

REPORT ON
NEPAL'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS
(2022-2023)



Government of Nepal
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Kathmandu, Nepal

Report on Nepal's Foreign Affairs (2022-2023)



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This annual report covers the activities of Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 17 July 2022 to 16 July 2023.

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Honourable Narayan Kaji Shrestha

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

MESSAGE

It is a matter of satisfaction to have this report ready, highlighting the key efforts and activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs spanning the period from 17 July 2022 to 16 July 2023.

Nepal's foreign policy is based on the principles of sovereign equality, non-interference, mutual respect and benefit. Nepal pursues a balanced and independent foreign policy for the protection and promotion of its national interests at home and abroad. As guided by the Constitution of Nepal, Nepal has placed its firm faith in the Charter of the United Nations, Non-alignment, principles of *Panchsheel*, international law and the norms of world peace in its conduct of foreign policy.

The year of the review was highly significant marked by important diplomatic endeavours that Nepal undertook in advancing its foreign policy. In line with the motto of 'Amity with all, enmity with none', Nepal has been expanding its diplomatic horizon by establishing diplomatic relations with friendly countries around the world.

The exchanges of high-level visits with our friendly countries are important to reinvigorate our relations with them. During the period, high-level visits, including the visit by President Rt. Hon. Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari to Iceland and the visit of Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' to India, were concluded which proved instrumental in further strengthening our bilateral ties with those countries.

Our engagement with India to jointly harness clean energy, enhance cooperation in trade and transit, and promote tourism not only gave promising signals for socio-economic development of Nepal but also enhanced connectivity and people-to-people relations. Apart from important high-level visits, we were able to deepen our friendly relations with China down to the people's level with the opening of border ports for trade and human movement.

We were also able to maintain warm and cordial relations with the countries in our extended neighbourhood in South Asia with exchanges of high-level visits, signing of new agreements and exchanging of assistance.

As in previous years, this year too has witnessed the continued momentum of support from our development partners. Our development partners such as the United States, Japan, and Switzerland, as well as the World Bank, European Union, and the Asian Development Bank deserve appreciation for continuously supporting our development endeavours. We have consistently maintained close and friendly relations with them.

As a firm believer in multilateralism, Nepal has attached high importance to its participation in international and inter-governmental organizations. We have been active in many forums of regional and international nature such as the United Nations, NAM, ILO, SAARC and BIMSTEC. I am happy to note that Nepal was elected as member of UN-ECOSOC from the Asia Pacific group for the period of 2024-2026. Our participation at the UN-peacekeeping operation has continued to grow, securing a new milestone as the second-largest troops-contributing country during the period.

In order to realize the overarching objective of national development, especially in light of the upcoming LDC graduation, Nepal prioritised economic diplomacy as an important tool to foster export trade and bring in investments and tourists, primarily by mobilizing its Missions abroad. To make economic diplomacy fruitful, we have tried our best to engage Nepali diaspora and utilize their knowledge, skills and experiences for national development.

Likewise, our Departments dedicated to passport and consular services enhanced their efficiency and service quality particularly through the induction of online and digital services and has thus been able to win trust of the service-seekers.

As the review year witnessed some epoch-making events across the world, such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict and distrust and disengagements between major powers, I remain hopeful that our diplomatic engagements and conduct will be instrumental to enhance positive image of the country and secure our national interests in such uncertain times, thus ushering in an era of hope and prosperity.

Finally, I have my special thanks to the Foreign Secretary and the editorial team for their hard work in bringing this report to fruition. I believe that this report will be useful to all those who are interested in Nepal's foreign policy and diplomacy.



Sewa Lamsal

Foreign Secretary

FOREWORD

It is my great pleasure to present the annual report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal for the period of 2022-23 (FY 2079-80).

I believe that this report is not a mere compilation of events but also a review of Nepal's diplomatic conduct throughout this period. I am confident that the publication of this report will be fruitful in disseminating information to the public, in enhancing foreign policy discourse and also in serving as an institutional memory to the Ministry.

Nepal's foreign policy, during the review period, was directed in enhancing the dignity of the nation and promoting the national interests in the international milieu as guided by the Constitution of Nepal and the relevant policies of the government. In line with the five principles of peaceful coexistence *Panchsheel*, the Charter of the United Nations, Non-alignment, international law and values and norms of world peace, Nepal pursues an independent, balanced and non-aligned foreign policy which was maintained during the reporting period.

While having emphasis on strengthening its democratic values and practices, Nepal successfully held the second round of periodic elections of the House of Representatives and the Provincial Assemblies in November 2022. All elected posts have been fulfilled by the representatives of the people, giving a powerful message of stability as well as democratic polity.

As foreign policy is often referred to as the extension of domestic policies, robust and strong democratic norms being practiced at home is the key to maintaining friendly and cooperative relations with other countries. In the spirit of 'Amity with all, enmity with none', Nepal established its formal diplomatic relations with 181 countries till the end

of the review period with four new relationships established during this period, namely, Republic of Malawi, Republic of Nauru, Republic of Cameroon and Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Neighbourhood has always been in Nepal's top priority. The reporting period witnessed further reinforcement of the bilateral relations with both the countries of immediate neighbourhood.

In May 2023, Prime Minister of Nepal Rt. Hon. Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' visited India at the cordial invitation of Prime Minister of India H.E. Mr. Narendra Modi. With signing of different treaties and agreements, joint inauguration and groundbreaking of several projects during the visit, the friendly relations between Nepal and India was further bolstered during the period. The two Prime Ministers also paved way to further consolidating the close cooperation between the two countries in the fields of energy cooperation, trade facilitation and connectivity for the mutual benefits of the two Governments and peoples.

Our relations with China during the review period was highlighted with the reopening of the border ports that were closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the invitation of State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China H.E. Mr. Wang Yi, Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon. Dr. Narayan Khadka visited China in August 2022. The visit was successful in reinvigorating the excellent state of bilateral relations between the two countries and thereby fostering greater level of development cooperation. Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China H.E. Mr. Li Zhanshu also visited Nepal and held discussions with Speaker of the House of Representatives Rt. Hon. Mr. Agni Prasad Sapkota on issues of mutual interest.

We also continued enjoying close and cordial relations with our extended neighbourhood. Hon. Dr. Bimala Rai Paudyal, Minister for Foreign Affairs attended the Seventy-fifth Independence Day celebrations of Sri Lanka in February 2023. Foreign Minister Hon. Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud participated in the 6th Indian Ocean Conference in Dhaka in May 2023.

In the United Kingdom, Foreign Minister Hon. Dr. Narayan Khadka attended the State Funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II while Foreign Minister Hon. Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud attended the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and the Her Majesty Queen Camilla.

The reporting period was also marked by high-level visits from our friendly countries. State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, H.E. Mr. Takei Shunsuke visited Nepal to observe the election of the House of Representatives and the Provincial Assemblies in November 2022. H.E. Ms. Anne Marie Trevelyan, Minister of State of the United Kingdom; H.E. Ms. Anne Beathe Tvinneim, Minister for International Development of Norway; H.E. Mr. Tim Watts, Assistant Foreign Minister of Australia; Ms. Victoria Nuland, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs of the United States of America also conducted visits to Nepal during the reporting period.

Nepal not only maintained close and cordial relations with its neighbours, development partners and other countries, but also actively participated in regional as well as multilateral affairs during the period. As the current Chair, Nepal put its striving efforts for the resumption of regular functioning of SAARC bodies. The period marked Nepal successfully becoming the second-most troops and police contributing country to the UN Peacekeeping Operations. Nepal also got elected to UN-ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission during the period. Nepal actively voiced for human rights, climate justice, sustainable development, disarmament and global peace at various multilateral forums.

The Ministry gave continuity to organizing its flagship events during the review period. The Ministry organized the second edition of Prof. Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series under the theme 'Safeguarding Nepal's National Interests: Foreign Policy Choices in the Changing International Environment' and an interactive program on 'Changes in Global Power Relations, Geopolitical Complexity and Nepal'. Virtual interaction program on economic diplomacy was held among the Nepali missions abroad in coordination with the sectoral Ministries of Nepal. Department of Passports successfully renewed its NS/ISO 9001:2015 certification, ensuring the continuation of quality service even after the introduction of e-passports. We also reformed the procedures to make consular services easier and convenient through digitalization.

I am hopeful that this report will be an interesting publication for all those willing to learn more about Nepal's foreign affairs and diplomatic conduct throughout the review period.

To conclude, I thank all the heads of Nepali Missions abroad, Division Heads, Directors General of the Departments and all my colleagues working under the Foreign Service umbrella for their constant dedication and contributions. I extend my special appreciation to the editorial team for their commendable work on preparing and finalizing this report.

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NEPAL'S FOREIGN POLICY

VISION

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

MISSION

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

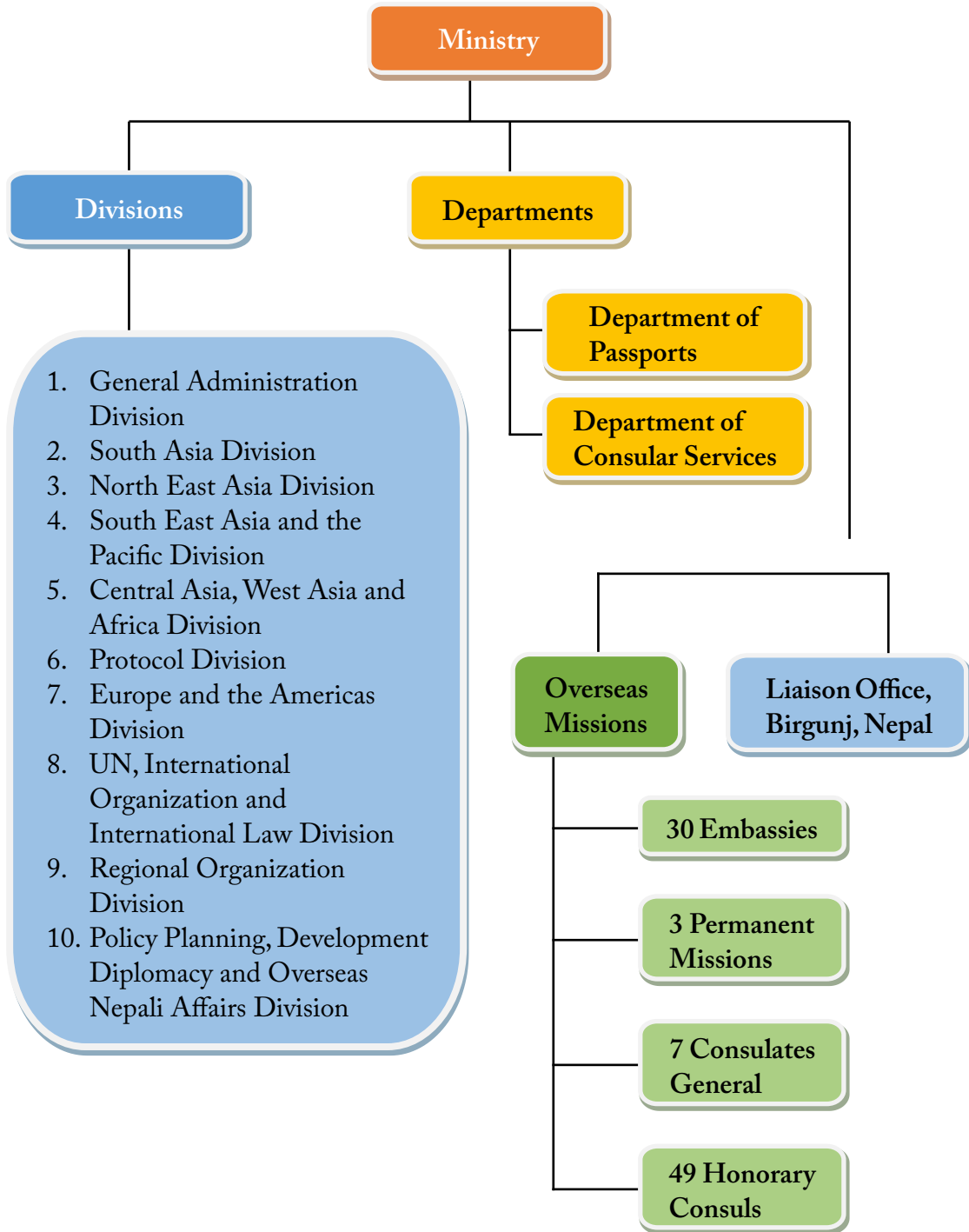
OBJECTIVES

- To expand and strengthen bilateral relations with all countries including neighbouring countries on the basis of sovereign equality, mutual benefit and respect.
- To promote national interest by enhancing Nepal's national identity and representation in international and regional forums.
- To play an effective role in multilateral forums for world peace; disarmament; promotion and protection of human rights; sustainable development goals; mitigation of climate change impacts; controlling pandemics, terrorism and cybercrime; safer migration; and, the rights of landlocked countries.
- To collaborate for creating a just, inclusive, fair, and rules-based world order.
- To promote regional cooperation, peace, and collaborations.
- To contribute to socio-economic transformation of the country through the conduct of economic diplomacy in such sectors as mobilization of development cooperation, and promotion of investment, export and tourism.
- To protect interests of Nepali nationals as well as legal persons engaged in occupation, business, and employment abroad.
- To promote soft power by utilizing the country's unique natural beauty, indigenous and rich civilization, culture, lifestyle, diversity, arts, languages, literature and sports.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND NORMS

- Nepal's independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, freedom; protection of national interest, and promotion of national respect and dignity
- Sovereign equality
- *Panchsheel* (the five principles of peaceful coexistence)
- Spirit of the Charter of the United Nations
- Mutual respect and benefit
- International law and norms of world peace
- Peaceful settlement of disputes
- International cooperation
- Justice, equality and accountability
- Democracy, human rights and rule of law
- Economic progress and prosperity
- Ecological balance, human security and conservation of the planet.

MINISTRY'S ORGANOGRAM



Highlights of the Year

Outgoing Visits

- President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari visited Reykjavik, Iceland at the invitation of Women Political Leaders (WPL) to participate at the Reykjavik Global Forum and to receive the WPL Trailblazer Award 2022.
- Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' visited India at the invitation of Mr. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India.
- Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud participated in the Coronation ceremony of King Charles III of the United Kingdom.
- Foreign Minister Dr. Narayan Khadka paid an official visit to China at the invitation of Mr. Wang Yi, State Councillor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.
- Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud visited Bangladesh to participate in the 6th Indian Ocean Conference (IOC)
- Foreign Minister Dr. Bimala Rai Paudyal visited Sri Lanka to participate in the 75th Independence Day functions as an honoured guest in Colombo.
- An eight-member delegation led by the chairperson of the International Relations committee of Federal Parliament of Nepal Ms. Pabitra Niraula Khanal visited Bangladesh with the aim of consolidating economic ties including through parliamentary exchanges.
- Nepali Parliamentary delegation visited Pakistan to participate in the 3rd Regional Seminar on achieving SDGs, organized by National Assembly of Pakistan and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

Incoming Visits

- Mr. Li Zhanshu, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China visited Nepal.
- State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Mr. Takei Shunsuke visited Nepal to observe the election of the House of Representatives and the Provincial Assemblies.
- Foreign Secretary of India Mr. Vinay Mohan Kwatra visited Nepal at the invitation of Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal and discussed matters of bilateral cooperation between Nepal and India.
- Executive Senior Vice-President of JICA, Dr. Jumichi Yamada visited Nepal to observe the progress of JICA supported projects, namely Sindhuli Road and Nagdhunga Tunnel Construction Project.
- UK Minister of Defence People, Veterans and Service Families Dr. Andrew Murrison MP visited Nepal. The issue of Gurkha Veterans, among others, were discussed during his visit.

- European Commissioner for International Partnership Ms. Jutta Urpilainen visited Nepal.
- Norwegian Minister for International Development Ms. Anne Beathe Trinnereim visited Nepal during the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Nepal-Norway diplomatic ties.
- A delegation comprising four members of the National Assembly of Korea, including Mr. Lee Sangheon, President of Korea-Nepal Parliamentary Friendship Group visited Nepal.
- Global President and Chief Financial Officer of Samsung Electronics Company of South Korea Mr. Hark Kyu Park visited Nepal. He attended the Foundation Ceremony of Samsung TV factory in Bhairahawa.

Bilateral Engagements

- The 15th meeting of the Nepal-China Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism was held between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries in Beijing.
- The 4th meeting of the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between the Foreign Ministries of Nepal and Japan was held in Tokyo.
- The 6th meeting of the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between the Foreign Ministries of Nepal and the Republic of Korea was held in Seoul. The meeting agreed to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relation in 2024 with various programmes and also agreed to sign an agreement on waiving visa for holders of official and diplomatic passports.
- The 6th Nepal-USA Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Council meeting was held in Kathmandu.
- Nepal and the EU held the 14th meeting of Joint Commission in Brussels as well as the mid-term review meeting in Kathmandu.
- The 2nd Meeting of Nepal-Australia Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held in Canberra.
- The 3rd meeting of Nepal-Canada Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held in Ottawa.
- MoU was signed between the Foreign Ministries of Nepal and Italy to establish a Bilateral Consultation Mechanism.
- The first meeting of the Nepal-China coordination mechanism on Border Trade and Cooperation was held in Lhasa with the aim of resuming the cross-border trade and people-to-people movement at optimum level including exploring new avenues of cooperation.
- 10th Nepal-China's Tibet Trade Facilitation Committee (NTTFC) meeting was held virtually and matters including full-operationalization of border ports, export of Nepali tea, coffee and cooked buffalo meat to Tibet, establishment of cross-border economic zones were discussed.

- Fourth and fifth meeting of Joint Steering Committee (JSC) on cooperation in the field of power sector held in Nepal and in Bangladesh respectively, which agreed to expedite the efforts to export 40-50 MW of electricity from Nepal to Bangladesh.
- The Government of Nepal dispatched a shipment of over 22 tons of relief materials including medicines, medical equipment, warm clothing and other essential items for the earthquake affected people of Türkiye.

Regional and Multilateral Engagements

- Participation in the 19th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting held virtually.
- Participation in 77th Session of the UNGA held under the theme 'A watershed moment: Transformative Solutions to Interlocking Challenges' at the United Nations headquarters in New York.
- Participation in the second part of the Fifth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5 Conference) held in Doha, Qatar.
- In the year 2023, Nepal stayed at the second largest troops and police contributing country with increased number of female peacekeepers.
- Nepal has been elected as a member of ECOSOC with the highest number of votes (145) from the Asia-Pacific Group for the period of 2024-2026.

Additional Engagements

- The Ministry launched the second edition of Professor Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series. As a keynote speaker, former Foreign Secretary Mr. Madhu Raman Acharya delivered a speech on 'Safeguarding Nepal's Nationals Interests: Foreign Policy Choices in the Changing International Environment'.
- An interactive programme was organized on 'Changes in Global Power Relations, Geopolitical Complexity and Nepal' with a presentation by Mr. Khadga K.C., Professor at the Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, Tribhuvan University.
- Government of Nepal granted its concurrence to establish a resident Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye in Kathmandu.
- Consular attestation of Police Clearance Certificate was arranged fully through online system, thereby significantly reducing the physical presence of people in the Department of Consular Services complex and its vicinity.
- A total of 4,03,695 service seekers were provided with various consular services by the Department of Consular Services.
- A total of 14,71,494 electronic passports were issued through District Administration Offices, Area Administration Office, Nepali Missions abroad, and the Department of Passports.

HIGH LEVEL ENGAGEMENTS

Participation at the Reykjavik Global Forum by the President and receipt of the WPL Trailblazer Award 2022.



(President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari receiving the WPL Trailblazer Award 2022).

Official Visit of the Prime Minister to India



(Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' with the Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi)

Participation of the Foreign Minister to the Coronation ceremony of King Charles III of the United Kingdom.



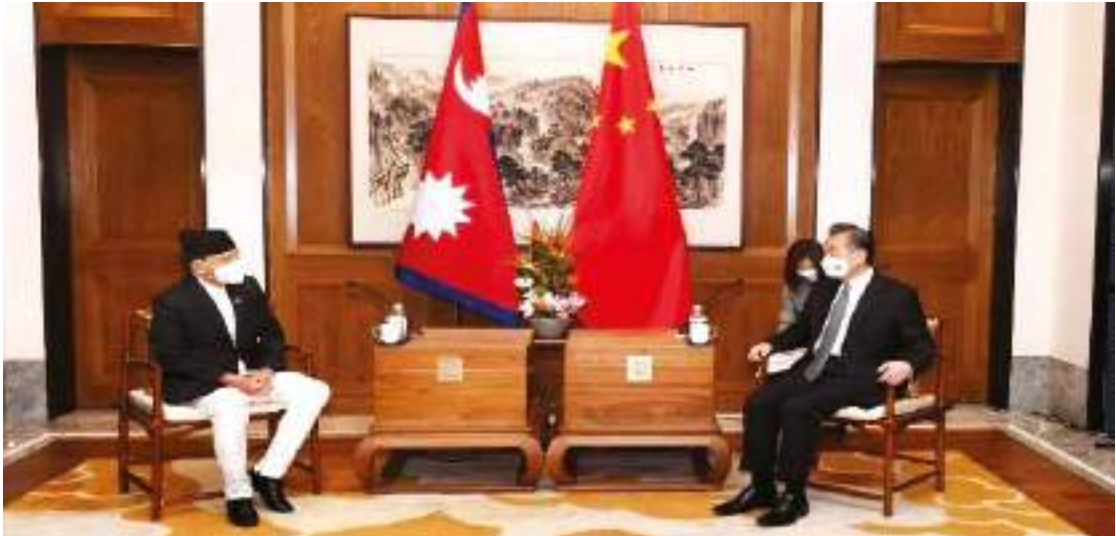
(Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud meeting with King Charles III)

Official Visit by the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China.



(Chairman Mr. Li Zhanshu pays courtesy call on President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari)

Official Visit of the Foreign Minister to China



(Foreign Minister Dr. Narayan Khadka with his Chinese counterpart Mr. Wang Yi)

Visit of the Foreign Minister to Bangladesh to participate in the 6th Indian Ocean Conference.



(Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud and his delegation with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina).

FACTS AND FIGURES

Economic Diplomacy

Trade

- Export: NPR 157 billion
- Import: NPR 1612 billion
- Top five export destination countries: India, United States, Germany, United Kingdom, and China
- Top five source countries of import: India, China, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, and Argentina.

(Source: Department of Customs)

Foreign Investment

- NPR 30.699 billion
- Top five foreign investors: China, United Kingdom, India, United States, and the Netherlands.

(Source: Department of Industry)

Tourism

- 5,58,879 foreign tourists visited Nepal.
- Top five source countries of tourists: India, United States, China, United Kingdom, and Australia.

(Source: Department of Immigration, Nepal Tourism Board)

Official Development Assistance

- USD 879.477 million
- Top five bilateral development partners: United States, Japan, Switzerland, Norway and Germany
- Top five multilateral development partners: World Bank Group, Asian Development Bank, United Nations, European Union and GAVI.

(Source: Ministry of Finance)

Overseas Employment

- Labour permits and renewals: 7,71,327
- Number of bilateral agreements between Nepal and Labour destination countries: 11
- Top five destinations for overseas employment: Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait.

(Source: Department of Foreign Employment)

SERVICE DELIVERY

Passports Distribution

- Total passports: 14,71,399
 - Ordinary passports: 14,66,816
 - Official passports: 3,859
 - Diplomatic passports: 590
 - Service passports: 39
 - Travel documents: 95

(Source: Department of Passports)

Consular Services

- Documents attested: 4,66,002
- Visa recommendations issued: 1530
- Diplomatic exemptions granted: 3658
- Gratis visas issued: 1932
- Compensation handed over to beneficiaries: NPR 804.340 million
- Repatriation of dead bodies: 197

(Source: Department of Consular Services)





Overview

Report on Nepal's Foreign Affairs (2022-2023) presents comprehensive review of the engagements and significant activities carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in bilateral, regional as well as multilateral fronts for the period of 17 July 2022 to 16 July 2023.

The review period marked the elections to the House of Representatives and Provincial Assembly held in November 2022. With strong upholding of democratic values and norms in the domestic front, Nepal's external relations continued to be guided by the principles of the UN Charter, Non-alignment, Panchsheel, norms of international law, and world peace during the review period. Nepal maintained its fundamental stance of pursuing an independent, non-aligned and balanced foreign policy on bilateral, regional and global issues in order to protect, promote and project its national interests, image and dignity in the international arena.

Nepal's amicable and cooperative relations with the immediate neighbours was further reinforced during the review period with greater level of engagements, frequent exchange of high-level visits and cooperation through various mechanisms at different tiers. Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' paid an official visit to India at the cordial invitation of the Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi that provided an impetus to widening and deepening multi-sectoral cooperation, development partnership and institutional collaboration between the two friendly countries. The year witnessed closer coordination between Nepal and India in various fields of mutual interest including border management, trade and tourism, power development and trading, connectivity and energy supplies.

Nepal-China relations gained a new momentum in the reporting year with high-level visits from both sides, the resumption of some border ports in the post-COVID period and the productive sectoral committee meetings. Mr. Li Zhanshu, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China visited Nepal at the cordial invitation of Speaker of the House of Representatives Mr. Agni Prasad Sapkota. The visit opened newer avenues for cooperation and partnership between the parliaments of two friendly neighbouring countries. Upon the invitation of his counterpart, Foreign Minister Dr. Narayan Khadka paid an official visit to China which paved way for resumption of opening of different border ports between Nepal and China and development as well as humanitarian assistance to Nepal from the trusted neighbour.

Nepal's foreign relations with other friendly neighbours, major powers, development partners, foreign employment destination states and the rest of the countries remained close and cordial. With meetings of various bilateral mechanisms, exchange of high-level visits, increased people-to-people contacts, and various agreements institutionalizing cooperation and collaboration, Nepal's national interests were further promoted and projected in the global arena with wider perspectives. In the reporting period, Nepal established its bilateral relations with the Republic of Malawi, the Republic of Nauru, the Republic of Cameroon and the Republic of the Marshall Islands increasing the number to 181.

Regionalism remained a priority in Nepal's foreign policy. The review period was marked with Nepal's efforts to revitalise South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) mechanisms and bodies in addition to meaningful participation in the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) forums.

Nepal maintained its momentum in fostering multilateralism for the greater good and well-being of the global community. With its unwavering commitment to the principles of sovereign equality, abiding by the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations (UN), norms and values of world peace and international law, Nepal actively advocated for inclusive, representative and accountable UN reforms. Nepal was the second biggest Troops and Police Contributing Country to UN Peacekeeping Operations. Nepal's elections to the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and the Peacebuilding Commission were remarkable achievements in the review period.

Addressing different multilateral forums including the 77th UN General Assembly Debate, Group of 77 and China, LDC5 Conference and NAM Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau, Nepal urged for global cooperation and solidarity to counter common challenges to humankind and promote global peace, climate justice and sustainable development taking into consideration the needs and priorities of the LDCs.

Along with hosting the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament (UNRCPD) in Kathmandu, Nepal organized an international symposium for spreading its voice to the global community stressing on the general and complete nuclear disarmament and the collective efforts to ensure global peace. Nepal contributed to the protection and promotion of human rights worldwide through its efforts in different sessions of the Human Rights Council and Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group.

The Ministry, with its central position in the domain of Nepal's foreign policy, engaged in planning and policy related issues during the reporting period in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, international commitments, 15th periodic plan and steadfast emphasis on economic diplomacy. The Ministry's flagship programme, Prof. Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series, continued for the second year. The Ministry and Missions continued to provide necessary services to the Nepali community abroad over the review period, in consonance with the continuous increase of the Nepali diaspora throughout the world.

Consular services were made quicker and accessible with the use of online means and digital technology. Machine Readable Passport system was completely phased out implementing the modern biometric passport system with greater level of data safety and security. Department of Passports also maintained its quality service and was able to renew the NS/ISO 9001:2015 standards during the review period. The Ministry continued its emphasis on human resources development, administrative reforms, logistical enhancement and strengthening of institutions.

NEPAL'S NEIGHBOURHOOD

Neighbourhood remains a central position in Nepal's foreign policy conduct. Nepal's bilateral relations with both of its neighbours, viz. India and China, are based on the values of mutual respect and trust, principles of the Panchsheel, and good neighbourliness.

The review period was fruitful in reinforcing the close Nepal-India friendship with increased engagements, development cooperations and people-to-people contacts.

Nepal-India relations were further deepened with the official visit of Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' to India from 31 May to 3 June 2023 at the invitation of the Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi. The two Prime Ministers extensively reviewed the age-old and multifaceted Nepal-India ties and renewed their commitments to further strengthen the relations in wider areas of trade, transit, investment, power and connectivity.

A number of agreements were signed and exchanged during the visit that opened up further new avenues of widening the bilateral friendship. The two Prime Ministers witnessed the exchange of the Treaty of Transit between Nepal and India, and remotely inaugurated and performed the groundbreaking of six different projects of various sectors including railway, power trade and border management. The list of MoUs and Project Development Agreement covered wider areas of mutual interests such as petroleum infrastructure, integrated check posts, hydroelectricity projects, cross-border payments and institutional cooperation between the Institute of Foreign Affairs of Nepal and Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service of India.

The review period witnessed the visit of Foreign Secretary of India Mr. Vinay Mohan Kwatra in February 2023 as well as bilateral meetings across sectors including power exchange, hydropower and power trade.

Nepal and China continue to treasure the close, cordial and cooperative relations between the two nations that dates back long before the establishment of formal diplomatic relations in 1955. The bilateral relations based on mutual trust, respect, appreciation of each other's sensitivities and Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence – Panchsheel, was continued with stronger level of cooperation and coordination between the two Governments and peoples.

The period witnessed the official visit of Mr. Li Zhanshu, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China in September 2022 at the cordial invitation of Speaker of the House of Representatives Mr. Agni Prasad Sapkota. The visit was successful in reviewing and projecting the cooperation between the two countries in political dimensions with emphasis on parliamentary cooperation. MoU on inter-parliamentary cooperation was also signed with the aim of further fostering the parliamentary exchanges and strengthening the cooperative mechanisms.

In August 2022, Foreign Minister of Nepal Dr. Narayan Khadka visited China at the cordial invitation of Mr. Wang Yi, State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs

of China. During the visit, there were announcements of further development, humanitarian and medical assistance to Nepal as well as agreements to open different border ports between Nepal and China.

In order to facilitate and enhance the trade and human movements across the Nepal-China border ports, several meetings of various mechanisms at different levels were held during the review period and efforts were carried out to ensure the full operationalization of border ports.

Fifteenth Meeting of Nepal-China Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism, First Meeting of Nepal-China Coordination Mechanism on Border Trade and Cooperation, Tenth Meeting of Nepal-China's Tibet Trade Facilitation Committee were also held during the review period.

SOUTH ASIA

The friendly relations between Nepal and the countries in South Asia were further consolidated during the review period with the exchange of visits, meeting of different sectoral mechanisms, and cooperation in multiple dimensions. Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud participated in the Sixth Indian Ocean Conference held in Dhaka in May 2023. Foreign Minister Dr. Bimala Rai Paudyal attended the Seventy-Fifth Independence Day of Sri Lanka as a honoured guest in February 2023. There were separate visits from Nepali parliamentary delegations to Bangladesh and Pakistan.

NORTH-EAST ASIA

Nepal's relations with the North-East Asian region were cordial and cooperative, marked by deepening relations at the people-to-people level, incoming and outgoing visits, and the meetings of Bilateral Consultation Mechanisms. Nepal's development endeavours continue to receive assistance from Japan and the Republic of Korea in multiple sectors.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Mr. Takei Shunsuke visited Nepal in November 2022. A parliamentary delegation from the Republic of Korea visited Nepal in August 2022 and exchanged views on cooperation between parliaments and people of the two countries. Sixth Meeting of Bilateral Consultation Mechanism with Republic of Korea and Fourth Meeting of Bilateral Consultation Mechanism with Japan were conducted in April 2023.

Nepal has been consistent on its principled position of peaceful reunification and denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Nepal and the countries of South-East Asia and the Pacific region continued to enjoy cordial and friendly relations during the review period. Common Asian values and culture, trade, tourism, diaspora and people-to-people ties are the major areas of mutual interest between Nepal and the countries of this region. The review period was also marked by the efforts of rescue and repatriation of Nepali nationals trafficked into Myanmar to involve them into fraudulent online activities.

Nepal-Australia ties were further reinforced with the visit of Mr. Tim Watts, Assistant Foreign Minister of Australia, to Nepal in May 2023 and the Second Meeting of the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism held in August 2022. Foreign Minister Mr. N.P. Saud participated in the inaugural BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' Retreat in Bangkok in July 2023. A Nepali delegation participated in the 70th session of UNESCAP. Nepal participated in the 15th Bali Democracy Forum in December 2022.

CENTRAL ASIA, WEST ASIA AND AFRICA

Nepal values its amicable and cooperative relations with the countries in the region of Central Asia, West Asia and Africa. Nepal's foreign affairs with respect to the region is focused on the effective conduct of labour diplomacy with special emphasis on the Gulf region.

High level visits including visit of Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina, Chairperson of the National Assembly to UAE, Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport to Qatar and Mr. Dev Raj Ghimire, Speaker of the House of Representatives to Bahrain contributed to further strengthening the relations of Nepal with the respective countries and the region as a whole. Mrs. Uma Regmi, Minister for Women, Children and Senior Citizen led the Nepali delegation to participate in the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Egypt in November 2022.

This year also witnessed a momentous occasion of Dr. Sanduk Ruit, a distinguished Nepali ophthalmologist being honoured with the Isa Award for Service to the Humanity 2021-2023. Furthermore, the inaugural flight of Kuwait Airways to Kathmandu, thousands of Nepalis contributing to FIFA World Cup 2022 stadium construction in Qatar, Nepali delegation participating in Second Session of the UN Habitat Assembly in Kenya were the major highlights of Nepal's foreign affairs in the region.

EUROPE AND THE AMERICAS

Nepal's relations with the countries in the Europe and the Americas were further enhanced during the reporting period. Frequent exchange of visits, increased development cooperation and partnership, regular bilateral consultations have aided to the maintenance and deepening of the friendly relations between Nepal and the countries of the region.

Nepal and the United States celebrated the 75th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations during the review period. The relations were further strengthened by the visits of USAID Administrator Ms. Samantha Power, Under Secretary at the State Department Ms. Victoria Nuland and other dignitaries to Nepal as well as the visit of Chief of Army Staff Mr. Prabhu Ram Sharma to the United States. Different stolen or lost statues, wooden artefacts and items of cultural significance were repatriated to Nepal from the United States through diplomatic initiatives. The channelling of US support through Nepal's budgetary system was also initiated during this period.

This year was a remarkable one in Nepal-United Kingdom relations marking the centenary of the Nepal-UK Friendship Treaty of 1923. Foreign Minister of Nepal attended the funeral ceremony of Queen Elizabeth II and the coronation of King Charles III. The year witnessed the visit of British Minister of State (Minister for Indo-Pacific) for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs Ms. Anne Marie Trevelyan to Nepal as well as the visit of Chairperson of National Assembly Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina to the United Kingdom. During the review period, meeting of Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between Nepal and the United Kingdom was held in London.

President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari attended and addressed the Reykjavik Global Forum – Women Leaders and received Women Political Leaders (WPL) Trailblazer Award in Iceland in November 2022.

Fourteenth meeting of the Joint Commission between Nepal and the European Union (EU) was held in February 2023. European Commissioner for International Partnerships Ms. Jutta Urpilainen's visit to Nepal helped to further strengthen the existing Nepal-EU relations during the review period.

Meetings of Bilateral Consultation Mechanisms with Canada, France and Belgium were held during the review period. Amidst the remarkable 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Nepal and Norway, Norwegian Minister for International Development visited Nepal in May 2023. The overall number of trail

bridges constructed through Swiss support surpassed the figure of ten-thousands during the reporting year.

REGIONAL COOPERATION

Nepal has always been maintaining its active and constructive position in regional affairs and organizations to further strengthen and deepen regional cooperation. The review period saw the continuation of the same with greater level of exchanges, interactions and engagements.

The meetings of SAARC bodies including SAARC Development Fund were held during the review period, which also saw consensus in the appointment of the new Secretary General of SAARC.

Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal participated in the Twenty-Third Session of BIMSTEC Senior Official's Meeting and Nineteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting virtually held in Bangkok in March 2023. Nepal participated in various meetings of BIMSTEC bodies in the review period. As one of the co-prime movers in Culture and Tourism pillar of Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), Nepal has been actively engaging in building a strong Pan-Asian partnership. During the review period, Nepal took part in Senior Officials Meeting of ACD held virtually in August 2022. In Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Nepal participated in different seminars and conferences organized during the review year as a dialogue partner.

MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS

Nepal has always been a staunch supporter of multilateralism based on the principle of sovereign equality and advocated for strong, cooperative and inclusive multilateral affairs. Amidst the intense developments in the global political landscape, especially pertaining to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Nepal stood firm in its unwavering commitment to strengthening global cooperation through multilateralism, maintaining world peace and order and adhering to the spirit of the UN Charter and norms of international law. During the review period, Nepal was able to maintain its second position among the troops and police contributing countries. Nepal was also elected as a member to the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission in the reporting year.

The review period witnessed significantly greater number of Nepali interactions and engagements in various multilateral forums as compared to previous years when COVID-19 pandemic had restricted the free movement across the world. A delegation

led by Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal participated in the 77th session of the UN General Assembly and stressed on the significance of global cooperation and solidarity. Twenty-five statements were delivered, and eight thematic resolutions were joined as co-sponsor by Nepal in the 52nd session of the Human Rights Council (HRC). Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport led the Nepali delegation to the Second Part of the Fifth Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5 Conference) in March 2023. Nepal also actively participated in other conferences including UN Water Conference, 22nd Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 76th Session of the World Health Assembly, 111th International Labour Conference and so on.

Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud addressed the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Baku, Azerbaijan in July 2023. Foreign Minister reiterated the principles of NAM and called for the collective efforts in promotion of global peace, climate justice and sustainable development.

During the review period, despite the trends of expansion of defence expenses, stalled negotiations on disarmament, Nepal highlighted its principled position towards the general and complete nuclear disarmament in a time-bound manner. In its striving efforts for global peace, Nepal tabled its annual resolution on UNRCPD in the First Committee of the UN which was consensually adopted. As second largest troop and police contributing country, Nepal called for just and equitable access in senior positions of the Secretariat and field missions commensurate with its contribution. Nepal hosted the Seventh Partnership for Technology in Peacekeeping International Symposium in Kathmandu in June 2023, the first of its kind in South Asia, which was attended by more than 200 participants from 47 countries. Executive Secretary of Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Dr. Robert Floyd visited Nepal in June 2023 that strengthened Nepal's collaboration with CTBTO in the sector of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

In the field of human rights, Nepal showcased its vibrant engagements through 52nd, 53rd, and 54th sessions of the HRC and 41st, 42nd, and 43rd sessions of the UPR Working Group. With regular coordination with Office of the High Commissioner of the Human Rights and other bodies and mechanisms related to human rights, Nepal vigorously advocated on the issues of human rights with special emphasis on women, children, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. Stressing on the principles of universality, objectivity, impartiality, dialogue and cooperation, Nepal also raised its

voice relating to the human rights with the themes of climate change, digital divide, SDGs and others.

Nepal maintained its consistent position in supporting the reform of the United Nations to make it more representative, transparent, inclusive and accountable. Nepal also called for fair, proportionate and equitable distribution of opportunities and access to all the member states in leadership positions of the organs, bodies and mechanisms of the UN. Nepal emphasizes on the reform of the UN Security Council, revitalization of the UN General Assembly, Development reforms and many more.

Underscoring the urgency to act in favour of climate justice based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, Nepal strongly called for the early operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund with special attention to the LDCs and the vulnerable. Nepal participated in the meetings of different bodies of World Trade Organization (WTO) and voiced for smooth graduation of LDCs, WTO reforms, TRIPS waiver and other pertinent concerns. As LDC Global Coordinator, Nepal, on behalf of the LDCs, also addressed the 70th Session of the Trade and Development Board in June 2023.

Nepal actively engaged and raised its voices in several other forums and bodies of UN during the review period.

POLICY MATTERS, ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY AND OVERSEAS NEPALIS

During the review period, the Ministry had regular engagements with different governmental institutions in formulating, analysing and implementing several policies and conducting various activities. The Ministry had close coordination with National Planning Commission and other relevant agencies in the implementation of SDGs, attaining the goals of 15th Plan and international commitments and preparation for smooth graduation from the LDC status.

Second Edition of Prof. Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series was successfully organized by the Ministry with the keynote speech by former Foreign Secretary Mr. Madhu Raman Acharya in June 2023. As a part of annual action plan, an interactive program on 'Changes in Global Power Relations, Geopolitical Complexity and Nepal' was organized in April 2022 with Prof. Dr. Khadga K.C. as the keynote speaker.

Prioritizing economic diplomacy, the Ministry collaborated with the Nepali diplomatic missions abroad to further Nepal's economic and developmental interests in areas

of infrastructure development, trade and tourism, foreign investment and foreign employment. The Ministry has also been regularly providing services to the overseas Nepalis including the issuance of NRN cards and providing facilitation as per the laws relating to Non-Residential Nepalis.

PROTOCOL, CONSULAR AND PASSPORT

The review period saw the rendering of protocol services in high level incoming and outgoing visits, as well as in the coordination for the provision of Agrément, presentation of credentials, and other relevant diplomatic activities. The relevant diplomatic support, courtesies and privileges were extended to diplomatic and consular missions based in and accredited to Nepal. On 14 October 2022, the Republic of Türkiye was granted concurrence to establish its embassy in Kathmandu.

The Department of Consular Services made remarkable progress in providing easy, smooth and accessible consular services to the service-seekers including Diplomatic Missions and International Organizations based in Nepal. The procedure for attestation of Police Clearance Certificate has been made completely online. An MoU was signed with the Department of Foreign Employment to coordinate for effective service delivery. This year witnessed the complete institutionalization of the E-passport regime in Nepal phasing out the Machine-Readable Passport (MRP) system. The Department of Passports facilitates regular passport service through District/Area Administration Offices in Nepal and Nepali diplomatic missions abroad. Urgent service within two working days is also provided to the needy service-seekers. The review period witnessed the record of issuing 14,71,494 passports with an increment of almost 77 percent in comparison to the previous year. A mobile passport service program was conducted in Portugal in March-April 2023. The Department also successfully renewed its NS/ISO 9001:2015 standards for further three years commencing from 10 July 2023.

ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

The Ministry continued to focus on human resources development and institutional reforms. The renovation works of the Ministry's existing building inside the Singha Durbar premises witnessed a significant progress and the preparatory works including finalization of the drawing/design and cost estimation for the construction of the Ministry's annex building completed in the reporting period.



Review of Nepal's Foreign Relations

Neighbourhood

The neighbourhood occupies a distinct space in Nepali foreign policy and diplomacy with the traditionally warm and close relations between Nepal and its neighbours. Nepali foreign policy remains committed to further strengthen and diversify bilateral cooperation with its neighbours for mutual benefits. Nepal continues to remain steadfast in the principled policy of not allowing its territory to be used for activities directed against its neighbours.

The review period witnessed an increase in post-pandemic mutual exchanges at all levels between Nepal and its neighbours. The multifaceted relationship saw exchange of high-level visits, official engagements, increased people-to-people interactions including in trade and tourism. Nepal's relationships with India and China, based on the principles of peaceful coexistence, sovereign equality, and understanding of each other's aspirations and sensitivities, continued to remain excellent during the period under review.

India and China continue to remain strong, important and trusted development partners across a variety of sectors including connectivity, health, education and infrastructure development.

India

Nepal and India share a close, comprehensive and multidimensional relationship founded on the traditional linkages of history, culture, tradition and deep-rooted people-to-people contacts. The relationship continued to remain strong during the reporting period with exchange of high-level visits, meetings of different bilateral mechanisms and an increased focus on connectivity linkages. The unwavering commitment to the principles of peaceful coexistence, sovereign equality, and understanding of each other's aspirations and sensitivities has been the firm foundation on which the bilateral relations have been growing further.

Official Visit of Prime Minister of Nepal to India

Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' paid an official visit to India from 31 May - 3 June 2023 at the cordial invitation of the Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi. The two Prime Ministers held bilateral delegation-level talks on 2 June 2023, where they reviewed the entire spectrum of the bilateral relations covering trade and transit; hydropower, power trade and transmission lines; cross-border railways, motorable bridges, petroleum pipelines, Integrated Check Posts (ICPs); irrigation,

river training, inundation and flood control; agriculture; culture and civil aviation, among others. The discussion was held with a commitment to sustain the momentum of engagement in diverse areas and further strengthen the friendly relations based on equality, mutual trust, mutual respect and mutual benefit.

The two Prime Ministers directed activating all bilateral mechanisms to carry forward the bilateral cooperation. The two Prime Ministers remotely inaugurated and performed the groundbreaking of following projects: Handing-taking over of Kurtha-Bijalpura section of railway line, Flagging off the inaugural-run of Indian cargo train to Nepal on the newly built Bathnaha-Biratnagar Nepal Customs Yard Railway, Inauguration of ICPs at Nepalgunj (Nepal)-Rupaidiha (India), Groundbreaking of ICPs at Bhairahawa (Nepal)-Sunauli (India), Groundbreaking of phase II of the Motihari-Amlekhgunj petroleum pipeline project, Groundbreaking of 400KV Butwal-Gorakhpur Transmission Line.

In addition, the two Prime Ministers witnessed the exchange of Treaty of Transit between Nepal and India; MoU for the development of the ICP at Dodhara-Chandani; MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Petroleum Infrastructure; MoU between the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) of Nepal and Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) of India; MoU for the Development of Phukot-Karnali 480 MW Hydroelectricity Project; Project Development Agreement (PDA) of Lower Arun 669 MW Hydroelectricity Project; MoU between National Clearing House Limited Nepal (NCHL) and National Payment Company India Limited (NPCIL) for cross-border payments.



(Joint Inauguration of Projects by the two Prime Ministers)

The two Prime Ministers expressed satisfaction that the Agreement on the long-term power-trade completed during the visit will streamline the procedures for the power-trade and make it more predictable. The Prime Minister of India stated that India aims to increase the quantum of hydropower import from Nepal to India to 10,000 MW in the next 10 years. Prime Minister 'Prachanda' welcomed the decision of India to facilitate the first trilateral power transaction from Nepal to Bangladesh through Indian grid with an export of 40 MW of power.

Prime Minister 'Prachanda' also addressed the Nepal-India Business Summit jointly organized by Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and stated that the abundance of natural resources, large pool of human capital, a promising market in the neighbourhood together with sound policy and regulatory framework make Nepal an attractive destination for investment. He called for joining in value chains and take advantage of the readily available economic opportunities in Nepal in mutually beneficial areas. The Prime Minister also visited Ujjain and Indore where he was welcomed by Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

Official Visit of Foreign Secretary

Foreign Secretary of Nepal Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal paid an official visit to India on 13-15 September 2022 at the cordial invitation of the Foreign Secretary of India Mr. Vinay Mohan Kwatra. The two Foreign Secretaries held bilateral meeting on 13 September 2022 where multiple areas of cooperation between Nepal and India covering trade, transit, connectivity, infrastructure,



power sector, irrigation and *(The two Foreign Secretaries before the bilateral talks)* inundation, agriculture, investment, culture, and people-to-people relations, among others were discussed. The two Foreign Secretaries shared views on multilateral issues. They underscored the need for early conclusion of Transit Treaty including its Protocol and the Memorandum to the Protocol and expediting the review of the Treaty of

Trade. Recalling the outcome of high-level visits, both sides discussed seamless power trade under mutually beneficial arrangement. They exchanged views on completing the boundary works in remaining segments through established bilateral mechanisms. The Foreign Secretary of Nepal also called on the External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar on 14 September 2022.

Visit of Indian Foreign Secretary Mr. Vinay Mohan Kwatra to Nepal

On 13-14 February 2023, the Foreign Secretary of India Mr. Vinay Mohan Kwatra visited Nepal at the invitation of the Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal.

The Foreign Secretaries held a bilateral meeting in Kathmandu on 13 February 2023. During the meeting, the two Foreign Secretaries reviewed various aspects of Nepal-India relations covering connectivity, trade and transit, power sector cooperation, agriculture, education, culture, health sector and people-to-people relations, among others. The two sides reviewed with satisfaction the progress made in the connectivity projects such as railways, transmissions lines, bridges and the ICPs. The two sides also discussed the early conclusion of the revised transit treaty and review of the trade treaty. The two sides agreed to continue export of power from Nepal to India on long-term basis and upgrading of cross-border transmission lines. The Foreign Secretary of Nepal reiterated the request of the Government of Nepal for additional air-entry routes and concurrence for the near border flight operation of the Gautam Buddha International Airport, Bhairahawa. The two Foreign Secretaries also discussed the boundary matters and exchanged views on completing the boundary works in the remaining segments through the established bilateral mechanisms.



(The two Foreign Secretaries before the bilateral talks)

Meetings on Nepal- India Cooperation in Power Sector

The 10th meetings of the Joint Working Group (JWG) and Joint Steering Committee (JSC) on India-Nepal Cooperation in Power Sector were held on 17 February 2023 and 18 February 2023 respectively in Mount Abu, Rajasthan, India. During the meetings, both sides reviewed various aspects of power sector cooperation including cross-border power flow, transmission lines, inter-governmental agreement on long-term power trade and power export from Nepal to Bangladesh through India.

14th Meeting of Nepal-India Power Exchange Committee

On 17 March 2023, the 14th meeting of Nepal-India Power Exchange Committee (PEC) was held in New Delhi, India. The Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Kul Man Ghising, Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA). The India delegation was led by Mr. Ashok Kumar Rajput, Member (Power Systems) of the Central Electricity Authority of India. The meeting deliberated on the revision of electricity tariffs for the import of electricity into Nepal from the Eastern and Northern regions of India. The PEC decided on the rates for the import of electricity by Nepal from the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand for the fiscal years 2017/18 to 2023/24. Further, the meeting also discussed on the modalities to export power from Nepal to India, including scheduling, metering and deviation settlement.

9th Meeting of Joint Committee on Water Resources and 7th Meeting of Joint Standing Technical Committee

The 9th meeting of Nepal-India Joint Committee on Water Resources (JCWR) was held in Kathmandu on 23 September 2022. The meeting was preceded by the 7th meeting of Nepal-India Joint Standing Technical Committee (JSTC) on Water Resources. Comprehensive review of water-sector cooperation between Nepal and India, including the implementation of Mahakali Treaty, Saptakoshi High Dam Multipurpose Project, and bilateral cooperation in flooding and inundation issues was done during the meetings. Moreover, the meetings also reviewed the activities of bilateral mechanisms related to water resources such as Joint Committee on Koshi and Gandak Project (JCKGP), and Joint Committee on Inundation and Flood Management (JCIFM).

The JCWR also extended the tenure of the Team of Experts (TOE) till March 2023 for the finalization of the DPR of Pancheswar Multipurpose Project and mandated the TOE to undertake its activities in a time-bound manner.

6th Nepal-India Coordination Meeting between APF, Nepal and SSB, India

The 6th Nepal-India Coordination Meeting between Inspector General of Armed Police Force, Nepal (APF, Nepal) and Director General (DG) of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB, India) was held in Kathmandu on 27-29 September 2022. Both sides deliberated on the issue of security situation in border areas, transborder crimes, regulating the movement of third country nationals through designated border crossing point, and timely exchange of information between two agencies.

China

Nepal and China enjoy an excellent state of bilateral relations based on the strong foundations of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, the age-old legacy of friendship, close and good neighbourliness, mutual cooperation and understanding, and appreciation of each other's sensitivities. The close and friendly relations between the two countries were further cemented during the reporting period. The two countries continued their efforts to advance and further broaden the areas of cooperation across political, economic, social, and cultural spheres.

As a good neighbour and trusted friend, China extended unwavering support and respect for Nepal's sovereignty, territorial integrity, stability and national independence. Nepal-China bilateral engagements have been steered by good neighbourhood diplomacy based on sincerity, amity and mutual benefits. China has remained the largest source country for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), second largest trading partner, and a major source country of foreign tourists to Nepal. During the review period, as a trusted development partner, China continued to provide development cooperation to Nepal to support its socio-economic growth trajectory in the spirit of true friendship.

Visit of Mr. Li Zhanshu, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress to Nepal

At the invitation of Speaker of the House of Representatives of Nepal Mr. Agni Prasad Sapkota, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Li Zhanshu paid an official visit to Nepal on 12-15 September 2022. During his visit, Mr. Li Zhanshu paid a courtesy call on President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari at the President Office on 14 September 2022. On the occasion, the two sides recalled the exchange of high-level visits and discussed various matters of mutual interests.

Mr. Li Zhanshu also called on the Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba at Singha Durbar on 13 September 2022. During the meeting, the two dignitaries discussed wide-

ranging matters of mutual interest between the two countries including bilateral trade, investment, connectivity, return of Nepali students to China, resumption of passenger flights, and reopening of border ports, among others.



(Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba with Chairman Mr. Li Zhanshu)

On 12 September 2022, Speaker of the House of Representatives Mr. Agni Prasad Sapkota and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China Mr. Li Zhanshu held official talks leading their respective delegations.



(Speaker Mr. Agni Prasad Sapkota with Chairman Mr. Li Zhanshu)

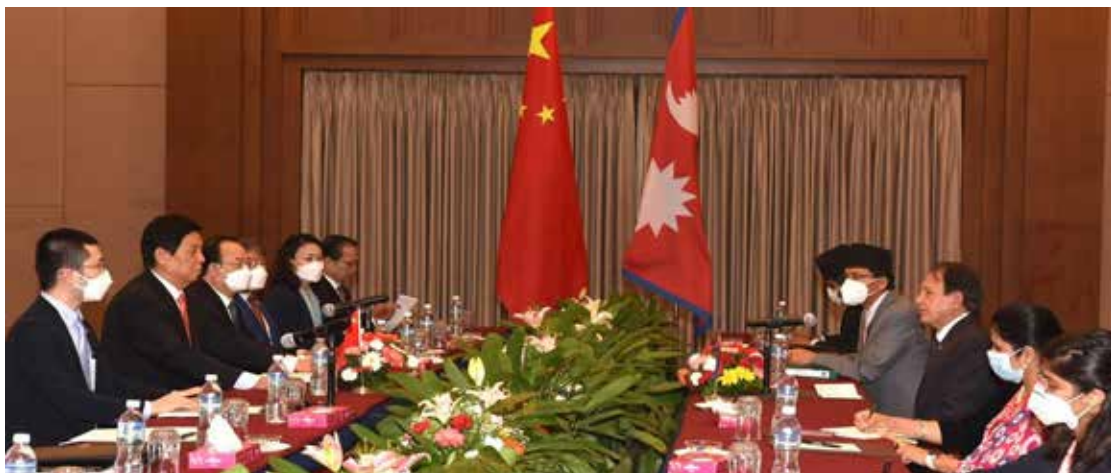
Following the bilateral talks, Mr. Agni Prasad Sapkota and Mr. Li Zhanshu signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Inter-parliamentary Cooperation.

Mr. Li Zhansu also held a meeting with Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina, Chairperson of the National Assembly of the Federal Parliament of Nepal on 13 September 2022. Various matters of Nepal-China relations including the inter-parliamentary exchanges and cooperation were discussed on the occasion.



(Chairperson Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina with Chairman Mr. Li Zhanshu)

Mr. Li Zhansu also held a meeting with Dr. Narayan Khadka, Minister for Foreign Affairs. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on various aspects of Nepal-China relations.



(Minister Dr. Khadka with Chairman Mr. Li leading their respective delegations)

Virtual Meeting between Chairperson of National Assembly of Nepal and Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference

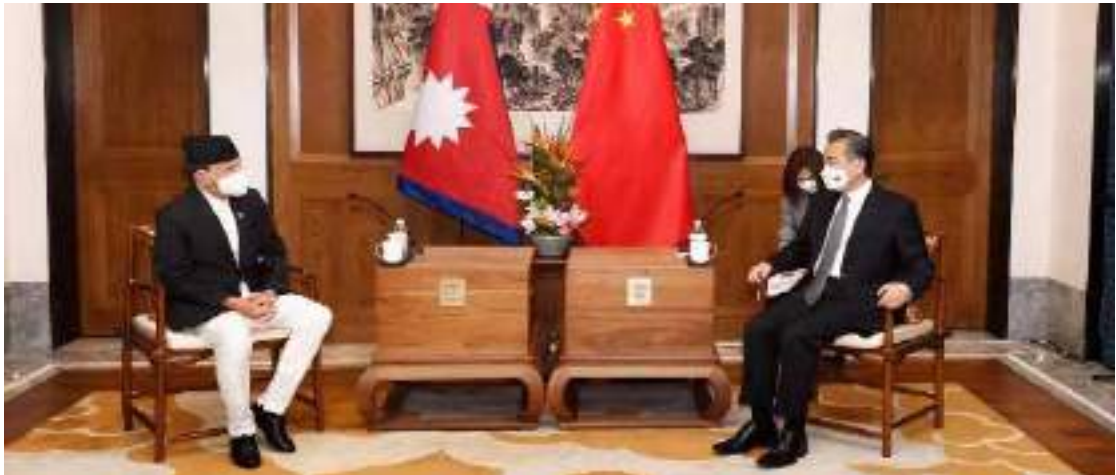
Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina, Chairperson of the National Assembly of Nepal held a virtual meeting with Mr. Wang Yang, Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference on 2 September 2022. The two sides exchanged views on various aspects of Nepal-China relations and underscored the importance of regular exchanges of high-level visits between the two parliaments of both countries to further strengthen the inter-parliamentary cooperation.



(Chairman Mr. Wang Yang and Chairperson Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina during the virtual meeting)

Visit of Foreign Minister to China

At the invitation of Mr. Wang Yi, State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, Dr. Narayan Khadka, Minister for Foreign Affairs paid a three-day official visit to China from 9 to 11 August 2022.



(Minister Dr. Khadka with his Chinese counterpart State Councilor Mr. Wang)

On the occasion, State Councilor Mr. Wang Yi announced to provide 800 million RMB to Nepal for the year 2021. The two Foreign Ministers decided to establish a joint mechanism for pandemic control in border ports. They also agreed to open Rasuwa-Kerung and Tatopani-Zhangmu ports for two-way trade and Hilsa-Pulang port for one way trade. In support of people being affected by disasters and natural calamities in different parts of Nepal, State Councilor Mr. Wang Yi announced to provide Nepal with 3 million RMB worth of disaster relief materials as per Nepal's request. China will also provide Nepal with additional 2 million RMB worth of medical items and logistics. The State Councilor also announced that China will provide additional COVID-19 vaccines and COVID-19 related medical assistance as much as Nepal may require.

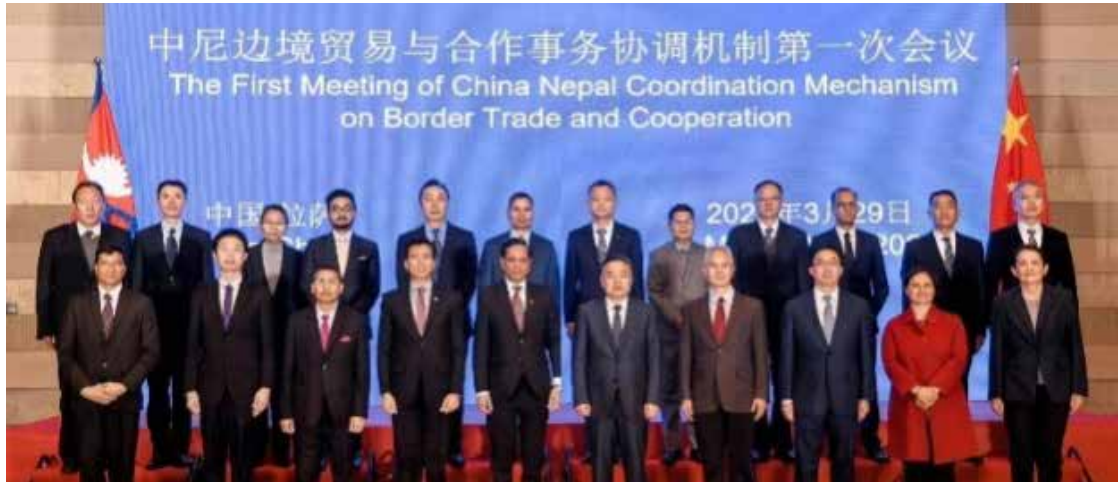
Meeting of Nepal-China's Tibet Trade Facilitation Committee

The 10th meeting of Nepal-China's Tibet Trade Facilitation Committee (NTTFC) was held virtually on 18 July 2022. Various trade-related matters between Nepal and China's Tibet including full operationalization of border ports, export of Nepali tea, coffee and cooked buffalo meat, infrastructure development at the border ports, and establishment of cross-border economic zones, among others were discussed during the meeting.

The 1st Meeting of Nepal-China Coordination Mechanism on Border Trade and Cooperation

The 1st meeting of the Nepal-China Coordination Mechanism on Border Trade and Cooperation was held on 29 March 2023 in Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China. The meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Madhu Kumar Marasini, Secretary of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, Nepal and Mr. Chen Yongqi, Executive Vice-Chairman of the People's Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region of China.

The discussion was focused on resuming the cross-border trade and movement of people at optimum level and exploring new avenues of cooperation in border trade and cooperation including smooth operation of land ports, trade facilitation, custom cooperation, border area development, trade-related infrastructures, among others. Reopening other border trade points at Nepal-China border was also discussed with a view to help border area inhabitants and support for their livelihood.

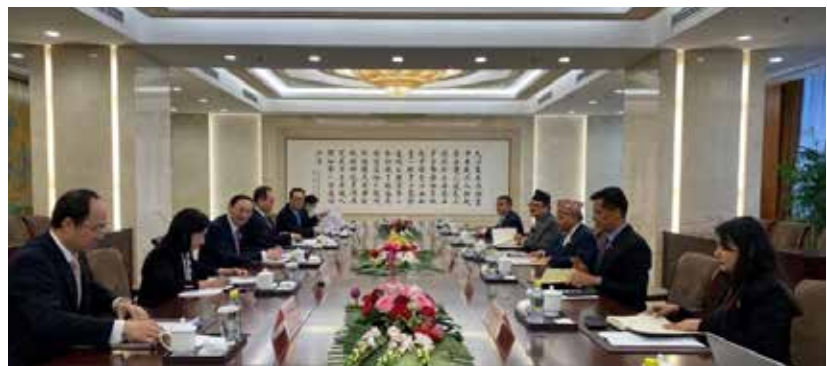


(Nepali and Chinese officials during the 1st Meeting of Nepal-China Coordination Mechanism on Border Trade and Cooperation)

15th Meeting of Nepal-China Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism

The 15th meeting of the Nepal-China Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism was held between the Foreign Ministries of Nepal and the People's Republic of China in Beijing on 7 April 2023. During the meeting, the two sides took stock of the existing Nepal-China bilateral relations and cooperation and deliberated on the ways to further expanding and consolidating cooperation in various areas, including development cooperation; promotion of trade, investment and tourism; building connectivity; and strengthening cooperation in the fields of agriculture, education, culture and people-to-people relations, among others. The meeting also reviewed the progress of different infrastructure development projects under China's grant assistance as well as Chinese-contracted projects and agreed to expedite the implementation of the projects so as to complete them in time.

Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal and Vice Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China Mr. Sun Weidong led their respective delegations to the meeting.



(15th Meeting of Nepal-China Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism)

Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal also called on Mr. Qin Gang, State Councilor and Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing on 6 April 2023. The two sides discussed various issues of mutual interests including the exchange of high-level visits, deepening economic cooperation and collaboration and promoting people-to-people exchanges.

Resumption of two-way trade and people-to-people movement

Following the 1st meeting of the Nepal-China Coordination Mechanism on Border Trade and Cooperation held on 29 March 2023 in Lhasa, the Rasuwagadhi-Kyerung border port has come into full operation for two-way trade and movement of people from 1 April 2023. China also resumed passenger clearance at the Jilong (Kyerung) dry port. Similarly, two-way trade via Tatopani-Zhangmu and human movement/passenger clearance from Yari/Pulang has resumed from 1 May 2023. The reopening of the ports is expected to augment bilateral trade between Nepal and China.

South Asia

There was continued engagement with the South Asian neighbours during the period under review. Exchange of high-level visits, focus on economic integration through trade and energy cooperation, and significant diplomatic engagements on matters of mutual interest with several countries in the region signalled the continued cooperative relations with Nepal's South Asian neighbours.

Afghanistan

Nepal's approach to Afghanistan has been guided by the goodwill and humanitarian assistance for the continued progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Afghanistan. Nepal wishes to see lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan, a fellow member of SAARC.

Bhutan

Nepal and Bhutan continue to enjoy good relations with deep roots in socio-cultural linkages and strong bonds at the people-to-people level. Both countries share a common landlocked and mountain topography and have similar aspirations, developmental challenges and priorities including tackling climate change.

The trade relations between Nepal and Bhutan are on an upward trend. There is scope for further expansion and deepening of the relationship particularly in the fields of forestry, agriculture, tourism and culture. The 5th Bilateral Trade Talk between Nepal and Bhutan was held on 15-16 February 2023 in Thimphu, Bhutan. Reviewing the various aspects of draft Trade Agreement between the two countries, the two sides discussed the draft rules of origin, product list and modalities for preferential treatment. The meeting also drew a timeline for resolving the pending issues and the conclusion of the Agreement.

Bangladesh

Nepal-Bangladesh relations continued to flourish in a spirit of friendship and neighbourliness during the review period. Exchange of high-level visits, parliamentary

interactions, progress in energy cooperation, and significant diplomatic engagements in the areas of mutual interest marked the ever-growing collaboration between the two countries.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud visited Bangladesh on 12-14 May 2023. On 14 May, the Foreign Minister called on the Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina. Matters such as trade, investment, energy cooperation, tourism as well as the interests of Nepali students studying in Bangladesh were discussed in the meeting. He also had a virtual meeting with his Bangladeshi counterpart Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, on 12 May. He addressed the 6th Indian Ocean Conference on 13 May, during which he underscored the strategic, economic, and ecological significance of the Indian Ocean and highlighted its importance as a gateway to international markets for the landlocked countries like Nepal.



(Foreign Minister Mr. Saud and his delegation with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina)

The year also witnessed significant strides in strengthening economic linkages between the two countries. The 4th and 5th meetings of Joint Steering Committee (JSC) on Cooperation in the Field of Power Sector, held on 25 August 2022 in Nepal and on 17 May 2023 in Bangladesh respectively, agreed to expedite the efforts to export 40-50 MW of electricity from Nepal to Bangladesh. The meeting also deliberated on the possibility of developing 683 MW Sunkoshi III hydropower project on a joint venture basis.

Similarly, the 7th meeting of Nepal-Bangladesh Joint Expert Committee on Harnessing of Water Resources and Mitigating Floods and Flood Damages was held in Dhaka on 30 May 2023. The two sides signed an MoU between Nepal and Bangladesh on 'Sharing of Real-time Hydro- meteorological Data and Information for Flood Forecasting and Warning'. The meeting also discussed the opportunities for sharing knowledge and experience in irrigation and water management.

As a result of continued dialogue between the two governments, the Government of Bangladesh decided to lift the ban on the export of all kinds of yarns from Nepal to Bangladesh via Banglabandh land port since December 2022. In addition, exchanges in the areas of education, digital connectivity, military cooperation, and tourism were prioritized in the ongoing bilateral efforts to deepen the multifaceted relationship between Nepal and Bangladesh.

A 'Deed of Lease Regarding Allotment of Land in Baridhara Diplomatic Enclave to the Embassy of Nepal' was signed between the Embassy of Nepal in Dhaka and Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (RAJUK) in Dhaka on 20 June 2023. Ambassador of Nepal to Bangladesh Mr. Ghanshyam Bhandari and Chairman (Secretary) of RAJUK Mr. Md. Anisur Rahman Miah, BPAA signed the Lease Deed on behalf of their respective governments.

The Maldives

The relations between Nepal and the Maldives continued to be marked by goodwill, cooperation and mutual understanding during the reporting period. The two countries share similar views on many international issues and work closely at various international forums.

There is an increased exchange post the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly on the people-to-people relations, with a significant number of Nepali medical professional working in the Maldives. Nepal is also a host to Maldivian students, who seek to study medicine in Nepal. There is a huge potential for increased collaboration, particularly in the areas of education, tourism and trade.

Pakistan

Nepal and Pakistan continued to engage on the bilateral and multilateral fora on matters of common interest during the reporting period based on goodwill, mutual respect and cooperation. Pakistan continued to provide support to Nepali students under the Pakistan Technical Assistance Program (PTAP) for higher education in the

field of medicine, engineering and dentistry. Pakistan also continued to offer training programmes for Nepali Army officials during the reporting period.

Ms. Pushpa Bhusal, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of Nepal led a Nepali delegation to the Third Regional Seminar for Parliamentarians on Achieving SDGs which was organized by the National Assembly of Pakistan and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Islamabad on 13-14 September 2022. The Seminar focused on various aspects of the implementation of SDGs in the region and the role of the parliamentarians in this regard.

There is potential for the bilateral trade to increase significantly along with the possibilities of increased cooperation in the field of sports, tourism and climate change. Nepal's export to Pakistan primarily includes black tea, woollen shawls, leather, hide and skin, optical lenses, medicinal plants, lentil and cardamom.

The Government of Nepal sent humanitarian relief materials containing essential food items, medicines, garments and other household items weighing more than 22 tonnes for the flood affected people of Pakistan on a chartered flight of Nepal Airlines on 13 September 2022. On behalf of the Government of Nepal, Joint Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal handed over the relief materials to Mr. Sajid Jokhio, Provincial Minister for Social Welfare of Sindh Provincial Government amid a brief ceremony organized at the Jinnah International Airport, Karachi.

Sri Lanka

Nepal- Sri Lanka relations continued to be friendly and fruitful with cooperation on bilateral and multilateral fora during the review period.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Bimala Rai Paudyal visited Sri Lanka on 2-5 February 2023 to participate in the 75th Independence Day celebrations as an honoured guest. During her visit, Foreign Minister Paudyal paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Mr. Dinesh Gunawardena and conveyed the greetings and best wishes on behalf of the President and Prime Minister of Nepal on the auspicious occasion of the 75th Independence Day of Sri Lanka for the continuous peace, progress and prosperity of the people of Sri Lanka. The matters including direct air connectivity between Colombo and Bhairahawa, attracting Sri Lankan investment in hydro power projects in Nepal, enhancing cooperation in the field of agriculture and collaborating in teachers' training program were discussed during the meeting.

Buddhism continues to play an important role in the people-to-people relationship of the two countries. Lumbini is a popular pilgrimage site for Sri Lankan Buddhists and a significant number of Nepali Buddhist monks' study in Sri Lanka. There is mutual cooperation in training programs organized by Nepali and Sri Lanka army. Nepali students are pursuing various courses offered by Sri Lanka as scholarship in Kotelawalla Defence University, University of Peradeniya, Ruhuna University, Jaffna University, Kelenia University and SLIIT. Nepal is also popular for Sri Lankan students, particularly in the medical sector.

There is significant potential for Nepal- Sri Lanka joint ventures in the service sectors such as hotel and tourism.

North-East Asia

During the review period, Nepal's happily existing amicable, cordial and cooperative relations with the countries of the North-East Asian region witnessed further development and continued cooperation in diverse areas of mutual interests. Nepal's engagements with these nations were expressed in the high-level interactions, physical/virtual meetings, bilateral consultations, and people-to-people contacts, among others.

Overall, bilateral engagements with the countries in this vibrant region have fructified in further achieving goals of shared development and prosperity.

Japan and the Republic of Korea maintained their assistance to Nepal's development efforts in sectors such as human resource development, health, infrastructure, among others.

Japan

Nepal's bilateral relations with Japan has been friendly, cooperative and mutually beneficial for both sides. As a major development partner, Japan assisted Nepal in achieving broad-based and sustainable development trajectory. Japanese assistance encompassed a wide array of areas including health, education, transport and infrastructure development.

The close and cordial ties from political to people-to-people levels of the two countries were the hallmark of Nepal-Japan relations under the review period.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Takei Shunsuke's Visit to Nepal

Mr. Takei Shunsuke, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan visited Nepal on 20-21 November 2022 to observe the election of the House of Representatives and Provincial Assemblies held on 20 November 2022.

During his visit, the state minister paid a courtesy call on President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari at the President Office on 21 November 2022. Matters of mutual interest were discussed during the courtesy call.



(State Minister Mr. Takei Shunsuke pays courtesy call on President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari at the President Office)

On 20 November 2022, State Minister Mr. Takei Shunsuke called on Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina, Chairperson of the National Assembly. During the call on, various matters of Nepal-Japan relations including the inter-parliamentary exchanges and cooperation were discussed.

Mr. Shunsuke also met with Mr. Dinesh Kumar Thapaliya, Chief Election Commissioner on 21 November 2022. Matters related to elections of the House of Representatives and Provincial Assemblies were discussed during the meeting.



(State Minister Mr. Takei with Chief Election Commissioner Mr. Thapaliya)

JICA Executive Senior Vice President's visit to Nepal

The Executive Senior Vice President of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Dr. Junichi Yamada visited Nepal on 4-7 December 2022. During his visit,

Dr. Yamada met with Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal on 6 December 2022 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and held discussions on the future opportunities of partnership and JICA cooperation policy to Nepal. Dr. Yamada also observed the activities of JICA supported projects namely Sindhuli Road and Nagdhunga Tunnel Construction Project and witnessed the progress made in the construction works of these projects.



(Foreign Secretary Mr. Paudyal with JICA Executive Senior Vice President Dr. Yamada)

4th Meeting of Nepal-Japan Bilateral Consultation Mechanism

The 4th meeting of the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between the Foreign Ministries of Nepal and Japan was held in Tokyo on 18 April 2023.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed the whole gamut of bilateral relations and exchanged views on further promoting cooperation between the two countries. Various ways and means of enhancing cooperation in the areas of trade, tourism, investment, agriculture, waste and disaster management, foreign employment as well as culture and people-to-people ties were discussed on the occasion. The Japanese side assured of the continued cooperation of the Government of Japan to Nepal for its graduation from the LDC status and thereafter within the framework of its cooperation policy.

Joint Secretary and the Head of North-East Asia Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa and Director General of the South-East and South-West Asian Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan Mr. Arima Yutaka led their respective delegations to the meeting which was held in the environment of warmth and cordiality.



(Nepali and Japanese delegation during the 4th Meeting of Nepal-Japan Bilateral Consultation Mechanism)

Prior to the meeting, Joint Secretary Mr. Thapa paid a courtesy call on the State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr. Takei Shunsuke at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Republic of Korea

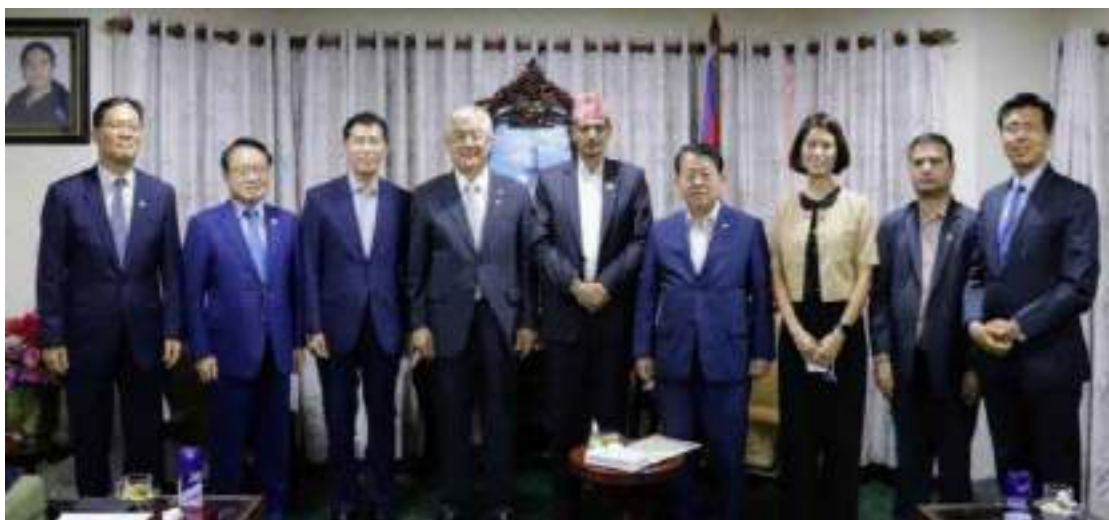
Nepal and the Republic of Korea (ROK) have been enjoying the momentum of amicable relations during the reporting period. Enhanced level of bilateral engagements, deepening cooperation in regional and international forums, robust people-to-people relations and continued development cooperation to Nepal helped further strengthen and consolidate Nepal-ROK bilateral ties.

Nepal continued to be among the priority countries in Asia for official development assistance from the Korean Government. Through KOICA, the ROK made a substantial overall contribution to Nepal's development in key areas like energy, education, health, rural and human resource development, and so on. Parallel to this, there is constant growth in the two nations' bilateral trade. There exist ample potentials for enhancing access of Nepali products to thriving Korean markets. It is encouraging that Korean investment in priority development sectors of Nepal continued to increase in this fiscal year.

Visit of Members of the National Assembly of the ROK to Nepal

A delegation comprising four members of the National Assembly of Korea including Mr. Lee Sangheon, President of Korea-Nepal Parliamentary Friendship Group visited Nepal on 19-22 August 2022.

The delegation paid a courtesy call on Speaker of the House of Representatives of Nepal Mr. Agni Prasad Sapkota on 21 August 2022. The two sides exchanged views on the current situation and future opportunities for cooperation between the two countries, including high-level visits as well as people-to-people exchanges.



(National Assembly members of the ROK pay a courtesy call on Speaker Mr. Sapkota)

Global President and CFO of Samsung Electronics Company visits Nepal

Global President and Chief Financial Officer of Samsung Electronics Company Mr. Hark Kyu Park visited Nepal and paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba on 24 August 2022. Various matters of bilateral relations and mutual interests between the two countries were discussed during the meeting. Mr. Park also attended the Foundation laying Ceremony of Samsung TV Factory in Bhairahawa, the production of which is expected to start in February 2023.

6th Meeting of Nepal-ROK Bilateral Consultation Mechanism

The 6th meeting of the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between the Foreign Ministries of Nepal and the ROK was held in Seoul on 14 April 2023. During the meeting, the two sides took stock of the overall state of bilateral relations between Nepal and the ROK and exchanged views on promoting cooperation in different areas encompassing

trade, investment, employment, energy, technology transfer, education, tourism, culture and people-to-people relations. The two sides discussed and agreed to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and the ROK by organizing various events including the exchange of high-level visits in 2024. They also agreed to sign an agreement between Nepal and the ROK on waiving visa for holders of official and diplomatic passports.

Joint Secretary and the Head of North-East Asia Division, Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa and Director General of the Asian and Pacific Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the ROK, Ms. Seo Min Jeong led their respective delegations to the meeting.



(6th Meeting of Nepal-ROK Bilateral Consultation Mechanism in Seoul)

Mongolia

During the review period, Nepal and Mongolia continued to enjoy a long-standing friendship and cordial relations guided by values and principles of the UN Charter, the Non-alignment, the *Panchsheel* and the norms of world peace. Both countries supported each other for their shared interests in regional and international forums including the United Nations. Growing people-to-people contacts encouraged by Buddhism since ancient times remained yet another hallmark of Nepal-Mongolia relations over the years.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Nepal and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea maintained friendly relations during the review period. Both the countries cooperated with each other in the areas of mutual interests and benefits. Nepal upheld its long-standing policy to see lasting peace and stability in the Korean peninsula.

South-East Asia and the Pacific

South-East Asia and the Pacific region, with over 660 million population, is an important region for promoting Nepal's trade, investment, tourism, employment and cultural cooperation.

The bilateral relations between Nepal and the countries of this region remained cordial and friendly during the period under review. In comparison to the previous year, which saw the negative impacts of the second and third wave of COVID-19 pandemic around the globe, this year saw steady growth in Nepal's bilateral relations with the countries of this region. Continued efforts were made to further expand cooperation with these countries especially in the areas of trade, tourism and investment.

Common Asian values and culture have brought people of Nepal and this region closer. Buddhism, direct air connectivity, people-to-people contacts have further contributed to cementing the relationship between Nepal and South-East Asia region. The increasing number of Nepali Diaspora in the region particularly in Australia and New Zealand has provided avenues for deepening engagement with them.

Malaysia hosted more than four hundred thousand Nepali workers whose remittances contributed to the socio-economic development of Nepal. Bilateral relations between Nepal and Malaysia in this duration was further strengthened by the implementation of Memorandum of Understanding between Nepal and Malaysia on the Recruitment, Employment and Repatriation of Workers, signed on 29 October 2018 in Kathmandu.

Australia

Nepal and Australia continued to enjoy friendly and cooperative relations over this period. Nepali diaspora in Australia has become an important facet of Nepal-Australia relations. More than one hundred thousand Nepalis have made Australia their home, and around 42,000 students are currently pursuing higher studies in Australian colleges and universities. Since Nepali students are the third largest group among Australia's international students' cohort, this has been instrumental in deepening mutual engagements between Nepal and Australia.

2nd Meeting of Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between Nepal and Australia

The 2nd Meeting of Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between Nepal and Australia was held in Canberra on 30 August 2022. Foreign Secretary Mr. Paudyal and Mr. Justin Hayhurst, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia led their respective delegations to the meeting. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the bilateral relations and exchanged views on further strengthening the bilateral ties and cooperation in different fields, such as education, energy, investment, trade, tourism, technology transfer, migration, cooperation in climate action, and disaster risk reduction, among others. Both sides agreed to prioritize the exchange of high-level visits, promote people-to-people contacts, and facilitate trade, investment and transfer of technology. They also discussed cooperation in multilateral forums, including the exchange of experiences in UN Peacekeeping operations. Secretary of the Water and Energy Commission Secretariat (WECS) along with his staff were also a part of Nepali delegation visiting Canberra.



(2nd Meeting of the Nepal-Australia Bilateral Consultation Mechanism)

Visit of Australian Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs to Nepal

Mr. Tim Watts MP, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia paid an official visit to Nepal on 16-17 May 2023. During the visit he paid courtesy calls on Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud. He also participated in a ceremony of handing over a wooden sculpture – called a Tunala – from a 13th century temple in Nepal which was in Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia. His visit which was realized after a long gap of high-level visits from Australia to Nepal has further strengthened Nepal-Australia relations.

Meeting with the Governor of Australian Reserve Bank

Ambassador Mr. Kailash Raj Pokharel held a meeting with Mr. Phillip William Lowe, Governor of Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) on 21 April 2023. They delved into various issues of mutual interests including the possibilities in banking engagement between Nepal and Australia. Considering the significant amount of remittance from Australia to Nepal through unofficial channels, Mr. Pokharel requested to ease the mode of remittance by facilitating establishing banking relations between the Commercial Banks of both countries.



(Ambassador Mr. Pokharel with Mr. Phillip William Lowe, Governor of Reserve Bank of Australia)

Indonesia

Nepal and Indonesia continued to enjoy friendly and cooperative relations during the period under review. The Embassy of Nepal in Kuala Lumpur worked closely for the rescue of Nepali citizens stranded in Indonesia due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participation in Bali Democracy Forum

Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa, Chief of South-East Asia Pacific Division participated in the 15th Bali Democracy Forum held on 8 December 2022 in Bali, Indonesia. He focused on investing in people's education and health, unleashing the creative and entrepreneurial energies of the youth, and keeping the workforce ready to adapt to technological changes which are the key elements in reducing inequality across and within countries. Nepal has been participating in all editions of Bali Democracy Forum.

Malaysia

The cordial and congenial relations between Nepal and Malaysia saw steady growth during the review period. Malaysia remains an important destination for Nepali workers, and Nepali nationals continue to contribute to both Malaysia's and Nepali economic growth.

Labour diplomacy remains a core component of Nepal-Malaysia relations. There is an existing Memorandum of Collaboration between the Foreign Employment Board of Nepal and the Social Security Organization of Malaysia which was signed in February 2021 on the promotion of Social Security Programmes and activities for insured Nepali workers in Malaysia.

Visit of Malaysian Minister of Home Affairs to Nepal

Mr. Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution bin Ismail, Minister of Home Affairs of Malaysia visited Nepal on 4-5 February 2023. During the visit, he met Mr. Dol Prasad Aryal, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security of Nepal. Zero cost recruitment, better social security and social welfare, digital application system for grievance handling were some of the pertinent matters discussed during the meeting. The visiting Minister also paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister of Nepal, Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' in Singha Durbar, Kathmandu.

Myanmar

The bilateral relations between Nepal and Myanmar remained cordial during the review period. Around 50 thousand pilgrims from Myanmar visit Lumbini, the birthplace of Gautam Buddha, every year.

The review period was also marked by the efforts of rescue and repatriation of Nepali nationals trafficked into Myanmar to involve them into fraudulent online activities in companies operating in Myanmar-Thailand and Myanmar-China border regions. More than 48 Nepali nationals were rescued and repatriated to Nepal during the reporting period.

The Philippines

The bilateral relations between Nepal and the Philippines continued to remain cordial and cooperative during the period under review. The two countries worked in close coordination for organizing rescue flights for Nepali citizens stranded in the Philippines, as well as for the Filipinos stranded in Nepal during COVID-19 times.

Thailand

Nepal and Thailand enjoy strong bilateral relations based on goodwill, mutual cooperation and understanding. Besides being members of BIMSTEC and the NAM, both Nepal and Thailand have been bound not only by the principles and practices of international organizations like the UN, but also by the similarity in culture and shared values, such as Buddhism. Thai people have tremendous goodwill for Nepal as well as Nepali people. Thousands of Thais, including monks and other pilgrims, visit Nepal to pay homage in Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha, every year.

On 22 July 2022, Mr. Vosita Vorasaph, Ambassador of Thailand to Nepal handed over medical equipment to Prof. Dr. Bishwa Keshar Maskey, Vice-Chairman of Nepal Red Cross Society to assist Nepal in her fight against the COVID-19 outbreak.

Participation in the inaugural BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' Retreat

Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud participated in the inaugural BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' Retreat in Bangkok on 17 July 2023. Foreign Minister Mr. Saud had bilateral meetings at the sidelines of the retreat with his counterparts from Thailand, India and Sri Lanka.



(Foreign Minister Mr. Saud with Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand)

Participation in the Third Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific

The Nepali delegation led by Dr Biswo Nath Poudel, Vice Chairman of the National Planning Commission participated in the Third Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok on 28-30 September 2022.

Singapore

The bilateral relations between Nepal and Singapore continued to remain cordial and cooperative under the review period. Each year, Singapore has been providing training opportunities to the government officials of Nepal in Singapore under Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP).

Republic of Timor-Leste

Nepal and the Republic of Timor-Leste established diplomatic relations on 11 February 2022. Timor-Leste is the 173rd country to have diplomatic relations with Nepal.

Central Asia, West Asia and Africa

Nepal has consistently strengthened its friendly and cooperative relations with countries in Central Asia, West Asia, and Africa. Throughout the review period, the Gulf region maintained its significance as a key destination for Nepali migrant workers.

The Ministry, in collaboration with diplomatic missions, played a pivotal role in ensuring the safety and welfare of Nepali workers in the Gulf region. Additionally, concerted efforts were made in activities related to the rescue, relief, and repatriation of Nepali nationals.

The review period has also seen notable high-level engagements.

Bahrain

Nepal and Bahrain maintain friendly and steadily progressing relations. The finalized draft MoU for a bilateral consultation mechanism signals enhanced cooperation. Around 25 thousand Nepalis currently contribute through employment in Bahrain.

In March 2023, a high-level parliamentary delegation from Nepal, led by Speaker of the House of Representatives Mr. Dev Raj Ghimire, attended the 146th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) held in Bahrain.

Dr. Sanduk Ruit, a distinguished Ophthalmologist from Nepal, has been conferred with the laureate of the 5th edition of the Isa Award for Service to Humanity 2021-23. This accolade not only reflects Dr. Ruit's excellence but also shines a brighter light on bilateral relations and creates a new window of opportunity to explore collaboration in the medical field between the two countries.

Egypt

The bilateral relations between Nepal and the Arab Republic of Egypt, characterized by mutual trust, goodwill, understanding and friendship, continued to grow in the reporting period. A 13-member official delegation from Nepal led by Minister for Women, Children and Senior Citizens Mrs. Uma Regmi attended the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt on 6-18 November 2022.

Israel

Nepal and Israel share a longstanding cordial relationship marked by friendship, goodwill, and cooperation, along with considerable engagement between the academic and non-governmental sectors of both countries. There is potential to further expand and deepen cooperation in trade, investment, energy, agriculture, employment, tourism, and people-to-people contacts.

In October 2022, Minister of Land Management, Cooperatives, and Poverty Alleviation Ms. Shashi Shrestha led a Nepali delegation on a study visit to Israel.

Israel is a sought-after destination for Nepali migrant workers, with approximately three thousand employed in the caregiving sector during the review period.

Kuwait

Nepal and Kuwait maintain strong bilateral relations since 1972 emphasizing goodwill and cooperation. Efforts are underway to enhance this friendship through potential agreements, including the Bilateral Labour Agreement. Kuwait stands as a major destination for Nepali migrant workers employed across various sectors.

In 2022, Nepal and Kuwait celebrated the 50th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations. Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) has been supporting Nepal in the field of hydropower development and irrigation.

Kuwait Airways, the National Flag carrier of Kuwait, initiated direct flights on the Kuwait-Kathmandu route in the third week of November 2022 as scheduled flights. This direct flight is anticipated to boost tourism, trade, and travel between Nepal and Kuwait, as well as with other countries in the Gulf region.

Oman

Nepal and the Sultanate of Oman maintain warm and friendly relations based on cordiality and goodwill. There is significant potential for cooperation in labour, tourism,

trade, and investment. The Sultanate currently hosts over 22,000 Nepali workers, including medical practitioners.

The Eighth Middle East Regional Conference of the Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) was held in Muscat, Oman, on 28-30 June 2023. Inaugurated by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, Mr. Purna Bahadur Khadka, the conference focused on the theme 'Mandatory social security and respectable foreign employment remittances are the foundation of nation-building'.

On June 30, 2023, the Embassy of Nepal in Muscat hosted an interactive meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Mr. Purna Bahadur Khadka, Minister for Labour, Employment, and Social Security Mr. Sharat Singh Bhandari, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mr. Raghbir Mahaseth, Finance Minister Mr. Janardhan Sharma, and Labour Minister Mr. Kishan Kumar Shrestha. Discussions covered various topics including labour, bilateral relations, and other relevant issues. Ambassadors and Mission Chiefs of Nepal to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Bahrain, along with other officials, were also in attendance.

Qatar

Nepal and Qatar share a strong bond built on trust, respect, and cooperation. Nepali migrant workers have played a vital role in Qatar's development, especially in construction, agriculture, and services.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha led a Nepali delegation at the 5th United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries (UNLDC5) on 5-9 March 2023.

Saudi Arabia

The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia approved the Agreement on General Cooperation (GCA) signed between Nepal and Saudi Arabia in March 2022.

Nepali migrant workers serve as a vibrant bridge between Nepal and Saudi Arabia. Both countries are actively involved in finalizing a bilateral labour agreement to strengthen bilateral labour cooperation.

In response to the outbreak of violence in Sudan in April 2023, 19 Nepali citizens were successfully evacuated with the assistance of the Government of Saudi Arabia.

South Africa

Nepal-South Africa relations saw positive growth during the review period with constructive engagements in trade, tourism, culture, sports, education, and economic cooperation.

Minister for Urban Development Ms. Sita Gurung led a Nepali delegation to the Second Session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya on 5-9 July 2023. The session focused on achieving sustainable urban development amid global crises, acknowledging the Assembly's leading role in urban policy making. The Ministerial Declaration adopted at the end of the session emphasized accelerating the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through effective multilateral governance.

United Arab Emirates

The UAE continues to be a significant labour destination for Nepali migrant workers. Additionally, the UAE serves as a development partner for Nepal offering assistance in various sectors, including health, education, commodity aid, biosphere and biodiversity, water and sanitation, and social services.

Chairperson of the National Assembly of Federal Parliament Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina visited the UAE and held a meeting with Mr. Saqr Ghobash, the Speaker of the Federal National Council of the UAE, in Abu Dhabi on 20 February 2023.



(Chairperson Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina meeting with Speaker Mr. Saqr Ghobash)

The meeting focused on enhancing cooperation between the two countries in tourism, energy, trade, labour, and parliamentary affairs.

Mr. Ek Narayan Aryal, Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Social Security led a Nepali delegation to the World Government Summit in Dubai on 13-15 February 2023. During the Summit, Mr. Aryal engaged in discussions with the Minister of Human Resources of the UAE, the Minister of Human Resources of the Government of Qatar, and Labor Ministers from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam to address mutual concerns.

A delegation led by Mr. Dinesh Kumar Ghimire, Secretary of the Ministry of Water Resources, Irrigation, and Energy of Nepal, participated in the thirteenth session of the IRENA Assembly on 13-15 January 2023, focusing on 'World Energy Transition - The Global Stocktake.' Mr. Ghimire made a presentation in 'Advancing Renewables-based Clean Cooking Solutions Session' on 14 January. Permanent Representative of Nepal to IRENA and Ambassador of Nepal to the UAE Mr. Krishna Prasad Dhakal and other officials of the Embassy of Nepal in Abu Dhabi actively engaged in all IRENA Assembly, Council, and other Meetings during the review period.

Europe and the Americas

Nepal continued to maintain cordial relations with the countries of the European and American continents throughout the reporting period. These relations were further enhanced through exchange of visits, increased development cooperation and economic partnership, regular bilateral consultations, among others.

Austria

Over the reporting year, Nepal's relations continued to grow with Austria. Engagements and discussions at different levels took place to further strengthen bilateral relations and economic partnership between Nepal and Austria. A Crisis Preparedness Team from Austria visited Nepal on 14-16 December 2022 with the objective of sharing experiences of conducting rescue operations during accidents while climbing, trekking and other adventures. The number of Austrian tourists visiting Nepal steadily increased to surpass the number in pre-COVID-19 years.

Belgium

The relations between Nepal and Belgium remained cordial during this period. The second meeting of Nepal-Belgium Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held in Brussels on 2 February 2023. During the meeting, the two sides took stock of various aspects of bilateral relations and exchanged views on further promoting cooperation between the two countries. Views were also exchanged on engaging in global issues such as climate change and sustainable development goals. Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal Ms. Sewa Lamsal and Director of the Asia-Oceania Department of Belgian Foreign Ministry Mr. Cornet d'Elzius led their respective delegations.



(Joint Secretary Ms. Lamsal with Mr. Cornet d'Elzius, Director of the Asia-Oceania Department)

Canada

Nepal and Canada have continued to enjoy longstanding friendship over this period. The third meeting of Nepal-Canada Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held in Ottawa on 29 September 2022. Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal led the Nepali delegation while Assistant Deputy Minister of Global Affairs Mr. Paul Thoppil led the Canadian delegation. During the meeting, the two sides discussed a range of matters of bilateral interest that included development cooperation, trade and investment, education, culture and tourism as well as environment and climate change, among others.



(Third meeting of Nepal-Canada Bilateral Consultation Mechanism)

The Canada-Nepal Parliamentary Friendship Group was reconstituted on 11 May 2023 in Ottawa. Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Mr. Jeevan Ram Shrestha visited Canada from 26 September to 4 October 2022. He led the Nepali delegation to the 41st Session of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Assembly held at the ICAO Headquarters in Montreal.

European Union

Nepal and the European Union (EU) continued to enjoy excellent state of bilateral relations based on mutual understanding and cooperation. The EU continued to remain one of the largest development partners of Nepal in this period.

European Commissioner for International Partnerships Ms. Jutta Urpilainen paid an official visit to Nepal on 8 February 2023. During her visit, Ms. Urpilainen called on the President and the Prime Minister of Nepal, and attended a working luncheon hosted by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal.



(European Commissioner for International Partnerships Ms. Jutta Urpilainen calls on Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda')

14th meeting of the Nepal-EU Joint Commission

Nepal and the EU held the 14th meeting of the Joint Commission on 1 February 2023 in Brussels. The meeting was co-chaired by Ms. Paola Pampaloni, Deputy Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific of the European External Affairs Service and Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal, Foreign Secretary of Nepal. The meeting reviewed all aspects of

bilateral relations and cooperation and exchanged views on a broad range of issues of common concerns and interests. A mid-term review to assess the progress of the Joint Commission meeting was also held in July 2023.



(The 14th meeting of Nepal-EU Joint Commission)

France

Nepal and France relations continue to be characterized by friendship, goodwill, mutual understanding and cooperation over this period. A three-member delegation headed by Mr. Daniel Salmon, President of France-Nepal Inter-parliamentary Friendship Group at the French Senate paid an official visit to Nepal on 5-10 September 2022. The third meeting of Nepal-France Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held in Kathmandu on 17 January 2023. A wide range of matters relating to bilateral relations and cooperation between the two countries were discussed during the meeting. The meeting was led by Joint Secretary Ms. Sewa Lamsal on the Nepali side and Director for Asia and Oceania at the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs Mr. Bertrand Lortholary on the French side.



(Third meeting of Nepal-France Bilateral Consultation Mechanism)

Germany

Bilateral relations between Nepal and Germany remained friendly, cordial and cooperative during the reporting period.

A delegation from the German South Asian Parliamentary Friendship Group in the Federal Parliament of Germany visited Nepal on 19-21 February 2023. The delegation was led by Ms. Renate Künast, Member of the Federal Parliament of Germany. The delegation called on Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', and Speaker Mr. Devraj Ghimire. They also held an interaction with a group of Nepali parliamentarians. The delegation also had a meeting with the Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal.

Similarly, a delegation led by President of the German Group of Liberal International Dr. Jürgen Martens visited Kathmandu and met the Foreign Secretary Mr. Paudyal on 17 March 2023.

On 10 February 2023, an MoU was signed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal and the Embassy of Germany in Kathmandu on the continued operation of the Goethe-Zentrum Kathmandu (GZK). The GZK is an important partner for Nepal in its efforts to promote education, culture, and economic development. The MoU is an important step in further promoting educational linkage between the two countries.

Italy

Nepal and Italy enjoyed cordial and friendly relations in the reporting period. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Italian Republic established a Bilateral Consultation Mechanism on 10 October 2022. The Mechanism has aimed to provide a standing platform to discuss the entire range of Nepal-Italy relations on a regular basis.

Luxembourg

Luxembourg's Minister for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Franz Fayot visited Nepal on 2-6 May 2023. During his visit, he had a bilateral meeting with Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud. The two Ministers exchanged views on various aspects of bilateral relations, development cooperation, climate change and other areas of mutual interest.



(Minister Mr. Franz Fayot meeting with Foreign Minister Mr. Saud)

The Netherlands

Friendship, cordiality and cooperation remained the salient features of Nepal-the Netherlands relations during the reporting period. On 31 January 2023, Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal met the Vice Minister/Director General for Political Affairs of the Netherlands Mr. Marcel de Vink in the Hague to discuss various matters of bilateral interest. The Foreign Secretary highlighted the significant level of Dutch cooperation in Nepal, particularly in the areas of human resources and rural development and requested the Dutch side to place Nepal on the list of priority countries for international cooperation. The Vice Minister of the Netherlands appreciated Nepal's developmental aspirations and assured of possible support.



(Foreign Secretary Mr. Paudyal with Vice Minister/DG for Political Affairs Mr. Vink)

Norway

Nepal and Norway marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic ties. Norway has remained a major development partner to Nepal. Currently Norwegian aid in Nepal concentrated primarily on education, clean energy, and governance. Under those three cooperation areas, Norway provides assistance to support sustainable development goals including women's rights, gender equality, climate and environment, anti-corruption, etc.

Norwegian Minister for International Development Ms. Anne Beathe Tvinnereim visited Nepal on 10-12 May 2023. During her visit, she held meeting with Mr. Shakti Bahadur Basnet, Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation. Similarly, Ms. Tvinnereim also had a bilateral meeting with Foreign Minister Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud on 11 May 2023.



(Meeting between Norwegian Minister Ms. Tvinnereim and Foreign Minister Mr. Saud)

Romania

Nepal and Romania enjoyed friendly and cooperative relations in this period. Romania remained one of the attractive destinations of foreign employment for Nepali workers this year. The Romanian Foreign Ministry issued around 5,200 visas for Nepali citizens aspiring to go to Romania for foreign employment through a temporary consular mission in Kathmandu during September - November 2022.

Russian Federation

Nepal and the Russian Federation continued to maintain friendly and cooperative relations over this period. A delegation led by Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina, Chairman of the National Assembly of the Federal Parliament of Nepal paid an official visit to the Russian Federation on 19-24 April 2023 at the invitation of the chairman of the Federation of the Russian Federation, Ms. Valentina Matvienko.

Slovenia

The Slovenian delegation including Ms. Mateja Stamcar Norcic, Political Director/Director General and Ms. Maja Jerancic, Minister Plenipotentiary from the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia along with Ms. Mateja Vodeb Ghosh, non-residential Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to Nepal had meeting with officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs including the Foreign Secretary on 9 May 2023. During the meeting, potential areas of collaboration between Nepal and Slovenia, including water resource, climate change, artificial intelligence, and peacekeeping as well as the establishment of bilateral consultation mechanism for continuous dialogue were discussed.

Switzerland

The relations between Nepal and Switzerland remained cordial, friendly and cooperative during the review period. Switzerland continues to support Nepal in its developmental agenda, including on migrant rights, digital innovation, employment and income sectors, agriculture markets, trail bridges, rural housing reconstruction among others.

Türkiye

Nepal and Türkiye continued to maintain cordial, friendly and cooperative relations over this period. The Government of Nepal in cooperation with government agencies, private sector and humanitarian organizations sent a shipment of over 22 tons of relief materials, including medicines, medical equipment, warm clothing, and other essential items for the earthquake-affected people of Türkiye. The gesture of solidarity was made following the devastating earthquakes that struck Türkiye on 6 February 2023.

United Kingdom

During the reporting period, bilateral relations between Nepal and the United Kingdom (UK) gained momentum with an enhanced exchange of high-level visits, interactions and activities to mark the centenary of the Nepal-UK Friendship Treaty of 1923. Chairman of National Assembly Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina paid a visit to the UK on 17-25 October 2022 during which he met the Speaker of the House of Commons

Sir Lindsay Hoyle. Foreign Minister Dr. Narayan Khadka visited the UK on 17-20 September 2022 to attend the State Funeral of Queen Elizabeth II. Similarly, Foreign Minister Narayan Prakash Saud visited the UK on 4-9 May 2023 to attend the coronation of Charles III and Queen Camilla held at Westminster Abbey on 6 May. The Foreign Minister met the King and other members of the Royal Family, the British Prime Minister, British Foreign Secretary, and other British Cabinet Ministers.



(Foreign Minister Mr. Saud met King Charles III in London)

Mr. Mohan Bahadur Basnet, Minister for Health and Population also visited the UK on 14-20 July 2023. During his stay in London, the Minister met Mr. Will Quince, MP, Minister of State (Minister for Health and Secondary Care) at the Department of Health and Social Care on 17 July.

From the British side, Minister of State (Indo-Pacific) for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs Ms. Anne Marie Trevelyan visited Nepal on 8-10 March 2023. Minister for Defence People, and Veterans Dr. Andrew Murrison MP visited Nepal on 7-11 February 2022 and a Parliamentary Delegation led by Ms. Sarah Champion MP, Chairman of the International Development Select Committee visited Nepal on 14-16 March 2023.



(UK Minister Dr. Murrison calls on Prime Minister 'Prachanda')

Partnership for development cooperation continued to be one of the key aspects of the Nepal-UK relations. Throughout the reporting period, the UK supported Nepal in various sectors of Nepal's development efforts including economic growth, achieving SDG targets and provided humanitarian and crisis assistance. The UK remained one of the major tourist source countries for Nepal during the review period.

Meeting of the Nepal-United Kingdom Bilateral Consultation Mechanism

The Sixth meeting of Nepal-United Kingdom Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) in London on 26 April 2023. The Nepali delegation was led by Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Poudyal while Permanent Under-Secretary at FCDO Sir Philip Barton led the British delegation.

During the meeting, the delegation exchanged views over two centuries-old friendship and cooperation and took stock of the progress made in major aspects of the bilateral relations, including development cooperation. trade, investment, tourism, education, human resource development, consular matters and people-to-people linkages, the British Gurkha issues, climate change and sustainable development as well as working together on agendas of mutual interest in multilateral forums.



(The 6th meeting of Nepal-UK Bilateral Consultation Mechanism)

Tripartite talks held on British Gurkha Veterans

Bilateral Committee established between Nepal and the UK to address the concerns and grievances of the British Gurkha veterans held two meetings (on 3 November 2022 and on 19 April 2023) in London, during the reporting period. The delegations to the

meetings were led by Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Ambassador of Nepal to the UK and Dr. Andrew Murrison, MP, British Minister of Defence People, Veterans and Service Families. The meetings were also attended by the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the organizations of ex-British Gurkha community. Meetings at the Technical Committee level were also held regularly which discussed extensively on the issues.

United States of America

The bilateral relations between Nepal and the United States of America (USA), which are guided by the shared values of peace, development, democracy and respect for human rights, as well as mutually beneficial interests was further deepened and expanded during the reporting period. The 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and the United States was celebrated during this period.

During the reporting period, a number of important visits from the US side was made to Nepal.

USAID Administrator Ms. Samantha Power visited Nepal on 7-9 February 2023.



(USAID Administrator Ms. Samantha Power paid courtesy call on Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda')

The US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Ms. Victoria Nuland visited Nepal on 29-30 January 2023.



(US Under Secretary of State Ms. Nuland during a courtesy call on Foreign Minister Dr. Paudyal)

During the review period, Mr. Donald Lu, US Assistant Secretary of State, visited Nepal for the third time since 2021. Similarly, Deputy Assistant Secretary at the State Department Ms. Afreen Akhtar visited Nepal during this period.

From Nepal, Chief of the Army Staff Gen. Mr. Prabhu Ram Sharma visited the US from 28 June to 3 July 2023. Both armies also held the Land Force Talk in Kathmandu on 27-29 March 2023.

During the period, the US ranked the fourth largest trading partner of Nepal in terms of total trade, seventh largest partner in terms of importing goods in Nepal, second largest country in terms of trade balance in Nepal's favour and second largest export destination country for Nepal.

Development support from the US reached a historic mark with the implementation of the new USAID Development Objective Agreement worth USD 659 million for a five-year period. For the first time, US support was channelled through Nepal's national budgetary system.

Tourist arrival from the US to Nepal rebounded significantly in 2022 with the total arrivals reaching 77,085 at the end of the year. With this, the US ranked the second

largest tourist source country for Nepal this year. Significant number of Nepali diaspora in the US have been contributing to further strengthen the people-to-people relations between the two countries.

TIFA Council Meeting

The 6th Nepal-USA Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Council meeting was held in Kathmandu on 19 May 2023. The meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Madhu Kumar Marasini, Secretary (Commerce and Supplies) of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies and Mr. Brendan Lynch, Acting Assistant United States Trade Representatives for South and Central Asia. Matters related to Nepal's trade preference, policies impacting the investment climate, intellectual property, digital economy, labour, agricultural trade, LDC graduation of Nepal, were discussed in the meeting.

Repatriation of historical Nepali artefacts

In the review period, the 8th century standing stone statue of 'Lord Buddha' and the 10th century wooden statue of 'Nritya Devi' was repatriated to Nepal by the Embassy of Nepal in Washington DC on 28 April 2023. Likewise, 40 wooden artifacts were repatriated to Nepal in cooperation of Homeland Security Investigations on 12 August 2023.



(10th century wooden statue of 'Nritya Devi')

Regional Cooperation

In line with its foreign policy priorities, Nepal actively engaged in the regional processes to address common challenges, optimize advantages in promising areas of cooperation, and promote economic development and shared prosperity taking into account the diverse strength and complementarities of the region. Nepal's focus, as a landlocked country revolved around the loci of trade, investment, tourism, technology, energy projects, cross-border infrastructure, and market access, among others.

Nepal being a founding Member and the current Chair of SAARC continued its efforts for revitalisation of the SAARC process. As a country which carried the mantle of chairmanship leading up to the Fifth Summit, Nepal sought meaningful and viable cooperation in the BIMSTEC process. During the period, significant headways in the areas of institution building and finalization of regional instruments were recorded.

With the spirit of Pan-Asian partnership, Nepal has been participating in the meetings of Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), a platform created for open dialogues and fruitful discussions on the issues of common interests and challenges in the region. During the period, Nepal remained engaged in the areas of multidisciplinary cooperation within the framework of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

SAARC

In the reporting year, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) witnessed a resumption of its regular activities with the holding of meetings of various bodies under SAARC such as SAARC Development Fund.

Mr. Golam Sarwar from Bangladesh was appointed as the fifteenth Secretary General of SAARC.

The Seventeenth Informal Meeting of SAARC Finance Ministers was held in Incheon, Republic of Korea on 5 May 2023 on the theme of the meeting 'Leveraging Regional Cooperation for Greater Participation in Global Value Chains (GVCs)'.

Thirty-Fifth Meeting of the SAARC Development Fund (SDF) Board was held in Colombo on 4 April 2023. It deliberated on such matters as loan pricing change issue under Economic and Infrastructure Windows; request for No Cost Time Extension (NCTE) for Social Window projects, and approval for extension of fixed deposits, and SDF Investment Policy under Admin and Finance.

The other important meetings held during this period were SAARC-ADB Fifth Special Meeting on Regional Economic Integration Study (Phase-II) (Colombo, 5-6 June 2023), SAARC-ADB Workshop on Updating SAARC Regional Multimodal Transport Study (SRMTS, Maldives, 01-02 August), and Special Meeting of the SAARC Chief Veterinary Officers' (CVOs) Forum (07-08 August 2023-Virtual).

BIMSTEC

19th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting and 23rd BIMSTEC SOM

Nepal participated in the 19th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting, virtually held on 9 March 2023. The Ministerial Meeting was preceded by 23rd Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Official's Meeting (SOM) also held virtually on 8 March 2023. On behalf of the Government of Nepal, Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal, led the Nepali delegation to both the meetings.



(19th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting preceded by 23rd Session of BIMSTEC SOM)

The Meetings endorsed several important instruments including the BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030, Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation among the Member States, Rules of Procedures for BIMSTEC Mechanisms, Terms of Reference for Eminent Persons' Group, Inclusion of Blue Economy, Mountain Economy and Poverty Alleviation under the purview of re-constituted sectors/sub-sectors of BIMSTEC Cooperation.

2nd BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting and SOM on Agriculture

The 2nd BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture was held virtually on 10 November 2022 preceded by the 2nd Meeting of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials on Agriculture on 9 November 2022. On behalf of the Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Development of Nepal, Dr. Govinda Prasad Sharma, Secretary (Agriculture Development) at the Ministry participated in the Ministerial Meeting.



(2nd BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture)

The Meeting adopted the Joint Statement encouraging the Member States to expedite the remaining identified common projects in Agriculture Sub-sector and for early establishment of the BIMSTEC Development Fund. The Meeting also adopted the Plan of Action on Strengthening BIMSTEC Agricultural Cooperation (2023-2027) and approved the text of the Memorandum of Understanding between International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and BIMSTEC. The Meeting also reiterated the decision to convene the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture once in two years.

BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) meetings

The 5th and 6th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) was held in Bangkok, Thailand on 13-15 September 2022 and 1-2 February 2023 respectively. The meeting finalized the Concept Note and the draft text of the BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030 for submission to the 23rd Session of BIMSTEC SOM for its endorsement. The meeting decided to include 'Blue Economy', 'Mountain Economy', and 'Poverty Alleviation' as sub-sectors under 'Trade, Investment and Development' sector, 'Environment and Climate Change' sector and 'People-to-People Contact' sector respectively.

Special Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) was held virtually at on 10 October 2022. The Meeting extensively deliberated on the draft Rules of Procedure (RoP) for core BIMSTEC Mechanisms. Similarly, another special meeting of BPWC held in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 21-22 December 2022 finalized the draft RoP for the Sectoral BIMSTEC Mechanisms and Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for Eminent Persons' Group on Future Directions of BIMSTEC; and recommended to the 23rd Session of the BIMSTEC SOM for their endorsement. Further, the Meeting recommended the Finalized Procedures and Rules of BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Commission (BCIC) to the BIMSTEC SOM on Culture for endorsement.

Governing Board of BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate

2nd Meeting of the Governing Board of BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate (GB-BCWC) organized at the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting, Noida, India on 1 November 2022 held extensive deliberations on the 'Host Country Agreement between the Government of India and the BIMSTEC Secretariat for establishing BCWC and decided to circulate the updated draft text of the Agreement for concurrence of the Member States.

Expert Group Meeting on the Establishment of BIMSTEC Development Fund

1st Ad-hoc Expert Group Meeting on the Establishment of BIMSTEC Development Fund held virtually in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 19 December 2022 finalized the Draft Concept Paper on the Establishment of BIMSTEC Development Fund and agreed to seek technical assistance of Asian Development Bank for drafting of a detailed report on the modalities of establishing the BIMSTEC Development Fund.

BIMSTEC Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime

10th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime held on 12-13 January 2023 virtually requested the remaining Member States to deposit their instruments of ratification of the BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters at the earliest.

Other Major BIMSTEC Activities

The Indian Chamber of Commerce organized the BIMSTEC Business Conclave 2023 in Kolkata, India on 13-15 June 2023 to promote economic growth, connectivity, enhance trade and investment among the Member States. Addressing the opening session of the Conclave, Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies Mr. Ramesh Rizal emphasized on the importance of trade, investment, environmental sustainability and connectivity for regional prosperity and hoped that the event would serve as a

platform to enhance more engagements among the Member States at the business and people levels especially related with trade and investment.

Nepal as the Lead Country for People-to-people Contact Sector including 'Tourism' as one of the Sub-Sectors, organized the BIMSTEC Tourism Fair as a part of Buddhist International Travel Mart (BITM) 2023 in Lumbini, Nepal on 11-13 May 2023 to commemorate Silver Jubilee Celebration of the establishment of BIMSTEC with the participation of the travel and tour agencies of the BIMSTEC Member States.

Nepal also participated in the 12th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (SG-AML CFT) held virtually on 16 August 2022. The Meeting took note of the progress made since the 11th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on AML-CFT.

Nepal participated in the Special Session of the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks Network of Policy (S-BNPTT) held virtually on 8-9 May 2023.

BIMSTEC has signed an MoU for cooperation in Agriculture and Food Security sector with International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in March 2023. IFPRI organized a conference on 'Rethinking Food Crisis Responses' in collaboration with the Government of Nepal in Kathmandu on 19-20 June 2023. During the event, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs of Nepal Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha launched the Global Food Policy Report 2023. Mr. Tenzin Lekphell, Secretary General of BIMSTEC participated in the Conference.

During his visit in Nepal, the Secretary General paid courtesy calls on Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud and Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal separately on 20 June 2023.

Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD)

Since its membership in the ACD as 34th Member in 2016, Nepal has been engaging in the ACD activities, meetings and events. Nepal participated in both sessions of the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-ACD) held virtually on 9 August and 15 August 2022 under the chairmanship of Bahrain. The SOM discussed the draft Bahrain Declaration, and the rotation of ACD chairmanship, among others. The meeting finalized the text of the Bahrain Declaration to be submitted to the 18th Ministerial meeting for consideration.

Following the SOM in August 2022, the ACD chair hosted an informal consultation on 31 October 2022 with the ACD members from the South Asian Region on the rotation of ACD chairmanship. During the meeting, Iran expressed its willingness to consider if no member volunteered to chair the ACD. Iran was the chair of the ACD in 2018-2019. The meeting held in virtual mode was attended by six ACD member states of the region-Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Nepal and Pakistan.

Nepal is one of the Co-Prime Movers in the Culture and Tourism pillar which is one of the six priority pillars of ACD.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

As a dialogue partner, Nepal has been participating in the various activities organized by the SCO Secretariat.

Nepal participated virtually in the seminar under the theme 'SCO Seminar on Combating Cybercrime' organized by the Secretariat of the SCO in collaboration with Shanghai University of Political Science and Law and China National Institute for SCO International Exchange and Judicial Cooperation from 28 November to 2 December 2022.

Nepal participated in the B2B Conference and Expo on Traditional Medicine on 2-3 March 2023 and SCO Conference on Shared Buddhist Heritage held in New Delhi on 14-15 March 2023, both organized by the Government of India.

Nepal has applied for upgrading the status from Dialogue Partner to Observer.

Multilateral Affairs

Nepal's commitment to multilateralism is guided by its history, philosophy and experiences. As a country that places unwavering faith in multilateralism, Nepal regards United Nations as the indispensable global platform for fostering cooperation and understanding among nations. It firmly believes that only a stronger, more accountable, inclusive and revitalized United Nations can deliver on its promises of peace, prosperity and sustainable development for all.

Building upon its deep-rooted belief in multilateralism as the cornerstone of global cooperation, Nepal navigated the complexities of the time with renewed commitment to the United Nations and its ideals. A tumultuous geopolitical landscape, caused mainly by the conflict in Ukraine, and ensuing polarization and rivalry among the nations cast shadow on multilateralism. Against this background, Nepal conscientiously maintained its strong faith in global cooperation and multilateralism. Maintaining its rank in the Second position of the troop contributor country and election to the United Nations Economic and Social Council were some of the major achievements for Nepal at the UN during the period.

High-level participation in Multilateral Forums

With the relaxation of COVID-19 protocols, Nepal resumed its robust presence and engagements in high level multilateral forums for the cause of a just, peaceful, inclusive, equitable and rules-based world order. Consistent with its long-standing position, Nepal raised its vital concerns and agendas of the common priorities of LDCs, LLDCs, and Mountainous countries to the comity of nations. Nepal believes that these concerns have far-reaching consequences to the sustainable and resilient development of the people, nations and the planet.

77th UNGA General Debate

Nepal participated in the 77th session of the UNGA which was held under the theme 'A Watershed Moment: Transformative Solutions to Interlocking Challenges' at the UN Headquarters in New York on 20-26 September 2022. Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal, who led the Nepali delegation to the Assembly, highlighted the world's pressing issues like pandemics, conflicts, and financial inequality and emphasized the need for global cooperation and solidarity to overcome these challenges.



(Foreign Secretary Mr. Paudyal addressing the General Debate of the 77th UNGA Session)

He also called for reforms in financial and trade systems to ensure fairer benefits for developing countries. Additionally, Nepal as a second-largest troops contributing country to the UN peacekeeping efforts, reaffirmed its commitment to peace and democracy.

52nd Session of the Human Rights Council

Mr. Govinda Prasad Sharma Koirala, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Peace and Human Rights led the Nepali delegation to the 52nd Session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) which was held from 27 February to 5 April 2023 in Geneva. The high-level segment of the Session was addressed by high level dignitaries from over 125 Member States of the United Nations including the President of the UNGA and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.



(Advisor to the Prime Minister addressing the 52nd Session of the Human Rights Council)

Nepali delegation highlighted the provisions of the Constitution of Nepal that guarantee judicial independence, rule of law, freedom of press, among others. Nepal actively participated throughout the Session delivering a total of twenty-five statements and joined eight thematic resolutions as a Co-sponsor.

Participation in the LDC5 Conference

A high-level delegation led by Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transportation participated in the Second Part of the 5th UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5 Conference) held on 5-9 March 2023 in Doha. The Deputy Prime Minister addressed the General Debate of the Conference on 6 March 2023. Prior to the Conference, he also addressed the Summit of Least Developed Countries. The Deputy Prime Minister also held bilateral talks and joined several other events in the margins of the Conference.



(Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Shrestha at the LDC5 Conference)

Participation in 2023 UN Water Conference

Mr. Abdul Khan, Minister of Water Supply, led a high-level Nepali delegation to the Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action convened in New York on 22-24 March 2023. In his statement delivered during the Review, the Minister highlighted



(Water Supply Minister Mr. Khan delivers statement at the UN Water Conference)

integral role of water in all dimensions of sustainable development. He called for bold actions on the utilization and conservation of water resources, as billions of people worldwide still live without safely managed drinking water and sanitation.

22nd Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

The 22nd Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) was held in New York on 17-28 April 2023 under the theme 'Indigenous peoples, human health, planetary and territorial health, and climate change: a rights-based approach'.

Mr. Aman Lal Modi, Minister for Federal Affairs and General Administration, participated in the opening ceremony of the Forum. In his statement, Mr. Modi underlined some of the affirmative measures introduced by the Government of Nepal for mainstreaming the marginalized indigenous communities to ensure their fundamental rights.



(Federal Affairs and General Administration Minister Mr. Modi addressing UNPFII)

Mr. Ram Bahadur Thapa Magar, Chairperson of the Indigenous Nationalities Commission and Mr. Bishnu Prasad Chaudhary, Chairperson of the Tharu Commission also participated in the Forum.

76th Session of the World Health Assembly

A high-level Nepali delegation led by Minister for Health and Population Mr. Mohan Bahadur Basnet participated in the 76th Session of the World Health Assembly. The Assembly was held in Geneva on 21-30 May 2023 under the theme of 'WHO at 75: Saving lives, driving health for all'.

In the conference, Nepali delegation emphasized the need of strong political leadership for health reforms including Universal Health Coverage and shared the progress made

by Nepal in reducing maternal mortality rate. On the sidelines of the Assembly, the Minister held a meeting with Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Director General of the World Health Organization.

111th International Labour Conference

The 111th Session of the International Labour Conference was held on 5-16 June 2023 in Geneva. Nepali delegation to the Conference was led by Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security Mr. Sharat Singh Bhandari. In his statement, the Minister stated that Nepal remains steadfast in its role as a pathfinder country for Sustainable Development Goal 8.7.

Nepal's Participation in NAM Ministerial Meeting

Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud led the Nepali delegation to the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) held in Baku on 5-6 July 2023. Addressing the meeting, the Foreign Minister underscored the importance of time-tested principles of the Non-Aligned Movement and urged the global leaders for collective effort in the promotion of dialogue, understanding and peaceful resolutions to conflicts. While highlighting Nepal's aspiration of graduating from least-developed country by 2026, the Foreign Minister also underlined the adverse impacts of climate change in Nepal and stressed on the need for collective advocacy of NAM for climate justice, promoting sustainable development and mobilizing support for climate adaptation and mitigation efforts. During the visit, Foreign Minister also held bilateral meetings with Mr. Ilham Heyder Oglu Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Mr. Jeyhun Aziz Oglu Bayramov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan.



(Foreign Minister Mr. Saud with the President of Azerbaijan Mr. Aliyev)

Thematic Multilateral Engagements

International Security and Disarmament

Nepal has consistently maintained its principled position in international forums calling for general and complete nuclear disarmament in a time-bound manner. Nepal continued to raise concern in multilateral forums regarding increasing trend of military spending, lack of progress in the negotiation of disarmament initiatives, prolonged inter-state conflicts in some regions, threats of usage of nuclear weapons and the impacts of new technologies on security and disarmament issues.

Nepal stressed on the need to review and reduce increasing military spending worldwide and urged to divert such resources towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Nepal actively followed the deliberations of the Security Council, particularly on peace operations, arms control, issues related to women, youth and children, human rights, and other issues that has impact on international peace and security. As the host country, Nepal facilitated the smooth functioning of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD). As in previous years, Nepal introduced an annual resolution on the UNRCPD in the first committee of the United Nations which was adopted through consensus.

UN Peace operations

Nepal has a long history of serving in peace keeping missions under the auspices of the United Nations. In the year 2023, Nepal stayed as the second-largest troops and police-contributing country with increased number of female peacekeepers. Nepal consistently called for a balanced, fair, and equitable opportunities for troop and police-contributing countries to serve in senior positions of UN peacekeeping operations.

During the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations commonly known as C34 held in February-March 2023, Nepal called for the removal of any national caveat for the effective performance of peacekeepers.

Nepal in cooperation with the United Nations hosted the Seventh Partnership for Technology in Peacekeeping International Symposium in Kathmandu on 13-16 June 2023. The Symposium was held under the theme 'Harnessing Technology for Digital Transformation'. The event was the first-ever such type to be held in South Asia. It brought 230 participants from 47 countries including 42 UN member nations and 11 different UN peacekeeping missions together.

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of United Nations Peacekeeping, Dag Hammarskjöld Medal was awarded posthumously to the peacekeepers, who lost their lives serving under the United Nations flag last year. Participating at the ceremony, the Permanent Representative/Ambassador Mr. Amrit Bahadur Rai received the medal on behalf of two fallen Nepali peacekeepers- Private Anil Gurung (MONUSCO) and Sergeant Pashupati Karki (UNMISS). On behalf of the Nepal Government, Ambassador Rai offered condolences to the families of all the fallen UN peacekeepers.

Sustainable Development and related Issues

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

With a view to examine progress across the SDGs, the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development was held on 10-19 July 2023 in New York. Nepali delegation led by Dr. Min Bahadur Shrestha, Vice-Chairman of National Planning Commission, participated in the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development.



(Vice Chairman of NPC Mr. Shrestha at the ECOSOC HLPF 2023 as the LDC Chair)

Speaking on behalf of the LDCs group, Dr. Shrestha urged the international community to fulfil its commitment to the vulnerable countries. He highlighted the disproportionate impact of global crises on LDCs and their lagging progress towards the 2030 Agenda. He emphasized the need for full implementation of the Doha Programme of Action, including technology transfer and structural transformation support, for the LDCs to achieve SDGs. In his national capacity, Dr. Shrestha highlighted Nepal's SDG progress

alongside challenges such as COVID-19 setbacks and financing stress. Despite low emissions, Nepal suffers climate change acutely. He urged international support for overcoming these hurdles and achieving SDGs on time.

Human Rights

Nepal participated in the 52nd, 53rd, and 54th sessions of the Human Rights Council held in 2023. Nepal also participated in the 41st, 42nd and 43rd sessions of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group held in November 2022, January-February 2023 and May 2023, respectively. The 41st session began the fourth cycle review of the UPR of states.

Nepal remained engaged with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Human rights bodies and mechanisms and the Secretariat of the Human Rights Council. Nepal responded to several communications from Special procedures requesting inputs for their thematic reports.

In its deliberations in the council and other mechanisms, Nepal focused on the issues of rights of women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons, marginalized communities, as well as on the issues like climate change, digital divide, SDGs, among others. Nepal urged that the work of the Council should be guided by the principles of universality, objectivity, non-selectivity and impartiality, upholding genuine dialogue and cooperation, and avoiding politicization of human right issues.

United Nations Reforms

Security Council Reform

Nepal has continuously participated in Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) on Security Council reform which started in 2009 and has rolled over to subsequent sessions of General Assembly until now. Nepal has maintained its consistent position on United Nations Security Council reforms while calling for timely reform of the Council to make it more representative, transparent, and accountable to meet the needs of today's world reality and need.

General Assembly Revitalization

Nepal participated in the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Working Group (AHWG) on the Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly which primarily focused on 'strengthening the accountability, transparency, and institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly and selection and appointment of the Secretary-General and other executive heads.

Nepal has continuously stressed the need to enhance General Assembly's authority, effectiveness, and credibility as the most universal, chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. Nepal has also urged that equal opportunities in decision-making positions must be ensured for women, with priority given to candidates from the developing world.

Development Reform

The 2023 Economic and Social Council Operational Activities for Development Segment was held on 23-25 May 2023. The Segment considered the progress in the implementation of the mandates of the General Assembly resolution 75/233 on the comprehensive policy review of operational activities for the development of the United Nations system and resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the UN Development System (UNDS).

Nepal continues to stress on the need to make the UNDS more responsive to country priorities while promoting national leadership and ownership, especially when it comes to implementing newer development agendas.

Climate Change

Nepal has been actively participating in all the Climate Change negotiations. The 27th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP27) was held in November 2022 in Sharm El-Sheikh, with a view to building on previous successes and paving the way for future ambition. Nepal actively participated in the Conference.

Engagements with UN Specialized Agencies and Inter-governmental Bodies WTO and Trade Related Matters

Nepal's engagement with World Trade Organization (WTO) remained important during the review period. Owing to the huge trade deficit of Nepal coupled with inherent challenges in fully capitalizing on the preferential provisions of LDCs, WTO forum has been a crucial avenue for redressing the imbalance.

Nepal participated in all the WTO bodies especially the meetings of General Council, Trade Negotiation Committee, Council for Trade in Goods, Council for Trade in Services and Council for Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights, Committee on Market Access, Committee on Trade and Development, Committee on Agriculture and in other Committees necessarily and has been raising the voices in favour of Nepal especially LDCs' graduation proposal, TRIPS waiver proposal, WTO reforms, ecommerce moratorium, discussion on food security, aid for trade and effective

implementation of Special and Differential Treatment. As a focal point of Aid for Trade on behalf of LDC Groups, Nepal is visible to the development partners.

The period under review has been the year of implementation of 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) decisions and planning for the 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13). After the successful conclusion of MC12, members intensified their work to implement the decision of the Ministers which are: implementation of Fisheries Agreement, food security, extension of ecommerce moratorium, extension of the TRIPS waiver to the COVID-19 therapeutic and diagnostic, issues of dispute settlement, date and place of MC13, among others.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) 70th Session of the Trade and Development Board

The 70th session of the Trade and Development Board was held on 19-28 June 2023. During the General Debate, Nepal delivered a statement on behalf of the LDC as the LDC Global Coordinator. In the statement, Nepal underlined that UNCTAD should strengthen its special focus on the trade and development needs of the least developed countries across all areas of its mandate, in accordance with the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (Istanbul Programme of Action) and relevant successor agreement which in this case is the Doha Program of Action (2022–2031) adopted by the 5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries held in March 2022.

Commission on Science and Technology for Development

Nepal participated in the 26th session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development held on 27-31 March 2023 in Geneva, under the two priority themes: Technology and innovation for cleaner and more productive and competitive production and ensuring safe water and sanitation for all: a solution by science, technology and innovation.

The Nepali delegation was led by Ms. Rekha Sharma, Minister for Communication and Information Technology.

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

The 64th series of meetings of the Assembly of the Member States of World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) took place on 6-14 July 2023 at the WIPO Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. During the meetings, Nepali delegation appreciated the announcement of WIPO graduation package for LDCs and stressed effective implementation of the WIPO deliverables.

Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)

The five-yearly 9th Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons (BWC/BTWC) took place from 28 November to 16 December 2022 in Geneva, Switzerland. Nepal participated in the Conference and reaffirmed itself as a dedicated State Party to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Signing of IAEA Technical Cooperation Agreement

Nepal participated in the 66th General Conference of the IAEA held in Vienna on 26-30 September 2022. Minister for Education, Science, and Technology Mr. Devendra Paudel led Nepali delegation to the Conference. At the sidelines of the Conference, Minister Paudel also signed the Technical Cooperation Country Program Framework (CPF) for the period 2022-2027. Under this Framework, Nepal receives technical cooperation from the IAEA in the areas of radiation safety and nuclear security, food and agriculture, health and nutrition, water and the environment, energy and industry, and nuclear knowledge development and management.



(Signing of the CPF 2022-2027 at IAEA Headquarters)

Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)

CTBTO Executive Secretary's Visit to Nepal

The Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) Dr. Robert Floyd visited Nepal on 4-7 June 2023. This visit marked a

significant step in strengthening Nepal's collaboration with CTBTO which is committed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. During his visit, the Executive Secretary held meetings with high dignitaries of the Government of Nepal.



(Executive Secretary Dr. Floyd paid courtesy call on the Prime Minister)

Nepal in Different UN Bodies

Nepal's Election to the UN Economic and Social Council

Nepal has been elected as a member of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with the highest number of votes (145), ahead of Pakistan (129) and Japan (127), from the Asia-Pacific Group. As an elected member, Nepal, will serve in the ECOSOC for a three-year term beginning from 1 January 2024.

Nepal's Election as A Member of Peace Building Commission

Nepal has been elected as a member of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) for a term of two years effective from 1 January 2023. PBC was established in 2005 with the aim to support conflict-affected countries. The commission provides advisory support to the General Assembly and Security Council in matters concerning peace-building and sustainable peace.

In line with its meaningful engagement and substantive contribution to multilateralism through the UN, Nepal held the following positions in the UN during the reporting period:

S. N.	Organization/Responsibility	Position	Tenure
1.	UN Human Rights Council	Member	2021-2023
2.	Global Coordination Bureau of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)	Chair	April 2023-
3.	13th INBAR Council	Chair	2023-2025
4.	CEDAW Committee	Member	2021-2024
5.	Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)	Member	2020-2023
6.	77th Session of the UNGA	Vice President	2022-2023
7.	Peace Building Commission	Member	2023-2024
8.	Economic and Social Council	Member	2024-2026
9.	Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC)	Member	2023-2025
10.	International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries	Chair	2022-2023
11.	Aid for Trade, WTO	Focal Point on behalf of the LDCs	2020-
12.	Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) Task Force of WTO	Member	2023-
13.	ACT-Accelerator Facilitation Council of the WHO	Member	Chair of SAARC

Nepal's Current Candidatures (during the reporting period)

Nepal has presented its candidature for the following roles in the UN-

- Non- Permanent Seat of the United Nations Security Council for the term 2037-2038, election will be held in June 2036.
- Executive Board of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS for the term 2026-2028, election will be held in June 2024.
- Chair of the First Committee for the 81st session of the UNGA, election will be held in June 2025.

**Policy Matters, Economic
Diplomacy and Overseas Nepalis**

Policy Matters

The Ministry was engaged in different policy initiatives including various innovative activities during the review period. The Ministry continued to engage with the House of Representatives, National Assembly and the Parliamentary Committee on International Relations to provide clarity and broader understanding on the issues of international relations, foreign policy and diplomacy. The Ministry also provided answers to queries sought by Parliament and the relevant Committee. The Ministry conducted different activities including interaction programs on foreign policy, development diplomacy as well as other issues pertaining to the Nepali Diaspora.

The Ministry was also engaged with National Planning Commission, Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers and Ministry of Finance for the implementation of the annual workplan (milestones) of the Ministry in line with achieving the goals outlined in the 15th Periodic Plan, SDG implementation and preparation for smooth graduation from LDC status.

The Ministry also organized some flagship programmes in the areas of foreign policy and issues on changes in global power relations, geopolitical complexity during the reporting period.

2nd Edition of Prof. Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series

With an aim to create a platform to deliberate on the issues of national, regional and global importance that have direct bearing on Nepal's national interest and the conduct of foreign policy, the Ministry launched the second edition of 'Professor Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series' on 25 June 2023. Former Foreign Secretary Mr. Madhu Raman Acharya delivered the keynote speech on 'Safeguarding Nepal's National Interests: Foreign Policy Choices in the Changing International Environment'. Several distinguished personalities including the former foreign ministers, members of the parliament, diplomats and policy makers attended the lecture series.



(Keynote Speaker Mr. Madhu Raman Acharya delivering his speech)



(2nd edition of Prof. Yadu Nath Khanal lecture series)

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

Interaction on Changes in Global Power Relations, Geopolitical Complexity and Nepal

The Ministry organized an interactive program on 'Changes in Global Power Relations, Geopolitical Complexity and Nepal' on 30 April 2022. Mr. Khadga K.C., Professor

at the Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, Tribhuvan University highlighted major challenges and opportunities of Nepal's foreign policy and diplomacy.



(Interaction Programme on 'Changes in Global Power Relations, Geopolitical Complexity and Nepal')

Economic Diplomacy

The Ministry has been attaching priority to economic diplomacy for bringing socio-economic transformation in the country. The Ministry and Nepali Diplomatic Missions abroad have been working to promote economic interest of the nation in bilateral, regional and multilateral forums. Due priority is given to sectors such as infrastructure development, export trade, foreign investment, technology transfer, development assistance, tourism and foreign employment.

Recognizing economic diplomacy as a valuable tool for advancing economic interests of Nepal, the Ministry conducted virtual interaction programme with the mission officials with a view to empowering them through required knowledge and skills.

Interaction Programme on Tourism Promotion

In the context of declining COVID-19 cases and with the aim to revive tourism sector of Nepal, the Ministry organized a two-day interaction programme on tourism promotion on 5-6 September 2022 in a hybrid format. The event, chaired by Foreign Minister Dr. Narayan Khadka, was attended by Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal, Ambassadors/ Heads of the Nepali Missions aboard (virtually), Secretary from the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Mr. Suresh Adhikari, Director General of Department of Immigration Mr. Rishi Ram Tiwari, Chief Executive Director of Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) Dr. Dhananjay Regmi, and representatives from Nepal Association of Tour and Travel Agents (NATTA), Hotel Association Nepal (HAN), and Trekking Agency Association Nepal (TAAN).



(Foreign Minister Mr. Khadka attending the interaction programme on Tourism Promotion)

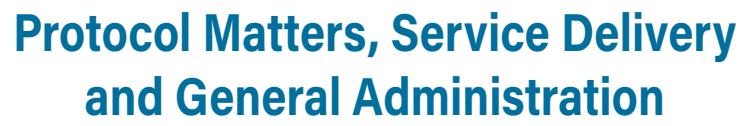
During the interaction programme, CEO of NTB Dr. Regmi made a presentation highlighting the current status, challenges and potentials of promoting tourism in Nepal and the role of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Nepali Missions abroad in facilitating and coordinating for tourism promotion.

Monitoring of Economic Diplomacy Related Activities of Nepali Missions Abroad

During the reporting period, representatives of the Ministry visited three Nepali missions in Europe to monitor their activities focusing on promotion of Nepal's export trade, investment and tourism, among others. Three-member team led by Joint Secretary Mr. Ghana Shyam Lamsal visited Nepali mission in London, Berlin and Paris and held discussion with the Ambassadors and other officials in all three Embassies.

Nepali Diaspora Affairs

The Ministry and Nepali missions abroad have continuously provided services to Nepali Diaspora both at home and destination countries. During the reporting period, the Ministry and the Missions issued/renewed 2,525 NRN identity cards. The Ministry also provided relevant facilitation and documentation, as per request of the NRNs, including for requests for necessary facilitation on their purchase of land in Nepal.



**Protocol Matters, Service Delivery
and General Administration**

Protocol Matters

The Protocol Division was engaged primarily in facilitating incoming and outgoing high level visits, working on matters related to Agrément and presentation of credentials of foreign Ambassadors to Nepal as well as preparation of credentials of Nepali Ambassadors to foreign countries, among others.

Appointment of Nepali Ambassadors

On 11 July 2023, the Government of Nepal decided to nominate the following Joint Secretaries of the Ministry as Ambassadors/Permanent Representatives of Nepal to the Countries and International Organizations mentioned hereunder-

S. N.	Name of the Ambassadors	Residential	Non-Residential Concurrent Accreditation
1	Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa	Permanent Mission of Nepal to United Nations, New York	Nicaragua and Ecuador
2	Mr. Ram Prasad Subedi	Switzerland Permanent Mission of Nepal to United Nations, WTO and other International Organizations in Geneva	Italy and San Marino (Non-Credential presenting country-Liechtenstein)
3	Mr. Sudhir Bhattarai	France United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	Monaco and Portugal (Non-Credential presenting country-Andorra)
4	Mr. Ghana Shyam Lamsal	Kuwait Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD)	Iraq

S. N.	Name of the Ambassadors	Residential	Non-Residential Concurrent Accreditation
5	Mr. Tej Bahadur Chhetri	United Arab Emirates (UAE) International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)	
6	Mr. Dhan Bahadur Oli	Thailand United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) Asian Institute of Technology	Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Singapore

Credential Presentations

The following Ambassador-designate presented their Letters of Credence to the President of Nepal-

S. N.	Country	Ambassador-designate	Residential/ Non-residential	Ceremony Date
1	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Mr. Saad Nasser Abdullah Abu Haimed	Residential	26 August 2022
2	Slovak Republic	Mr. Róbert Maxián	Non-residential	
3	Finland	Ms. Riina-Riika Heikka	Residential	21 October 2022
4	United States of America	Mr. Dean R. Thompson	Residential	
5	Iceland	Mr. Gudni Bragason	Non-residential	
6	The United Arab Emirates	Mr. Abdulla Saeed Mubarak Jarwan AlShamsi	Residential	20 December 2022
7	The United Republic of Tanzania	Mrs. Anisa Kapufi Mbega	Non-Residential	
8	Republic of Serbia	Mr. Siniša Pavić	Non-residential	
9	People's Republic of China	Mr. Chen Song	Residential	13 January 2023
10	Islamic Republic of Pakistan	Mr. Abrar H Hashmi	Residential	12 June 2023
11	Republic of Korea	Mr. Park Taeyoung	Residential	

The Government of Nepal provided Agrément to the following Foreign Ambassador-designate to Nepal-

S. N.	Country	Ambassador-designate	Residential/ Non-Residential
1	Republic of Panama	Mrs. Yasiel Alines Burillo Rivera	Non-Residential
2	Republic of Zimbabwe	Mr. Godfrey Majoni Chipare	Non-Residential
3	Republic of Armenia	Mr. Youri Babakhanian	Non-Residential
4	Belgium	Mr. Didier Anna L. Vanderhasselt	Non-Residential
5	Sweden	Mr. Jan Thesleff	Non-Residential
6	Vietnam	Mr. Nguyen Thanh Hai	Non-Residential
7	European Union	Ms. Veronique Lorenzo	Residential
8	Thailand	Mr. Suwapong Sirisorn	Residential
9	Switzerland	Dr. Danielle Meuwly Monteleone	Residential
10	Hungary	Mr. István Szabó	Non-Residential
11	Iran	Dr. Iraj Elahi	Non-Residential
12	Qatar	Mr. Mishal Mohamed Ali Ahmed Alnasari	Residential
13	Cambodia	Mr. Koy Kuong	Non-Residential
14	Peru	Mr. Javier Manuel Paulinich Velarde	Non-Residential

Farewell of the Foreign Ambassadors

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

S.N.	Name	Country	Date
1	Mr. Pertti Anttinen	Finland	August 2022
2	Mr. Randy W. Berry	USA	September 2022
3	Ms. Hou Yanqi	China	October 2022
4	Mr. Syed Haider Shah	Pakistan	October 2022
5	Mr. Saeed Al-Naqbi	UAE	October 2022
6	Ms. Himalee Arunatilaka	Sri Lanka	January 2023
7	Ms. Elisabeth Von Capeller	Switzerland	June 2023

S.N.	Name	Country	Date
8	Ms. Nicola Pollitt	United Kingdom	June 2023
9	Ms. Nona Deprez	European Union	June 2023
10	Mr. Vosita Vorasaph	Thailand	April 2023

Establishment of Foreign diplomatic mission in Nepal

The Government of Nepal granted its concurrence on 14 October 2022 to establish a resident Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye in Kathmandu.

Consular Services

The Department of Consular Services provides all the necessary consular services to Nepali and foreign nationals in coordination with the Nepali authorities concerned, and the Nepali Missions abroad. The Department also provides various services entrusted in regard to privileges and immunities and exemption to the Diplomatic Missions and International Organizations based in Nepal as per the international laws, conventions, practices, and mutual agreements. The Department has been continually upgrading its service delivery systems, especially through the use of information technology.

Establishment of fully Online Police Clearance Certificate (PCC) Attestation system

The Department, in coordination with the Nepal Police and the Financial Comptroller General's Office, has completed all the ground works for implementation of fully online PCC attestations system using Application Programming Interface (API). It involves the complete cycle: online payment, online submission and online receipt of the attested-document which can be downloaded by the service-seekers. It is expected that more than four hundred thousand service-recipients will be benefitted annually from this initiative, allowing for better service delivery.

MoU with Department of Foreign Employment

The Department and the Department of Foreign Employment (DOFE) have signed an MoU to connect their individual systems through Application Programming Interface (API) so that necessary data could be shared for the benefits and protection of Nepali workers abroad.

Continuation of collaboration and partnership with the local level via online system in consular services

As in the previous years, the Department collaborated with local levels to provide online consular services to the service seekers from the local level by providing most of them with online login and passwords. This has enabled service seekers to access the relevant consular services including rescue and repatriation of Nepalis stranded

abroad, management of dead bodies, and compensation initiatives in case of death/injuries abroad from their place of residence. In this fiscal year, the Department has established collaboration with District Administration Offices of 17 districts and the selected municipalities thereon.

Successful continuation of other online services

Other services such as online legal services system, online power of attorney verification system, online visa recommendation and verification system and online Services to the Diplomatic Missions in Kathmandu have been successfully continued throughout the year.

Quantitative Overview of Consular works during FY 2079/80

S. N.	Details of Services	Number of Work Performed
A Attestation section		
1	Total number of attested documents (Documents attested using online application system)	4,66,002 (3,06,922)
2	Revenue collected (in NPRs) Revenue collected from Police Clearance Certificate attestation- 15,34,61,000. Revenue collected from attestation of other documents- 7,95,40,000	23,95,84,513
B Consular and Legal Counselling Section		
1	Recommendation for issuing Nepali driving license on the basis of foreign driving license held by the Nepali citizen	5
2	Recommendation for Medical treatment, religious tour, World cycling tour and others	78
3	Recommendation for education certificate attestation and nationality verification	1368
4	Recommendation letter to Embassy of India for Police verification report to Nepali citizens during their period of stay in India	759
5	Recommendation for procurement of chemicals and explosives	201

S. N.	Details of Services	Number of Work Performed
6	Recommendation letter for vehicle permit to enter India	21
7	Citizenship renouncement of Nepali citizens- processed	246
8	Authentication of Power of Attorney issued by Nepali missions abroad	34
9	POA, VOR, SoSCO (Malaysia), GOSI Form regarding compensation of Nepali citizens died abroad	498
10	Search and rescue of Nepali nationals abroad	457
11	Repatriation of dead bodies through the Department	197
C Visa and Exemption Section		
1	Issuance of diplomatic/official/ Gratis visa	1932
2	Issuance of diplomatic/official ID Card	605
3	Issuance of SAARC visa stickers	42
4	Number of recommendations for exemption	3658
5	Other correspondence and recommendation	850
6	Number of visa recommendation to the foreign missions on GON's nominations	1530
D Compensation Amount (in NPRs)		
	Compensation received from Nepali missions abroad and sent to relevant District Administration Offices	80,43,40,975.79

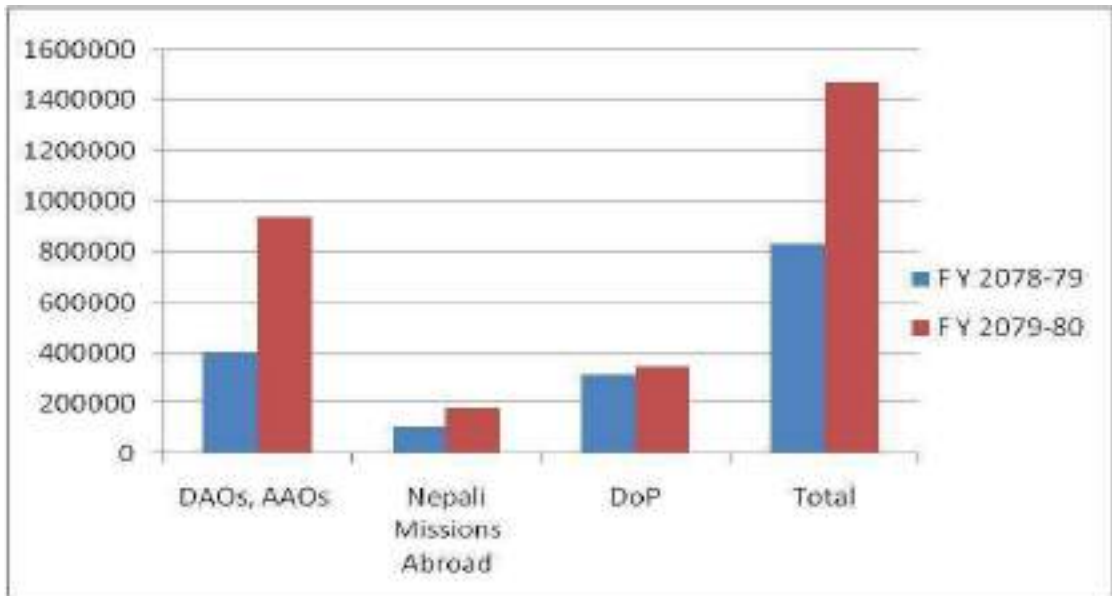
Passport Services

E-passport (e-MRTDs) regime became completely operational in Nepal in the review period, replacing the Machine-Readable Passports (MRP) system. Currently, applications and biometrics for e-passports are received in all 77 District Administration Offices, 17 Area Administration Offices and 38 Nepali Missions abroad. While the Department of Passports accepts applications for urgent service only, all other units accept applications for regular service.

Passports and Travel Documents Issued

During the review period, the Department issued a total of 14,71,494 passports. This accounts to an increment of 76.79 percent from the previous fiscal year when a total of 8,32,309 passports were issued. To enrol the biometric data of the applicants, the Department has deployed 195 enrolment stations all over the aforementioned 133 centres.

S.N.	Issued from	e-Passports	MRPs	Travel Documents	Total
1.	District Administration and Area Administration Offices	9,42,048	-	-	9,42,048
2.	Nepali Missions Abroad	1,76,855	3871	-	1,80,726
3.	Department of Passports	3,44,541	4084	95	3,48,720
Total		14,63,444	7,955	95	14,71,494



(Number of passports and travel documents issued from various centres)

Mobile service in Portugal

To cater to the needs of the rapidly increasing Nepali diaspora in Portugal, the Department conducted a month-long mobile passport service program in Lisbon, Portugal from 26 March to 25 April 2023. The team deployed from the Department with necessary equipment, made 2,308 biometric enrolments for e-passport applicants over the period. The mobile service conducted in coordination with the Embassy of Nepal in Paris and the Nepali diaspora organizations in Portugal was a milestone for the Nepali diaspora in the absence of a Nepali mission in that country.



(Department Team providing passport service in Portugal)

Renewal of ISO Certificate

The Department secured the renewal of NS/ISO 9001:2015 standards from Nepal Bureau of Standards and Metrology for the maintenance of continuous upgradation of its service delivery mechanism. The Bureau conducted an assessment for the same and awarded the certification that will remain valid for next three years, starting from 10 July 2023. This certification marks the continuation of the Department's commitment to maintaining high quality standards. The Department obtained this certificate for the first time in 2017 and has continuously maintained the standard since then.

Other Services

The Department also carried out various communications with relevant agencies for verification of submitted documents as well as authenticity of issued documents. It also conducted visits to various enrolment centres in Nepal and held interactions with relevant officials. Over the year, the Department performed following engagements-

Services/Engagements	Number
Issued Verification Letters	821
Authenticity related communications with investigating and regulating agencies	186
Interaction and coordination visits to District Administration and Area Administration Offices	48

Administration and Human Resource Development

Procurement and Construction

The renovation of the Ministry's existing building inside the Singha Durbar premises continued in the reporting period. The architectural design and cost estimation of a planned new building in the adjacent area has also been completed.

Preparatory works for construction of chanceries in Canberra, Australia as well as in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia has been on-going. In line with the Government's policy, the Ministry focused on purchasing new land in a few different countries where Nepal has resident missions. Furthermore, the Ministry has also prioritized construction of buildings for its missions and staff, simultaneously keeping in view the enhancement of management of the existing properties.

Human Resource Development

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

Archive Management

The Ministry completed classification and sorting of historically important documents. It sought to work closely with the office of National Archives, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of the Government of Nepal to manage this task. Digitization and storage of classified documents have continued.

Financial Resource Management

Accountability, transparency, efficacy, efficiency and propriety were taken into consideration while mobilizing financial resources and in minimizing outstanding arrears accumulated over the years.

Revenue collection (NPRs in 000)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Nepali Missions Abroad	Department of Passports	Department of Consular Services	Grand Total
21442	4234388	3966456	239608	8461894

Budget Allocation and Expenditure (NPRs in 000)

Particulars	Budget Allocation	Expenditure	
		Budget	Percentage
Recurrent	6091772	5588867	91.74
Capital	443000	80799	18.24
Total	6534772	5669666	86.76

Appendices

I

Major High-Level Visits

A. OUTGOING

S. N.	Dignitary	Country	Dates	Remarks
1	President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari	Iceland	9-11 November 2022	To attend Reykjavik Global Forum – Women Leaders
2	Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'	India	31 May-3 June 2023	Official Visit
3	Speaker of the House of Representatives Mr. Dev Raj Ghimire	Bahrain	11-15 March 2023	To participate in the 146th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly
4	Chairperson of the National Assembly Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina	United Kingdom	17-25 October 2022	Official Visit
		United Arab Emirates	20 February 2023	Official Visit
		Russian Federation	19-24 April 2023	Official Visit
		People's Republic of China	11-20 June 2023	Official Visit

S. N.	Dignitary	Country	Dates	Remarks
5	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha	Qatar	5-9 March 2023	Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5)
6	Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Narayan Khadka	People's Republic of China	9-11 August 2022	Official Visit
		United Kingdom	17-20 September 2022	To attend the State Funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
7	Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Bimala Rai Paudyal	Sri Lanka	3-4 February 2023	To participate in the 75th Independence Day Celebration functions
8	Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Narayan Prakash Saud	United Kingdom	4-9 May 2023	To attend the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty the Queen Consort
		Bangladesh	12-14 May 2023	To participate in the 6th Indian Ocean Conference held in Dhaka
		Azerbaijan	4-8 July 2023	To participate in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Ministerial Meeting in Baku

B INCOMING

S.N.	Dignitary	Country	Dates	Remarks
1	Mr. Li Zhanshu, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress	People's Republic of China	12-15 September 2022	Official Visit
2	Mr. Takei Shunsuke, State Minister for Foreign Affairs	Japan	20-21 November 2022	To observe the election of the House of Representatives and Provincial Assembly on 20 November 2022
3	Ms. Victoria Nuland, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs	United States of America	29-30 January 2023	Official Visit
4	Ms. Anne Marie Trevelyan, Minister of State (Minister for Indo-Pacific) for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs	United Kingdom	8-10 March 2023	Official Visit
5	Ms. Anne Beathe Tvinnereim, Minister for International Development	Norway	10-12 May 2023	Official Visit
6	Mr. Tim Watts, Assistant Foreign Minister for Foreign Affairs	Australia	16-17 May 2023	Official Visit

II Agreements/MOUs

S.N.	Agreements/MoUs	Date
1	MoU between the House of Representatives of the Federal Parliament of Nepal and the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China on Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation	12 September 2022
2	Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment between Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between Nepal and Italy	10 October 2022
3	Memorandum of Understanding on the continued operation of the Goethe-Zentrum Kathmandu between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nepal and the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Nepal	10 February 2023
4	BIMSTEC Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation	9 March 2023
5	BIMSTEC MoU for Cooperation in Agriculture and Food Security	5 March 2023
6	Agreement on Interparliamentary between the National Assembly of the Federal Parliament of Nepal and Federal Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation	20 April 2023
7	MoU on 'Sharing of Real-time Hydro- meteorological Data and Information for Flood Forecasting and Warning' between Nepal and Bangladesh	30 May 2023
8	MoU for the development of the Integrated Check Post at Dodhara Chandani between Nepal and India	31 May 2023
9	MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Petroleum Infrastructure between Nepal and India	31 May 2023

10	MoU between the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) of Nepal and Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) of India	31 May 2023
11	MoU for the Development of Phukot-Karnali 480 MW Hydroelectricity Project 2 between Nepal and India	31 May 2023
12	Project Development Agreement (PDA) of Lower Arun 669 MW Hydro-electricity Project between Nepal and India	31 May 2023
13	MoU between National Clearing House Limited Nepal (NCHL) and National Payment Company India Limited (NPCIL) for cross-border payments	31 May 2023
14	Deed of Lease Regarding Allotment of Land In Baridhara Diplomatic Enclave to the Embassy of Nepal between Embassy of Nepal in Dhaka and Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (RAJUK) Dhaka	20 June 2023

III

Meetings of Bilateral Consultation Mechanism

S.N.	Bilateral Consultation Mechanism Meeting	Date and Venue
1	Second Nepal-Australia Bilateral Consultation Mechanism Meeting	30 August 2022, Canberra
2	Third Nepal-Canada Bilateral Consultation Mechanism Meeting	29 September 2022, Ottawa
3	Third Nepal-France Bilateral Consultation Mechanism Meeting	17 January 2023, Kathmandu
4	Fourteenth Nepal-EU Joint Commission Meeting	01 February 2023, Brussels
5	Second Nepal-Belgium Bilateral Consultation Mechanism Meeting	02 February 2023, Brussels
6	Fifteenth Nepal-China Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism Meeting	07 April 2023, Beijing
7	Sixth Nepal-Republic of Korea Bilateral Consultation Mechanism Meeting	14 April 2023, Seoul
8	Fourth Nepal-Japan Bilateral Consultation Mechanism Meeting	18 April 2023, Tokyo
9	Sixth Nepal-United Kingdom Bilateral Consultation Mechanism Meeting	26 April 2023, London

IV

Major Statements

**Keynote speech by the President of Nepal Right Honourable
Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari at Reykjavík Global Forum – Women Leaders
Reykjavik, Iceland, 09 November 2022**

First Lady of Iceland Her Excellency Eliza Jean Reid
President and Founder of the Women Political Leaders Ms. Silvana Koch-Mehrin,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting me in this global forum of women leaders. Coming from Nepal to Iceland, mine has truly become a journey from the “Third Pole” to the North Pole. I bring you warmest greetings of the Nepali people from the land of Lord Buddha and Mount Everest.

The three-dimension approach of ‘communication, connection, and community’ of this Forum is showing a beacon of light for gender equality. For us, this Forum is also an occasion to celebrate our long journey of struggle for equality, voice, representation, and participation.

As the world faces numerous challenges today, it is more important than ever that women’s perspectives be brought to the fore of decision-making process. It is a mother, a wife, and a daughter who are most affected by any crisis. More so, in the global south. Most recently, COVID-19 pandemic amply demonstrated that marginalized communities are most vulnerable during crises. And climate change is no different. Today, climate emergency has become an existential threat for us.

In Nepal, the impacts of climate change have been more visible and devastating with each passing year. Glaciers are receding, and permafrost is melting in the Himalayas, posing threats to lives and livelihood of millions of people. Extreme climate events have increased, causing huge loss to economy, ecology and human lives.

Nepal is one of the most vulnerable countries when it comes to climate change, and one of the most resource-constrained. We are bearing a disproportionate burden compared to our negligible share in greenhouse gas emissions. Yet our commitment to climate action is robust. We are determined to implement Paris Agreement and have announced to reach a net zero emission by 2045. Towards this end, we call for transparent mechanism and fast-track provisions for resources, transfer of technology, and capacity-building support.

Madam President,

In Nepal, now we are on course of institutionalizing an inclusive democracy that has well embodied principles of human rights, equality, non-discrimination, inclusion, and social transformation.

To bring about an equal and just society, we continue investing in education, public health, employment, and inclusive socio-political arrangements.

We do have solid constitutional foundation that guarantees at least one third representation of women in the federal Parliament and provincial legislatures.

Through recently held elections, women occupy 41% of elected political offices at local governments. Participation and representation of women has also increased in other fronts such as civil service, security agencies, cooperatives and private corporations.

Nonetheless, we still have a long way to go to attain gender parity in our national life. We still have battles to win against all forms of gender-based violence, prejudices and stereotypes. On this, our commitment and efforts are unwavering and sincere.

Madam President,

As I speak in this forum, I have in my mind all those women who have gone through hardships and sufferings befallen on them due to poverty, underdevelopment and deprivation. Those women who have had to break the barriers of many kinds to better their lives and the lives of their children.

And I am deeply honoured today to represent these brave women across generations. Honoured to be a part of this collective mission to create an inclusive society where men and women decode the world's challenges as equals.

Thank you,

“रेक्याभिक ग्लोबल फोरम- वुमन लिडर्स”मा
सम्माननीय राष्ट्रपति श्रीमती विद्यादेवी भण्डारीज्यूले गर्नुहुने विशेष सम्बोधन
०९ नोभेम्बर २०२२

रेक्याभिक, आइसल्याण्ड

गणतन्त्र आइसल्याण्डकी प्रथम महिला महामहिम एलिजा जाँ रीड,
वुमन पोलिटिकल लिडर्सका अध्यक्ष तथा संस्थापक श्री सिल्भाना कोक-मेहरिन,
महामहिमहरू,
भद्र महिला तथा सज्जनवृन्द !

महिला नेतृत्वको यस विश्वव्यापी मञ्चमा आमन्त्रित गर्नुभएकोमा यहाँहरूलाई धन्यवाद दिन चाहन्छु । नेपाल देखि आइसल्याण्ड आउने मेरो यस यात्राले हामीलाई “तेस्रो ध्रुव”देखि उत्तरी ध्रुवसम्म जोडेको छ । भगवान बुद्ध र सगरमाथाको देशबाट नेपाली जनताको न्यानो सदभाव लिएर म यहाँ आएको छु ।

विश्व महिला राजनीतिक नेतृत्व मन्चले “संचार, सम्बन्ध, र समुदाय” को बहुआयामिक प्रयासबाट लैंगिक समानताको नयाँ बाटो तय गर्ने लक्ष्य लिएको छ। समानता, आवाज, प्रतिनिधित्व र सहभागिताका लागि हामीले गरेको लामो संघर्षका उपलब्धिहरू एक आपसमा साट्ने उत्सवको रूपमा पनि हामीले यस फोरमलाई लिएका छौं ।

आज विश्वले कैयन चुनौतीहरू सामना गर्नुपरेको सन्दर्भमा महिलाहरूको दृष्टिकोण निर्णय प्रक्रियाको अग्रपंक्तिमा मुखरित हुनु अपरिहार्य बनेको छ । कुनैपनि संकटले आमा, पत्नी र छोरीहरूलाई नै सबैभन्दा बढी प्रभावित गर्दछ । दक्षिणका मुलुकहरूको अवस्थाले यसलाई अझ स्पष्ट गर्दछ ।

हालैको विश्वव्यापी कोभिड-१९ महामारीले सीमान्तकृत समुदायहरू नै संकटको समयमा बढी जोखिममा पर्ने वास्तविकतालाई उजागर गरेको छ । जलवायु परिवर्तनको असर पनि यो भन्दा फरक छैन । जलवायु परिवर्तन आज हाम्रो अस्तित्वलाई नै सकट ल्याउने कारक बन्दै गएको छ ।

नेपालमा जलवायु परिवर्तनको असर हरेक वर्ष बढ्दो र झन् विनाशकारी हुँदै गएको हामीले अनुभव गरेका छौं । हिमनदीहरू सुक्दै गइरहेका छन् । हिमालयमा सधैं महिना जमिरहने हिउँ पग्लिरहेको छ । लाखौं मानिसहरूको जीवन एवं जनजीविका जोखिममा परेको छ । अनपेक्षित मौसमी घटनाहरूमा वृद्धि भई अर्थतन्त्र, पारिस्थितिकीय प्रणाली तथा मानव जीवनमा गम्भीर क्षति पुगिरहेको छ ।

नेपाल जलवायु परिवर्तनको उच्च जोखिममा रहेको मुलुकमध्येमा पर्दछ भने हामीसँग सो जोखिमको सामना गर्न स्रोत, साधन र क्षमताको अभाव पनि उत्तिकै टड्कारो रूपमा रहेको छ । नेपाल हरितगृह ग्यास उत्सर्जन गर्ने राष्ट्रमा पर्दैन तर, जलवायु परिवर्तनबाट अत्यन्त नकारात्मक रूपले प्रभावित छ । तथापि जलवायु परिवर्तनको प्रभाव न्यूनीकरण अभियानमा हाम्रो उच्च प्रतिबद्धता रहेको छ। हामी पेरिस सम्झौता कार्यन्वयन गर्न दृढ छौं र सन् २०४५ सम्म सापेक्षिक शुन्य उत्सर्जनमा पुग्ने लक्ष्य लिएका छौं । यी उद्देश्य प्राप्त गर्न स्रोत-साधन, प्रविधि हस्तान्तरण, तथा क्षमता अभिवृद्धिका लागि छरितो तथा पारदर्शी संयन्त्र निर्माण गर्न हामी विश्व समुदायलाई आह्वान गर्दछौं ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय,

हाल नेपालमा हामी मानव अधिकार, समानता, भेदभावरहित, रुपान्तरणका सिद्धान्तहरू आत्मसात गरिएको समावेशी लोकतन्त्र संस्थागत गर्ने मार्गमा छौं।

समानता र न्यायपूर्ण समाजको निर्माणका लागि हामीले शिक्षा, सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य, रोजगारी तथा समावेशी सामाजिक-राजनीतिक प्रबन्धहरूमा लगानी गरिरहेका छौं।

हामीसंग संघीय तथा प्रादेशिक विधायिकाहरूमा महिलाको एक तिहाई प्रतिनिधित्व सुनिश्चित गरिएको सुदृढ संवैधानिक आधारशिला रहेको छ।

हालसालै सम्पन्न स्थानीय सरकारको निर्वाचनमा एकचालीस प्रतिशत राजनीतिक पदहरूमा महिलाहरू निर्वाचित हुनु भएको छ। निजामती सेवा, सुरक्षा निकाय, सहकारी तथा निजी संस्थानहरू जस्ता क्षेत्रमा महिलाहरूको सहभागिता तथा प्रतिनिधित्वमा अभिवृद्धि भइरहेको छ।

तथापि राष्ट्रिय जीवनमा पूर्ण लैंगिक समानताको लक्ष्य हासिल गर्ने हाम्रो लामो यात्रा अझै जारी छ। सबै प्रकारका लैंगिक हिंसा, पूर्वाग्रह, तथा कुरितीहरू विरुद्धको लडाईं जित्न बाँकी नै रहेको छ। यस अभियानमा हाम्रो प्रतिबद्धता अटल र प्रयास इमान्दार रहेको छ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय,

आज म यस फोरमलाई सम्बोधन गरिरहँदा, गरिबी, अल्पविकास तथा वन्चितीकरणका कारण कष्ट झेलिरहेका महिलाहरूलाई सम्झिरहेको छु; आफ्नो र आफ्नो सन्ततिको जीवन सुधार गर्न कैयन विघ्नवाधा तथा अड्चनसँग जुधिरहेका महिलाहरूलाई सम्झीरहेको छु।

आज यहाँ विभिन्न पुस्ताका नेपाली विराङ्गनाहरूको प्रतिनिधित्व गर्न पाउँदा मैले गौरवान्वित महसुस गरेको छु। महिला र पुरुष बीचको समान हैसियत हुने समावेशी समाज निर्माण गरी विश्वका चुनौतीहरू सामना गर्ने यस सामुहिक अभियानमा सम्मिलित हुन पाउँदा सम्मानित महसुस गरेको छु।

धन्यवाद।

सम्माननीय राष्ट्रपति श्रीमती विद्यादेवी भण्डारीले नेपाल विश्व सम्बन्ध परिषद्को ७५औँ वार्षिक उत्सवको उपलक्ष्यमा आयोजित कार्यक्रमलाई गर्नुभएको सम्बोधन

कार्यक्रमका अध्यक्ष,

नेपाल विश्व सम्बन्ध परिषद्का सभापति तथा कार्यकारी समितिका सदस्यहरू,

वरिष्ठ कुटनीतिज्ञ एवं पूर्व मन्त्री डा. भेष बहादुर थापा,

महामहिम राजदूतहरू,

राष्ट्रसेवकहरू,

सञ्चारकर्मीहरू,

भद्र महिला तथा सज्जनवृन्द !

नेपाल विश्व सम्बन्ध परिषद्को ७५औँ वार्षिक उत्सवको सन्दर्भमा यो गोष्ठीको आयोजना गर्नुभएकोमा सराहना गर्दछु । यस अवसरमा म परिषद्का अध्यक्ष, कार्यकारी समितिका सदस्यहरू तथा सम्बन्धित सबैलाई धन्यवाद दिन चाहन्छु ।

वि.सं. २००४ सालमा स्थापना भई नेपालको पुरानो गैरसरकारी संस्थाको रूपमा परिषद्ले विश्व शान्ति, असंलग्नता र पञ्चशीलमा आधारित नेपालको परराष्ट्र नीतिलाई सुदृढ गराउने उद्देश्यका साथ सकारात्मक छलफल र गोष्ठी जस्ता कार्यक्रमहरू सञ्चालन गर्दै आएको छ । ७५औँ वर्षसम्म अस्तित्वमा रहेर परराष्ट्र मामिला तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय सम्बन्धका क्षेत्रमा काम गर्ने संस्थाका रूपमा कायम रहनु यस परिषद्को एउटा उल्लेखनीय सफलता हो भन्ने मलाई लाग्दछ । यस अवसरमा वि.सं. २००३ मा सम्पन्न एसिया सम्बन्ध सम्मेलनमा नेपालले जनाएको सक्रिय सहभागिता लगत्तै स्थापना भएको नेपाल विश्व सम्बन्ध परिषद्लाई सुरुका वर्षमा नेतृत्व प्रदान गर्ने व्यक्तित्वहरूको पनि म स्मरण गर्न चाहन्छु ।

परिषद्को स्थापना कालमा मुलुकको परराष्ट्र मामिला र अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय सम्बन्ध पारिवारिक शासनको घेराभित्र रहेकोले नेपाली जनताको सरोकारभन्दा बाहिरको विषय थियो । वि.सं. २००७ सालको राजनीतिक परिवर्तनपछि नेपाल राजनीतिक खुलापनको नयाँ युगमा प्रवेश गर्‍यो । तत्पश्चात् परिषद्ले परराष्ट्र मामिला, राष्ट्रिय, क्षेत्रीय र अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय महत्वका अन्य विषयहरूमा स्वदेशी तथा विदेशी लब्धप्रतिष्ठित व्यक्तित्वहरूसँग छलफल तथा अन्तर्क्रिया कार्यक्रमहरू आयोजना गर्दै परराष्ट्र मामिलामा सकारात्मक विमर्श गर्ने मञ्चको रूपमा आफ्नो सक्रियता कायम राखेको मैले पाएको छु । हाम्रो आफ्नै देश र विश्वमा भएका परिवर्तनका सन्दर्भहरूलाई ध्यानमा राख्दै यस्ता सार्वजनिक मञ्चहरूले परराष्ट्र नीति तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय मामिलाहरूका वस्तुगत तथा सान्दर्भिक पक्षहरूमा बहस र छलफल गर्नुपर्दछ । यस्ता कार्यक्रममा व्यक्त गरिएका सुझाव र विज्ञहरूको राय हाम्रो परराष्ट्र सम्बन्ध सञ्चालनमा संलग्न निकायहरूका लागि पनि उपयोगी हुनेछन् भन्ने मैले विश्वास लिएको छु । निरन्तर चलिरहने छलफल र अन्तरक्रियाहरूले हाम्रो दृष्टिकोणलाई ठोस आकार दिन, जनमत निर्माण गर्न, एक अर्काका धारणाहरू आदान प्रदान गर्न सहयोग पुर्याउँदै परराष्ट्र नीतिमा साझा दृष्टिकोण निर्माण गर्न मद्दत गर्दछन् भन्ने मलाई लाग्दछ ।

महिला तथा सज्जनवृन्द,

बदलिंदो परिवेशमा नेपालको परराष्ट्र नीतिको उद्देश्य र लक्ष्य प्राप्तिका लागि भइरहेका प्रयासहरूका बारेमा यस कार्यक्रममा छलफल हुन उपयुक्त हुने म ठान्दछु । एकातिर, विज्ञान तथा सूचना प्रविधिको क्षेत्रमा अभूतपूर्व विकासले मानव जीवनलाई सहज र सुखी बनाउन ठूलो योगदान गरिरहेका छन् भने अर्कातिर, वर्तमान विश्वले अभूतपूर्व चुनौतिहरूको सामना गरिरहेको छ । भूराजनीतिक जटिलता, बढ्दो असमानता, आर्थिक सङ्कट र जलवायु परिवर्तनले ल्याएको सङ्कट लगायतका कारणले विश्व शान्ति र समृद्धिमा नयाँ चुनौति उत्पन्न भएका छन् । अहिलेकै रफ्तारमा वातावरण विनाश हुँदै जाने हो भने विश्व समुदायले ठूलो मात्रामा खाद्य असुरक्षा र पानीको सङ्कट व्यहोर्नु पर्ने अवस्था देखिएको छ ।

कुनै पनि मुलुकको विदेश नीति आन्तरिक नीतिकै विस्तारको रूपमा लिने गरिन्छ। त्यसकारण आत्मनिर्भर, स्वावलम्बी र स्वाधीन अर्थतन्त्रको विकास मार्फत वर्तमानको अन्तरनिर्भर र जटिल अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय प्रणालीमा हाम्रो उपस्थितिलाई अर्थपूर्ण र प्रभावकारी बनाउनु पर्दछ। यसमा निहित जटिलता र चुनौतिहरू सामना गर्दै भावी दिशा तय गर्न प्रभावकारी परराष्ट्र नीति एवं सबल र सक्षम कुटनीतिक संरचनाको आवश्यकता पर्दछ।

नेपालले सधैं आफ्नो स्वतन्त्रता र सार्वभौमसत्ता अक्षुण्ण राखेको छ। नेपालका भूराजनीतिक यथार्थहरू नै मूल रूपमा हाम्रो परराष्ट्र नीति र तिनको कार्यान्वयनमा प्रभाव पार्ने कारक तत्वहरू हुन्। यस अवसरमा, म परराष्ट्र नीतिमा व्यापक साझा सहमति तथा एकीकृत दृष्टिकोण निर्माण हुन जरूरी हुन्छ भन्ने कुरामा जोड दिन चाहन्छु। बदलिंदो आन्तरिक तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय परिवेशलाई विचार गरी आफ्नो राष्ट्रिय हितअनुकूल परराष्ट्र नीति सञ्चालन गर्नु हाम्रो प्राथमिकता रहनुपर्दछ।

नेपालको संविधानमा मुलुकको सार्वभौमसत्ता, अखण्डता, स्वाधीनता र राष्ट्रहितको रक्षा गर्न क्रियाशील रहँदै संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघको बडापत्र, असंलग्नता, पञ्चशीलको सिद्धान्त, अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय कानून र विश्वशान्तिको मान्यताको आधारमा राष्ट्रको सर्वोपरी हितलाई ध्यानमा राखी स्वतन्त्र परराष्ट्र नीति सञ्चालन गर्ने उद्देश्य परिलक्षित छ। संविधानमा निर्दिष्ट आधारभूत मान्यताहरूका आधारमा हाम्रो परराष्ट्र नीतिका उद्देश्य र लक्ष्यहरू निर्धारण गरिएका छन्। यी उद्देश्यहरू हासिल गर्न हामीले अन्य मुलुकहरू एवं अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय संघ संस्थाहरूसँग मित्रता र सहयोगात्मक सम्बन्ध कायम गर्नु पर्दछ। सबैसँग मित्रता राख्ने र कसैसँग शत्रुता नगर्ने हाम्रो परराष्ट्र नीतिको मूल मन्त्र रहेको छ।

असंलग्न आन्दोलनको संस्थापक सदस्य भएका नाताले नेपाल यस आन्दोलनका आधारभूत सिद्धान्त र आदर्शहरूप्रति गहिरो आस्था र विश्वास राख्दछ। नेपालको संविधान, २०७२ ले असंलग्नतालाई नेपालको परराष्ट्र नीति सञ्चालनमा एक मार्गदर्शक आधारको रूपमा स्वीकारेकोले असंलग्न आन्दोलनका आदर्शप्रति नेपालको दृढ प्रतिवद्धतालाई पुनर्पुष्टि गर्दछ।

नेपालले हालसम्म आफ्नो कुटनीतिक सम्बन्धलाई विश्वका १७८ मुलुकहरूसँग बिस्तार गरेको छ। हाम्रो परराष्ट्र नीतिको प्रमुख उद्देश्य नेपाल र नेपाली जनताको हित प्रवर्द्धन गर्नु हो। अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय समुदायमा नेपालको छवि उच्च राख्न र सबै देशबाट अधिकतम सद्भाव, समर्थन र सहयोग प्राप्त गर्न प्रभावकारी कुटनीतिको माध्यमबाट अनुकूल अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय वातावरण सिर्जना गर्नु पर्दछ। भूपरिवेष्टित राष्ट्रहरूको पारवहन अधिकारको पैरवी तथा पर्वतीय मुलुकहरूको विकाससम्बन्धी अवाधारणालाई अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय मञ्चमा अगाडि बढाउन नेपालले निरन्तर भूमिका खेल्नु पर्दछ।

विकासशील देशहरू विशेष गरी अति कम विकसित देशहरूको विकासमा सहयोगी र सक्षम हुने उदार विधिमा आधारित, न्यायोचित र निष्पक्ष अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय व्यवस्थाको वकालत हामीले जारी राख्नु पर्दछ। नियममा आधारित विश्व व्यवस्थालाई न्यायमा समेत आधारित बनाउन हाम्रा प्रयासहरू केन्द्रित हुनुपर्दछ। दिगो शान्ति, समृद्धि र जनताको जीवनमा परिवर्तन ल्याउन नेपालले आर्थिक सामाजिक विकासलाई उच्च प्राथमिकतामा राखेको छ। दिगो विकासका लक्ष्यहरू, अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय प्रतिबद्धताहरू र राष्ट्रिय विकासका आकांक्षाहरू पूरा गर्न हामी प्रयासरत छौं। आर्थिक विकास, वैदेशिक लगानी प्रवर्द्धन, प्रविधि हस्तान्तरण, निर्यात व्यापार जस्ता महत्वपूर्ण क्षेत्रहरूमा राष्ट्रिय विकासलाई सघाउन अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय सद्भाव र सहयोग उपलब्ध गराउने दिशामा हाम्रो कुटनीति केन्द्रित हुनु पर्दछ।

महिला तथा सज्जनवृन्द,

हाम्रा दुई निकट छिमेकी मुलुकहरू भारत र चीनसँग हाम्रो मित्रवत सम्बन्ध रहिआएको छ। भौगोलिक निकटता, सामाजिक र सांस्कृतिक सम्बन्ध, सरकारी तथा जनस्तरमा हुने अन्तरक्रिया, व्यापार र आर्थिक सहयोग लगायत द्विपक्षीय सहकार्यका धेरै

कारणहरूले दुवै छिमेकी मुलुकहरूसँग हाम्रो निकटता छ । यसलाई मध्यनजर गर्दै दक्षिण र उत्तरका छिमेकीहरूसँग मित्रता, पारस्परिक संवाद, सार्वभौम समानता र पारस्परिक लाभका लागि सहकार्यमा आधारित घनिष्ठ र सौहार्दपूर्ण सम्बन्ध रहनु पर्दछ । उच्चस्तरीय भ्रमणको नियमित आदानप्रदान र जनस्तरको बढ्दो सम्पर्कले हाम्रो सम्बन्धलाई थप मजबुत बनाएको छ ।

हालका दशकहरूमा भारत र चीनले हासिल गरेको अभूतपूर्व आर्थिक विकास हाम्रा लागि खुसीको विषय हो । हाम्रो छिमेकमा भइरहेका सकारात्मक परिवर्तनहरूबाट हामीले पनि लाभान्वित हुने गरी द्विपक्षीय सम्बन्ध सञ्चालन गर्नु पर्दछ । नेपालले आफ्ना छिमेकीहरूको हितविरुद्ध नेपाली भूमिमा कुनैपनि गतिविधि हुन नदिने प्रतिवद्धता जनाएको छ । साथै, हाम्रो सरोकारको विषयमा हाम्रा छिमेकीहरूबाट पनि त्यस्तै संवेदनशीलताको अपेक्षा हामीले राखेका छौं । आपसी विश्वास र सद्भाव निर्माण गरी यी दुई मुलुकहरूसँग निरन्तर सहयोग र सहकार्यको सम्बन्ध कायम राख्नु पर्दछ ।

दुई निकट छिमेकी मुलुकका साथै हाम्रा अन्य मित्रराष्ट्रहरू तथा श्रम गन्तव्य मुलुकहरूसँगको सम्बन्ध उत्तिकै महत्वपूर्ण रहेको छ । लाखौंको संख्यामा रहेका नेपाली आप्रवासी कामदारहरूको सुरक्षा तथा कल्याणका लागि यी महत्वपूर्ण साझेदारहरूसँग नजिकबाट सहकार्य गर्न जरूरी छ । वैदेशिक रोजगारीबाट प्राप्त हुने विप्रेषण आज देशको आम्दानीको एक प्रमुख स्रोत बनेको छ । हामीले वैदेशिक रोजगारीमा जाने नेपालीहरू, विशेषगरी महिला र अधिक जोखिममा परेका नागरिकहरूको हितलाई सबै परिस्थितिमा पूर्ण रूपमा सुरक्षित राख्न सक्नुपर्दछ । यसका लागि नेपाली दूतावास र नियोगहरूले थप सक्रिय भूमिका खेल्नुपर्छ । पारस्परिक लाभका लागि व्यापार, पर्यटन, लगानी र जनस्तरको सम्बन्धलाई प्रवर्द्धन गरी आर्थिक साझेदारीलाई अझ फराकिलो पार्नु पर्दछ ।

हाम्रा विकासका प्रयासहरूमा महत्वपूर्ण सहयोग प्रदान गर्दै आएका विकास साझेदार मुलुकहरूसँगको सम्बन्ध परराष्ट्र नीतिको धेरै महत्वपूर्ण विषयको रूपमा रहेको मैले पाएको छु । संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघका स्थायी सदस्य राष्ट्रहरू, युरोपेली संघ तथा यसका सदस्य राष्ट्रहरू र विकासका साझेदार मुलुकहरूसँगको सम्बन्धलाई हामीले प्राथमिकतामा राख्नु पर्दछ । धेरै साझेदार मुलुकहरू हाम्रो आर्थिक विकास र समृद्धिका लागि भरपर्दो गरी लामो समयदेखि संलग्न रहेका छन् । नेपालले कोभिड-१९ महामारीपछि उच्च आर्थिक वृद्धि हासिल गर्ने आकांक्षा राखेकाले आगामी दिनमा यी मुलुकहरूबाट थप सहायता र सहयोगको लागि पनि सक्रिय रहनु पर्ने आवश्यकता तर्फ म यस विद्वत सभाको ध्यान आकृष्ट गर्न चाहन्छु ।

महिला तथा सज्जनबुन्द,

नेपाल सदैव स्थापित संस्थागत संरचनाहरू मार्फत क्षेत्रीय सहयोग प्रवर्द्धन र सुदृढीकरणको पक्षमा रहेको छ । नेपाल हाल दक्षिण एसियाली क्षेत्रीय सहयोग संगठनको (सार्क) अध्यक्ष भई कार्य गर्दै आएको छ । रोकिएको सार्क सम्मेलन लगायत अन्य सार्क प्रक्रियालाई आवश्यक गति दिई अगाडि बढाउन सदस्य राष्ट्रहरू बिच घनिभूत छलफल हुन जरूरी रहेको छ । बहुपक्षीय प्राविधिक तथा आर्थिक सहयोगका लागि बंगालको खाडीको प्रयास (बिमस्टेक)को पनि सदस्य रहेको नेपालले सो संगठन मार्फत क्षेत्रीय सहयोगलाई थप प्रभावकारी बनाउन सदस्य राष्ट्रहरूसँग कार्य गर्दै आएको छ ।

हाम्रो अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय छविको प्रवर्द्धनका साथै आर्थिक विकास र सामाजिक प्रगतिका लागि अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय समुदायबाट आवश्यक पर्ने सहयोग र सहायता प्राप्त गर्न संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघ र यसका विशिष्टीकृत निकायहरू एवं अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय वित्तीय संस्थाहरूसँग नेपालको लामो सहकार्यले ठूलो महत्त्व राख्दछ । बहुपक्षीयताको केन्द्रबिन्दुको रूपमा संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघ प्रणालीको अग्रणी भूमिका रहेको छ । संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघको वडापत्रमा उल्लेखित सार्वभौम समानताको सम्मान र स्वतन्त्रता, क्षेत्रीय अखण्डता तथा आन्तरिक मामिलामा अहस्तक्षेप जस्ता आधारभूत विषयलाई सबै राष्ट्रले जुनसुकै परिस्थितिमा पनि आत्मसात गर्नु पर्दछ । अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय शान्ति तथा सुरक्षाको सुनिश्चितताको लागि विवादहरूको शान्तिपूर्ण समाधान तथा सहयोगको वातावरण प्रवर्द्धन गर्नु आवश्यक हुन्छ । कूटनीति र संवादलाई सबै प्रकारका अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय विवादहरूको शान्तिपूर्ण समाधानका लागि मतभेदहरू कम गर्ने र द्वन्द्वहरू समाधान गर्ने

उत्तम माध्यमको रूपमा लिनुपर्ने हुन्छ। कुनै पनि देशको सार्वभौमसत्ताविरुद्ध बल प्रयोग संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघको बडापत्रका सिद्धान्तहरू विपरीत हुन्छ भन्ने हाम्रो मान्यता रहेको छ।

संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघको तेस्रो स्तम्भको रूपमा रहेको विकाससम्बन्धी क्षेत्र कमजोर रहेको अवस्था छ। विकास, शान्ति तथा मानवअधिकार एक अर्काका परिपूरक हुनाले सबैलाई हामीले उत्तिकै महत्व दिनु पर्दछ। शान्तिपूर्ण तथा न्यायपूर्ण विश्व व्यवस्थाको हाम्रो चाहना र परिकल्पनालाई साकार रूप प्रदान गर्न संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघ प्रणालीमा सुधार तथा राष्ट्रिय, क्षेत्रीय र अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय स्तरमा कानूनको शासनको पालना हुन आवश्यक छ।

अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय शान्ति र सुरक्षा कायम गर्ने कार्यमा नेपालले उल्लेखनीय योगदान गर्दै आएको छ। विश्वका विभिन्न भागमा रहेका संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघीय शान्ति मिसनहरूमा नेपाल दोस्रो ठूलो जनशक्ति योगदानकर्ता मुलुक हो। शान्ति स्थापनाका लागि तैनाथ रहँदा हाम्रा वीर शान्ति सैनिकहरूले कर्तव्य पालनाको सिलसिलामा गरेको बलिदानले विश्व शान्तिको लागि हाम्रो प्रतिबद्धताको बलियो उदाहरण प्रस्तुत गर्दछ। नेपाली शान्तिकर्मीहरूले शान्ति र मानवीयताको संरक्षणका लागि व्यावसायिक र समर्पित रक्षकको रूपमा आफ्नो योग्यता प्रमाणित गरेका छन्। नेपालको शान्तिप्रतिको प्रतिबद्धतालाई संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघ तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय समुदायले खुलेर प्रशंसा गरेका छन्।

शान्तिप्रेमी देशको रूपमा आफ्नो विशिष्ट परिचय कायम राख्दै एसिया र प्रशान्त क्षेत्रका लागि संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघीय शान्ति तथा निशस्त्रीकरण क्षेत्रीय केन्द्रको मुख्यालय नेपालमा रहेको छ। यस संस्थाको उद्देश्य प्राप्तिका लागि चालिने प्रयासमा नेपालको समर्थन रहनेछ।

संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघीय शान्ति अभियानमा योगदान गर्नुका साथै सशस्त्र द्वन्द्वबाट शान्ति र लोकतन्त्रमा शान्तिपूर्ण रूपान्तरणको आफ्नै अनुभव अनुभव नेपालसँग छ। हाम्रो सफल र मौलिक घरेलु शान्ति प्रक्रियाको अनुभव संक्रमणकालमा रहेका र द्वन्द्वबाट गुञ्जिरहेका देशहरूका लागि उपयोगी बन्न सक्दछ। लैङ्गिक समानता र समावेशीकरणका दृष्टिमा समेत नेपालले प्राप्त गरेका संवैधानिक तथा संरचनागत उपलब्धिलाई अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय समुदायले उच्च महत्व दिएको मैले पाएको छु। अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय समुदायका बिचमा नेपालको प्रतिष्ठा अझै अभिवृद्धि गर्न हाम्रा सफलताको कथालाई विश्वसनीय रूपले प्रस्तुत गर्ने कूटनीतिमा हामीले जोड दिनुपर्दछ। मानवअधिकार र स्वतन्त्रताका स्थापित मान्यताहरूप्रति हाम्रो दहो प्रतिबद्धता रहिआएको छ। हाम्रो संविधान तथा कानूनले मानवअधिकारका यी मान्यताहरूलाई मौलिक हकका रूपमा आत्मसात गरेका छन् र त्यसको संवैधानिक तथा कानुनी उपचारको प्रत्याभूति पनि गरिएको छ। मानवअधिकारसम्बन्धी धेरैजसो अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय सन्धि सम्झौताहरूको नेपाल पक्ष राष्ट्र रहेको छ। संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघको मानवअधिकार परिषद्को निर्वाचित सदस्यका रूपमा नेपालले सक्रिय र निष्पक्ष भूमिका निर्वाह गरेको छ।

जलवायु परिवर्तनसम्बन्धी पेरिस सन्धिको प्रावधानप्रति हाम्रो पूर्ण समर्थन रहेको छ। विश्व व्यापार संगठनको सदस्यको नाताले हामीले नियममा आधारित अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय व्यापार व्यवस्थामा जोड दिँदै अतिकम विकसित मुलुकहरूलाई समान तर सकारात्मक रूपमा विभेदित व्यवहार गरिनुपर्दछ भन्ने मान्यतालाई जोड दिँदै आएका छौं।

महिला तथा सज्जनवृन्द,

अतिकम विकसित मुलुक, भूपरिवेष्टित अतिकम विकसित मुलुक र साना टापु विकासशील राज्यहरूको विकास र समृद्धिका लागि नेपालले सक्रिय वकालत गर्दै आएको छ। विकास र जलवायु परिवर्तनका क्षेत्रमा समान चासो र सरोकार भएका देशहरूसँगको ऐक्यवद्धता र सहयोग हाम्रो बहुपक्षीय कूटनीतिको महत्वपूर्ण विषयका रूपमा रहेको छ। नेपालले सन् २०११ मा इस्तानबुलमा सम्पन्न अतिकम विकसित मुलुकहरूको संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघीय चौथो सम्मेलनको अध्यक्षता र नेतृत्व गरेको थियो। यस वर्षदेखि

पुनः नेपालले अतिकम विकसित मुलुकहरूको संयोजकको रूपमा नेतृत्वदायी भूमिका निर्वाह गर्दैछ । विशेष परिस्थितिमा भएका मुलुकहरूको विशिष्ट विकास आवश्यकताहरू सम्बोधन गर्न सबै सान्दर्भिक अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय सम्झौताहरूको प्रभावकारी कार्यान्वयनको लागि नेपाल आफ्नो आह्वानमा अडिग रहनु

पर्दछ । सन् २०२६ मा हामी अतिकम विकसित मुलुकबाट स्तरोन्नति हुन लागि रहेका छौं । अतिकम विकसित मुलुकको स्थितिबाट नेपालको स्तरोन्नतिलाई हामीले लामो समयदेखि राखिएको राष्ट्रिय आकांक्षा र विकासको कोशेदुङ्गाको रूपमा लिनुपर्दछ । यसले राष्ट्रिय मनोबल र देशको समग्र छवि बढाउन मद्दत गर्नेछ । साथै, पर्यटन तथा लगानीमा सकारात्मक प्रभाव पारी हाम्रो अर्थतन्त्रको आधुनिकीकरण र प्रतिस्पर्धात्मक क्षमता अभिवृद्धि गर्ने अवसर प्रदान गर्नेछ । हालैका वर्षहरूमा गैरआवासीय नेपालीहरू नेपालको विकासमा संलग्न हुने आशाजनक सम्भावनाहरू भएको समूहको रूपमा देखा परेका छन् । नेपाल सरकारले गैरआवासीय नेपालीहरूलाई नेपालको विकास प्रयासहरूमा सम्भावित लगानीकर्ता र साझेदारको रूपमा मान्यता दिएको छ । हामीले मातृभूमिप्रति गैरआवासीय नेपालीहरूको प्रतिवद्धता, गहिरो माया र सम्मानको कदर गर्दै मुलुकको विकासमा वास्तविक साझेदार बनेर राष्ट्र निर्माणको महान कार्यका लागि वाह्य लगानी र प्रविधि हस्तान्तरणका क्षेत्रमा योगदान गर्न आमन्त्रित गर्नु पर्दछ । अन्त्यमा, फेरि पनि नेपाल विश्व मामिला परिषद्को ७५औं वार्षिकोत्सवको अवसरमा अध्यक्ष तथा पदाधिकारीहरूलाई हार्दिक बधाई दिदै परिषद्को उज्ज्वल भविष्यको कामना गर्दछु ।

धन्यवाद !

२०७९ फागुन ११ गते बिहीबार ।
राष्ट्रिय सभागृह, काठमाडौं ।

Briefing by the Right Honourable Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' to the Diplomatic Community in Nepal held at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers on 15 May 2023.

Honourable Deputy Prime Ministers,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies the Ambassadors and Heads of Missions,
Senior Government Officials,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

At the outset, I would like to welcome you all to this briefing. While I have had the pleasure of meeting most of you in person before, this is the first time we have gathered in this setting since I became the Prime Minister. Please accept my appreciation for your presence.

Today, as just indicated by the Foreign Minister, I would like to briefly highlight three broad areas that are important for us and that might be of interest to you as well. First, I will provide an update on the recent political developments in Nepal. Then I will outline the current economic situation of the country and the major priorities of my government. And finally, I will touch upon our foreign policy priorities.

Last year was politically a momentous year for Nepal. The federal and provincial, and local elections were held in a span of six months. These elections were milestones in further strengthening an inclusive democratic society and ultimately in enhancing people's faith in the democratic process.

Following the elections, governments at all three tiers have been formed. Through the elections, rightful share of women, youths, and different disadvantaged communities has been guaranteed at local government, as well as provincial and federal parliaments as stipulated in the Constitution.

With the formation of the present Government, the country has once again renewed its resolve of consolidating the democratic gains and striving for socio-economic transformation.

Strengthening and empowering democratic institutions; building a peaceful, prosperous, and inclusive society; and achieving economic transformation form the core mandate

of the current government. The Common Minimum Program (CMP) of the present coalition government is about executing the same mandate.

To this end, our efforts will be directed towards institutionalizing the federal democratic republic system. We will strive to end discrimination of all kinds and endeavor to build a just and equitable society.

It has been our priority to make public administration competent and efficient as well as ensure quality service delivery to the people. The policies and actions of this government are guided by our strong commitment to good governance, the rule of law and participatory democracy. We uphold zero-tolerance policy against corruption and aim to ensure transparency and accountability at all levels.

Excellencies,

We are committed to bringing our successful, unique and home-grown peace process to a logical conclusion. We attach high importance to consolidation of peace, reconciliation and harmony in society and reaffirm our commitment to conclude the remaining task of the transitional justice process and provide justice and reparation to the victims of the conflict.

The Comprehensive Peace Accord, the directives of the Supreme Court, and relevant international commitments, as well as the concerns of the victims, will guide our endeavors towards this end.

Having come through the course of successful peace process, I can assure our partners that Nepal can conclude the process of transitional justice in equally unique way based on the above parameters.

It is with this objective in mind, the amendment Bill to The Enforced Disappearances Enquiry, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act, has been tabled in the Parliament and there is a consensus among major political parties in the Parliament to pass the Bill at the earliest. The amendment proposal has adopted a victim-centric approach and recognizes reparation as a right of the victim. I assure you that there will be no blanket amnesty in cases of serious violation of human rights.

Excellencies,

Now, let me briefly touch upon the current economic situation and the challenges we face.

As you all are aware, over the past few years, the global economy has faced a series of challenges and uncertainties. The cumulative impact of COVID-19 pandemic and the disruption in the supply chain of foods, fertilizers, fuel and other essential goods has hit all of us, and more particularly the poorest and vulnerable and risked backsliding of our development gains.

Despite manifold challenges, our economy is showing a positive sign of improvements in the external sector. The liquidity crunch is being gradually relaxed, and the interest rate is in a declining trend. However, economy-wide progress is yet to be achieved. We need to redouble our efforts in all three sectors- agriculture, manufacturing and services, to achieve desired growth target. Meeting the targets of revenue collection and capital expenditure has become difficult. Thus, budget deficit has emerged, and there is some gap between revenue collection and public expenditure.

With a view to revive economic dynamism, my government has introduced several measures on economic, fiscal, and monetary policy that include reducing unnecessary recurrent expenditures, spearheading revenue-generating activities, reducing bank interest rate, and offering refinancing and loan restructure facilities in productive and priority sectors.

We accord high priority to economic development. We have taken measures to create a conducive investment environment and placed due emphasis on leveraging labour productivity, strengthening institutions, and investing in innovation and bringing about structural transformation in our economy. We also prioritize promotion of inclusive and sustainable industrialization, economic diversification and value addition.

We are also committed to reforming and modernizing the revenue administration to further enhance our capacity of domestic resource mobilization. We remain committed to ensure that our fiscal policies help reduce disparities and develop dynamic economy. We are encouraging the private sector to increase productivity and production, create jobs, generate revenue, and drive innovation.

Excellencies,

We are committed to ensuring a predictable, secure, and conducive investment environment to attract more foreign direct investment (FDI) in priority areas. We encourage investments especially in the areas of clean energy, tourism and infrastructures. We will continue to make further legal, policy and institutional reforms to boost the confidence of the investors.

Most of you have been long-standing partners of Nepal in its development efforts, and your support has been instrumental in spearheading the country's progress. Official Development Assistance (ODA), including grants and concessional loans, is still crucial for Nepal to address its economic and infrastructure challenges. There is still a significant need for external financing, particularly in areas such as sustainable development, poverty reduction, and access to education, healthcare, and other basic services and to sustain the progress we have made.

In the specific context of current economic stress, we urge development partners for enhanced level of unconditional and budgetary support to enable us plug resources gap in critical areas.

Dear Friends,

As you are aware Nepal is set to graduate from the LDC category by 2026. Though hit hard by multiple challenges beyond our control, graduation has been our national resolve and we are committed to making it smooth, sustainable, and irreversible. Shortly we are finalizing the graduation strategy paper that will be shared with the development partners.

We are graduating without meeting the income criterion, making it a unique situation. On top of this, it will come with upfront costs and loss of international support measures. And our preparations for graduation will overlap with the pandemic recovery. This means we must deploy additional efforts and achieve concrete progress to sustain graduation and avoid the situation of what economists caution us the "middle income trap".

In this context, it is crucial for us to receive continued and focused international support measures from our development partners. Such support measures should include, inter alia, concessional and grant finance, preferential market access and technology transfer for an extended period of time even beyond graduation.

Excellencies,

As a country situated in the Himalayan region, Nepal is bearing disproportionate burden of climate change. The negative impacts of climate change on the lives and livelihoods of our people are increasingly visible in our mountains and plains. As a committed party to the Paris Agreement, we have set ambitious targets of reaching a net-zero carbon scenario by 2045. In view of the existential threat that climate change poses to the world, Nepal calls for a robust action on climate ambition at the international

level. We have tailored our NDC accordingly and localized adaptation plans to address vulnerabilities. To meet our ambitious climate targets, we need easy and flexible access to climate finance for mitigation, adaptation, transfer of technology, and capacity-building. Multiple crises and challenges compounded with the current economic situation has rendered realization of the sustainable development goals (SDG) even more challenging. We seek your continued interest in this critical area of our development priority.

It was with a view to addressing impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, meeting the climate ambition, and accelerating the implementation of SDGs, we adopted Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID) strategy together with our development partners. We appreciate your strong commitment of support to implement this holistic development approach.

Excellencies,

I would also like to inform you that Nepal is close to the end of concluding periodic Mutual Evaluation under the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG-AML/CFT).

Nepal has been a strong supporter and complier of international obligations as our proactive role has been visible in the United Nations and other regional organizations. Nepal's compliance of FATF recommendations has been significantly improved over the years since we became member of the APG in 2002. We remain committed to continuously improving our capacity to address the new and emerging challenges.

It is in this spirit we have taken the ongoing mutual evaluation as a part of this continuous reform process and our cooperation to the APG throughout this evaluation has been extraordinary. We are committed to further strengthening our legal regime, initiating policy reform, and building institutional and enforcement capacity.

With a view to address the new and emerging challenges and enhance our implementation capacity and plug the gaps, the Government of Nepal has tabled a comprehensive Bill in the Parliament that seeks to amend and reform several legal instruments that have direct bearing with AML/CFT. There is high-level political commitment to pass the Bill before the APG plenary which will be held in the second week of July.

We seek continuous cooperation and understanding from our partners as always after the completion of the assessment and publication of the report in August/September this year.

Dear Friends,

Finally, let me briefly outline our major foreign policy thrusts.

The Constitution of Nepal provides basic policy direction to the conduct of our international relations. Our foreign policy is guided by the principles of Panchsheel, non-alignment, the UN Charter, international law, and norms of world peace.

We pursue an independent foreign policy based on the principles of sovereign equality, non-interference, mutual respect and benefit.

Friendship, mutual respect, and cooperation continue to guide our external engagements. Protection and promotion of national interest is our foreign policy goal. Two major goals- promoting Nepal's credentials as a peaceful, inclusive, and democratic State, and pursuing economic diplomacy- remain at the core of our foreign policy.

The current Government will remain effortful to enhance Nepal's relations with our immediate neighbors, development partners, destination countries for our migrant workers and all other friendly countries. We will strive further to explore new avenues of economic cooperation with our friends and partners.

Potentials of regional cooperation in South Asia are far from being fully realized. We will remain effortful in reviving the SAARC process and in ensuring renewed momentum in the BIMSTEC so that its unique potentials as a link between South Asia and South East Asia are realized.

As always, we will prioritize safety, security, and well-being of our migrant workers. We attach due importance to leveraging the skills, expertise and resources of our Diaspora for Nepal's development.

Our engagements in and contributions to the critical global issues such as peace and security, sustainable development, human rights, and climate change will be further strengthened. Nepal will continue working towards finding global solutions to the global problems. What is needed is to pivot away from the traditional approaches and reorient our actions to address these challenges. Nepal's commitment to multilateralism has ever been strong and so is our commitment to the principles enshrined in the UN Charter. Nepal is one of the largest troops and police contributing countries in the UN peace operations. We continue to champion the agenda of the developing countries including the LDCs and LLDCs.

Currently a member of the Human Rights Council elected for the second term of 2021-23, we continue to serve the Council with determination and distinction. We promote an objective and apolitical approach to human rights issues based on our democratic values and commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

I conclude by extending to you, and through you to the countries and institutions you represent, my sincere thanks for the goodwill, support, and cooperation extended to Nepal. I hope this will continue in the days ahead as well.

I thank you.

Statement by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Physical Infrastructure and Transport and the Leader of Nepali Delegation, Hon. Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha at the Least Developed Countries' (LDC) Summit

4 March 2023, Doha, Qatar

**Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Madam High Representative and Under Secretary-General,
Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen,**

I would like to begin by thanking His Excellency Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, President of Malawi and Chair of the Global Coordination Bureau of the LDCs, for organizing this important Summit.

I also express my sincere gratitude to the government of State of Qatar for its generous hospitality and for hosting this event in Doha.

Mr. Chair,

It has been more than half a century since 1971 when the United Nations recognized the least developed countries as a group that needed focused support measures for their development.

Even after implementation of four dedicated programs of action since 1981, support measures have proven insufficient and the LDCs still constitute about one fourth of the UN membership as we arrive in 2023. The big question before us is why and how we continue to suffer from perpetuity of poverty and underdevelopment.

Mr. Chair,

The answer lies, among others, in the lack of sufficient and impactful support measures and meaningful collaboration to implement the programs of action.

Clearly, as in the 1980s, the LDCs need to transform the structures of their economies, with stronger industrial capacity, better productivity, and an expanded export base. For decades, LDC's GDP and share of export in world trade have stayed around one percent, whereas they represent 14% of the global population.

In the face of multiple crises, LDCs are in need of huge investments in green and resilient industries, education, health, science and technologies, and agriculture. More than ever, LDCs need quality, sustainable, and resilient infrastructures for energy, transportation, and digital connectivity.

We need robust social security and resilient health systems for protecting and securing the well-being of the most vulnerable groups of our society, and for developing and utilizing human resource potentials.

LDCs need inclusive and effective institutions for better governance at home as well as at global level.

The fruit of development generated by globalization has eluded us for decades.

It is true that we have achieved some progress; yet continue to be on the margin of global economic development.

While we are grateful to the assistance we have received, we call on our development partners for scaling up support, as our economies are facing the onslaught of mega global crises, such as the pandemic, conflicts, and climate disasters.

Therefore, we urge the development partners to fully meet their ODA commitments. ODA resources must increase along with concrete debt relief measures to overcome the challenges of rising debt and inflation.

Doha Program of Action is a blueprint of renewed and strengthened global partnership based on the principle of leaving no one behind. We, therefore, call on our development partners for concrete and substantial support in a spirit of shared responsibility and mutual accountability for the effective implementation of DPOA.

The LDCs are the worst victims of the climate crisis. As a matter of justice and for the survival of our economies and societies, the climate finance commitments made for adaptation, mitigation, loss and damage must be fully operationalized, with simplified access to LDCs.

Similarly, technology transfer, including the digital ones, must be ensured as they can catalyze SDG implementation, help combat pandemics and other crises.

Beyond incremental steps, we must take bold steps to reform the global economic and financial system with a view to making it just and equitable that would ensure the voice and effective participation of the developing world.

Mr. Chair,

The Constitution of Nepal recognizes the basic needs and services like education, health, food, water, and sanitation as human rights.

Our development plans have internalized global policy frameworks like the Agenda 2030, Paris Agreement and UN programs for LDCs and LLDCs into our national plans and programs. Nepal is committed to achieving net-zero emission by 2045.

We are implementing a transition strategy for smooth and irreversible LDC graduation. We are committed to exert all-out efforts for the effective implementation of DPoA and Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development to ensure that the graduation process would be smooth and sustainable.

To conclude, **Mr. Chair**, this Summit is an opportunity to collectively persuade our partners for their greater support to our resolve to implement the DPoA and Agenda 2030.

I thank you.

**Joint Press Meet between the Prime Ministers of Nepal and India
Statement by Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'**

New Delhi, 1 June 2023

**Your Excellency Shri Narendra Modi Ji,
Members of delegation from both sides,
Friends form Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. Thank you, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, for your kind words. I am equally touched by your warm welcome and generous hospitality.
2. This is my fourth visit to India as the Prime Minister of Nepal. I fondly recall my previous visits in September 2008, and then twice in September and October 2016.
3. I bring with me the greetings and best wishes of the Government and people of Nepal. We are happy to see the remarkable transformation of India's economic and development landscape under the able leadership of Prime Minister Modi ji. I congratulate Prime Minister Modi ji on completion this week of 9 years in government with far reaching achievements on many fronts.
4. The relations between Nepal and India are age-old and multifaceted. These relations stand on the solid foundation built, on the one hand, by the rich tradition of civilizational, cultural socio-economic linkages and, on the other, by the two countries' firm commitment to the time-tested principles of sovereign equality, mutual respect, understanding and cooperation.
5. Today, as Prime Minister Modi ji mentioned, we made an extensive review of the progress in our relations and renewed our commitments to further strengthen these relations and cooperation. I appreciate Prime Minister Modi ji's 'neighbourhood first' policy.
6. In our meeting today, we discussed the ways to further strengthen cooperation in diverse areas including trade, transit, investment, hydropower development, power trade, irrigation, agriculture, connectivity including air entry routes, railways, bridges, transmission lines, expansion of petroleum pipelines, construction of Integrated Check Posts as well as cultural and people-to-people contacts.
7. As you all witnessed Prime Minister Modi ji and I jointly launched various projects through remote inauguration, flagging off and groundbreaking. A number of Agreements and MOUs have also been exchanged.
8. We reviewed the progress made in the implementation of hydroelectricity projects

in Nepal and towards the construction of cross-border transmission lines. It is one of the most important elements of our economic partnership. Nepal's hydropower can not only contribute to our economies and energy security but also serves as an important factor to realize our climate ambition.

9. I appreciate India's import of 452 MW of power from Nepal and requested Prime Minister Modi ji for approval of the import of additional 1200 megawatts of power from Nepal including the 456 MW Upper Tamakoshi. I thank Prime Minister Modi-ji for positive response.
10. Looking ahead, an Agreement on the long-term power trade has been completed. Under this agreement, India will import 10,000 MW of power from Nepal in the next 10 years. This is a major development in enhancing cooperation in this area based on the Joint Vision Statement that the two Prime Ministers issued in April 2022.
11. I also appreciated India's willingness to facilitate the export of hydropower from Nepal to Bangladesh through India. We have agreed that export of upto 50 MW of power from Nepal to Bangladesh via India would commence soon and the three countries would work out an agreement to this effect soon.
12. Today, we also witnessed the signing and exchange of the Project Development Agreement for the development of 669 MW Lower Arun Hydropower Project and the MoU on the development of 480 MW Phukot Karnali hydropower project. These projects provide a fresh momentum for power sector development and cross-border trade.
13. Prime Minister Modiji and I agreed to advance the Pancheswar Multi-purpose Project by concluding the DPR within three months. For this purpose, we have directed our respective officials to expedite bilateral discussions. The modalities of Implementation will be concluded within one year after the approval of DPR by the two governments.
14. We welcomed the construction of the Tanakpur link canal and agreed that water will be released from Tanakpur barrage to irrigation command area of Nepal through this canal in a phase-wise manner, based on the necessary facilities on the Nepali side.
15. I am happy to state that the vital transmission line projects under the LOC-IV will commence soon.
16. Prime Minister Modi ji and I discussed other aspects of cooperation in water resources, including irrigation. We also discussed to resolve the problem of inundation and take appropriate measures for flood control. We have directed our officials to hold meetings of bilateral mechanisms at the earliest to address the issues and find ways for further cooperation before the onset of monsoon.

17. We discussed the promotion of trade and the ways of reducing Nepal's increasing trade deficit with India. India is Nepal's largest trading partner. I have requested Prime Minister Modi ji for non-reciprocal market access to India with more flexible and easy quarantine procedures for Nepal's agricultural products and simplified Rules of Origin for other products. We also discussed the establishment of well-equipped testing labs along the major border points and formalizing of the arrangement for mutual recognition of test certificates. I requested Prime Minister Modi ji to lifting of the anti-dumping duty on Nepali jute products.
18. Integrated check posts and dry-ports are crucial for trade facilitation as well as for seamless cross-border movement of goods and people. Prime Minister Modi ji and I jointly inaugurated the ICP at Nepalgunj-Rupaidiha border and performed remote groundbreaking of the ICP in at Bhairahawa-Sunauli border. Similarly, we witnessed the exchange of the MoU on building of an integrated check post and dry port at Dodhara-Chandani.
19. The revised Treaty of Transit was signed and exchanged today. We have also agreed to direct early convening of the Commerce Secretary level mechanism to initiate the process for review of the Treaty of Trade.
20. The MOU between the NPCIL and NCHL signed today will ease the cross-border payments much needed by the businesspeople, students, pilgrims and travelers of both Nepal and India.
21. We just witnessed the groundbreaking of the phase II of Motihari Amlekhgunj petroleum pipeline. We look forward to its early construction. We have also reached an agreement for the extension of Motihari-Amlekhgunj petroleum pipeline upto Chitwan and construction of a new cross border petroleum pipeline from Siliguri to Jhapa on grant basis.
22. Prime Minister Modi ji and I jointly flagged-off the cargo rail service between Bathnaha and Biratnagar, Nepal Customs Yards. The passenger rail service between Jayanagar to Kurtha has been extended to Bijalpura. I thank the Government of India for its generous assistance in constructing these railway links. We also held discussions on the early completion of the works in the remaining segments and sustained operation of these railways through training and capacity building of Nepali railway personnel.
23. We discussed about Nepal's request for additional air entry routes. *Nepal welcomes India's positive indication of air-entry route for bilateral flights. It is operationally feasible for ATR aircrafts. We request for approval of high-altitude additional air-entry route from Mahendranagar at an early date.* We appreciate India's approval for near-border flight operation in the Gautam Buddha international Airport in Bhairahawa, Nepal through publishing ILS procedure in the AIP to enhance safety and efficiency of flight operation.

24. We would like to have regular flights from Nepal's newly built international airports of Bhairahawa and Pokhara to and from various cities of India.
25. Prime Minister Modi ji and I have agreed to promote cooperation in the field of agriculture. We look forward to early conclusion of MOUs on Cooperation in Agriculture and in the Field of livestock. We are thankful to the government of India for the gift of improved breed of livestock and hope to receive germ plasm of major cash crops particularly sugarcane and coffee.
26. Today I am really touched by the explanation of the Excellency Prime Minister Modi ji about agriculture development including nano-fertilizer project.
27. Prime Minister Modiji and I discussed the boundary matters. I urged Prime Minister Modiji to resolve the boundary matters through the established bilateral diplomatic mechanisms.
28. I commended the role played and initiatives taken by Prime Minister Modi ji during India's G20 Presidency as well as SCO Chairmanship, including for giving voice to the issues of concerns to the global south. Nepal is happy to join India's multilateral initiatives of the International Solar Alliance and more recently the International Big Cat Alliance.
29. As India celebrates *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav*, I congratulate India for all its achievements—be it in economic growth or industrialization; infrastructure development or science and technology; poverty alleviation or expansion of social security schemes and many other fronts. Nepal sees India's advancement as an opportunity.
30. We also discussed about the establishment of fertilizer plant in Nepal in joint venture and we will try our best to work together for the successful completion of the project.
31. India is Nepal's close neighbor and important partner for development and prosperity. As Nepal moves ahead on the path of graduating from LDC status by 2026, India's continued support and goodwill remains important for us.
32. We have agreed to maintain the momentum generated by this visit and take effective measures for the implementation of the agreements and understandings reached today and earlier.
33. I have extended cordial invitation to Prime Minister Modi ji for a visit to Nepal. I look forward to welcoming him in Nepal soon.

Thank You !

Keynote Speech by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Physical Infrastructure and Transport and the Leader of Nepali Delegation, Hon. Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha at the Fiftieth Anniversary Commemoration of formation of the Group of the Least Developed Country

Doha, 5 March 2023

Theme: "50 years of LDCs: Building a New Generation of Partnerships for Progress"

**Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Madam High Representatives and
Under-secretary-General
Excellencies and distinguished delegates,**

It is my honor to be part of this historic occasion marking the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Group of Least Developed Countries.

This moment has inspired me to hark back to the decolonization movement of 1950s and 60s, during which, the concept of "the least developed countries" evolved, while newly independent yet impoverished countries were trying to take the path of economic development.

Subsequently, in 1971, the United Nations General Assembly recognized the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) as a group. LDCs were in need of special support measures for their development as they were unable to break vicious cycle of underdevelopment not only because of their own structural problems but also because of systemic problem of global economy.

Since then, LDCs are fighting an epic battle against poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and so many malaises of underdevelopment in collaboration with development partners including UN agencies. Some progress has been made in the last 50 years, yet the LDCs are still the 'poorest and weakest segment' of the global community. Only six countries have been graduated from this category so far. The pace of transformation is unacceptable. It is a common responsibility of global community.

Currently, forty-six LDCs host 50% of world's poor. They account for 14% of world population but only about 1.3% of global GDP and less than 1% of global trade.

In 2019, they accounted for less than 4% of world's total greenhouse gas emissions. Yet over the last 50 years, 69% of worldwide deaths caused by climate-related disasters occurred in LDCs.

In this age of digital revolutions, barely one-fifth of the population in LDCs has access to the internet.

Mr. President, these are some of bitter facts, which reveal inherent inequality and injustice in the global system. And these facts are sufficient enough to remind us that our efforts in the past were acutely insufficient. Our efforts through four ten-year dedicated programs of action have not liberated the people of LDCs from the tyranny of poverty and de-privation.

However, lamentation will take us nowhere. Together, we must take actions.

In this critical juncture of history, we must move forward by 'Building a New Generation of Partnerships for Progress'. Precisely, the Doha Program of Action is the basis for new generation of partnership.

Mr. President,

Our road ahead is formidable in the face of complex and urgent problems.

We have to rebuild our economies from the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have to implement DPOA in tandem with Agenda 2030.

We have to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Building stronger partnership is essential.

On the backdrop of these massive development challenges, let me put forth some of my thoughts.

First, solidarity is the key. We expect concrete and substantial support from our development partners in the spirit of shared responsibility and mutual accountability. We need to deliver results. Effective implementation of the Doha Programme of Action is the test for LDCs, development partners and the United Nations System.

Second, LDCs are the battleground for Agenda 2030. We must win this battle by putting LDCs on the forefront of development agenda with adequate resources.

Third, structural transformation through building productive capacity and resilient infrastructure, trade diversification and connecting LDCs to regional and global value chains is critical to ensure sustainable development in LDCs.

Fourth, LDCs are in need of climate finance and technology in a substantial scale. The unmet promise of \$100 billion a year in climate finance must be realized with priority giving particular attention to LDCs.

The recently agreed Loss and Damage Fund marks a new dawn for climate justice. This must be implemented in good faith.

Fifth, there should be comprehensive reform of the global economic and financial system including Bretton Woods Institutions making sure the voice and representation of LDCs. The present global financial system is only amplifying systemic inequalities by rewarding the rich and punishing the poor countries. We must make the system that rewards the poorest first.

In addition, an enhanced level of support from the international community in the form of ODA, FDI, aid for trade, and technology transfer is equally important.

Sixth, we need to ensure incentive-based international support measures for graduating and graduated LDCs, including support for their smooth transition to make their graduation sustainable and irreversible.

To conclude, **Mr. President**, LDCs cannot afford another lost decade. We must turn the tide. Obviously, in partnership, we can turn the tide.

Let us solemnly commit ourselves at this historic 50th anniversary to build a new generation of partnership to enable all LDCs for early graduation so that they would be able to provide decent life for their people. LDCs cannot be a permanent status. Let us make the LDCs thing of the past sooner than later.

As a graduating LDC, Nepal remains committed to engaging constructively in realizing our collective aspiration.

Thank you!

Statement by the Hon. Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Physical Infrastructure and Transport and the Leader of Nepali Delegation at the General Debate of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

Doha, 6 March 2023

**Mr. President,
Excellencies, Heads of the States and Governments
Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Secretary-General of the LDC5 Conference,
Excellencies and distinguished delegates,**

At the outset, I would like to join the previous speakers in thanking and appreciating the Government of State of Qatar for generous and warm hospitality accorded to us; and excellent arrangements made for the Conference.

My appreciation also goes to the Secretary-General of the Conference and her able team for substantive as well as other preparations.

I align my statement with the statements delivered by the Republic of Cuba on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Malawi on behalf of the LDCs.

Mr. President,

Only six countries have graduated from the LDC category, since the creation of the Group in 1971 by the UN General Assembly. The progress is agonizingly slow. Much acclaimed international economy and globalization have failed to bring prosperity in the LDCs.

LDCs account for 14 per cent of the global population but they account for only 1.3 per cent of global GDP. However, they account for more than 50 per cent of the world's extremely poor. Things went terribly wrong leaving so many countries and so many people in poverty on the island of prosperity accumulated by few people and countries. Doha Program of Action (DPoA) is the fifth dedicated ten-year program of action for LDCs. It must be at least second to the last if not the last one itself. LDCs cannot wait another half a century just to leave the tag of LDC. Therefore, we strongly call on our development partners for the effective implementation of Doha Program of Action in tandem with 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Let us pledge political will to make the DPOA a solution to pull the LDCs back from the global multiple crisis and to enable them to achieve resilient and sustainable development.

Nepal is firmly committed to graduating from the LDC category even in the face of profound economic setbacks owing to the pandemic, earthquake, and climate change. My government is determined to bring prosperity in the lives of Nepali people through accelerated, resilient, inclusive, and sustainable economic development.

Not far from the recent past, Nepal has gone through historic political transformation. The power of people's war and people's movement has transformed the country from monarchy to republic, unitary to federal. Thus, federal democratic republic and socialism oriented inclusive democracy has been institutionalized in the new the constitution promulgated in 2015 by the Constituent Assembly. The Constituent Assembly was itself a part of the unique, home-grown, and nationally led peace process in Nepal. Now, we are in the process of implementing the constitution which has shouldered upon us the historical task of economic development and prosperity with social justice as the main task of today. Our government has taken this as the singleness of purpose. We are also serious on the truth that political change itself cannot be saved and consolidated without giving the dividend to the people in terms of economic development to change their lives. It is our time to unleash the potential of Nepali people for rapid economic development. We know the moment has come. So, this government is determined to deliver.

Mr. President,

Though the pace of our economic development is not so rapid and satisfactory; Nepal is determined to embark on the process of graduating from LDC by 2026. The LDC graduation should be smooth and sustainable. There should be continuation of some support measures so that graduating and graduated LDCs will attain and sustain their smooth and irreversible graduation.

A strong partnership is essential for building resilience, strengthening productive capacity, and accelerating the structural transformation of the LDCs.

Nepal sincerely calls on development partners not only to fulfill their ODA commitment but also to provide concrete and substantial support to meet the development needs of LDCs.

Tackling climate change is our collective responsibility. However, it primarily entails the scaling up of action by the historical as well as present large emitters. We welcome the decision to establish the Loss and Damage Fund in CoP27. The fund must have sufficient resources, as trillions are required in climate finance for adaptation and mitigation.

Meeting of the \$100 billion climate finance promise stands as a test case for a sustained climate finance for the future.

While we welcome some short-term debt relief measures, we call for a comprehensive debt relief initiative for the debt-distressed LDCs.

We call on development partners for enhanced digital cooperation and technology transfer keeping in mind the LDCs are the least connected countries.

Mr. President,

There is barely any disagreement that the LDCs are the battleground on which the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will be won or lost. Sadly, LDCs are the hardest hit by compounded challenges of pandemic, conflict, and climate change resulting in slow progress of the SDG implementation.

We still have hope that our renewed and strengthened partnership with development partners, UN agencies, and private sectors enable us to win the SDG battle.

In conclusion, **Mr. President**, collective effort is the foundation of our journey towards a prosperous and sustainable future for our people.

Together, we can overcome new and emerging threats including COVID-19, which has urged to all of us for rethinking

Together, we can overcome economic challenges and rebuild it better.

Together, we can overcome the climate crisis and save our planet from the brink of climate hell.

Together, we can achieve SDGs in the spirit of leaving no one behind by reaching the furthest behind first.

Report on Nepal's Foreign Affairs (2022-2023)

As a responsible member and incoming Chair of the LDC Group, Nepal remains committed to upholding the Group's collective interest in all possible manners to enable them to march ahead on the path of prosperity.

I thank you!

**Closing Remarks by Hon. Mr. N.P. Saud, Minister for Foreign Affairs at the
7th Partnership for Technology in Peacekeeping Symposium,
16 June 2023, Kathmandu**

**Under- Secretary General of United Nations, Department of Operational Support,
Mr. Atul Khare**

Assistant Secretary Generals of the United Nations

Chief of the Army Staff, General Prabhu Ram Sharma

Secretaries of the Government of Nepal

Excellencies the Ambassadors,

UN Resident Coordinator to Nepal,

Dear Panellists,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It has been an absolute honour and privilege for Nepal to host the “7th Partnership for Technology in Peacekeeping Symposium”, the first one in South Asia. As we come to the end of this Symposium, I stand before you with the deepest sense of gratitude to all the brilliant minds and passionate individuals who are committed to the noble cause of peace. I sincerely appreciate the hard work of all those involved in making this event a success.
2. Over the course of the past few days, we witnessed thought-provoking discussions and innovative ideas aimed at enhancing peacekeeping efforts through harnessing technologies. It has brought together a diverse group of experts, practitioners, policymakers, and stakeholders from around the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. Peacekeeping has continued to remain not only a unique innovation but also an effective tool available to the UN to maintain peace and security in troubled parts of the world. Today technology is advancing exponentially. Considerable strides are made in digital technology, Artificial Intelligence, robotics, biotechnology, and unmanned vehicles.
4. However, the advancements have not always been even. Not everyone can equally benefit from such technological advancements. The economic and social benefits of these technological breakthroughs are geographically concentrated. Therefore, LDCs like Nepal have been lagging behind this progress. We must act together to reduce this gap by assisting and equipping them with modern technologies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. We have seen that UN peacekeeping missions have constantly evolved during the past seven decades. The peacekeeping missions are now mandated with wider responsibilities from creating lasting peace and stability to creating an environment for political solutions, paths to economic development, and sustained peace.
6. However, our peacekeeping troops are far from benefitting from technological advancements. They lack a wide range of capabilities that national militaries, law enforcement agencies, and international organisations have been employing.
7. Therefore, we must ensure the well-being of our personnel by pursuing a holistic approach to harnessing the potential of modern technology. Nepal has been a consistent and longstanding contributor to UN peacekeeping. It takes pride in her contributions to the noble cause of world peace for over six decades now.

Dear Friends,

8. It is evident that with technological advancement, the future peace operations can respond to both sides of the problem, prevention and response in fast-moving situations and environments. The digital transformation brings new possibilities allowing us to measure and track sustainability progress, optimize the use of resources, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, among others.
9. This Symposium has also reinforced that we need to redouble our collective efforts to strengthen our strategies and sharpen our response in pursuit of peace. Therefore, to make UN peacekeeping operation successful and capable of delivering its mandates, we need regular update and upgrade our systems in terms of technology and training so that our troops are well-trained and well-equipped.
10. During the deliberations, we agreed on the potentials as well as challenges of using technology including artificial intelligence in peacekeeping. I am confident that this Symposium further exemplified the strength of cooperation and collaboration necessary to address the crises faced by our personnels in peacekeeping missions and achieved its objectives for future engagements.
11. Nepal attaches high priority to attain its goal of international peace, security, and sustainable development around the world. It will continue its partnership in peacekeeping with renewed commitment with the concerned stakeholders in the implementation of ongoing projects in different missions.
12. In closing, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the representatives of different Member States, panelists, academia and government officials for their active participation. I would like to convey my deepest appreciation to the organising team from the UN and Nepali side for their hard works and meticulous planning including, the efforts made by the Nepali Army in making

this Symposium a reality under the leadership of the Ministry of Defence. My deep appreciation goes to USG Khare in this regard.

13. I hope that participants had some time to enjoy the beauty and cultural heritage of Kathmandu City. Please take time off in the future to visit here again with your friends and family to explore the hidden treasure of Nepal, the birthplace of Gautam Buddha.
14. Last but not the least, I would also like to appreciate the Soaltee Hotel team for their excellent service and logistical arrangements for the Symposium. Finally, I wish you a safe travel back to your work.

Thank you all for your kind attention.

**Statement by Hon. Mr. N.P. Saud, Minister for Foreign Affairs at the
Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement Coordinating Bureau
(NAM-COB) Baku Azerbaijan,**

5 July 2023

*Theme: Non-Aligned Movement: United and Steadfast in Confronting Emerging
Challenges*

**Mr. Chairman,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the outset, I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for convening this Ministerial Meeting. I would also like to thank the Government of Azerbaijan for the excellent arrangement made for the meeting as well as generous hospitality accorded to us.

I bring the message of peace from the birthplace of Buddha and greetings and best wishes of the Government and people of Nepal for the success of this meeting.

Mr. Chairman,

Nepal welcomes the theme of the meeting which is timely and relevant at this juncture of the world history as we grapple with a multitude of existing and emerging challenges. The world has become an interdependent global village. Yet, today we see a strong current of protectionism and narrow nationalism. At a time, when the global community should be united to confront the unprecedented challenges before us, what we see in the world today is discontent and division.

The pursuit of peace and prosperity remains unfulfilled in many parts of the world. The upsurge in violent conflicts and arms race has consumed the scarce resources and has led to economic hardship, inflation, poverty, food insecurity, and an energy crisis.

While we are yet to fully emerge from the shocks of COVID-19 pandemic in people's lives and health, climate change continues to accelerate negative impacts, posing an existential threat to the people and planet.

Likewise, grave concerns remain over the potential misuse of artificial intelligence, online-platform, digital technologies, and virtual assets. On top of everything, faith in multilateralism is eroding, undermining the prospects of peace and sustainable development.

Besides, transnational organized crimes and the specter of terrorism looms large, threatening the peace and stability in many parts of the globe.

As we navigate through these complex issues, we need to act collectively to promote dialogue, understanding, and peaceful resolutions to conflicts. There is no alternative of working together.

Dear Friends,

Nepal firmly believes in the principles of Non-Aligned Movement and the power of unity in confronting these challenges. We need to foster international cooperation within NAM, deepen south-south cooperation, and strengthen multilateralism with the United Nations at its centre to resolve global problems.

As NAM members, we must strive to address the root causes of the world's persistent problems such as poverty, conflict and violence. We must promote durable peace through dialogue and respect for diversity. We must accelerate our economic development to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

At the same time, we must strive for a just, inclusive and equitable world order. The global financial system and international trading regime must help the less resourceful countries to prosper.

As the champion of social justice and economic empowerment, NAM must champion for inclusive and sustainable global growth, in which the global south receives a fair share to eradicate poverty and give their people a decent life. We must ensure prosperity for all so that no one is left behind.

Distinguished Delegates,

In Nepal, we have been making all out efforts to eradicate poverty through sustained and inclusive economic development. As a graduating LDC, we are effortful to ensure smooth and irreversible graduation by 2026 despite formidable challenges.

Situated on the lap of the Himalayas, Nepal is highly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. The consequences of global warming, including glacial retreat, changing weather patterns, and increased natural disasters, directly affect our ecosystems, water resources, and livelihoods of our people. Recent report has shown that the glaciers are disappearing at an alarmingly faster rate compared to a decade earlier.

NAM must lead the way in advocating for climate justice, promoting sustainable development, and mobilizing support for climate adaptation and mitigation efforts, focusing the countries in special situations, including the LDCs. They require robust support measures to achieve SDGs by reversing the current economic downturn and confront the adverse impacts of climate change.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nepal recognizes the UN as the cornerstone of multilateralism that fosters cooperation, resolves conflicts, and advances global governance. NAM should contribute decisively in the UN to build a multilateral system that is fit for purpose and capable of delivering results for the people globally underlining its values and principles.

We must strengthen our resolve to combat transnational organized crimes and the menace of terrorism.

Likewise, International Financial Institutions are crucial in providing resources to the developing countries to help them achieve the 2030 Agenda and their long-held development aspirations. NAM must champion for reforming these institutions to make them more inclusive, transparent, and effective.

Nepal places great importance on the time-tested principles of the Non-Aligned Movement. These principles constitute the bases of our foreign policy. We value the Movement's achievements and emphasize the need to enhance its relevance through unity, strength, and influence in pursuit of a more peaceful, prosperous, and just world, as envisioned by our founding leaders six decades ago.

Let us harness the collective strength of NAM to address the urgent issues of our time and work towards a future where all nations can thrive in harmony. Finally, I extend my sincere best wishes to the Next Chair-Uganda for the new Presidency. Nepal is committed to play its role to make NAM a decisive force for the better and safer world.

Thank you !

**Statement by Honorable Mr. Govinda Prasad Sharma Koirala, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Peace and Human Rights and Head of the Nepali Delegation at the High-Level Segment of the 52nd Session of the Human Rights Council, Geneva,
28 February 2023**

**Mr. President,
Mr. High Commissioner,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates**

It is my great honor to address the High-Level Segment of the 52nd Session of the Human Rights Council.

Firstly, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, for your election. I also take this opportunity to congratulate the High Commissioner for Human Rights for his appointment.

Mr. President,

The suffering of the people in relation to enjoying human rights and human dignity continue to rise due to growing conflicts and lack of fulfillment of basic needs of the people.

As we are commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we call upon the international community to realize and make concerted efforts for the universal promotion and protection of human rights.

Mr. President,

The Government reiterates Nepal's total and unequivocal commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights. The Constitution of Nepal guarantees most of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Under the Constitution, not only civil and political rights, but also economic, social and cultural rights are enforceable.

In addition, the Constitution provides for a national human rights protection system by establishing independent National Institutions.

Similarly, the Constitution guarantees judicial independence, rule of law, freedom of press, and civic space, among others.

Mr. President,

Recently, Nepal successfully conducted free and fair periodic elections at all levels of government. In line with the Constitutional provision, we have been implementing inclusive principles to enhance the participation of the marginalized sections of society in the governance structures.

For example, the elections have resulted in over 33 percent women's representation in the federal and provincial parliaments and 40 percent at the local level.

Mr. President

Nepal's legal frameworks strictly prohibit sexual and gender-based violence. Harmful traditional practices against women and girls are outlawed. Sexual and reproductive health rights of women and girls are protected. We have also ensured the protection of the rights and identity of sexual minorities.

We have pledged to eliminate child labour and child marriage. Caste-based discrimination is strictly prohibited by law, and such acts are being strictly investigated and perpetrators are brought to justice.

The Constitution guarantees freedom of religion as a fundamental right. We believe that freedom of religion cannot be impaired by coercion or monetary inducement for conversion.

Mr. President,

We have already put in place a gender-responsive budgeting system. Recently the Government launched the second National Action Plan for implementing the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security.

Nepal places great value on the safety, security and well-being of migrant workers, and we have been engaged in bilateral, regional and multilateral forums for the protection of their human rights.

Despite the impacts of the COVID pandemic, climate change and other crises, Nepal is committed to achieve SDGs by 2030. We are set to graduate from LDC status by 2026. Nepal is committed to achieve net zero emission by 2045.

Mr. President,

Nepal continues to remain engaged with human rights bodies and mechanisms. We have been responding to communications and are committed to submitting periodic reports to the treaty bodies.

The Government has launched combined 'Fifth National Human Rights Action Plan (2020-2025) and implementation action plan of 3rd cycle of UPR recommendations (2021-2025). It is being implemented in collaboration with various stakeholders.

The Government of Nepal is extending full support to all the National Human Rights Institutions, including National Human Rights Commission, to enable them to fully implement their mandates. Nepal is committed to ensure the compliance of the Paris Principles so that the National Human Rights Commission continues to enjoy 'A' status.

Mr. President,

Nepal reaffirms its commitment to conclude the transitional justice process and provide justice and reparation to the victims of conflict as we move towards establishing reconciliation in society. In this endeavor, we will be guided by the Comprehensive Peace Accord, the directives of the Supreme Court of Nepal, and relevant international commitments, as well as the concerns of the victims.

For this purpose, after conducting nationwide consultation with the relevant stakeholders including the victims, amendment of the Enforced Disappearance and Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act 2014 was tabled in the Parliament in July 2022. Because of the expiry of the tenure of the parliament, the bill could not get through. It is in the highest priority of the government and the new amendment bill will be tabled in the parliament soon. The amendment proposal recognizes reparation as a right of victim.

I assure you that Nepal has the capacity to conclude the process of transitional justice giving full respect to the afore-mentioned standards. Let me assure you that under Nepal's transitional justice process there will be no amnesty in the case of serious human rights violations.

Finally, Mr President, as a member of the UN Human Rights Council, Nepal wishes to underline the importance of upholding the approach of genuine dialogue and cooperation on human rights agenda. States should adopt an objective, non-selective, and impartial approach and should refrain from politicization of human rights issues.

In the Council, Nepal has been calling upon states to engage in diplomacy and dialogue and resolve disputes through peaceful means, and to protect human rights of all including women, girls and children under all circumstances while respecting international human rights and humanitarian laws.

My delegation wishes a successful conclusion of this session.

I thank you Mr. President.

Statement by Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal at the Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Least Developed Countries held on the Margin of the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly

New York, 23 September 2022

**Mr. Chairman,
Honorable Ministers,
Madam Under-Secretary-General and High Representative, and
Distinguished Delegates,**

I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for convening this meeting.

The leadership and direction that you and the Government of Malawi have provided to our Group have been critical to keep the Group moving during these difficult times.

I would also like to congratulate Madam Rabab Fatima on the assumption of her responsibilities as Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

Madam USG and her able team at OHRLLS deserve our deep appreciation for their continued efforts to promote the interests of the most vulnerable countries.

Mr. Chairman,

The world today faces cascading crises marked by geopolitical divides, inequality, and climate emergency.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed the devastating impacts of inequality both within and among countries.

The crises have hit the vulnerable countries and peoples the most. It has pushed an additional 95 million people into extreme poverty, with most of them living in the LDCs. The suffering of the poorest of poor in our countries continues unabated.

Though, we have implemented four decadal Programs of Action since 1981, we are still trapped in a vicious cycle of underdevelopment.

The challenges of building productive capacities, boosting investment and trade, reducing poverty, and strengthening institutions continue to remain as daunting as they were in the 1980s.

There is only one way this can change. It is when the international community comes together- with more resolve and solidarity, more commitments and actions- to address the problems facing the LDCs.

This is exactly the vision of the 'Doha Program of Action'.

With a new generation of commitments by the LDCs and the development partners, the DPoA aims at achieving a rapid, inclusive, and sustainable economic development in the LDCs.

We must implement this global development compact in conjunction with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Accord.

We must prioritize structural transformation of our economies by building productive capacity based on green recovery through investment in areas of competitive advantage. While we, the LDCs, must pledge ourselves to do more, a greater international support is critical than ever before.

In this context, we urge the international community to fully deliver on their ODA commitments. FDI, aid for trade, and climate financing must complement the LDCs' national development efforts.

There is a need for renewed and strengthened global partnership to develop resilient and sustainable infrastructure in transportation and communications, in energy and information and communications technology (ICT), and in public health and food systems, among others.

The DPoA recognizes the power of science, technology, and innovation to fight against multidimensional vulnerabilities.

In line with this, transfer of scientific knowledge and technology to the LDCs must be a top priority. The LDC Technology Bank should be made an effective conduit for technology transfer to the LDCs.

Global financial architecture needs to be made just, inclusive, and equitable. All possible international financial instruments must be used to make resources and fiscal space available to the LDCs.

Mr. Chairman,

Nepal is currently undertaking preparations for LDC graduation by 2026. Ours is a unique case as we have been recommended for graduation without meeting the income criterion.

Graduation is our long-held aspiration. Therefore, we are making all-out national efforts to ensure that it is smooth, sustainable, and irreversible.

We call for a strong support from our development partners to complement our national efforts.

To conclude, as we prepare for the second part of LDC 5 to be held in Doha in March 2023, let us recommit to reverse the trajectories that have led us off course.

Let us pledge to effectively implement the DPoA. Let us ensure that the DPoA becomes a 'booster shot' to build resilience and promote sustainable economic growth in the LDCs.

Thank you for your attention.

Statement by Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal at the Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Least Developed Countries held on the Margin of the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly New York,

23 September 2022

**Mr. Chairman,
Honorable Ministers,
Madam USG and High Representative, and
Distinguished Delegates:**

I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. Chairman, for convening us today. I would also like to commend your stewardship of our Group in these tough times.

Please allow me to congratulate Madam Rabab Fatima on the assumption of her responsibilities as Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

I thank Madam USG and her able team at OHRLLS for their continued efforts in promoting the cause of LLDCs.

Mr. Chairman,
We are living in the third year of the pandemic. It still stands as one of the major challenges of our time.

The geopolitical tensions are on the rise, and some have unfortunately morphed into a major confrontation.

Together, they have rendered deepening disruptions to global supply chains and bleak prospects of social and economic recovery.

The LLDCs, which are faced with pre-existing development challenges in trade, transport, and connectivity, are the hardest hit by these crises. The COVID-19-related restrictive measures have negatively affected their trade and increased the already high trade and transportation costs.

Climate change, biodiversity loss, and natural disasters continue to add woes to the peoples and economies of our countries.

Against this backdrop, I would like to highlight the following points:

First, green and resilient recovery from the pandemic must be our top priority. It is time to expedite action on vaccines, to prioritize investment in people; and to overhaul social support systems.

We must chart out sustainable pathways to deal with the long term economic, social, and developmental consequences of the pandemic.

Second, we are nearing the end of the Vienna Program of Action. As we gear up for the next Conference on LLDCs, the implementation of the VPoA must be ramped up. We must focus on its unfinished business, with more resolve and solidarity.

We must do so in tandem with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Third, Connectivity – both in physical and digital spheres – is critical to link up our countries with global markets and value chains.

In this connection, we see the Ashgabat Process as an important drive for ensuring sustainable transport solutions for LLDCs. We must now chart out concerted actions for building resilient infrastructure, building productive capacities, diversifying trade, and transforming economies of our countries.

Fourth, it is time to recalibrate and strengthen the foundation of global cooperation for LLDCs. They must receive an enhanced level of support from transit countries and development partners.

Developed countries must fulfil their ODA commitments in support of the development efforts of LLDCs. Measures must be taken to ensure that LLDCs get a fair share of FDI, aid for trade, and technology to complement their national development efforts.

Finally, our countries are at the sharp end of climate change.

Its severe impact is on our mountains. It has disproportionately affected the lives and livelihoods of the mountainous people and even endangered their identity and civilization.

We need bold climate action to help the vulnerable communities and build climate-resilient development pathways.

The large emitters must fulfill their climate commitments, including with credible action on climate financing.

Mr. Chairman,

Nepal is implementing the fifteenth development plan that has fully internalized the aspirations and objectives of SDGs and VPoA.

Since Nepal is graduating from the LDC category by 2026, building strong connectivity through resilient infrastructure is our top priority. We expect a greater support from the transit countries and our development partners towards this end.

To conclude, **Mr. Chairman**, to change the LLDCs' fate of remoteness and geographical isolation the vision and promise of connectivity must be backed up by concrete actions and solutions. For this, now is the time to act. Nepal remains committed to do its part to realize the collective goals and objectives of the Group.

I thank you!

Remarks by Foreign Secretary of Nepal Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal at the Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77 and China.

New York, 23 September 2022

**Mr. Chairman,
Honorable Ministers,
Excellencies, and
Distinguished Delegates,**

I would like to express my sincere thanks to you, Mr. Chairman for convening this meeting and leading our Group during these difficult times.

I would also like to thank the G77 and China Secretariat for the professional services they have provided to the Group throughout the year.

At the outset, please allow me to extend our deepest and most sincere condolences to you, Mr. Chairman, and the Government and people of Pakistan, for the loss of lives and properties due to recent floods. We stand in solidarity with Pakistan at this difficult hour.

Distinguished Delegates,

Humanity is experiencing multiple tremors coming from the pandemic, climate crisis, geopolitical tensions, and economic recession.

COVID 19 is still not only ravaging our economies, but also jeopardizing our efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development.

Climate crisis continues to pose an existential threat to humanity. Many developing countries are experiencing the instances of floods, landslides, and fire like never before.

Food insecurity is rising, fuel crisis is soaring, and inflation is at record high.

This has exacerbated the persisting inequalities within and between countries and aggravated liquidity crises and indebtedness of developing countries. The countries in special situation including LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDs, which are already in acute need of financial resources, are at risk of further relapse.

This warrants more solidarity and cooperation at the global level.

G77 and China must lead for timely, accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Paris Agreement, Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and other internationally agreed development goals.

The developed countries must fulfil their ODA commitments.

We should redouble our efforts on North-South, South-South and Triangular cooperation for building back a better.

Global economic governance must be made fair, inclusive, and democratic so that developing countries are provided with a level playing field.

Mr. Chairman,

The countries like Nepal are bearing the brunt of climate change – for a fault of not their own.

Nepal is one of the most vulnerable countries facing the climate crisis.

On our part, we have put in place the local adaptation plan to address the challenges and vulnerabilities of the people at the grassroots level.

We remain committed to realizing its net-zero ambition by 2045.

Developed countries must lead from the front by reducing emissions and providing climate finance.

As the largest intergovernmental organization of developing countries in the United Nations, G77 and China must redouble its effort to ensure that the fruit of development must reach the furthest behind first.

Nepal is committed to upholding the Group's principles of unity, solidarity, and cooperation and supporting the cause of global peace and prosperity.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, as the largest negotiating block, our Group has the leverage to turn the tide for realizing our collective goals. Let's utilize this strength for broader economic interests of developing countries while safeguarding multilateralism to garner global solutions for global problems.

I thank you for your attention!

**Statement by Foreign Secretary and the Leader of Nepali Delegation
Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal at the General Debate of the 77th Session of
United Nations General Assembly**

New York, 26 September 2022

Theme- A Watershed Moment: Transformative Solutions to Interlocking Challenges

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

I begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your unanimous election to preside over the 77th session of the General Assembly.

I also express appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, for successfully steering the 76th session.

My deep appreciation goes to UN Secretary-General, Mr. Antonio Guterres, for his commendable efforts to promote global peace, security, human rights, and development.

There could have been no better time to deliberate on *'A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges'*, the theme of this year's General Debate.

Mr. President,
We are living indeed in a watershed moment.

- A moment when the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions, inequalities, and climate crisis threaten our pursuit of peace and prosperity;
- A moment when the values of solidarity and cooperation are put to test, with trust and confidence in short supply;
- A moment when humanity is caught between hope and despair, unity and division, and harmony and dissension; and
- A moment, when the world is striving to forge a new consensus amid competing interests, priorities and challenges.

For the third year in a row, COVID-19 continues to add strain to our lives, livelihoods, and economies.

But there is a hope. The production and availability of COVID-19 vaccines has minimized the risk and severity of the disease and enhanced our ability to save lives.

In Nepal, we have been able to fully vaccinate 96 percent of the target population, with almost everyone receiving at least one dose.

We thank our immediate neighbours – India and China, our development partners, and the United Nations System for their valuable support.

But this is not the case everywhere. Poor and vulnerable people in many parts of world have still been kept away from the ‘dose of hope,’.

The pandemic will not end unless it ends for all people in all countries.

We must ensure vaccine equity so that no one is left behind.

Excellencies,

The 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals are at risk.

The pandemic has hit hard on our march into the decade of action.

This has been followed by cascading crises marked by geopolitical divides, disruption of supply chain, and climate emergency.

The resulting high food and fuel price, massive inflation, and debt burden severely hit the limited fiscal capacity of the poorer countries especially the least developed ones.

All these crises have cumulative negative impact on financing of the SDGs. It is more acute in the countries in special situations like LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS.

As per the pre-pandemic estimate, Nepal would require an average annual investment of 19 billion US dollars to achieve the SDGs. With the shortfall of financing, our hard-earned development gains are at risk at a time we are preparing to graduate from the LDC status by 2026.

However, graduation is our long-held aspiration, and we remain committed to using this opportunity to bring a structural transformation to the national economy. We will do everything possible to make our graduation process smooth, sustainable, and irreversible.

For this, we need additional international support in the form of investment, technology transfer, aid for trade, and technical assistance. This is critical for us to recover from the pandemic, rescue the SDGs, and turn global partnership into a reality.

Mr. President,

No country can thrive without integration into the global market. The rising tide of protectionism and stalled trade negotiation are delaying the much-needed reform in international trading system, which is tipped in favour of some. The poorer countries are yet to benefit from it. We must ensure open, fair, and transparent trade rules so that all countries can benefit from it.

Similarly, the current global financial system has seriously failed the developing world. It is unfair to continue this undemocratic and unresponsive system. We call for the much-needed reform of international financial architecture, for making it inclusive, fair, and equally beneficial to all.

The countries under debt stress need urgent debt relief, restructuring, and cancellation. The international community must swiftly help them come out of their debt crises.

Mr. President,

In Nepal, we are bearing the disproportionate burden of climate change and facing climate shocks such as frequent landslides, storms, floods, and wildfires.

The melting of glaciers and the drying-up of snow-fed rivers have been adversely affecting the lives and livelihoods of people downstream and rendering us one of the most vulnerable countries.

Our region recently experienced the heartbreaking loss of lives and properties due to unusually heavy downpours, melting of the glaciers and resulting floods.

To combat the climate crisis and address vulnerabilities, we have localized the adaptation plans in Nepal.

While remaining fully committed to the Paris Agreement, we have set ambitious target of reaching a net-zero scenario by 2045 as announced by the Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba during the COP 26.

However, climate change is a global problem, and it needs global action. For this, the large emitters – which account for over 80 percent of all global emissions, must take bold steps to keep the 1.5° Celsius climate goal alive.

The commitment of 100 billion US dollars of climate financing must turn into a reality. The COP 27 needs to move from pledges into action.

Distinguished Delegates,

Geopolitics and polarization have pushed global peace and security into peril. The world is becoming more complex with rising transnational challenges such as terrorism, radicalism, extremism, and mass migration.

Today, the world faces the highest number of violent conflicts since 1945, within and between countries, divided by the fault lines of race, religion, ethnicity and origin.

The question that keeps us haunting today is whether enough is being done to protect the people from the scourge of wars, preventing them from happening in the first place. Investment in the prevention of conflicts is more effective than addressing their consequences.

The technological advancement today has the capacity to inflict devastating physical action instantly. And yet, it is appalling to see how our world body gets crippled when it comes to the interplay of interests of the major powers at the Security Council.

As our dependence on new technology deepens, the issue of cyber security emerges as one of the greatest challenges that demands our collective resolve to setting norms and building capacity to prevent the threat it poses. We must also put in place the necessary safeguards to curb the malicious use of new technologies.

Mr. President,

In 2021, global military spending surpassed two trillion US dollars. Countries are chasing an elusive notion of security by leaving behind billions of people hungry, sick, and destitute. Genuine security depends on the ability to address the underlying causes of conflict – poverty, hunger, and unemployment.

Stockpile of nuclear arsenals constitutes perpetual threat to humanity. Therefore, elimination of them is the only guarantee of the non-use of these weapons in the future. Nepal reiterates its call for general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass

destruction, including biological, chemical, nuclear and radiological weapons in a time-bound manner.

Nepal opposes the arms race in outer space and emphasizes on the peaceful use of it for the benefit of humankind.

As the host of the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Nepal continues to support regional disarmament initiatives as building blocks of global disarmament. We remain committed to reviving the Kathmandu Process, which we believe complements global arms control and disarmament efforts.

Nepal condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and calls for an early conclusion of a comprehensive convention against terrorism.

Mr. President,

We are deeply concerned about the deaths and suffering of civilians in the war in Ukraine. We call for an urgent cessation of hostilities and violence and urge all concerned parties to exercise maximum restraint and return to the path of dialogue.

Nepal opposes any threat or use of force against the territorial integrity, political independence, and sovereignty of a country under any pretext and circumstance.

Afghanistan has remained on the precipice of uncertainties and violence. The Afghan people are exposed to a shocking level of poverty and humanitarian sufferings.

We call that unhindered humanitarian aid and public services including health and education for all sections of the Afghan society must be ensured.

We urge all parties concerned in Myanmar to respect the will of the people to elect their representatives, paving the way to restore the democratic process.

The people in Libya, Syria, and Yemen have been facing hardships and sufferings for a long. The concerned parties need to resort to peaceful means of conflict resolution to end the violence and return to peace.

Protracted violence and conflicts continue to inflict pain and suffering on Palestinian and Israeli civilians. Nepal reiterates its long-standing view for a two-state solution, whereby Palestine and Israel live side by side in peace and security within the recognized international borders.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

Nepal pursues path of democratic system with people's welfare at the centre. Our democratic process is characterized by people's struggle, sacrifice, dialogue, and resilience.

In May this year, we successfully held democratic elections to the local governments in peaceful, free, and fair manner. We are now set to hold periodic elections for federal parliament and provincial assemblies in November.

For a democracy like Nepal, these are much more than just periodic elections. They are the testament to our ability of ensuring peaceful transfer of power. They are the means to enhance people's trust in democracy, promote legitimacy and accountability, and strengthen the rule of law.

The principles of inclusion and participation constitute the core of Nepal's governance system. The Constitution of Nepal guarantees the proportional representation and participation of all sections of our society in national life. It guarantees at least 33 percent representation of women in federal and provincial parliaments and 40 percent at the local level.

As a result, the participation of women, youth, and disadvantaged groups has increased significantly in politics and other spheres of national life. It has not only ensured their rightful place but also injected dynamism, justice, and fairness into society.

Mr. President,

Nepal's commitment to human rights is unequivocal. The Constitution of Nepal incorporates universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. As a member of the Human Rights Council for the second consecutive term, Nepal continues to add value to the work of the Council.

Our approach to human rights is firmly grounded in the principles of universality, indivisibility, objectivity, and non-selectivity.

We are committed to concluding the transitional justice process by addressing the concerns of the victims, complying with the directive of the Supreme Court, abiding by the spirit of Comprehensive Peace Accord and our relevant international commitments. Taking this in earnest, the Government of Nepal presented an amendment Bill to the Parliament to reform the related laws.

We uphold the rights of the child as the most sacred obligation of the State with their protection, wellbeing, health, education, and development at the centre.

We attach high importance to the safety, security, dignity, and well-being of migrant workers and emphasize on the effective implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

We also attach high importance on quality education, skills, entrepreneurship and employment to the youth to unleash their potentials for sustained economic development, peace, and prosperity in society.

We recognize the significant role that diaspora can play to bring capital, technology and skills to the country of origin.

Though we are not a party to the Refugee Convention and its Protocol, we have been hosting thousands of refugees on humanitarian grounds.

We believe that forced eviction of citizens, anywhere and under any circumstance, is a grave crime. Refugees' right to return to their homeland in safety, honour, and dignity must always be ensured.

Excellencies,

The cardinal principle of 'seeing the world as one family' shapes our worldview in external relations.

Our foreign policy dwells on the notions of peace, non-violence, and non-aggression, which find their eloquent expression in the teachings of Gautam Buddha, the enlightened son of Nepal.

Nepal enjoys cordial relations with all countries around the world. This is a result of both my country's historical evolution and the friendly nature of our people. Given the goodwill Nepal receives from our friends, we feel it to contribute more for international peace, progress and social justice.

We engage with our neighbours and friends in the international community based on the principles of the UN Charter, non-alignment, Panchsheel, international law, and the norms of world peace. We play active roles in SAARC, BIMSTEC and ACD to promote regional cooperation.

Our partnership with the UN has been built on the foundation of trust and cooperation. We firmly believe in multilateralism with the United Nations at its centre. With its unmatched coverage, legitimacy and convening power, the United Nations is the most appropriate forum for promoting global cooperation based on sovereign equality and mutual respect.

Currently the second-largest troops and police contributing country, Nepal has been a consistent contributor to UN peacekeeping for the last six and a half decades. We have deployed our peacekeepers at every call and without caveat, even in difficult situations. Nepal supports all major initiatives aimed at reforming UN peace operations. We have endorsed the Kigali principles, the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P), and A4P+ initiatives, among others. We have zero-case policy against sexual exploitation and abuse in peace operations.

We condemn the targeted attacks against the blue helmets. Perpetrators of such crimes should be brought to justice.

We believe that countries should have fair share of leadership positions at the headquarters and in the field according to the level and history of their contribution to UN peacekeeping.

Nepal supports UN reform initiatives, including revitalizing the General Assembly and reforming the Security Council, to make it more representative, inclusive, and transparent.

We also support reform initiatives based on the Secretary-General's report 'Our Common Agenda'.

These endeavours will not produce results unless the Member States take bold and transformative steps to make our organization fit for the future.

We must enable the UN to deliver on the needs of the furthest behind first.

To conclude, Mr. President, the decisions we make today will determine what our future will look like. Our choice to act or not to act will have a huge impact on generations to come.

Let us look at what opportunities lie ahead of us.

Let us give solidarity and cooperation a chance.

As a peace-loving country, Nepal remains committed to contributing to our collective efforts of making this world peaceful, prosperous, and equitable.

I thank you for your attention.

Statement by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Physical Infrastructure and Transport and the Leader of Nepali Delegation, Hon. Mr. Narayan Kaji Shrestha for the joint side event organized by Bangladesh, Nepal, and Lao PDR on the margins of the LDC-5 conference

05 March 2023 Doha, Qatar

Mr. Chair

Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh

Honorable Deputy Prime Minister of Lao PDR

Excellences, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the UN Resident Coordinators, and UN-OHRLLS for their support to organize this side-event. The respective agencies and our officials from Nepal, Bangladesh and Lao PDR also deserve special thanks for their hard work to make this event a reality.

As LDCs are the poorest segments of the international community, they are the most vulnerable to internal and external shocks. They share a similar development challenge. And, Nepal, Bangladesh and Lao PDR are not the exception.

Our existing structural impediments restrict our development efforts.

The fallout of COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing geopolitical tension further aggravate our development efforts.

Despite the low-emitting countries, we bear the disproportionate brunt of climate change.

To change our plight into power, we need adequate support measures from international community during our graduation period and beyond.

As graduating cohorts, this event has helped us highlight the challenges we face for a smooth transition and irreversible graduation.

Mr. Chair,

Now let me turn to my own country Nepal.

We are fully aware of the fact that the graduation not only brings opportunities but also challenges. Our export trade is going to be hit due to tariffs increase and loss of other preferences. Besides a drop in the ODA, we are also going to be deprived of LDC-specific funds and support programs from international financial institutions, WTO, climate finance mechanisms and others.

The impacts will be economy-wide – affecting employment, poverty, inequality, health, and education and which is already under severe stress resulting from the pandemic and associated global economic downturn. On top of that, our graduation process started before we met the income criteria.

Amid these challenges, we are determined to achieve our graduation aspiration.

For this, we are preparing a smooth transition strategy with detailed policy action on key areas. We have already established a high-level steering committee to oversee the graduation process. Our development policies reflect the six priority areas of the DPoA.

The overarching theme of LDC5 “From Potential to Prosperity” seems very close to Nepal’s national aspiration of building a “Prosperous Nepal, and Happy Nepali”.

I hope the call for stronger global solidarity and support in the Doha Program of Action, including to the graduating countries, will be sincerely implemented by our development partners.

Mr. Chair,

In this connection, it is vitally important that our development and trade partners and civil society work in lockstep with our governments to make the graduation a success. LDC graduation is not an isolated development milestone. It cuts across sectors of trade, human development, poverty, disaster management and more, with effective institutionalization of our actions. Above all, a climate of greater political stability and commitment are foundation for graduation momentum.

Let me reiterate Nepal's political commitment to making its graduation smooth, sustained, and irreversible. We should share our experiences to make our graduation a common success. We urge our development partners to support us in this historic development trajectory.

Let us support each other in our common journey towards a prosperous future for our people.

I thank you.



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