

**Remarks by The Rt. Hon'ble Pushpa Kamal Dahal  
'Prachanda', Prime Minister of Nepal, at the joint media  
briefing with His Excellency Shri Narendra Modi, Prime  
Minister of India, New Delhi, September 16, 2016**

Your Excellency Prime Minister Modiji  
Excellencies  
Distinguished media persons,

I thank Prime Minister Modiji for his kind words. Your words and sentiments mean a lot for me and my country. We have nothing but goodwill to exchange in keeping with excellent tradition of our friendly relations. I have been overwhelmed by the warm welcome and generous hospitality of the Government and friendly people of India. I must mention how privileged and honoured I have been to stay at the prestigious Rashtrapati Bhawan as State Guest of the Government of India. I have taken this as a natural reflection of our intimate and extensive relationship.

I have stated time and again that Government under my leadership is deeply committed to strengthening relations with neighbours. It is in this vein I sent special envoy to India in less than two weeks after the formation of the Government. In less than a month of assuming office, I have embarked on a State Visit to India. This is my second visit as Prime Minister, but the context and circumstances of the two visits are vastly different.

This morning immediately after the ceremonial reception at the forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhawan, I visited Rajghat to pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of non-violence and pioneer of liberation movement. That was a tribute to Gandhiji's greatness. He has left for us and for generations to come an enduring lesson of humility, discipline and public welfare.

Prime Minister Modi and I have just concluded extensive discussion on the entire gamut of our relationship. We did that in an atmosphere of trust and understanding. We shared the view that given our deep and extensive relationship, a meaningful partnership between our two countries is crucial to unlock huge potentials that we have for our mutual benefits. I am convinced that without economic prosperity, political transformation cannot be sustainable. This fact has become all the more important for my country, which has emerged from conflict and just accomplished a task of political transformation of historic proportion. We realize that a peaceful, stable, democratic and prosperous Nepal contributes to peace and stability in the neighbourhood and beyond.

We exchanged substantive views on taking concrete steps to elevate our relations to a new height in all spheres -- political, economic, social and cultural. We expressed our firm determination to forge an enduring partnership for development and prosperity and in this context had useful exchanges on the various projects and programmes that have the potential to bring about tangible results to our people.

We exchanged views on our respective 'neighbourhood first' policies and agreed that this common orientation in our policies should lead to a greater and mutually beneficial partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> century based on trust and open dialogue.

I expressed view that trust and confidence are the pre-requisites of strong and sustainable friendly relations. And to ensure this, we should respect each other's sensitivities and concerns in a spirit of good neighbourliness.

We discussed that Nepal and India are friends and bound to remain friends. Our friendship and fraternity stand on the solid foundation of the historical ties of shared culture and civilizational linkage on the other hand and the time-honoured principles of Panchasheel and the UN Charter on the other. We need to carry forth this relation in the changed

context of 21st century which warrants a new perspective as well as frank and open dialogues on our interests and concerns.

As close neighbours, our destinies are interlinked. I shared with Prime Minister Modi how inspired we are by India's growth and prosperity under his strong and bold leadership. We talked happily about the tremendous progress India has made in economic transformation, science, technology, communication, research and innovation. I stated with Modi that Nepal is eager to learn from India's success story and forge an enduring partnership for shared economic development.

In our discussion, we were extensively focused on agenda of development, growth, trade and connectivity. I emphasized on the need to effectively implement the projects we agreed on in time bound manner.

India has provided us generous development cooperation. These resources have been used in vital infrastructure projects, health, education and rural development. We stressed on the need of time bound completion of the ongoing projects by addressing hindrances on respective sides. We talked about joint monitoring of the ongoing projects. Key among the ongoing projects are 4 Integrated Check Posts, 5 Cross Border railways and Postal roads phase I.

Cooperation in Energy sector was our focus. Both of us appreciated that signing of Power Trade Agreement two years ago was an important achievement in fostering Nepal India partnership in energy sector. We agreed on the need of early operationalization of the free market provision by reviewing law and regulation.

We agreed on the need of early finalizing the DPR of Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project.

Considering the hydropower projects in pipeline in Nepal, we discussed about starting work for the development of the second cross border

transmission line connecting Butwal. Nepal is currently facing power crisis and the need of importing power may continue for a short term. We discussed about how India can help us in meeting the short term power needs in the best possible way.

India's cooperation in our infrastructure development has remained significant. I thanked Modi ji for providing three concessional Lines of Credits so far. We talked about expediting implementation of projects identified under the third LoC. One of the projects is motorable bridge at Mahakaliriver. Once realized, the bridge will turn out to be a vital linkage between the two countries. We also talked about fresh Line of Credit to fund for the development of Postal road phase II and sub stations for hydropower.

Trade, transit and connectivity were our important agenda. I shared with Prime Minister Modi ji Nepal's concern over growing trade deficit. Currently our import from India is over 10 times higher than export. We agreed on the need to take measures to address such imbalance, which cannot be sustainable in long term. Nepal expects support from India's public and private sector in industrialization and growth of trade.

We discussed about Nepal's request for additional three air entry routes. We have instructed our civil aviation authorities to finalize the matter in the next meeting.

Prime Minister Modi ji and I noted with satisfaction that Eminent Group of Persons have started to work. They have been given a broad mandate to assess the overall context of Nepal-India bilateral relations and recommend measures to be taken for better relations including the way to address outstanding issues.

Both of us discussed that control of cross border crimes and maintaining sanctity of our border and No Man's Land are mutual security interests of the two countries in which greater cooperation and understanding need to be ensured.

India is rising in its global stature and it has a visible mark in global arena as the largest successful world democracy. I assured Prime Minister Modiji that Nepal fully supports India's aspiration for greater roles in international institutions.

Last but not least, I also shared with Prime Minister Modiji that the promulgation of the Constitution last year by the popularly elected Constituent Assembly was a historic achievement for the people of Nepal. You are aware that my Government has made serious efforts to bring everyone on board as we enter the phase the implementation of the Constitution in the interest of all segments of Nepali society.

Both of us agreed that exchanges of visit at the highest political level should be regular between the two countries. The Rt. Hon President of Nepal has invited His Excellency the President of India to visit Nepal this year. And I have invited Prime Minister Modiji to visit Nepal. We eagerly look forward to welcoming both President Pranabji and Prime Minister Modiji to Nepal in near future.

Thank you.