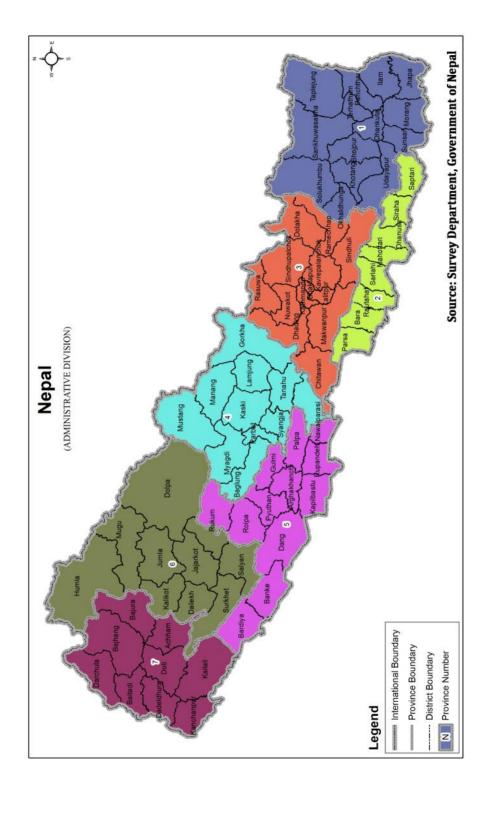


ANNUAL REPORT (2016/17)

KATHMANDU, NEPAL AUGUST 2017



Nepal: Facts and figures

Geographical location:

Latitude: 26° 22' North to 30° 27' North

Longitude: 80° 04' East to 88° 12' East

Area: 147,181 sq. km

Border:

North—People's Republic of China

East, West and South — India

Capital: Kathmandu

Population: 28431494 (2016 Projected)

Country Name: Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal

Head of State: Rt. Honourable President

Head of Government: Rt. Honourable Prime Minister

National Day: 3 Ashwin (20 September)

Official Language: Nepali

Major Religions: Hinduism, Buddhism

Literacy (5 years above): 65.9 % (Census, 2011)

Life Expectancy at Birth: 66.6 years (Census, 2011)

GDP Per Capita: US \$ 853 (2015/16)

Monetary Unit: 1 Nepalese Rupee (= 100 Paisa)

Main Exports: Carpets, Garments, Leather Goods, Handicrafts, Grains

(Source: Nepal in Figures 2016, Central Bureau of Statistics, Kathmandu)

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Message from Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

Hon. Krishna Bahadur Mahara



We are all well-aware that the promulgation of the Constitution 2015 was a culmination of Nepal's 'unique and home-grown' peace process. This materialized the long-cherished aspirations of Nepali people to have a Constitution written by their own elected representatives. This year, implementation of the inclusive democratic Constitution continued to remain crucial in our efforts to institutionalize democratic gains and achievements made over a long period of time through people's arduous struggles and revolutions.

In this context, the country witnessed successful holding of local-level elections after a gap of nearly two decades. The Government also made preparations for provincial and federal elections within the timeframe as stipulated in the Constitution.

For the first time in Nepal's history, the Constitution has clearly defined the major elements of national interest and reinforced the fundamental bases for the conduct of an independent and balanced foreign policy of the country. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to pursue foreign policy objectives within these parameters with the aim of enhancing the country's image in the international arena. In doing so, the historic achievements of Nepali people were highlighted with an aim to sustaining goodwill and support of the international community to our democratic transformation and socio-economic development, among others.

Our foreign policy priorities were directed towards consolidating multifaceted relations with the neighboring countries. High-level exchanges, reactivation of important bilateral mechanisms and conclusion of some important instruments were the main features of our engagements with the neighbours. Continuous efforts were also made to enhance our relations with the major powers and development partners as well as the countries across the globe. Our relations with labour destination countries also received priority.

Our engagements in regional organizations and multilateral forums remained substantial. We played an active role in advancing regional cooperation under SAARC and BIMSTEC and contributed to international peace and security through our participation in various UN peacekeeping operations. Solidarity and

cooperation with LDCs and LLDCs continued to characterize the pursuit of our common agenda.

We made visible progress in service delivery from Departments and Diplomatic Missions. The Department of Passports was awarded an ISO certification, thereby making it the first government agency to receive such a certification in quality management system. Similarly, the Department of Consular Services provided effective and efficient services including through the use of information and communication technologies.

In the conduct of development diplomacy, we sought to promote our vital economic interests abroad. We remained effortful in attracting more foreign investment in our national priority sectors, mobilizing assistance in reconstruction efforts, promoting tourism and expanding export trade.

Against this backdrop, the Ministry is publishing this Annual Report incorporating the major activities undertaken by the Ministry, its Departments, and Diplomatic Missions abroad in the Fiscal Year 2073/74 (16 July 2016- 15 July 2017). This publication aims at sharing information with the wider public on the conduct of Nepal's diplomacy and international relations during this period.

It is my hope that this Report will serve as a reference for academicians, students, journalists and general public interested in the foreign affairs of Nepal. My sincere appreciation goes to the editorial team for their efforts in bringing out this report. I also thank all other officials at the Ministry, its Departments and Missions abroad for their contributions to this report.

Krishna Bahadur Mahara

Foreword



We are happy to bring out the Annual Report 2016/17 as a part of proactive public disclosure. We have tried our best to make this Report more comprehensive and elaborate based on the experience of the previous publications.

I am confident that this Annual Report, as a compendium of initiatives, activities and achievements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and our Missions in 2016/17, will add to the repertoire of information and knowledge about Nepal's diplomatic engagements.

The role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is pivotal in safeguarding Nepal's vital interest. It is in this context that the whole diplomatic machinery was mobilized taking cognizance of domestic political developments and evolving external situations.

The Legislature-Parliament's Committee on International Relations and Labour provided important directives and guidelines in the conduct of diplomacy. The Ministry regularly consulted relevant stakeholders on important foreign policy issues.

A High-Level Foreign Policy Review Task Force (HLFPRTF) was set up under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister for Foreign Affairs to recommend the foreign policy priorities and the ways to implement them effectively in consonance with the domestic realities and to respond to the rapidly changing external environment. A number of consultative groups on foreign policy issues including the one representing private sector were constituted.

Our diplomatic outreach was further expanded this year. The number of countries with which Nepal established diplomatic relations reached 147. With the establishment of the Embassy in Madrid (Spain) and the Consulate General in Guangzhou (China), our overseas diplomatic presence expanded to 38 stations. Likewise, we established bilateral consultation mechanisms with a number of countries across the continents.

Our relations with neighbouring countries witnessed both expansion and consolidation. A series of high-level visits helped enhance trust and understanding paving the way for greater cooperation on mutually beneficial areas.

Nepal further strengthened friendship and broadened the partnership with major powers and development partners for socio-economic development. Our engagement with labour destination countries was substantial. We continued to give priority to safety, security and well-being of the migrant workers. We also made efforts to strengthen bilateral relations with countries in Asia, Oceania, Africa, Latin America and other regions on the basis of mutual benefit and cooperation.

Realizing meaningful cooperation through deeper integration underpinned our diplomatic efforts on regional front. With this vision, we consistently pursued regional cooperation under SAARC and BIMSTEC. We continued to participate actively in UN peacekeeping operations with the sole objective of contributing to the international peace and security. We remained proactive in advancing the common cause of LDCs and LLDCs. Our regional and multilateral engagements have helped us earn prestige as a responsible member of the international community.

Economic interest remained at the core of our engagements, efforts and initiatives under development diplomacy. We have initiated the process of developing concrete country-specific strategies in accordance with our needs and priorities. This will be helpful for our Missions to undertake development diplomacy related activities.

The benchmarks set by the Ministry and its Missions were instrumental in making the public service efficient and effective. The Ministry also introduced the performance evaluation criteria for the Heads of Departments and Divisions as well as the heads of Nepali Diplomatic Missions.

Institutional strengthening of the Ministry and the Missions and capacity building of its cadres also remained our priority. A draft of Foreign Service Act was prepared through internal consultations, which remains to be processed for legislation. Foreign Service officials were given language training, short and long-term diplomatic courses both at home and abroad.

The Ministry laid emphasis on coordination with relevant agencies of the Government of Nepal in pursuit of foreign policy objectives. A large number of coordination meetings were held in preparation of high-level visits and other important diplomatic engagements. The Council of Ministers, through a decision, made it mandatory for the relevant authorities of the Government to consult and seek the views of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on all matters pertaining to external relations.

In a nutshell, the Report encompasses our efforts and achievements in furthering Nepal's enlightened national interest in tandem with the changed domestic situation and evolving external environment. As improvement is always desirable, I look forward to receiving constructive feedback and suggestions from valued readers.

The editorial team deserves appreciation and special thanks for their hard work in putting together inputs and materials received from Divisions, Departments and Missions. I thank all Division and Department Heads as well as Ambassadors and Heads of Mission and all colleagues at the Ministry, Departments and Missions for their support and cooperation in bringing out this Annual Report.

Shanker D. Bairagi Foreign Secretary

1. Year Overview

This Annual Report provides an overview of key activities carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal during the period between 16 July 2016 and 15 July 2017. It is an attempt to reach out to the wider public in order to provide them with information about the work of the Ministry, its Departments and Nepali Missions abroad. For this, the Report reviews the diplomatic activities and initiatives undertaken over the last year on Nepal's foreign policy front, with a focus on major dimensions of our foreign policy priorities-bilateral, regional, multilateral and development diplomacy- that underpinned our engagements in 2016/17.

At home, the year was marked by continuous efforts of the Government institutionalize the of Nepal to historic political gains through the implementation of the constitution. On external front, Nepal's priorities continued to be guided by the constitutional provisions aimed at enhancing the country's image and developing mutually beneficial cooperation with friendly countries and development partners. Our diplomatic machinery was tasked to share Nepal's experience of 'unique and home-grown peace process' with the international community and engage constructively to pursue ways and instruments of enhancing Nepal's national interest in the changed context. Representation of Nepal as an inclusive democratic State as well as articulation of Nepal's development priorities remained our two intrinsic diplomatic goals.

With such directions firmly set on, our diplomatic engagements continued to focus on six major areas. First was the task of broader policy interventions including through the initiation of foreign policy review. Secondly. significant efforts were made to further deepen Nepal's relations with immediate neighbours China and India, and get engaged in the 'vibrant economic drive' of the neighbourhood. emphasis was laid Thirdly, enhancing the bilateral relations with development partners and friendly countries across all continents. Fourthly, our undertakings at regional and multilateral forums aimed at promoting a meaningful regional cooperation through deeper integration and establishing an inclusive and rulebased international system. Fifthly, development diplomacy and protection of the interest of Nepali nationals, specially the migrant workers. received a significant impetus. Lastly, our initiatives on making passport and consular services more efficient and effective were driven by our commitment towards better public service.

Broader Policy and Planning Issues

In the world today, the sphere of international relations and diplomacy has widened more than ever before. An effective exercise of a country's diplomacy, therefore, requires strong and sound policies, capable institutions and efficient procedures that promote an ability to function, to innovate, and to produce. It was with

this perspective that policy initiatives were taken to review foreign policy priorities, formulate country-specific strategies on economic diplomacy, further standardize the functions of both Ministry and Missions and restructure the Institute of Foreign Affairs.

On 11 April 2017, the Government of Nepal constituted a sixteen-member 'High-Level Foreign Policy Review Task Force' under the coordinatorship of Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Task Force has been mandated to review the foreign policy priorities and define it in the changed context, and provide recommendations for their implementation keeping Nepal's national interests at the centre. The Taskforce will focus its deliberations on political, security, economic, and institutional aspects of foreign policy and recommend appropriate measures. Its report is expected soon.

MOFA constituted consultative groups of over eighty foreign policy experts in order to solicit their advice on foreign policy issues as and when required by the Ministry. The exercise is expected to facilitate informed discussions by think tanks, civil society, media and stakeholders for the effective conduct of the foreign policy.

The Government of Nepal established the Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations in Vienna, Austria at the Permanent Representative/ Ambassador level. The Government also decided to open an Embassy in Madrid, Spain at Ambassadorial level. Similarly, a Consulate General of Nepal was established at Guangzhou, Guangdong Province of China.

Embassies of Nepal in Muscat and Manama were upgraded to the Ambassadorial level and the Consulate of Nepal in New York was upgraded to the level of Consul General during the period under review.

Efforts were initiated to formulate country-specific strategies development diplomacy. The Country-Specific Strategy Formulation Committee, formed as it was as per the decision of 'High-Level Development Diplomacy Operation and Monitoring Committee's meeting held on 29 December 2016, has been working to formulate such strategies. It is supposed to suggest development diplomacy measures by the end of June 2018.

The Ministry continued its efforts to strengthen and revitalize the Institute of Foreign Affairs, which works in the fields of research and training. A five-member task force led by former Ambassador Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai submitted a report for restructuring the Institute. Work has been initiated to implement the report's recommendations.

To standardize and synchronize the activities of the Ministry, an annual 'logframe of activities' was formulated and implemented. This was helpful for coordination and collaboration among Divisions, Departments and Missions.

Nepal and its Neighborhood

Diplomatic engagements with our

two immediate neighbours continued to remain a topmost foreign policy priority in 2016/17. Such engagements got inspired by Nepal's policy of maintaining a balanced relationship with India and China and further deepening good neighbourly relations. Our efforts were reflective of the intent to enhance a solid partnership with both neighbours, based on historic tradition, common culture, civilization and close linkages at people's level.

relations Nepal-India witnessed substantial engagements over the year. They derived strength from close and multifaceted linkages, respect of each other's aspirations, consolidation of development cooperation and renewed resolve and determination to enrich bilateral relations. The exchange of high-level visits, conclusion of important instruments and a focus on 'fast-tracking' the implementation of joint economic projects and agreements characterized the engagements 2016/17.

The year saw a number of high-level visits from both sides. The President, the Prime Minister, the Special Envoy of the Prime Minister, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs visited India. From the Indian side, the President, the Finance Minister, and the Minister of Railways visited Nepal. These high-level contacts contributed to strengthening the partnership between the two countries for development and prosperity. The visits proved instrumental in enhancing the mutually beneficial cooperation based on trust and mutual understanding.

Important agreements in the areas of road, infrastructure, energy, and post-earthquake reconstruction were concluded during the year under review. Engagements under different mechanisms also got intensified. Fourth Meeting of Nepal-India Joint Commission led by Foreign/ External Affairs Ministers made a comprehensive review of all aspects Nepal-India relations. Other Mechanisms sectoral issues. on Working Groups and project specific Committees reviewed Steering progress made in the respective areas and charted out future course of action.

The issue of implementation of joint economic projects and agreements received priority. A Joint Oversight Mechanism was formed under the joint chairmanship of Foreign Secretary on the Nepali side and Ambassador of India to Nepal on the Indian side. The Mechanism has been fully functional vis-à-vis its mandate to regularly monitor the progress made in the implementation of bilateral projects and agreements.

northern neighbour China, With relations continued to grow during the period under review. Regular exchange of high-level visits, conclusion of important bilateral agreements, meetings and consultations under different mechanisms and intensified people-to-people contacts contributed to further widening and deepening of Nepal-China ties. Underlying these engagements was the emphasis laid by both sides on making economic cooperation and connectivity central to their bilateral cooperation strategies.

Visits to China from the Nepali side included that of the Vice-President. the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Legislature Parliament and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance. From the Chinese side. State Councilor and Minister for Defense, Chairman of the People's Congress of TAR and Minister for State Administration for Industry and Commerce, among others, visited these high-level Nepal. During contacts, political, economic, social, cultural and all other major aspects of Nepal-China relations featured prominently.

The Agreements and MoUs signed between the two countries strengthened bilateral cooperation in areas such as infrastructure, connectivity, education and industrial development. Of them, the MoU on Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative signed by the two sides in Kathmandu on 12 May 2017 is expected to promote mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields including connectivity, trade, investment, technology and people-to-people contacts.

The eleventh meeting of Nepal-China Joint Consultation Mechanism held this year in Kathmandu reviewed the progress made in the implementation of agreements/MoUs reached between the two sides in the past. Similarly, various sectoral mechanisms including in the areas of trade, connectivity, postearthquake reconstruction assessed the status of progress and agreed on future directions. The focus of all such frameworks was on promotion of cooperation between the two sides

in order to further cultivate mutual understanding and enhance close cooperation in all sectors.

With reference to other countries in South Asia, our priority was to build on Nepal's friendly and cooperative partnership subsisting with them. Besides the bilateral engagement, friendship and collaboration at subregional, regional and multilateral frameworks also continued characterize our relations. Exchange of high-level visits, deliberations at different mechanisms, and interactions at various levels contributed towards the shared goals of development and prosperity.

Beyond Neighborhood: Nepal and the Rest of the World

The year witnessed Nepal's firm commitment to further expand and upgrade its bilateral relations with the countries beyond the immediate neighbourhood. Our focus was on enhancing Nepal's political, economic and commercial as well as cultural ties. Economic diplomacy remained at the centre of our engagements. Our relations continued to progress through exchange of visits, regular interactions at the political level, constant focus on revitalizing the existing bilateral mechanisms, establishing frameworks, and engagements under public diplomacy.

North East Asia, South East Asia, the Pacific and Oceania

Nepal's engagements with the

countries in North East Asia were guided by our priorities to expand relations in the areas of trade, investment, development cooperation and tourism. High-level interactions including during Ministerial visits exchanged between Nepal and these countries helped build a momentum in our bilateral relations.

The year 2016 marked the Diamond Jubilee of the establishment diplomatic relations between Nepal and Japan. The meeting of the Second Nepal-Japan Diplomatic Consultations between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries was held on 28 June 2016. Similarly, Nepal and the Republic of Korea held the Third Bilateral Consultation Mechanism meeting in Kathmandu on 21 October 2016. The Republic of Korea made substantial increment in the quota for Nepali workers under Employment Permit System from 3200 in 2017 to 10,200 for the year 2018.

Bilateral relations between Nepal and the countries in South East Asia, the Pacific and Oceania also continued to gain added momentum during the year under review. Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat's high-level interactions during his visits to Australia, New Zealand and Singapore helped enhance bilateral relations.

As in the previous years, Malaysia continued to attract a significant number of Nepali migrant workers, and hence the issues concerning safety, security and welfare of these workers remained our priority.

Similarly, besides agenda of economic cooperation, our engagements with Australia and Thailand were marked by initiatives to promote cultural and educational ties.

Whilea Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the establishment of Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between Foreign Ministries of Nepal and Australia was signed, separate MoUs to establish Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal and Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Laos and the Philippines were also under consideration.

Central Asia, West Asia and Africa

With the countries in Central Asia, West Asia and Africa. Nepal's oriented diplomatic efforts were towards expanding and consolidating bilateral relations through visits, economic cooperation and people-topeople contacts. Foreign employment related issues remained at the central stage in our dealings with the countries in the Gulf region. Cooperation and collaboration at regional and multilateral forums continued.

In January 2017, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' visited the UAE and addressed the 10th World Future Energy Summit as a keynote speaker. He underscored the investment opportunities and energy development potentials in Nepal and the efforts made in renewable energy. The Prime Minister held bilateral talks with the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi

and the Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai and discussed the need for enhancing bilateral cooperation in energy and infrastructure sector.

There are about 550,000 Nepali migrant workers in Saudi Arabia, 400,000 in Qatar, 200,000 in the UAE, 60,000 in Kuwait, 20,000 in Oman and 25,000 in Bahrain. Therefore, our diplomacy in these labour destination countries focused on matters related to safety, security and well-being of Nepali workers. The Ministry and Missions remained effortful to help workers get acquainted with local laws of the host governments and address the problems facing migrant workers.

Relations between Nepal and Israel saw an upward development in 2016/17. While around four thousand Nepali migrant workers in Israel constituted a vital link between the two countries, 'Earning by Learning' programme run as a part of agricultural cooperation opened up a new avenue in bilateral engagements.

South Africa's success and experience in three-tier governance system at national, provincial and local levels attracted a number of Nepali delegations over the year. Besides bilateral cooperation, collaboration at multilateral forums helped add momentum in our relations.

Similarly, Nepal and Egypt completed six decades of close and bilateral relations. The only country from African continent to have a residential diplomatic mission in Kathmandu – Egypt's cooperation in educational and cultural exchanges continued in 2016/17.

Europe and Americas

During the period under review, Nepal made efforts to enhance its relations with the countries in Europe and the Americas through high-level visits, conclusion of important agreements, formation of consultation mechanisms, and conduct of programmes under development diplomacy. Our diplomatic machinery was actively mobilized to consolidate development partnerships with countries in Europe and the Americas and garner their support for Nepal's development efforts.

In order to expand the diplomatic outreach, the Government of Nepal established residential diplomatic missions in Madrid and Vienna. The process to establish Bilateral Consultation Mechanisms between Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal and Foreign Ministries of various countries including Belgium, Denmark and Germany was initiated.

Various Programmes and exhibitions were organized to commemorate the bicentenary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and the United Kingdom. The Embassy of Nepal in London organized a 'Special Ceremony of Bicentennial Celebrations' on 14-20 March 2017. His Royal Highness Prince Henry of Wales and His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester graced the concluding and inaugural sessions of the Ceremony respectively.

The Third Meeting of Nepal-UK Bilateral Consultation Mechanism held in Kathmandu in March 2017 reviewed matters such as trade, investment, grievances of British Gurkhas and other aspects of bilateral cooperation.

Nepal-USA relations continued to grow during the year under review. The Visit of Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat to the USA in January 2017 and the visit of a Delegation led by US Congresswoman and former speaker of the House of Representatives Ms. Nancy Pelosi to Nepal in May 2017 helped consolidate the bilateral relations with a particular focus on economic cooperation.

The U.S. assistance of US\$ 500 million under Compact Program of the Millennium Challenge Corporation was agreed during the review period and is expected to be concluded in September 2017. The Compact includes the projects on energy and transportation sectors.

The year 2016 also marked the diamond jubilee of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Russia. Various programmes were organized both in Nepal and Russia to observe the occasion. Speaker of the Legislature-Parliament Ms. Onsari Gharti's visit to the Russian Federation also helped further augment Nepal-Russia ties.

Nepal-EU relations continued to make progress during the year. The visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat to the EU Institutions

in Brussels was instrumental with regard to cooperation for ongoing post-earthquake reconstruction. and collaboration in diverse areas of bilateral cooperation. The visit of an EU Parliamentary delegation led by Ms. Jean Lambert, Member of European Parliament and Chair of the Delegation for Relations with the countries of South Asia. added momentum to the high-level interactions. EU's development continued cooperation to Nepal through a number of projects in the fields of education, rural development and democratic governance.

Similarly, delegations from Austria, Canada, Finland, France, Italy, Russia, Spain, Turkey, the UK and the USA participated in Nepal Investment Summit held in Kathmandu on 2-3 March 2017. They expressed their intent in investing in various sectors ranging from infrastructure, energy, health, aviation and railways, among others.

Promoting trade, attracting investment and boosting tourism remained our priorities, and hence development prominently diplomacy figured in the function of our Missions. Nepal's Missions in the regions held highlighting Nepal's programmes natural beauty and showcasing the diverse cultures. Nearly three hundred thousand tourists visited Nepal from these regions in 2016/17. The cumulative investments from Europe and the Americas were worth about NRs. 1.18 billion.

Regional Cooperation

At the regional level, Nepal continued to engage constructively with other member states as the current Chair of SAARC and BIMSTEC processes as well as a member of Asia Cooperation Dialogue and Dialogue Partner of SCO. Our regional deliberations were characterized by the efforts on enhancing cooperation in areas of mutual interest and particularly promoting deeper economic integration for shared regional progress and prosperity.

Nepal proactively engaged with other member states for advancing the momentum of the SAARC process. Despite the postponement of the 19th Summit, the year witnessed good progress under SAARC. The Seventh Meeting of SAARC Interior/Home Ministers was held in Islamabad on 02-04 August 2016, in which Member States deliberated on the issues including counter-terrorism, narcotics drugs and cybercrimes. Hon. Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance led a Nepali delegation to the 8th Meeting of SAARC Finance Ministers held in Islamabad on 26 August 2016.

At the special invitation of the Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' attended the BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit in Goa, on 16 October 2016. The meeting provided momentum to the BIMSTEC process by adopting Goa Outcome Document and the Action Agenda.

The 17th Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) was held in Kathmandu on 7 February 2016. This was the first of any highlevel Meetings of BIMSTEC that was convened after Nepal assumed chairmanship of BIMSTEC in 2014.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat led a Nepali delegation to the 2nd Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Summit that was held in Bangkok on 08-10 October 2016. Nepal's focus was on strengthening cooperation on connectivity including road and rail networks, air links, waterways and transmission ways as a key enabler for development of the countries, especially the land-locked ones.

The 15th Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Ministerial Meeting was held in Abu Dhabi on 15-17 January 2017 on the theme of 'Sustainable Energy'. Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi led a Nepali delegation to the Meeting.

Similarly, one of the youngest dialogue partners of the SCO, Nepal was invited to take part in a few programmes under the SCO Framework.

Multilateral Engagements

In addition to our efforts in enhancing bilateral cooperation with friendly countries, Nepal continued to contribute to multilateral and global processes. Nepal's engagement was marked by the commitment to promote key universal values of human dignity, peace, and security and well-being of the people. Equally important

were Nepal's socio-economic development imperatives underlying the engagements in those forums.

The year saw Nepal's constructive engagements on the multilateral front. They were characterized by an exchange of high-level visits, ratification of different agreements and continued pursuit of Nepal's interest with regard to trade, development, and labour and migration.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari participated at the World of Work Summit organized by ILO as an integral part of the 106th Session of the International Labour Conference on 15 June 2017. Speaking as 'a highlighted special guest'. she Nepal's achievements concerning women's participation in politics and underscored the need to work collectively for promoting women's rights.

Vice-President Mr. Nanda Bahadur Pun led a Nepali delegation to the 17th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit held in Margarita Island, Venezuela on 17-18 September 2016. He reiterated Nepal's firm commitment to the NAM principles and processes and called for collective efforts in tackling common challenges facing the NAM member countries.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat participated in the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) that began on 13 September 2016. Addressing the General Assembly, he shed light on Nepal's position on global issues of importance and highlighted

future priorities of the Government. He also met UN Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon. Issues ranging from the implementation of the Constitution of Nepal, Nepal's role in UN peacekeeping operations, and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were discussed in the meeting.

Nepal was elected as a Vice-President of the UN General Assembly for the 71st session representing the Asia Pacific Group.

Nepal was elected, for the first time in 50 years of its ILO membership, as a Deputy Member of the ILO Governing Board for the period 2017-2020 at the 106th Session of the International Labour Conference in June 2017. Earlier in March, Nepal assumed the chair of the Colombo Process – a regional consultative process on the management of overseas employment and contractual labour for countries of origin in Asia.

Nepal continued to champion the cause and development priorities of LDCs and LLDCs at different forums. A Regional Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Least Developed Countries on Sustainable Energy was organized in Kathmandu on 22-23 March 2017.

Nepal started integrating the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development brought under the auspices of the UN into its national policies and programmes. Nepal also remained active in promoting the cause of LDCs on climate change issues under the framework of United Nations

Framework Convention on Climate Change.

In pursuance of the commitment to and respect for human rights, Nepal remained constructively engaged with the United Nations human rights mechanisms. Minister for Foreign Affairs attended the 34th Session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) and shared Nepal's human rights achievements with the international community.

Earlier this year, ILO Director General Mr. Guy Ryder's visit to Nepal in December 2016 provided an opportunity to review Nepal-ILO cooperation and deliberate on Nepal's priorities in the 'world of work'. Similarly, IAEA Director General Mr. Yukiya Amano's visit to Nepal in July 2017 added momentum towards enhancing Nepal-IAEA cooperation including in the areas of technical assistance, transfer of technology and capacity building.

Nepal ratified and/or extended support to a number of multilateral instruments this year. Nepal's ratification of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change on 4 October 2016 was a testimony to our commitment towards strengthening international, regional and national efforts to address the adverse impacts of climate change. Nepal also ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (1972). Nepal ratified the Trade Facilitation Agreement under the World Trade Organization (WTO) in January 2017. The Government of Nepal decided to extend its support to the Kigali Principles on the protection of civilians thereby reinforcing its longstanding policy of protecting civilians during UN peace operations.

Development Diplomacy

Economic development continues to remain a major objective of our diplomatic efforts. Economic agenda runs deep in our foreign policy engagements also in the context of our national goal(s) to graduate from the LDC status by 2022 and become a middle-income country by 2030.

With rapid economic growth taking place in our neighborhood, we actively pursued development diplomacy in 2016/17. Our efforts were also focused towards strengthening cooperation and strategic partnership with development partners and other friendly countries, regional frameworks, and international organizations. These efforts were centered on post-earthquake reconstruction process, promotion of trade and investment interests and strengthening of cultural ties with friendly countries.

'Non-resident Ambassadors' Symposium 2017' was organized in New Delhi on 5-6 May 2017 for Delhibased ambassadors and diplomatic missions concurrently accredited to Nepal. The Symposium highlighted and elucidated various dimensions of development diplomacy of Nepal and the prospects of opportunities for investment in Nepal.

Nepal Investment Summit was organized on 2-3 March 2017 in Kathmandu. The Ministry and Nepali diplomatic Missions coordinated with friendly governments and international organizations and investors to facilitate their participation in the Summit. Expression of intent worth US\$ 13.52 billion of investment in Nepal was a milestone of the Summit.

The Ministry remained focused with a commitment to making foreign employment safe, secure, dignified and productive. Our diplomatic Missions, particularly those in labour destination countries were engaged through dialogue and consultations with the concerned authorities of the host governments.

Tourism sector gained significant revival with the concerted efforts of Nepali diplomatic Missions overseas. The total number of tourist arrival that had declined by 32 percent in 2015 as compared to 2014 witnessed an increase by 40 percent in 2016.

Nepali Missions continued to engage with Nepali Diaspora towards utilizing their knowledge, skills, technology and capital in Nepal's development efforts. A number of Nepali Missions remained effortful to build on the diaspora-development nexus and collaborate with the NRNs to organize programmes on trade, investment, tourism, foreign employment, etc.

Service Delivery: Passport and Consular Affairs

Passport and consular services constitute a vital link connecting

common people directly with Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is due to this that an emphasis was placed on improving public service delivery at these ends. The Ministry laid priority on strengthening and capacity building of the Department of Passports and Department of Consular Services. Our efforts were oriented towards putting in place the measures aimed at enhancing the use of technology, promptness in service delivery and inter-agency coordination.

In 2016/17, the Department of Passports undertook various institutional, administrative and quality control reform measures in order to provide efficient, effective and predictable public services. A decision was made in September 2016 to reduce passport fees by US\$ 30 for Nepali migrants working in major labor destination countries.

Some other reform initiatives included introduction of the 'Live Enrollment System' to collect and process digital passport application forms, launch of a mobile application called Passport', introduction of 'Digital Distribution System' for maintaining digital archive of the passports issued and broader use of social media to connect to service seekers. These innovations helped maintain quality and uphold standardized passport delivery services that led to the award of ISO 9001:2015 to the Department thereby making it the first and only public office of the Government of Nepal to receive the ISO certification in quality management system.

As of 15 July 2017, a total of 4, 926,532 MRPs were issued since the beginning of the issuance of MRPs in Nepal in December 2010. In the year 2016/17, the Department produced a total of 5, 57,188 MRPs.

Similarly, the Department of Consular Services (DoCS) remained effortful to provide effective and efficient consular services to Nepali nationals, diplomatic community based in Kathmandu and other service-seekers. The Department embraced 'e-governance' to ensure efficiency and promptness of its services. A particular focus was laid on coordination with Nepali missions abroad in providing legal assistance, securing compensation and insurance amount to victims and/or their families.

The Department introduced 'Online Legal Services' with a view to addressing the problems facing Nepali nationals working and studying abroad.

'Online Visa Recommendation' system was launched to ensure promptness in visa application process and ensure more reliability in communicating to the diplomatic Missions. 'Online Attestation Verification' was another such initiative that was introduced to help an online verification of the documents issued by our government agencies and attested by the Department.

Since 1 January 2017, the Department has made 'service delivery within half an hour' its motto and all consular attestation services are catered to the service seekers accordingly. 'Emergency Hotline Service' has been introduced to provide the needy with an easy and quick access to the Department and Nepali Missions abroad. Introduction of 'token system' and 'feedback form' are also new initiatives put in place to standardize and constantly upgrade the quality of consular services.

2. Neighbouring Countries and South Asia

Nepal continued to intensively engage in advancing its relations with immediate neighbours India and China, and the countries of South Asia - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka - in 2016/17. Nepal enjoys excellent relations with these countries in political, social, economic, cultural and other aspects.

India

Nepal-India relations witnessed greater engagements at various levels with an enhanced level of trust and understanding. This was reflected in the exchange of a number of highlevel visits. The period also saw an expansion of cooperation and an increased focus on the implementation of agreements and development cooperation projects.

Exchange of High-level Visits

The President of Nepal Ms. Bidya Devi Bhandari paid a 5-day State Visit to India on April 17- 21, 2017 at the invitation of the President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee. The visit was significant to the continuation of highlevel political engagements of the two countries.

The President had meetings with the President and the Prime Minister of India. Views were exchanged on further strengthening the historical ties between Nepal and India. Both sides discussed various areas of cooperation including hydropower, infrastructure development, cross-border connectivity

and post-earthquake reconstruction, and agreed on the need for further expanding bilateral cooperation.

The President appreciated the priority given by the Government of India to its relations with neighbouring countries under 'neighbourhood first' policy. Both the President and the Prime Minister of India stated India's commitment to support Nepal's efforts for progress and development.

Interaction with business community was a key event of the President's engagements during the visit. While addressing the business event jointly organized by the Ministry of External Affairs of India, Confederation of Indian Industry, Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and ASSOCHAM India, the President urged the Indian investors to take advantage of investment opportunities in Nepal.

The President also visited the well-known religious and cultural sites in Somnath and Dwarka in Gujarat, and Bhubaneswar and Puri in Orissa.



The President Meets her Indian Counterpart Shri Pranab Mukherjee



Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, Calls on the President.

At the invitation of the President of Nepal, President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee paid a three-day State Visit to Nepal from 2 to 4 November 2016. The visit was yet another milestone in further cementing cordial relations between the two countries.

During the bilateral meeting, the two Presidents exchanged views on various aspects of Nepal-India relations. They shared that Nepal-India relations stood on a solid foundation of common culture, civilization and close linkages at people's level. The President of India congratulated the President of Nepal, Nepali people and the Constituent Assembly on the promulgation of the Constitution last year and its subsequent amendment.

The President of India was accorded Civic Receptions by Kathmandu Metropolis on 3 November 2016 and Janakpur Municipality on 4 November 2016 amidst special ceremonies.

The Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Chancellor of Kathmandu University, conferred on the President of India an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters (D. Litt.) during a Special Convocation Ceremony organized on 3 November 2016 on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the University.

The Prime Minister of Nepal paid a four-day State Visit to India on 15-18 September 2016 at the cordial invitation of the Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi.

During the meeting, the two Prime Ministers held extensive discussion on various aspects of Nepal-India relations and shared a firm determination to forge an enduring partnership for development and prosperity. Talks also covered matters pertaining to socioeconomic development with particular emphasis on energy, connectivity, trade, investment and tourism. Both Prime Ministers underscored the need to



Prime Ministers of Nepal and India Addressing the Joint Press Meet

effectively implement ongoing projects in a time-bound manner and to this end, agreed to establish a joint oversight mechanism which would monitor, on a regular basis, the progress made in the implementation of bilateral projects and agreements. They also stressed the need for an early finalization of the DPR of Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project and realization of other hydropower projects being implemented by India's public/private developers.



Prime Ministers of Nepal and India at Hyderabad House, New Delhi

Major outcome of the Prime Minister's

Visit was documented in a 25-point Joint Statement. The two Prime Ministers addressed a joint Press Meet highlighting the major outcomes of the talks at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi.

The following MoUs/Agreements were signed and exchanged during the visit:

- MoU Between Department of Roads, Postal Highway Project of the Government of Nepal and M/s National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited of India for Project Management Consultancy Services for Upgradation/Improvement of Road Infrastructure in Terai Area,
- First Amendatory Dollar credit line agreement between the Government of Nepal and EXIM Bank,

 Dollar Credit line agreement between the Government of Nepal and EXIM Bank on Line of Credit for post-earthquake reconstruction projects.

During the Visit, the Prime Minister was accorded a Civic Reception by India Foundation, a think tank in New Delhi on 17 September. The Prime Minister delivered a statement on the theme of 'Nepal-India Partnership for the 21st Century'.

The Prime Minister also addressed a business event jointly organized by the Ministry of External Affairs of India, Confederation of Indian Industry, Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and ASSOCHAM India. The Prime Minister welcomed Indian investment in Nepal and assured the Government's commitment to further improve investment climate in the country.

In continuation of the high-level engagements between the two countries, the Prime Ministers of Nepal and India met on the sidelines of BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit convened by the Prime Minister of India in Goa on 16 October 2016.



The Prime Minister with his Indian Counterpart in Goa, India

The first meeting of the Joint Oversight Mechanism was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kathmandu on 29 November 2016. The Mechanism has been formed under the cochairmanship of the Foreign Secretary of Nepal and the Ambassador of India to Nepal.

The meeting comprehensively reviewed the progress made in crossborder rail projects, Integrated Check Posts. cross-border transmission lines, Arun III and Upper Karnali Hydropower Projects, Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project, Postal roads. projects under various Lines of Credit including Mahakali Bridge, and reconstruction projects under Government of India's cooperation, among others. As of 15 July 2017, four rounds of meeting of the Mechanism were held.



First Meeting of Nepal-India Oversight Mechanism

Speaker of the Legislature Parliament, Ms. Onsari Gharti Magar visited India on 17-20 February 2017 to participate in the 2017 South Asian Speakers' Summit on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Summit deliberated on the role of Parliament in the implementation of the SDGs.

Likewise, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Mr. Krishna Bahadur Mahara visited India on 2 April 2017 to participate in the SASEC Finance Ministers' meeting.

Mr. Bimalendra Nidhi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs, visited India on 18-20 August 2016 as the Special Envoy of the Prime Minister soon after the formation of the new Government. He called on the President and the Prime Minister of India and had meetings with senior cabinet ministers of India.

Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Minister for Foreign Affairs, visited India on 11-13 September 2016. He met Minister of External Affairs of India Smt. Sushma Swaraj and held discussions on various matters of bilateral relations. They underlined the need for expeditious implementation of all agreed and ongoing projects under Nepal-India cooperation.

Dr. Mahat addressed the opening panel of the 2nd edition of the Raisina Dialogue organized in New Delhi on 17 January 2017 by the Ministry of External Affairs of India in partnership with the Observer Research Foundation. He delivered a statement on the theme of 'Big Politics and New Challenges', underscoring the importance of multilateral approach in addressing major challenges facing the world today.

A delegation of the Legislature-Parliament's International Relations and Labour Committee led by the Committee Chairman, Mr. Prabhu Sah visited India on 05-12 March 2017 to study foreign policy formulation and management in a federal set up.

Nepal- India Joint Commission



Signing of the Outcome Document of the 4th JC Meeting

Nepal-India Joint Commission held its fourth meeting in New Delhi on 27 October 2016. Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal and Mr. M. J. Akbar, Minister of State for External Affairs of India co-chaired the meeting.

The meeting made a thorough review of all aspects of Nepal-India relations under five broad clusters namely political, security and boundary; economic cooperation and infrastructure; trade and transit; power and water resources; culture and education. It adopted Agreed Minutes as its outcome. The final outcome of the meeting covered, *inter alia*, the following important matters:

- Clearance of DPRs of the roads, Mahakali Bridge and irrigation projects to be implemented through the concessional loan provided by the Government of India in 2014,
- Expeditious completion of the phase I of Terai roads,

- Early completion of the two ongoing cross-border railway link projects namely Biratnagar-Jogbani and Bardibas-Bijalpura-Jaynagar and initiation of works for the three other agreed crossborder rail link projects namely Nepalgunj-Nepalgunj Road, Kakarbhitta-New Jalpaiguri, and Bhairahawa-Nautanawa,
- Early completion of works of integrated check post at Birgunj and commencement of construction of integrated check post at Biratnagar,
- Finalization of projects to utilize grant and loan components offered by the Government of India for reconstruction.
- Concrete measures to enhance Nepal's export to India by, inter alia, addressing the concerns related to additional duties and charges, quantitative restrictions and rules of origin,
- Resolving the matter related to Nepal's request for additional air entry routes,
- Operationalizing the open market provisions of the bilateral Power Trade Agreement,
- Developing infrastructure for required additional irrigation facility for Nepal under the Gandak Agreement,
- Link canal and other infrastructure related to Mahakali Irrigation Project,

 Undertaking joint inspection to resolve the issue of inundation in Terai area.

The meeting of the Joint Commission was preceded by the preparatory meeting of the senior officials led by the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries on 26 October 2016.

Ambassadors' Symposium on Nepal's Economic Diplomacy

With the aim of engaging diplomatic community in Nepal's development efforts, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the support of Embassy of Nepal in New Delhi, the Institute for Strategic and Socio-Economic Research and Pavilion Group Nepal, organized an Ambassadors' symposium in New Delhi on 5-6 May 2017 under the theme 'Enhancing Bilateral Economic Cooperation with Countries having Diplomatic Relations with Nepal'. New Delhi hosts the largest number of diplomatic missions concurrently accredited to Nepal.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat delivered a keynote address at the inaugural session in which he highlighted the importance of foreign investment in Nepal to achieve economic growth and realize the country's development aspirations.

Minister of State of External Affairs of India Gen. V. K. Singh also addressed the Symposium shedding light on the deep-rooted Nepal-India relations and substantial engagements between the two countries in trade, investment, tourism and other

components of economy. He assured of India's continued support to Nepal's development efforts.

Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi chaired the thematic session on the investment opportunities in Nepal. He underscored the need for massive investment in productive sectors in order to materialize Nepal's development vision and urged partner countries to encourage their investment in Nepal.

Finance Minister of India Attends Nepal Investment Summit

Shri Arun Jaitley, Minister of Finance of India, was invited to deliver a keynote speech at the Nepal Investment Summit held in Kathmandu on 3 March 2017. He said that India was deeply committed to help Nepal in its efforts for economic growth by attracting domestic and foreign investments.

Minister of Railways of India attends Nepal Infrastructure Summit

Shri Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu, Minister of Railways of India, delivered a keynote speech at the Nepal Infrastructure Summit held in Kathmandu on 19-20 February 2017. He said that India would create a cross-border railway connectivity as soon as possible in order to connect Kathmandu with two Indian cities — New Delhi and Kolkata.

At the request of Nepali side, the Government of India, through a notification on 20 April 2017, removed CVD imposed on Nepali jute products.

The Supply Agreement between

Nepal Oil Corporation and Indian Oil Corporation Limited was renewed for the next five years on 27 March 2017. Minister for Supplies Mr. Deepak Bohara and Minister of State (I/C) for Petroleum and Natural Gas of India, Mr. Dharmendra Pradhan witnessed the signing of the Agreement.

The first meeting of Eminent Persons' Group on Nepal-India Relations (EPG-NIR) was held in Kathmandu on 25-26 July 2016. Nepal and India, as per the agreement reached during the 3rd meeting of the Joint Commission in July 2014, constituted the Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) to prepare a joint report with recommendations on improving bilateral relations between Nepal and India in the changed context including by reviewing existing treaties. So far, the Group has met for four times alternately in Nepal and India.

Nepal-India Home Secretary Level Meeting was held in New Delhi on 8-9 September 2016. Home Secretaries Mr. Lok Darshan Regmi and Mr. Rajiv Mehrishi led the Nepali and Indian delegations, respectively. The meeting held discussions on comprehensive issues related to security, border management, strengthening border infrastructure, Postal Road construction, inundation at border areas, and training and capacity building of law enforcement officials.

The 32nd Meeting of the Board of Directors of B. P. Koirala Nepal-India Foundation was held at Alwar, Rajasthan, India on 31 December 2016. The meeting was co-chaired by Mr.

Deep Kumar Upadhyaya, Ambassador of Nepal to India and Mr. Ranjit Rae, Ambassador of India to Nepal. The meeting reviewed the progress made by the Foundation in the last 25 years of its operation. The B. P. Koirala Foundation Delhi Secretariat based at the Embassy of Nepal completed 54 projects in 2016.

The Eleventh Meeting of Nepal-India Joint Committee on Inundation and Flood Management (JCIFM) was held in Kathmandu on 16-21 April 2017. The meeting of the joint committee in Kathmandu was preceded by joint field visit to the ongoing and proposed flood protection works along the Kamala, Bagmati and Lalbakaiya rivers. The issues of physical and financial review of all works in Kamala, Bagmati and Lalbakeya; ongoing works and release of fund; flood forecasting issue; flood inundation issue and other relevant matters were discussed.

During the period under review, the 6th Meeting of Nepal-India Joint Agriculture Working Group was held and civil aviation authorities of two countries also met for bilateral talks.

The People's Republic of China

Relations between Nepal and the People's Republic of China continued to grow in 2016/17. Regular exchange of high-level visits, meetings political leaders on different occasions, holding of the 11th Joint Consultation Mechanism meeting, conclusion of important bilateral instruments, expansion of economic development agenda and intensified

people-to-people contacts were the main developments that contributed to further widen and deepen Nepal-China relations.

Exchange of Visits

Vice-President Mr. Nanda Bahadur Pun paid an official visit to Lanzhou, China on 4-10 July 2017 and delivered a key note speech on 6 July at the Opening Ceremony of the 23rd China-Lanzhou Investment and Trade Fair and High-end Forum for Cooperation and Development along the Silk Road as the Guest of Honor. On 7 July, he also delivered a keynote speech at the "Nepal-China (Gansu) Economic and Trade Exchanges Conference", organized by the Embassy of Nepal in Beijing in collaboration with Gansu Provincial People's Government in Lanzhou. The Vice-President also visited Yannan and Xi'an of Shaanxi Province from 8to 9 July 2017.



Vice President Mr. Nanda Bahadur Pun addressing the 23rd China-Lanzhou Investment and Trade Fair and High-end Forum for Cooperation and Development along the Silk Road in Lanzhou.

Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' paid an official visit to China on 23-29 March 2017. He attended the Opening Session of the 2017 Annual Conference of the

Boao Forum for Asia held in Boao and addressed the Forum on 25 March 2017 on the theme 'Globalization and Free Trade: Asian Perspectives'. The Prime Minster, in his remarks, stressed the need for making globalization more inclusive and reinvigorated so as to ensure equitable benefits to all countries. On the sidelines of the Forum, he had a meeting with Mr. Zhang Gaoli, Vice Premier of China in which the matters of mutual interests were discussed.

After the Boao Forum, the Prime Minister visited Beijing and had a meeting with the Chinese President Mr. Xi Jinping on 27 March 2017. This was the second time Mr. 'Prachanda' met the Chinese President as Prime Minister during his second tenure. The two leaders had met earlier in Goa during the BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit in 2016.



Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' Addressing the Boao Forum for Asia

At the meeting with the Chinese President in Beijing, major aspects of Nepal-China relations were discussed. The Prime Minister reiterated Nepal's One-China policy and expressed commitment not to allowing Nepal's territory for any hostile activities directed towards neighbours. The two leaders underscored that the *Panchasheel* constituted the bedrock of Nepal-China relations.



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

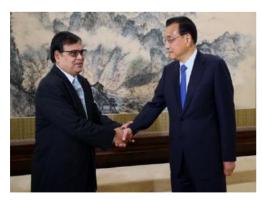
The leaders shared views on political ties, economic development, cultural and people-to-people relations, cross-border connectivity including railways, investment, trade, and tourism.

On 26 March, the Prime Minister unveiled a plaque of "Nepal Study Centre" jointly with the president of the Beijing Foreign Studies University amidst a ceremony held at the University. He also delivered a keynote speech on 'Nepal-China Relations: Prospects for Growth and Prosperity'. The Prime Minister also addressed the prominent businessmen and entrepreneurs on the roundtable entitled "Investment opportunities in Nepal" on 27 March, which was jointly organized by the Embassy of Nepal and China Council for the Promotion of International Trade. The Prime Minister called for more investment from China and assured the investors of Government's commitment to protect and promote investment.

On his way back home, the Prime Minister visited Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and met senior leaders.

On 18-24 September 2016, Speaker of the Legislature Parliament Ms. Onsari Gharti Magar visited China as Guest of Honor at the Silk Road (Dunhuang) International Culture Expo (SRICE) in Gansu Province. She addressed the opening ceremony of the Expo and highlighted the importance of closer economic and cultural cooperation for mutual benefits. She met senior provincial leaders and exchanged views on promoting bilateral relations.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Mr. Krishna Bahadur Mahara visited China on 15-20 August 2016 as Special Envoy of Prime Minister soon after the formation of the new Government. He had a meeting with Mr. Wang Yi, Foreign Minister of China on 16 August 2016. The Deputy Prime Minister also paid a courtesy call on Mr. Li Keqiang, Premier of the State Council in Beijing on 17 August 2016.



DPM Mr. Krishna Bahadur Mahara Calling on Chinese Premier H.E. Li Keqian

Mr. Mahara also visited Lhasa, China

at the invitation of the Government of China to attend, as Guest of Honor, the inaugural programme of the Third China Tibet Tourism and Culture Exposition, 2016 on 10 September 2016.

Mr. Mahara visited China from 13 to 16 May 2017 leading a Nepali delegation to attend the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation held in Beijing. The delegation consisted of Mr. Ramesh Lekhak, Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport, Mr. Surendra Kumar Karki, Minister for Information and Communication and other senior government officials.



Nepali Delegation attending the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, Beijing

During the visit, Mr. Mahara also had a meeting with Mr. Wang Yang, Vice Premier of the State Council on the sideline of the Forum on 14 May. Also on the same day, Mr. Karki delivered brief remarks in the thematic session on Connectivity and Development Policies and Strategies."

Similarly, Mr. Lekhak had a bilateral meeting with his Chinese counterpart Mr. Li Xiaopeng, Minister of Transport of China on 16 May.

Minister for Defense Mr. Bal Krishna Khand visited China to attend the 7th Xiangshan Forum, co-hosted by the

Chinese Association for Military Science and the China Institute for International Strategic Studies, held in Beijing on 10-12 October 2016. In Beijing, he had a meeting with Chinese State Councilor and Defense Minister General Chang Wanquan on 11 October 2016.

Minister for Health Mr. Gagan Kumar Thapa visited China on 23-26 November 2016 to participate in Global Conference on Health Promotion' organized by World Health Organization.

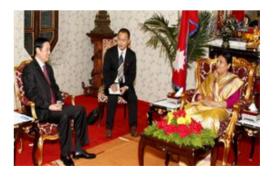
Α Parliamentary delegation comprising of twelve Members from northern border districts of Nepal and led by Mr. Bal Bahadur K. C. visited Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), Chengdu and Hainan from 26 October - 4 November 2016 at the invitation of the TAR Government. Likewise, a delegation led by Mr. Vishma Raj Angdembe, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Industry, Commerce and Consumer Welfare, visited Beijing and Shanghai on 09-20 November 2016. The delegation called on Mr. Zhang Mao, Minister, State Administration for Industry and Commerce in Beijing on 10 November 2016.

There were also visits from Supreme Court of Nepal. The visits included those of Justices Mr. Gopal Parajuli from 17 to 22 September 2016, Mr. Baidhyanath Upadhyaya from 13 to 15 November 2016 and Mr. Hari Krishna Karki from 4 to 11 June 2017.

From the Chinese side, a number of

high-level visits took place during the reporting period. Mr. Baima Chilin, Chairman of the People's Congress of TAR, visited Nepal on 21-27 December 2016. He called on the Speaker of the Legislature-Parliament, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs Mr. Bimalendra Nidhi, Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, and Minister for Federal Affairs and Local Development Mr. Hitraj Pandey.

Mr. Liu Qibao, Member of Political Bureau and Secretariat of Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and Chief of the CPC Publicity Department visited Nepal on 18-20 December 2016. He held meeting with Mr. Krishna Bahadur Deputy Prime Minister Mahara, and Minister for Finance, and paid courtesy calls on the President and Prime Minister. He also met leaders of political parties. He attended the book launching ceremony of Nepali version of 'Xi Jinping: The Governance of China' and also attended the opening ceremony of the 7th China Festival in Kathmandu held on 19-22 December 2016.



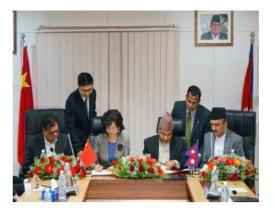
Mr. Liu Qibao Paying Courtesy Call on the President

General Chang Wanquan, State Councilor and Minister for Defense of China visited Nepal at the invitation of Mr. Bal Krishna Khand, Minister for Defense, on 23-25 March 2017. The two Ministers held talks on bilateral cooperation. Two MoUs on Military Assistance Gratis of RMB 200 million were signed on that occasion. He paid courtesy calls on the President, Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs, and had a meeting with Chief of Army Staff General Rajendra Chhetri.

Mr. Zhang Mao, Minister for State Administration for Industry and Commerce of China visited Nepal on 18-21 October 2016. An 'MoU on Consumer Right's Protection' was signed between Nepal and China during the visit. He paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister and met the Ministers for Industries and Supplies.

Agreements/MoUs Signed between Nepal and China

On 12 May 2017, Nepal and China signed the MoU on Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative in Kathmandu. Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi and Ambassador of China to Nepal Ms. Yu Hong signed the MoU on behalf of their respective governments at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The MoU aims at promoting mutually beneficial cooperation between Nepal and China in various fields such as policy coordination, connectivity, economy, environment, technology and people-to -people relations, among others.



Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi and Ambassador of China to Nepal H.E. Yu Hong signing the MoU on Belt and Road Imitative in Kathmandu.

On 23 December 2016, Mr. Leela Mani Paudyal, Ambassador of Nepal to China and Mr. Zhang Xiangchen, Vice Minister at Ministry of Commerce of China signed the agreement on the utilization of RMB 1 billion grant assistance provided by the Chinese Government to Nepal for postearthquakes reconstruction.

The Ministry of Industry of the Government of Nepal and the State Administration for Industry and Commerce of China signed the MoU in the Field of Registration of Industrial Entities on 7 July 2017.

Ministry of Health and Population of Nepal and Central South University (CSU), Changsha, Hunan signed an MoU on Education Cooperation in Beijing on 6 June 2017. Ambassador of Nepal to China Mr. Leela Mani Paudyal signed the MoU on behalf of the Government of Nepal.

On 9 May 2017, Mr. Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Mr. Zhong Shan, Minister of Commerce of China signed the MoU on Construction of Nepal-China Cross-Border Economic Cooperation Zone. The MoU aims at strengthening economic cooperation and accelerating development in border regions of the two countries.

Kathmandu Metropolitan City and Chengdu City of Sichuan Province of China signed an Agreement on the establishment of Sister City Relations in Kathmandu on 23 December 2016.

The Ministry of Supplies of the Government of Nepal and the State Administration for Industry and Commerce (SAIC) of China signed the MoU in the Field of Consumer Rights Protection on 19 October 2016.

Meetings under Bilateral Mechanisms

The 11th Meeting of Nepal-China Joint Consultation Mechanism was held in Kathmandu on 20 June 2017. Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi led Nepali delegation and Mr. Kong Xuanyou, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (PRC) led the Chinese delegation.

The two sides reviewed the status of Nepal-China relations and assessed the progress made in the implementation of agreements/MoUs reached in the past. Both sides pledged to further promote cooperation in mutually agreed areas.

The 7th meeting of Nepal-China's Tibet Trade Facilitation Committee

was held in Lhasa on 21-25 September 2016.

The 29th Border Customs Meeting between the Department of Customs, Nepal and Department of Customs, Lhasa was held in TAR on 4-9 August 2016.

In June 2017, Nepal and China agreed to upgrade the Rasuwagadhi/Keyrong Port as an international port as per the bilateral agreement signed on 14 January 2012.

The consultation meeting for the amendment of the Protocol on the Utilization of Highways in Tibet, China by Nepal for Cargo Transport and the first preliminary meeting for the development of Protocol of Transit Transport Agreement were held in Lhasa, TAR on 17-18 November 2016.

The 14th Meeting of Nepal-China Non-Governmental Cooperation Forum was held in Kathmandu on 31 May 2017. Ms. Bhawani Rana, President of Federation of Nepali Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) and Mr. Xie Jingrong, Vice Chairman of All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce (ACFIC) led the Nepali and Chinese delegations respectively.

Development Diplomacy, Peopleto-People Relations and Cultural Events

The Embassy of Nepal in Beijing and the Consulates General of Nepal in Lhasa, Hong Kong, and Guangzhou organized a series of promotional events during the period under review. Major events included:

- 2561st Buddha Jayanti/Lumbini Day 2074 in Beijing on 10 May 2017,
- Tourism promotional programmes in Beijing in December 2016 and January 2017, four exclusive programmes in Chengdu, Guangzhou, Hangzhou and Beijing on 8, 9, 11 and 14 June 2017 respectively,

Two Nepal-specific programmes for promotion of tourism, investment and trade in Yunnan and Gansu Provinces on 13 June and 7 July 2017 respectively,



Buddhist Monks at a Prayer Programme Organized by the Embassy to Mark 2561st Anniversary of Buddha's Birthday

- A programme to launch 'Nepal Tourism Promotion Year 2017 in China' in Beijing on 21 April 2017,
- Two interaction programmes on 'Investment Opportunities in Nepal' and 'Tourism Potentialities of Nepal' in Lhasa on 2 June 2017 and 6 June 2017,
- A trade promotion programme entitled 'Hong Kong Nepal Trade Fair 2017' in Hong Kong on 24 -25 June 2017,

- Investment promotion programme 'Opportunities of Investment in Nepal' in Hong Kong on 24 June 2017,
- A tourism promotion programme 'Tourism Promotion of Nepal: The Birthplace of Shakyamuni Buddha' in Guangzhou on 8 July 2017.

Afghanistan

Nepal and Afghanistan continued to enjoy good bilateral relations during 2016/17. They worked together in regional and multilateral forums to advance the cause of LDCs and LLDCs.

The Government of Nepal condemned a series of terrorist attacks in various locations in Afghanistan and expressed solidarity with the people and Government of Afghanistan. As a fellow SAARC member, Nepal has consistently called for peace and stability in Afghanistan. Nepal attaches high priority to safety and security of Nepali nationals working in Afghanistan. The two Governments maintain close cooperation in this regard.

Bangladesh

The relations between Nepal and the People's Republic of Bangladesh continued to grow during 2016/17.

Chief Justice Ms. Sushila Karki led a five-member delegation to participate in the South Asian Conference of Chief Justices on Climate Change held in Dhaka on 24-26 November 2016. She

highlighted the role played by Nepal's Judiciary with regard to environmental law and climate change.

An eight-member Nepali delegation led by Ms. Onsari Gharti Magar, Speaker of the Legislature-Parliament, participated in the 136th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Dhaka from 1-5 April 2017. She spoke on the need for addressing inequalities by delivering dignity and well-being for all.

Minister for Commerce Mr. Romi Gauchan Thakali attended the 'Ninth South Asia Economic Summit' convened in Dhaka on 14-17 October 2016. Similarly, Mr. Surendra Kumar Karki, Minister for Information and Communications, participated in the "Digital World 2016" held in Dhaka on 19-21 October 2016. Minister for Labor and Employment Mr. Surva Man Gurung took part in the 'Global Forum on Migration and Development Summit' held in Dhaka on 9-13 December 2016.

Various exchange programmes reflecting a close cooperation between Nepal Army and Bangladesh Army were organized. Chief of the Army Staff Gen. Rajendra Chhetri visited Bangladesh on 15- 20 November 2016. From the Bangladesh side, Chief of Staff of Bangladesh Army, General Abu Belal Muhammad Safiul visited Nepal on 6-10 June 2017.

The Third Meeting of Nepal-Bangladesh Technical Committee on Trade was held in Dhaka on 23-24 January 2017. The meeting discussed

various aspects of Nepal-Bangladesh trade and connectivity issues including operational modalities for carriage of transit cargo between Nepal and Bangladesh, duty-free/preferential market access for the agricultural and industrial products, and harmonization of sanitary and phytosanitary measures.

Bhutan

Relations between Nepal and Bhutan are underpinned by the commonalities in religion and culture that bring peoples of the two countries closer.

Nepal and Bhutan, mountainous and landlocked as they are, share similar aspirations for development and work together in regional and international forums on issues of common interest.

The Prime Minster had a meeting with his Bhutanese counterpart on the sidelines of the BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit in Goa in October 2016. The two Prime Ministers exchanged views on promoting bilateral relations. The Prime Minister of Nepal urged the Bhutanese Prime Minister to show flexibility in resolving the problem of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal and allow the refugees to return to their homeland.

Since the early 1990s, about 118,000 Bhutanese refugees entered Nepal. Nepal has provided shelter to the refugees on humanitarian grounds. Nepal agreed to facilitate third country resettlement of Bhutanese refugees as a temporary measure only and continues to hold its position that they must be allowed to return home with dignity and honour.

Maldives

The year witnessed further strengthening of Nepal-Maldives relations that are marked by cordiality, goodwill, cooperation and mutual understanding.

Nepal and the Maldives work closely in the regional and multilateral forums to pursue common agenda for development.

The Armies of two countries also maintained high-level contacts during the period under review. The Chief of Army Staff of the Maldives, Mr. Ahmed Siyam, visited Nepal in October 2016.

About three thousand Nepali nationals are employed in the Maldives. This serves as an important aspect of people-to-people contacts. Some Nepali medical officers and consultant doctors have been serving at health institutions of the Maldives. A number of Maldivian students are also studying medicine in Nepal.

Pakistan

Nepal and Pakistan have been enjoying friendly and cordial bilateral relations ever since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1960.

The Foreign Minister of Nepal had a courtesy meeting with Mr. Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of Pakistan on the sidelines of the 71st Session of the UNGA in New York. The two sides exchanged views on strengthening bilateral cooperation and reinvigorating SAARC process.

A number of visits took place in connection with SAARC related meetings. They included the visit of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Mr. Krishna Bahadur Mahara to participate in the 8th Meeting of the SAARC Finance Ministers held in Islamabad on 25-26 August 2016, the visit of Mr. Narayan Gopal Malego, Secretary, Ministry of Home to participate in the SAARC Interior Ministers' Meeting held on 4-5 August 2016, the visit of Dr. Ganesh Raj Joshi, Commissioner, Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority to participate in 'SAARC Nations Seminar on Anticorruption' held in Islamabad on 25-27 September 2016, and that of Ms. Chitralekha Yadav. member of Legislature-Parliament, to participate in the regional conference on 'Role of Women Parliamentarians Strengthening Democracy and Social Justice' held in Islamabad on 12-14 March 2017.

Federal Minister for Climate Change Mr. Zahid Hamid of Pakistan participated in the 2nd Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection (GSLEP) held in Kathmandu on 19-20 January 2017.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the State Bank of Pakistan and Nepal Rastra Bank in Karachi on 9 February 2017 in order to cooperate in the field of supervision and exchange of supervisory information in accordance with Basel Core Principles for Effective Banking Supervision.

Each year Pakistan provides scholarships for Nepali students to study higher education in medical, engineering and pharmaceutical fields under Pakistan Technical Assistance Programme. This year 14 students were selected by the Ministry of Education to pursue higher education in Pakistan.

Sri Lanka

This year marked the diamond jubilee of Nepal- Sri Lanka diplomatic relations. The sixty years of relations have remained fruitful in consolidating cooperation in the areas of mutual interest.

The visit of the President of Nepal to Sri Lanka on 13-16 May 2017 provided a momentum in advancing relations between the two countries. The President addressed, as Chief Guest, the Closing Ceremony of United Nations Vesak Day organized under the theme of 'Buddhist Teachings for Social Justice and Sustainable World Peace' in Kandy on 14 May 2017. She highlighted the teachings of Lord Buddha and their relevance in the present context for world peace and social harmony. The event was also attended by the President of Sri Lanka Mr. Maithripala Sirisena, other high-ranking officials of the Government of Sri Lanka as well as Buddhist Scholars from seventy-two countries. The President also paid homage to Sacred Tooth Relics of Lord Buddha at Dalada Maligawa in Kandy.



The President Addressing the Vesak Day Ceremony

The President had a bilateral meeting with her Sri Lankan counterpart in Colombo. She was received with warmth and the meeting was held in a very friendly and cordial atmosphere. The President extended invitation to the President of Sri Lanka to pay a State visit to Nepal. The President of Sri Lanka accepted the invitation and conveyed that the date would be worked out through diplomatic channels.



The President with Her Sri Lankan Counterpart

The Prime Minister of Nepal had a meeting with the President of Sri Lanka on the sidelines of the BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit held in Goa in October 2016. They discussed matters of mutual interest, including reconstruction of temples of archaeological and historical importance damaged by the earthquakes and the visit of the President of Sri Lanka to Nepal.

As a token of solidarity, the Government of Nepal contributed US\$ 50,000 as relief assistance to the Government of Sri Lanka to support the rescue efforts

in the aftermath of floods and landslides in southern and western parts of Sri Lanka in May 2017.

The Government of Sri Lanka has started renovation of two heritage sites in Kathmandu Valley- Ananda Kuti Vihar and Rato Machhindranath Temple- damaged by the 2015 earthquakes.

3. North East Asia, South Easst

Bilateral relations between Nepal and the countries from North East Asia, South East Asia, the Pacific and Oceania remained cordial and friendly in 2016/17. The bilateral relations with these countries were further consolidated by an exchange of visits, conclusion of various agreements/ MoUs, meetings within the established mechanisms and people-to-people contacts. Efforts were made to further cooperation with expand these countries especially in the areas of trade, tourism and investment.

Japan

Nepal and Japan celebrated the 60th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations throughout the year 2016/17. The Government organized of Nepal a Special Commemorative Programmme graced by the Prime Minister of Nepal in the presence of Japanese Minister of State for Foreign Affairs in Kathmandu on 1 September 2016. Congratulatory messages were exchanged highlighting the significant achievements made in bilateral relations over the last six decades. The other features of the commemorative event on that day included diplomatic receptions, cultural programmes featuring typical cultural performances of countries, issuance of commemorative postage cover, among others.

Exchange of High-level Visits

Minister for Industry Mr. Nabindra Raj Joshi visited Japan on 18-25 February 2017. Mr. Joshi met Minister

Asia, the Pacific and Oceania

of State for Environment Mr. Tadahiko Ito, Senior Vice-President of JICA Mr. Irigaki Hidetoshi and Secretary General of Liberal Democratic Party Mr. Toshihiro Nikai. Mr. Joshi called upon the Japanese leaders to encourage Japanese investors to seize investment opportunities in Nepal and give preferential market access to Nepali products.

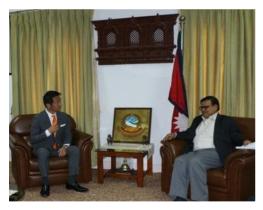
Chairman of the Nepal-Japan Parliamentary Friendship League Mr. Ram Chandra Paudel visited Japan from 28 November to 5 December 2016. Mr. Paudel held a meeting with General Secretary of LDP Mr. Toshihiro Nikai.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Japan Mr. Nobuo Kishi paid a visit to Nepal from 30 August to 01 September 2016 leading a Japanese delegation to attend the commemorative programme organized on the occasion of Diamond Jubilee anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Japan.

Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Kiyoshi Odawara visited Nepal on 11-12 July 2017. The Vice-Minister called on the President, the Prime Minister and the DPM and Minister for Foreign Affairs. Reflecting upon the six decades of fruitful cooperation, they discussed matters of bilateral interests.

State Minister for Environment of Japan and Vice Chairman of NepalJapan Parliamentarian Friendship League Mr. Tadahiko Ito visited Nepal on 18-19 June 2017. Mr. Ito called on Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. Matters including climate change and disaster management were discussed. Mr. Ito also met CEO of National Reconstruction Authority to discuss issues of reconstruction including management and disposal of disaster waste in Nepal. The State Minister also attended the seminar on "Promoting Disaster Waste Disposal" in Kathmandu on 19 June 2017.

Former Prime Minister of Japan Dr. Yukio Hatoyama visited Nepal on 18-22 March 2017. Dr. Hatoyama called on Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and senior political and business leaders. He also interacted with Nepali business community focusing on Japanese investment in priority sectors of Nepal.



Mr. Kiyoshi Odawara, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Paying a Courtesy Call on DPM and Minister for Foreign Affairs

The meeting of the Second Nepal-Japan Diplomatic Consultation between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries on 28 June 2017 provided an opportunity for reviewing different issues of Nepal-Japan relations, sharing views on matters of mutual concern and planning for future courses of action.

Bilateral Cooperation and Assistance

2016/17, Japan decided extend a grant assistance of 4.813 billion Japanese Yen to Nepal for the implementation of Project for Improvement of Water Supply in Pokhara. Japan agreed to provide Japanese Yen 16.636 billion for Nagdhunga Tunnel Construction Project under Japanese concessional loan. Japan launched Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS) for government officials to pursue higher studies in Japan and provided grant assistance of 282 million Japanese Yen. Japan also agreed to provide a grant assistance of Japanese Yen 300 million for the implementation of School Sector Reform Programme (SSRP) extension plan.

The Government of Japan provided 754 million Yen Grants for Medical Equipment Improvement Project in the T. U. Teaching Hospital and an agreement to this effect was signed in Kathmandu on 28 December 2016.

The Government of Japan provided a grant amount of 1452 million Japanese Yen for Improvement of Aviation Safety facilities in major airports. Two separate agreements in this regard were signed in Kathmandu on 31 August 2016.

Economic Diplomacy

The Embassy of Nepal in Japan organized a seminar on 'Future Prospects of Nepali Business' on 16 December 2016 in collaboration with Nepal-Japan Business Chamber of Commerce. Likewise, the Embassy organized a Tourism Promotional Programme in Tokyo on 7 July 2017. Future prospects for investment especially in tourism sector in Nepal were highlighted.

The Embassy also hosted a 'Tourism and Business Promotion Seminar' on 29 January 2017. The Embassy collaborated with Metropolitan Tokyo Professional Institution Association to organize a Job Fair on 24 June 2017 to facilitate Nepali students' search for jobs in Japan.

Around 70,000 Nepali nationals with different professions and engagements have been living in Japan.

Republic of Korea

Regular interactions between the foreign ministries of Nepal and Korea coupled with high-level visits have contributed to further enhance bilateral relations.

High-Level Visits

Minister for Information and Communication Mr. Surendra Kumar Karki visited Korea to participate in 2016 Global ICT Leadership Forum held in Seoul from 10 to 13 October 2016.

Minister for Agriculture and Cooperatives Mr. Gauri Shanker Chaudhary visited Korea on 18-21 October 2016 to participate in the Global Saemaul Leadership Forum 2016.

Mr. Janardan Sharma 'Prabhakar'', Minister for Energy, visited the Republic of Korea from 18 to 21 March 2017 to participate in the investment programme organized by the Embassy of Nepal. During the visit, he held bilateral meeting with Mr. Sungho Choi, Vice President of Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) on 20 March 2017 and discussed prospects of energy cooperation.

Minister for Urban Development Dr. Narayan Khadka visited Korea on 4-10 September 2016 to participate in a programme entitled 'KF Invitation Programme for Distinguished Guests in Political and Legislative Affairs.'

The Chief of Army Staff General Rajendra Chhetri visited Korea on 8 – 11 September 2016 to participate in 'the Defense Expo Korea 2016' held in Seoul.

Meeting of the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism

Nepal and Korea held the 3rd Bilateral Consultation Mechanism meeting in Kathmandu on 21 October 2016. The meeting reviewed bilateral relations between Nepal and Korea. Both sides underscored the importance of exchanging high-level visits. The Nepali side requested the Korean delegation to increase quota for Nepali workers under Employment Permit System.

The Agreement on Friendship and Cooperation between the City of Kathmandu of Nepal and City of Seoul of Korea was signed in Seoul on 26 September 2016. Similarly, an agreement on the 'Exemption from Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic and Official/Special Passports' is ready for signature.

Economic Cooperation

The RoK extends its cooperation to Nepal within the framework of Country Partnership Strategy 2016–2020 in the fields of health, human resources development, and improvement of people's livelihood of Nepal.

Ministry of Energy of Nepal and Nepal Water and Energy Development Company signed Project Development Agreement (PDA) of the Upper Trishuli-I Hydropower Project (216 MW) on 29 December 2016. The successful implementation of this project is expected to inject new dynamism in terms of Koran investment in Nepal.

Kathmandu University and Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI) of Korea jointly launched the "Project for Integrated Rural Development of Nepal through Strengthening Research and Development Capacity of Kathmandu University" for 2016-2020.

Over 32,700 Nepali people work in industrial and agricultural sectors of Korea. Both countries agreed in 2007 to cooperate under the Employment Permit System (EPS) to send Korean

language trained Nepali workforce to Korea. The EPS MoU, concluded between Nepal and RoK in October 2015 with 2 years validity period, has been serving as the basis for sending Nepali workers to Korea. The Korean Government has made substantial increment in the EPS quota for Nepali workers from 3200 in 2017 to 10,200 for the year 2018.

Activities on Economic Diplomacy

The Embassy held a meeting with top Executives of Korea Importers Association (KOIMA) in Seoul on 22 February 2017.

On 13 April 2017, the Embassy of Nepal held a meeting with Chairman of KOEXIMA Mr. Howard Jung and senior officials of Korea Export and Import Association (KOEXIMA).

The Embassy also participated in the 15th Import Goods Fair held on 22-24 June 2017. Nepali handmade goods, handicrafts, *pashminas*, silver jewelries, and Nepali organic tea and coffee were showcased in the Fair.

The Embassy also organized an Investment Promotion Programme in Seoul on 19 March 2017 under the theme "Investment in Nepal's Energy Development from Korea". An "Investment Guidebook 2017" was also made public in Korean language with a view to disseminating information on environment and procedures for making foreign direct investment in Nepal to Korean potential investors.

The Embassy in collaboration with Nepal Tourism Board participated in the 32nd Korea World Travel Fair 2017 held on 1-3 June 2017. The Embassy promoted Nepal as the "Land of Everest" and the "Birthplace of Shakyamuni Buddha".

The Embassy co-organized a "Regional Programme on Remittances and Diaspora Investment for Rural Development" with support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development on 2 October 2016.

The Embassy organized 'Voluntary Return Support Information and Motivation Programme' every month from March to June in different cities of Korea.

Mongolia

The year marked the 55th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Mongolia. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia Mr. Tsend Munkh-orgil paid a three-day official visit to Nepal. This was the first high-level visit from Mongolia since the visit of Mongolian President in 2001.



Minister for Foreign Affair with his Mongolian Counterpart

In the official bilateral talks held between the two Foreign Ministers on 19 December 2016, various dimensions of mutual cooperation on political and economic fronts were reviewed. Views were exchanged on promoting cultural cooperation, religious tourism, development of Lumbini, and exchanging delegations of parliamentarians and journalists to promote bilateral ties. The two Foreign Ministers had earlier met in New York on the sidelines of the 71st Session of the UNGA.

The Agreement on the Exemption from Visa Requirements for the holders of Diplomatic and Official (Special) Passports was signed during the visit. Nepal and Mongolia finalized the text of an Agreement on establishing bilateral consultation mechanism between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries and the text is ready for signature.

The visiting Foreign Minister also paid courtesy calls on the President and the Prime Minister of Nepal. Both sides expressed the willingness to continue the existing cordial bilateral relations between two countries.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Nepal and Democratic People's Republic of Korea established the diplomatic relations in 1974. Both are members of the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement.

In line with its principled position on general and complete disarmament,

Nepal continued to maintain its strong position on denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and called for dialogue among the concerned parties to resolve their disputes through peaceful means.

Malaysia

Nepal and Malaysia enjoyed friendly and cooperative relations in the review period. The presence of a large number of Nepali migrant workers is an important aspect of Nepal-Malaysia relations

Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Minister for Foreign Affairs visited Malaysia to attend the 5th NRNA Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting held in Kuala Lumpur on 19March 2017. Speaking at the Meeting, he urged the NRNs to contribute to the development process of Nepal.

Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi, Foreign Secretary visited Malaysia on 8 -10 July 2017. He held meetings with his counterpart Mr. Ramlan Ibrahim, Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, and Sri Adenan Bin AB. Rahaman, Secretary General, Ministry of Human Resources. In both meetings the Nepali side raised the safety, security and well-being of the Nepali migrant workers especially in the context of growing number of death cases of Nepali migrant workers. The Foreign Secretary also urged for an early conclusion of bilateral labour agreement and for the reduction of exorbitant visa fees imposed on Nepali migrant workers under various headings. In a meeting

with Mr. Datuk Mohammad Sadik Kethergany, Director General of Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR), the Foreign Secretary discussed the possibility of training opportunities for young Nepali diplomats.

As in previous years, Malaysia continued to remain one of the major destinations for Nepali migrant workers during the reporting period. Consultations were held in Kathmandu on 20 21 February 2017 at the level of senior officials on the draft text of an MoU on Recruitment, Employment and Repatriation of Nepali Workers.

The Embassy of Nepal in Kuala Lumpur remained active to ensure safety, security and welfare of Nepali migrant workers in Malaysia. As part of its labor diplomacy, the Embassy continued its weekly educational and awareness Radio Programme via the national radio channel, Radio Bernama of Malaysia and 24- hour emergency hotline telephone services for the Nepali workers.

Australia

Nepal and Australia enjoyed excellent bilateral relations as ever. This year, the relationship was further marked by the visit of Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Minister for Foreign Affairs on 22-26 November 2016. He held meetings with Ms. Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Senator Ms. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Minister for International Development and

Pacific. In both meetings, views were exchanged on enhancing bilateral relations by promoting cooperation in education, tourism, trade, and investment, among others. Dr. Mahat called for an enhanced level of development cooperation and also the need for air connectivity between the two countries in view of the significant flow of people in both directions. He also urged the Australian side to resume visa services from the Australian Embassy in Kathmandu.

Dr. Mahat also met Ms. Penny Wong, Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Mark Butler MP, National President of Australian Labor Party. The mattes of mutual interest were discussed during the meetings.

He also addressed the NRN community in Australia and discussed various aspects including the prospects of Australian investment in Nepal. Dr. Mahat also participated, as Chief Guest, in the Nepal Festival held in Sidney on 26 November 2016.

Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi visited Australia on 11-15 July 2017. During his visit, a Memorandum Understanding of (MoU) establishment the of**Bilateral** Consultation Mechanism between Foreign Ministries of two countries was signed on 14 July 2017. The two sides agreed to hold the first meeting of the BCM in Kathmandu in early 2018.



Foreign Minister with his Australian counterpart

Dr. Sharman Stone, Australian Ambassador for Women and Girls, visited Nepal on 3-6 April 2017. She met the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, and reinforced Australia's support in reconstruction of earthquake-resistant infrastructure and efforts regarding the protection of rights of Women and Children in Nepal.

Australia continued to remain an attractive destination for Nepali students to pursue higher studies. Australian Government and Universities have been providing around 50 scholarships to Nepali students on a competitive basis every year.

In 2016/17, a total sum of AUD 31.9 million ODA flow to Nepal was recorded, out of which AUD 15.6 million was channelized through DFAT.

With increased number every year, Nepali community is one of the fastest growing communities in Australia, which serves as an important link in our bilateral relations. The Embassy of Nepal in Canberra has been working in close coordination with the NRNA and other Nepali communities based in Australia.

New Zealand

Relations between Nepal and New Zealand remained cordial and friendly during the year. The visit of Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat in November provided momentum to the existing relations between the two countries. Dr. Mahat and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand Mr. Murray McCully had a meeting on 28 November 2016 and exchanged views on bilateral relations and matters of mutual interest.

The Government of New Zealand has been extending support towards continuing Sir Edmund Hillary's legacy in Nepal through annual contribution to the Himalayan Trust, and support for other development projects.

The presence of Nepali diaspora is an important link to promote people-to-people contacts.

Thailand

Nepal and Thailand enjoyed excellent bilateral relations in the period under review. Nepal and Thailand continued to work closely on various mutually beneficial areas of cooperation at different levels.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari paid tribute to His Late Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej at the Grand Palace by laying floral wreath and signed the Condolence Book on 12 May 2017. The President was en route to Colombo.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat met his Thai counterpart on the sidelines of the 71st Session of the UNGA in New York. Views were exchanged on activating joint commission and promoting tourism and cultural cooperation through variety of activities.

The two sides remained engaged to finalize the two separate Agreements on Cultural Cooperation and Tourism Cooperation between the two countries.

As in previous years, Thailand provided a number of short-term capacity building trainings for Nepali Government officials and long-term scholarships for Nepali students in the fields of medicine, engineering, mitigation, economics, disaster communication, agriculture and health, through the Thailand International Agency (TICA). Cooperation 2016/17, 20 Nepali students were selected for pursuing higher studies at different universities of Thailand under TICA. More than 100 Nepali students have been pursuing higher studies

in the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT).

As part of economic diplomacy, the Embassy of Nepal in Bangkok organized tourism promotion programmes in Phuket, Bangkok, Phnom Penh (Cambodia) and Vientiane (Laos), as well as tourism, trade and investment promotion programmes in Bangkok and Singapore.

Myanmar

Bilateral relations between Nepal and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar continued to remain excellent in the reporting period. Nepal and Myanmar worked closely on matters of common interest at different forums including UN and BIMSTEC.

Former Prime Minister Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal visited Myanmar to participate in the programme 'Launching of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace' held in Nya Pyi Taw. He had a meeting with the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and House Speaker U Win Myint and discussed matters of mutual interest.

A draft MoU on Bilateral Consultation Mechanism (BCM) between Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar is under consideration.

The Himalaya Airlines, a Nepali private airliner, started flights between Kathmandu and Yangon providing direct air connectivity between the two

Singapore

Bilateral relations between Nepal and the Republic of Singapore remained excellent in 2016/17.

Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Minister for Foreign Affairs, visited Singapore to attend Trade, Tourism and Investment Promotion Programme organized in Singapore by the Embassy of Nepal in Bangkok on 4 May 2017. Dr. Mahat urged the entrepreneurs and business community in Singapore to invest in Nepal. Dr. Mahat had a meeting with the Minister at Prime Minister's Office. Ms. Josephine Teo, and exchanged views on enhancing the relations and cooperation between Nepal and Singapore particularly in the area of trade, tourism, investment, education and financial sector.

Dr. Mohamad Maliki Osman, Senior Minister of State (SMS) visited Nepal from 2 to 5 May 2017 and had a meeting with Minister for Defense Mr. Bal Krishna Khand to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Indonesia, Laos, Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei

Relations between Nepal and Indonesia, Laos, the Philippines, Vietnam and Brunei continued to be marked by friendship, cordiality and cooperation in the period under review.

Separate draft MoUs to establish Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal and Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Laos and the Philippines are under consideration. Once concluded, such mechanisms are expected to further promote Nepal's relations with these countries particularly in the fields of trade, investment, tourism, culture and education, among others.

The Embassy of Nepal in Kuala Lumpur remained effortful for establishing sister city relations between Lumbini and Mangelang Municipality of Indonesia which hosts Borobudur, the largest Buddhist temple in the world.

A draft Agreement on Exemption of Visa Requirements for Diplomatic and Official Passports with Laos is under consideration.

From Vietnam, Mr. Pham Sanh Chau, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs and Special Representative of the Prime Minister of Vietnam on UNESCO Affairs visited Nepal on 3-4 March 2017. He paid courtesy calls on the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and discussed matters of mutual interest.

A draft Agreement on Exemption of Visa Requirements for Diplomatic and Official Passports with Vietnam is also under consideration.

4. Central Asia, West Asia and Africa

Nepal's relations with the countries in the Central Asia, West Asia and Africa region continued to strengthen during the reporting period. The Government of Nepal maintained engagements with regular countries of these regions to expand and consolidate bilateral relations. Foreign employment related issues occupied the central stage of Nepal's dealings with the countries in the Gulf region. Constructive cooperation and collaborations with the countries in the regions continued at regional and multilateral forums.

Saudi Arabia

Nepal and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia maintained cordial bilateral ties which were strengthened through growing people-to-people contacts. A wide range of activities were carried out to further advance bilateral relations during the review period. While some visits were exchanged to maintain the momentum of political relations, Nepal-Saudi Arabia cooperation also witnessed growth in trade and investment.

Saudi Arabia hosts the largest number of Nepali migrant workers in the Gulf region. Over 550,000 Nepali migrants have been working in Saudi Arabia and about 1,200 Nepali Muslims make Hajj pilgrimage annually to Mecca and Medina, the Two Holy Mosques in Saudi Arabia. Some Nepali Muslim students are also studying Arabic language and Islamic studies in

universities at Makkah and Madinah.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest among Saudis to visit Nepal for tourism purposes, including for adventure. In May 2013, a young Saudi woman Ms. Raha Moharrak scaled Mt. Everest becoming the first Saudi woman to reach the top of the highest mountain on earth and inspiring many others from the Gulf region.

A delegation of the International Relations and Labour Committee of the Legislature-Parliament led by its Chairman Mr. Prabhu Sah visited Saudi Arabia in March 2017. The delegation held bilateral meetings with the labor minister and other high-level officials of the Kingdom and exchanged views on labour related issues and other matters of cooperation.

In May 2017, *Majlis Ashura*, Parliament of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, constituted a Saudi-Nepali Parliamentary Friendship Committee headed by Dr. Abdullah H. Alharbey and consisted of members of Royal Saudi Legislature Council.

The Government of Nepal proposed a draft labor agreement and its protocol to Saudi Arabia with a view to promoting labour relations between the two countries. A draft on General Agreement of Cooperation between Nepal and Saudi Arabia is under consideration.

In addition to providing consular

services, the Embassy of Nepal in Riyadh remained fully involved in dealing with issues and problems of Nepali migrant workers. The Embassy rescued and repatriated more than two hundred Nepali female domestic workers from Saudi Arabia.

A 'Health Awareness and Free Health Checkup Campaign' was organized by the Consulate General of Nepal in Jeddah in cooperation with Non-Resident Nepali Association on 10 February 2017. More than 150 Nepali migrant workers received free health checkup from Nepali medical practitioners, who were working with Medical Groups and Hospitals in Jeddah. The programme remained useful in awareness generation and diagnosis of health problems of the Nepali migrant workers.

The Embassy and the Consulate General organized periodic interactive meetings and orientation programmes with Nepali communities to help resolve their problems. Following the announcement of the Government of Saudi Arabia in March to grant amnesty to undocumented workers, around 8,000 Nepali migrant workers received consular services from both Missions thus enabling them to get repatriated from Saudi Arabia to Nepal.

Qatar

Nepal continued to maintain substantial engagement with the State of Qatar during the year 2016/17. Bilateral relations were expanded in the field of employment, trade and investment, and

tourism. High-level visits between the two countries also helped strengthen bilateral cooperation.

Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Minister for Foreign Affairs, paid an official visit to Qatar from 10-12 January 2017 at the invitation of Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar. The Foreign Minister held separate bilateral meetings with the Foreign Minister and Labor Minister of Qatar. He had an audience with Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, the Emir of the State of Oatar.



Foreign Minister Calls on HH Emir of Qatar



Foreign Minister with his Qatari Counterpart

In all meetings, both sides discussed the need for further diversifying relations in trade, investment, energy and telecom areas, and noted that regular exchange of visits was important. While highlighting the contribution of Nepali migrant workers to the development of Qatar, they also discussed issues related to their safety, security, welfare and capacity building.

Similarly, an eight-member Nepali delegation led by Mr. Prabhu Sah, Chairman of the Committee on International Relations and Labour of the Legislature Parliament, visited Qatar from 23 to 25 March 2017 and got acquainted with the problems facing Nepali migrant workers.

In December 2016, a delegation led by Chairperson of National Human Rights Committee of Qatar visited Nepal during which an activation plan of MoU on migration was signed with the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal. In February 2017, Dr. Hamad Bin Abdulaziz Al-Kawari, advisor to the Diwan Amiri of the State of Qatar visited Nepal.

At present, there are about 400,000 Nepali migrant workers in Qatar particularly in services and construction sectors. The Embassy of Nepal in Doha registered some five thousand complaints regarding labor issues. One-third of those problems were solved by the Embassy through negotiation and compromise between employers and employees.

The Embassy organized development

diplomacy programme on trade, investment, tourism and employment sectors in Doha in collaboration with and participation of stakeholders. Likewise, the Embassy organized a programme in coordination with Nepal Rastra Bank with a view to promoting money transfer from Qatar through formal banking system.

Drafts agreements on waiver of visa requirements for diplomatic and official passports, on reciprocal investment protection and promotion, as well as on mutual administrative cooperation for the proper application of customs law and prohibition and combating of offences are under discussion.

Kuwait

Nepal enjoys friendly and cordial relations with the State of Kuwait. During the review period, the bilateral relations with Kuwait were further consolidated through various activities.

Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Narayan Kaji Shrestha 'Prakash' visited Kuwait from 23 to 26 February 2017. Likewise, an eight-member delegation of the International Relations and Labour Committee of the Legislature-Parliament led by Chairman Mr. Prabhu Sah, visited Kuwait from 22 March to 23 March 2017.

Agreement between the Government of Nepal and the Government of Kuwait on Mutual Visa Exemption for Holders of Diplomatic and Special/Officials Passports is in the process of finalization.

The Embassy of Nepal in Kuwait remained active in promoting Nepal's tourism and business potentials including by building rapport with the local business community.

Kuwait is an important labour destination Nepali for migrant workers. Over 60,000 Nepali migrant workers, out of which about 40 percent are women, are currently working in Kuwait. The Embassy of Nepal in Kuwait concentrated its efforts on handling labor issues and extending consular services. It set up a hotline for effective communication, especially for workers in difficult situation, and introduced the customer visit machine at the reception for the first-come-firstserve system.

The Embassy launched awareness programmes for Nepali workers by making public 'Dos and Don'ts' in Kuwait and holding interaction programmes on Kuwait's labour and immigration laws for Nepali labourers. The Embassy transferred compensation amount equivalent to more than five crores Nepali Rupees to the deceased Nepali workers' families in Nepal.

United Arab Emirates

The year under review witnessed significant events in the bilateral relations between Nepal and the United Arab Emirates.

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' paid a four-day official visit to the UAE on 14-17 January 2017 at the invitation of Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi His Highness Sheikh

Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. On 16 January 2017, the Prime Minster addressed the 10th World Future Energy Summit as a key-note speaker. He shed light on the energy development potentials in Nepal, investment opportunities in energy sector and Nepal's efforts in clean and renewable energy.

The Prime Minister held bilateral talks with Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and High Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai and discussed issues of bilateral and regional cooperation. The two sides discussed the need for enhancing bilateral engagement and promote cooperation in the economic field with a particular emphasis on energy and infrastructure sector.



Prime Minister with the Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai

Similarly, the Speaker of the Legislature-Parliament Ms. Onsari Gharti visited the UAE on 10-14 December 2016 to participate in Global Summit of Women Speakers of the Parliament held at Abu Dhabi on 12-13

December 2016. She highlighted the importance of women empowerment and shared the achievements Nepal has made in women's representation in politics and development.

Mr. Keshav Kumar Budhathoki, Minister of General Administration, visited the UAE to attend the World Government Summit in Abu Dhabi on 12-14 February 2017. Also, a delegation led by Mr. Prabhu Sah, Chairman of International Relations and Labour Committee of the Legislature-Parliament, visited the UAE in March 2017.

Three Agreements -Enhanced Air Services Agreement, Bilateral Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investment (BIPPA) and Bilateral Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation (DTA)- between the two governments are under consideration.

There are over 200,000 Nepali migrant workers in the UAE. The Embassy organized various events for promoting Nepali trade and tourism and conducted orientation and awareness programmes with Nepali communities.

Oman

Relations between Nepal and the Sultanate of Oman have grown over the years.

Mr. Min Bahadur Shrestha, Vice Chairman of National Planning Commission, visited Oman on 27-29 November 2016 to participate in Tanfeedh Programme of the Government of Oman.

Three separate MOUs on Labour and Training, Avoidance of Double Taxation and Bilateral Consultation Mechanism are under consideration. Oman has also offered to cooperate in post-earthquake reconstruction.

There are around 20,000 Nepali migrant workers in Oman. The Embassy of Nepal in Muscat has been extending necessary consular services to Nepali workers and conducting interaction programmes on local laws.

The Government of Nepal recently upgraded the Embassy to the Ambassador level and appointed Ms. Sharmila Parajuli Dhakal as new Ambassador.

Bahrain

Nepal and the Kingdom of Bahrain enjoy friendly relations.

There are around 25,000 Nepali working in various sectors in Bahrain. A Memorandum of Understanding on Labour and Occupational Training has already been concluded between the two countries.

In 2016/17, the Embassy of Nepal in Manama remained active in providing consular services to Nepali nationals in Bahrain. It also organized development diplomacy programmes in order to promote Nepal's economic interests.

Establishment of Nepal Embassy in Manama in 2013 has helped unlock potentials of cooperation between the two countries in areas of tourism, trade and investment, as well as in further expanding employment opportunities for Nepali nationals in Bahrain. The Embassy has been upgraded to the Ambassadorial level and Mr. Padam Sundas has been appointed as new Ambassador.

South Africa

Bilateral relations between Nepal and the Republic of South Africa have remained cordial and friendly. They are based on friendship, mutual harmony, understanding and cooperation.

During 2016/17, a number of Nepali delegations visited South Africa.

A twelve-member delegation led by Ms. Ranju Kumari Jha, Member of Parliament as well as Chairperson of the Committee on Women, Children, Senior Citizen and Social Welfare at the Legislature-Parliament, from 19 to 28 September 2016. The visit was undertaken to study the child rights protection system in South Africa.

A six-member delegation led by Mr. Baidhyanath Upadhyay, Justice at Supreme Court, undertook a visit to South Africa from 24 to 28 October 2016.

A seven-member Nepali delegation led by Mr. Dinesh Kumar Thapaliya, Secretary at the Office of Prime Minister and Council of Ministers and consisting of Secretary Mr. Tanka Mani Sharma and other senior officials visited South Africa on 25-31 March 2017. The delegation observed South Africa's success and experience

in three-tier governance system at national, provincial and local levels.

Declaration of Intent between the Government of Nepal and the Government of South Africa on Cooperation, and Visa Waiver Agreement for the Diplomatic and Official Passport Holders are under consideration

After the establishment of Nepal Embassy in Pretoria in 2010, the number of South African tourists visiting Nepal is gradually increasing. The Embassy has been making efforts in partnership with local travel and tour operators for Nepal's publicity. It has also been providing consular services to Nepali nationals living in South Africa and other countries to which the Embassy is concurrently accredited.

Egypt

Bilateral relations between Nepal and the Arab Republic of Egypt that are characterized by mutual trust, goodwill, understanding and friendship continued to grow in the year 2016/17. It is the only country from African continent to have a residential diplomatic mission in Kathmandu.

The year 2017 marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Egypt and a number of programmes are being organized to mark this event.

Former Minister of Family and Population of Egypt Dr. Mushira Mahmoud Khattab visited Nepal on 7-10 February 2017 and met relevant authorities.

Cooperation between Nepal and Egypt encompasses educational exchanges and agricultural training. There are 116 students studying in Egypt under full scholarship. Each year Egypt provides about 15 scholarships to Nepali students in Islamic and Arabic studies. It also provides five scholarships for undergraduate and two for postgraduate studies in medical field.

An exchange programme on residential cross-cultural activities of students of the American University in Cairo (AUC) and the TU affiliated Southwestern State College of Nepal was hosted by the AUC at New Cairo on 09-18 March 2017.

Israel

The excellent state of bilateral relations of Nepal and the State of Israel got enhanced during the reporting period.

Minister for General Administration Mr. Keshav Kumar Budhathoki visited Israel from 28 December 2016 to 5 January 2017 and held meetings with high-level dignitaries of Israel where he discussed the views of mutual interest and benefit.

The visa waiver agreement between Nepal and Israel for diplomatic passport holders is expected to be concluded soon.

The Embassy of Nepal in Tel Aviv took part in various tourism promotion programmes including 2017 edition of International Mediterranean Tourism Market, the largest Professional Tourism Fair in Eastern Mediterranean Region. Besides, the Embassy sponsored Nepal related articles on the most popular Israeli online travel magazine *Masa Acher*.

Around four thousand Nepali have been working in Israel. A pilot programme for the recruitment of caregivers from Nepal to Israel has been designed, in the second phase of which sixty Nepali caregivers were recruited for employment in Israel in this review period.

Israeli International Development Cooperation Agency MASHAV has been providing short-term trainings in sectors such as science, health, environment and education. Around five hundred Nepali youth have been receiving training as a part of 'Earning by Learning' under agricultural cooperation.

5. Europe and Americas

Over the decades, Nepal has been enjoying friendly and cordial relations with countries from Europe and the Americas in a wide spectrum of cooperation and partnership. The same spirit of relations was evident this year. Unfortunately, some countries in these regions suffered tragic terror attacks that were unequivocally condemned by Nepal. Equally notable were the political developments witnessed in some countries including the USA, France, and the UK which took to the global stage with their new leadership.

During the year, Nepal made efforts to enhance its relations with the countries and international organizations based in Europe and the Americas including through exchange of high-level visits, conclusion of agreements, formation of bilateral consultation mechanisms. people-to-people contacts. and cooperation at the multilateral forums. Guided by the foreign policy strategy to contribute to development efforts, Nepal was effortful to ensure that the goal of domestic socio-economic transformation remained central to its diplomatic engagements with these countries.

It was in this context that the Ministry and Nepali Missions in Europe and the Americas were active to garner support for Nepal's drive for development, a critical step to institutionalize the political transformation that Nepal has undergone in recent times. In addition to the measures taken to expand political relations between

Nepal and the countries in Europe and the Americas, development diplomacy activities figured prominently in the function of the Ministry and the Missions. With a special emphasis on areas of infrastructure, agriculture, education, and health, the Ministry and the Missions remained actively engaged with Nepal's development partners.

Austria

This year set an important milestone in Nepal-Austria relations as Nepal decided to establish its Embassy / Permanent Mission in Vienna. Mr. Prakash Kumar Suvedi presented his credentials to the Director General of the United Nations Office in Vienna as the first Ambassador/ Permanent Representative of Nepal.

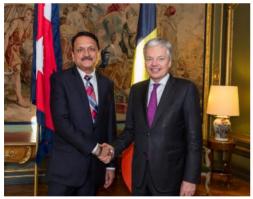
Relations between Nepal and Austria have remained cordial and friendly ever since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1959. Austria has been providing financial assistance to support various development projects in Nepal including through the EU channels. Its major focus is on the areas of hydro-electricity, conservation of ancient temples, drinking water and eco-tourism development.

Belgium

Nepal-Belgium relations continued to make significant strides in 2016/17.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat visited Brussels on 13-18 February 2017 to participate in the International High-Level Conference on Mediation.

On 13 February 2017, Dr. Mahat had a bilateral meeting with Mr. Didier Reynders, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium. The two ministers agreed on establishing a Bilateral Consultation Mechanism (BCM) between foreign ministries of two countries and also concurred on the importance of having parliamentary friendship groups in the parliaments of both Nepal and Belgium. Consultations on the establishment of BCM have been completed and the agreement is expected to be concluded soon.



Minister for Foreign Affairs with Mr. Didier Reynders, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs of Belgium

Dr. Mahat participated in the International High-Level Conference on Mediation held in Brussels on 14 February 2017. He addressed a thematic panel entitled 'Implementation of

Mediated Peace Agreements, What are the Challenges?' at the Conference. In his address, he highlighted Nepal's 'unique and homegrown' peace process with a particular emphasis on the tenyear experience of implementation of Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed between the Government of Nepal and the Maoists back in 2006.

Embassy of Nepal participated in a number of promotional events organized in different cities of Belgium over the year.

The Embassy participated in the International Conference on World Peace City Lumbini, Nepal jointly organized by Lumbini Development Trust and Lumbini-Kapilvastu Global Campaign on 27 November 2016. The Conference deliberated on the Buddhist ideals as well as the need to promote Lumbini as 'the world peace city'.

Likewise, the Embassy also participated in the Brussels Holiday Fair 2017 in Brussels on 2-5 February 2017. In the Fair, the Embassy showcased traditional Nepali artifacts and promotional materials including roll-up banners and brochures in local languages such as French, Dutch and German in order to promote Nepal as a most-favoured tourist destination.

The Embassy undertook some important initiatives under different priority areas: engagement with Benelux governments, institutions and diplomatic corps, connecting with the local communities of the host countries, building partnerships with Nepali diaspora and improving service delivery.

The efforts are underway to constitute EU-Nepal and Belgium-Nepal friendship groups at the respective parliaments. The Belgium-Nepal Friendship Association which had remained moribund since 2009 was formally reconstituted. An Embassy-NRNA Forum was put in place to better coordinate the existing cooperation between the Embassy and Nepali communities.

Brazil

Nepal-Brazil relations continued to grow during the year under review. Nepal's only residential diplomatic mission in the whole of Latin America is in Brazil. Likewise, Brazilian Embassy in Kathmandu is the only diplomatic mission from the entire Latin American continent.

A delegation led by Supreme Court Justice Mr. Baidhyanath Upadhyaya visited Brazil on 19-23 October 2016 with an objective to gain an insight into the Brazilian judicial system. The delegation met the President of the Supreme Court of Justice of Brazil and held discussion on areas of mutual cooperation in judicial system.

Likewise, a delegation led by Secretary of the Office of Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, Mr. Chandra Kumar Ghimire visited Brazil on 19-23 June 2017 with a view to getting insights into the structure of the President's Office of Brazil and its

relations with other Federal Agencies as well as with the Governments of State and Municipal levels.

The Embassy of Nepal remained engaged with the relevant Brazilian authorities to explore ways and means of enhancing Nepal-Brazil relations. Efforts were made to identify possible areas of cooperation and establish frameworks for such cooperation.

In close collaboration with relevant agencies in Brasilia, Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, the Embassy organised promotional activities to enhance cooperation in trade and investment sector. They intensified the relationship with the business community in these states.

The trade volume between Nepal and Brazil is on an increasing trend. Nepal exported mainly carpets and handicrafts in 2016/17 and imported soybean oil and other soybean products during the year.

The Embassy also participated in the programme organized to observe the *Vesak Day* during the 561th *Buddha Jayanti* on 13 May 2017 and contributed to promoting Nepal as the birth-place of Lord Buddha.

Apart from bilateral engagements, Nepal and Brazil actively cooperate on issues of mutual interest in various multilateral fora.

Bulgaria

Nepal's relations with Bulgaria continued to be cordial and friendly.

This year, the Foreign Ministries of the two countries finalized and signed, on 7 July 2017, the MoU on the establishment of bilateral consultation mechanism. It is expected to provide an effective mechanism to assess whole gamut of bilateral relations between two countries, and further take it to greater heights.

Besides, the MoU between Nepal and Bulgaria for the Cooperation on Youth Development is due to be concluded soon which aims at enhanced sharing of knowledge, experiences, and resources and developing long term co-operation in areas of youth development.

Canada

Relations between Nepal and Canada progressed in all major spheres of bilateral cooperation during the year. As a step towards enhancing relations, the Canada-Nepal Parliamentary Friendship Group was established for the first time in the Parliament of Canada on 4 October 2016. The Group consists of 21 Members of Parliament and 4 Senators.



Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Mr. Jiwan Bahadur Shahi at the First Meeting of Nepal-Canada Parliamentary Friendship Group

During the review period, a number of Nepali delegations visited Canada. A Nepali Delegation led by Minister of Culture, Tourismand Civil Aviation, Mr. Jiwan Bahadur Shahi attended the 39th General Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) held on 27 September – 5 October 2016 in Montreal, Canada. Mr. Shahi highlighted the progress made by Nepal in the area of civil aviation and stressed the need for enhanced international support to boost the aviation sector of the least developed countries like Nepal.

A delegation led by Member of the Public Service Commission Ms. Bindra Hada Bhattarai visited Canada and held a meeting with the President of the Public Service Commission of Canada and discussed at length the Canadian experience on the relationship and coordination between federal and provincial Public Service Commissions.

From the Canadian side, Justice Ms. Sheila Ray, Ontario Court of Justice, visited Nepal on 9-22 December 2016. Discussions on experience sharing of the justice system were held during her meetings with Chief Justice of Nepal and other high-level officials.

To give impetus to trade and investment cooperation between the two countries, Embassy of Nepal in Canada reached out to various stakeholders from the Canadian business community. The hydro energy sector figured prominently in such interactions. A meeting was held with President of Hydro Quebec Ms. Jacqueline

Mongrut on 16 December 2016 and possible collaboration in hydropower development in Nepal was discussed.

In coordination with the newly appointed Honorary Consul in the Province of Alberta of Canada, the Embassy organized a special Tourism, Trade and Investment Programme in June 2017 where a large number of Canadians representing tourism, trade and investment sectors attended the event. Everest summiteers from Canada were also felicitated during the programme. Promotion of Nepal's tourism potential was carried out at various tourism programmes in different parts of Canada including Canadian National Exhibition, Ottawa Ultimate Travel and Vacation Show. Asian Heritage Festival, Vesak in Ottawa Festival.

Czech Republic

Relations between Nepal and Czech Republic continued to grow during the year under review. Vice Speaker of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, Mr. Vojtech Filip led a delegation to Nepal on a three-day visit on 18-21 September 2016. The visiting delegation paid courtesy calls on the President and the Speaker of the Parliament, among others.

Apart from extending passport and consular services to the Nepali Diaspora, the Nepali Embassy in Berlin continued its activities in close coordination and partnership with the people and Government of Czech Republic and the Nepali diaspora residing there. Around 500 Nepali

nationals most of whom are either students or businesspersons have been living in Czech Republic.

Denmark

The year witnessed an increased momentum in bilateral engagements between Nepal and Denmark.

His Royal Highness, Prince Joachim Waldemar Christian Denmark visited Nepal from February to 6 March 2017. He travelled to Kavre, Gorkha, Tanahun, Syanja, Kaski, Dhanusa, Siraha and Sindhuli and observed the DANIDA funded projects such as Care Denmark Upper Aandhikhola Watershed Management Project and other projects under Nepal-Denmark Cooperation. visit played a significant role in strengthening and deepening bilateral relations between Nepal and Denmark.

The Embassy remained effortful towards establishing Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal and Foreign Ministries of Demark and other countries to which the Embassy has been concurrently accredited.

With an objective to promoting Nepal's tourism, the Embassy of Nepal in Copenhagen, in collaboration with the public transport office of Denmark, organized Bus Campaign to promote major tourist destinations of Nepal such as Pokhara, Lumbini, Sagarmatha,

Chitwan and Patan Durbar Square from 24 October to 6 November 2016. The Embassy also participated in the KUKS International Exhibition of Cultural Heritage, 2016 organized by the Cultural Confederation of Foreign Societies from 24 - 29 October 2016.

The Danish Government has decided to close down its Embassy in Kathmandu.

El Salvador

Nepal and El Salvador established formal bilateral relations on 21 September 2016. Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat and the Foreign Minister of El Salvador Mr. Hugo Roger Martinez signed the protocol on the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and El Salvador in New York on 21 September 2016. Nepal and El Salvador agreed to establish and enhance cooperation in areas of trade, investment and social sector.

European Union

Nepal's engagements with the EU remained substantive and cooperation between the two sides continued to expand in 2016/17.

The visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat to the EU Headquarters in Brussels on 13-17 February 2017 lent a further impetus to Nepal's relationship with the EU. During the visit, he called on Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker, President of

the European Commission and had a meeting with HR/VP Ms. Federica Mogherini. Various issues pertaining to bilateral cooperation on trade, investment, development cooperation and aviation safety featured in the meetings.



Minister for Foreign Affairs with European Commission President Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker

An EU Parliament delegation led by Ms. Jean Lambert, Member of European Parliament and Chair of the Delegation for Relations with the countries of South Asia visited Nepal on 22-23 May 2017. The delegation called on the Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, among others. Discussions were held particularly on Nepal-EU development cooperation, EU's support to Nepal's electoral process and post-earthquake reconstruction.

The Mission of Nepal to the EU in Brussels remained active in enhancing Nepal-EU relations. It participated in a number of conferences, meetings, progammes and events. In particular, its focus was directed towards widening Nepal-EU development cooperation in the areas of infrastructure development, agriculture, education and energy. The Mission also continued to champion the cause of LDCs with respect to trade, investment and climate change in the EU forums.

The year 2016/17 saw an enhanced Nepal-EU engagement with respect to ongoing post-earthquake reconstruction, electoral support as well as collaboration in diverse areas of bilateral cooperation. At present, EU's development cooperation to Nepal encompasses a number of projects in the fields of education, rural development and democratic governance. Most of these projects are supported through the Multiannual Indicative Programme which has a budget of €360 million for the period 2014 to 2020. EU funding is channeled in the form of project grants, budget support and service contracts.

The EU's support for cooperative projects to enhance Nepal's trade capacity including through training of personnel and strengthening of institutions also continued over the year. Nepal has been benefitting from the EU's Everything But Arms scheme for LDCs.

The EU is one of the principal trading partners of Nepal. It is the second largest export market for Nepal with 13% share of the country's total exports. In 2016/17, Nepal's exports and imports were worth NRs. 10,492,597,650 and

NRs. 23,413,064,925 respectively.

Finland

The year witnessed continuity of close cooperation with Finland as an important development partner of Nepal.

Nepal has benefitted from Finland's assistance in poverty alleviation, sustainable development, disaster risk reduction and promotion of democracy, human rights, equality and participatory system of governance constitute the major areas of development cooperation.

This year, an agreement to support the implementation of the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP), with the grant of EUR 20 million was also signed between the Government of Nepal and the Government of Finland as a gesture of cooperation in education sector.

There are about 3 000 people of Nepali origin living in Finland.

In summer 2016 Finnish Foreign Ministry officials and NRNA, Finland, decided to set up an Alumni Network of those Nepali people who studied in Finland. The Network aims at bringing together various stakeholders in Finland and Nepal and providing information on the markets of the two countries with a view to enhancing economic relations between Nepal and Finland.

Total exports and imports for this year were NRs. 90,813,838 and NRs. 324,568,734 respectively.

France

Relations between Nepal and France continued to remain cordial and friendly during the year. The Government of Nepal strongly condemned the terrorist attack in the southern French city of Nice on 14 July 2016 and expressed solidarity with the people and Government of France.

The President Ms. Bidya Devi Bhandari extended her message of congratulations to Mr. Emmanuel Macron on his election as the President of the French Republic in May 2017 and expressed hope that Nepal and France would be able to further deepen and widen the relations on the basis of shared values and cooperative partnership.

In September, Vice President Nanda Bahadur Pun made a brief stopover in Paris en route to and from Venezuela leading a Nepali delegation to the 17th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement. Other prominent visits included those by Minister for Defence Mr. Bal Krishna Khand with regard to the participation in Paris Ministerial Conference on Peacekeeping Francophone Environment on 25-28 October 2016, Justice of the Supreme Court Mr. Om Prakash Mishra to learn from the best practices of the judicial system of France on 14-16 December 2016.

The Embassy in Paris worked together with the relevant French agencies in the promotion of Nepal-France relations. It was effortful to boost trade, tourism and investment by

organizing programmes in various places in France, engaging with Nepali Diaspora and reaching out to the French people at grassroots level.

The Embassy discussed with Senior Sales Director of the Airbus Industry from Toulouse the role and impact of well-equipped and advanced aeroplanes in revolutionizing the aviation and tourism sector of Nepal. On 31 March and 1 April, 2017, the Embassy organized a promotional programme on Nepal's trade, tourism and investment in Les Hautes Alps in Gap and Briancon and held meetings with the competent French authorities to discuss investment, infrastructure and reconstruction issues.

The number of French tourists, which stood at around twenty-three thousand, was on an increasing trend this year. A total of Nepalese rupees six hundred and thirty-four million foreign direct investment was made by various French companies in 2016/17 in Nepal. The major areas of French investment included hotels, restaurants and medicine.

Nepali Diaspora in France continued to remain a priority for the Embassy especially in promotion of Nepal's tourism, art and culture in France.

Germany

Nepal and Germany continued to enjoy cordial and friendly relations and had a meaningful partnership for cooperation.

Minister for Commerce Mr Romi

Gauchan Thakali visited Germany from 13-18 January 2017 to take part in DOMOTEX and CMT held in Hannover and Stuttgart respectively. During his visit, the Embassy hosted an interaction programme on 'Prospects of Nepal-Germany Trade and Investment in which high-level officials of the Federal Foreign office, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy, prominent businesspersons based in Berlin participated.

Likewise, Minister for Federal and Local Development Mr. Hitraj Pandey visited Bonn, Germany on 13-18 October 2016 to take part in the UN Volunteers Partnerships Forum organized by the UN Volunteers (UNV) in collaboration with the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the City of Bonn. The Forum had a theme 'Revitalizing Partnership: Volunteerism for the Sustainable Development Goals.'

Other high-level visits to Germany included those by Minister for Agriculture Development Mr. Gauri Shankar Chaudhary on 19-29 January 2017; Chairperson of Finance Committee of the Legislative Parliament Mr. Prakash Jawala on 19-24 March 2017; and Supreme Court Justice Mr. Om Prakash Mishra, on 17-20 December 2016, among others.

German Minister for Environment, Nature Conversation, Building and Nuclear Safety Dr. Barbara Hendricks visited Nepal on 2-5 April 2017. During her visit, she met the Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation Mr. Shankar Bhandari and Minister for Environment Mr. Jayadev Dev Joshi to gain insight into the progress made in development projects in the field of environment and forest that have been supported by Germany.

Likewise, Ms. Claudia Roth, Vice President of the German Parliament 'Bundestag' visited Nepal leading a three-member delegation on 9-11 April 2017. In her meeting with the Speaker of Nepal's Legislature-Parliament Ms. Onsari Gharti, Vice-President Roth shared the conviction that the two countries would be able to work together more closely for the mutual benefit of both countries and peoples and to take the bilateral relations to greater heights.

The Embassy participated in the Berlin Bazaar, an international Handicrafts Fair held on 16-20 November 2016. The Embassy also participated, in collaboration with Nepal Tourism Board, in the Berlin ITB Fair, a prominent and one of the biggest tourism fairs in the world, organized this year on 8-12 March 2017.

Germany approved development assistance of 36 million Euros to Nepal to be spent in areas such as sustainable economic development, trade, health and energy.

Hungary

Relations between Nepal and Hungary continued to remain excellent in the review period.

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat met Hungarian

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr. Peter Szijjarto during the course of attending the 34th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva on 28 February 2017.

The two sides held discussions on bilateral cooperation in hydropower, education and development cooperation. A loan assistance of 100 million Euro, equivalent to Rs. 11.20 billion, at minimal interest rate (below one percent) was agreed to be provided by the Government of Republic of Hungary in the hydropower sector of Nepal.

Ireland

Nepal and Ireland continued to enjoy friendly and cordial relations throughout the year.

Ireland-Nepal Parliamentary Friendship Group was established on 27 June 2017. It consisted of the Members of Irish Parliament, Hon. Ms. Maureen O'Sullivan TD, Hon. Senator Ms. Ivana Bacik, Hon. Mr. Sean Barett TD, Mr. Sean Crowe TD and Hon. Mr. Darragh O'Brien TD. The Convener Ireland-Nepal Parliamentary of Friendship Group, Ms. Maureen O' Sullivan, stated that the Friendship Group could be instrumental in encouraging Irish Business Houses and investors for beneficial trade and investment in Nepal in areas of hydropower, tourism, agro-based and herbal based products as well as IT and technology transfer.

Italy

Bilateral relations with Italy in the

spheres of trade promotion and cultural cooperation gained prominence this year.

The year proved productive in bringing the two countries closer. The Embassy in Geneva organized a Nepal Destination Promotion Programme in Milan, Italy on 4 May 2017, under the theme 'Connecting Cultures and Enjoying the Beauty of Nature'. A Nepali cultural show and a typical Nepali meal were the main highlights in the programme.

Italy's development cooperation to Nepal is primarily channelized through multilateral organizations like UNHCR, FAO, WHO and WFP as well as through different channels of the European Union.

Nepal and Italy continued to remain significant trade partner and Nepal exchanged goods worth NRs. 32,329,496 and NRs. 1,395,084,040 in exports and imports respectively.

Luxemburg

Nepal enjoyed friendly and cordial relations with Luxembourg in 2016/17.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat visited Grand Duchy of Luxemburg on 16 February 2017. He called on Mr Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister, and had separate bilateral meetings with Mr. Jean Asselborn, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs, and Mr. Romain Scheider, Minister for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs of Luxemburg.

As a follow-up on former Prime Minister late Sushil Koirala's visit to Luxemburg in September 2014, Dr. Mahat urged the Luxembourgish authorities to include Nepal in Luxemburg's official ODA recipient countries, and called for an enhanced support in areas of trade, investment and tourism. The Luxembourgish Prime appreciated Minister progress made by Nepal with regard to institutionalizing the democratic gains made over the years and expressed the commitment of his government to extend possible support to Nepal in the days to come.



Minister for Foreign Affairs Meets Mr. Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister of Luxemburg

In a similar vein, Mr. Asselborn and Mr. Scheider assured Dr. Mahat of Luxemburg's support in exploring further avenues of economic engagements with Nepal. They also indicated that Nepal would be given positive consideration during the next review of the list of countries receiving the Luxemburgish ODA.

As of June 2017, Luxemburg has been extending its development cooperation

to Nepal through multilateral channels such as the UN and the EU. An active cooperation between National Scouts of two countries has been instrumental to enrich bilateral relations over the years. There are also few NGOs which receive Luxemburgish funding for development activities in various areas.

Nepal's exports to and imports from Luxembourg totaled NRs. 3,887,906 and NRs. 7,327,103 respectively in 2016/17.

Monaco

Diplomatic relations between Nepal and the Principality of Monaco were established in May 2012. Since then, efforts are ongoing to enhance political and economic relations with Monaco. The Nepal-Monaco Cultural Association, with the assistance of the Prince Albert Foundation has been active in building schools and health posts, especially in the Dhading district in coordination with Avignon (France) based Franco-Nepalese Cultural Association.

Netherlands

Nepal and the Netherlands shared cordial and cooperative relations in the review period.

The Dutch economic cooperation to Nepal started in 1976. Currently, much of its development support to Nepal is channeled through the multilateral entities such as the UN and the EU. Besides, a significant amount of cooperation is provided through various Dutch NGOs and INGOs. The

focus of Dutch cooperation to Nepal is in the areas of health, environment, disaster preparedness and relief, decentralized local governance, biodiversity and renewable energy.

The Embassy of Nepal in Brussels which is concurrently accredited to the Netherlands continued to engage with the Dutch Government, non-government organizations and Nepali diaspora in the Netherlands. The Embassy participated in the Embassy Festival organized in The Hague on 3 September 2016.

The Netherlands is one of the seven core group countries taking the initiative on the third-country resettlement of Bhutanese refugees. As of June 2017, 329 refugees have been resettled in the Netherlands

With regard to Nepal-Netherlands trade, the total exports and imports were worth NRs. 439,016,446 and NRs. 1,721,261,291 in the period under review.

Norway

Relations between Nepal and Norway remained friendly and cordial during the year.

Development cooperation that started with the signing of a memorandum of understanding in 1996 continued to yield significant results. The major areas of cooperation at present include education, renewable energy and good governance.

In 2016 alone, Nepal received a total of 252 million NOK (approximately US\$

30 million). The Norwegian Embassy in Kathmandu has been collaborating in around 50 active projects in Nepal, and administers approximately 75% of the total official development assistance extended to Nepal by Norway. The remaining 25% is channeled directly from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

Norway has also been annually offering NORAD fellowships to Nepali students and scholars. This has been useful in building enhanced capacity of human resources in Nepal.

Around 2900 Norwegians visited Nepal in 2016.

Poland

Relations between Nepal and Poland have remained cordial and friendly ever since the establishment of diplomatic relations on 25 November 1959.

Poland continued to attract Nepali students in the field of medicine and social science during the year. Poland is a major country in Central Europe in terms of size and population and its role in Europe for its political and economic transformation. During the year, over 3,500 Polish tourists visited Nepal.

Portugal

Nepal and Portugal continued to enjoy friendly and productive relations in the review period. Likewise, trade between Nepal and Portugal was significantly boosted to over NRs. 1 billion during the year. Cooperation to Nepal from Portugal was channeled through the European Union and other international organizations.

Russian Federation

Relations between Nepal and Russia remained cordial and friendly in 2016/17. Mutual understanding, common views on matters pertaining to international issues and goodwill towards each other contributed to enhancing the constructive ties between the two countries.

This year marked the diamond jubilee of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Russia. We observed the year by organizing various programmes in both countries. This has given a new momentum to further expanding our relations.

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Nepal and the Russian Federation exchanged congratulatory messages emphasizing the expansion and consolidation of bilateral cooperation.

Speaker of the Legislature-Parliament Ms. Onsari Gharti visited Russia on 21-25 November 2016. She held a meeting with Ms. Valentina Myatviyenko, Speaker of the Federation Council, on 22 November 2016. Ms. Myatviyenko stated that the Government of Russia had welcomed the promulgation of the new Constitution of Nepal and was interested to invest in the hydro-sector of Nepal. Both the Speakers agreed that the exchange of the visits of

parliamentarians from both countries and their interactions thereof would help elevate the bonds of ties to a new height.

The Embassy of Nepal in Moscow remained actively engaged with the Government of the Russian Federation. The Embassy, along with a delegation from the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, participated in the 24th Moscow International Travel and Tourism Exhibition held in Moscow on 14-16 March 2017.

Nepal participated in the 22nd International Specialized Exhibition on 'Tourism and Sport' and the First Congress and Exhibition Project 'Kazan Event Expo' held at Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan of the Russian Federation on 13-15 April 2017.

Around seven thousand Russian tourists visited Nepal in the reporting period. Nepal exported food items, garments, leather, carpets and shawls and decorative materials to the Russian Federation.

Russia's contribution to Nepal's economic and social development is also visible through the cooperation in human resources development in Nepal.

Efforts are underway to further promote relationship with Russia. A number of bilateral MoUs/Agreements including in the areas of disaster management, culture, drug trafficking and mutual legal assistance are under consideration.

Spain

Government of Nepal decided to open a residential embassy in Madrid on 20

February 2017. Mr. Bharat Bahadur Rayamajhi was appointed as the first Ambassador of Nepal to Spain.

Relations between Nepal and Spain have always remained cordial and friendly. They have witnessed further consolidation over the years. Exchange of visits, cooperation in international forums, and the commitment to global peace and harmony have brought the two countries closer.

The presence of Nepali diaspora in Spain has promoted people-to-people relations.

Sweden

Bilateral relations between Nepal and Sweden continued to be cordial and friendly in the reporting period.

Nepal and Sweden share common concerns on issues such as climate change, implementation of sustainable development goals and promotion of sustainable forestry, among others. During the year, officials from both sides discussed ways to enhance cooperation especially in trade and tourism. The concept of exploring investment of Swedish Retail companies like IKEA and H&M was discussed.

Around 2, 700 Swedish tourists visited Nepal during the year.

Switzerland

Nepal's relations with Switzerland continued to grow in various spheres during the period under review.

On 24 February 2017, Minister for

Foreign Affairs, Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat held a bilateral meeting with his Swiss counterpart, Mr. Didier Burkhalter, on the sidelines of the 34th Session of the Human Rights Council held in Geneva. The two ministers reviewed various areas of cooperation existing between Nepal and Switzerland and reiterated their commitment to deepen and strengthen bilateral cooperation. The Swiss Foreign Minister assured Dr. Mahat of continued cooperation to Nepal under Swiss Development Cooperation.

In 2016/17, bilateral discussion was held with Swiss authorities for the enhancement of bilateral development cooperation to meet Nepal's need for development financing.

In collaboration with the Nepali Students Association in Switzerland, the Embassy held a Swiss-Nepal Technology Transfer Seminar in Zurich on 8 April 2017. The programme held interactions on various projects related to the transfer of Swiss technology to Nepal.

Turkey

Relations between Nepal and Turkey continued to grow and expand in the review period.

Trade and business cooperation between Nepal and Turkey received significant boost last year. Bilateral trade surged to NRs. 4.1 billion and Nepal enjoyed a trade surplus of over NRs. 1 billion. Yarn export making up nearly 89 percent of the total export to Turkey accounted as one of the biggest export earnings. Leather, wool, carpets,

textiles were other goods exported to Turkey.

The operation of direct flights between Kathmandu and Istanbul has brought two capitals closer in terms of people-to-people contact and enhanced prospects for business relations.

United Kingdom

Nepal and the United Kingdom enjoyed excellent bilateral relations based on cordiality, mutual trust and respect.

Nepal condemned the terror attacks outside the British Parliament in London on 23 March 2017 and at Manchester Arena on 22 May 2017 and expressed sadness over the loss of lives and properties.

High-level visits from Nepal to the United Kingdom in 2016/17 included those of Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Mr. Jeevan Bahadur Shahi on 5-13 November 2016 to participate in the World Tourism Market: Minister for Education Mr. Dhaniram Poudel to participate in the Education Conference organized by the British Council on 22-27 January 2017; and Minister for Industry, Mr. Nabindra Raj Joshi on 18-24 March 2017, among others. On 19 March 2017, Mr. Joshi participated in the 'Nepalese Trade Fair and Interaction Programme on Trade and Investment Opportunities in Nepal' and also attended the Special Bicentennial Concluding Ceremony on 20 March 2017 organized by the Embassy.

The visits of the Chairman of Public

Service Commission Mr. Umesh Prasad Mainali (17 to 22 June 2017), Chief Secretary Dr. Somlal Subedi (10 to 14 October 2016) and Chief of the Army Staff Gen. Rajendra Chhetri (10 to 14 July 2017) also took place during this period.

Lord Mayor of London, Dr. Andrew Parmley visited Nepal from 21 to 23 January 2017. He called on the President, the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and other high-ranking officials. Upon his return to the United Kingdom, he hosted a conference at the Mansion House, London on 23 March 2017 on the theme 'Opportunities for UK business in Nepal's Expanding Hydro Energy Sector' with the aim of connecting the potential British investors with representatives Nepal's hydropower industry. Minister of Industry, Mr. Nabindra Raj Joshi and Ambassador of Nepal to the United Kingdom discussed the efforts made by the Government of Nepal towards creating an enabling environment for foreign investment in Nepal.

The 3rd Meeting of Nepal-UK Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held in Kathmandu on 28 March 2017. The meeting reviewed diverse issues such as trade, investment, human rights, grievances of British Gurkhas and other matters of global importance.

The Embassy of Nepal in London remained engaged throughout the year to further widen and strengthen close and cordial relations between the two countries.

The Embassy organized a 'Special Ceremony of Bicentennial Celebration' from 14 to 20 March 2017, to mark the conclusion of the bicentenary of bilateral relations between Nepal and the United Kingdom. His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester attended the Inaugural Ceremony and Nepali Cultural Festival held to commemorate the bicentenary of bilateral relations on 14 March 2017.

The week of bicentennial celebrations featured programmes and exhibitions showcasing Nepal through its art, culture, literature, food and music, which were attended by high-level officials as well as members of the parliament from the United Kingdom and Nepal, among others.

Similarly, the Embassy organized a special programme on 15 March 2017 to announce Visit Nepal-Europe 2017 Campaign. Member of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom and the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Nepal, Mr. Virendra Sharma inaugurated the programme in which all Honorary Representatives of Nepal Tourism Board in Europe participated.

The Embassy also organized an academic seminar on '200 years of Nepal-Britain Relations' on 16 March 2017. Inaugurating the seminar, former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State and Minister for International Security Strategy and Member of the House of Commons, Sir Gerald Howarth stated that Nepal and Britain had historical connection and Nepal was in the hearts of British people.

The Embassy hosted Nepali Trade Fair and Interaction Programme on Trade and Investment Opportunities in Nepal on 19 March 2017. Presentations on efforts to explore the potentials of investment opportunities in Nepal were made by various experts and speakers.

A special ceremony was organized on 20 March 2017 by the Embassy to mark the conclusion of the bicentenary celebrations. His Royal Highness Prince Henry of Wales graced the ceremony as Chief Guest.



His Royal Highness Prince Henry of Wales at the Closing Ceremony

The Embassy was engaged negotiations on the British Gurkha issues. Ambassador of Nepal to the United Kingdom, Dr. Durga Bahadur Subedi held meetings with the Minister of Defence, Veterans, Reserves and Personnel, Mr. Mark Lancaster. TD MP. It was agreed to form a Technical Committee comprising of the representatives from the Ministry of Defense of the Government of the UK, Embassy of Nepal and the Ex-Gurkha Servicemen Organizations to study, analyse and recommend on the issues and grievances raised by the ex-Gurkha Servicemen Organizations.

The Embassy was also actively involved in organizing *Nepali Mela* in London and Nepal-Ireland Day in Ireland.

United States of America

The United States of America is one of the oldest development partners of Nepal. Both the countries continued to enjoy friendly and cordial relations during the reporting period.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari congratulated President Mr. Donald J. Trump on his election as the US President and expressed her desire to work closely with him for the mutual benefit of both countries and peoples.



Minister for Foreign Affairs with Congressman Mr. Jarred Polis

Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat visited Washington D.C on 26-29 September 2016, and held meetings with US authorities. In his meeting with the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights, Dr. Sarah Sewal on 29 September 2016 Dr. Mahat appreciated the US Government's continued financial and economic cooperation to Nepal and underlined the importance

of enhanced US cooperation in the days to come.

Other visits to the United States included those by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance. Mr. Krishna Bahadur Mahara on 6-9 October 2016; Minister for Youth and Sports, Mr. Daljit Sripali on 31 January- 1 February 2017; Minister for Information and Communication, Mr. Surendra Kumar Karki on 7-10 March 2017; Former Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal on 4-8 December 2016; Former Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, Mr. Subash Chandra Nemwang on 26-29 August 2017; and Chief Secretary Dr. Som Lal Subedi on 7-8 March 2017.

Leading a Bipartisan Delegation of the US House of Representatives, US Congresswoman and former speaker of the House of Representative Ms. Nancy Pelosi visited Nepal on 6-7 May 2017.



A Bipartisan Delegation Led by US Congresswoman and Former Speaker of the House of Representative Ms. Nancy Pelosi Calls on the President

She paid courtesy calls on the President, the Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Speaker of the Parliament. In all these meetings,

discussions were focused on political and human rights, economic and developmental issues.

Admiral Harry B. Harris, Jr. Commander of the United States Pacific Command visited Nepal and participated in the opening ceremony of a US-sponsored multinational U.N Peacekeeping exercise (*Shanti Prayas*) in Kathmandu on 20 March 2017.

The third meeting of Trade and Investment Framework Agreement was held in Kathmandu on 20-21 April 2017. The meeting held discussions on a wide range of issues such as investment, trade, services, labour, customs, intellectual property rights, products standards, phytosanitary matters, etc.

Views were also exchanged on the implementation of Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act, 2015 of the USA in order to materialize the provisions of duty-free access to the Nepali products. The Act provides duty-free access for 66 Nepali products to the US market until 2025. Nepal got the WTO waiver from its Council of Goods and Services on 7 December 2016.

With an objective to promote the benefits of duty-free access facilities to Nepal given by the United States, the Embassy in Washington D.C. organized an information dissemination programme on trade and investment opportunities in Nepal which was able to draw the attention of large masses from Nepali communities living in the United States.

Various promotional programmes were also organized by the Consulate General of Nepal in New York aiming to promote tourism, trade and investment. Nepal Day parade was organized this year as well.

ofIn other economic areas collaboration. the **Embassy** closely involved in moving forward the agenda of the Alliance Group of 27 countries including Nepal. The group was formed to lobby for the renewal of GSP facilities extended to Nepal and other least developed countries. The United States has been providing GSP facilities on 5000 goods at lower or zero tariffs for the least developed countries since 1976 under the US Trade Act of 1974 that is due to expire on 31 December 2017.

The U.S. assistance under Compact Program of the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which extended its eligibility criteria to Nepal since December 2011, was agreed and is expected to be signed in September 2017. A delegation from the U.S Government's Millennium Challenge Corporation visited Nepal in July 2017 to hold discussions over the final provisions of the planned MCC Compact.

The Compact is worth US\$ 630 million, out of which the MCC will provide US\$ 500 million as grant assistance to Nepal. The contribution of the Government of Nepal will be US\$ 130 million. The Compact will include the projects on expansion of transmission lines and upgradation of roads. The implementation of these

projects will have to be completed within 5 years.

The contribution of the United States in capacity building and skills enhancement of Nepali security officials also remained significant this year.

Venezuela

Nepal continued to enjoy friendly relations with Venezuela during the reporting period.

Vice President Mr. Nanda Bahadur Pun visited Margarita Island, Venezuela on 15-18 September 2016 leading a Nepali delegation to the 17th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). On the sidelines of the Summit, the Vice President met the Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and discussed areas of mutual concern between Nepal and Venezuela.

6. Regional Cooperation

Regional engagements are an important dimension of Nepal's foreign policy. In the year under review, our regional diplomacy focused on promoting deeper economic integration. While underlining the importance deepening regional cooperation in core economic areas such as connectivity, energy, trade and investment, Nepal played an active role in and made significant contribution to advancing regional cooperation. Nepal, the current Chair of SAARC and BIMSTEC as well as a member of Asia Cooperation Dialogue and a Dialogue Partner of SCO, engaged in a number of activities of these frameworks.

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

has been consistently emphasizing the important role of SAARC for regional cooperation in South Asia. As a founding member, Nepal remains firmly committed to the goals and objectives of SAARC. Nepal hosts the SAARC Secretariat and the SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC). Nepal successfully convened the third, eleventh and eighteenth SAARC Summits in 1987, 2002 and 2014 respectively. Despite the postponement of the 19th SAARC Summit, Nepal has been proactively engaged with the Member States to maintaining the momentum of regional cooperation. The year 2016-17 witnessed some progress under SAARC.

Programming Committee

The 53rd Session of the SAARC Programming Committee (PC) was held in Kathmandu on 1-2 February 2017. The Committee reviewed the progress made in the implementation of its previous decisions. The Session deliberated on the administrative and financial matters of SAARC Secretariat, Regional Centres and Specialized Bodies. The Meeting adopted reports of various sectoral meetings, workshops and trainings. Nepal offered to host the Meeting of the Technical Committee to finalize Draft SAARC Declaration on Labour Migration. The Session was chaired by Joint Secretary Mr. Mani Prasad Bhattarai. Secretary General SAARC H.E. Arjun Bahadur Thapa highlighted the progress made since the last meeting held in Pokhara.



Joint Secretary Mr. Mani Prasad Bhattarai Chairs the PC Meeting held in Kathmandu

SAARC Interior/Home Ministers' Meeting

The 7th Meeting of SAARC Interior/ Home Ministers, preceded by the 7th Meeting of SAARC Secretaries of Interior/Home and the 7th Meeting of SAARC Immigration Authorities, was held in Islamabad on 2-4 August 2016. The Meeting reviewed actions and efforts on counter-terrorism, narcotics drugs and cybercrimes.

The Ministers highlighted the necessity of addressing challenges controlling cybercrimes transnational organized crimes. Special emphasis was made on securing future for the youth, women and children. While condemning terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, the Ministers called for collective actions in combating this menace. They were unanimous in asserting that terrorists should not escape prosecution.

Mr. Narayan Gopal Malego, Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs led the Nepali delegation to both Ministerial and Secretary-level Meetings.

SAARC Finance Ministers Meeting

Mr. Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance led Nepali delegation to the 8th Meeting of SAARC Finance Ministers held in Islamabad on 26 August 2016. The Meeting reviewed the progress made in the implementation of recommendations of the 7th Meeting of SAARC Finance Ministers held in Kathmandu on 20 August 2015.

The Meeting deliberated, among others, on accelerating the process towards South Asian Economic Union (SAEU) in a phased and planned manner as mentioned in the declaration of the 18th SAARC Summit. Views were exchanged on full and expeditious implementation

of South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) including through bringing down tariffs, eliminating NTBs/PTBs, reducing sensitive lists and operationalizing the SAARC Agreement on Trade in Services in order to achieve deeper integration and move towards SAEU.

Informal Ministerial Meetings

Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Minister for Foreign Affairs, chaired the Informal Meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers held in New York on 21 September 2016 on the sidelines of the 71st Session of the UNGA. The Meeting reviewed the progress made in the implementation of the decisions of the 37th Meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers held in Pokhara in March 2016.

The 11th Informal Meeting of SAARC Finance Ministers was held in Yokohama, Japan on 5 May 2017 on the sidelines of the 50th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of ADB with the theme '50 years of ADB and its operations in SAARC Countries'. Speaking as the Chair, The Hon. Krishna Bahadur Mahara appreciated ADB's continued engagement in the promotion of cooperation and integration in the Asia-Pacific region. He presented the current economic scenario of Nepal that also included Nepal's impressive 6.9 economic growth rate achieved for the first time in a quarter of a century.

The Meeting called for improvement in infrastructure, connectivity and creating economic corridors among SAARC Member States, operationalization of the SAARC Agreement on Trade in Services (SATIS), finalization of the text of the Draft SAARC Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investment at the earliest. The augmentation of intra-regional trade under SAFTA and making visa regimes more liberal to encourage people-to- people contacts were also highlighted in the Meeting.

Governing Board Meetings

During the reporting period, the Governing Board Meetings of the SAARC specialized bodies (SAARC Development Fund, South Asian University and SAARC Arbitration Council), and the SAARC regional Agriculture centres (SAARC Centre, SAARC Cultural Centre, SAARC Energy Centre and SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre) were held. In these meetings, the respective specialized bodies and regional centres reviewed the programmes and activities carried out in the year 2016 and also finalized the budget and programme for the year 2017 for the consideration and approval of the Fifty-third Session of the Programming Committee.

Other SAARC Events

SAARC-FAO Consultation on Sustainability of the Regional Support Unit (RSU) was held in Kathmandu on 09 March 2017. The Meeting requested Nepal and SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) to submit proposals on sustainability of the RSU for further discussion.

The South Asian University (SAU) held its first and second convocations during the reporting period.

The first ever Convocation Ceremony. after the establishment of the South Asian University (SAU) in 2010, was held in New Delhi on 11 June 2016. As the current Chair of SAARC, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Mr. Kamal Thapa presided over the First Convocation Ceremony and delivered the convocation speech highlighting that the SAU was a testament to the heritage of knowledge and wisdom of the region. Likewise, the Second Convocation Ceremony was held in New Delhi on 12 June 2017. The Ceremony was presided by His Excellency Mr. Deep Kumar Upadhyay, Ambassador of Nepal to India. Mr. Upadhava urged the graduating students to contribute to the process of South Asia's development and to carry forth the message of peace, harmony and fraternity.

The 3rd SAARC-ADB Special Meeting of Representatives of Commerce and Finance Ministries on Regional Economic Integration Study (Phase-II) was held in Islamabad on 12-13 April 2017. The Meeting reviewed the implementation status of prioritized and identified corridors/projects (road, air, maritime, inland waterways) in the SAARC Regional Multimodal Transport Study (SRMTS) at the national level.

A 'Regional Conference on SAARC Effectiveness' was organized by the International Relations and Labour Committee of the Legislature-Parliament of Nepal in Kathmandu on 29-30 September 2016. The Chairpersons of the Parliamentary Committees dealing with international affairs from all SAARC Member States attended the Conference.

The Conference was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' while several foreign and Nepali experts in SAARC affairs presented comprehensive papers on five topics i.e. overview of three decades of SAARC. economic cooperation. fostering trust and understanding, deepening integration through enhanced connectivity, strengthening institutional mechanisms. Prime Minister Mr. Madhay Kumar Nepal led the coordinating process of the Conference.

In addition, the 9th Food Bank Board Meeting was held in Kathmandu on 21-22 September 2016.

Mr. Amjad Hussain B. Sial, from Pakistan assumed his duty as the 13th Secretary General of SAARC on 1 March 2017.



Call on Foreign Minister by the SAARC Secretary General on 09 March

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

Ever since joining BIMSTEC as a member in 2004, Nepal has been playing an active and constructive role in the regional integration process under BIMSTEC. Nepal assumed the Chair after the 3rd BIMSTEC Summit held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar in March 2014.

BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit/ BIMSTEC Leaders' Retreat

At the special invitation of the chair of BRICS, the Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi, BIMSTEC Leaders attended the BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit in Goa, India on 16 October 2016.

The Outreach Summit provided an opportunity for BIMSTEC and BRICS Leaders to interact with and discuss matters of mutual concern and explore the possibility of boosting cooperation between BIMSTEC and BRICS.

The BIMSTEC Leaders' Retreat that was organized on the sidelines of BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit deliberated on intensifying regional cooperation under BIMSTEC and adopted the Outcome Document and 16-point Agenda of Action to guide the future course of action. Key elements incorporated in the Outcome Document include firm commitment to the conclusion of BIMSTEC Free Trade Area, enhancement of connectivity, energy cooperation, fight against terrorism, and celebration of the 20th anniversary of the BIMSTEC, among others.



BIMSTEC Leaders during the BIMSTEC Leaders' Retreat 2016

Seventeenth Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (BIMSTEC-SOM)

The 17th Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) was held in Kathmandu on 7 February 2017. The Meeting was preceded by the Second Preparatory Meeting to the BIMSTEC-SOM and the 7th Meeting of the Joint Working Group on the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat.



Foreign Secretary with Delegates of the BIMSTEC-SOM in Kathmandu

The Meeting took important decisions to revitalize BIMSTEC process in order to bring about tangible results to the lives of people in the region. The deliberations of the Meeting encompassed important priority sectors such as connectivity,

trade, tourism, investment, energy, technology transfer, etc. The Meeting decided to constitute Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) in order to work out the BIMSTEC vision - a roadmap for the future directions of this regional organization in line with the UN Agenda 2030. The Member States reiterated their firm commitment to the effective implementation of the Outcome Document of the BIMSTEC Leaders' Retreat and its 16-point Agenda of Action.

Nepal offered to host the Fifteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting and the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit in Nepal. Similarly, Nepal also proposed to convene an expert group meeting on the implementation of the Poverty Action Plan and prepare a Concept Paper on Mountain Economy for exploring and harnessing its potentials.

Fourth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials on Energy (SOE)

A three-member delegation from Nepal participated in the 4th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials on Energy which was held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar on 11-12 January 2017.

The Meeting finalized the draft MoU on the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection. Nepal offered to host the Third BIMSTEC Energy Ministers' Meeting in Kathmandu. An early operationalization of the BIMSTEC Energy Centre to be set up in India was also emphasized in the Meeting.

First Meeting of the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs:

The First Meeting of the National Security Chiefs of the BIMSTEC Member States took place in New Delhi, India on 21 March 2017. A four-member delegation from Nepal led by Mr. Singha Bahadur Shrestha, IGP of Armed Police Force participated in the Meeting.

The Meeting recognized common threats in traditional and non-traditional security areas faced by the BIMSTEC Member States and decided to deepen security cooperation in the region.

The 7th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Legal and Law Enforcement Issues (SGLLEI) was held in Yangon, Myanmar on 22-23 March 2017. The Meeting deliberated on various new areas of cooperation, such as extradition, cyber-crimes and payment devices fraud, trafficking in persons, especially women and children, transfer of sentenced persons, trafficking and trading of illicit firearms, ammunitions and explosives, fake drugs and medicines, among others.

The 9th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-

group on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism was convened in Yangon, Myanmar on 26-27 April 2017. The Meeting discussed Illicit Flow of Funds (IFF) among the BIMSTEC Member States and agreed to share revised National Risk Assessment Report.

The Nepali delegation made a presentation on 'Some Case Studies of Nepal: Emerging Cyber Threats on Financial Sector' and highlighted two specific cases of ATM card fraud. Nepal also offered to host the Tenth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism in Kathmandu in 2018.

The 3rd Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks (BNPTT) was organized at the BIMSTEC Secretariat, Dhaka, Bangladesh on 22-23 April 2017. The Meeting finalized the ToR of BNPTT and agreed to establish the Centre for Bay of Bengal Studies.

BIMSTEC Working Group (BWG) met on a monthly basis with the participation of mission representatives of Member States stationed in Dhaka. The Ambassador of Nepal to Bangladesh chaired five BWG meetings in 2016/17.

The Secretary General of BIMSTEC Mr. Sumith Nakandala, paid a visit to Kathmandu from 21-23 January 2017 and held a meeting with Foreign Secretary, Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi on 22 January 2017. Views were

exchanged on making BIMSTEC more vibrant and action-oriented regional organization.

Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD)

Nepal's commitment to multilateralism has found yet another unequivocal expression in the pan-Asian cooperation initiated by the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD). Nepal joined the ACD in March 2016 and till date is the newest member.

Second ACD Summit

With the theme of "One Asia, Diverse Strengths", the 2nd Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Summit was held in Bangkok on 08-10 October 2016. The Summit adopted three outcome documents: ACD Vision for Asia Cooperation 2030, Bangkok Declaration along with ACD Blue Print 2017-2021 and ACD Statement on Reigniting Growth through Partnerships for Connectivity.

While addressing the Summit as the leader of Nepali delegation, Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat underlined the importance of connectivity in all modes - road and

rail networks, air links, waterways and transmission ways — as a key enabler to countries of Asia, especially landlocked countries like Nepal. The Foreign Minister referred to the role played by migrant workers in connecting peoples and societies in Asia and stressed the need to guarantee safety, security and wellbeing. He highlighted that development of Nepal's hydropower would provide source of green energy not only for Nepal but also for neighbouring countries.

During the Summit, ACD Connect 2016 Business Forum was also organized in Bangkok on 9 October 2016 under two sub-themes 'Driving Asian's Economies with Financial Technology 'and 'Financing Infrastructure in Asia'.

Fifteenth ACD Ministerial Meeting

Nepal participated in the 15th Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Ministerial Meeting held in Abu Dhabi on 15-17 January 2017 under the theme of "Sustainable Energy". Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi, as the leader of Nepali delegation, underscored the importance



Inauguration Ceremony of the 2nd ACD Summit

of enhanced cooperation at bilateral, sub-regional and regional levels to ensure sustainable, affordable, reliable and modern energy to all as stipulated in the SDGs. He called for investment in Nepal's hydropower which, if harnessed properly, could provide a reliable source of renewable energy source for the region. The Meeting adopted the *Abu Dhabi Declaration* and *ACD Energy Action Plan*.

The Senior Officials Meeting and Energy Working Group/Drafting Committee Meeting preceded the Ministerial Meeting. Nepali delegation to both meetings was led by Mr. Mani Prasad Bhattarai, Joint Secretary and Head of Regional Organizations Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat attended the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Foreign Ministers' Meeting on the sidelines of the 71st Session in New York on 22 September 2016. He emphasized the need for placing poverty eradication at the forefront of ACD agenda. He also underscored the importance of regional cooperation in the areas of energy, connectivity, tourism and culture. He drew the attention to the special needs of LDCs and LLDCs. The Meeting finalized the ACD Vision for Asia Cooperation 2030 and the Bangkok Declaration to be considered by the second Summit.

Nepal also participated in the High-Level Study Group (HLSG) on the Establishment of Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Permanent Secretariat which met in Bangkok on 14 July 2016.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

Nepal was granted the status of Dialogue Partner of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on 22 March 2016. Since becoming the Dialogue Partner of this regional forum, Nepal has been exploring possible areas of cooperation as defined in the Memorandum of Granting the Dialogue Partner Status to Nepal (2016).

Nepal, through its mission in Beijing, remains in close contact with the SCO Secretariat stationed in Beijing for productive engagements with SCO and its Member States. As one of the recent Dialogue Partners of SCO, Nepal has been invited to take part in a few programmes under the SCO Framework.

A three-member delegation of Nepal including the representatives from the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs and Ministry of Foreign Affairs participated in the International Forum of the SCO on Legal Service for Silk Road held in Yiwu, Zhejiang Province of China on 23-24 November 2016. The Meeting agreed to harmonize the legal documents of the SCO Member States for the implementation of Belt and Road Initiative.

The Deputy Director of the Executive Committee of the Regional Counter-Terrorism Structure of the Shanghai

Cooperation Organization (SCO)

Mr. Zhon Qing visited Kathmandu on 16-24 January 2017 for attending the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of Interpol. In a meeting with Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi on 23 January 2017, Mr. Qing stated that Memorandum on granting Nepal the status of dialogue partner of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has laid solid basis for cooperation between Nepal and SCO. Mr. Bairagi expressed his full commitment on implementation of MoU and readiness to conclude an additional protocol for deeper engagements within SCO Framework.

Mr. Durga Prasad Bhattarai, Ambassador/ Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United

Nations addressed, as a panelist, the High-Level Special Event on "United Nations and Shanghai Cooperation Jointly Countering Organization: Challenges and Threats" organized at the UN by the Permanent Mission of Kazakhastan in New York on 22 November 2016. The UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon and the SCO Secretary General Mr. Rashid Alimov and Permanent Representatives of Member States, Observers and Dialogue Partners of the SCO attended the event.

Similarly, three professional sportsmen from Nepal participated in the SCO Kunming International Marathon, organized on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the SCO on 17 December.

7. Multilateral Affairs

Multilateral **Affairs** continued to remain an important part of Nepal's diplomatic engagements in 2016/17. An exchange of high-level visits, constructive participation in conferences and meetings, ratification of various international instruments and continued pursuit of socio-economic agenda development constituted Nepal's priorities on the multilateral front. While our deliberations were guided by the ideals of cooperation and mutual trust, special emphasis was directed towards promoting a fair, rulebased and transparent international system.

17th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement

Vice President Mr. Nanda Bahadur Pun led a Nepali delegation to the 17th Summit of the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) held in Margarita Bolivarian Republic Island. Venezuela. on 17-18 September 2016. He underscored the importance Nepal attached to the principles and ideals of Non-Aligned Movement for fostering global understanding and strengthening multilateralism.

Preceding the NAM Summit, Nepal's Permanent Representative to the UN, Mr. Durga Prasad Bhattarai and Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal led the Nepali delegations to the Ministerial Meeting and Senior Officials Meeting held on 15-16 September 2016 and 13-14 September 2016 respectively.

71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat led the Nepali delegation to the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly Addressing the General (UNGA). Assembly on 24 September 2016, Dr. Mahat apprised the international community political of constitutional developments of Nepal. He stated that Nepal's commitment to the UN had "become even stronger" and that Nepal has "significantly contributed to the UN in fulfilling responsibility of maintaining international peace and security".



Foreign Minister Addressing the 71st Session of the UNGA

Dr. Mahat underlined the importance of national ownership and international partnership to ensure the effective implementation of the SDGs. He stressed the need to effectively implement Istanbul Programme of Action (IPOA) for LDCs and the Vienna Programme of Action (VPOA) for LLDCs.

He also addressed the Ministerial Meetings of LDCs, LLDCs, and G-77 and China and articulated the interests of the least developed, land-locked and developing countries respectively, specifically highlighting the inclusive development agenda pursued by Nepal.

On 20 September 2016, Dr. Mahat attended a reception hosted by US President Barack Obama in honour of visiting heads of delegations.

On 23 September 2016, the Foreign Minister held a meeting with UN Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon. Issues such as implementation of the Constitution of Nepal, Nepal's role in UN peacekeeping operations, Nepal-UN cooperation, climate change and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development figured in the discussion.



Foreign Minister with UN Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon

On the sidelines of the UNGA, the

Foreign Minister had a courtesy call on Mr. Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of Pakistan. He also held bilateral meetings with his counterparts Mr. Vivian Balakrishnan of Singapore, Mr. Tsend Munkh-Orgil of Mongolia and Mr. Ivica Decic of Serbia.

Permanent Representative of Nepal Mr. Durga Prasad Bhattarai was elected as Vice President of the 71st session of UN General Assembly representing the Asia-Pacific region. He presided over a number of plenaries and participated in many important events in the capacity of the Acting President of the General Assembly.

On 16 January 2017, the Permanent Representative of Nepal was elected, with acclaim, the chair of the UNGA's Working Group on the working methods of the Contingent-Owned Equipment (COE-WG).

Special Session on Strengthening of the Role of the UN

Nepal participated in the Special Session of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the strengthening of the Role of the Organization held at the UN Headquarters from 21 February to 1 March 2017. Nepal urged for cooperation and coordination among the Special Committee, Security Council, Ad Hoc Working Group of

the revitalization on the work of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies with a view to maintaining coherence and synergies among them.

Peace, Security and Disarmament

A Nepali delegation led by Mr. Bal Krishna Khand, Minister for Defence, participated in the Ministerial Peacekeeping Conference on Operations Francophone in Environment, organized by Government of France, in Paris on 26-27 October 2016. In the Conference, he highlighted Nepal's contribution to the UN peacekeeping operations since 1958 and underlined that the constraints of troops and police contributing countries must be acknowledged and their voices heard while deciding and reviewing the mission mandates.

Mr. Atul Khare, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Chief of Department of Field Support, visited Nepal on 28-30 August 2016. During the visit, discussions were held on issues related to peacekeeping and field support services.

Mr. Yukiya Amano, Director General of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), visited Nepal from 5 to 9 July, 2017. He held a bilateral meeting with the Nepali delegation led by Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi. Both sides reviewed the

cooperation between IAEA and Nepal since the latter joined the Agency in 2008. The meeting also discussed potential cooperation in the areas of health, agriculture and livestock, non-destructive testing to verify integrity of key infrastructure and cultural heritage sites, education and research, human resource development, among others.

Back in Vienna, Nepal participated in the Forty-Eight Session of the preparatory committee of the Commission of Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) held on 22-23 June 2017. The Commission appointed Nepal, among others, as a member of the Credentials Committee.

The Eighth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) was held in Geneva from 7 to 25 November 2016. Nepal, for the first time, took part in the Review Conference as a State Party to the Convention. The Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Deepak Dhital, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

The UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific was relocated to Kathmandu on 21 November 2016. The new UNRCPD office in Kathmandu was jointly inaugurated by Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Foreign Minister and Mr. Kim Won-soo, Under-Secretary-General of the UN and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. The Centre started functioning from Kathmandu in August 2008 but it had been temporarily shifted to Bangkok after the 2015 earthquakes.

Democracy and Human Rights

Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat led a Nepali delegation to the 9th Bali Democracy Forum held in Bali, Indonesia on 8-9 December 2016. In his address to the Plenary Session of the Forum, Dr. Mahat said that democracy was not only about competition but also about accommodation and dialogue to reach consensus. He mentioned that Nepal's peace process was a successful example of ending conflict through dialogue and that the world could learn from Nepal.

Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Minister for Foreign Affairs, led a Nepali delegation to the High-Level segment of the 34th Session of the UN Human Rights Council on 27 February – 3 March 2017.

He reiterated Nepal's unflinching commitment to the universal values of human rights and its principled position to respect, protect and promote human rights in all its dimensions.



Foreign Minister Addressing the 34th Session of Human Rights Council

On the sidelines, he held a meeting with. Mr. Didier Burkhalter, Swiss Minister of Foreign Affairs and discussed various aspects of bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

Dr. Mahat also met Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan and discussed the issues facing the landlocked countries.

Similarly, Dr. Mahat held meetings Fierravantiwith Ms. Concetta Wells, Minister for International Development and the Pacific of Australia. Mustafa Mr. Ramid. Minister of Justice of Morocco, Mr. Zahid Ahmad, Federal Minister for Law and Justice of Pakistan, and Mr. Peter Szijjarto, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary and discussed issues of bilateral interests.

Dr. Mahat also met and discussed issues of cooperation with UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filipo Grandi; UN High Commissioner

for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein; and WIPO Director General, Mr. Francis Gurry.

Mr. Kumar Khadka, Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare, led a delegation of Nepal to the 61st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) held in New York from 13 to 24 March 2017. In his statement, Mr. Khadka stressed the importance of women's economic empowerment for the full and effective implementation of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as SDGs 5 and 8.

Nepal participated in the 16th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues held at the UNHQ from 24 April to 5 May 2017. Nepali delegation highlighted the measures taken by the Government of Nepal including positive discrimination to ensure indigenous people's capacity building and participation in all aspects of national life.

While presiding over a high-level event organized to mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as Acting President of the UN General Assembly, Mr. Durga Prasad Bhattarai invited the international community to renew its commitment to indigenous peoples, work collaboratively to achieve the Declaration's aims and secure a world in which the rights of all indigenous peoples were promoted and protected.

Sustainable Development

Mr. Arjun Narsingh KC, Minister for Urban Development, led a Nepali delegation to the Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) held in Quito, Ecuador on 18 October. Minister KC highlighted Nepal's commitment to creating inclusive and sustainable cities in coherence and synergy with the 2030 Agenda.

Mr. Daljit BK Shreepali, Minister for Youth and Sports, participated in the 2017 Youth Forum of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on 30 January 2017. The Minister highlighted the need for integrating the SDGs in various youth development programmes.

Mr. Nabindra Raj Joshi, Minister for Industry, led a Nepali delegation to the second ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up which was held at the UNHQs from 22 to 25 May 2017. The Minister called for bridging the financing gap and urged the international community to fulfill their commitments for the effective implementation of SDGs.

This year's High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development was organized under the auspices of the ECOSOC in New York with the theme "eradicating property and promoting prosperity in a changing world". Nepal was among

the 43 countries to present their Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) during the Ministerial Segment of the Forum from 17 to 19 July 2017. The VNR includes national perspectives in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Min Bahadur Shrestha, Vice Chair of the National Planning Commission, led the Nepalese delegation. He underscored the need for completing the unfinished agenda of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and building on that, embracing a much more ambitious aspiration of fulfilling the SDGs.

A Nepali delegation, led by Mr. Romi Gauchan Thakali, Minister for Commerce, participated in the High-Level Meeting for the Euro-Asia Region on Improving Cooperation on Transit, Trade Facilitation and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which took place in Hanoi, Vietnam on 7-9 March, 2017.

Health

Mr. Gagan Kumar Thapa, Minister for Health, participated in the 140th session of the WHO Executive Board in Geneva from 23 January to 1 February 2017. He underscored the importance of articulating the vision of WHO in the areas of providing access to affordable medicines, faithful implementation of SDGs, balancing out the health

needs of developed and developing countries and managing global health issues. Nepal is a member of the WHO Executive Board for the period 2014-2017.

He also led a Nepali delegation to the 70th World Health Assembly held in Geneva from 22 to 31 May 2017. The Minister highlighted the importance of effective global partnerships for positive health outcomes that can be instrumental in economic progress, peace and stability.

Labour and Migration

President Bidya Devi Bhandari attended the World of Work Summit organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO) on 15 June 2017. The Summit was organized under the theme "A Better Future for Women at Work".

The President addressed the Summit as a special guest and underscored the achievements made by Nepal in women's participation and representation in politics as well as in the world of work. The President, who was joined by two other women Heads of State from Malta and Mauritius, was exclusively invited by the ILO for this year's Summit. This was the first time the Head of the State of Nepal was invited by the ILO.



The President Adressing the World of Work Summit 2017

The Director General of ILO Mr. Guy Ryder paid a courtesy call on the President and briefed on the ILO-Nepal relations.

On the occasion of 50 years of cooperation with Nepal, Mr. Guy Ryder, Director General of the ILO visited Nepal on 13-15 December 2016. Mr. Ryder addressed a ceremony on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Nepal- ILO partnership. Mr. Ryder also paid a courtesy call on Mr. Surya Man Gurung, Minister for Labour and Employment.

Nepal was elected as a Deputy Member of the ILO Governing Board for the period 2017-2020 at the 106th Session of the International Labour Conference, held in Geneva from 5 to 16 June 2017.

Nepal assumed the chair of the Colombo Process on 29 March 2017. As a non-binding regional consultative process on migration, it facilitates dialogue and cooperation on issues of common interests and concerns relating to labour mobility.

UNESCO

Nepal played an active role, as the Chair of the regional group of Asia and the Pacific Countries (ASPAC) of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) during the year 2016. It served, for consecutive three years from 2014 to 2016, in the bureau of the ASPAC, the second largest regional group at UNESCO with 44 countries.

LDCs and LLDCs

Minister of Physical Infrastructure and Transport Mr. Ramesh Lekhak led a Nepali delegation to the High-level Meeting on Sustainable Transport of Landlocked Developing Countries held in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, on 13-14 October 2016. He highlighted the challenges and possible way forward on implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for the LLDCs.

A Regional Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Least Developed Countries on Sustainable Energy was organized in Kathmandu on 22-23 March 2017 by the Government of Nepal in partnership with the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed

Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS).

The meeting discussed various financing models and initiatives to enhance sustainable energy project development capacities and shared best practices on the use of sustainable energy in the least developed countries.

22nd Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC

The twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 22) and the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 12) were held in Marrakech, Morocco, from 7 to 18 November 2016. A Nepali delegation led by Mr. Jay Dev Joshi, Minister for Population and Environment, participated in the Conference. At its conclusion, the Conference issued "Marrakesh Action Proclamation for our climate and sustainable development".

Ratification of /Affiliation with International Agreements

Nepal ratified the Paris Agreement on Climate Change on 5th of October 2016. The Paris Agreement entered into force a month later on 4th of November 2016 after achieving the threshold of minimum deposits of 55 instruments of ratification by Parties of the UNFCCC.

Nepal ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (1972). Nepal became the 177th State Party of the Convention after formally depositing the Instrument of Ratification in Washington D.C. on 4 November 2016.

Nepal ratified the Trade Facilitation Agreement under the World Trade Organization (WTO) regime by depositing the instrument of ratification to the WTO Director General in Geneva on 24 January 2017. Nepal became 108th WTO member and 14th LDC to submit the ratification. The Agreement entered into force on 22 February 2017 following its ratification by two-third members of the WTO.

The Government of Nepal on 27 January 2017 decided to extend its support to the Kigali Principles on the protection of civilians reinforcing its longstanding policy of protecting civilians during peace operations deployed under the mandate of the United Nations.

Joint Field Visit of the Executive Boards of different UN Agencies

A 28-member delegation comprising the team leaders of the executive boards of different UN agencies such as UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS, and UNICEF visited Nepal from 16 to 24 April 2017. The delegation comprised

of representatives of the United Nations from their head offices in New York, Rome and Geneva.

The delegation reviewed the country programme, strategic plan and work of the UN agencies in Nepal and assessed how these agencies carried out the mandate of the United Nations. Lauding the efforts made by Nepal to ensure that 'no one is left behind', the delegation commended the exemplary collaboration of the Government of Nepal with the United Nations agencies.

8. Policy, Planning and Development Diplomacy

Policy articulation and advice as well as strategy development were the key tasks of the Ministry in this area. Effective conduct of development diplomacy, cooperation and collaboration with Non-Resident Nepali Association and larger diaspora, and coordination with relevant think tanks remained on focus within the overall priorities of foreign policy orientation.

High-Level Foreign Policy Review Task Force

High-Level Foreign Policy Review Task Force (HLFPRTF) was set up under the chairmanship of the Minister for Foreign Affairs in April 2017. The Task Force was mandated to review foreign policy and recommend priorities in consonance with our national interests and ways to implement them effectively. The Task Force consists of experts from political, defense, economic and institutional spheres.

MOFA Consultative Group of Experts

MOFA constituted advisory groups with expertise in the field of international relations, foreign policy and diplomacy. MOFA initiated consultation with the experts on various dimensions and areas of MOFA priorities.

Development Diplomacy

With a view to promoting national economic interests through effective

and efficient conduct of development diplomacy, Nepal's economic engagements with immediate neighbours and other friendly countries were increased in 2016/17. Our engagements focused on foreign trade, investment, technology transfer, tourism, development cooperation, foreign employment and climate change. Necessary budget implement allocated to and programmes of development diplomacy focusing on six thematic areas. Total of 125 programmes were organized through Nepali Missions abroad. They included the following.

S. N.	Programme	Number of Programmes Held	Percent of Total budget
1	Tourism, Arts and Cultural Promotion	27	27.9
2	Familiarization Trip	4	3.5
3	Mobilization of Tour Operators	2	1.2
	Subtotal of Tourism Promotion Programmes	33	32.6
4	Identification of Export Avenues for Trading	5	2.5
5	Trade Facilitation and Export Promotion	25	21.4
6	Identification of Transit Possibilities	3	2.7
7	Trade Fair and Nepal Promotion	6	5.9
	Subtotal of Trade Promotion Programmes	39	32.5

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8	Safety and		
	Security of	9	5.7
	Labour		
	Identification of		
9	New Avenues for	8	3.8
	Employment		
10	Claiming of	1	2
10	Compensation	1	
	Promoting		
11	Productive Use of	5	2.3
	Remittances		
	Subtotal		
	of Foreign	23	13.8
	Employment		
	Related		
	Programmes		
12	Investment	5	6.8
12	Seminar	3	0.8
13	Investment	10	8.1
13	Promotion	10	0.1
	Subtotal of		
	Investment	15	14.9
	Promotion		
14	National	4	2.5
	Reconstruction		
	Support		
	Programme		
	Subtotal of	4	2.5
	Reconstruction		
	Support		
	Programmes		
15	Language	11	3.7
	Training	11	3./
	Subtotal of		
	Language	11	3.7
	Training		3./
	Programmes		
	Total	125	100
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Tourism

The tourism sector expanded with the improvement in overall economic activities in 2016. The number of tourist arrival reached 753,002 in 2016. The top ten origins of tourists in Nepal in 2016 included India, China, Sri Lanka, USA, Thailand, UK,

Australia, Japan, France and Germany, respectively. During the review period, average length of tourist stay was 13.4 days; average spending per tourist per day was US\$ 53; and total revenue earned from this sector was US\$ 518 million. The share of this sector to GDP remained 2.1 percent.

Various programmes organized by different diplomatic Missions abroad played a positive role in enhancing our tourism industry. Total of 33 programmes were conducted for tourism promotion in 2016/17 which included 32.6 percent of total allocated budget for economic diplomacy.

The outreach of programmes under tourism, arts and cultural promotion was about 8,100 people on an average of 300 people per programme.

The Missions in Beijing, Bangkok, Brussels, Ottawa and Islamabad facilitated familiarization trips while Nepali Missions in Berlin and Vienna mobilized tour operators for tourism promotion.

Trade

Nepal suffers trade deficit which has continued to widen. The current trade deficit exceeded US\$ 8 billion with export-import ratio standing at 1:13 in 2016. Nepal's top ten import sources in 2016 were India, China, UAE, Indonesia, Thailand, USA, Japan, Argentina, Malaysia and Vietnam while major export destinations in 2016 were India, USA, Germany, Turkey, UK, China, Bangladesh, France, Japan and Italy, respectively.

India ranked first in both import and export trade, while China stood second for import and USA ranked second in Nepali exports. About two-thirds of Nepal's trade was with India this year. Observation of region-wise international trade situation of Nepal showed that about 93 per cent of its total import came from Asia and 66 per cent of its total exports went to the same region. America and EU remained second and third.

In the year 2016/17, total trade deficit stood at 34.4 percent of GDP. Trade deficit in first eight months of the year 2016/17 increased by 47.6 percent and stood at NRs, 580.34 billion.

Different Nepali missions organized trade promotion programmes. Total of 39 programmes were conducted with 32.5 percent share in total allocated budget of economic diplomacy.

Nepali Missions in Abu Dhabi, Jeddah, Kuwait, Malaysia and Doha organized programmes for identification of export avenues for trading.

Interaction with business communities of host countries was held for exploring additional transit facilities from India, China and Bangladesh.

Nepali Missions in Brussels, Cairo, London, Pretoria, Seoul and Tokyo organized *Nepal Mela*, Nepal festival, trade fair, etc. More than 4000 persons participated in these programmes.

Foreign Employment

In 2016, Malaysia was the top employment destination for Nepali

migrant workers. More than 33 percent of total migrant workers received permission for foreign employment in Malaysia. They sent home US\$ 181 million as remittances in 2016. Nepali workers in Qatar earned the highest amount (US\$ 1,951 million) in 2016. Other top-ranking foreign employment destinations remained Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and South Korea, among others. The contribution of remittances to the national GDP was 32 percent in 2016.

The Ministry remained focused on ensuring safe, secure, dignified and productive foreign employment to Nepali nationals abroad. Our diplomatic Missions in labour destination countries were engaged with concerned authorities through various programmes, facilitated fruitful employment of Nepali migrant workers.

Nepali Missions in labor destination countries organized foreign employment related programmes. A total of 23 programmes were conducted under this theme with 13.8 percent of total economic diplomacy budget spent.

Programmes were organized on promoting safety and security of Nepali migrant workers by Nepali Missions in Abu Dhabi, Doha, Jeddah, Kuala Lumpur, Kuwait, Manama, Muscat, Riyadh and Tel Aviv. The programmes aimed at raising awareness of Nepali migrant workers for safety and security in their working environment, residence, procedures for entry and exit in employment and so on. More than 5000 Nepali migrant workers benefited from these programmes.

Programmes were organized by Nepali Missions in Abu Dhabi, Cairo, Jeddah, Kuala Lumpur, Kuwait, Manama, Muscat and Tel Aviv for the identification of additional employment opportunities.

The Embassy of Nepal in Riyadh organized a programme to facilitate the process of securing compensation and insurance amount for the victims. This was introduced as a pilot programme targeting the locations where most death cases of Nepali migrant workers occurred.

Programmes were organized by Nepali Missions in Abu Dhabi, Doha, Kuala Lumpur, New Delhi and Seoul in order to promote productive use of remittances. These programmes aimed at encouraging Nepali migrant workers to channelize their remittances through banking system and use them in productive sectors.

Foreign Direct Investment

In 2016, foreign direct investment (FDI) reached NRs.115 billion with 2,959 projects generating employment for 192,851 persons. Top FDI sources were: India (NRs. 44.04 billion), Mainland China (NRs. 17.97 billion), South Korea (NRs. 8.62 billion) followed by USA (NRs. 5.26 billion).

With a view to attracting foreign investment in Nepal, diplomatic missions abroad organized various programmes in 2016 highlighting investment opportunities in Nepal. They also organized interactions with potential investors in respective countries.

Nepali Missions abroad conducted various investment promotion programmes. A total of 15 programmes were organized by the Missions with 14.9 percent budget of development diplomacy spent.

Nepali Missions in Beijing, Geneva, London, New Delhi and Ottawa hosted investment seminars. These programmes aimed at promoting Nepal as an attractive investment destination. About 3000 potential investors participated in these programmes.

Nepali Missions in Bangkok, Berlin, Brasilia, Canberra, Hong Kong, Kolkata, Moscow, Seoul, Tokyo and Washington D.C. held investment promotion programmes with an aim to promote foreign direct investment in Nepal, disseminating investment related information of various sectors of Nepali economy. More than 5000 foreign investors, non-resident Nepali and business persons took part in these programmes.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Nepali Missions abroad facilitated the foreign diplomatic missions and international organizations in Kathmandu and overseas foreign investors in their participation in the Nepal Investment Summit organized jointly by the Ministry of Industry (MOI) and Investment Board of Nepal (IBN), under the theme 'Harnessing Investment Opportunities in Nepal' on 2-3 March.

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' inaugurated the Summit. Senior political leaders, high-level government officials. prominent business persons and Nepal's development partners shared their experiences on investment opportunities in Nepal. Foreign Minister Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat addressed the Summit and highlighted favourable atmosphere investing in Nepal. Foreign Secretary Bairagi delivered Shanker Das concluding remarks.

In this Summit, foreign investors expressed their investment intent worth US\$ 13.52 billion in various sectors including aviation, hydropower, banking, railways, roads, mining and minerals, and manufacturing. A total of 16 companies from around the world signed Letters of Intent.

Ambassadors Symposium 2017 was held in New Delhi on 5-6 May 2017 under the theme of 'Enhancing Bilateral Economic Cooperation with Countries having Diplomatic Relations with Nepal'. Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, delivered a keynote address at the inaugural session of the symposium for Delhibased ambassadors and diplomatic missions concurrently accredited to Nepal. The two-day Symposium was jointly organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Nepal, the Embassy of Nepal in New Delhi, the Institute for Strategic and Socio-economic Research (ISSR) and the Pavilion Group Nepal.

The Minister highlighted the importance of foreign investment to achieve economic growth and realize the country's vision of

development. He added that Nepal was an open and liberal economy and investment was fully protected there.

Speaking about various sectorspecific incentives provided to foreign investors, the Foreign Minister emphasized that growing improvement of cross-border infrastructure and connectivity between Nepal and India provided further opportunities for expansion of trade and investment in Nepal.

The Minister of State for External Affairs of India Gen V. K. Singh also addressed the Symposium highlighting deep-rooted Nepal-India relations and substantial engagements between the two countries in trade, investment, tourism and other components of economy. He assured India's continued support to Nepal's development efforts.

Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi chaired a session entitled "Investment Climate and Investment Opportunities in Nepal". In his opening speech, Mr. Bairagi briefed about the investment opportunities in Nepal.

National Reconstruction Support

Nepali Missions in Geneva, London and Washington D.C. organized different national reconstruction support programmes. A total of four programmes were organized with 2.5 percent share in total allocated budget of development diplomacy.

Official Development Assistance (ODA)

In 2015/16, Nepal received US\$ 1.074.06 million as ODA. Of that, 58 per cent came from multilateral development partners while 42 per cent was from bilateral development partners. Among the multilateral DPs, the WB Group stood at the top with a disbursement of US\$ 243.69 million, followed by the ADB (US\$ 217.68 million), the UN Country Team (US\$ 113.57 million), the EU (US\$ 29.48 million) and IFAD (US\$ 9.22 million). Among the bilateral partners, USAID disbursed US\$ 118.93 million. followed by DFID (US\$ 89.47 million), Japan- including JICA (US\$ 45.91 million), Switzerland (US\$ 36.98 million) and India (US\$ 35.77 million).

Transfer of Technology

In 2016/17, Nepali Missions abroad actively remained engaged bilateral, regional and multilateral levels including in South-South cooperation and North-South-South triangular cooperation forums in order to facilitate transfer of appropriate technology to the country. As an LDC, Nepal consistently raised strong voice at different multilateral forums for technology transfer from the developed to the least developed countries.

Climate Diplomacy

Diplomatic efforts were made during the review period to attract bilateral or multilateral sources of climate finance. Part of this effort was engagement of Nepali Missions in bilateral, regional and multilateral negotiations. Similarly, initiatives were taken to explore other sources for climate finance such as- Climate Investment Fund (CIF), Climate Trust Fund (CTF), Scaling-Up Renewable Energy Programme (SREP) and Forest Investment Programme (FIP). Recently, two entities, Alternate Energy Promotion Centre and National Trust for Nature Conservation, were selected to be National Implementing Entities (NIE) for Green Climate Fund.

Non-Resident Nepalese (NRN) and Nepali Diaspora Abroad

During the reporting period, Nepali Missions continued to engage with the NRNs and Nepali Diaspora to utilize their knowledge, skills, technology and capital in Nepal. The Missions collaborated with the NRNs and Diaspora to organize programmes related under development diplomacy. The NRNs continued to support in post-earthquake reconstruction efforts. They undertook a project to develop Laprak, one of the most affected villages in Gorkha District, into a model village. The Nepali Diaspora was also actively engaged in promoting exports in their country of residence and also in mobilizing foreign investors to invest in Nepal.

Amendment to the NRN Act is under process. Policy, Planning, Development Diplomacy and Nepali Diaspora Division at the Ministry facilitated the issuance of NRN identity cards, land and house purchase and other related matters.

Publication of MOFA Bulletin

This year, the Ministry started publishing bi-monthly 'MOFA Bulletin: Current Affairs' covering the activities of different Divisions and Departments of the Ministry. Six issues were published in 2016/17.

Implementation and Monitoring of Economic Diplomacy

Meeting of the High-Level Economic Diplomacy Implementation and Monitoring Committee (HLEDIMC) was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 29 December 2016. Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat chaired the meeting. The meeting reviewed various aspects of Nepal's economic diplomacy, and suggested ways for effective implementation.

Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi highlighted opportunities and challenges of Nepal's economic diplomacy. He emphasized the need for effective coordination among all stakeholders.

The meeting decided to form a committee for working out country-specific strategies for promoting development diplomacy led by the

Joint Secretary of the Ministry. This committee was composed of representatives from Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation; Ministry of Labor; Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Industry; Ministry of Commerce; Investment Board of Nepal; Trade and Export Promotion Center, Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce & Industries, Nepal Chamber of Commerce, Confederation of Nepalese Industries, and Federation of Nepal Cottage and Small Industries.

Observation and Monitoring of Economic Diplomacy Programme

In July 2017, a three-member team led by the Foreign Secretary visited Nepali Embassies in Kuala Lumpur and Canberra and monitored the development diplomacy programmes carried out by the Embassies in the reporting period. In addition, a separate two-member team visited Tokyo for the same purpose.

Similarly, a three-member team headed by Joint Secretary of the Ministry undertook monitoring and evaluation visits to Nepali Embassies in Berlin, London and Moscow.

9. Administration and Management

Institutional strengthening, career development, capacity building, change management and property procurement and management were the primary tasks under administration and management.

Important initiatives were undertaken at the Ministry and Nepali Missions abroad to improve working environment during the review period. Focus was laid on simplifying legal procedures, expanding facilities, strengthening the Missions and creating gender-friendly environment.

In view of increased engagements, the Government of Nepal established Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations Office in Vienna, Austria, at the level of Ambassador/Permanent Representative. Government of Nepal also decided to open an Embassy in Madrid, Spain, considering the growing diplomatic activities and demand for consular services.

Similarly, the Consulate General of Nepal in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province of the People's Republic of China, was established.

The Government upgraded the Embassies of Nepal in Muscat and Manama to the Ambassador level and the Consulate General of Nepal in New York was upgraded to Consul General level.

In line with the policy of the Government of Nepal to acquire its own property for Nepali Diplomatic Missions abroad, the Ministry procured a Chancery building in Bangkok, Thailand. The Embassy started operating from the new building.

Process for constructing an office building in Tripureshwor, Kathmandu was begun in order to house Department of Passports, Department of Consular Services and Institute of Foreign Affairs. Necessary budget for this year was sanctioned.

With a view to simplifying procurement process of diplomatic missions abroad, the Government of Nepal adopted the *Public Procurement Procedure for Diplomatic Missions Abroad*, 2016.

Likewise, the Ministry took initiative to construct Chancery and residential buildings of the Embassy of Nepal in Islamabad, Pakistan and the Embassy of Nepal in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The Ministry also initiated the construction of an annex building in the premises of the Embassy of Nepal in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The Ministry cleared fifty-six percent amount of reported irregularities documented by the Auditor General's Report until 2015/16.

10. Protocol Matters

The year 2016/17 remained quite engaging from the perspective of protocol. The Ministry focused its efforts on planning and coordinating high-level visits, extending state protocol and hospitability as and when necessary, and undertaking policy initiatives with a view to standardizing and simplifying the protocol process. Efforts were also made to introduce new arrangements and procedures including in granting agrément, coordination improving diplomatic missions and facilitating the works of honorary consuls based in Kathmandu.

High-level Visits

This year, the Ministry coordinated thirteen outgoing and incoming high-level visits. The Protocol Division carried out activities such as planning, programming, arranging financial and logistic resources, maintaining inter-agency coordination, extending hospitability and preparing arrival and departure ceremonies in connection with the visits.

Establishment of Diplomatic Relations

Nepal and El Salvador, a Central American republic, established diplomatic relations on 21 September 2016. The Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat and Mr. Hugo Roger Martinez Bonilla, Minister of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador, signed a Joint communiqué to this effect at a special ceremony held

at the United Nations Headquarters in New York

Nepal and Uganda, an African Republic, established diplomatic relations on 12 June 2017. Ambassador/Permanent Represe-ntative of Nepal to the United Nations Mr. Durga Prasad Bhattarai and Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Uganda Mr. Dr Adonia Ayebare signed a joint communiqué to this effect at a brief ceremony in New York.

Nepal and Côte d' Ivoire, a country in West Africa, established diplomatic relations on 16 June 2017. Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations Mr. Durga Prasad Bhattarai and Ambassador/Permanent Representative of the Republic of Côte d' Ivoire to the United Nations Mr. Claude Bouah-Kamon signed a Joint Communique to this effect at a brief ceremony in New York.

Nepal and Djibouti, an African Republic situated in the Horn of Africa, established diplomatic relations on 14 July 2017. Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations Mr. Durga Prasad Bhattarai and Ambassador/Permanent Representative of the Republic of Djibouti to the United Nations Mr. Mohamed Siad Doualeh signed an instrument to this effect at a brief ceremony at the Permanent Mission of Nepal in New York.

08 May 2017, the Council of Ministers

of the Government of Nepal decided to authorize the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to take an appropriate decision, as and when necessary, on establishing the diplomatic relations with the member states of the United Nations with which Nepal is yet to have formal diplomatic ties.

As of July 2017, the number of countries with which Nepal has established diplomatic relations has reached 147.

Appointment of Nepali Ambass adors

Twenty-three Nepali Ambassadors and two Consuls General were appointed during the period under review. Of them, twenty-two Ambassadors and two Consuls General have already assumed their duties at the respective Nepali Missions.

The Ministry pursued the agrément request with respective countries for the above-mentioned ambassadors. Agrément to appoint Consuls General was also sought from the respective countries.

New Procedure for Granting Agrément

A new procedure of granting *agrément* to the foreign Ambassadors-designate to Nepal was adopted.

The procedure was approved by the Council of Ministers on 16 March. According to the new procedure, the concurrence of the Government of Nepal to the proposed appointment of

a foreign ambassador to Nepal shall be granted by the Prime Minister and the information of the same would be given to the Office of the President and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In 2016/17, the Government of Nepal granted *agrément* to forty ambassadors-designate of various countries to Nepal, of whom twenty-three presented their Letters of Credence to the President.

Farewell of Ambassadors

Eight foreign ambassadors based in Kathmandu completed their tour of duty. A separate Farewell Reception in honour of each one of them was given by Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi.

Revision of Concurrent Accreditation

The Government of Nepal made a decision on 20 February 2017 to revise the concurrent accreditation of Nepali Missions abroad. In doing so, factors such as geographical proximity, austerity aspects, relations between the countries hosting Nepali Missions and countries to be concurrently accredited as well as the volume of work of each Mission were taken into consideration.

Amendment to the Rules Relating to Honorary Consul, 2039

At the initiative of the Ministry, the Government of Nepal approved the Fourth Amendment to the Rules Relating to Honorary Consul, 2039 BS, in April 2017. The Amendment was made with a view to making the Rules more pragmatic. Due attention was also paid to make it more compatible with the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, 1963 to which Nepal is a Party.

Twenty-Three Nepali Honorary Consuls General/Consuls were either newly appointed or promoted and/or had their tenure extended or terminated. Similarly, permission was granted this year to appoint nine Honorary Consuls of various countries to Kathmandu valley.

11. Passport Services

Department of Passports has been providing passport services to Nepali citizens through its own Collection and Distribution Counters in Kathmandu and the wider network of District Administration Offices located in 75 Districts and 38 Nepali Missions abroad. The Department is solely responsible for the personalization and issuance of Machine Readable Travel documents (MRTDs) to Nepali nationals and other eligible persons in accordance with prevailing Passport Act, Rules and Regulations.

The reform measures and initiatives undertaken by the Department such as application of appropriate technology and use of social media to disseminate information to the clients have been instrumental in making passport services as one of the visible citizencentric public services.

The Department's web portal www. nepalpassport.gov.np provides comprehensive information about passport services. This web portal is constantly updated.

Introduction of the Live Enrollment System to collect and process digital passport application forms has helped improve passport service delivery. There are ten live enrollment counters at the Department premises in Kathmandu, and at ten Nepali Missions based in Doha, Riyadh, Jeddah, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, London, Washington DC and New York.

There are two streams of passport services- fast and normal tracks. A fast

track passport service is designed to serve the people in urgent need. The fast track services, made available only at the Department, help the service seekers get their passports issued for NRs. 15,000 for one-day service, NRs. 12,000 for two-day service and NRs. 10,000 for three-day service.

In 2016/17, the Department undertook various reform measures in quality and internal control in order to better provide standardized, efficient and predictable services to the people. Quality system manual was put in place to maintain standardized passport delivery services that resulted into the award of ISO 9001:2015 to the Department making it the first public office of the Government of Nepal to receive the ISO certification in quality management system.

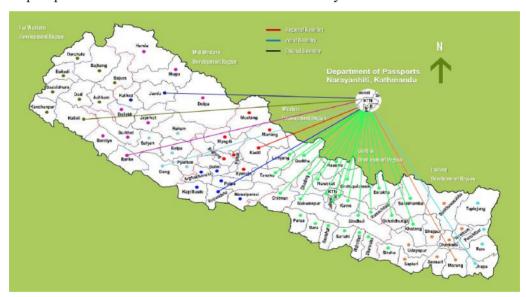
Number of Passports Issued So Far

As of 15 July 2017, a total of 4, 926.532 MRPs have been issued since the commencement of the issuance of MRPs in Nepal in December 2010. In 2016/17, the Department produced a total of 5,57,188 MRPs/TDs. The total figure includes 4, 907,820 ordinary passports, 13,822 official passports, 3,567 diplomatic passports and 1323 Travel Documents. In the reporting period, a total of 192, 375 clients applied directly at the Department, whereas 344,564 and 20,249 applied through Districts and Diplomatic Missions abroad respectively. The following table reflects the total passports issued over the past seven years.

Fiscal Year	DoP	District	Mission	Total
2010/11	162558	9747	1457	173762
2011/12	206639	195510	5383	407532
2012/13	229404	304549	34174	568127
2013/14	450671	426380	135688	1012739
2014/15	452155	542409	342274	1336838
2015/16	269944	473795	126607	870346
2016/17	192375	344564	20249	557188
Grand Total	1963746	2296954	665832	4926532

Network of Service Delivery at Home and Abroad

The Department has linkages as illustrated in the map below to make the delivery of passports smooth and efficient within the country.



Some New Initiatives

Following are some of the initiatives the Department has undertaken to make its services better and effective.

Decision was made in September 2016 to slash passport fees from US\$

80 to US\$ 50 for Nepali migrants working in major labor destination countries namely Malaysia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Israel, Syria, Jordan and Yemen.

Foreign Minister Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat launched the 'Mobile Application' of the Department titled "Nepal Passport" on 3 January 2017. With the increasing trend of smart phone users, this application has helped enhance public access to passport services.

Digital Distribution System was introduced at the Emergency Counters for the digital record of distributed passports. Digital Dispatch System was also introduced at the Department to maintain digital records of passports dispatched to respective Districts and Missions.

In order to improve coordination and collaboration with District Administration Offices (DAOs), Department of Passports organized various interaction Programmes for the personnel involved in passport processing unit of the DAOs.

The Department submitted a draft Amendment to the existing Passport Act, 2024 to the Ministry. The Department is also preparing draft amendments to the Passport Rules and Directives.

Production and Publicity of Short Movie 'Passport'

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Krishna Bahadur Mahara made public the short movie entitled 'Passport' on 7 July 2017. The Department of Passports in close collaboration with the Department of Consular Services produced the Movie in order to raise public awareness on how to access public services provided by the Departments and Nepali Missions

abroad. This informative movie has been uploaded on the Department's webpage, YouTube and other social media sites.

ISO 9001:2015 Certification

Both internal as well as external audit for the ISO 9001:2015 certification of the Department's management of service delivery has been completed. The external auditors from Nepal Bureau of Standards and Metrology (NBSM) conducted a thorough auditing of the Department's service delivery. The Department of Passports was awarded the ISO 9001:2015 certificate by the decision of the certification panel of NBSM dated 10 July 2017.

Mr. Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs unveiled the NS/ISO 9001:2015 in July 2017.



DPM and Foreign Minister Lighting the Lamp to Unveil 'ISO 9001:2015 Certification'

Revenue Collection

In the fiscal year 2016/17, the Department collected the revenue of NRs. 2,053,803,500. This amount includes the revenue collected only by the Department against its services.

12. Consular Services

In the year 2016-17, the Department of Consular Services (DoCS) remained effortful to provide effective and efficient consular services to Nepali nationals and officials of diplomatic missions and international organizations in Nepal. With the rise in number of Nepali people seeking to go abroad for studies, employment and for various other purposes as well as the increase in number of diplomatic missions and international organizations in Nepal, the day-to-day functions of the Department have grown considerably.

Major services catered by the DoCS include;

- Coordination with Nepali missions abroad in providing legal assistance, securing compensation and insurance amount as well as facilitation for the repatriation of dead bodies,
- Consular attestation of documents issued by government agencies,
- Issuing diplomatic, official and gratis visas and diplomatic identity cards to diplomats and officials of diplomatic missions and international organizations based in Kathmandu,
- Issuance of recommendations for diplomatic exemption on goods and vehicles to be imported by foreign diplomats/ officials working in diplomatic missions and international organizations in Nepal,
- Issuance of visa recommendations as per the decisions of government agencies.

In order to better manage and deliver these services effectively.

the Department took a number of initiatives in 2016/17. These initiatives pertain to the better use of technology, promptness in service delivery and inter-agency coordination.

Online Legal Services

The Department introduced online legal services system to effectively and efficiently address problems Nepali facing nationals working and studying abroad. Launched by Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, this system is expected to significantly contribute to expeditiously securing compensation and insurance amount to the legal heirs and repatriation of dead bodies to Nepal. With the system in practice, applicants can apply online and check the status of their cases themselves.

Online Visa Recommendation

The Department introduced online visa recommendation system on 1 January 2017 to ensure promptness in visa application process. This system will enhance reliability in communicating to the diplomatic missions.

Online Attestation Verification

Online attestation verification system was launched by the DoCS on 16 April 2017. This has enabled the online verification of the documents issued by government agencies. This system has been helpful to ensure authenticity of the documents attested by the Department.

Service Delivery within Half an Hour

Since 1 January, the Department started providing all consular attestation

services within half an hour to a significant number of service-seekers. The Department is fully committed to providing efficient and prompt services.

Emergency Hotline Services

Emergency hotline service was introduced to address the problems of Nepali nationals abroad, especially those in labor destination countries. This has helped provide the needy

with an easy and quick access to the Nepali Embassies/Missions abroad.

Token System and other services

The Department also introduced token system to better manage delivery of services. It also started using the 'feedback form' with a view to seeking inputs from the service-seekers and constantly upgrading the quality of services.

Overview of Consular Functions Carried Out in 2016-17

	Consular Functions	Quantity
A	Consular and Legal Consultation Section	
1	Recommendation for Medical Treatment, Pilgrimage, World Bicycle Tour and other issues	128
2	Recommendation for attestation of Indian Educational Documents, Nationality Verification and higher studies in India	1,780
3	Recommendation for Indian pension related matters	28
4	Recommendation for foreign driving licenses to change into Nepali License	3,733
5	Recommendation for the character verification report to those who lived temporarily in India	305
6	Recommendation for import of chemicals and explosives	88
7	Recommendation for vehicle permit to India	29
8	Regarding renunciation of Nepali Citizenship	125
9	Verification regarding Power of Attorney for Land Revenue Offices.	1,095
10	regarding the authenticity of Nepali Citizenship and related documents	247
11	POA, VOR, H-Form Requests, Correspondences to districts relating to repatriation of dead bodies and compensation cases	416
12	Cases forwarded to Nepali Embassies/Consulates abroad to search and rescue of Nepali Nationals	645
13	Cases forwarded for repatriation of Dead bodies	237
14	Correspondences regarding consular matters	234
15	Draft received as compensation from Malaysia	93
16	Draft handed over to victims	88
В	Visa and Exemption Section	
1	Issuance of Gratis/Official/Diplomatic visa	3,116
2	Issuance of Diplomatic and Non- Diplomatic Identity Cards	450
3	Issuance of SAARC Visa Stickers	135
4	Exemption works	3,309
5	Letters sent to different government authorities	1,406
C	Attestation Section	
	Issuance of Visa Notes and Recommendations	2,500
D	Attestation Section	
1	N Number of documents attested	200,649
	Total	220,836
	Total Revenue Collected from RMIS	RS.4,56,25,730

APPENDICES

- I. Joint Statement Issued on the State visit of Prime Minister of Nepal, Rt. Hon'ble Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' to India (15- 18 September, 2016)
- 1. The Rt. Hon'ble Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Prime Minister of Nepal, and Ms. Sita Dahal are on a State visit to India from 15-18 September 2016 at the invitation of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi. The delegation includes the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, the Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport Mr. Ramesh Lekhak, members of the Legislature-Parliament, and other senior officials of the Government of Nepal.
- 2. During the visit, Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister of Nepal was accorded ceremonial reception at the Rashtrapati Bhawan on 16 September 2016. He paid courtesy call on the Hon'ble President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee, and held talks with the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India. Smt Sushma Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs, Shri Arun Jaitley, Minister of Finance, Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of State for Power (Independent Charge) called on the Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister of Nepal. Hon'ble Prime Minister of India hosted an official banquet in honour of the visiting dignitary and the accompanying delegation. Prime Minister Prachanda will be visiting Nathpa Jhakri hydro-electric power project in Himachal Pradesh and the Food and Herbal Park at the Patanjali Yogpeeth near Haridwar. An interaction with the Indian business community was jointly hosted by ASSOCHAM, CII and FICCI in honour of the visiting dignitary.
- 3. Bilateral meetings were held in an atmosphere of utmost cordiality and warmth that have characterized the close and friendly relations between India and Nepal. The Prime Minister of India thanked the Prime Minister of Nepal for accepting his invitation, and warmly welcomed him in India on his first visit abroad since assuming office in August 2016. He stated that the visit would help further strengthen the age-old bonds of fraternal relations between the people of India and Nepal, and expand the multi-dimensional cooperation between the two countries. The two Prime Ministers agreed that the high-level exchanges are vital for maintaining the momentum towards further deepening of the close and cordial ties between the two countries.
- 4. The Prime Minister of Nepal thanked his Indian counterpart for the invitation and warm hospitality extended to him and his delegation since their arrival. He stated that his visit to India demonstrates the importance that the Government of Nepal attaches to good neighbourly relations with India. The two countries and their people share an ancient, deep-rooted and vibrant friendship based on a shared cultural and civilizational ethos. He expressed

the willingness of the Government of Nepal to explore newer areas of mutual cooperation and partnerships and to take our age-old and unique ties to new heights, while reinvigorating the existing mechanisms for enhancing mutual benefit.

- 5. The two Prime Ministers reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral cooperation and underlined the need to further deepen and expand bilateral cooperation in all areas for the mutual benefit of the people of the two countries. They directed that all bilateral institutional mechanisms be convened regularly and their decisions be implemented expeditiously. Both sides agreed to hold the next session of the India-Nepal Joint Commission in 2016.
- 6. The two Prime Ministers noted the progress in promoting sub-regional cooperation, and agreed that the two governments should explore ways to further enhance it, particularly in the areas of trade, transit, connectivity and power. They also stressed the importance of enhancing regional cooperation within the framework of the SAARC and the BIMSTEC.
- 7. The two Prime Ministers noted that the first meeting of the Eminent Persons Group on Nepal-India Relations was held in Kathmandu in July 2016, and hoped that the Group would work intensively and look into the totality of India-Nepal relations from independent perspective and suggest measures to consolidate and further expand the close and multi-faceted ties between the two countries.
- 8. The Prime Minister of Nepal thanked for the prompt and extensive assistance provided by the Government and people of India in the aftermath of the devastating earthquakes of 25 April and 12 May 2015. He conveyed his gratitude to the Government of India for the latter's special assistance package of US\$ 1 billion for Nepal's post-earthquake reconstruction.
- 9. The Prime Minister of India welcomed the setting up of the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) in Nepal, which will coordinate post-earthquake reconstruction projects. The two Prime Ministers agreed that expeditious action should be taken to implement mutually agreed projects in the identified sectors for post-earthquake reconstruction in accordance with the bilateral MOU signed in February 2016. At the request of the Nepali side, the Indian side agreed to extend assistance to the NRA, including through sharing of experience and capacity building by the National Disaster Management Authority of India. In response to the declared policy of the Government of Nepal to grant NRs. 3 lakh to each beneficiary for reconstruction of houses, Government of India conveyed that it would increase its contribution for 50,000 households from NRs. 2 lakh to NRs. 3 lakh. For this purpose, US\$ 50 million will be drawn by the Government of Nepal from the LOC of US\$ 750 million for post-earthquake reconstruction.

- 10. The Prime Minister of Nepal shared with the Prime Minister of India developments in Nepal. He conveyed that the promulgation of the Constitution last year is a historic event in institutionalizing federal democratic republic. He also shared the efforts made by the present Government to take all sections of Nepali society on board for the effective implementation of the constitution. While appreciating the importance of the constitutional consolidation of democracy in Nepal, Prime Minister of India welcomed the ongoing efforts of the Government of Nepal to take all sections of the society on board for effective implementation of the Constitution. Prime Minister of India wished the Prime Minister of Nepal every success in this endeavour. The Prime Minister of Nepal thanked the Government and people of India for their goodwill, support and solidarity in Nepal's peace process.
- 11. The two Prime Ministers believe that both countries hold similar views on major international issues, including the comprehensive reforms of the UN and other international organizations, affecting the developing countries and work in close coordination with each other in the United Nations and other international I. The Nepali side reiterated its support for India's candidature for permanent membership of the UN Security Council.
- 12. The two Prime Ministers noted with satisfaction the ongoing defense and security cooperation, and the recently concluded Home Secretary level talks and the meeting of the bilateral consultative group on security matters. They stressed the need to ensure that the open border, which has facilitated economic interaction and movement of people and goods on both sides of the border and has been a unique feature of India-Nepal bilateral ties, is not allowed to be misused by unscrupulous elements posing security threats to either side. The two sides committed that they will not allow their territory to be used against each other.
- 13. The Prime Minister of India expressed India's commitment to continue the close partnership between India and Nepal for socio-economic, scientific and technological development. The two Prime Ministers directed the officials to closely monitor progress of the ongoing projects under bilateral economic and development cooperation, address any bottlenecks, and to complete them expeditiously in a time bound manner. In this regard, both sides agreed to set up an oversight mechanism comprising senior officials from the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu and the Government of Nepal, which will review progress together with respective project implementing agencies/developers of ongoing economic and development projects on a regular basis, and take necessary steps to expedite their implementation.
- 14. The two Prime Ministers expressed satisfaction at the steady growth of bilateral trade. Prime Minister of Nepal expressed concern over Nepal's

growing trade deficit with India and underlined the need for taking measures to enhance Nepal's exports to India. The two Prime Ministers noted the successful conclusion of the meeting of the Inter-Governmental Committee (IGC) on Trade, Transit and Control of Unauthorized Trade, at the Secretary-level in June 2016, and agreed that the IGC will continue to discuss trade infrastructure and trade facilitation related measures to boost bilateral trade. They agreed that the Trade Treaty between India and Nepal would be renewed in October 2016 in terms of provisions of the Treaty, with the aim of enhancing the bilateral trade. Both sides agreed to hold civil aviation talks to discuss air services matters, including request for additional air routes.

- 15. The two Prime Ministers noted the successful completion of two roads tilizat about 71 kilometers under Phase I of Terai road project. The two Prime Ministers directed the officials to expedite the construction of postal roads and feeder roads (Terai roads) and complete them expeditiously, in accordance with the modalities for implementation agreed by both sides in February 2016.
- 16. The two Prime Ministers stressed the need for early development of infrastructure at integrated check posts (ICPs) to facilitate smooth and faster movement of people and goods. They noted with satisfaction the progress in construction of Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) at Raxaul and Jogbani, and agreed that work on the Raxaul-Birgunj ICP project will be expedited with the objective of completing it by December 2016. It was decided to immediately commence construction of the ICP at Biratnagar, and to expedite the Detailed Engineering Reports in respect of ICPs at Nepalgunj and Bhairahawa.
- 17. The two Prime Ministers reviewed the progress made in the implementation of the two ongoing India-Nepal cross-border rail-link projects (a) Jayanagar-Bijalpur-Bardibas and (b) Jogbani-Biratnagar, and agreed that both sides will take further measures necessary for expeditious completion of both the projects. Both sides agreed that steps will be initiated to facilitate development of three other agreed cross-border rail-link projects (Nepalgunj-Nepalgunj road; Kakarbitta-New Jalpaiguri; Bhairawaha Nautanwa) so that the land acquisition can commence on the Nepali side.
- 18. The two Prime Ministers directed the officials to expedite the construction of sub-station at Dhalkebar so that the Muzaffarpur-Dhalkebar transmission line can be operated at its full capacity as planned. It was decided that the construction of transmission lines (i) from Kataiya to Kusaha, and (ii) from Raxaul to Parwanipur will be completed by December 2016 to augment grid connectivity and power supply between the two countries. The two Prime Ministers expressed satisfaction that both countries are engaged in preparation of a Master Plan for the cross-border interconnection for the

- period until 2035 and Action Plan on power trade until 2025.
- 19. The two Prime Ministers reviewed progress of other major hydro-power projects, Pancheshwar, Upper Karnali and Arun-III, and noted that various issues be addressed expeditiously with a view to implementing the projects in a time-bound manner so that their benefits start accruing to the people at the earliest. It was decided to expedite finalization of the Detailed Project Report of the Pancheshwar multi-purpose project. It was agreed that both sides will continue to take measures to operationalize the Power Trade Agreement signed in 2014. Both sides agreed to discuss all water resources cooperation related matters such as inundation and flood management, irrigation matters and other major projects, at the next meeting of the Joint Committee on Water Resources at the Secretary level, to be convened at an early date.
- 20. The two Prime Ministers welcomed the signing of the MOU for the construction of Raxaul-Amlekhgunj petroleum pipeline in August 2015 and directed that construction work be undertaken expeditiously.
- 21. Both the Prime Ministers expressed satisfaction at the utilization of the two Lines of Credit of US\$ 100 million and US\$ 250 million for development of roads and power infrastructure in Nepal. The two Prime Ministers welcomed the allocation of US\$ 200 million for irrigation projects, and US\$ 330 million for development of roads and Mahakali bridge from the LoC of US\$ 550 million. Both sides expressed their commitment to early implementation of these projects. At the request of Nepal, India conveyed its willingness to extend an additional line of credit to take up projects namely, Hulaki Rajmarg (Phase-II); cross-border transmission line connecting Butwal, 400 KV substations at Dhalkebar and Hetauda, and a polytechnic in Kaski District.
- 22. The two Prime Ministers expressed satisfaction at the performance of the Indian Joint Ventures in Nepal and emphasized the need for channelizing more Indian investments into Nepal according to its development priorities. They underlined the need for a secured environment for the investors to project Nepal as an attractive destination for foreign investment.
- 23. The two Prime Ministers welcomed the commencement of work for construction of a Dharmashala at the Pashupatinath Area. The MOU between the Pashupati Area Development Trust and the Archeological Survey of India for reconstruction and renovation of the monuments at the Pashupatinath Area will be finalized expeditiously.
- 24. The two Prime Ministers stressed the need for taking forward the cooperation in the fields of tourism and ayurvedic system of health care. In this regard, both sides will take steps to fully implement the MOUs on cooperation in Traditional Medicine and on Tourism Cooperation, including development

of tourism in the form of Buddhist and Hindu pilgrim circuits.

25. The Prime Minister of Nepal extended an invitation to the Prime Minister of India to pay an official visit to Nepal. The Prime Minister of India accepted the invitation. The date will be finalized through diplomatic channels.

New Delhi 16 September, 2016

II. Treaties/Agreements/MoUs Signed/Ratified in 2016/2017

S.N.	Name of the agreement/ treaty/MoU	Country/ Org.	Date of Signature	Date of Rat- ification/ Accession	Adminis- trative Authority
1.	MoU between Depart-	India	16 Septem-		Department
	ment of Roads, Postal		ber 2016		of Roads
	Highway Project of the				
	Government of Nepal and				
	M/s National Highways				
	& Infrastructure Develop-				
	ment Corporation Limited				
	of India for Project Man-				
	agement Consultancy				
	Services for Upgradation/				
	Improvement of Road In-				
	frastructure in Terai Area.				
2.	First Amendatory Dollar	India	16 Septem-		Ministry Of
	Credit Line Agreement		ber		Finance
	between the Government		2016		
	of Nepal and EXIM Bank.				
3.	Dollar Credit Line Agree-	India	16 Septem-		Nepal
	ment between the Govern-		ber		Recon-
	ment of Nepal and EXIM		2016		struction
	Bank on Line of Credit				Authority
	for Post-earthquake Re-				
	construction Projects.				
4.	The Supply Agreement	India	27 March		Nepal Oil
	between Nepal Oil Cor-		2017		Corporation
	poration and Indian Oil				
	Corporation Limited				
	(Renewal for Next Five				
	Years).	C1 :	1035		3.51
5.	MoU on Cooperation un-	China	12 May		Ministry
	der the Belt and Road Ini-		2017		of Foreign
	tiative.	C1 :	22 D		Affairs
6.	Agreement on the Uti-	China	23 Decem-		Mr
	lization of RMB 1 Bil-		ber 2016		Ministry Of
	lion Grant Assistance				Finance
	Provided by the Chinese				
	Government to Nepal for				
	Post-earthquake Recon-				
	struction.				

7	M III 4 4 M' '	C1 :	7.1.1	N4: 1 C
7.	MoU between the Minis-	China	7 July	Ministry of
	try of Industry of the Gov-		2017	Industry
	ernment of Nepal and the			
	State Administration for			
	Industry and Commerce			
	of China in the Field of			
	Registration of Industrial			
	Entities.			
8.	MoU between Ministry	China	6 June	Ministry of
	of Health and Popula-		2017	Health and
	tion of Nepal and Central			Population
	South University (CSU),			
	Changsha on Education			
	Co-operation.			
9.	MoU on Construction of	China	9 May	Ministry of
	Nepal-China Cross-Bor-		2017	Finance
	der Economic Coopera-			
	tion Zone.			
10.	Agreement on the Estab-	China	23 Decem-	Kathmandu
	lishment of Sister City		ber	Metropoli-
	Relations between Kath-		2016	tan City
	mandu Metropolitan City			
	and Chengdu City of Si-			
	chuan Province of China			
	signed in Kathmandu.			
11.	MoU on Consumer Rights			
	Protection between the	China	19 October	Ministry of
	Ministry of Supplies of		2016	Supply
	the Government of Ne-			~ SPP17
	pal and the State Admin-			
	istration for Industry and			
	Commerce (SAIC) of			
	China.			
12.	Two MoUs on Military	China	23-25	
12.	Assistance Gratis of RMB	Ciliiu	March	Ministry of
	200 million between the		2017	defense
	Ministry of Defense,		2017	defense
	Government of Nepal and			
	Government of China.			
	Government of China.			

13.	MoU between the State Bank of Pakistan and Nepal Rastra Bank in the Field of Supervision and Exchange of Superviso- ry Information in Accor- dance with Basel Core Principles for Effective Banking Supervision.		9 February 2017	Nepal Ras- tra Bank
14.	The Agreement on Friendship and Cooperation between the City of Kathmandu of Nepal and City of Seoul of Korea.	South Korea	26 September 2016	Kathmandu Metropoli- tan City
15.	Project Development Agreement (PDA) of the Upper Trishuli-I Hydro- power Project (216 MW) between Ministry of En- ergy of Nepal and Nepal Water and Energy Devel- opment Company	South Korea	29 December 2016	Ministry of Energy
16.	The Agreement on the Exemption from Visa Requirements for the holders of Diplomatic and Official(Special) Passports.	Mongolia	19 December 2016	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
17.	MoU on the establishment of Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between the Government of Nepal and the Government of Aus- tralia.		14 July 2017	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
18.	MoU on Migration with National Human Rights Committee of Qatar.	Qatar	December 2016	National Human Rights Commis- sion
19.	MoU on the establishment of Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between the Government of Nepal and Government of Bulgaria.	Bulgaria	7 July 2017	Ministry of Foreign Affairs

20.	Agreement between the	Japan	28 Decem-		T.U Teach-
	Government of Nepal		ber		ing Hospi-
	and Government of Japan		2016		tal
	to provide 754 million				
	Yen Grants for Medical				
	Equipment Improvement				
	Project in the Teaching				
	Hospital.				
21.	Two Agreements between	Japan	31 August		Ministry
	the Government of Nepal		2016		of Culture,
	and Government of Japan				Tourism
	to provide grant amount				and Civil
	of 1452 million Japanese				Aviation
	Yen for Improvement of				
	Aviation Safety Facilities				
	in Major Airports of Ne-				
	pal.				
22.	Paris Agreement on Cli-	UNFCCC	5 October	4 November	Ministry of
	mate Change		2016	2016	Environ-
					ment
23.	Convention on the Pro-	BWC		4 November	Ministry
	hibition of the Devel-			2016	of Foreign
	opment, Production and				Affairs
	Stockpiling of Bacterio-				
	logical (Biological) and				
	Toxin Weapons and on				
	their Destruction (1972)				
24.	Trade Facilitation Agree-	WTO	24 January	22 February	Ministry of
	ment under the World		2017	2017	Commerce
	Trade Organization				
	(WTO) Regime				

III. Nepali Ambassadors and Consuls General Appointed in 2016/17

S.N.	Name of the Ambassador	Country/Organization	
1	Mr. Deep Kumar Upadhyaya	India	
2	Mr. Leela Mani Paudyal	China	
3	Ms. SewaLamsalAdhikari	Pakistan	
4	Mr. Tara Prasad Pokharel	Brazil	
5	Mr. Prakash Kumar Sevedi	Permanent Mission of Nepal to the UN, Vienna	
6	Mr. Rishi Ram Ghimire	Russian Federation	
7	Mr. Ramesh Prasad Khanal	Federal Republic of Germany	
8	Mr. Jhabindra Prasad Aryal	Egypt	
9	Mr. Durga Bahadur Subedi	United Kingdom	
10	Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa	Belgium and European Union	
11	Ms. Lucky Sherpa	Australia	
12	Mr. Padam Sundas	Bahrain	
13	Prof. Chop Lal Bhusal	Bangladesh	
14	Mr. Yuba Nath Lamsal	Denmark	
15	Mr. Niranjan Kumar Thapa	Israel	
16	Ms. Prativa Rana	Japan	
17	Prof. Bishwambher Pyakuryal	Sri Lanka	
18	Ms. Mr. Arjun JB Singh	Republic of Korea	
19	Mr. Bhim Kumar Udas	Myanmar	
20	Ms. Sarmila Parajul (Dhakal)	Oman	
21	Mr. Ramesh Prasad Koirala	Qatar	
22	Prof. Mahendra Prasad Singh Rajput	Saudi Arabia	
23	Mr. Bharat Bahadur Rayamajhi	Spain	

Consuls General

Name of the Consul General	Name of City or Place and Country
Mr. Rabi Bhattarai	Guangzhou, People's Republic of China
Mr. Madhu Kumar	New York, United States of America
	General Mr. Rabi Bhattarai

${\bf IV.\ Foreign\ Ambassadors\ Who\ Presented\ Credentials\ to\ the\ President\ in\ 2016/17}$

S.N.	Name of Ambassador	Country	Residential/Non- Residential	Date
1	H.E. Mr. Mentor Villagomez	Equator	Non-Residential	29 August 2016
2	H.E. Mr. Jožef Drofenik	Slovenia	Non-Residential	
3	H.E. Mr. Jagdishwar Goburdhun	Mauritius	Non-Residential	
4	H.E. Mr. Yousuf Bin Mohammed A1- Hail	Qatar	Residential	21 October 2016
5	H.E. Mr. Jörg Giovanni Frieden	Switzerland	Residential	
6	H.E. Ms. Yu Hong	China	Residential	
7	H.E. Mr. Abelardo Rafael Cueto Sosa	Cuba	Non-Residential	
8	H.E. Mr. Fahad Ahmad Alawadhi	Kuwait	Non-Residential	30 November
9	H.E. Mr. SanjaasurenBayaraa	Mongolia	Non-Residential	2016
10	H.E. Mr. Oleksandr Shevchenko	Ukraine	Non-Residential	
11	H.E. Mr. Jorge de Oliveirass	Portugal	Non-Residential	
12	H.E. Mr. Sam Schreiner	Luxemburg	Non-Residential	16
13	H.E.Mr.AsfawDingamo	Ethiopia	Non-Residential	December
14	H.E. Mr. Mirzusharif Jalolov	Tajikistan	Non-Residential	2016
15	H.E. Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri	India	Residential	26 March 2017
16	H.E. Ms. Robina Patricia Marks	South Africa	Non-Residential	

17	H. E. Mr. Bhakavat Tanskul	Thailand	Residential	5 May 2017
18	H.E. Mr.Park Young-Sik	Republic of Korea	Residential	
19	H. E. Mr. Peter Graeme Budd	Australia	Residential	
20	H.E. Mr. Gyula Petho	Hungary	Non-Residential	
21	H. E. Mr. SakirOzkanTorunlar	Turkey	Non-Residential	5 June 2017
22	H. E. Mr. Mohamed Maliki	Morocco	Non-Residential	
23	H. E. Mr. Giambatista Diquattro	Holy See	Non-Residential	

V. Foreign Ambassadors Who Completed their Tour of Duty in 2016/17

S.N.	Name	Designation	Farewell Date
1	H.E. Mr. Ahmed Jassim	Ambassador of Qatar	18 July 2016
	Mohammed Ali Al-		
	Mamer		
2	H.E. Mr. Vutti Vuttisant	Ambassador of Thailand	28 September
			2017
3	H.E. Mr. Wu Chuntai	Ambassador of China	28 September
			2017
4	H.E. Mr. Ranjit Rae	Ambassador of India	21 February
			2017
5	Mr. Arjun BahadurThapa	Secretary General of	28 February
		SAARC	2017
6	H.E. Mr. Coe Yong-Jin	Ambassador of South	6 April 2017
		Korea	
7	H.E. Mr. Glen Darran	Ambassador of Australia	11 April 2017
	White		
8	H.E. Mr. Matthias Meyer	Ambassador of Germany	9 June 2017

VI. Nepali Diplomatic Missions with Concurrent Accreditation

S. N.	Name and Address of Nepali Mission	Countries to Which the Mission is Concurrently Accredited	International Organizations to Which the Mission is Concurrently Accredited
1	Embassy of Nepal, Canberra, Australia	 New Zealand Fiji Tuvalu Solomon Islands Samoa Vanuatu Papua New Guinea 	
2	Embassy of Nepal, Manama, Bahrain		
3	Embassy of Nepal, Dhaka, Bangladesh		
4	Embassy of Nepal, Brussels, Belgium	1. Luxembourg 2. The Netherlands	 European Union (EU) Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) World Customs Organization (WCO) Common Fund for Commodities (CFC), The Netherlands Center for the Promotion of Products from Developing Countries (CBI), Netherlands

5	Embassy of Nepal, Brasilia, Brazil	 Argentina 2. Bolivia Chile 4. Colombia Guyana 6. Paraguay Peru Uruguay 9. Venezuela St. Vincent and Grenadines 	
6	Embassy of Nepal, Ottawa (Canada)	1. Cuba 2. Jamaica	1. ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization)
7	Embassy of Nepal, Beijing, China	1. DPR of Korea 2. Mongolia	1. SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) 2. INBAR (International Network for Bamboo and Rattan) 3. AIIB (Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank)
8	Embassy of Nepal, Copenhagen, Denmark	 Finland 2. Norway Sweden Iceland 5. Latvia Lithuania Estonia 	
9	Embassy of Nepal, Cairo, Egypt	 Algeria 2. Ethiopia Lebanon 4. Libya Morocco 6. Nigeria Syria 8. Tunisia Mali 10. Jordan Sudan Mauritania Rep. of Guinea 	

10	Embassy of Nepal, Paris, France	1. Andorra 2. Monaco 3. Portugal 4. Spain	1. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)
11	Embassy of Nepal, Berlin, Germany	 Czech Republic Holy See Romania 4. Poland Ukraine 6. Serbia Slovakia 8. Bulgaria Hungary 	1. UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change)
12	Embassy of Nepal, New Delhi, India	1. Afghanistan 2. Bhutan	
13	Embassy of Nepal, Tel Aviv, Israel	1. Cyprus	
14	Embassy of Nepal, Tokyo, Japan		1. APO (Asian Productivity Organization) 2. UNU (UN University, Tokyo)
15	Embassy of Nepal, Seoul, Rep of Korea		
16	Embassy of Nepal, Kuwait City, Kuwait	1. Iraq	1. ACD (Asian Cooperation Dialogue Secretariat)
17	Embassy of Nepal, Muscat, Oman		
18	Embassy of Nepal, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Indonesia Brunei Darussalam	
19	Embassy of Nepal, Yangon, Myanmar		

20	Embassy of Nepal, Islamabad, Pakistan	 Iran 2. Turkey Tajikistan Kyrgyzstan Turkmenistan 	
21	Embassy of Nepal, Doha, Qatar		
22	Embassy of Nepal, Moscow Russian Federation	 Belarus Kazakhstan Moldova Georgia Armenia Azerbaijan 	
23	Embassy of Nepal, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	1. Somalia 2. Yemen	1. Saudi Fund for Development (SFD), Riyadh
24	Embassy of Nepal, Pretoria (South Africa)	 Botswana 2. Kenya Lesotho 4. Congo Zambia 6. Gabon Tanzania 8. Zimbabwe Mauritius Mozambique Seychelles 	1. UN Environment Programme, Kenya
25	Embassy of Nepal, Colombo (Sri Lanka)	1. Maldives	1. Colombo Plan Secretariat 2. SPACP (South Asian Cooperative Environment Programme)
26	Embassy of Nepal, Bangkok (Thailand)	 The Philippines Cambodia Laos 4. Vietnam Singapore 	1. UNESCAP (UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) 2. AIT (Asian Institute of Technology)
27	Embassy of Nepal, Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates)		<i>SJ</i> /

28	Embassy of Nepal,	1. Ireland	1. WTO (World
	London (United	2. Malta	Tourism
	Kingdom)		Organization)
			2. IMO (International
			Maritime
			Organization)
			3. ICO
			(International
			Coffee Organization)
			4. ITC (International
			Tea Committee),
			London
			5. World Energy
29	Embassy of Nepal,	1. Panama 2. Costa Rica	Council 1. World Bank
29	Washington	3. Mexico 4. El Salvador	2. IMF
	DC(USA)	5. Honduras 6. Guatemala	(International
	,	3. Holidulas 0. Guatemaia	Monetary Fund)
30	Permanent	1. Ecuador 2. Nicaragua	
	Mission of Nepal to the UN, New		
	York		
31	Permanent	1. Italy	1. WTO (World
	Mission of Nepal	2. San Marino	Trade
	to the UN and Other International		Organization)
	Organizations,		2. WHO (World Health
	Geneva		Organization)
	(Switzerland)		,
32	Permanent	1. Albania 2. Croatia	1. CTBTO
	Mission of Nepal to the UN and	3. Greece 4. Macedonia 5. Montenegro	2. IAEA
	Other International	6. Slovenia	3. FAO 4. UNIDO
	Organizations,	7. Bosnia and Herzegovina	5. UNODC
	Vienna, Austria		6. WFP
			7. IFAD
			8. UNOOSA

VII. Appointment, Tenure Extension and Promotion of Honorary Consuls General/Consuls of Nepal in 2016/17

S.N.	Name	Designation	City/State		Tenure
			(Country)	Type	Upto
1	Mr. Marvin A.	Consul	Illinois,	Tenure	26 Feb
	Brustin	General	USA	extension	2020
2	Prof. Dr. Fatma	Consul	Istanbul,	Tenure	15 Dec
	Gunseli Malkoc	General	Turkey	extension	2019
3	Mr. Makar	Consul	Lisbon,	Tenure	17 Dec
	Bahadur Hamal		Portugal	extension	2019
4	Mr. Paolo	Consul	Italy	Promotion	18 Mar
	Nugari			to Honorary	2018
				Consul	
	26 2011	- 1	·	General	
5	Mr. Rishi	Consul	San Diago,		
	Punakhar		California	to Honorary	
	Dhakal			Consul	00 10 2010
	Ma Vania	Canani	Ozalza	General	08.10.2019
6	Mr. Kunio Imanishi	Consul General	Osaka,	Tenure extension	22 May 2020
7	Mr. Kenji	Consul	Japan Fukuoka,	Tenure	
/	Tsugami	Consui	Japan	extension	22 May 2020
8	Dr. Didier	Consul	Rouen,	Tenure	22 May
0	Benard	General	France	extension	2020
9	Mr. Emmanouil	Consul	Athens,	Tenure	22 May
	Karavelakis	Consur	Greece	extension	2020
10	Ms. Maria	Consul	Porto,	Tenure	
	Theresa d Matos		Portugal	extension	22 May
	Marta da Cruz				2020
11	Mr. Alexander	Consul	Monaco	Tenure	22 May
	Moghadam		City	extension	2020
12	Mr. Deepak	Consul	New South	Tenure	
	Kumar Khadka	General	Wales,	extension	22 May
			Australia		2020
13	Mr. Prem Raja			Tenure	22 May
	Mahat	General	USA	extension	2020
14	Dr. William C.	Consul	Ohio, USA		22 May
	Cassell	General		extension	2020
15	Mr. Richard C.	Consul	San	Tenure	
	Blum	General	Francisco,	extension	22 May
			USA		2020

16	Mr. Frederick	Consul	Perth,	Tenure	
	Neil Brown		Western	extension	04 May
			Australia		2021
17	Mr. Stephen	Consul	Alberta,	Tenure	
	Thomas Hess		Canada	extension	19 Jul 2020
18	Mr. Gerard	Consul	Toulouse,	Termination	
	Baumont	General	France	on	
				completion	22 May
				of tenure	2020
19	Mr. Michael T	Consul	Brisbane,	Termination	
	Wille OAM	General	Australia	asdesired by	04 May
				him	2017
20	Mr. Shahram	Consul	Tehran,	Promotion	
	Shantiaee		Iran	to Honorary	
				Consul	22 May
				General	2020
21	Mr. Joshef	Consul	Brisbane,	New	04 May
	Anthony Tooma		Australia	appointment	2021
22	Mr. Terry Teo	Honorary	Klang	New	
	Swee Leng	Consul	Valley,	appointment	
			Malaysia		22.05.2020
23	Mr. Bally	Honorary	Jakarta,	New	
	Saputra Jano	Consul	Indonesia	appointment	
	Seti				22.05.2020
24	Mr. Nawaraj	Honorary	Bucharest,	New	
	Pokharel	Consul	Romania	appointment	22.05.2020

VIII. Honorary Consuls Representing Foreign Countries in Kathamndu (Approved in 2016/17)

Sr. No.	Name	Designation	Country
1	Mr. Rajendra Giri	Honorary Consul	Ethiopia
2	Mr. Ashok Kumar Agrawal	Honorary Consul	Guinea
3	Mr. Naresh Kumar Shrestha	Honorary Consul	Iran
4	Mr. Karan Vaidya	Honorary Consul	Latvia
5	Mr. Shovakar Neupane	Honorary Consul	Lithuania
6	Mr. Tsetan Gyurman Shrestha	Honorary Consul	Mongolia
		(Re-appointment)	
7	Mr. Pepijn Ttrapman.	Honorary Consul	The Netherlands
8	Mr. Prem Prakash Khetan	Honorary Consul	Turkey
9	Mr. Rajesh Kaji Shrestha	Honorary Consul	Vietnam

IX. Nepali Ambassadors / Consuls General Who Served in Diplomatic Missions Abroad

	S.N.	Name	Appointment/Tenure
	1	H.E. Rishikesh Shah	October 27, 1958
	2	H.E. Matrika Prasad Koirala	August 03, 1961
	3	H.E. Major General (Retd.) Padam Bahadur Khatri	December 03, 1964
	4	H.E. Kul Shekhar Sharma	April 17, 1969
	5	H.E. Yadu Nath Khanal	June 14, 1973
	6	H.E. B.G Padam Bahadur Khatri	January 23, 1976
	7	H.E. Dr. Bhes Bahadur Thapa	August 29, 1980
	8	H.E. Bishwo Pradhan	February 18, 1986
USA	9	H.E. Dr. Mohan Man Saiju	September 19, 1988
	10	H.E. Yog Prasad Upadhya	November 25, 1991
	11	H.E. Bhasu Dev Dhungana	March 20, 1995
	12	H.E. Dr. Bhes Bahadur Thapa	April 30, 1996
	13	H.E. Dhamodar Prasad Gautam	September 10, 1998
	14	H.E. Jay Pratap Rana	February 14, 2002
	15	H.E. Kedar Bhakta Shrestha	September 15, 2004
	16	H.E. Suresh Chandra Chalise	January 22, 2008
	17	H.E. Sankar Prasad Sharma	February 24, 2010
	18	H.E. Dr. Arjun Kumar Karki	Incumbent
	1	H.E. G.B. Yakthumba	January 1969
	2	H.E. Gyanendra B. Karki	May 1971
	3	H.E. Bharat R. Bhandary	June 1976
	4	H.E. Shardul SJB Rana	October 1979
	5	H.E. Khadgajit Baral	May 1985
	6	H.E. Dr. Dibya Deo Bhatt	January 1991
	7	H.E. Prof. Thakkan Mallik	January 1995
Myanmar	8	H.E. Gopal P.Acharya	June 1995 – December 1995
·	9	H.E. Gen. (Retd.) Satchit SJB Rana	June 1996 – September 1999
	10	H.E. Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Victory SJB Rana	June 2005 – June 2006
	11	H.E. Guna Laxmi Sharma (Bishowkarma)	December 2007 – February 2012
	12	H.E. Paras Ghimire	June 2012 – June 2016
	13	H. E. Bhim K. Udas	Incumbent

	1	H.E. Damodar Shumsher	1964-1966
		J.B.Rana	
	2	H.E. Balchandra Sharma	1968-1971
	3	H.E. Jagdhish Shumsher J.B.Rana	1972-1976
	4	H.E. Gyanendra Bahadur Karki	1977-1982
	5	H.E. Narendra Bikram Shah	1983-1985
	6	H.E. Bishweshwar Prasad Rimal	1986-1990
	7	H.E. Yadav Kant Silwal	October 1991 – November 1992
Russia	8	H.E. Kumar Prasad Gyawali	1993 – 1995
114400	9	H.E. Lal Bahadur Khadayat	September 1996- September 1998
	10	H.E. Lila Prasad Sharma	February 2001- February 2005
	11	H.E. Hiranya Lal Shrestha	June 2005- May 2006
	12	H.E. Surya Kiran Gurung	November 2007- February 2012
	13	H.E. Dr. Ravi Mohan Sapkota 'Kopila'	May 2012- May 2016
	14	H.E. Rishi Ram Ghimire	Incumbent
Oman	1	H.E. Sarmila Parajuli Dhakal	Incumbent
Brazil	1	H.E. Pradhumna Bikram Shah	Jan. 18, 2010 - April 17, 2014
	2	H.E. Tara Prasad Pokharel	Incumbent
	1	H.E. Khelendra Prasad Pandey	1980-1986
	2	H.E. Ram Chandra Bahadur Singh	1986-1991
	3	H.E. Sundarnath Bhattarai	1991-1996
Thailand	4	H.E. Janak Bahadur Singh	1997-2003
	5	H.E. Maj Gen Tara Bahadur Thapa	2005-2006
	6	H.E. Naveen Prakash Jung Shah	2007-2011
	7	H.E. Dr. Khaga Nath Adhikari	Incumbent

	1	H. E. Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Daman SJB	1956 - 1961
	2	Rana H. E. Keshar Bahadur K. C.	1961 - 1965
	3	H. E. Ranadhir Subba	1965 - 1974
	4	H. E. Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Kshetra B. Rana	1974 - 1978
	5	H. E. Prof. Yadu Nath Khanal	1978 - 1982
	6	H. E. Gen. (Retd.) Guna S. J. B. Rana	1982 - 1986
	7	H. E. Nayan Bahadur Khatri	1986 - 1991
China	8	H. E. Prof. B. C. Malla	November 1991 – January 1995
	9	H. E. Tulsi L. Amatya	February 1995 – December 1995
	10	H. E. Prof. Yubaraj S. Pradhan	April 1996 – August 1998
	11	H. E. Rajeshwar Acharya	October 1998 – January 2003
	12	H. E. Narendra Raj Pandey	May 2003 - June 2006
	13	H.E. Tanka Prasad Karki	November 2007 - December 2011
	14	H.E. Dr. Mahesh Kumar Maskey	January 2012 - May 2016
	15	H.E. Leela Mani Paudyal	Incumbent
	1	H.E. Durgesh Man Singh	1992 – July 1997
	2	H.E. Kedar Bhakta Shrestha	July 1997 – February 2002
Dalaina	3	H.E. Narayan Shamsher Thapa	March 2002 – October 2006
Belgium	4	H.E. Pramesh Kumar Hamal	December 2007 – February 2012
	5	H.E. Ram Mani Pokharel	May 2012- May 2016
	6	H.E. Lok Bahadur Thapa	Incumbent

	1	H.E. Sardar Bhim Bahadur Pandey	July 1965 – March 1969
	2	H.E. Meer Subba Padhyumna Lal Rajbhandari	July 1965 - March1969
	3	H.E. Meer Subba Ishwori Man Shrestha	August 1973 – September 1980
		H.E. Ram Hari Sharma	October 1980 – May 1984
Germany	4	H.E. General (Retd.) Singha Pratap Shah	September 1984 – May 1990
	5	H.E. Gopal Prasad Sharma	October 1991 – January 1995
	6	H.E. Dr. Novel Kishore Rai	June 1995 - December 1999
	7	H.E. Balram Singh Malla	December 1999 – June 2004
	8	H.E. Dr. Madan Kumar Bhattarai	August 2004 – January 2009
	9	H.E. Suresh Prasad Pradhan	July 2009 – August 2013
	10	H.E. Ramesh Prasad Khanal	Incumbent
South	1	H.E. Arun Prasad Dhital	April 2010 - August 2014
Africa	2	H.E. Amrit Bahadur Rai	Incumbent
	1	H.E. Gen. (Retd.) Shanker	November 1949 (accrediated
		Shamsher	from
		WEB B 114	London)
	2	H.E. Ram Prasad Manandar	1955 AD (accrediated from London)
	3	H.E. Shardul Shumsher Rana	November 1967 - March 1972
	4	H.E. Bal Chandra Sharma	April 1972- September 1975
	5	H.E. Dr. Trailokya Nath Upraity	October 1975
France	6	H.E. Krishna Raj Aryal	April 1980
	7	H. E. Dilli Raj Uprety	December 1984-1989
	8	H.E. Kalyana Bikram Adhikari	September 1990
	9	H.E. Keshav Raj Jha	March 1993 - Dec 1997
	10	H.E. Indra Bahadur Singh	February 1998 - April 2003
	11	H.E. Prajwalla Shumsher JB	September 2005 - June 2006
		Rana	
	12	H.E. Mohan Krishna Shrestha	July 2010 - August 2014
	13	H.E. Ambika Devi Luintel	Incumbent
	1	H.E. Shyama Nanda Suman	July 2000
	2	H.E. Surya Nath Mishra	November 2007
Qatar	3	H.E. Dr. Maya Kumari Sharma	May 2012 - October 2013
	3	H.E. Prof. Ramesh Prasad Koirala	Incumbent

T1	1	H.E. Baija Nath Thapaliya	2009 AD
Israel	2	H.E. Niranjan Thapa	Incumbent
	1	H.E. Krishna Bam Malla	1972 AD
	2	H. E. Harka Bahadur Thapa	1976 – 1982
	3	H. E. Gahendra Bahadur	1982 – 1987
		Rajbhandari	
	4	H. E. Mohan Prasad Lohani	1987 – 1991
Bangl-	5	H. E. Lok Bahadur Shrestha	1992 – 1998
adesh	6	H. E. Madhu Raman Acharya	1998 – October 2001
*********	7	H. E. Bhagirath Basnet	March 2003 – January 2006
	8	H. E. Pradeep Khatiwada	November 2007- November 2011
	9	H. E. Hari Kumar Shrestha	November 2011- November 2015
	10	H.E. Prof. Dr. Chop Lal Bhusal	Incumbent
	1	H.E. Yogendra Dhakal	2007 AD
	2	H.E. Rudra Kumar Nepal	2012-2016
Australia	3	H.E. Lucky Sherpa	Incumbent
	1	H.E. Nilambar Acharya	October 1996 - April 2000
	2	H.E. Bal Bahadur Kunwar	June 2000 - June 2005
Sri-Lanka	3	H.E. Durga Prasad Bhattarai	September 2005 - October 2009
911-Lanka	4	H.E. Sushil Chandra Amatya	December 2009 - December 2013
	5	Prof. Dr. Bishwambher Pyakuryal	Incumbent
	1	H.E. Vijay Lal Karna	February 2008-March 2012
Denmark	2	H.E. Mukti Nath Bhatta	April 2012 - APril 2016
	3	H.E. Yuba Nath Lamsal	Incumbent
Kuwait	1	H.E. Madhuwan Prasad Poudyal	December 2009 - February 2014
	2	H.E. Yagya Bahadur Hamal	Incumbent

	1	H.E. Anirudh Prasad Singh	1967 - 1972
	2	H.E. Jharendra Narayan Singh	1972 - 1976
	3	H.E. Bishwa Pradhan	1976 - 1980
	4	H.E. Gen. (Retd.) Singh Bahadur	1980 - 1984
		Basnyat	
	5	H.E. Krishna Bahadur	1984 - 1988
.		Manandhar	1000 1002
Egypt	6	H.E. Bhogendra Nath Rimal	1988 - 1992
	7	H.E. Jitendra Raj Sharma	February 1992 - 1996
	8	H.E. Gopinath Dawadi	October 1996 - February 2001
	9	H.E. Dr. Rambhakta P B Thakur	August 2005 - January 2010
	10	H.E. Dr. Shyamlal Tabadar	January 2010 - Janauary 2013
	11	H.E. Jhabindra Prasad Aryal	Incumbent
	1	Mr. Madhuban Paudel, Charge d' Affairs	April 2004 – August 2006
UAE	2	Mr. Mohan Krishna Shrestha, Charge d'Affairs	September 2006 – December 2007
	3	HE Arjun Bahadur Thapa	December 2007 – January 2012
	4	HE Dhananjay Jha	2012-2016
Malaysia	1	H.E. Dr. Rhishi Raj Adhikari	February 2008 - February 2012
	2	H.E. Dr. Niranjan Man Singh Basnyat	Incumbent
	1	H.E. Nar Pratap Thapa	1960 AD
	2	H.E. Upendra Bahadur Basnet	1965 AD
	3	H.E. Ishwari Raj Mishra	1969 - 1973
	4	H.E. Khadga Man Singh	1974 - 1978
	5	H.E. Govinda Prasad Lohoni	1978 - 1982
	6	H.E. Niranjan Bhattarai	May 1983 - January 1988
	7	H.E. Arjun Nar Singh Rana	March 1988 - March 1992
Pakistan	8	H.E. Chuda Bahadur Hamal	August 1992 - September 1992
	9	H.E. Mukunda Prasad Dhungel	December 1992 - May 1997
	10	H.E. Kumar Prasad Gyawali	November 1997 - November 2001
	11	H.E. Puskar Man Singh Rajbhandari	January 2003 - June 2006
	12	H.E. Bal Bahadur Kuwar	January 208 - February 2012
	13	H.E. Bharat Raj Paudyal	May 2012 - May 2016
	14	H. E. Sewa Lamsal Adhikari	Incumbent
		-1	1

	1	H.E. General (Retd.) Singha	1945 - 1946
	1	Shumsher J.B. Rana	17.10 17.10
	2	H.E. Vijaya Shumsher J.B. Rana	August 1951
	3	H.E. Mahendra Bikram Shah	July 1954
	4	H.E. Daman Shumsher J.B.	August 1954
		Rana	
	5	H.E. Narpratap Thapa	May 1961
	6	H.E. Yadu Nath Khanal	Jane 1963
	7	H.E. Jharendra Narayan Singh	October 1967
	8	H.E. Sardar Bhim Bahadur Pandey	May 1969
	9	H.E. Krishna Bom Malla	May 1972
India	10	H.E. Vedananda Jha	August 1977
	11	H.E. Jagdish Shumsher J.B.	February 1983
		Rana	1 1 1 2 2 2
	12	H.E. Binda S. Shah	April 1988
	13	H.E. Chakra P. Bastola	November 1991
	14	H.E. Prof. Harsha Narayan Dhaubhadel	February 1995
	15	H.E. Prof. Lok Raj Baral	March 1996
	16	H.E. Dr. Bhekh Bahadur Thapa	October 1997
	17	H.E. Karna Dhoj Adhikary	February 2004
	18	H.E. Dr. Durgesh Man Singh	April 2008
	19	H.E. Rukma Shumsher Rana	December 2009
	20	H.E. Deep Kumar Upadhyay	Incumbent

	1	Minister Gen. Bahadur S.J.B.	1934-1936
		Rana	
	2	Minister Gen. Krishna S.J.B. Rana	1936-1939
	3	Minister Gen. Singha S.J.B. Rana	1939-1947
	4	H.E. Gen. Kaiser S.J.B. Rana	1947-1949
	5	H.E. Gen. Shankar S.J.B. Rana	1949-1954
	6	H.E. Daman S.J.B. Rana	1954-1957
	7	H.E. Prof. Ram Prasad Manandhar	1957-1961
	8	H.E. Kali Prasad Upadhaya	1961-1965
	9	H.E. Ishwari Raj Mishra	1966-1969
UK	10	H.E. Col. Upendra Bahadur Basnyat	1969-1974
	11	H.E. Gen. Kiran S.J.B. Rana	1974-1978
	12	H.E. Jharendra Narayan Singha	1979-1983
	13	H.E. Ishwari Raj Pandey	1983-1988
	14	H.E. Maj.Gen. Bharat Kesher Simha	1988-1992
	15	H.E. Surya Prasad Shrestha	1992-1997
	16	H.E. Dr. Singha Bahadur Basnyat	1997-2003
	17	H.E. Prabal S.J.B. Rana	2003-2006
	18	H.E. Murari Raj Sharma	2007- 2009
	19	H.E. Dr. Suresh Chandra Chalise	2010- 2014
	20	H.E. Dr. Durga Bahadur Subedi	Incumbent

	1	H.E. Gen. Daman Samsher Rana	1955 AD
Japan	2	H.E. Bharat Raj Rajbhandari	September 1965- August 1969
	3	H.E. Prakash Chandra Thakur	September 1969 - December 1973
	4	H.E. Dr. Yadav Prasad Pant	-April 1974 - March 1979
	5	H.E. Dr. Badri Prasad Shrestha	May 1979 - May 1985
	6	H.E. Narayan Prasad Arjel	July 1985 - May 1991
	7	H.E. Bharat Prasad Dhital	November 1991 - January 1995
	8	H.E. Dr. Bishnu Hari Nepal	June 1995 - January 1996
	9	H.E. Kedar Bhakta Mathema	October 1996 - February 2003
	10	H.E. Dr. Ramesha Nanda Baidhya	December 2003 - June 2005
	11	H.E. Dr. Ganesh Yonjan	November 2007 - October 2011
	12	H.E. Dr. Madan Kumar Bhattarai	November 2011 - November 2015
	13	H.E. Prativa Rana	Incumbent
Bahrain	1	Dr. Durga Bahadur Subedi, Charge d' Affaires a.i.	October 02, 2013
	2	H.E. Padam Sundas	Incumbent
Republic of Korea	1	H.E. Kamal Prasad Koirala	Dec. 28, 2007 - December 27, 2011
	2	H.E. Kaman Singh Lama	May 04, 2012 - May 03, 2016
	3	H.E. Arjun Jung Bahadur Singh	Incumbent
Canada	1	H.E. Dr. Bhoj Raj Ghimire	November 24, 2009 - Dec. 09, 2013

	1	H.E. Rishikesh Shah	1956 - 1960
	2	H.E. Matrika Prasad Koirala	1961 - 1964
	3	H.E. Maj. Gen. Padam Bahadur	
		Khatri	1964 - 1972
	4	H.E. Sailendra Kumar Upadhaya	1972 1978
	5	H.E. Uddav Dev Bhatta	1979 - 1985
UN,	6	H.E. Jay Pratap Rana	1985 - 1991
New York	7	H.E. Dr. Jay Raj Acharya	1991 - 1994
	8	H.E. Narendra Bikram Shah	-1995 - 2000
	9	H.E. Murari Raj Sharma	2000 - 2005
	10	H.E. Madhu Raman Acharya	2005 - 2009
	11	H.E. Gyan Chandra Acharya	2009 - 2012
	12	H. E. Durga Prasad Bhattarai	Incumbent
	1	H.E. Dr. Shambhu Ram Singkhada	October 29, 1998 - Feb. 15, 2003
	2	H.E. Gyan Chandra Acharya	February 21, 2003 - February 15, 2007
Geneva	3	H.E. Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai	November 20, 2007 - Feb. 15, 2012
	4	H.E. Shanker Das Bairagi	February 23, 2012 - December 07, 2013
	5	H.E. Deepak Dhital	Incumbent
	1	H.E. Kedar Prasad Koirala	1979
	2	H.E. Tirtha Raj Tuladhar	July 1985 - January 1989
	3	H.E. Surendra Bahadur Shrestha	July 1989 - February 1994
Saudi Arabia	4	H.E. Narayan Samsher Thapa	July 1994 - July 1997
	5	H.E. Badri Prasad Khanal	December 1997 - February 2003
	6	H.E. Abullaisi Thakurai	Sept. 2005 - June 2006
	7	H.E. Hamid Ansari	March 2008 - March 2011
	8	H. E. Udaya Raj Pandey	August 2011 - August 2015
	9	H.E. Prof. Dr. Mahendra Prasad Singh Rajput	Incumbent

Vienna	1	H.E. Prakash Kumar Subedi	Incumbent
	1	Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Daman SJB Rana	1948 - 1955
	2	Mr. Dharma Narayan Pradhan	Feb. 1955 - 1955
	3	Salyani Raja Jitendra Bahadur Shah	1955 - 1961
	4	Gen. (Retd.) Gahendra Shumshere Thapa	1961 - 1967
	5	Gen. (Retd.) Pahal Singh Lama	1967 - 1971
	6	Mr. Rom Bahadur Thapa	1971 - 1975
	7	Mr. Madhav Raj Bhandari	1975 - 1979
Kolkata	8	Mr. Madhusudan Lohani	1979 - 1982
	9	Mr. Durga Prakash Pandey	1982 - 1987
	10	Mr. Ram Bahadur K. C.	1987 - 1992
	11	Mr. M P Upadhayay	1993 - 1995
	12	Mr. Sunil Paudyal	1995 - 1996
	13	Mr. Deep Basnyat	1996 - 1998
	14	Mr. Bhoj Raj Ghimire	1998 - 2001
	15	Mr. Yuva Raj Bhusal	2001 - 2004
16		Mr. Govinda Prasad Kusum	2004 - 2007
	17	Mr. Suresh Man Shrestha	2007 - 2011
	18	Mr. Chandra Kumar Ghimire	2012 - 2015
	19	Mr. Eknarayan Aryal	Incumbent

	1	Major Captain (Retd.) Upendra Bahadur Basnet	1956 - 1961
	2	Col. (Retd.) G. B. Yakthumba	1961 - 1964
	3	Gen. (Retd.) Bhakta Narsingh Rana	1964 - 1968
	4	Mr. Yudhdha Gambhir Singh G.	1968 - 1969
	5	Mr. Narayan Prasad Shrestha	1970 - 1972
	6	Prof. Dor Bahadur Bista	1972 - 1975
	7	Mr. Jonden Ukyab	1975 - 1977
	8	Mr. Basudev Tuphan	June 15, 1978 - Dec. 13, 1980
	9	Mr. Gobardhan Bikram Shah	Dec. 15, 1980 - Dec. 13, 1982
	10	Mr. Tamla Ukyab	Dec. 26, 1982 - Feb. 25, 1988
Lhasa	11	Dr. Rana Bahadur Thapa	March 28, 1988 - April 18, 1992
	12	Mr. Manik Lal Manandhar	April 19, 1993 - July 15, 1995
	13	Mr. Ang Dendi Sherpa	July 25, 1995 - March 21, 1996
	14	Mr. Binod Lama	July 25, 1996 - July 31, 1998
	15	Mr. Shankar Pandey	Nove. 17, 1999 - October 07, 2003
	16	Mr. Leela Mani Paudyal	Nov. 29, 2003 - August, 31, 2008
	17	Mr. Naindra Prasad Upadhyay	September 03, 2007 - October 29, 2011
	18	Mr. Hari Prasad Bashyal	Jan. 28, 2012 - Jan. 28, 2016
	19	Mr. Govinda Bahadur Karki	Incumbent

	1	Mr. Pradhumna Bikram Shah	June 02, 1997 - Nov. 15, 1998
	2 Mr. Jainendra Jeevan Sharma		Nov. 07, 1998 - (N/A)
3 Mr. Madhav Prasad Ghimire		Mr. Madhav Prasad Ghimire	May 27, 2003 - October 20, 2004
	4	Mr. Keshav Prasad Bhattarai	October 04, 2007 - August 11, 2009
Hong Kong	5	Mr. Binod Kumar Upadhyaya	January 26, 2010 - January 18, 2013
	6	Mr. Mahesh Prasad Dahal	April 25, 2013 - October 19, 2015
	7	Mr. Kamal Prasad Bhattarai	Incumbent
Guangzhou	1	Mr. Ravi Bhattarai	Incumbent

X. Record of High-level Visits as of July 2017

Outgoing Visits

SN	Diginitary	Date	Country	Type of Visit
1	King Mahendra	April27-30, 1960	United States	State
2	King Mahendra	October 1960	United Kingdom	State
3	Prime Minister B.P. Koirala	1960	Israel	Official
4	King Mahendra	September 1963	Egypt	State
5	King Mahendra	October 1966	Egypt	NAM Summit
6	King Mahendra	October 1966	France	State
7	King Birendra	1980	United Kingdom	State
8	King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya	1981	Egypt	State
9	King Birendra	September 1983	Egypt	Unofficial
10	King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya	December 1983	United States	State
11	King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya	October 1986	Germany	State
12	King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya	14-17 Sept. 1987	China	Official
13	King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya	1989	Greece	Private
14	Prime Minister Krishna P. Bhattarai	08-10 June 1990	India	Official
15	Prime Minister Girija P. Koirala	05-10 Dec 1991	India	Official
16	Prime Minister Girija P. Koirala	16-22 March 1992	China	Official
17	King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya	23-25 June 1993	China	State
18	King Birendra	September 1994	France	State
19	King Birendra	1995	United Kingdom	To Attend 50 th Anniversary of WWII
20	Prime Minister Girija P. Koirala	Feb 1995	Germany	Official
21	Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikary	10-14 April 1995	India	Official
22	Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikary	17-21 April 1995	China	Official
23	Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikary	April 1995	Germany	Official

24	Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikary	1995	United Kingdom	Official
25	King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya	1996	China	Private
26	Prime Minister Sher B. Deuba	11-17 Feb 1996	India	Official
27	Prime Minister Sher B. Deuba	1996	United Kingdom	Official
28	Prime Minister Sher B. Deuba	21-28 April 1996	China	Official
29	Prime Minister Krishna P. Bhattarai	1999	United Kingdom	Official
30	Prime Minister Girija P. Koirala	31 July-06 August 2000	India	Official
31	Prime Minister Girija P. Koirala	11 September 2000	Switzerland and Germany	Official
32	King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya	26 Feb-04 March 2001	China	State
33	King Birendra	2001	China	Annual Conference of Boao Forum
34	King Gyanendra	23-28 June 2002	India	State
35	King Gyanendra	09-18 July 2002	China	State
36	Prime Minister Sher B. Deuba	20-25 March 2002	India	State
37	Prime Minister Sher B. Deuba	06-11 May 2002	United States	Official
38	Prime Minister Sher B. Deuba	2002	United Kingdom	Official
39	Prime Minister Surya B. Thapa	24-25 Nov 2003	India	SAARC Chairman
40	Prime Minister Sher B. Deuba	08-12 Sep 2004	India	Official
41	King Gyanendra	23 Dec 2004-02 Jan 2005	India	Official
42	King Gyanendra	22-23 April 2005	Indonesia	Asian-African Summit
43	King Gyanendra	23-26 April 2005	China	Annual Conference of Boao Forum
44	King Gyanendra	2005	Qatar	to attend G-77
45	King Gyanendra	2005	United Arab Emirates	Official

46	King Gyanendra and Queen Komal Rajya Laxmi Shah	12-16 June 2005	Qatar	2nd South Summit of G-77 Nations
47	King Gyanendra and Queen Komal Rajya Laxmi Shah	16-18 November 2005	Tunisia	World Summit on Information Society
48	King Gyanendra and Queen Komal Rajya Laxmi Shah	19 -24 November 2005	South Africa, Brundi	
49	King Gyanendra and Queen Komal Rajya Laxmi Shah	28 November to 02 December 2005	Egypt	
50	Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala	6-9 June 2006	India	Official
51	Prime Minister Puspa Kamal Dahal	Aug 23-27, 2008	China	Official (to attend closing ceremony of Beijing Olympics)
52	Prime Minister Puspa Kamal Dahal	14-18 Sep 2008	India	Official
53	Prime Minister Puspa Kamal Dahal	1-3 April 2009	Finland	Official
54	Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal	18-22 Aug 2009	India	Official
55	Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal	Dec 26 – 31, 2009	China	Official
56	President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav	15-18 Feb 2010	India	State
57	President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav	October 26-November 01, 2010	China	Goodwill visit
58	President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav	27 Jan-05 Feb 2011	India	Official
59	President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav	25-27 Feb 2011	Kuwait	State
60	Prime Minister Jhalanath Khnal	9-13 May 2011	Turkey	Official (to Participate in the 4 th LDC Conference)
61	President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav	10-13 Oct 2011	Qatar	State
62	Prime Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai	20-23 Oct 2011	India	Official
63	Prime Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai	29 August - 01 September, 2012	Tehran, Iran	Official (to Participate 16 th NAM Summit)

64	Prime Minister Dr.	June 20-22, 2012	Brazil	Official (to
	Baburbam Bhattarai			Participate in Rio+20 UN
				Conference)
66	Prime Minister Sushil	5-6 June 2014	China	Official (to
	Koirala			Participate in
				China-South
				Asia Expo)
67	President Dr. Ram Baran	26 March-01 April	China	Official (Boao
	Yadav	2015		Forum for
				Asia Annual
(0	Prime Minister Sushil	22 24 4:1 2015	Indonesia	Conference
68	Koirala	22-24 April 2015	Indonesia	Official (to
	Koiraia			Participate in Asian-African
				Conference,
				2015)
69	Prime Minister Mr. K.P.	19-24 February	India	State
	Sharma Oli	2016		
70	Prime Minister Mr. K.P.	20–27 March 2016	China	Official
	Sharma Oli			
71	Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa	15 - 18 September	India	State
	Kamal Dahal "Prachanda"	2016		
72	Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa	15 - 16 October	India	Official (to
	Kamal Dahal "Prachanda"	2016		Participate
				in BRICS-
				BIMSTEC
				Leaders
				Outreach
72	Duines Minister Mr. Deeder	14 17 1 2017	Abu Dhabi	Summit)
73	Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda"	14-1	Abu Dhabi	Official (to Participate
	Kamai Danai Fiachanda			in World
				Future Energy
				Summit)
74	Prime Minister Mr.	23 to 29 March	China	Official (to
	Pushpa Kamal Dahal	2017		Participate in
	"Prachanda"			Boao South
				Asia Annual
				Conference)
75	President Bidya Devi	17-02 April 2017	India	State
	Bhandari			

76	President Bidya Devi	13-16 May 2017	Sri Lanka	Official
	Bhandari			(Closing
				Ceremony of
				UN Vesak Day
				Conference)
77	President Bidya Devi	13-18 June 2017	Switzerland	Official (to
	Bhandari			participate
				in 106th ILO
				Conference)

Incoming Visits

S.N	Dignitary	Date	Country	Type of
				Visit
1	Prime Minister	June 1951	India	Official
	Jawaharlal Nehru			
2	President Rajendra	October 1956	India	State
	Prasad			
3	Prime Minister	June 1959	India	Official
	Jawaharlal Nehru			
4	Prime Minister Lal	April 1965	India	Official
	Bahadur Shastri			
5	President Zakir Hussain	October 1966	India	State
6	Prime Minister Indira	October 1966	India	Official
	Gandhi			
7	Prime Minister Indira	February 1973	India	Official
	Gandhi			
8	Prime Minister Morarji	December 1977	India	Goodwill
	Desai			
9	President Mr. Neelam	1981	India	State
	Sanjiva Reddy			
10	President François	02 to 03 May		State
	Mitterrand	1983		
11	Prime Minister Chandra	13-15 February	India	Official
	Shekhar	1991		
12	Prime Minister P.V.	19-21 October	India	Goodwill
	Narashimha Rao	1992		
13	Former Prime Minister	December 1993	Greece	Official
	Constantin Mitsotakis			
14	President S.	November 1996	India	State
	Radhakrishnan			

15	President Jiang Zemin	December 4-5, 1996	China	State
16	Prime Minister Sri Inder	5-7 June 1997	India	Official
	Kumar Gujral			
17	President Arnold Keller	9-12 November 1997	Switzerland	Official
18	President R.K.	28-30 May 1998	India	State
	Narayanan			
19	Premier Mr. Zhu Rongji	14-16 May 2001	China	Official
20	Premier Wen Jiabao	January 14, 2012	China	Official
21	State Councilor Yang	June 24-25,	China	Official
	Jiechi	2013		
22	Prime Minister Narendra	3-4 August 2014	India	Official
	Modi			
23	President Pranab	02-04 November	India	State
	Mukherjee	2016		

XI. Speeches/ Statements Delivered during High-level Visits in 2016/17

Unofficial English Translation Check against delivery

Address by the Rt. Honourable Bidya Devi Bhandari, President of Nepal at World of Work Summit 106th Session of the International Labour Conference Thursday, 15 June 2017

Mr. Chairperson
Excellencies the Heads of State of Malta and Mauritius
Director General of the ILO, Mr. Guy Ryder
Distinguished delegates representing the Governments, Employers and the
Workers
Eminent personalities from the world of work

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I thank the Director General of the ILO for the invitation as well as the excellent arrangements made for this important event.

In my capacity as the first woman President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, I feel deeply honoured to represent Nepal and Nepali people in this Summit, convened as a part of the 106th Session of the International Labour Conference.

As I stand before this august gathering to share the historic political achievements made through relentless struggles and sacrifices of Nepali people, I feel the entire nation has been honoured.

We note that international community has been taking keen interest in our transition from conflict to peaceful political transformation alongside the endeavours to transform from conservatism and outmoded social structures. Our journey towards social transformation is ongoing.

I have brought with me warm greetings and best wishes from the Government and hard working people of Nepal, known as the land of Gautama Buddha and Mount Everest.

While addressing this Summit, I appreciate the special contribution made by ILO towards promoting decent, equitable and socially just world of work.

As ILO approaches its 100th anniversary in 2019, I commend it for making 'Women at Work' as one of the centenary initiatives.

My sincere appreciation goes to the entire membership of ILO for electing Nepal in the Governing Board during the current session.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The role trade unions play for the maintenance of harmonious industrial relations and peace ultimately contributes to the economic development and prosperity of society at large. We do acknowledge the role of trade unions in our national advancement too.

The decent work agenda promoted by ILO constitutes a key pillar of fair globalization where everyone becomes a winner. This goal can be achieved if every State accords due regard to the dignity and value of work. In order to make work more dignified, we should create an environment for sharing best practices and promoting innovative ideas.

In the year 2015, the world leaders adopted an ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It is a matter of satisfaction that all pillars of the Decent Work Agenda have been duly integrated in the 2030 Agenda.

It has also rightly identified gender equality both as an objective as well as a means for realizing the goals.

Excellencies,

Compared to situation few decades ago, women are more educated and trained now; they have better access to labour market; they represent in increasing number in parliaments; and have more leadership role in governments and enterprises. But the goal towards realizing full gender equality is yet to be achieved.

Societies cannot stand a long time on the shaky foundation of discrimination and inequality. Discrimination against women must come to an end for which we all have to put our meaningful efforts.

Despite decades of efforts, implementation of the international commitments remains weak. Progress of women in the world of work has been slow and inhibited. We continue to languish in low utilization of women's potentials.

It's a fact that without political, economic, social and cultural empowerment of women, we cannot imagine the establishment of an equal, just and peaceful society. We must internalize this reality.

As I speak of women in the world of work, I am deeply touched by the cry of

migrant women workers in vulnerable situation and their abuse and exploitation. Continued existence of some of the worst forms of labour and modern day slavery in the form of human trafficking and the trafficking of women and girls is an affront to the human civilization. This must not be allowed to continue further

In the course of my political journey as a student leader, woman activist and a trade unionist, I have closely confronted many constraints. I have myself experienced how arduous and challenging it is for a woman to reach to the position of political leadership in a patriarchal society. However, I have never experienced defeat in my political journey to this point. The message one can learn from this is that with strong commitment and unwavering efforts women can succeed in most difficult political tests.

Excellencies,

I am happy to share with you that in spite of the constraints imposed by weak economy and prolonged transition and challenges, Nepal has made significant strides towards achieving gender equality – be it in the world of work or in the socio-economic and political spheres. However, these achievements are not the results of coincidence.

We have a long history of struggles to come to the stage we stand today. We have moved from a society where such evil practices as Suttee, child marriage, polyandry, dowry, social exclusion and deprivation prevailed. Many succeeding generations of women, daughters and sisters have shed blood and struggled to secure those rights. Several of them have attained martyrdom in the process.

I feel it important to recall the indomitable courage and sacrifice shown by Yogmaya Neupane who in an adverse social milieu of 1941 joined by her 67 women followers immersed to death in the Arun River in eastern Nepal in protest against misrule and socio-cultural evils. She is a pioneer in the early days of Nepali women's struggle for their rights. Nepal's journey of political and social transformation is full of such sagas of sacrifices made by women from all fronts of life. I pay high tribute to all those women leaders.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

After almost seven decades of persistent struggles, on 20th of September 2015, Nepali people wrote the Constitution for themselves through their elected representatives.

The Constitution is founded on the ideals of creating egalitarian society based on the proportional and inclusive principles to ensure equality and social justice and eliminating discrimination and oppression in all its forms and manifestations.

Comparatively speaking, the rights guaranteed by the Constitution are of superior standards.

The Constitution has provisions specific to women such as right against exploitation and violence, equal lineage, and protection by way of positive discrimination in education, health, employment and social security.

There is no restriction on the choice of employment or profession on the basis of gender. Women have equal entitlement to enter and compete for the positions in all public services, including those in civil, military and other security agencies. The number of women peacekeepers from Nepal in various peace operations under the United Nations is increasing. Gender discrimination in wages and remuneration is strictly prohibited. Moreover, employing women in hazardous work is outlawed.

In order to further empower women, a law pertaining to positive discrimination is being implemented in government and public sector jobs. Thirty three percent of the reserved quotas in civil service are guaranteed for women. This has resulted in significant increase in women's representation in administrative decision making and has opened avenues for gradual rise of women into leadership positions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Guided by the forward-looking approach, the principle of inclusive representation has been adopted to ensure women's representation in political positions. For sure, this provision has not remained a mere rhetoric.

I feel proud to state that today the Head of the State and Speaker of Parliament in Nepal are women. Before her mandatory retirement last week, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court was also a woman.

There is already one third representation of women at our Parliament. The Constitution prescribes that the election to President and Vice-President should be held in such a way that ensures representation of different gender or ethnic community. In both houses of the Parliament, either the Speaker or Deputy Speaker has to be a woman.

I would like to cite an example in this regard. Following the people's movement of 2006, I had the privilege to present a resolution to the restored Parliament proposing mandatory one third representation of women in all entities of the State. I believe that a long journey begins with a small step certainly holds truth.

Proportionally inclusive representation of women has been guaranteed down to the local level. The recently held first phase of elections to the local government bodies has helped to significantly enhance women's political representation.

The second phase of the elections to be held in two weeks from now will culminate into full realization of mandatory constitutional requirement of at least 40% women's representation in those elected bodies. Under the new arrangements, women will occupy equal number of leadership positions in local level bodies.

An independent National Women Commission has been established with a power to monitor compliance with women related constitutional and legal provisions as well as Nepal's international obligations emanating from the instruments to which we are a State party.

As per the provision of the Constitution, the elections to be held in future of the State Assemblies and the Federal Parliament will show a full spectrum of national political firmament that mirrors the mosaic of our social and gender diversity.

The provision of political representation of women that we have followed could serve as a good model to many other countries.

Excellencies,

A State party to 7 out of 8 core ILO Conventions, Nepal's Constitution has internalized fundamental principles of right to employment, labour and social security as well as the right to form and join trade unions and engage in collective bargaining.

National Employment Policy endorsed by the Government in 2015 has mainstreamed gender and social inclusion policy. The Government has introduced gender budgeting and ensured financial resources to the programmes aimed at promoting gender equality. The President Women Upliftment Programmes being implemented in several districts demonstrates that this agenda has received highest political commitment and priority.

Our progress towards gender equality in labour market is testified by some recent statistics.

Nepal has the highest Female Labour Force Participation Rate in the South Asia region. Our global ranking in this pillar is 17th.

Twenty-two years ago, the participation of women in labour force was close to 66 percent, and this has increased to more than 80 percent as of 2015.

We have put in place requisite policies and legal framework to make presence of 'women at work' more decent, safe, gender-friendly and equitable. We have also gradually amended and reformed existing laws and legal structure.

Allow me to put another illustration in the context of women empowerment. We experimented a provision to increase the ownership of land by women. At a time when only 8 percent of the women had land ownership, the cabinet I belonged to adopted a policy of waiving registration fee if land ownership is transferred to a woman. In a matter of a year the land ownership by women increased to 26 percent.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Nepal's achievement in gender-related MDGs has given us a hope for better future. A good progress was registered in all dimensions – literacy, school enrollment ratio, maternal health, maternal mortality rate, women's empowerment and political participation. I am happy to state that Nepal ranked 1st in girls' enrolment in secondary education in the global comparison.

Our effort to address women's empowerment issues in a more holistic manner has created a dynamic space for women's participation in economic activities. We are seeing a discernible rise in entrepreneurship under the initiative and leadership of women.

Adoption of gender-friendly policies and practical actions has resulted into enhanced women's participation in economic structure both as entrepreneurs as well as workers.

Despite several progresses, we have more to do for making the economic structure and labour market equitable for women.

The challenges exist on multiple fronts. Unpaid household work of women is still to be accounted in economy. Skills and quality education that can create value in market have yet to be spread across the country and social structure.

This has to be transformed by addressing structural factors and creating more enabling opportunities specific to the women.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Empowerment of women is not just a moral obligation. It is a key driver essential for sustainable development and socio-economic transformation.

We need to transform gender stereotypes in the society as well as in work place, and address the structural inequality.

Mere laws cannot address all of the social evils and bad practices. A behavioral change through education and awareness must be implemented in an integrated manner.

The revolution in information technology has made it possible for a large

number of women to access world labour market. To utilize internet as a tool of empowerment, we must strengthen digital connectivity and ensure its universal access.

Landlocked and least developed countries like Nepal face specific constraints and concerns. The international community must play a constructive role to integrate women in these countries in production value chains.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I conclude, I would like to stress that women's power is the power of creation, nurturing and development. It is the foundation of creativity, culture and solidarity.

To uplift the status of women – socially, economically and politically, we need to intensify our efforts within the households, the national borders and beyond.

I call upon all individuals of the world, women and men alike, to redouble their efforts for achieving equality in household, in society, in workplace, in national life as well as in the world.

In closing, Mr. Chairperson, I reiterate my thankfulness to ILO for the thoughtful decision to hold a Summit on the important agenda of women at work and inviting three women Heads of State, including myself, to address it. I am confident that the outcome of the Summit will help promote the cause of women at the world of work globally.

I thank you all.

Address by Rt. Hon. President of Nepal Ms. Bidya Devi Bhandari as Chief Guest at the Closing Ceremony of the UN Vesak Conference

14 May 2017, Kandy, Sri Lanka

Most Venerable Dr. Phra Brahmapandit, President of the International Council for the Day of Vesak (ICDV),

Most Venerable Monks from Sri Dalada Maligawa and other Distinguished Monks,

Your Excellency Mr. Maithripala Sirisena, President of Sri Lanka Excellencies Scholars Distinguished Guests Ladies and Gentlemen

I feel the Nepali people honoured as I speak at this closing ceremony of the United Nations Vesak Conference in this historical and ancient city of Kandy. My sincere thanks go to Your Excellency, the President of Sri Lanka, for your thoughtful invitation to me to attend this important event.

Coming from the land of Gautam Buddha, the apostle of peace, non-violence, compassion and fraternity, I bring the message of warm affection and goodwill on behalf of the people of Nepal to the friendly people of Sri Lanka.

I also thank you, Mr. President, for the warm hospitality extended to us since our arrival in this beautiful country and for the excellent arrangements made for this conference.

It gives me immense pleasure to note that after a long gap the Head of State of Nepal is on a visit to this friendly country.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nepal – the land of the world's highest peak, Mount *Sagarmatha* (earlier known as Mount Everest), and Sri Lanka – a wonderful pearl hung in the Indian Ocean with a long maritime route interacting with different civilizations in its long history, have been enjoying excellent relations over the centuries. These need to be further consolidated through greater connectivity.

Social, cultural and religious similarities characterize our bilateral bonds of friendship and cooperation. Though formal diplomatic relations were established only sixty years ago, the two countries share strong ties that go back to centuries. The philosophy and messages of Nepal's illustrious icon, Gautam Buddha, remain the basic foundation in establishing contacts between our two countries and peoples.

In recent years, exchange of high-level visits, cooperation in diverse fields as well as both countries' active participation in regional forums such as SAARC and BIMSTEC have contributed to strengthen our bilateral relations.

Sri Lanka has done much in promoting and propagating the noble principles of Buddhism. Siddhartha Gautam is believed to have visited this country at least three times after his enlightenment. It is pertinent to note that Kandy, a beautiful city, ancient capital of Sri Lanka and currently regional capital of Central Province, has taken the initiative in hosting this very special event. I have just visited *Sri Dalada Maligawa*. The holy Buddhist Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic brings this city closer to the hearts of our people who swear by the principles enunciated by Buddha for promoting world peace, stability and development. I am happy to mention that people here have special affinity with Nepal as the birthplace of Buddha.

It is, therefore, a matter of pride that our close neighbour Sri Lanka has hosted the International Vesak Day Celebrations this year under the theme "Buddhist Teachings for Social Justice and Sustainable World Peace". I hope deliberations and exchange of ideas among the policymakers, scholars and representatives of relevant institutions during the conference have helped enrich understanding about the need for world peace.

Vesak Day is celebrated in commemoration of the birth, enlightenment and *Parinirvana* of Gautam Buddha. In recognition of the ever growing significance of the teachings of Buddha, the United Nations has been observing the Vesak Day annually since the year 2000. Nepal is proud to be a leading sponsor of the resolution at the United Nations General Assembly.

I would like to express my appreciation for the prime role played by Sri Lanka in this context. Let me take this opportunity to specially pay our tributes to statesman and top diplomat Lankabhimanya Laxman Kadirgamar for his most thoughtful initiative in this regard.

The fundamental lesson learnt by both Nepal and Sri Lanka that underwent agonizing period of violent conflict and massive loss of lives and property is that the power of ballot is stronger than that of bullet. The political history of the world has amply proved it. Like the experiences of Sri Lanka in the past, Nepal also passed through a long period of armed conflict, instability and transition until the promulgation of the constitution through an elected Constituent Assembly in

September 2015. As I am speaking to you, I am pleased to inform you that the fellow Nepali nationals are taking part in the local level elections today in an enthusiastic manner.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Buddha's timeless teachings based on humanitarian values of non-violence, truth, compassion and tolerance have been guiding our civilizations for over two millennia. The glorious history and achievements of Buddhist philosophy are inextricably linked to our faith, culture, livelihood and approach to life. These precepts are guiding principles for promoting eternal peace, tolerance, harmony and shared development.

Creation of a peaceful and just world order demands that we renew and rededicate our faith towards sincerely observing the immortal messages of Buddha's teachings. Buddha is the light of the world and, I believe, that light must be our savior for transforming the world into a better place to live in, both for us as well as the future generations.

Social justice remains at the core of peace, stability and progress in any society. Ensuring social justice is possible when all segments of society are entitled to equal rights and can enjoy the benefits and opportunities in all spheres of public life. While according due priority to elimination of discrimination, equitable participation and economic wellbeing, the governance system must be geared towards overcoming poverty and backwardness.

We continue to witness various forms of extremism and radicalism sustained by intolerance in different parts of the world. New fault lines are being created along religious, ethnic and civilizational lines. Even non-state actors are posing serious threat to the established order. These elements use violence and other means to destabilize the social fabric and hinder peace and prosperity in the world. I believe, there is wider consensus that the ideas which destabilize social harmony, divide humanity and spread prejudice, radicalism and hatred, in any guise are no longer accepted in today's world.

As a country with a time-tested history of social and cultural harmony in the midst of diversity, Nepal advocates the need to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogues, understanding and cooperation for the achievement of enduring peace at the global level. We feel that all countries need to fulfill, in a coherent manner, their obligation to promote harmony among civilizations, mutual respect and culture of peace in order to establish and institutionalize sustainable peace. I believe that cultural, linguistic, ethnic or religious diversity constitute part of heritage and pride for a society rather than a burden.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Buddha's teachings provide a solid foundation to address our challenges and hardships. These teachings have shown a way of life towards ultimate happiness and peace. They inspire us to discipline our lives and shape our virtues and promote justice and sustainable peace in the world. Internalizing and faithfully observing Buddha's teaching is far more important than anything else in establishing a peaceful world for mankind.

As a philosophy, Buddhism requires to be understood in terms of our core human values and common destiny. Peace, non-violence, compassion, harmony and forgiveness are higher noble causes that bind human beings together. They are more relevant today than before. By their very nature, Nepali people are ardent believers in peace, compassion, harmony and tolerance.

As the home to Lumbini – sacred birthplace of Buddha and fountain of world peace, Nepal's commitment to social justice and sustainable world peace is unwavering. Our orientation towards world peace derives from the immortal teachings of Buddha.

Lumbini is the fountain of Buddhism. It is the land of historical, cultural, religious and archaeological significance. It has inspired people from across the world including pilgrims, artists and scholars to visit and exchange thoughts. It is a World Heritage Site and a center for the study and research on Buddhism.

Lumbini is inextricably linked to Nepal's identity. We are committed and duty bound to protect and preserve the archaeological relics in the greater Lumbini area. These are priceless assets for mankind. Lumbini, Ramgram, Gotihawa, Devadaha and Tilaurakot have been intimately associated with Gautam Buddha and constitute a full Buddhist circuit in the area. A comprehensive Master Plan is being implemented with the Lumbini Development Trust working as the leading institution with a view to turning this holy place into an international center for peace and pilgrimage for Buddhists and all peace-loving people of the world. A new Gautam Buddha International Airport is being constructed and essential physical infrastructures are being established in Bhairhawa and adjoining places to cater to the needs of Buddhist pilgrims and other visitors.

The Lumbini Buddhist University, established with a view to undertaking study and research on Buddhist philosophy, teachings and messages to propagate message of peace and friendship, has streamlined its academic activities.

Known for utmost degree of religious and cultural tolerance, Nepal is home to ten UNESCO World Heritage Sites and innumerable temples, shrines and monasteries associated with Gautam Buddha. It is quite common in Nepal to

find both Hindus and Buddhists visiting temples of two faiths. Besides, Hindus in Nepal accord highest importance to Buddha.

Boudhanath and Swayambhunath are two such UNESCO Heritage Sites that are part of Nepal's history and origin as a land of mixed culture and faith. Both these temples suffered damages in the devastating earthquake of April 2015. Boudhanath Temple, the largest of its type in the world, has already been fully restored to its glory through active cooperation of people. We also highly appreciate Sri Lanka for undertaking the reconstruction of Rato Machhindranath Temple and Ananda Kuti Vihar after the damages caused by the earthquake.

I wish to underline that we will leave no stone unturned to maintain the sanctity of Lumbini and develop it as a center of world peace. We remain thankful to our neighbours and friendly countries that have extended their generous support and cooperation to Lumbini's development. I especially like to thank the Government of Sri Lanka for its support in developing Lumbini as the 'Fountain of World Peace'.

Further promotion of Lumbini as the birthplace of Lord Buddha, origin of Buddhism and a site of world peace, would be important to uphold its historic significance. As we celebrate the International Vesak Day, it would be pertinent to revitalize the International Committee for the Development of Lumbini at the United Nations to coordinate and facilitate concerted efforts at the international level.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to recall our commitment to continue working with friendly countries, institutions, scholars and the international community to promote Buddhist teachings. As I highlighted Nepal as a land of so many temples and shrines associated with Gautam Buddha, I extend my open invitation to all of you to visit Nepal and enjoy both its natural scenery and wonderful array of temples, shrines and monasteries that have played important role in promoting Buddhism. As Nepal and Sri Lanka share common faith on Buddhist philosophy, I would like to stress on the need to further widen the dimensions of mutual friendship and cooperation including direct air-linkage between the two countries.

To conclude, I wish to extend my hearty felicitations to everyone here on the occasion of the International Vesak Day. May this celebration guide us to attain social justice, non-violence, tolerance and sustainable world peace through Buddha's immortal teachings! May the friendly people of Sri Lanka who repose so much faith in the teachings of Gautam Buddha enjoy peace and continued prosperity in coming years!

Thank you.

Statement by Right Honourable Mr. Nanda Bahadur Pun, Vice President and Leader of the Nepali delegation to the 17th Summit of Non-Aligned Movement Margarita Island, Venezuela, 17 September 2016

Mr. Chairman,

- 1. I have the honour and privilege to represent Nepal at the 17th Summit meeting of the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) being held in this spectacular Margarita Island.
- 2. At the outset, I express my sincere gratitude to the Government and people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for the warm welcome, generous hospitality extended and for the excellent arrangements that have been put at our disposal since our arrival.
- 3. On behalf of the Government and People of Nepal, let me also join other delegations in congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, on your election as the chair of 17th NAM Summit. We have every confidence in your leadership in steering this meeting to a successful outcome. My appreciation also goes to the Islamic Republic of Iran, outgoing Chair of the movement, for the commendable leadership in the process of strengthening our movement since the 16th NAM Summit.

- 4. As a founding member of the Movement, Nepal has unwavering faith in the fundamental principles and ideals of the Movement. The Constitution of Nepal endorses non-alignment as one of the guiding principles of Nepal's foreign policy. This manifests our strong commitment to the principles of NAM.
- 5. Since its inception in 1961, NAM is at the forefront in struggles against the bloc politics, colonialism, apartheid, racism, occupation and pressures. NAM played crucial role to accelerate the pace of self-determination of peoples under colonial and alien domination; and to consolidate the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of member States. The movement has also provided major thrusts in the areas of disarmament, peace, security, greater economic wellbeing, social justice and environmental sustainability. We are confident that this summit would enable us to take stock of achievements made and reflect upon how we, member States, with shared vision and combined strength should respond to the multifaceted and evolving challenges that we all continue to face.

6. The aftermath of the cold war was expected bringing thaw in the ideologically divided international political landscape. However, it's an irony that the members of the NAM themselves became engulfed in the intra-state conflicts, violence, ethnic strife, and religious fanaticism. For the movement to reinvigorate itself and demonstrate its continued relevance will require our internal cohesion and coherence as much as our unity, sustained solidarity and shared commitment.

- 7. Today's world has put both opportunities and challenges especially before the developing countries. We believe that the environment for the lasting peace and security conducive to people-centric development can only be guaranteed under strengthened multilateralism. This provides us much needed synergy to fight against the menace of global terrorism and various forms of transnational crimes. Slow progress in disarmament has taken toll on the scarce resources direly needed to improve the lives of millions of people. NAM's principled stand on multilateralism should promote consensus on disarmament and coherence on our collective fight against the challenges confronting the world today.
- 8. NAM is a voice for peace, justice and equality and it should advance this cause with more zeal. We are deeply concerned over the deadlock of the peace process in the Middle East. It has been our principled position that the Palestine and Israel should live side by side in peace and security with secure international boarder. Syria is in turmoil now. Disproportionate numbers of innocent people have lost their lives and millions have been displaced; yet the solution appears elusive. This humanitarian catastrophe should be avoided. We urge all the parties concerned in the region to enter into dialogue without delay and allow peace a chance. Any solution to the Syrian conflict must be led and owned by Syrian people.
- 9. We believe that UN system has a leading role to play in global governance. NAM draws significantly from the principles and purposes of the UN Charter. Respect for sovereign equality, independence and territorial integrity of States and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries must be upheld by all in all circumstances. Peaceful resolution of disputes and fostering an environment of cooperation are of critical importance for ensuring peace and security. The third pillar of the United Nations is weak. We must accord equal emphasis on development, peace and security, and human rights as they are mutually reinforcing. The United Nations itself is in need for reform in order to reflect the vastly transformed political reality

of the present day world. Our vision for peaceful and just world order needs comprehensive reform in the UN system and adherence to the rule of law at national, regional and international level.

- 10. There has been much talk about the new humane and equitable international economic order. In reality, globalization and trade liberalization have accrued uneven benefits among states. A large segment of humanity feels to have been left out. The risks coming together with globalization have made developing countries more vulnerable to the shocks of financial and economic crisis, climate change, food crisis, and energy price volatility. The situation becomes bleaker, as the official development assistance continues to decline, the debt burden spirals, market access for our goods and services face restrictions and the conditionality of the international financial institutions remain static. NAM should position itself for the removal of entrenched and systematic inequalities and should continue to stand for global economic justice and shared prosperity to all.
- 11. Trade must contribute to reduce poverty and foster growth. Doha round of trade negotiations has long been stalled. Tendency to evade from the Doha Development Agenda risks negating the development dividend of the multilateral trading system. Multilateral trading and financial systems must not fail to recognize the special and differentiated situation of the LDCs and LLDCs and should aim at supporting those countries come forward.
- 12. Flow of trade among the NAM Member States has increased manifold. Countries in the South today are leading financer in many areas, including in technologies. South is in better position than ever before to foster South-South cooperation which should be diversified and strengthened in a meaningful way to incorporate all possible areas of mutual benefits. Genuine North-South and triangular cooperation can contribute for development and democratize decision-making structures of the international financial institutions and World Trade Organization. It can also help implement the declarations, commitments, and plan of actions adopted in the various UN sponsored conferences and their follow up meetings. We urge the developed countries to fulfill their commitments of providing 0.7 percent of the GNP to the developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 percent of GNP to the LDCs as official development assistance
- 13. The United Nations has adopted much awaited Sustainable Development Goals last year. This is a time for international community to translate the motto of the SDG conference 'leave no one behind' into reality. The

LDCs and LLDCs in particular need assistance to overcome structural challenges, eradicate poverty, and promote rapid, equitable and sustainable development. Together with the SDGs we emphasize on full implementation of the commitments made in the Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs and Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs.

- 14. The new democratic and inclusive constitution was adopted in Nepal on 20 September last year by the popularly elected Constituent Assembly. People of Nepal had long-cherished aspiration to have a constitution written by their own representatives. Nepal had gone through series of political movements, decade long armed conflict and struggles to realize this aspiration. The rigorous democratic exercises spanning over eight years in an inclusive, transparent and participatory manner culminated into the making of the constitution. This marks a historic political watershed. The Constitution ensures inclusive and democratic polity, pluralism, the rule of law, representative and accountable government, social and economic justice and universally accepted human rights. The constitution guarantees equality. dignity, identity and opportunity for all by ending discrimination and inequalities. Fundamental rights of persons belonging to the mosaic of multiethnic, multi-lingual, multi-cultural and geographically diverse country are safeguarded. Gender equality which remains at the core of the constitution has already produced female President, Chief Justice and Speaker of the parliament at a time. The constitution adheres to the principles of inclusion and participation, and ensures social justice to all.
- 15. We are now in the process of making arrangements to hold democratic elections at all levels of our political structure. The present Government of Nepal has accorded priority to the implementation of the constitution, completing of the remaining issues of peace process, reconstruction and rebuilding of the earthquake ravaged areas, and attaining inclusive prosperity and development. This would help institutionalize the federal democratic system of governance as promised by the Constitution.
- 16. Nepal is land of Lord Buddha and home to the spectacular Mount Everest, the highest point on earth. The vast fresh water resources sprung from the Himalayas constitute the lifeline of millions of people living in the great Himalayan watershed. Impact of climate change in the form of melting glaciers and its environmental consequences has posed danger in the fragile mountain ecosystem. Like other LDCs, we are bearing the brunt of the climate change while having contributed least to greenhouse gas emissions.

- NAM should accord high priority to this critical issue. Climate vulnerable LDCs in particular should be ensured with necessary funding for adaption and mitigation as well as for easy access to technical knowhow to minimize the negative impacts of climate change.
- 17. Nepal plans to graduate by 2022 from LDC status. This uphill task is constrained by the devastating earthquake that struck Nepal in 2015 twice. Around 9 thousand people lost their lives and hundreds of thousands of houses and historical monuments perished. As we have accelerated the pace of reconstruction; an enhanced, comprehensive and robust international support would be instrumental in our endeavor of rebuilding of earthquake ravaged areas.
- 18. We are happy to see NAM's evolution as a major inter-governmental forum with a great moral strength. I conclude my statement by stressing on three points: First, peace and harmony among the Member States is a must for the NAM to continuously stay as a coherent force. Second, sense of genuine solidarity and unity within the movement is important for us to thrive. And third, NAM must adapt to the changing ground realities of the world and try to influence the events in favor of the developing countries, particularly the most vulnerable among them. I am confident that this summit would be able to chart out our future course to further the collective interests of the movement.

I thank you.

Statement delivered by The Rt. Hon'ble Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Prime Minister of Nepal at the Opening Ceremony of the Tenth Session of the World Future Energy Summit Abu Dhabi, January 16, 2017

Your Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of UAE Armed Forces,
Your Highnesses
Your Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates
Delegates of Business Communities
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour to address the distinguished gathering of leaders from political, business, industry, academic spheres and journalist at this opening ceremony of World Future Energy Summit hosted on the occasion of its 10th anniversary celebration.

I would like to thank His Highness the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi for the kind invitation extended to me to attend this summit. I am impressed by the excellent arrangements made for the conference.

I take this opportunity to thank the Government and people of United Arab Emirates for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to my delegation ever since our arrival in this beautiful capital city of Abu Dhabi.

As one of the largest gathering for sustainable energy and clean technologies, the World Future Energy Forum provides an excellent opportunity to engage in dialogue for achieving a common goal:

- a goal of greener and cleaner future;
- a goal of developed and more prosperous future, and
- -a goal of sustainable future.

As the UAE is playing a prominent and inspiring role in revolutionizing the energy sector, this event is a fitting tribute to UAE's contributions to the development of energy sector and clean energy solutions. We sincerely appreciate UAE's notable initiative in this field.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Needless to say, energy is the lifeline for development; lifeline of progress; and lifeline of prosperity.

In 2015, the world leaders agreed upon a solemn pledge for sustainable future by adopting SDGs.

And, the 7th goal says – ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

Unfortunately, one in five people still lacks access to modern electricity.

In the same year, we reached an ambitious and comprehensive Paris Agreement to tackle the menace of climate change and global warming. We collectively agreed to curb the emissions and pledged for a greener future.

Unfortunately, **around 60 percent** of the total greenhouse emissions is due to our carbon-intensive consumption of energy. **Ladies and Gentlemen**,

We have made our pledges. We have reached several agreements.

And, the time implores us to act on those pledges; to implement the agreements; and to deliver on our promises, for gap between commitment and delivery erodes our credibility.

Access to affordable and renewable energy must be treated as a universal right that no one should be denied.

Our cooperation on energy sector must create a win-win situation for all countries and all peoples to grow and prosper.

The world reliant on fossil fuel and traditional energy cannot alone provide the answer in ensuring affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

And, obviously the answer is clean energy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Clean energy is the ultimate enabler to realize the development goals, without jeopardizing the environment.

We must invest our resources in clean energy sources and renewable energy. Much of the potential of harnessing sustainable energy is lying dormant while 3 billion people rely on wood, coal, charcoal or animal waste for cooking and heating.

The future of energy lies in clean energy sources such as hydropower, solar, wind and thermal. Identification and development of renewable sources of energy and its judicious distribution together with related technologies must constitute the center pillar of our cooperative efforts to ensure energy security to everyone.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When it comes to hydropower, Nepal was an early mover. We installed a 500-Kilowatt hydropower project back in 1911.

This was just 29 years after the first hydropower project was installed in Wisconsin, the US, and one year before China built its first hydropower project.

Unfortunately, after more than a century of first hydropower project in Nepal, above 30 percent of the population is yet to have access to electricity and is forced to depend on traditional fuels for energy requirements.

Acute energy crisis had been a bleak reality, until my government managed to reduce the power cuts by building efficiency in supply side.

Nepal's theoretical hydroelectric potential has been estimated to be as high as 83,000 Megawatts (MW) of which 42,000 Megawatts is considered to be technically and economically feasible.

Similarly, Nepal has a huge potential for solar energy. It is located at favourable latitude that receives ample amounts of solar radiation. It has more than 300 days of sunshine in a year.

By utilizing just 0.01% of the total land area of Nepal, we can harness around 2,920 Gigawatt Hours (GWh) of energy per year from solar power.

That is almost equal to the energy from 251, 243 (two hundred 51 thousands) tons of oil.

Located between the two of the largest growing economies, Nepal could become a major energy exporter to our neighbourhood and South Asia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Emerging out of a protracted political transition, our key agenda and the need for the hour is to advance economic development. Nepal is targeting graduation from LDC status to developing country status by 2022 and aims to become a middle-income country by 2030. To meet these targets, Nepal will need at least 6,000 Megawatts of additional energy.

For realizing our development targets by achieving an economic growth rate of decent 7.2%, total capacity of 25,000 Megawatts will have to be installed by 2040.

As we intend to intensify development efforts, investment in energy sector is full of potential.

Lots of industries and infrastructure projects are in pipeline. There are vast opportunities for development of transportation and service sectors. This opens up huge avenues for investment in energy.

Investment opportunities lie in the upgradation and expansion of distribution system and transmission system.

In 2016, Government of Nepal endorsed the 'Action Plan on National energy Crisis Alleviation and Electricity Development Decade', which targets to generate 10,000 Megawatts by 2025 through a roadmap for policy reforms and initiatives to spur private sector investment.

We have adopted liberal policy in foreign investment.

Government of Nepal adopted Renewable Energy Subsidy Policy last year for increasing investment in micro-hydro and solar energy.

We have provided several incentives to promote investment in energy sector, such as tax rebates, concessional duty, excise duty and refunds, up-to 100% repatriation of profit.

Our labour policy is market friendly. Moreover, we have abundance of cheap labour. We are committed to taking for the measures to create conducive industrial environment.

In addition to these policies, we are open to sign separate Programme Development Agreements with investors, for boosting their confidence.

One window system and small bureaucracy are other advantages. Nepal ranks 2^{nd} among the South Asian countries in Ease of Doing Business index.

Nepal welcomes the investment venture from firms across the world in its energy sector.

The Power Trade Agreement (PTA) has been signed with India. This has opened up a large market for exporting electricity to India.

Similarly, South Asian countries signed the SAARC Framework agreement on Energy Cooperation during the 18th SAARC summit. This is an important step towards the eventual formation of regional energy market.

I would like to extend invitation to you, Dear Business Delegates, for attending Nepal Investment Summit on 2nd and 3rd March this year. The upcoming summit will adopt policies to attract investments in priority areas like clean energy.

Rest assured –investment in Nepal's energy sector is profitable.

Rest assured –investment in Nepal's hydropower is safe and secure.

If we are able to tap such resources across the world, Ladies and Gentlemen, the future will be bright and clean.

In conclusion, I stress that greener, more prosperous and more sustainable future is possible and achievable. What we need is strong political commitment, vision, partnership and collaboration coupled with intensive investment.

I wish this summit all success!

I thank you all!

Shukran!

Statement by Rt. Honourable Prime Minister On "Globalization and Free Trade: The Asian Perspectives" At Boao Forum for Asia, 2017

Your Excellency Mr. Zhang Gaoli, Vice Premier of the People's Republic of China

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government Honourable Ministers Heads of International and Regional Organisations Secretary General Mr. Xhou Wenzhog Delegates from Business Community Distinguished Delegates Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honour to address this distinguished gathering of political leaders, pioneers from business and academics from across the continent. The Annual Conference of Boao Forum provides an important platform for sharing of perspectives and novel ideas for prosperity of Asia, prosperity of humanity.

I would like to thank the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Boao Forum for Asia for the invitation and excellent arrangements made for our gathering in this beautiful island of Hainan Province.

Distinguished Delegates,

A single word that has been in extensive use in our world is –globalization. Though this single word may not have single meaning, the pursuit is one. Pursuit of development, progress and prosperity. Pursuit of greater connectivity, mobility and integration.

In past few decades, globalization and international trade has brought fundamental transformations in the living standards of the people —of developed as well as devolving world. Decline of extreme poverty from the level of 47 percent in 1990 to below 14 percent today is just one example.

A backbone of global economy, globalization is a key force of development.

It is that force, which has lifted millions out of poverty.

However, it has not been an unalloyed feat.

The role of globalization and freedom of trade in making our world wealthier has been undeniable. But many have felt that they have been left behind in the process. Many have felt that marginalization has also been a corollary to globalization. In sharing of the fruits of globalization, there has been a visible/conspicuous asymmetry.

This very asymmetry has led to apprehensions in various parts of the world – developed as well as developing. It has created an atmosphere of uncertainty and cynicism. And, to provide the anchor of stability in these uncertain times, Asia has an important role. To steer the raft of free trade, Asia has an undeniable onus.

We have to make sure that globalization triumphs cynicisms as well as complacence. Globalization —which is more inclusive and reinvigorated. Globalization —which does not create a dichotomy of winners and losers rather a win-win situation for all.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For a long stretch of history, Asia used to be a global economic powerhouse. A land of innovators and inventors. A continent of civilizations and commerce.

Now in the 21st century, the center of gravity of global economy is shifting towards Asia. It is emerging as the engine of global growth. A hub of trade. A hub of innovation.

Domestic demand is resilient. The regional cooperation is gaining ground.

In the process of globalization, Asia has made its contribution as well as gained the fruits.

But, we must not forget –there are still many countries in Asia for whom globalization has not bestowed with benefits.

There are still some barriers that hinder the free flow of goods and services from the countries, which are at lower rung of development.

Success and sustainability of globalization must rest on inclusiveness. We must ensure the equality of opportunities as well as ability to reap benefits of

globalization. We should strive for a level playing field –that is even and fair.

Inclusiveness lies at the core of Asian culture. For centuries, different nations, religions and civilizations have co-existed with each other and flourished equally.

The same inclusiveness is possible and must prevail while we continue to embark upon the path of globalization and free trade.

21st century is rightly said to be the Asian Century. A century of shared benefit and shared destiny.

To materialize the Asian model of globalization, we must build a cooperation model, which will enable free flow of ideas, unimpeded links of trade and an enduring instance of win-win situation. Undoubtly, trade is the engine of growth. For countries like Nepal, it is that force which can lead the economic transformation to sustain political transformation.

However, the progress in multilateral trading system remains disappointing. Early conclusion of trade negotiations under WTO with development agenda occupying the central stage is a must to further streamline the free yet fair trade.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nepal has entered the phase of economic transformation crossing many political milestones. Our priority now is to accelerate economic growth and development.

I would like to invite the Asian business community to invest in various profitable sectors including hydropower, infrastructure development and tourism in Nepal. We have a rich resource base. Many of the sectors are virgin in terms of investment and are equally profitable.

Our growing domestic market and our location among the largest economies of Asia bear an immense prospect to establish Nepal as a trade hub; a vital link in global value chain.

We can realize this potential of my country as well our continent by making globalization work for all. By ensuring an inclusive globalization for all and free and fair trade. By building on the opportunities offered by globalization and free trade for the common prosperity of Asia and the world.

To create a wealthier world, we must strive for;

Inclusion not isolation
Partnership not protectionism
Bridges not barriers
Freedom while trading not fears

I believe that we have enough foresight, big-heartedness and courage to tread upon this path- a path of Asian prosperity, a path of shared prosperity. Thank You!

Statement by Hon. Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Head of the Nepali delegation to the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York, 24 September 2016

Mr. President,

I wish to begin by congratulating you on your election to the presidency of the 71st session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

I assure you of my delegation's full support in the successful discharge of your important responsibilities.

Let me also commend outgoing President His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft for his effective leadership of the previous session.

I wish to place on record Nepal's admiration to His Excellency Mr. Ban Kimoon, Secretary General, for the dedication with which he served the world body for the last 10 years. And we wish him well for the future.

Mr. President,

Exactly six decades ago, Nepal first spoke at the 11th session of the General Assembly as a newly admitted member.

Sixty years down the road, our commitment to the United Nations have become even stronger. The principles of the UN Charter remain at the core of Nepal's foreign policy.

As much as United Nations has contributed to our development endeavors and lately to the peace process, Nepal has significantly contributed to the United Nations in fulfilling its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security.

Mr. President,

It has been a year since we adopted the universal and transformative 2030 Agenda with the objective of leaving no one behind.

One year on, it is clear now that much more needs to be done to move from commitments to results.

Let me stress the fact that the secure foundation of the world peace rests on wellbeing of the people across the globe. Poverty reduction and sustainable development are thus inseparable. We cannot imagine a peaceful, prosperous and secure society when millions of people are living in poverty.

I, thus, urge all member states and our development partners to move beyond rhetoric and commence concrete actions without losing time, energy and zeal.

We have also realized that SDGs can only be realized if sound development policies and frameworks are backed by capable institutional framework, adequate resources, and innovative methods of implementation.

As much as the national commitment, ownership, leadership and people-centric governance are critical in the domestic context, robust international partnership is equally important to ensure SDGs' success.

We would thus like to see progress in all pillars of resources- ODA, trade, FDI, technology and debt relief – to ensure smooth implementation of SDG agenda.

In case of Nepal, our commitment to SDGs is informed by our success in MDGs.

Amidst multiple challenges, Nepal's performance on the Millennium Development Goals were impressive.

We were able to halve the proportion of people living in poverty. We were also able to significantly reduce the maternal and infant mortality rates. We were able to send more children to schools and retain them. Participation of girls was substantially increased.

SDG agenda is now a part of our national development plans and programmes. We will implement it with utmost priority.

Mr. President,

The vision for a safer world continues to elude us.

New sources of threats to humanity have emerged while at the same time the traditional sources of threats become more pronounced. The modes and intensity of non-traditional security threats, such as terrorism, transnational crimes, ethnic tensions and intra-state conflicts, and violent extremism have increased manifold.

Abuse of innovation in information and communications technology by criminal elements has further engendered vulnerability of societies.

We underline the central role of the UN General Assembly and the Security

Council in addressing these threats and challenges.

The growing terrorist activities in our own region and in many parts of the world are a matter of serious concern for all of us. Terrorism is a serious threat to human quest to live in harmony, peace and dignity.

Nepal unequivocally condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

The failure of the international community to agree on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism is highly frustrating. We call upon the international community to muster much needed political will to accomplish this agenda.

To create a secure world, we must adopt two-track approach.

First, we deal with emerging threats resolutely, firmly and collectively. On a much broader scale, we also need to nurture the culture of peace.

As the birth place of Lord Buddha, Nepal believes that meaningful exchanges and dialogues among civilizations would help embed the values, contributing eventually to the world peace.

Mr. President,

We would like to see an early resolution of conflict in Syria. The suffering of the Syrian people must come to an end.

Nepal supports the call for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. We recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people for an independent state based on UN resolutions and the right of every nation in the region to live in peace within secure and recognized international boundaries.

Mr. President,

Nepal stands for complete and time-bound disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction, including the nuclear ones.

An environment must be created for the realization of development dividends of disarmament by redirecting scarce resources for productive use.

The global community, especially the nuclear states, must put sincere efforts for moving forward the stalled negotiations on disarmament. We believe that all efforts for disarmament must be pursued in good faith in full compliance with the agreed international regimes.

Based on our principled position, Nepal hosts Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament for Asia and the Pacific. We invite Member States and partners to support and fully utilize the Centre to promote dialogue on disarmament, enhancing the Kathmandu process.

Mr. President,

UN peace operations are an important innovation of the United Nations dedicated to the service of humanity.

Nepal's engagement in the peace keeping operations immediately after three years of our joining the United Nations speaks volumes of our unflinching commitment to the cause of international peace and security. We feel proud to be part of this flagship contribution.

Our troops have served in various challenging peacekeeping missions with high degree of professionalism, commitment and devotion. This has helped them earn international acclaim. Seventy-three of our fellow countrymen have sacrificed their lives in line of duty to the supreme cause of peace.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to fulfill our obligations and are prepared to provide additional troops and civilians to the UN peace-keeping operations.

This is because we have a strong conviction that the success of the United Nations largely hinges on the success of the peace operations.

However, we also believe that for the peace missions to be successful, there must be unity of purpose in mobilizing entire political capital of the Security Council; clearly defined mandates and operational modalities; adequate resource back-up; safety and security of the personnel; regular consultation and greater collaboration with the troop contributing countries; and a clear exit strategy.

We also believe that peace-keeping alone cannot guarantee durable peace in societies. It should be complemented by proper and clearly defined peace building strategies led and owned by the people and societies themselves.

We would also like to underline that all troop contributing countries must get fair opportunities to serve in leadership positions both in the field and at the headquarters commensurate with their level and length of contribution.

Mr. President,

It's a matter of satisfaction that human rights values and norms have now become truly global.

Human rights must not be used as tools to serve hidden political objectives. All human rights, including the right to development, must receive equal priority and be pursued even-handedly.

The salient features of non-selectivity, universality, indivisibility and objectivity must be upheld in all circumstances.

The sanctity of the Human Rights Council and the innovative mechanism of UPR must be maintained to ensure full ownership of human rights on equal footing.

Nepal's commitment to human rights and fundamental freedom is total and unwavering.

We are party to most of the core international human rights instruments, which have found eloquent expression in Nepal's newly promulgated constitution.

Mr. President,

The new constitution of Nepal, which was the result of eight years of deliberation to ensure participatory, transparent and inclusive processes, contains impressive list of human rights and constitute adequate remedial measures.

Nepal has abolished death penalty and is a party to the first optional protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Nepal has put in place necessary legal, institutional and administrative measures for the realization of all human rights.

National Human Rights Commission and other independent constitutional bodies have been established with the sole objective of protecting and promoting human rights in all spheres of national life.

Nepal's home-grown peace process recognizes transitional justice as its key component.

The Commission on Investigation of Disappeared Persons and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are carrying out their mandate in an independent and impartial manner. The Government is committed to take appropriate measures to address issues surrounding transitional justice process in line with our international commitment and the ground realities of establishing sustained peace.

Mr. President,

Nepal has been working closely with the Human Rights Council with all sincerity and commitment.

Informed by our experiences of protecting and promoting of human rights and our sincere desire to contribute to the work of the Council, we are seeking membership of the Human Rights Council for the term beginning 2018.

This is the first time we have filed our candidature. We request for support from all fellow member States to our candidature.

Mr. President,

Migration has become a defining phenomenon of contemporary world. Global movement of people has brought both benefits as well as challenges. Proper management of migration can contribute to the economic growth and development of both receiving and origin countries of migrant workers.

Welfare and protection of rights and wellbeing of the migrant workers must therefore receive priority in the countries they work.

As a source country of over three million migrant workers, Nepal calls for concerted efforts at the national, regional and international levels to ensure that this process creates a fair and win-win situation to all.

Despite not being a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its Protocol of 1967, Nepal has long been hosting refugees on humanitarian ground.

International burden sharing has greatly contributed to lessen the burden to the host countries. However, refugees' right to return to their homeland with safety and dignity must always be upheld in all circumstances.

Mr. President,

Globalization, while created many opportunities, has also accrued uneven benefits among the countries.

The constraints of the countries in special situation particularly the LDCs and LLDCs, are real.

International financial, trading and monetary systems thus must be made responsive to their needs and concerns.

Robust implementation of internationally agreed commitments, including those

contained in the Istanbul Programme of Action, Vienna Programme of Action, Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and Sendai Framework are critically important to enable these countries to emerge from the state of poverty and underdevelopment.

Delay in the conclusion of Doha round of trade negotiations is a huge setback, denying many development dividends of trade and hampering the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

On the climate change, Nepal as a Himalayan country is facing challenges from the melting glaciers, flash floods, and outburst of glacial lakes. We believe that the Paris Agreement on Climate Change adopted last year reflects a rare commitment of international community to make a difference. We support its early entry into force.

Nepal also believes that climate justice based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibility should be at the center of its implementation. Special attention must be given to the climate vulnerable countries, particularly mountainous countries, in the provisioning of resources and transfer of technology for capacity building and adaptation.

Our efforts must recognize intrinsic connection between poverty reduction, sustainable development and environmental protection.

Mr. President,

We must acknowledge that UN system has a leading role to play in global governance.

An equal emphasis must be laid on all three pillars of the United Nations: development, peace and security, and human rights.

Reform in the United Nations must reflect the vastly transformed political reality of the 21st century.

Our vision for sustainable peace and just world order cannot be realized without a comprehensive reform in the UN system, including the reform of the Security Council. Nepal strongly believes in more representative, inclusive and accountable UN.

Mr. President,

In recent years, Nepal has undergone political transformation of historic proportions.

The decade long armed conflict was finally converted into peace process with the

signing of comprehensive peace accord in 2006.

Commitment to democratic norms and values was the central thrust of the peace process that finally led to the first ever elections to the Constituent Assembly.

Management of arms and integration of combatants was successfully completed as part of the peace process. With the promulgation of the democratic constitution on 20 September last year, the peace process has basically come to an end.

Nepal's homegrown peace process and its success could be a good example for countries transiting from conflict to peace.

The promulgation of constitution represents a turning point in Nepal's constitutional and political history.

The constitution aims to institutionalize inclusive and democratic polity, pluralism, the rule of law, representative and accountable government, social and economic justice and universally accepted human rights, among others.

Equality is at the core of the constitution. Equal opportunity and protection is guaranteed to every citizen. Discrimination on any ground is prohibited. The state is obliged to take special measures to protect the most marginalized and under-represented sections of society and look after their wellbeing.

Our constitution is not a rigid document rather it is a living and dynamic document and is capable of addressing any remaining or new issues within its framework. The two amendments that were made within months of its promulgation amply prove this.

Currently, we are engaged in dialogue with concerned political parties in the county to find out an acceptable solution to some of the issues where differences persist.

The constitution guarantees equal participation and incorporates principle of proportional representation of the women, indigenous nationalities, *Madheshis*, *Dalits* and other marginalized groups in elected and other organs of the state structure.

Nepal has a strong commitment to gender equality and empowerment of women.

Women are guaranteed minimum one third representation in the federal and provincial parliaments and 40% in the local government.

I am proud to inform this General Assembly that Nepal's Head of State, Chief Justice and Speaker of the Parliament are all women.

Mr. President,

We have entered a crucial phase of constitution implementation in Nepal.

Our ultimate goal is to consolidate peace, stability and bring about prosperity in the country. Inclusive economic growth and development is important to sustain political gains. The constitution provides a framework to pursue these objectives.

Democratic elections at all three tiers of the federal set up will have to be completed within February 2018. This is a huge task. But we are determined to do it.

Accomplishing this would help institutionalize the federal democratic system of governance as promised by the Constitution.

Besides, the task of completing remaining issues of peace process, reconstruction and rebuilding of the earthquake ravaged areas, and attaining inclusive prosperity and development constitute our top priorities.

Mr. President,

As we embark on the effective implementation of the constitution and undertaking of the vital tasks of socio-economic transformation of Nepal, good will, solidarity and support from the international community become all the more important.

We are confident that our friends in the international community stand by us in our efforts to consolidate strong foundation for a peaceful, stable, democratic and prosperous Nepal.

To conclude, Mr. President, United Nations today is confronted with unprecedented challenges, however, unique opportunities also exist and can be seized to transform the world into a peaceful place to live in.

We have the capacity, resources and technology to address the challenges and ensure prosperity and dignity to everyone. But we must muster necessary political will to achieve this.

Let's make solemn commitment at this assembly that the world of tomorrow will be different from that of today. We don't want the history of 21st century to be written as a history of conflicts, strife, poverty, hunger and indignation, but a history of prosperity, peace, development and partnership.

I thank you for your attention.

Statement by Hon. Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Leader of Nepali Delegation at the 2ndAsia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Summit Bangkok, 10 October 2016

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

Royal Highnesses,

Excellences, the Heads of State and Government,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen!

I bring you humble greetings from Nepal; the birth place of Lord Buddha whose preaching of peace and harmony nourishes not only Asia but the entire world and humanity.

As the newest member of this forum, my country is greatly honoured to participate in the 2nd Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Summit, being convened in this beautiful capital city of Bangkok.

I congratulate the Kingdom of Thailand for providing dynamic leadership as the Chair of the ACD and for hosting this summit with very relevant theme of "One Asia, Diverse Strengths". The convening of ACD Connect Business Forum has provided an important platform to exchange novel business ideas, practices and modalities. I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the Royal Thai Government for their generous hospitality extended to us and for the excellent arrangements made for this summit meeting.

Let me extend our best wishes to the United Arab Emirates as our next chair. Nepal welcomes the establishment of ACD Permanent Secretariat in Kuwait.

Mr. Chairman,

The continent of Asia is a vibrant mosaic with rich diversity –diversity of cultures as well as civilizations; diversity of people as well as practices; diversity of economies as well as political systems.

And, this diverse mosaic is connected by a common identity – - the Asian identity.

The diverse assortment of Asia is linked by a common aspiration –the Asian aspiration; aspiration for peace and prosperity.

To enrich that common identity, this platform can be a catalyst. To bring those aspirations together, this forum can be an enabler.

Mr. Chairman,

Today, Asia is emerging to be the global economic powerhouse. The development pursuit of some of the Asian countries is truly inspiring. The innovativeness and resourcefulness of Asian countries is more pronounced than ever before.

Our region is endowed with rich natural resources ranging from hydropower to biodiversity, arable lands to mineral deposits. The abundance of human resource is another asset.

Despite our huge development potentials, most of them have remained untapped and idle. Despite growing wealth creation, the Asian nations are not well connected with each other.

Despite our promising strengths, strides in socio-economic development of some of the Asian countries remain below our expectation.

Mr. Chairman,

Responsibility lies on us to work on our strengths for unleashing the potential; to vitalize the economic performance of all the Asian countries; and to ensure that not a single country from Asia will be left behind in this Asian century.

Connectivity in all modes-- road and rail networks; air links; waterways and transmission ways--will be the key enabler to realize this goal. For a landlocked country like Nepal, the importance of connectivity cannot be overemphasized.

Migrant workers provide a strong link connecting peoples and societies in Asia. Their rights must be protected and their safety and security must be guaranteed in view of their contribution to economic growth and development in both origin and recipient countries.

Excellences,

Not only are the strengths of Asia diverse. Our challenges too are diverse. Our hurdles too are diverse –diverse as well as demanding.

The threat of terrorism haunts us. Extremism of different hues mocks our conscience. Violence and transnational organized crimes pose a daunting threat. We should resolutely work to fight against these menaces.

The peril of poverty looms large. Economic inequality, natural disasters, climate change, and pandemic diseases are testing our abilities as well as intentions.

Mountainous countries like ours are highly vulnerable to climate change and are bearing the brunt of it disproportionate to their contribution to green house gas emission. They need special support measures to overcome climate vulnerabilities and ensure sustainable development.

And it's beyond the reach of a single country to address these challenges. The synergy among the diverse strengths of Asia is a must to cross this equally diverse assortment of hurdles. A concerted effort among the Asian countries is necessary to decimate these difficulties.

In our pursuit to deepen the synergy among our diverse strengths, we are adopting the ACD Vision for Asia Cooperation 2030 and the Bangkok Declaration, along with ACD Blue Print 2017-2030 today.

These frameworks reflect our solidarity with commitment to Pan-Asian cooperation; our commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; our commitment for peace, prosperity and partnership in the continent.

Mr. Chairman,

Nepal is now at the crucial phase of reconstruction and development after the massive devastation caused by the earthquake in April and May 2015. We thank you all for providing immediate help in rescue and relief works and now for the reconstruction.

Nepal has huge development potentials. Hydro resources of Nepal can be a source of green energy not only for us but also for our neighbouring countries in Asia, greatly contributing to energy security in our region.

Nepal is bestowed with unmatched natural beauties and cultural treasures. Our tourism potential is equally huge but remains untapped. I invite investors from the region to invest on our resources; to join us in our development endeavours.

In advancing cooperation within ACD framework, we have offered to assume the role of a co-prime-mover in these sectors.

With the promulgation of the new constitution in September last year, we are now moving towards socio-economic development, with the aim of creating a peaceful and prosperous Nepal. We highly appreciate the understanding and cooperation from the international community in Nepal's reconstruction and development.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, I reiterate sincere commitment of Nepal to contribute to the ACD process. It is my profound belief that we can build on our individual as well as collective strengths, to make a headway towards a prosperous future of whole of the Asia- one Asia with diverse strengths.

I thank you all!
