensive job-market declines, millions will fall into poverty. The impact becomes unevenly high in the LDCs and low-income countries. Declining remittances and potential reduction in ODA and shrinking of other resources will further compound economic stagnation.

Crisis of this proportion calls for robust global response with United Nations and its specialized agencies like ILO at the centre.

We should support and strengthen them to promote human-centred agenda of decent work as embraced by the ILO.

Protection of the most vulnerable, including the migrant workers and those in informal sectors, and provision of adequate social security and health care is key to minimize the impact.

However, it is unfortunate that migrant workers who have contributed to the building of destination countries are losing hopes and returning home in the midst of the pandemic without protection of their job and income.

This situation, contrary to the ILO principles, could have been avoided and norms of WHO should have been observed in the process. In Nepal, within 108 days, in an average 3000 people returned home every day from India crossing our land border. About half a million migrant workers are expected to return from the Gulf region and other countries.

It does not mean that we are not welcoming our nationals back home. But this scale of sudden return has posed tremendous pressure on our health system as the cases of infection shoot up rapidly.

I held several telephone conversations with Heads of State and Government in labour destination countries seeking their cooperation for the protection and wellbeing of the Nepali workers. At home, we are protecting foreign nationals in our country during this pandemic.

Humanity is tested in the time of crisis. Our conscience should guide us to uphold justice and fairness even in the time of extreme difficulty. International solidarity at this hour could prevent the job loss, return of migrant workers and reversal in the progress of SDG and resulting rise of poverty.

Poverty and sudden stress on local labour market endangers larger peace and stability worldwide.

### **Excellencies,**

We in Nepal have invested resources within our capacity to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have employed both preventive and mitigating measures that include testing, contact-tracing, quarantine, isolation and social distancing. We are close to meeting the target of testing two per cent of our population.

Temporary measures, such as, nation-wide lockdown and restriction in movement helped us to contain the virus to a large extent. Number of deaths so far remains minimal. Estimates are that nearly 63 percent of Nepali workforce will face some degree of impacts, which is more severe in urban areas and in service industries like hotel restaurant catering and tourism sector.

We have responded to the situation with some immediate and medium-term measures. For those in informal sector, we have provided food and wage for work as an immediate relief.

For those in the formal sector, we have ensured payroll protection, re-scheduling and capitalization of loans and waivers on electricity, among others. We are trying to convert this challenge into opportunity with special focus on building our health infrastructures.

In the medium term, we have devised programs such as, Prime Minister's Employment Program, food for work, subsidy to private sector for internship wages, skilling for re-deployment, and reorienting of poverty alleviation funds for production and sustainable employment generation, restructuring of agriculture and support to SMEs.

Provincial and local governments are also implementing programs for promoting job opportunities in coordination and collaboration with the federal Government.

While we are committed to partnership and social dialogue in the process, we also look forward to greater solidarity to address the situation globally.

I thank you.



## 8. Statement by Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at the Fourth Indian Ocean Conference, Male, 3 September 2019

His Excellency Mr. Ahmad Ali Al Sayegh, Minister for Economic Cooperation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates,

His Excellency Mr. Tandi Dorji, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Royal Government of Bhutan,

His Excellency M. Joaquim Jose Gusmao dos Reis Martines, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries of Timor Leste,

Shri Madhav Rao and other Distinguished Members of the Organizing Committee, Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Namaskar and good evening!

I have the great honour and privilege to address this Fourth Indian Ocean conference being held in this beautiful friendly country, the Maldives.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Government of the Maldives, the India Foundation and S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore, for organizing this Conference and inviting me to be a part of this important event.

The theme of the conference, *Securing the Indian Ocean Region: Traditional and Non-Traditional Challenges*, is highly relevant in view of the great significance of the Indian ocean and its security.

The organizers deserve appreciation for creating such a prominent platform for deliberations on the theme of common interest.

I am here today bringing the best wishes of the people of the Land of Sagarmatha (the Mount Everest), the highest place on the earth, to the people of the deep Sagar (the Indian Ocean).

### **Excellencies,**

We all are aware of the glory and magnificence of the Indian Ocean. This Ocean is the source of nourishment to a great number of human beings, animals and plants. It is also a bedrock for the development of great civilizations, cultures, and dynamic commercial and economic activities.

The vast ocean sprawling from Australia in the East to the Arabian Gulf to South Africa is replete with precious resources of one sort or the other.

It is an important passage for internal trade, as a large portion of such trade from the Pacific to the Atlantic and, in between them, passes through this region.

It is the route for trade of more than half of the world's sea-borne oil, accommodating 23 of the world's top 100 container ports facilitating one third of the global trade.

Likewise, 36 littorals and 14 adjacent hinterland states are related to the Indian Ocean, making more than 35% of the world's population dependent on it. Thus, there is an inextricable linkage of these countries with this Ocean.

A large portion of the resources of the Indian Ocean region is yet to be explored. It is said that 16.8% of the world's oil reserves and 27.9% of natural gas reserves find home in it. The abundance of huge resources has not only sustained life but also incessantly propelled trade and economic growth in the region.

Despite being a landlocked country, the major share of Nepal's export and import trade is directly or indirectly dependent on transit through the Indian Ocean.

### **Distinguished Delegates,**

With the opportunities come the challenges. The Indian Ocean and the surrounding region face a host of non-traditional security threats which include piracy, marine terrorism, climate change, illicit trafficking of drugs and weapons, human trafficking, natural disasters like tsunami, illegal migration, and interruption in freedom of navigation.

Many of these challenges have severely affected the countries associated with this Ocean. The island nations are facing existential threats due to climate change and consequent rise of sea level; unseasonal heavy rainfalls resulting into floods and landslides have been hitting Nepal and other countries every year taking a heavy toll of precious lives and property caused by the phenomena of global warming; similarly, threats of human trafficking, drugs and weapons smuggling and illegal migration have continued posing grave security threats.

In this context, it is appropriate to pursue collective actions from the countries directly or indirectly linked to the Ocean in order for addressing these challenges.

Moreover, maritime security of the Indian Ocean should receive a due priority by all the governments concerned.

It is important to note that the existing multilateral and regional architecture- Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), ASEAN Regional Forum, East Asia Summit- have all prioritized cooperation in maritime safety and security, trade and investment facilitation, and disaster risk management.

In the South Asian region, initiatives taken such as this Conference will prove instrumental in forging cooperation in regard to strengthening the security of the region.

### **Excellencies,**

In Nepal's case, though Nepal is not directly linked with this Ocean, the country is associated with it, as major portion of Nepal's international trade passes through it. It is bearing the brunt of the adverse impacts of climate change without being the cause for it. So is the case for the Maldives and some other countries.

Nepal believes that the rights of exploration, navigation and utilization of the resources of this Ocean can only be exercised when there is peace and security. Furthermore, it also holds that maritime security will continue to play a meaningful role in strengthening the Blue Economy, benefitting all the countries concerned.

Nepal is in favour of peace, prosperity and abidance of international laws in relations to the use of the high sea. It supports an architecture based on inclusiveness, partnership and collaboration among all countries and utilization of resources and sharing of the benefits by all states, including landlocked countries like Nepal.

I am confident that such arrangements would ensure the exploration, navigation and utilization of the marine resources, sharing the benefits and use of high seas to all states, including landlocked countries like Nepal.

In this context, I am happy to inform this august gathering that the Government of Nepal has been working towards implementing the vision of connecting Nepal's mountains with the Indian Ocean with seamless connectivity of roads, railways and waterways.

Nepal is also in a process of bringing into operation its own commercial ships in international waters, hoisting Nepal's Flag, in the near future. We believe it will involve us directly with the Indian Ocean with much more focus on international trade and transit.

There is one more dimension- the ecological interdependence between Himalayas and Indian ocean. In the context of climate change, the melting of glaciers results in the rise of sea-level which endangers the survival of low-lying island states. So, preserving the ecological balance in the Himalayas by addressing the adverse effects of climate change is in our common interest. The Himalayas have not only ecological values, they have been the source of civilization and repository of traditional and indigenous knowledge.

The Government of Nepal, with a view to sensitizing the international community on the impact of climate change on the livelihoods of people living in the mountains and low-lying coastal and island states, will be hosting a dialogue on Climate Change and Mountain Ecology in the first quarter of next year within the framework of newly established 'Sagarmatha Sambad'. We will invite you attend the event once we finalize the details.

As to the exploration and utilization of the marine resources under the high seas, Nepal is yet to take full advantage of these resources.

Taking it into consideration, we urge the developed world for their support to the Land-Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs) to enhance capacity for reaping the benefits of the sea.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am pleased to inform you that Nepal is in the process of developing in-land water ways in its big rivers in cooperation with India in a way to connect Nepal's rivers with the sea for the movement of its export and import. It believes that effective waterways as a means of transport can greatly facilitate smooth, economical and fast trade and transit. Once Nepal is able to do so, it will also be effectively linked with the Indian Ocean.

At this moment, it would be relevant to recall the decision of the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit held in Kathmandu in 2018, which emphasized the importance of Blue Economy. The summit agreed to cooperate in this sector for the sustainable development in the region, paying due considerations to the special needs and circumstances of the landlocked Member States. I hope the agreement will be implemented in its true spirit, enabling the

land-locked countries like Nepal to reap maximum benefits.

### **Distinguished Delegates,**

When we discuss about the sea, we need to do it in a holistic manner. There is no doubt that maintaining security of the Ocean is of paramount importance. So is removing obstacles and addressing challenges of various sorts. What is more for the land-locked states like Nepal is to help remove their difficulties so that this natural handicap would not become an obstacle for their development.

Equally important is that the resources of and benefits from the oceans and seas should be equally shared with all countries associated with them. Then only we will create robust cooperation, including for their security and resolution of problems.

Nepal is ready to cooperate with all other countries associated with this region in strengthening security of the Indian Ocean and addressing the challenges facing it in whatever way possible.

Before I conclude, I, once again, would like extend thanks to the Organizing Committee for hosting this conference on a relevant theme which interests all coastal and landlocked countries.

I wish the conference a grand success!

Thank you!



## **9. Remarks by Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at a Dinner hosted in honour of State Councilor and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of China Wang Yi, Kathmandu, 9 September 2019**

Your Excellency Mr. Wang Yi, State Councilor and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China,

Distinguished Delegates from China,

Members of my delegation,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to extend, once again, a warm welcome to Your Excellency Mr. Wang Yi, State Councilor and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of China and the distinguished members of your delegation in Nepal.

I would also like to welcome the Hon. Ministers of the Government of Nepal and the distinguished invitees.

I am happy to welcome Your Excellency, a trusted and longtime friend of Nepal, after four years in Nepal.



We had the bilateral talks a while ago. I am pleased to share with you all that there was a comprehensive and fruitful discussion between us on all major aspects of our bilateral relations.

We also witnessed the signing of some important MoUs of cooperation between Nepal and China.

We have reached an understanding to maintain the momentum of high-level exchanges, widen and deepen mutual cooperation, and develop common voice in international forums on matters of common interests.

Before the bilateral talks, His Excellency Wang Yi paid courtesy calls on the Rt. Hon. President and the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister of Nepal.

We are well-prepared and eagerly waiting to welcome high level visits from China in near future.

Rt. Hon. President of Nepal paid a state visit to China in April 2019 and held bilateral talks with the President His Excellency Xi Jinping. During her visit, she also attended the Opening Ceremony of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation held in Beijing and addressed the High Level Meeting and the Leaders' Roundtable of the Forum. I am happy to recall that I was also a member of her delegation.

Our relations have withstood the test of time. It is as stable as the Mt. Everest. Relations between our two countries go far beyond the formal diplomatic scope and have been widening and deepening in course of time. We are not only connected by geography but also are bound by cultural affinity, history and encouragingly increasing people-to-people relations.

Nepal remains firmly committed to one China policy. We are equally committed to ensuring that our territory is not used against China.

We appreciate China's unconditional respect for our sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence.

We greatly appreciate His Excellency President Xi Jinping's vision of 'building a community of a shared future for humanity' and greater cooperation among nations for economic prosperity particularly through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Government and the people of Nepal appreciate the exemplary success of China in its journey to socio-economic transformation. In relatively a short span of time, China has developed from an agrarian society to an industrial powerhouse. It is the second largest economy in the world and the largest one in terms of purchasing power parity.

Nepal has also embarked on a journey of development and prosperity guided by the national aspiration of 'Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali'. We are committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals within the agreed time frame and become a middle income country by 2030.

Our topmost priority is to enhance connectivity and infrastructure development.

Our domestic resources do not suffice to realize our tremendous development needs.

Assistance of our friends and development partners is essential to fill in the resources gap.

While truly appreciating the generous and unconditional support and assistance of China for Nepal's socio-economic development so far, we confidently count on the continued and enhanced cooperation of China in future. We firmly believe that prosperous and stable Nepal is also in the interest of China.

Building on our age-old relations, we are committed to enhancing our relations to meet the needs of ever changing time. I am fully convinced that with our collective efforts, we will scale a new height in our bilateral relations.

With these few words, may I now request you all to join me in proposing a toast to:

- the good health and happiness of H.E. Wang Yi, State Councilor and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China and all the members of his delegation,
- the continued peace, progress and prosperity of the friendly people of China,
- the closer and stronger friendship between Nepal and China.

Long live Nepal-China relations!



## **10. Statement by Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at the 74<sup>th</sup> session of United Nations General Assembly, New York, 27 September 2019**

Mr. President Excellencies  
Distinguished delegates  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, and members of the Bureau on your election and assure you of our full support in the discharge of your responsibilities.

I also appreciate the role played by Her Excellency Maria Fernanda Espinosa, as the President of the 73<sup>rd</sup> session of the Assembly.

Our acclamation goes to the Secretary-General His Excellency Mr. Antonio Guterres for bringing reforms to make the United Nations fit-for-purpose.

**Mr. President,**

The world today stands at crossroads. Landscapes of global order are undergoing profound transformation. The problems of yesterday haven't subsided, yet new challenges are menacing.

Inequality – of income or opportunities; and of technology or capability – is increasing.

Trade tensions among the largest economies are giving rise to unpredictability and risk of recession.

The ensuing insecurity and disorder hurt the countries such as LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS

the most.

The peril of climate change is outpacing our response. The threat is truly existential in terms of sustainability of planet and future of humanity.

It is the poorest and most vulnerable countries that are hit hardest by the impacts of climate change. Despite their negligible emissions, they face the consequences which are disproportionate, unjust and undue.

In this context, Nepal appreciates the Secretary-General's leadership in convening the Climate Action Summit on 23 September 2019. It was another milestone to chart out sustainable path in the face of obstinate ignorance of climate science.

Home to Sagarmatha, also known as the Mount Everest, the highest peak in the world, Nepal lies at the hotspot of climate change. The Himalayas, as the barometer of climate change, are witnessing the melting of glaciers and drying up of the fresh water in a faster pace.

A report by International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) published this year reveals that one-third of the glaciers will melt away from the Hindu Kush and Himalaya range by the end of this century even if we meet the 1.5 degrees commitment.

This is alarming.

The climate induced disasters wreak havoc every year. This year alone, several Nepali people lost their lives to floods and tornado.

Keeping in mind the seriousness of the issue and realization of our own responsibility, the Government of Nepal has decided to convene a global dialogue in April next year under the theme of climate change. This will be the first episode of the Sagarmatha Dialogue established by Nepal to deliberate on critical issues of contemporary importance.

### **Excellencies,**

Nepal pins a great hope on the centrality of the United Nations for galvanizing multilateral efforts to address the cross-cutting and global challenges, such as; poverty reduction and achieving SDGs.

We have abiding trust in multilateralism and we believe that only alternative to it is a better, effective, inclusive, and responsive multilateralism.

The adoption of the Agenda 2030 was a display of inclusive multilateralism at its best. The Agenda can be implemented if similar spirit guides our actions with renewed sense of partnership and with all stakeholders shouldering the responsibility.

In the last four years, the SDGs scorecard shows mixed progress. Poverty has decreased but the rate of reduction is decelerating. The unemployment rate has dropped but the wages remain stagnated. Food insecurity and hunger are in a regressive track.

An enhanced level of collaboration is critical to mobilize required resources for the attainment of the SDGs as well as Universal Health Coverage.

In the countries like Nepal, there is a big gap of resources in order to fully realize the

SDGs by 2030. Mobilizing domestic financial resources is our priority. However, national efforts need to be complemented by international support measures in the form of technical, financial, investment and other means of support, particularly to the LDCs and LLDCs.

The world has made great strides in wealth creation and advancement of technology. So has been the progress in life expectancy, literacy, basic education and reducing maternal and infant mortality.

Sadly, the progress has not been evenly distributed. Women and girls, people with disabilities, ageing population still bear the disproportionate brunt of poverty and inequalities. Inequality within and between countries is growing.

In this context, Beijing+25, International Conference on Population and Development+25 and mid-term review of Vienna Program of Action would provide important opportunities to reset the actions in accelerated pace.

Nepal appreciates the Secretary-General's strategy on bringing gender parity.

**Mr. President,**

Nepal welcomes the reforms towards creating synergy and coherence of the UN system adhering to the principle of keeping people at the centre. We are hopeful that the new generation of country teams and RCs live up to the expectation by delivering more.

We hope that the renewed thrust of UN reforms will also propel the reforms of the Security Council. Our efforts must be towards making the Security Council representative in structure, transparent in function, democratic in character and accountable in performance.

The agenda of revitalizing the work of the General Assembly, including its enhanced role and authority is long overdue. We must take this reform with priority.

The deteriorating financial situation of the Organization is a matter of serious concern. It will impede the fulfillment of its mandates and responsibilities.

**Mr. President,**

Heightened geopolitical complexities, defunct disarmament architecture, and absence of order in cyber and outer space endanger international peace and stability.

Arms race coupled with growing distrust among major players appears symptomatic to a new form of division with regard to critical issues of peace and security.

Here lies the importance of stronger and effective United Nations to promote trust and cooperation. Nepal supports general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction.

We are concerned with the collapse of INF treaty, pull out of an important party from the Iran Nuclear deal, and stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament.

Such trends should not encourage the penchant for nuclear armaments.

Nepal is in support of effective and verifiable nuclear weapons free zones.

We stand for a legally binding multilateral disarmament regime for ensuring global security and stability.

As a signatory to the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we expect to complete internal legal process for its ratification soon.

We reiterate that the outer space must be kept free of arms race for the greater benefit of humanity.

As the host country to the UN Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Nepal calls for strengthening of the regional approaches to disarmament including the 'Kathmandu Process' to complement the global initiatives.

### **Excellencies,**

Problems of transnational organized crime, human and drug trafficking and terrorisms transcend national boundaries. Flow of illicit money for financing crimes must be dealt with stringent measures and cooperation among the States.

Nepal condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We call for effective implementation of existing conventions and resolutions including the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Conclusion of a comprehensive convention against terrorism should not be delayed any longer.

The violent conflicts in Libya, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere continue unabated inflicting human sufferings.

Conflict induced problems including human rights violations, exodus of refugees and forced migration have global ramifications.

We believe in peaceful settlement of conflicts and disputes through negotiations and dialogues, and without external interferences.

Robust conflict prevention and peace-building measures are critical for sustaining peace. The under-utilized tool of mediation can potentially help bring an agreeable solution to conflicts.

We want to see meaningful steps being taken to resolve the protracted Middle East issue. We support a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security with secure and recognized international borders based on relevant United Nations resolutions.

Nepal welcomes the dialogues between the United States and DPRK and between the two Koreas. We hope the initiatives will lead to lasting peace and stability on the Korean peninsula.

### **Mr. President,**

True to our commitment to the UN Charter, Nepal has rendered one of the most dedicated, reliable and professional services to the UN peace operations for over six decades.

Our peacekeepers have been deployed without caveats at the shortest notice even in

fragile and asymmetric threat environments. Safety, security and dignity of peacekeepers is therefore critically important for us.

It is in this spirit, we endorsed the Declaration of Shared Commitments in support of the 'Action for Peacekeeping' (A4P) initiative last year.

We appreciate the role of DPO and DOS and the UN as a whole in maintaining peace and order through peacekeeping operations.

Peace operations require predictable, adequate and sustained resources for their success. Timely and full reimbursement to troops and police-contributing countries is essential to ensure that these brave personnel continue to render best performance even in adverse situations.

Troops and police contributing countries should receive due share of leadership positions both in the field and headquarters.

Nepal is committed to progressively deploying more women peacekeepers. We do not condone sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions and therefore we have endorsed the Kigali principles.

### **Excellencies,**

Sendai Framework calls for global cooperation for reducing the risk of large-scale natural disasters.

Nepal has harmonized its national strategies on Disaster Risk Reduction with those of Sendai Framework, the SDGs, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit.

Learning lessons from the 2015 earthquakes, Nepal has focused on resilience of infrastructures.

Even being a landlocked country, we equally care about oceans. We believe that there is an organic linkage between oceans and mountains. We are concerned because health of oceans is deteriorating alarmingly due mainly to climate change and reckless human activities.

We are confident that the new international legally binding instrument on BBNJ—currently under negotiation— will prove to be a milestone international law in protection and conservation of marine biodiversity.

A phenomenon as old as the human civilization, migration comes as a defining megatrend of our times. Ensuring the rights and wellbeing of the migrant workers is a matter of our priority.

The Global Compact on Migration adopted in December last year is an important steppingstone and a good example of multilateralism at work. We urge all member States to own the process and be part of this outcome.

As a host to a large number of refugees for decades, Nepal firmly believes in refugees' right to return to their home country in safety and dignity.

**Mr. President,**

Nepal's commitment to the universal values of human rights is total.

The Constitution of Nepal is founded on the fundamentals of inclusive democracy, pluralism, rule of law, secularism, representative and accountable government, social justice, and human rights.

We are fully committed to concluding the transitional justice process in line with the Comprehensive Peace Accord, directive of the Supreme Court, relevant international commitments, concerns of the victims and the ground realities.

We hold that democracy, development and respect for human rights are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

As a member of the Human Rights Council, we have been promoting those ideals in an independent, apolitical and objective manner.

To contribute further, Nepal has presented its candidature for the re-election to the Human Rights Council for the term 2021-2023.

We greatly count on the valuable support of all UN member States.

**Excellencies,**

Nepal's Foreign policy is guided by the five principles of peaceful coexistence, non-alignment, UN Charter, international law, and norms of world peace.

'Amity with all, enmity with none' has been our operational motto. We believe in an inclusive, just and fair international order.

Nepal believes that regional processes complement global efforts for peace, security and economic development. We strive to enhance regional economic cooperation under SAARC, BIMSTEC and ACD. As the current chair, we are effortful to revitalize the stalled SAARC process.

Nepal's democratic transformation presents a uniquely successful, nationally led and owned peace process. We would be happy to share our experience that may be useful to those in conflict.

Building on the historic political transformation, the Government of Nepal is now focused on economic agenda to sustain political gains under an overarching national aspiration of 'Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali'.

We have created an investment friendly atmosphere with substantive policy and legal reforms. One window service is operational with almost all sectors open for 100 percent foreign investment.

We have recently adopted the Fifteenth Five-Year Plan with a longer-term development perspective. Graduation from the LDC status is part of our plan. The 2030 Agenda and other internationally agreed goals and targets have been integrated in our national plans and programs.

Peace, tolerance and harmony are intrinsic to Nepali culture and way of life. Lumbini in

Nepal is not only the birthplace of Gautam Buddha, but also the fountain of peace, the ultimate destination for tranquility of mind and spiritual fulfillment. We want to promote this world heritage at the international stage. We aim to host the UN Day of Vesak in 2021.

**Mr. President,**

Before I conclude, let me reiterate Nepal's profound commitment to the principles and purposes of the United Nations. We firmly believe in the centrality of the United Nations in promoting multilateralism.

Viewing from the crossroads of history, we see no alternative to multilateralism to ensure peace, security and order in the world.

It is incumbent upon us, the Member States, to make this organization a strong platform of collaboration and dialogue for resolving differences and finding solutions to the challenges.

Only an empowered and reformed United Nations reflective of the present-day reality can achieve these critical responsibilities.

I thank you all for your attention.



### **11. Statement by Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at the “Myanmar-Nepal Friendship and Business Opportunities” programme jointly organized by Myanmar-Nepal Friendship Association and Myanmar-Nepal Chamber of Commerce, Yangon, 19 October 2019**

Mr. President, Myanmar-Nepal Friendship Association

Mr. President, Myanmar-Nepal Chamber of Commerce

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Friends from Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Namastey!

Min-ga-la-ba!

I am delighted to be here with you today. I have had similar privilege before but this one is special. Because our meeting is taking place on the occasion of the state visit of Rt. Honourable President of Nepal to Myanmar. It is a unique gathering, a perfect combination of business and friendship associations, both playing an important role in cementing friendly ties between our two countries. This certainly gives me an added pleasure.

Although Nepal and Myanmar formally established diplomatic relations six decades ago,



both countries have maintained contacts for a very long period of time. Our ancient land links, marital associations, cultural similarities, deep respect towards each other, and practice of Buddhism have brought us closer. Myanmar nationals of Nepali origin have further strengthened our relations as a bridge. The friendship association has immensely contributed in nurturing people to people contacts which remains at the core of any bilateral relationship. I would like to see them working proactively to promote understanding, good will and cooperation between our two countries. Buddha's eternal teachings of love, compassion and empathy influence daily life of the people in both countries.

Nepal had opened its Consulate in 1949 in Yangon, well before we established formal diplomatic relations in 1960. The establishment of diplomatic relations further cemented the bilateral relations.

Beyond the bilateral domain, Nepal and Myanmar are active members of BIMSTEC and Asian Cooperation Dialogue. This gives them an opportunity to collaborate to advance common interest within the framework of regional cooperation. We are of the view that countries in Asia should work together based on Oriental values and norms to contribute to development and prosperity for the entire Asian continent.

Talking in the multilateral context, even broader opportunities are there for them to work together in various multilateral forums such as United Nations, NAM, G-77. Today's world where basic tenets of multilateralism are under attack, solidarity and unity among developing countries is essential to overcome the challenges of contemporary world and ensure a just, fair and rules based international order.

Let me reflect on the bilateral relations.

President Rt. Honourable Bidya Devi Bhandari is on a state visit to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at the friendly invitation of His Excellency U Win Myint. This is the first ever visit by a president of Nepal and by a head of state of Nepal in nearly four decades. This visit assumes a special significance in the context of far reaching changes that our two countries have undergone in recent years. Our two countries have started the exchange of high level visits in recent years. I recall with pleasure the official visit of His Excellency Myint in August last year. We also had the privilege of welcoming the State Counsellor Her Excellency Aung San Suu Kyi in November. In one year alone, we have been able to conclude three important bilateral instruments in the fields of trade and investment, tourism and culture. These instruments carry immense importance in furthering economic and cultural ties between our two countries. We already enjoy strong political relationships.

Lumbini, birth place of Lord Buddha and fountain of Buddhism as well as world peace, is a sacred place for Buddhist around the world. Thousands of Buddhist pilgrims including from Myanmar visit Lumbini every year. Lumbini is more than a religious site; it is also a cultural treasure of humanity listed under the UNESCO heritage sites. I am happy to note that the Government and the People of Myanmar have contributed for the development of Lumbini. I would add one more fact in this connection; the pagoda built by Myanmar in Lumbini has remained a centre of attraction for Buddhist pilgrims from Myanmar and

the world. It would be my remiss if I fail to acknowledge the outstanding contribution made by former Secretary-General of UN, U Thant, who hailed from Myanmar, for his role in galvanizing international support for the development of Lumbini.

To facilitate tourists and other people, a new international airport is on the verge of completion. Once in operation the airport will greatly facilitate international travel to and from Lumbini. This will help realize the objectives of visit Nepal year 2020. This is only one dimension. Nepal has to offer a lot of unique things ranging from natural beauty as manifested by majestic Himalayas, flora and fauna to rich cultural treasures. Cultural diversity is our asset and peaceful co-existence is our way of life. We would like to welcome our friends from Myanmar to visit Nepal as our tourism products intend to meet the expectations of tourists of all kinds and for all purposes.

**Mr. President,**

With the successful promulgation of Constitution in 2015 and elections at all three levels of local, province and federal, we have a stable government in Nepal after decades. Now the Government has concentrated its focus on socio-economic transformation with clearly defined objectives of improving people's standard of living and achieving higher and sustainable economic growth.

The overarching national aspiration that has guided our development vision and action is "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali". We intend to become middle income country by 2030 and achieve the SDGs by the same deadline. With the Government economic policies and constant hard work of the people, we have achieved 7.1 percent economic growth in the last fiscal year and we are likely to maintain this rate for the current fiscal year.

Nepal and Myanmar both are developing countries. We have common development challenges. We have a combined population of 83 million, which could be a big market. Our policies are liberal and our visa regime is also liberal. Therefore, I would like to urge the business community of Myanmar to visit Nepal and explore the opportunity for business.

The Government of Nepal is steadily and determinedly working towards building a business-oriented, investment-friendly environment in Nepal through various policy, structural, and legal reforms and introducing new market-friendly incentives and policies to make Nepal a profitable business destination. Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Act has been thoroughly revised and updated and the Public Private Partnership and Investment Act has been promulgated to provide a sound regulatory framework for investment. Laws pertaining to intellectual property rights are under consideration for revision.

Nepal has trade and investment cooperation agreement with Myanmar. The Nepali businessmen are keen to work with the businessmen from Myanmar. Nepal's Federation of Cottage and Small Industries (FNCIS) and Union of Myanmar Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industries (UMFCCI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the promotion of business between two countries.

The Government has opened almost all sectors for foreign direct investment. The negative list is very short. Our two countries have the advantage of huge markets in our

neighbourhood. Moreover, regional forums like BIMSTEC offer a promising future for expanding trade and investment opportunities in the region.

Being an LDC, we have preferential access to some of the international markets.

We have untapped natural resources. We also have huge demographic dividend with 57 percentage of working age population. Every year over 500 thousand youths enter into job market. We have educated and trained working population. Combination of both makes investment in any sector in Nepal highly profitable. Hydropower and infrastructure development, agriculture, tourism, information technologies, manufacturing, mines and minerals have been identified as priority areas for investment.

Other incentives related to investment such as tax, foreign exchange, repatriation of capital, import, visa, land acquisition, company registration are quite attractive and the government has installed a one stop service to facilitate visa process in a time bound manner.

Disposable income of locals is increasing rapidly due to remittances from abroad, creating new local markets for products as well as new pools of talent within the labor market.

#### **Dear Friends,**

We successfully organized Investment Summit in March, 2019 and Infrastructure Summit in September, 2019. I recall the participation of His Excellency U Thaug Tun, Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations at the Investment Summit. Both the summits witnessed active participation from many countries. Investment Summit saw investors pledging to finance several mega projects. The later summit saw extensive discussions focused on the global and regional megatrends, including climate change, and their relevance to the local context, issues surrounding infrastructure project delivery, financing modalities, and opportunities for cross-border economic cooperation and investments.

We understand that protection of your investment and reaping eventual profit is your priority. The Government of Nepal is fully committed and capable to protecting foreign investment with assured profit. We have formulated laws to protect your investment.

We have robust institutional set up that looks after investment in Nepal. Nepal Investment Board, chaired by the Right Honorable Prime Minister is a dedicated organization that looks after major investment projects. Similarly, the Department of Industry and Industrial Promotion Board have further strengthened existing investment mechanism.

As we look towards the future, I am confident that our common values and shared interests will continue to unite us. Our close relationship has only strengthened with time. We value cultural similarities that exist between our two countries. We value trade and business which are the bases of our economies but we also value our friendship and trust between our two nations and people. Let those values never diminish.

As our two governments have expressed strong determination to work together for enlarging the scope of economic cooperation, it is but natural that we expect our business communities to match the spirit and take concomitant efforts to realize the vision set forth by the government. My job here today is to appeal to the business communities

of both countries to forge collaborative partnerships in realizing potentials that our two countries offer.

I would like to thank the organizers once again for this opportunity to address you all in this platform,

Thank you.



## **12. Remarks by Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at a reception held at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Moscow, 26 November 2019**

H.E. Anatoliy Vasilievich, Rector, Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO)

Distinguished faculty members,

Dear students,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I extend to you all warm greetings on behalf of the Government and people of Nepal and on my own.

My sincere thanks go to the Institute of International Relations for organizing today's programme. The Institute's continued partnership with the Embassy of Nepal at different forums reflects nothing but true affinity, close academic interaction and growing people-to-people exchange.

It is my distinct honour to meet with the faculty, students and researchers of this Institute of high repute here in Moscow on the occasion of my official visit to the Russian Federation.

I have heard a lot about the extraordinary contributions of MGIMO in the articulation of Russian foreign policy. As alma mater of top Russian diplomats, intellectuals and politicians, I commend your stellar performance, particularly in enhancing the scope of research and knowledge base in the field of contemporary global politics.

I am very pleased to be present amongst you to exchange our views and experiences on how we can best contribute from our respective sides to further strengthening the already warm bilateral relationship between Nepal and Russia.

We greatly value the continued dialogue and exchange by engaging all walks of life and different sectors of development. I offer my sincere appreciation to you all for playing an active role in strengthening multi-faceted ties that exist between Nepal and the Russian Federation.

Nepal and the Russian Federation are old and good friends. Ever since the establishment

of diplomatic relations in 1956, we have maintained cordial and friendly relations. This year marks the 63<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the establishment of formal ties. I would like to extend warm felicitations to all of you on this happy occasion.

### **Esteemed Friends,**

In my presentation today I will briefly touch on three key aspects: Nepal-Russia relations; Nepal's foreign policy orientation in the changed context; and Nepal's development journey ahead and our priorities.

Let me first pick up Nepal-Russia relations.

Nepal greatly values the bond of friendship it enjoys with the Russian Federation. Our relations have progressively evolved over the years to cover political, economic, social, cultural and educational dimensions. It is a multidimensional partnership.

Continued engagements at various levels and mutual cooperation in the areas of common interest have nurtured our friendship.

Parliamentary and judicial exchanges and frequent visits by high officials of both countries have contributed to widening the scope and enriching the substance of our relationship.

The objective of my visit this time, in my capacity as Foreign Minister of Nepal, has been to bolster trust, deepen political understanding, promote economic, commercial and cultural ties and strengthen collaboration in dealing with regional and global issues of common concern.

In this light, Foreign Minister Lavrov and I exchanged substantive views on a wide range of topics during our official talks yesterday. We agreed to work together to take our relations to the next level through enhanced political engagement and promotion of mutually beneficial cooperation in diverse fields. We underlined the importance of exchanging high level visits between the two countries, activating established bilateral consultation mechanism and concluding a host of agreements and understanding to further cooperative partnership.

I am satisfied with the outcome of our discussions and our consensus on the road ahead to realize the full potential of our mutual cooperation.

As you are aware, my visit has taken place in the fundamentally changed national context of Nepal. Nepal's long political transition following a decade-long armed conflict has ended. A new democratic and inclusive Constitution promulgated in September 2015 has settled long-standing political issues. The elections held in 2017 under the provisions of the Constitution have produced a stable government with over two-thirds majority in the Parliament first time in two decades, thereby ending the cycle of political instability. Policy clarity and consistency in development efforts has been realized and the 'Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali' has been defined as country's overarching national aspiration. A clear sense of direction and commitment in the conduct of an independent and balanced foreign policy based on the notion of 'amity with all, enmity with none' has underpinned our worldview.

This visit is also about Nepal's commitment to reenergizing all aspects of multi-faceted

Nepal-Russia friendship. Needless to say, the full spectrum of our friendship is much more than the formal contacts. There has been an increasing level of cultural cooperation and interactions engaging the private sector and other people-to-people exchanges. Students, entrepreneurs, diaspora, scientists, artists, mountaineers, tourists and importantly the academia from both the countries have made significant contributions.

People-to-people relations give added value to Nepal-Russia relations, which began with the visit of the renowned Russian Scholar Ivan Pavloviech Minayev to Kathmandu in 1875. It has been reinforced by Russian literary icons like Tolstoy, Chekhov, Gorky and Pushkin who have great influence in Nepali literature. It is heartening that many Russians have attraction towards the Hindu, Buddhist and the Eastern philosophy.

Some Nepali and Russian nationals are residing in each other's countries for a variety of reasons. I thank the Russian community for hosting Nepali nationals and supporting them. I also express my sincere thanks to the friendly Russian people for their help in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in 2015. As Foreign Minister Lavrov told yesterday, the true friendship came into full play when Russia promptly and spontaneously sent a team of medical doctors along with humanitarian supplies for rescue and relief.

#### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is encouraging to witness continued progress achieved by the Russian Federation over the decades. In the fields of technologies, infrastructure, innovation and research, the progress has been remarkable. The Government, people and the academic circle of Nepal greatly appreciate these and many other stellar achievements made by the Russian Federation.

The steady course taken by Russia in achieving sustainable economic development, industrialization and high-end technological advancement have been glaring example of its perseverance and dedication. Over the decades, the Russian partnership with the global south has been increased.

Nepal sincerely appreciates support and cooperation extended by the Russian Federation in industrial and infrastructure development in the past. The technical cooperation has helped significantly lay the groundwork for Nepal's economic development.

Nepal has learnt from Russia the development planning model. Nepal adopted systematic and planned development efforts since 1956 and we have in place the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the Development Plan. The best practices of the Soviet Planning model have helped Nepal shape its planning framework.

On a different note, Russian scholarships on higher education for Nepali students and public-sector professionals have been highly useful. There are a number of Nepali nationals trained in the Russian Federation occupying higher positions in politics, administration and the private sector today.

Nepal and the Russian Federation have been working closely in multilateral forums as well. One important avenue I would like to mention is the United Nations, which Nepal considers to be the cornerstone, custodian and emblem of multilateralism. With emphasis on a just and balanced world order for peace and stability, Nepal believes in

multilateralism and rules-based international order.

At a time when the world is facing multiple challenges, the Russian initiatives in global fight against terrorism, cybercrime, climate change and other pressing global issues have been commendable. Let me underline that primacy of international law and value of world peace in the conduct of foreign policy help reduce tension and conflict.

Nepal has been contributing to the maintenance of the international peace and security by consistently and substantially supporting UN peacekeeping operations. Our troops are presently working in 15 out of 16 peacekeeping missions around the world and mostly in the troubled parts of the world. Russia, being a permanent member of the UN Security Council, has an important role to fulfill, together with other members, that peacekeeping missions accomplish their objectives in a timely manner within the given mandate. We call for enhanced consultation and coordination with TCCs/PCCs when taking important decision on peace missions.

Regional cooperation is one of the defining attributes of international relations today. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), founded jointly by the Russian Federation and other friendly countries in the region, is a new opportunity for institutionalizing a long-lasting environment for peace and prosperity in the region, and beyond. As a Dialogue Partner, Nepal has found SCO as an additional platform for engaging in mutually beneficial projects in a wide areas including trade, transit, investment, energy, agriculture, small and medium enterprises and culture. We are looking for a full-fledged membership of the organization to enhance our contribution. We are thankful to the Government of the Russian Federation that it was in Ufa, Russia, the decision to grant Nepal the dialogue partner status was taken.

Nepal has been collaborating, directly or indirectly, on matters of common interest with the Russian Federation in all available platforms. We will continue this in future.

Let me inform you, in this context, the Government of Nepal has established a permanent dialogue forum, Sagarmatha Sambaad (Mt Everest Dialogue) to deliberate on contemporary issues of national, regional and global significance. The first episode of this international dialogue platform will be devoted to the theme 'climate change mountains and future of humanity' and will be held on 2-4 April next year in Kathmandu. This will provide yet another opportunity for Nepal and Russia to strengthen partnership in the collective interest of humanity.

### **Distinguished guests,**

Next aspect is Nepal's foreign policy orientation.

Never colonized and subjugated, Nepal has always remained an independent nation. This speaks of our glorious history and evolution as a nation.

Our foreign policy orientation is very much influenced by this legacy. As I stated earlier, we pursue an independent, non-aligned, balanced foreign policy based on the philosophy of friendship and cooperation with all countries in the world. We do not believe in enmity. We do not nurture ill feelings towards anyone.

The UN Charter, the *Panchasheel*—the five principle of Peaceful Coexistence, non-

alignment, respect for international law, value for world peace guide our foreign policy. We believe that respect for every country's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries are the essential ingredients of healthy inter-state relationship.

As with any other country, Nepal also gives priority to its relationship with its neighborhood and extended neighbourhood. We have defined that our relationship with neighbours and other countries is based on the principle of sovereign equality, mutual respect and benefit. Guided by this principle, the present Government has made substantial efforts to enhance and consolidate friendly ties and cooperative partnership with neighbours and other friendly countries. It is our principled commitment which we are translating into action that we will not let our territory to be used against the interest of our neighbours and any other friendly nation. This has helped us earn confidence and trust of neighbours.

Our immediate neighbours happen to be the world's two most populous countries and the fastest growing economies. It gives Nepal ample prospects for its economic development. We have the potential to be a vibrant bridge connecting the two sides for common benefits.

As a region full of potentials, diversity and challenges, South Asia should continue to engage in promoting the collective interest with utmost sense of regional solidarity, mutual respect and accommodation divergent views. We want peace and stability in our region and beyond. We believe that all differences can be resolved amicably through peaceful means.

Major powers, such as the Russian Federation, development partners and other friendly countries are in the priority of our foreign policy orientation. We have significantly enhanced our partnership with this group of countries. We are committed to further widen and deepen our relationship for mutual benefit. These countries are an important source of our development financing and trade relationship. Beyond neighbourhood, they are also a source of inbound tourists and technology.

The labour receiving countries are also in our priorities, as a large number of Nepali migrant workers are living there for employment. We are trying to diversify our relations with them to cover such vital areas as trade, investment, tourism and transfer of technology.

Regional cooperation features prominently in our foreign policy priority. We want to promote meaningful regional cooperation for the collective well-being of the people in the region. We attach importance to SAARC and BIMSTEC as principal vehicles for regional cooperation in our region. As I said earlier, we want to enhance our engagement in SCO. We are also pursuing the objective of sub-regional cooperation within the framework of BBIN-Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal. We are also a member of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue.

Our commitment to UN Charter is unflinching. We are a strong supporter of multilateralism. As discussed earlier, the UN is an indispensable global institution for us as it is the only legitimate organization which is capable of dealing with a host of



contemporary issues we face today. Ours is an international perspective that believes in collective prosperity of mankind and rejects unilateralism. We stand for general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction. We support nuclear free zones and peace zones. We unequivocally condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

We call for a just, harmonious, inclusive and peaceful world order where all nations enjoy their rights while fulfilling their obligations in good faith.

Economic diplomacy has been a key component of our overall diplomacy. We are building economic partnership with friendly countries focusing on trade, investment, tourism, technology transfer, climate financing and decent jobs for migrant workers. Our diplomatic missions have been tasked to promote economic diplomacy to support our national drive for rapid yet sustainable development.

### **Distinguished friends,**

Let me touch on the last component of my presentation. That is about our development priorities.

Economic transformation is our most important national task ahead. We are still an LDC. We have additional difficulties as well. We are a country emerged from conflict and we are also a landlocked country. This sums up the nature of our development challenges, which are of course manifold and complex.

Development is a national responsibility and we are fully aware of it. But our domestic resources are not sufficient to overcome our huge development challenges. And, we do not have luxury to wait for long, as we are lagging behind. We have to quicken the pace.

Our immediate goal is to graduate from LDC and become middle-income country by 2030 which is also the deadline for the realization of SDGs. We have envisioned a long-term plan to achieve national prosperity by 2041. We will redouble our efforts to realize the national aspiration of 'Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali' within this timeframe.

Towards realizing the national aspiration, we will expediate the process of economic development. While internal resources are important, we count on international support and goodwill to enhance trade performance and seek enhanced level of foreign direct investment. With a view to attracting foreign direct investment, we hosted an Investment Summit in Kathmandu in March this year. The Summit attracted a large number of prospective investors, including from Russia.

To make the business environment more attractive, friendly and competitive, investment related laws and institutions have undergone constant reform. For example, Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Act (FITTA), Public Private Partnership and Investment Act, Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Act have been promulgated and One-Stop Service has already been operationalized. Some other legislative reforms are in the pipeline such as Intellectual Property Rights Act.

Nepal's friendly investment climate is evident from the World Bank's Doing Business Report. Its latest report ranks Nepal among South Asia's most favourable countries for ease of doing business.

Nepal has huge hydropower potentials. Exploitation of this precious resource can change the economic face of our country and the region. Investment in this sector is highly profitable as there is no problem of market. Regulatory framework exists to facilitate export of power generated in Nepal to India and Bangladesh.

Agriculture, tourism, mines and minerals, infrastructure development and IT are some of the areas where investment can be highly profitable. We have a liberal investment regime that allows investment in almost all sectors. Negative list is very short. We also offer a range of incentives that are unique and special to our context.

At this juncture, Nepal has high hope of solidarity and support from our trusted friends. Your own involvement or encouragement to the business community to explore investment opportunities in Nepal would go a long way. Nepal is fully committed to protect your investments. Political stability gives policy stability, which is the fundamental element to ensure predictability in foreign investment regime.

At present the level of trade and economic engagement between Nepal and the Russian Federation stands at a modest level. Rather than staying discouraged with the figures, I think it should be taken as an opportunity to attain a higher and swifter level of trade, commercial and investment engagements between us.

It is upon us—the Governments, the private sector, academia and people of all walks of life—to strive for meaningful and substantive cooperation in all sectors, including trade, investments and tourism. There is a need to energize the role of Nepal-Russia Chamber of Commerce and Industries towards building business networks and kickstart doable projects in hand.

As you may be aware, Nepal is celebrating 2020 as Visit Nepal Year. An increased number of Russian friends to visit Nepal for tourism would greatly help the campaign. Nepal is a must-visit destination in one's lifetime. Famous Poet Rasul Gamzatov was right when he described Nepal as 'diamond yet to be crafted'. Investment in Nepal's tourism infrastructure, which remains one of the lucrative areas, will also greatly help boost Nepal's economy.

The Embassy of Nepal will work closely with you all, including the Non-Resident Nepali Association, Chambers, Friendship Associations and other partners, to make the Visit Nepal Year a success. As your good friend and also as the Foreign Minister, I would like to extend to you all a very warm invitation to visit Nepal at your convenience.

As I conclude, I once again appreciate you all for organizing this function and also for your kind presence. Ambassador Rishi Ram Ghimire and his team deserve my special appreciation for the hard work.

I am confident that today's interaction will contribute to continue the momentum of our exchange and mutual understanding. This platform should continue to explore new ideas, academic exchange and avenues towards further enhancing Nepal-Russia relations in the coming years. I count on your support and solidarity.

I thank you.



### **13. Remarks by Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at “International Conference for Understanding and Peace”, Lumbini, 11 December 2019**

Chair of this Session,  
Vice Chancellor of Lumbini Buddhist University,  
Venerable Vice Chair of Lumbini Development Trust, Excellencies,  
Eminent scholars from home and abroad,  
Distinguished delegates, panelists and participants,  
Friends from the media,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.  
Namaskar and Good Morning to you all.

At the outset, I would like to thank the organizers, Lumbini Research Centre for Peace and Understanding, in collaboration with Lumbini Buddhist University, Lumbini Development Trust and Nepal Council for World Affairs, for inviting me to this important gathering of eminent scholars discussing international understanding and peace.

I welcome the distinguished international delegates to Nepal and wish for their comfortable stay.

I particularly appreciate the organizers for choosing Lumbini as the venue of this conference. There cannot be a better choice. It is an honour and privilege to speak on peace from the birthplace of Lord Buddha, the apostle of peace.

#### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Quest for peace and understanding has been a long and cherished goal of humanity all along the history. Civilizations have evolved, thrived and prospered due largely to the prevalence of peace. They have died due to lack of it.

We are talking about peace in the world, peace among the States, peace among the communities, peace among the religions and cultures, peace among civilizations and peace of mind within an individual. They all are inter-related and mutually reinforcing.

We have seen unprecedented prosperity and progress achieved in a state of peace at all levels.

At the same time, major catastrophes have occurred in the course of history in absence of peace and temptation to war.

We have seen devastating world wars. We have seen making and unmaking of nation States. We have seen long and perennial animosity between and among civilizations and death of civilizations. We have seen crusades between religions to prevail one over the other. We have seen massacre and genocides between and among communities. We have witnessed ethnic cleansing and mass exodus of people due to their colour, faith, ethnicity or origin.

As if this is not enough, we have seen race for armament of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons. It is an irony that competition for weapons of mass destruction basically emanates from the rich and prosperous parts of the world and now extends to lesser prosperous regions as well.

Though it is pretended for ensuring effective deterrence for their security, in reality race of nuclear arms never ensures security, rather creates a state of suicidal security dilemma.

Let me quote the teachings of Buddha from Dhammapada that seems pretty relevant to this state of affairs.

I quote

“The kind of seed sown will produce that kind of fruit.

Those who do good will reap good results.

Those who do evil will reap evil results.

If you carefully plant a good seed, you will joyfully gather good fruit.”

Unquote.

Race for weapons of mass destruction exactly resembles this irony. It is not a good seed to be sown. Nor will it produce good fruits to enjoy.

Gautam Buddha spread the message of peace across the world. His was the message for reason, harmony, co-existence, love and compassion. It was an inclusive message of peace for all without any distinction on the basis of nationality, race, color or any other denomination. It was a message for equality, justice and truth which constitute the fundamental basis for peace.

Regrettably, whenever Buddha's message has been crossed or ignored, there have been wars and devastation, human suffering and destruction.

Dialogue and engagements are the tools to promote peace. Dialogues have potentials to prevent wars as well as to conclude war and restore peace.

**Dear Friends,**

A more systematic global attempt for the establishment of peace and promotion of cooperation among the nation States began in the ashes of the First World War.

However, due to lack of dialogue and understanding, peace could not prevail for long. The world was pushed into another devastation of Second World War.

Then we created an edifice of United Nations to ensure peace and collective security through cooperation and collaboration among Member States.

This edifice has been largely successful to avert a world-scale war. However, many parts of the world unfortunately have been engulfed in internal conflicts, inter-state conflicts, communal strife, and low intensity wars. Scales of damage wrecked by these conflicts compound in millions of lives, trillions of dollars of properties damaged and immense suffering of human being, including innocent children, women and elderly.

None of these conflicts have brought stability and peace by themselves. It is ultimately the dialogues, negotiation, engagements and collaboration that have transformed conflicts into peace.

Our own experience of 10 years of armed conflict followed by successfully negotiated peace process speaks volumes of the importance of dialogue and understanding in promoting peace. Our peace process is a testimony of how requisite political will and accommodation, negotiation and dialogue can resolve conflicts.

Having achieved political stability, we are now focused on socio-economic transformation with the overarching aspiration of “Prosperous Nepal Happy Nepali”.

Harmony and co-existence make essential ingredients of our culture. We believe in “*Vawatu Sarba Mangalam* (May all be blessed with auspicious) and “*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*” (The world is a family). Unity in diversity is our basic mantra of cohesive society.

At the international level, Nepal believes in friendship and harmony in the world. Nepal has always stood for total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. We support peaceful resolution of international and inter-state disputes. We have stood for fairness, justice and peace in international affairs. We have passionately espoused the cause of the LDCs, LLDCs and the countries in special situation and called for greater international solidarity for their development. We have consistently promoted the agenda of climate justice as well as implementation of the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.

For over 62 years, Nepal has been rendering extraordinary contribution to international peace and security through our participation in UN peace operations. Currently Nepal stands as the 5<sup>th</sup> largest troop and police contributing country to the UN Peace operations. Our troops and police have successfully protected civilians from violence, helped respond to humanitarian crises, create an environment conducive to peaceful settlement, helped maintain truce, implement peace agreements, clear landmines and assist in laying foundation for durable peace.

We are a member of the UN Peace Building Commission and active member of the Group of Friends of Mediation that promotes the peaceful means of dispute settlement.

Our voice of reason and conscience resonates in other important UN entities and international forums as well. In the Human Rights Council we speak for the voiceless in an objective and impartial manner. In ILO we promote social justice and dialogue.

Overall, we support multilateralism, rule-based international order, and international cooperation and collaboration to address global issues of common concern.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Pursuit of peace has always been humanity’s highest aspiration. Sometimes, peace is understood as the opposite of conflict, violence or war. Certainly war historically has been the fundamental antithesis of peace. But a sound state of peace is more than that.

Albert Einstein says,

“Peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice, of law, of order- in

short, of government”.

Absence of conflict or war merely provides a condition for the beginning of peace. True peace includes personal wholeness, righteousness, political justice, human dignity and equal opportunity for development in all dimensions- individual, cultural, social, ecological and political.

They all collectively and individually contribute for political peace in a larger organized society. Sense of partnership, collaboration, participation, respect for voice and dissent and legitimacy are the source of political peace. Few exceptional individuals like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Junior and Nelson Mandela followed non-violence as a means of attaining the goal of political peace.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Development is the prerequisite for peace. Deprivation, lack of basic human needs and underdevelopment fuel dissatisfaction in the society, which eventually invites the conflict. So human centric development is the foundation for sustainable peace. The adoption of the Agenda 2030 was a display of the commitment for inclusive development at its best. The Agenda can be implemented if similar spirit holds at the core of our actions with renewed sense of partnership and each side shouldering the responsibility, to attain the most desired peace in the world.

Achieving the sustainable development goals hinges on resources.

Desire for peace is human nature. However, peace needs continuous nurturing. Conflicts, discords, armaments, animosity breeds wars. Wars become devastating when they are aided and assisted by advanced automated technology. The world has produced enough ammunition, nuclear or otherwise, to destroy the world several times. Display of arms against arms is not a solution to the problem. Neither arms can foster peace. What is the need of the hour is dialogue and understanding. Dialogues enable and nurture greater understanding between and among individuals, communities, leaders, nation States, civilizations and religions. Understanding facilitates dialogues and helps to establish and sustain peace.

All stakeholders have a role to play in promoting peace and understanding between and among nations. Governments, civil society, religious institutions and scholars, academicians, think tanks all can play a role in promoting peace and understanding. Events like this can be useful forum to promote the message of peace. Such an effort carries greater attention when it is held at the birth place of Lord Buddha.

I wish the organizers of this event all success in this endeavor.

I thank you all.



## **14. Remarks by Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at the 72<sup>nd</sup> anniversary Program of Nepal Council of World Affairs, 16 February 2020, Kathmandu**

Chief Guest of the Program Vice President Right Honorable Mr. Nanda Bahadur Pun,  
President of Nepal Council of World Affairs,  
Excellencies and Members from Diplomatic Community,  
Representatives from United Nations, Academia, Private Sector and Civil Society,  
Friends from the media,  
Ladies and Gentlemen!  
Namaskar and Good Afternoon to you all.

It is a pleasure and honour to be present in this commemoration of the 72<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of Nepal Council of World Affairs (NCWA).

While thanking the NCWA for inviting me at this important event, let me begin by congratulating its office bearers and members on this special occasion.

NCWA deserves our appreciation for hosting this annual event almost regularly with fruitful and creative deliberations on pertinent topics of foreign policy and international relations.

Today, I have been asked by the host to speak a few words on Nepal's foreign relations and the relations with neighboring countries. The topic demands to touch all aspects of Nepal's external relations, including with the neighbors. I will be brief and try to do justice to this rather comprehensive topic.

### **Distinguished friends,**

The world today is highly connected, complex and inter-dependent. Survival, security and prosperity have been basic elements that every nation state endeavors to maximize. At the same time, creating an international order that is conducive for all to exist, prosper and thrive is important for peace and security. This demands cooperation among nations and their willingness to act collectively to respond to the challenges of global scale. As a dignified member in the comity of nations, Nepal's efforts have been around this basic character of modern nation states. Safeguarding Nepal's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity; protecting national interest and the interests of its people; and ensuring Nepal's security and economic wellbeing have been all along the fundamental tenets of Nepal's international relations.

The Constitution of Nepal has guided basic framework for the conduct of Nepal's foreign relations. The Constitution also defines core elements of our national interest. Safeguarding of the freedom, sovereignty, territorial integrity, nationalism, independence and dignity of the country, border security, economic wellbeing and prosperity and the rights of the Nepali people are defined as the elements of Nepal's national interest. Service to the national interests is therefore the primary objective of our foreign policy goal.

The Constitution also directs Nepal to pursue independent foreign policy and adhere to the principles of the UN Charter, non-alignment, Panchsheel, international law and the norms of world peace while conducting foreign relations. In doing so, sovereign equality and dignity of the nation are two critical elements that Nepal attaches great importance.

These guiding principles and our time-tested practice of external relations have enabled us to take independent posture on international issues, articulate our views on merit basis, contribute to the world peace, and nurture friendship with all countries of the world.

Nepal practices 'amity with all, enmity with none' and considers international relations should be based on justice, sovereign equality, mutual respect and shared benefit. We want to promote Nepal's credentials as an open, progressive, and democratic State.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Nepal maintains friendly and cooperative relations with both of her immediate neighbours: India and China. Maintaining close and cordial relationship with them is our priority. Our relations have expanded manifold in the sphere of political, economic, cultural, trade, tourism, investment, and people-to-people exchanges. Nepal's neighbourhood provides opportunities for expanding economic linkages. Regular exchange of high level visits and increasing people to people contacts have further strengthened these relations and deepened the spirit of cooperation. Nepal is conscious of the legitimate interests of our neighbours and will not allow any activity against them in our soil and expect the same understanding from our neighbours.

Nepal and India enjoy historically close and multi-faceted relations. These relations are nurtured by extensive people to people level contacts and socio-cultural bonds that we share for centuries. The exchange of visits by the Prime Ministers of Nepal and India in April and May 2018 has contributed to further enhance mutual trust and consolidate bilateral relations. Our two countries are committed to take forward cooperation and partnership on the basis of equality, mutual trust, respect and mutual benefit. We have agreed to advance cooperation in the core areas of agriculture, railway linkages and inland waterways.

The high level visits in 2018 provided major push for the implementation of ongoing development projects. Some of the flagship projects, such as, Motihari to Amlekhgunj Petroleum Pipeline and Integrated Check Posts in Birgunj and Biratnagar have been completed. Similarly, reconstruction of over 45,000 housing units in Nuwakot and Gorkha districts under the assistance of India have been completed and they were handed over to the residents last month. Construction of remaining housing units is undergoing. Construction of Jay Nagar-Kurtha section of the rail project has been completed. This will ultimately link Bardibas with Jaynagar upon completion of another 34 Km section of the rail line. Detailed project report of Birgunj-Kathmandu electric railway is being prepared this year. Arun III hydro-electricity project under Indian investment is progressing well after the foundation stone of the project was jointly laid by the two Prime Ministers. More projects enhancing production, trade and connectivity are in focus for the future.

You are aware that the Government of Nepal is in communication with the Government



of India for a dialogue and settlement of the border issue of Kalapani through diplomatic means. We anticipate mutually convenient dates for the meeting would be worked out soon on this issue. The leaders on both sides have displayed clear vision, commitment and required political will to take the relationship to a higher plane of trust, cooperation and friendship. Prime Minister K P Oli's vision of 'prosperous Nepal, happy Nepali' is unleashing, among others, Nepal's connectivity potentials with both of our neighbors and building necessary infrastructures for that purpose and goes well with India's policy of 'neighborhood first' and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'sab ka saath sab ka bikash'.

Nepal and China enjoy a long history of close and cordial relationship, which is based on the five principles of peaceful co-existence. Appreciation of each other's aspirations as well as respect for each other's concerns and sensitivities has injected an important element of trust in our relationship. Nepal remains fully committed to one China policy. We admire China's neighbourhood diplomacy guided by the principles of sincerity, amity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness.

During the official visit to China by the Right Honourable Prime Minister of Nepal we agreed to intensify implementation of MoU on cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative to enhance connectivity. The cooperation covers building of dry ports, roads, railways, aviation and communications network within the framework of Trans-Himalaya Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network.

We have concluded some important agreements with China in recent years for enhancing multidimensional connectivity between the two countries. The Protocol on implementing Transit Transport Agreement has already been signed that provides Nepal access to the Chinese seaports and dry ports and facilitates the operationalization of the transit transport agreement. This is an important milestone towards Nepal's transformation from a landlocked country to a land-linked country. Another MoU for building cross-border transmission line with China concluded last year is also equally important in terms of promoting multi-dimensional connectivity. Trans-Himalayan Railway will be a game changer. Our two countries have already signed MoU on Cooperation in the Railway Project. Pre-feasibility study of this project has already been completed and now we are in the process of feasibility study and preparation of detailed project report.

The visit to Nepal by Chinese President Xi Jinping in October last year was a significant milestone in the annals of relations between the two countries. Total twenty agreements were signed during the visit which includes cooperation to enhance road, railway and tunnel connectivity along with increasing Chinese investment in Nepal. The visit provided a momentum for the speedy implementation of the agreements reached in the past and to carry on the decision taken during the visit of the Chinese President.

We consider the growing economic development and strength of our neighbours as an opportunity for us to move ahead with economic development. We admire our neighbours for their continued goodwill and support to our national aspirations and for their cooperation in the development efforts of Nepal.

Nepal's relations with the countries in the extended neighbourhood are based on mutual

respect, goodwill and understanding which we wish to sustain and consolidate. They are further nurtured by growing cultural and traditional ties. Our priority is to further explore, open up and diversify our relations especially in the areas of trade, investment, tourism and people-to-people exchanges.

Nepal has always maintained cordial and cooperative relations with major powers and development partners. Their goodwill and support to Nepal in her development endeavour has been an enduring aspect of our friendship. We value this cooperation and remain grateful to our development partners for their continued support. We look forward to a greater partnership to promote investment and technology transfer for our economic development and implementation of sustainable development goals. We continue to work towards enriching the substance of cooperation in our bilateral engagements with these countries.

Labour migration has become an important aspect of Nepal's foreign relations. A large number of Nepali nationals are engaged in foreign employment and the remittances they send home make a sizable share of our economy. Therefore, it becomes Government's priority to work closely with the countries of destination for safety, security and wellbeing of our migrant workers. In recent years our engagements with the labour destination countries have been more intensive and enriched by exchange of high level visits, and progressively growing trade and investment. We look forward to expand and diversify the scope of cooperation with these countries so as to encompass the broader areas of economic partnership involving trade, investment, tourism and civil aviation, among others.

### **Dear Friends,**

Nepal continues to engage at regional and sub-regional level for promotion of economic cooperation and connectivity. As the Chair of SAARC, Nepal has done its best for the revival of the stalled SAARC process. We have been actively working at BIMSTEC to promote economic cooperation, connectivity and prosperity. Nepal plays its due role in Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) as its member and in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as a dialogue partner.

In the multilateral arena, Nepal supports multilateralism to promote a just and equitable international order in which all States – big or small – fulfill their international obligations in good faith, and enjoy equal opportunity to achieve their aspirations for development and prosperity. We consider that stability and predictability in the global order is essential for maintaining international peace and security. Nepal believes in rule-based and just multilateral system with the United Nations (UN) at its centre. We have abiding faith on the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

As an active member of the UN, Nepal has contributed significantly for over six decades to the maintenance of international peace and security and protection of human rights. Nepal currently stands 5th largest troop and police contributing country in the UN peace operations.

Nepal attaches high importance to the protection and promotion of human rights. Human rights hold the centre stage in our Constitution. We are a State party to twenty-

four international human rights-related instruments, including seven out of nine core Conventions. Nepal considers all human rights are universal, in-divisible, inter-dependent, inter-related and mutually reinforcing.

As a member of UN Human Rights Council Nepal has played objective and impartial role in the Council. To further contribute to the work of the Council in an impartial manner and share our achievements in human rights, Nepal has presented candidature for re-election to the Council for the term 2021-23.

Nepal continues to champion the cause of LDCs, LLDCs, South-South and triangular cooperation in the UN and other international forums. Solidarity and cooperation with LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS will continue to characterize our deliberations.

Nepal accords high priority to the issue of climate change. Nepal supports effective implementation of the Paris Agreement and calls for enhanced level of climate finance and technology transfer for the adaptation and mitigation.

As a responsible member in the comity of nations, we intend to contribute to the larger policy discourse on issues of common importance. To this end, Nepal has decided to establish a multi-stakeholder permanent dialogue forum in Kathmandu – ‘Sagarmatha Sambaad’- to deliberate on prominent issues of global, regional and national significance. The first episode of the Sambaad will be held in the first week of April 2020 in Kathmandu under the theme of ‘Climate Change, Mountains and the Future of the Humanity’.

To conclude, let me stress that the ultimate purpose of a country’s foreign policy is to serve its vital national interests and support realization of national aspiration. Nepal’s foreign policy has served her national interest well in the context of changing global and regional dynamics. We remain conscious that fundamentals of our foreign policy comply with the constitutional provisions and our practice remains consistent, coherent and credible.

I thank you all for your attention.



**15. Statement by Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at the High-Level Segment of the 43<sup>rd</sup> session of Human Rights Council, Geneva, 25 February 2020**

Madam President  
Madam High Commissioner  
Excellencies,

I feel honoured to be back to the Council again.

This session is taking place at the beginning of the new decade marked by optimism, empowerment and equality.

With the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration, the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, and a full circle of a hundred years of multilateralism, we have come a long way towards realizing the common aspiration of 'leaving no one behind' by ensuring opportunity, justice and human rights for all.

These landmark events remind us of our determination to maintaining world peace, protecting human rights and fundamental freedom, and embracing socio-economic progress.

Nepal remains steadfast in those commitments, principles and values.

Nepal firmly believes in the universality, in-divisibility, inter-relatedness, inter-dependence and mutually reinforcing nature of human rights, including the right to development. We believe that the rule of law and human rights must be evenly operational at national, regional and international levels.

We are a party to all major international human rights instruments including seven of the nine core such instruments. We have internalized those values and standards into our national laws, policies and practices.

The Constitution of Nepal is founded on universally recognized human rights and such other principles as inclusive multiparty democratic polity, pluralism, the rule of law, and representative and accountable government. Independence of judiciary and full freedom of press are the salient tenets of Nepal's Constitution.

Social justice is integral to our democratic process. The Constitution guarantees special measures for weaker sections of our society to enable them enjoy fundamental rights and receive a fair share of representation in all spheres of national life.

Nepal, as a secular State, guarantees freedom of religion as a fundamental right. The religious tolerance in Nepali society is exemplary.

We recognize the role of the grassroots community organizations, civil society, human rights defenders, and the media as the indispensable partners in the promotion and protection of human rights.

The National Human Rights Commission of Nepal conforms to the Paris Principles and stands accredited as 'A' category national human rights institution.

As one of the pioneer countries to implement National Human Rights Action Plan since 2004, we are now preparing the 5th National Action Plan.

**Madam President,**

Having achieved democratic political order and stability in the country, Nepal is now focused to realize the vision of "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali". We have mainstreamed Sustainable Development Goals into the national development plan with a view to realize them by 2030.

We practice equality and non-discrimination and remain committed to ensuring full enjoyment of all human rights by women and girls. The progress made by Nepal in terms of gender equality and empowerment provides a reason to be proud.

Marking the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child last year, we have pledged to ending all forms of child labour, ending Child Marriage and enacted the Right to Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Act.

We are fully committed to the rights of persons with disabilities. The measures of positive discrimination that we have implemented to enable them participate in political and public life have produced good impacts. Provisioning of adequate resources and infrastructure for quality and inclusive education for children with disabilities remains our continued priority.

**Madam President,**

Migration has been one of the defining phenomena of our time.

Being one of the major countries of origin; safety, security, dignity and welfare of the migrant workers is a matter of paramount importance for us.

Protection of rights of migrant workers, including women migrant workers, and combating trafficking in person requires cooperative efforts at national, regional and international levels. We believe that the historic commitment expressed through Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) provides a framework of cooperation to ensuring migration benefits for all.

A clean, healthy and sustainable environment is essential for the full enjoyment of all human rights. As a mountainous country, impact of global warming is of particular concern for us. While we support Council's attention to human rights vis a vis climate change, Nepal has initiated a multi-stakeholder global dialogue forum- Sagarmatha Sambaad- named after the world's tallest mountain, known as the Mt. Everest, to deliberate on the issues of common interest.

The first edition of this dialogue will be convened in Kathmandu from 2 to 4 April this year on the theme of 'Climate Change, Mountains and the Future of the Humanity'.

**Madam President**

Nepal presents a uniquely successful case of nationally led and owned conflict transformation and peace process. We are dealing with the incidences of conflict era human rights violations through two independent Commissions – the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission for Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons. The term of the Commissions has been extended to ensure the completion of their work. The newly appointed Commissioners have started functioning in full swing.

We stand firmly to our commitment to addressing remaining issues of transitional justice in accordance with the Comprehensive Peace Accord, directive of the Supreme Court, relevant international commitments, concerns of the victims, and the ground realities.

Nepal appreciates the continuous goodwill and understanding of the international community.

**Madam President**

The Human Rights Council and its mechanisms have been playing important role in promoting universal respect for all human rights.

The UPR has successfully evolved as a transparent and fair process of promoting dialogue and cooperation and a meaningful exercise for the improvement of human rights situation everywhere.

In Nepal, we have been implementing the outcome of the second cycle of UPR in earnest under an updated plan of actions. Nepal looks forward to the Third Cycle of Review in November this year.

Nepal attaches great importance to the work of Special Procedures mandate-holders. We continue to be constructively engaged with them. We welcome country visits by Special Procedures at a mutually convenient time. We regularly respond to the Communications of the Special Procedures and treaty bodies.

We are committed to our obligation to submit periodic reports on regular basis. In 2018 alone, Nepal's periodic reports under CRPD, CERD and CEDAW were considered. Preparation of latest reports under CAT, ICCPR, ICESCR and CRC are underway.

Our experience as a member of the Council has inspired us to consolidate democracy, advance socio-economic transformation, and promote universal respect for and observance of human rights. We have made utmost efforts to fulfill our pledges and commitments.

In this spirit, Nepal has submitted candidature for the membership of the Human Rights Council for the second term 2021 to 2023. We count on the valuable support of all UN Member States.

We have strong faith in the values of multilateralism to strengthen and sustain our common aspiration of a peaceful, prosperous and just world. We remain committed to working together in a balanced and objective manner for the universal protection and promotion of human rights.

I thank you.



## **16. Remarks by Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at a Seminar on “Nepal’s Foreign Policy: Orientation and Priorities” organised by United Nations Association of Nepal, Kathmandu, 9 August 2019**

Chairman of the United Nations Association of Nepal,  
Excellencies,  
Friends from the Media,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset, let me thank the United Nations Association of Nepal for hosting this seminar and inviting me to speak on this important theme.

Before I touch upon the subject matter of today’s seminar, let me briefly go through the background that shaped and inspired Nepal’s world view as it grew a consolidated nation state from the fragmentation that this region witnessed in the 18th century.

We are proud that Nepal is one of the oldest independent States in Asia. Nepal’s recorded history is a testimony of our practice of foreign policy with neighbouring countries even before the unification.

Prithivi Narayan Shah has eloquently articulated the unique geopolitical situation of Nepal in the metaphor of a ‘yam between two boulders’. Though the connotation and understanding of the “yam” has undergone significant change with the time, modern Nepal’s foreign policy draws on its underlying message ever since. Safeguarding of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity were inherent in the ‘notion of yam’. Nepal even chose self-imposed isolation for over a century but retained her independence in the face of expanding colonialism in the region.

The political change of 1951 opened up the country and expanded our external outreach. Throughout the series of political upheavals and systemic transformation that followed in the past 70 years, basic tenets of our foreign policy remained consistent with necessary adjustments in its nuances and strategies.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Constitution of Nepal guides basic framework for the conduct of Nepal’s foreign policy. The Constitution also defines core elements of our national interest. Safeguarding of the freedom, sovereignty, territorial integrity, nationalism, independence and dignity of the country, border security, economic wellbeing and prosperity and the rights of the Nepali people are defined as the basic elements of Nepal’s national interest. It is intrinsic that service to the national interests is the primary objective of our foreign policy goal.

The Constitution also guides Nepal to pursue independent foreign policy and adhere to the principles of the UN Charter, non-alignment, Panchsheel, international law and the norms of world peace. Maintaining foreign relations on the basis of sovereign equality and enhancing dignity of the nation is an important element of our foreign policy.

These guiding principles have enabled us to take independent posture on international

issues, articulate our views on merit basis, contribute to the world peace, and nurture friendship with all countries of the world.

Within the framework set by the Constitution, safeguarding of Nepal's sovereignty, and independence and ensuring non-interference in the internal affairs of the country becomes a paramount priority for the Government in all of its external engagements.

We want amity with all, enmity with none, and consider international relations should be based on justice, sovereign equality, mutual respect and shared benefit. We want to promote Nepal's credentials as an open, progressive, and democratic State.

We support multilateralism to promote a just and equitable international order in which all States- big or small- fulfil their international obligations in good faith, and enjoy equal opportunity to achieve their aspirations for development and prosperity. We consider that stability and predictability in the global order is essential for maintaining international peace and security.

A country transformed from armed conflict, we would be happy to share our hard-earned experience of successful nationally-led and owned peace process for the benefit of the countries in conflict or those in transition.

Having achieved internal political stability, we want to focus on the achievement of economic development with the overarching goal of 'prosperous Nepal, happy Nepali'. Development imperatives at home guide our diplomatic engagements abroad. We have devised policies and national development plans accordingly. Focused pursuit of economic development agenda will remain a key priority of our economic diplomacy. Graduating from the status of LDC and attaining the middle-income status by 2030 are set as our milestones.

More recently, another dimension of Nepal's standing in global stage has been added by expanding Nepali diaspora. A number of Nepali diasporas have excelled in the field of academics, science and technology, medicine, engineering, arts, designs, architecture, culinary skills, literature, industries, sports and adventures. Many of them have written their own success stories of entrepreneurship. They have individually and collectively contributed for the promotion of Nepal's image in the world stage.

As a new initiative, the government has recently launched Brain Gain Centre at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to connect and attract knowledge, skills and expertise of Nepali diaspora to the service of the country.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Nepal has maintained friendly and cooperative relations with both of her immediate neighbours: India and China. Maintaining close and cordial relationship with them is our consistent priority. Our relations have expanded manifold in the sphere of political, economic, cultural, trade, tourism, investment, and people-to-people exchanges. We look forward to further strengthening of these relations. We admire our neighbours for their continued goodwill and support to our national aspirations and for their cooperation in the development efforts of Nepal. We consider the spectacular economic development of our neighbours as an opportunity and desire to benefit from that. We are conscious of the



legitimate interests of our neighbours and will not allow any activity against them in our soil and expect the same from our neighbours.

Our relations with the countries in the extended neighbourhood are based on mutual respect, goodwill and understanding which we wish to sustain and consolidate. They are further nurtured by growing cultural and traditional ties. Our priority is to further explore, open up and diversify our relations especially in the areas of trade, investment, tourism and people-to-people exchanges.

Our relations with major powers and development partners have always remained cordial and cooperative. Their goodwill and support to Nepal in her development endeavour has been an enduring aspect of our friendship. We value this cooperation and remain grateful to our development partners for their continued support. While development cooperation from our partners through the Government channel in alignment with our priorities, leadership and ownership is important for us, we look forward to an enhanced level of investment and technology transfer. We continue to work towards enriching the substance of cooperation in our bilateral engagements with these countries.

Labour migration is an important issue for Nepal. A large number of our citizens are engaged in foreign employment and the remittances they send home make a sizable share of our economy. Therefore, it becomes Government's priority to work closely with the countries of destination for safety, security and wellbeing of our migrant workers. In recent years our engagements with the labour destination countries have been more intensive and enriched by exchange of high level visits, and progressively growing trade and investment. We look forward to expand and diversify the scope of cooperation with these countries so as to encompass the broader areas of economic partnership involving trade, investment, tourism and civil aviation, among others.

### **Dear Friends,**

Nepal is an ardent supporter of the rule-based and just multilateral system with the United Nations (UN) at its centre. We have abiding faith on the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and have adhered to them in letter and spirit.

As an active member of the UN, Nepal has contributed significantly for over six decades to the maintenance of international peace and security and protection of human rights. Nepal currently stands 5th largest troop and police contributing country in the UN peace operations.

Nepal attaches high importance to the protection and promotion of human rights. Human rights hold the centre stage in our Constitution. We are a State party to twenty-four international human rights-related instruments, including seven out of nine core Conventions. Nepal considers all human rights are universal, in-divisible, inter-dependent, inter-related and mutually reinforcing.

Currently Nepal is a member of UN Human Rights Council, and also serves as the coordinator of Asia Pacific group in the Council. We are a member of UN Peace Building Commission, Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Commission on Science and Technology for Development, Executive Board of UN-WOMEN, and Deputy Member of the ILO Governing Body. We are coordinator of Colombo Process of Labour Sending Countries

and Chair of the Enhanced Integrated Framework Board of WTO. A Nepali expert is serving as a Vice Chair in the CEDAW Committee.

Nepal supports the UN reform initiatives with equal emphasis on all three pillars- peace and security, development and human rights- and to make the global body more efficient, effective and responsive to the need of our time.

Nepal stands for peaceful solution of international disputes. We support national leadership and ownership of any solution to internal conflict and apolitical role of the agencies like the United Nations.

Nepal continues to support total and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction. Nepal condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and believes that terrorist acts cannot be justified on any ground whoever may be the perpetrator.

Nepal accords high priority to the issue of climate change, which is one of the biggest challenges of our time. We contribute negligible in the global greenhouse gas emission. However, as a mountainous country with fragile ecosystem, we are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change and global warming. We, therefore, support effective implementation of the Paris Agreement and call for enhanced level of climate finance and technology transfer for the adaptation and mitigation.

Nepal continues to champion the cause of LDCs, LLDCs, South-South and triangular cooperation in the UN and other international forums. Solidarity and cooperation with LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS will continue to characterize our deliberations.

Promoting regional economic cooperation remains our priority. A year ago, Nepal successfully hosted fourth BIMSTEC summit in Kathmandu. As the Chair of SAARC we have been consistently putting our efforts to revive the stalled SAARC process. Nepal plays its due role in Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) as its member and in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as a dialogue partner.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Before I conclude, let me state that our efforts have been to ensure that Nepal's foreign policy serves its purpose to safeguard the vital areas of our national interest in the context of changing global and regional dynamics. We are also fully aware that fundamentals of our foreign policy remain consistent with the constitutional provisions and our practice remains coherent and credible. Recently, we hosted a National Dialogue on Foreign Policy with an objective of forging minimum common understanding on the critical foreign policy areas. We consider that such exercise should continue in the future as well.

With a view to promoting deliberations on contemporary issues of global importance, we are preparing to host Sagarmatha Dialogue in Nepal early next year. We hope Sagarmatha Dialogue to be a unique contribution of Nepal in the policy deliberations that will be an important forum to broaden our understanding of the major issues shaping the global and regional order in our time.

I thank you all for your attention.



## **17. Remarks by Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at a Workshop on “The Belt and Road Initiative in Nepal: Opportunities and Challenges”, 7 August 2019**

Chairperson of the workshop Former Minister Anand Pokharel

Distinguished Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to thank South Asia Institute of Advanced Studies and Chinese Academy of Sciences for their cordial invitation to me to address the workshop on “the Belt and Road Initiative in Nepal: Opportunities and Challenges.”

The topic is timely and pertinent for our deliberation. The workshop is important as it brings together the scholars and experts from diverse fields. I would like to welcome the team of professors from the Institute of Geographical Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences, for travelling all the way from China to Nepal to attend this program, and highly appreciate for conducting the research on the green BRI in the Himalayan Region. I hope their findings will be beneficial to all of us.

I believe such regular interactions, deliberations and exchange of views by experts help to have comprehensive understanding of a project of global scale like BRI.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Belt and Road Initiative is a visionary undertaking of President Xi Jinping launched in 2013. It is a significant milestone that aims at promoting comprehensive connectivity and cooperation among the countries and people in the region and beyond. More than 130 countries have signed the MoU and some others have expressed their willingness to join this landmark initiative. We do believe that it will have paramount impact in the development landscape of the region and beyond, in 21st century.

We are happy to witness the miraculous development in China in a relatively short span of time. It has been able to lift its people out of poverty within few decades; not long ago an agrarian economy and has now become the second largest economy in the world.

Connectivity in a comprehensive manner is at the core of the BRI. Five priority areas as set by the BRI are in one way or the other aim to enhance connectivity to build a community of shared interests that fosters development and prosperity.

The connectivity projects of the Initiative will help to support the development strategies of the countries along the Belt and Road in keeping with their national priorities, tap market potential in this region, promote investment and consumption, create demands and job opportunities, enhance people-to-people and cultural exchanges, and mutual learning among the peoples of the relevant countries. Since the multilateralism and collective efforts are facing some challenges, and the tendency towards self-centeredness and protectionism is emerging, initiative like BRI can play an instrumental role to develop collectivism and to protect the spirit of economic globalization with more substantive value addition.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Nepal has entered a new era of peace and stability with the promulgation of a new Constitution in 2015 and the successful holding of elections in all three tiers resulting into the formation of strong governments at all levels. You may all know that Nepal aspires to become a middle-income country by 2030 and graduate from LDC status at an early date. The single-minded pursuit of the government remains development and prosperity.

To achieve these goals, we require massive investment in infrastructure development. We also require huge investment of capital and modern technology as well as expertise in the related fields. We believe that Chinese assistance and collaboration through BRI can be significant in supporting our development needs in infrastructures.

Nepal has become a part of the BRI after it signed an MoU in 2017. We are committed to implementing the MoU of Cooperation under BRI to promote sustainable development consistent with our development needs. Efficient connectivity will unfold manifold opportunities in various fields including in trade, investment, manufacturing and tourism.

Nepal and China are committed to enhance connectivity encompassing vital components such as ports, roads, railways, aviation and communications within the framework of Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network. It is a matter of happiness that Joint Communique of the Leaders' Roundtable of the 2nd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation has included in its annex "Trans-Himalayan Multi-dimensional Connectivity Network, including Nepal-China cross-border railway".

We believe that BRI can support countries like Nepal to grow and prosper at an accelerated speed. As a framework to spur investment and enhance connectivity, BRI can be instrumental in addressing development bottlenecks arising out of connectivity and mobilizing finances for development while ensuring win-win benefits. Being a landlocked country, Nepal is paying at least 20 percent additional cost to its production and transit-transport cycle. It is contributing (negatively) to shrink its competitiveness in global market. This fact speaks a volume about the critical importance of connectivity to Nepal.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We have concluded some important agreements with China in recent years for enhancing multidimensional connectivity between the two countries. Recently concluded Protocol on implementing Transit Transport Agreement between the two countries provides Nepal access to the Chinese seaports and dry ports. This is an important milestone towards Nepal's transformation from a landlocked country to a land-linked country. I am happy to share with you that we have completed all necessary internal procedures to bring the protocol into effect. Also, we concluded another MoU for building cross-border transmission line with China last year. Trans-Himalayan Railway will be a game changer in our development journey. Our two countries have already signed an MoU on Cooperation in the Railway Project. Pre-feasibility study of this project has already been completed and now we are in the process of feasibility study and preparation of detailed project report.

Recent development in the areas of tourism, aviation, trade, cultural exchanges and people to people contacts are encouraging. we should explore the ways to unleash the potentials on the area of economic cooperation in the days ahead.

Rt. Hon. President paid a state visit to China in April this year and addressed the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation held in Beijing. The visit provided us a good opportunity to share our views on the importance of Belt and Road Initiative in promoting connectivity and realizing the sustainable development goals for countries like ours. I would like to fondly recall the very in-depth statement(s) made by President Xi, where he highlighted the core concepts of BRI, including sustainability and green development.

Green BRI is call of the day at a time when we are witnessing the adverse impact of climate change. Unsustainable patterns of production and consumption have accelerated environmental degradation. Countries like Nepal are bearing the brunt of climate change despite negligible emissions from our side. Women and underprivileged community have been its main victims. The only way forward is development of green economy. While striving for economic development, BRI can play an important role in transforming to clean-energy mode and low-carbon economy.

The proposed BRI projects should aim at utilizing the rich resources along the Himalayan range and improving the quality of lives of peoples in those areas, while carefully examining the sensitivity, vulnerability and fragileness of the Himalayas. The facilities and infrastructures thus created should support conservation efforts and help overall development of that region in a sustainable manner.

Nepal wills to contribute the green economy. Endowed by huge hydro resources with more than 40,000 MWs commercially feasible generating capacity, Nepal has great potential in this regard. If we can utilize the potentials of solar, wind and other means of renewable energy along with the hydropower, our contribution will be paramount in the region. We want to collaborate with the neighboring countries and welcome more investment and technology transfer in this area.

To materialize the vision of BRI in general, and Trans-Himalayan connectivity infrastructures in particular, in-depth researches are extremely important, in the areas of geography, geology, hydrology, environment, economics, cultures and many mores. In this regard, collaboration between the think tanks and research institutes like CAS and Nepali research institutes will be very meaningful.

I believe that the workshop will bring forward pragmatic ideas to be utilized to tap the opportunities offered by the BRI.

Once again, I would like to thank the organizers for bringing forth this important topic for deliberations among the experts from diverse sectors.

I wish the workshop a success.

Thank you all for your kind attention!



## **18. Statement by Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali on “Nepal-India Relations: Development and Dynamics” at a Talk Programme organised by Pushpal Memorial Foundation, Lalitpur, 18 July 2019**

Chairman of Pushpal Memorial Foundation and  
Former Prime Minister Hon. Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal,  
Hon. Ministers and Members of Parliament,  
Ambassador of India to Nepal  
His Excellency Shri Manjeev Singh Puri,  
Distinguished Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great privilege and honour for me to speak on the theme of “**Nepal-India Relations: Development and Dynamics**”. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Chairman of Pushpal Memorial Foundation for organizing this talk programme and also providing me with this opportunity to share my views.

Let me begin with the historical relationship between Nepal and India. We know the relationship between our two countries is time immemorial. History tells us that even before the modern nations of Nepal and India came into existence, small kingdoms and princely states existing in the present territories of Nepal and India had developed flourishing relationship, both at the level of the government and the people. The bilateral relationship continued to grow in the subsequent times, reaching the present stage. This active relationship in continuity speaks volumes of engagements, friendship and cooperation between our two countries.

The closeness of the relationship between Nepal and India is based on the robust foundation of geographical proximity, civilization and cultural bonds, friendship between the two peoples, and similar perceptions on many global and regional issues including shared values. Nepal and India are two independent and sovereign countries; they are immediate neighbours, sharing a long stretch of boundary; and they exist side by side and interact much more densely in every sphere of life. When we realize this fact, we become further closer. And, it also automatically demands from us more efforts to take the relationship to a new height.

### **Distinguished Participants,**

It is with this spirit that the two countries have maintained friendly and cooperative relationship at the highest political level. High level visits at increased frequency have helped not only strengthen friendship but also fructify the relationship in areas of mutual interest. In this context, I would like to fondly recall the visits of both prime ministers and four rounds of talks last year, which have contributed significantly to further cementing the bilateral ties and to explore the new vistas of cooperation. The growth of the relationship has produced tangible outcomes in many sectors, such as trade, transit, investment, tourism, culture, education, development cooperation and so on. Besides,

continuous dialogues, exchange of ideas, and agreements, including through dozens of bilateral mechanisms, have substantially contributed to add dynamism to the relationship.

It is a matter of satisfaction that Nepal-India relations have been growing in multi-dimensional ways, creating myriads of opportunities. However, this does not mean that the relations are bereft of problems and issues. They are there; and it is not unnatural for any friendly neighbouring countries with wide gamut of relations and dense interaction. What we need to do is to continue removing obstacles, resolving issues and moving forward towards extracting the benefits from enhanced bilateral cooperation.

And what gives us enormous satisfaction is that we have clear vision, sufficient commitment and required capability in both sides to address those issues.

Another important aspect in our relationship is that we have to understand the sensitivities of each other. If there is a trust that sensitivities are well taken care of, it will help grow the relationship smoothly. We need to continue strengthening cooperation for controlling the cross-border criminal and unwanted activities, which harm both countries. Similarly, we must prevent unscrupulous elements from using the soil of one country against another. Furthermore, a practical solution is also to be worked out for reducing Nepal's huge trade deficit with India, as the huge imbalance in trade shows a negative picture.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Given India's huge population, big size of economy, industrial capacity and technological progress, it has remained a major source of investment, import items, tourist inflows, technological support, and development cooperation to Nepal. India is one of the biggest source of foreign investment in Nepal in terms of amount. Among the source countries of tourists coming to Nepal, India is on top of all. Likewise, in Nepal's total imports and exports, India occupies a prominent position. On the part of Nepal too, investment, export of goods and tourists outflow into India are there, though in a smaller scale. These facts and figures vindicate the depth and dynamism of our relationship. Here, what we need to do is to create a win-win situation for both countries. We have to work out plans for ensuring it in a sustainable way.

The areas of cooperation in our two countries are so wide and all-encompassing that potentials exist in almost every sector. We are blessed with enormous natural resources; we have young and active population; our history, culture and civilization are rich. Additionally, people-to-people bonds are strong and dynamic. Interdependence and interconnectedness are intense. India's economy has already taken momentum, securing a respectable position in the global economy. It is an opportunity for Nepal to take the benefit from this economic growth. In Nepal too, economic growth rates have started going up, which can benefit India as well.

One of the critical issues to collaborate with, is the issue of climate change. Since the challenges of climate change has scaled up in unprecedented points, probably we should have to use the term climate crisis or urgency rather. As both countries are linked with similar climate system, ecology and Himalayan ranges, problem we face are almost identical. We can even talk the daily weather forecasts nowadays, the potential floods in Terai and adjoining parts of Northern India alarms millions of people everyday. It is an issue, which warrants us to work collaboratively, with sensitivity and urgency

It is rare to have a highly favourable situation in both countries, which is available at present, as reflected in the stable governments enjoying the two-thirds majority in the parliaments, enormous faith of the peoples in the leaders, accelerating economic growth rates, clear visions for development and prosperity, and strong commitments for delivery of outcomes to the peoples. I see it as a golden opportunity for both Nepal and India. We must do everything possible to tap this opportunity.

On the one hand, we need to work on a new agenda for development and shared prosperity in the changed scenario; and, on the other hand, we have to complete the unfinished tasks, clearing ways for novel ventures. These twin tasks are to be performed simultaneously. Old treaties and agreements await review for making them appropriate in the present context. Completion of long-standing bilateral cooperation projects of great significance, such as Pancheswor and Hulaki Roads, require due priority. Similarly, resolution of the boundary issues and the permanent solution to the problems of inundation are other important works to be accomplished.

I am happy to share the facts that a number of flagship projects between Nepal and India have been carried out. Some of them have already been completed and some are in the phase of implementation. The petroleum pipeline project from Motihari to Amlekhgunj is almost ready for operation. The Integrated Check Post in Birgunj has already started functioning and the next one in Biratnagar is awaiting its operationalization. Likewise, some segments of Hulaki Roads have been completed. The process for Raxaul to Kathmandu Railway line has begun with preliminary survey. The works relating to Inland Waterways have also started. We are developing strong connectivity with India through railways and waterways. Cooperation in the field of agriculture is taking momentum. New air entry points have been finalized to pave the way to boost the Nepali aviation industry. I am sure it will phenomenally help enhance movement of goods and people with less cost and less time.

When we talk about our relations, we should also take into account global developments, as they do have implications on bilateral relations. The world today has seen unprecedented developments in geo-politics, geo-economics, technology, and inter-state relations. Nationalistic fervor, protectionist policies, apathy to multilateralism, and dissociation from global and regional compacts and commitments have unexpectedly changed the dynamics of cooperation among countries. In such a volatile situation, countries like ours have to forge strong cooperation in order to secure common interests from the international and regional engagements.

### **Distinguished Participants,**

The Government of Nepal has dedicated its entire efforts towards realizing the national aspiration of “Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali”. To help contribute to this drive, we count high the collaboration with India. We welcome increased amount of investment from India into Nepal in areas of our national priority, such as hydro-power, transport infrastructure, tourism, agriculture, ICT, mines and minerals, education, health, manufacturing, etc. These investments will benefit not only Nepal but also India. In the areas of trade, enhanced market access for Nepali products in India as well as trade facilitation are required for reducing the trade deficit of Nepal, making the trade beneficial



for both countries. Similarly, as we are going to celebrate the year 2020 as the “Visit Nepal Year”, we expect more tourists from India to Nepal in 2020 and beyond. From Nepal’s side too, a lot of Nepali people visit India every year as tourists. This is one of the important areas of cooperation between our two countries. As before, I am confident that Nepal will continue receiving increased amount of development cooperation from India. While saying so, I would like to thank the Government of India for continuously extending development cooperation to Nepal in the past as well as increasing the amount of such cooperation to Nepal in the budget announced recently.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

After the historical political change, Nepal now is perfectly poised for development and prosperity. It is based on the facts on the ground. First, the country has political stability with a government enjoying two-thirds majority in the parliament. Second, with a new constitution as well as new and revised laws, legal base has taken strong roots. Third, good governance and reform in public service have received adequate priority. Fourth, revenue mobilization and financial discipline has created conducive environment in the economic and financial sector. Fifth, the Government of Nepal has given a tempo to development works. Sixth, a lot of incentives and facilities for foreign investors, industrialists and businesspersons are available in the country. Seventh, necessary infrastructure and facilities are being expanded for foreign tourists for their comfortable and enjoyable stay. Finally, the Government of Nepal is committed to strengthen ties with its immediate neighbours and other friendly countries around the world. I am confident that such a propitious environment will serve as a bedrock for the growth of our relations, accruing great advantages to both countries.

To end, I would like to say that there is every room for the expansion and deepening of Nepal-India relations in the days ahead. Both countries are replete with potentials. There is also the will and determination to realize these potentials for their development. With mutual understanding and trust at all levels, we can continue reaping the benefits of our friendship and cooperation. I see a brighter side in Nepal-India relations. I wish it to remain brighter forever.

I thank you for your kind attention.



## VI. Appointment of Nepali Ambassadors

S.N.	Name	Country	Concurrent Accreditations	Remarks
1	Mahendra Bahadur Pandey	China	North Korea, Mongolia	

## VII. Presentation of credentials by foreign ambassadors

S.N.	Name	Accreditation/Country	Date
1	Aleksei A. Novikov	Residential/Russia	12 August 2019
2	Jean Claude Kugener	Non-residential/ Luxemburg	12 August 2019
3	Julius Pranevičius	Non-residential/Lithuania	12 August 2019
4	JasemIbrahem J.M. Alnajem	Non-residential/Kuwait	12 August 2019
5	Ramon S. Bagatsing JR	Non-residential/Philippines	11 September 2019
6	Andrei Rzhheussky	Non-residential/Belarus	11 September 2019
7	Coromoto Godoy Calderon	Non-residential/Venezuela	11 September 2019
8	Carlos José de Pinho e Melo Pereira Marques	Non-residential/Portugal	11 September 2019
9	Himalee Subhashini de Silva Arunatilaka	Residential/Sri Lanka	11 November 2019
10	Daniel Chuburu	Non-residential/Argentina	11 September 2019
11	Abdulrahman Mohamed Ahmed Al Gaoud	Non-residential/Bahrain	11 September 2019
12	Bounneme Choungom	Non-residential/Laos	11 September 2019
13	Nicola Kathryn Pollitt	Residential/UK	4 December 2019
14	Rabie Narsh	Non-residential/Lebanon	4 December 2019
15	Katrin Kivi	Non-residential/Estonia	4 December 2019
16	Falah Abdul hasan Abdulsada	Non-residential/Iraq	4 December 2019
17	Brendan Ward	Non-residential/Ireland	13 February 2020
18	Armen Martir	Non-residential/Armenia	13 February 2020

19	Gudmundur Arni Stefansson	Non-residential/Iceland	13 February 2020
20	Vinay Mohan Kwatra	Residential/India	5 March 2020
21	Thomas Selby Pillay	Non-residential/ Seychelles	5 March 2020
22	Federico Salas Lotfe	Non-residential/Mexico	5 March 2020

## VII. Kathmandu-based foreign ambassadors completing tour of duty

S.N.	Name	Designation	Return date
1	W.S. Perera	Ambassador of Sri Lanka	30 September 2019
2	Bhakavat Tanskul	Ambassador of Thailand	16 October 2019
3	Richard Morris	Ambassador of the United Kingdom	6 November 2019
4	Manjeev Sing Puri	Ambassador of India	31 December 2019
5	Amjad Hussian B. Sial	Secretary General of SAARC	29 February 2020
6	Thiri Pyanchi U Tun Nay Lin	Ambassador of Myanmar	5 June 2020
7	Park Young-sik	Ambassador of the RoK	16 June 2020

## Abbreviations

ACD:	Asian Cooperation Dialogue
APF:	Armed Police Force
BBIN:	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal
BIMSTEC:	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
BPWC:	BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee
BRI:	Belt and Road Initiatives
BWG:	Boundary Working Group
BBNJ:	Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction
CEDAW:	Convention on Elimination of all kind of Discrimination against Women
CoP25:	25 <sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC
COVID-19:	Corona Virus Disease 2019
CPC:	Communist Party of China
DAO:	District Administration Office
DFID:	Department for International Development
DPM:	Deputy Prime Minister
ECOSOC:	Economic and Social Council
EBA:	Everything but Arms
EEAS:	European External Action Service
EIB:	European Investment Bank
EIF:	Enhanced Integrated Framework
EPG-NIR:	Eminent Persons Group on Nepal-India Relations
EPS:	Employment Permit System
EU:	European Union
FDI:	Foreign Direct Investment
GAVI:	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
HRC:	Human Rights Council
IAEA:	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICP:	Integrated Check Post
IFC:	International Finance Corporation
IGC:	Inter-Governmental Committee
IGGT:	Inter-Governmental Group on Transport
IHL:	International Humanitarian Law
ILO:	International Labour Organisation
IMF:	International Monetary Fund
IOM:	International Organisation for Migration
IPCC:	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPoA:	Istanbul Programme of Action
JCPOA:	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
JSC:	Joint Steering Committee
JWG:	Joint Working Group
KOICA:	Korea International Cooperation Agency
KV:	Kilovolt
LDCs:	Least Developed Countries
LLDCs:	Land Locked Developing Countries
LoE:	Letters of Exchange

MCC:	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MoF:	Ministry of Finance
MoFA:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOU:	Memorandum of Understanding
MRP:	Machine Readable Passport
MRTDs:	Machine Readable Travel Documents
NAM:	Non-aligned Movement
NPR:	Nepali Rupee
NRNA:	Non-Resident Nepali Association
ODA:	Official Development Assistance
OHCHR:	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
RMB:	Renminbi (Chinese Currency unit)
RoK:	Republic of Korea
SAARC:	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAFTA:	South Asian Free Trade Area
SATIS:	SAARC Agreement on Trade in Services
SCO:	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goals
SFFA:	SAARC Framework for Action
SIDS:	Small Island Developing States
SOC:	Senior Officials' Committee
SSB:	Sashastra Seema Bal
TAR:	Tibet Autonomous Region
TEPC:	Trade and Export Promotion Center
TPCC:	Troop and Peace Contributing Countries
UAE:	United Arab Emirates
UK:	United Kingdom
UN:	United Nations
UNCTAD:	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP:	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund
UNGA/GA:	United Nations General Assembly
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO:	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNITAR:	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNODC:	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USA:	United States of America
USD/ US\$:	US Dollar
VNY:	Visit Nepal Year 2020
VPoA:	Vienna Programme of Action
WHO:	World Health Organisation
WTO:	World Trade Organisation

# **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

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*This Annual Report can also be accessed at <https://www.mofa.gov.np>*