

Report on Nepal's Foreign Affairs (2020-2021)



Government of Nepal
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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(2020-2021)



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This annual report covers the activities of Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 16 July 2020 to 15 July 2021.

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Dr. Narayan Khadka

Minister for Foreign Affairs

MESSAGE

It has been five months since the present government came into office. The Common Minimum Programme announced by the government has outlined major foreign policy priorities taking into consideration the guidelines provided by the Constitution of Nepal.

The present government attaches high importance to constitutional supremacy, human rights, fundamental freedoms, rule of law, independent judiciary, good governance and other norms and values of democracy. The protection, advancement and promotion of national interest, wellbeing of the people, high and equitable economic development, creation of the foundation of socio-economic transformation, completion of the remaining task of the peace process, implementation of federalism and strengthening of local levels, among others, constitute the priority area of the government.

In external front, the government pursues independent and balanced foreign policy. The principles of *Panchsheel*, non-alignment, the UN Charter, international law and norms of world peace continue to provide us the basis for the conduct of our foreign policy. We continue to advocate for a liberal, rules-based international order and to work with partners to realize our international commitments and national aspirations including achieving the sustainable development goals.

Soon after my appointment as the Foreign Minister, I had the opportunity to begin my tenure by leading the Nepali delegation to two important multilateral forums for Nepal: the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly and the High-level Commemorative Meeting to mark the 60th anniversary of the NAM. The Rt. Hon. Prime Minister also addressed virtually some important high-level events held during the UNGA. The Rt. Hon. Prime Minister led the Nepali delegation

to the World Leaders Summit of the 26th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (CoP26) held in Glasgow. All these forums and the bilateral meetings held on the sidelines have provided the government an opportunity to underscore the priorities of the present government to the international community and renew friendship with countries across the world in a short span of time. Since Foreign policy is an extension of domestic policy, I have initiated efforts towards building national consensus at home on the conduct of foreign relations.

In the year 2020-21, the second wave of pandemic led Nepal to become more active in vaccine diplomacy as well as in ensuring the accessibility of emergency medical supplies and equipment.

Despite the difficulty created by the pandemic, Nepal's engagements with neighbouring and other countries, as well as our representation in the regional and multilateral forums, during the reporting period, remained active and meaningful. In the period under review in this annual report, Nepal's outreach has substantially grown and our engagements with our immediate neighbours, neighbours in the region and other friendly countries have expanded.

I hope this annual report, which covers major activities undertaken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2020/2021, will be an interesting read to academicians, policymakers, journalists, students and readers interested in Nepal's foreign affairs. I thank all those in the Ministry, the departments and the missions abroad for their contribution in bringing out this annual report which reviews MOFA's activities over the year.

December 2021



Bharat Raj Paudyal

Foreign Secretary

FOREWORD

The Constitution of Nepal has laid down the guiding principles for the conduct of Nepal's foreign policy and international relations. In the year 2020/21, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, guided by the policy directives enshrined in the Constitution, conducted its activities towards nurturing and strengthening Nepal's relations with friendly countries at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels as well as promoting economic diplomacy and safeguarding the welfare of Nepali citizens abroad.

Like all other countries, the unprecedented health crisis wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic have had serious impact on the national life of Nepal throughout the year. Therefore, the Ministry was prompt in recalibrating its priority and mobilizing its resources and capacity towards managing the challenges posed by the rapid surge of the pandemic; helping the national efforts of saving lives; strengthening health system and securing livelihoods of people through timely provisioning of vaccines and other life-saving medicines, medical items and equipment; and, ensuring safety, security and wellbeing of Nepali nationals living abroad and rescuing and repatriating them to Nepal as necessary. The Ministry effectively coordinated and engaged with our neighbours and international community throughout this period and was able to receive swift and substantial health related support in combating the pandemic. Timely support of essential medicines, medical items, equipment, liquid oxygen etc. from our immediate neighbours, India and China, and other friendly countries from the European Union as well as the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, Thailand, Singapore and others remained significant in combating the pandemic, including during the deadly second wave of the pandemic.

Our relations with India saw significant developments in the realization of important and mutually beneficial projects, such as cross-border petroleum products pipeline, cross-border railway, integrated check-posts, post-earthquake reconstruction, implementation of hydropower project, and promote cooperation in education and culture. The meetings of Nepal - India Joint Commission and Nepal - India Oversight Mechanism were crucial in reviewing the bilateral projects and enhancing cooperation including in trade, tourism, and investment. The Foreign Secretary of India visited Nepal that paved the way for accelerated meetings of different bilateral mechanisms and implementation of development projects under Nepal-India cooperation. India's support of COVID-19 vaccine helped Nepal to become one of the first few countries to early commence vaccination and India's cooperation in the swift provision of liquid oxygen during the second wave of COVID-19 helped saving lives.

Similarly, our relations with northern neighbour China were consolidated and expanded in political, economic, social and cultural spheres during the period under review. The two countries collaborated in advancing bilateral cooperation in various areas of mutual interests, including in COVID-19 response and recovery. Nepal received significant support of COVID-19 vaccines and other critical medical logistics and equipment from China. The telephone call at highest level, virtual meetings at high levels and engagements at different levels helped promoting mutual understanding and cooperation between the two countries in difficult period. Presidents of Nepal and China exchanged messages of congratulations on the occasion of joint announcement of 8848.86 meters as new height of Mt. Sagarmatha/Zhumulangma. The year 2021 marked the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and China.

The year also marked significant developments in relations with countries beyond our immediate neighbourhood.

The State Visit of the President of Nepal to Bangladesh paved way to further strengthen bilateral relations and mutual cooperation. The fifth meeting of the US-Nepal Trade and Investment Framework Council (TIFA-Council) was held virtually on 15 December 2020. Important bilateral consultations meetings were held with Austria, Canada, Denmark, EU, France, Germany, Poland and the United Kingdom. Nepal and Israel celebrated the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations. Several bilateral agreements were signed with different countries covering areas of trade, tourism, culture, railways, labour and immigration among others.

Nepal established diplomatic relations with Sierra Leone, Gambia and the Commonwealth of Dominica expanding its diplomatic relations to 171 countries.

During the review period, Nepal played constructive role in various regional forums like SAARC, BIMSTEC, ACD and SCO and continued its efforts for deeper cooperation among SAARC and BIMSTEC members, including in trade and connectivity.

Last year commemorated the 75th anniversary of the United Nations. Participating in its General Assembly and other high-level events, Nepal reaffirmed the commitment to the principles and purposes of the United Nations and its centrality in multilateralism. Nepal chaired the Second Committee of the UNGA during its 75th session. Nepal continued its contributions and engagements in all three pillars of the United Nations.

Nepal participated in the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council for the third time showcasing its progresses and efforts in the promotion and protection of human rights. Nepal was re-elected to the Human Rights Council (HRC) and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) for the second consecutive terms. Global climate agenda, implementation of the sustainable development goals and promoting the interests of LDCs and LLDCs remained our priority in the multilateral engagements. Nepal was also recommended for graduation from LDC category with five years preparatory period.

During the reporting period, the Ministry unveiled 'Foreign Policy 2020' as a consolidated policy document. With the objective of pursuing economic diplomacy in more coordinated fashion, identifying challenges and opportunities and unleashing the national potential of export trade, investment and tourism, the Ministry initiated intensive interactive engagements involving the line agencies of the government, the Nepali diplomatic missions abroad and the private sector. Such direct engagements will continue in the coming years in all spheres of economic diplomacy. The missions abroad also continued economic diplomacy related activities.

Public service delivery remained as one of the key priorities of the Ministry. The Department of Passports initiated and implemented necessary preparatory works for the procurement of installation, enrolment, personalization and printing system of electronic passports. The Department, despite enormous pressure of increased workload, maintained ISO 9001 standards in the delivery of services. The Department of Consular Services launched innovative initiatives towards easy and effective delivery of services, including by using information technology and establishing better synergy with other stakeholders. The Ministry, the departments and the Nepali diplomatic missions made all possible efforts to ensure prompt and effective service delivery.

Similarly, ensuring safety, security, dignity and wellbeing of Nepalis abroad, including migrant workers, remained our priority. Our diplomatic missions in the labour destination countries helped retention of job of Nepali migrant workers in the face of COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry facilitated the rescue and repatriation of Nepali citizens in distress due to the pandemic, provided legal and consular services to the needy Nepalis through the diplomatic missions, and helped repatriate physical remains of Nepali nationals succumbed to disease or other accidents. The Ministry initiated a coordinated efforts to the repatriation of stolen Nepali artifacts from different countries and was successful in securing back some of the precious lost artifacts.

The present annual report portrays Nepal's latest diplomatic engagements and activities during the fiscal year 2020-21. I thank all my colleagues in the Ministry, the departments and the Nepali missions abroad for the dedication and hard work during the difficult time of COVID-19 pandemic and for standing committed to serve the nation in time of need.

I would also like to thank the in-house team of colleagues at the Ministry who were assigned to compile and produce this report for their commendable work. They deserve appreciation for their hard work that has enabled the Ministry to give continuity to the preparation of annual report as in previous years.

December 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message	
Foreword	
Vision, Mission, Objectives, Guiding Principles & Basis of Nepal's Foreign Policy	i
Ministry's Organogram	iii
Highlights of The Year	iv
High-level Engagements	vi
Facts And Figures	xi
Overview	1
Review of Nepal's Foreign Relations	10
1. Neighbourhood	11
2. South Asia	18
3. North East Asia	22
4. South East Asia and the Pacific	24
5. Central Asia, West Asia and Africa	27
6. Europe and the Americas	30
7. Regional Cooperation	38
8. Multilateral Affairs	45
Policy Matters, Economic Diplomacy and Overseas Nepal	57
9. Policy Matters	58
10. Economic Diplomacy	60
11. Overseas Nepal	61
Protocol Matters, Service Delivery and General Administration	62
12. Protocol Matters	63
13. Consular Services	65
14. Passport Services	67
15. Administration and Human Resource Development	70
Appendices	72
16. Major High-level Visits	73
17. Agreements/MoUs	74
18. Meetings of Bilateral Consultation Mechanisms	76
19. Major Statements	77
20. Presentation of Credentials by Foreign Ambassadors	165
21. Kathmandu-based Foreign Ambassadors Completing Tour of Duty	166
Abbreviations	167

VISION, MISSION, OBJECTIVES, GUIDING PRINCIPLES & BASIS OF 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, and fair rules-based world order
- To promote regional cooperation, peace, and collaborations
- To contribute to socio-economic transformation of the country through the conduct of economic diplomacy in such sectors as mobilization of development cooperation, and promotion of investment, export and tourism
- To 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

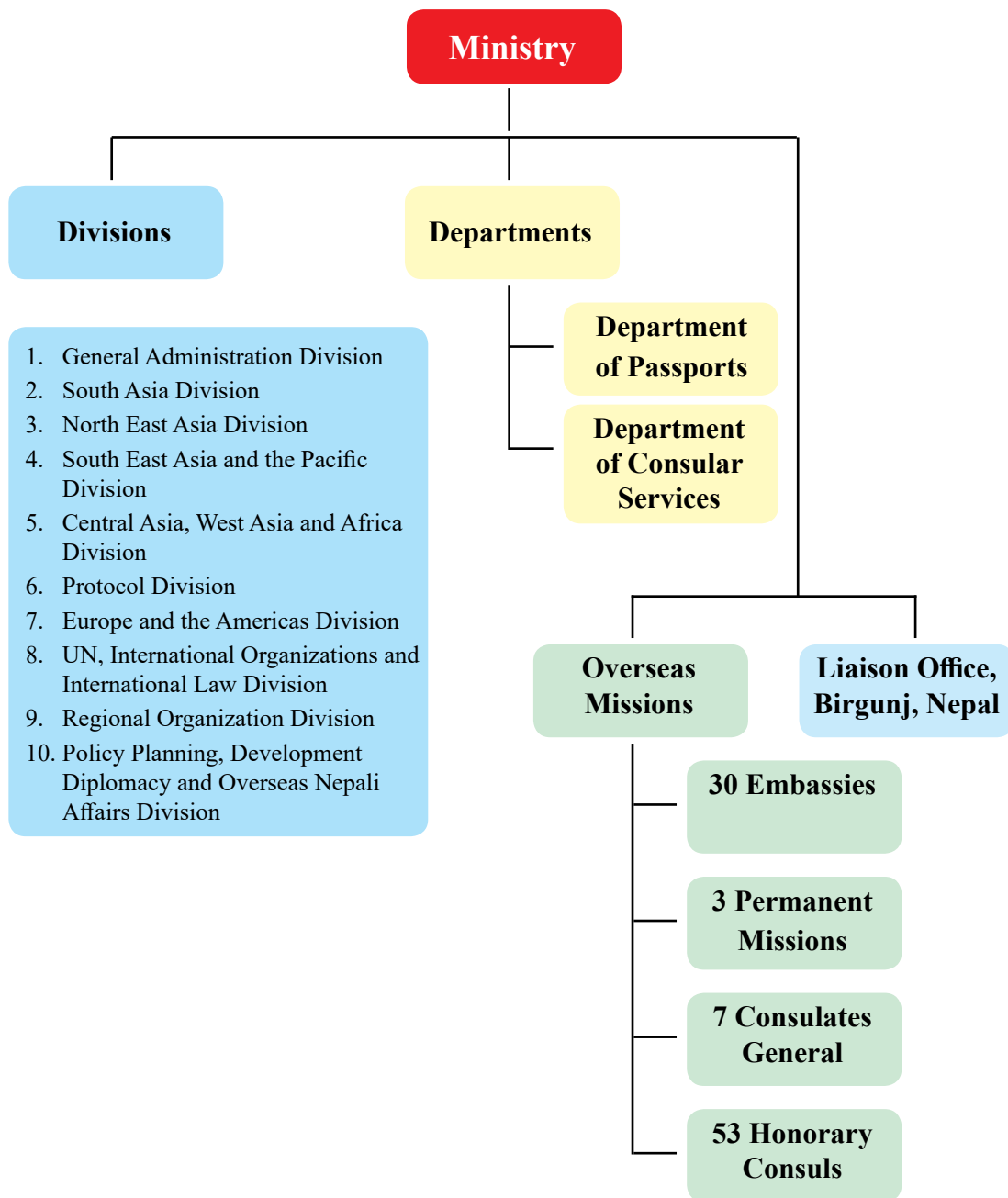
GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND NORMS

- 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

BASIS

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

MINISTRY'S ORGANOGRAM



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

- Promulgation of Nepal's Foreign Policy, 2020
- State Visit of the President of Nepal to Bangladesh
- Telephone conversation between the Presidents of Nepal and China
- Telephone talk between the Prime Ministers of Nepal and India
- Telephone conversation between the Prime Ministers of Nepal and Bangladesh
- Celebration of the 65th anniversary of Nepal-China and the 60th anniversary of Nepal - Israel relations
- Joint announcement of the new height of Mt. Sagarmatha/Zhumulangma
- The 6th meeting of Nepal-India Joint Commission
- Fifth meeting of Nepal-United States Trade and Investment Framework Council
- Bilateral consultation mechanism meetings with Austria, Canada, European Union, France, Germany, Ireland, Poland and the United Kingdom
- Mobilization of international support of medical items, equipment and vaccines during COVID-19 crisis.
- Coordination in the rescue, repatriation and evacuation of Nepali nationals from countries affected by COVID-19
- Repatriation of the lost Nepali artefacts
- Visit of CoP26 President to Nepal
- Participation in the 75th UNGA and other high-level multilateral forums
- Participation in the ministerial meetings of NAM and G77
- Recommendation by ECOSOC for Nepal's graduation from the LDC category
- Signing of bilateral agreements and MoUs on important areas
- Bilateral and multilateral cooperation for socio-economic development
- Re-election to the United Nations Human Rights Council (2021-23) and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (2021-24)
- Successful conclusion of the third Universal Periodic Review of Nepal
- Became the second largest troops and police contributing country

- Participation in the 17th BIMSTEC ministerial meeting and engagements with SAARC, SCO and ACD
- Economic diplomacy and engagement in events on promotion of trade, tourism and investment.
- Establishment of diplomatic relations with the Commonwealth of Dominica, the Gambia and Sierra Leone
- Interactions on Brain Gain Centre (BGC) and public diplomacy
- Effective protocol, consular and passport services with preparations for the issuance of e-passports
- Opening of the Consulate General of Nepal in Chengdu, China
- Completion of new building for Department of Consular Services and Department of Passports at Tripureshwor
- Human resource trainings and institutional strengthening

HIGH-LEVEL ENGAGEMENTS



Telephone Conversation
between the Presidents of
Nepal and China

The President of Nepal in
Meeting with the President
of Bangladesh



Telephone Talk between
the Prime Ministers of
Nepal and India



The President of Nepal
Speaking at the P4G Seoul
Summit

The Prime Minister of
Nepal Addressing the
High-level Meeting to
Commemorate the 75th
Anniversary of UN



The Prime Minister
of Nepal Delivering a
Statement at "Financing
the 2030 Agenda in the
Era of COVID-19 and
Beyond"





The Foreign Minister of Nepal and the External Affairs Minister of India at the Meeting of the Nepal-India Joint Commission

Joint Announcement of the New Height of Mount Sagarmatha/Zhumulangma by Nepal and China



The Foreign Minister of Nepal Attending the 17th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting



Meeting of Asia
Cooperation Dialogue

The Deputy Prime
Minister and Minister
for Foreign Affairs of
Nepal Interacting with the
Ambassadors and Heads of
Nepali Missions



FACTS AND FIGURES

ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY

Foreign Trade:

- Export NPR 1,41,124 million; Import NPR 15,39,837 million
- Top five export destination countries: India, USA, Germany, UK, Turkey
- Top five source countries of import: India, China, Argentina, UAE, USA

(Source: Trade and Export Promotion Centre)

Foreign Direct Investment:

- NPR 32 billion
- Top five foreign investors: China (Mainland), India, USA, South Korea, British Virgin Islands

(Source: Department of Industry)

Tourism:

- Top five tourist source countries: India, China, USA, UK, Russia

(Source: Immigration Department and Nepal Tourism Board)

Official Development Assistance:

- USD 1,87,00,03,870
- Top five bilateral development partners: US, UK, China, India, Japan
- Top five multilateral development partners: WB, ADB, EU, UN, GAVI
- GDP: USD 33.6 billion
- GDP per capita: USD 1,191

(Source: Ministry of Finance)

Overseas Employment:

- Labour permits and renewals: 1,66,698 persons
- Number of bilateral agreements between Nepal and labour destination countries: 2
- Top five destinations for overseas employment: Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain and Oman

(Source: Department of Foreign Employment)

SERVICE DELIVERY

Passports Distribution

- Total passports: 3,39,175
- Ordinary passports: 3,48,148
- Official passports: 603
- Diplomatic passports: 348
- Travel documents: 77

Consular Services

- Documents attested: 1,79,457
- Visa recommendations issued: 1,089
- Diplomatic exemptions granted: 3,000
- Gratis visas issued: 1,227
- Rescue and repatriation: 90,000
- Compensation handed over to beneficiaries: NPR 62,08,90,223
- Repatriation of dead bodies: 431



OVERVIEW

This report on Nepal's foreign affairs reviews the major activities carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the fiscal year 2020/21. It attempts to depict the important engagements with our immediate neighbours and other friendly countries as well as our involvement at the regional and global levels.

During the period under review, activities relating to Nepal's external relations were guided by the principles and policy directives as enshrined in the Constitution of Nepal. The Ministry made efforts in further developing friendly and cooperative relations with all countries based on the principles of sovereign equality, trust, and mutual benefit. Enhancing the image and dignity of the nation, safeguarding the rights and interests of its citizens, advancing an independent position on important global issues based on their merits as well as contributing to the creation of a

just, fair and rules-based world order constituted the core imperatives in shaping Nepal's foreign policy behaviour in the international arena.

Guided by the Charter of the United Nations, non-alignment, the principles of *Panchsheel*, world peace and the norms of international law, Nepal continued to exercise an independent and balanced foreign policy while also taking into consideration overall national interests and the aspiration of achieving rapid and sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

Fighting and coping with the COVID-19 pandemic remained our major challenge like that of many other countries around the globe. Our attention was primarily focused on minimizing the human cost of the pandemic. Generating international support to complement the national efforts in saving people's lives remained an important priority of the Government of Nepal.

The President, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and the Foreign Secretary remained closely engaged with their respective counterparts around the world through various means aiming to generate international support during COVID-19 crisis. The President wrote letters to the Presidents of the United States and the Russian Federation as well as to the Queen of Great Britain requesting for support in the battle against COVID-19, including vaccine support. The Prime Minister and Foreign Minister sent messages to their respective counterparts making similar appeals. The Prime Minister wrote an op-ed piece in The Guardian appealing the international community to urgently provide essential medical items, life-saving drugs, and vaccines.

The Ministry worked for the rescue, relief, and repatriation of its citizens from various parts of the world. More than 90,000 Nepali nationals were evacuated from different countries. Our diplomatic wings remained active in disseminating relevant information including the country-specific situations and restrictions, travel advisories and documentations required for travels under these difficult circumstances. The Ministry played an active role as a part of COVID-19 Crisis Management Coordination Centre, the principal mechanism responsible for monitoring and controlling the pandemic in the country.

Due to the lockdowns and containment measures in the wake of the pandemic, virtual meetings and telephone conversations became the new normal even at the level of high political

leaderships. The Ministry continued to adapt to changing mediums of conducting diplomacy and facilitate leaderships' external engagements accordingly.

In the year 2020-21, Nepal made efforts to further promote the warm, cordial, and cooperative relations with the immediate neighbours, India and China. Telephone conversations were held at the leadership levels with both these countries and views were exchanged on further enhancing cooperation in the context of the pandemic. Engagements at other levels also continued, virtually and in-person, including through the meetings of joint commission and various sectoral mechanisms.

India and China, besides contributing significantly to Nepal's socio-economic development, extended generous support during the pandemic and provided vaccines, medical items, equipment and supplies.

Nepal's relations with the countries in the extended neighbourhood as well as in other parts of the world including the labour destination countries, development partners and major powers continued to remain friendly and cooperative during this reporting period.

President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari paid a State Visit to Bangladesh in March 2021 as a special guest attending the celebration of the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Some important agreements were signed during the visit further cementing Nepal-Bangladesh ties.

During the reporting period, meetings of bilateral consultation mechanism were held with a number of countries together with several other sectoral meetings. Agreements of cooperation were concluded in the spheres of labour, trade, and infrastructure development. Nepal expanded its diplomatic ties establishing the formal relations with three more countries: the Commonwealth of Dominica, the Gambia and Sierra Leone.

On the regional front, Nepal actively participated in the meetings of SAARC, BIMSTEC, ACD, SCO and other regional forums. Enhancing connectivity at the regional and sub-regional levels as well as harnessing the potential of socio-economic development in the region remained top on our agenda.

The United Nations celebrated its 75th anniversary last year. Nepal's role within the global institution remained steadfast in all three pillars, namely human rights, peace and security, and development. Nepal reaffirmed its faith on multilateralism with a need for more robust and efficient United Nations at its centre for ensuring a just, fair, and rules-based international order.

Addressing the 75th session of the UNGA, Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli underscored Nepal's ever-growing partnership with the United Nations and emphasized on our collective responsibility to make the world body more 'fit for purpose'. He also highlighted the significance of unity, solidarity, and cooperation for resolving the global challenges including the fight against the

threats like pandemic, climate crisis and terrorism. Nepal continued to emphasize the sovereign equality and dignity of all nations especially promoting the rights and interests of LDCs and LLDCs.

We underscored the urgency of equitable and fair access to safe, effective, and affordable vaccines and medical supplies & equipment in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

Climate change remained an important agenda in the context of building back better from the pandemic and building sustainable, resilient, and greener societies. Nepal reiterated its firm support to the Paris Climate Agreement and submitted enhanced NDCs with an ambition to realize net zero carbon scenario by 2045.

Nepal, a member of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), continued to promote the universality, interrelatedness, and mutual reinforcing nature of human rights. Nepal got re-elected as a member of the Council for the second consecutive term. Nepal also got re-elected to CEDAW Committee for the 2021-24 term.

The Ministry and its missions were actively engaged in economic diplomacy, organizing a number of events on promoting Nepal's trade, investment, tourism as well as expanding development cooperation. The Ministry and the missions continued to reach out to Nepali diaspora through webinars and virtual events under the Brain Gain Center with an aim to mobilize their expertise and resources in national development.

The Ministry and its departments continued their efforts in further simplifying and enhancing the delivery of protocol, consular and passport-related services.

The Ministry also prioritized the renovation of its building in Singh Durbar, completion of new construction at Tripureshwor, and purchases of properties for the missions abroad. Training and development of human resources as well as up-gradation of IT infrastructures were carried out.

NEPAL'S NEIGHBOURHOOD

Nepal continued to maintain age-old friendly and cordial relations with its neighbours - India and China. Sovereign equality, goodwill, mutual trust and benefits, understanding of each other's concerns and sensitivities and cooperation for prosperity and development are the foundations of these bilateral relations. Nepal's engagements with both the neighbouring countries remained significant in the fields of economic development, infrastructure, trade and transit, health and education, culture and people-to-people exchanges.

Nepal's relations with India gained further momentum in all dimensions. Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli and Indian Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi held friendly telephone conversation in August 2020 and exchanged views on further enhancing bilateral cooperation.

Important meetings including those presided by the Foreign Ministers and Foreign Secretaries were held to review the status of overall bilateral relations and

cooperation in multiple areas, including the ongoing bilateral projects. During these engagements, boundary matters, review of 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship and the receipt of the report of the Eminent Persons Group were also discussed.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali paid a visit to India from 14 to 16 January 2021 for the sixth meeting of Nepal-India Joint Commission. The meeting discussed the whole gamut of Nepal-India bilateral relations, including trade, transit, energy, boundary, COVID-19 cooperation, infrastructure, connectivity, investment, agriculture, tourism, and culture, among others.

During the reporting period, India continued to remain Nepal's largest trade partner. India was also the top source country for foreign tourists in Nepal and the second largest source for FDI. Likewise, India was one of our major development partners.

As an important development on connectivity, a Letter of Exchange for the amendment to bilateral Rail Services Agreement was signed between Nepal and India. Cooperation continued in combating against the COVID-19 pandemic. Nepal received Covishield vaccines from India on grant as well as procurement basis.

Nepal's relations with China also witnessed further growth and progress with high-level talks, exchange of visits, and cooperation in the areas of mutual interest. Nepal maintained its principled position of respecting the 'One China

Policy'. China continued to assist Nepal's socio-economic development efforts.

On 26 May 2021, President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari and the President of the People's Republic of China Mr. Xi Jinping held a virtual talk and discussed various areas of cooperation including COVID-19 vaccines and medical assistance. The Foreign Ministers of Nepal and China also held telephone talks exchanging views on issues of mutual concern and cooperation for the control of the pandemic. Nepal received vaccines and other medical items and equipment as assistance from China.

The year also marked the milestone of the 65th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Nepal and China. The new height of Mount Sagarmatha/Zhumulangma was announced on 8 December 2020 with the exchange of congratulatory messages by the Presidents of both the countries.

SOUTH ASIA

During the reporting period, Nepal continued to strengthen and expand its relations with countries in South Asia. Exchange of bilateral visits and meetings of bilateral consultations mechanism were held with various countries in the region.

President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari paid a State Visit to Bangladesh on 22-23 March 2021 and attended the birth centenary celebration of the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. A wide range of matters concerning bilateral relations and cooperation were discussed. Four agreements were signed covering the areas of tourism, culture, trade, and transit. Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma

Oli had a telephone conversation with his Bangladeshi counterpart Ms. Sheikh Hasina on 01 September 2021. They exchanged views on matters of common interests including cooperation for power generation and grid connectivity.

NORTH EAST ASIA

Nepal's high-level engagements as well as exchanges at the levels of governments and people continued with countries in the North East Asia during the reporting period.

Japan continued to remain a major provider of development assistance to Nepal extending support in the fields of health, education, transport, and infrastructure. The Republic of Korea was also a development partner in the region and one of the major destinations for Nepali migrant workers. Nepal has received significant investment from both the countries.

Nepal maintained its principled position of denuclearization, peace, and stability in the Korean Peninsula.

SOUTH EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Nepal continued its interactions and cooperation with the countries in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. There is a significant number of Nepali diaspora in the region, especially in Malaysia & Australia.

A Memorandum of Collaboration between Foreign Employment Board of Nepal and Social Security Organization of Malaysia was signed.

Nepal received pandemic-related assistance of medical items and equipment from several countries in the region. Nepal also coordinated with the countries in the region for rescue and repatriation of its citizens including for the operation of emergency flights.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Raghurir Mahaseth held a virtual meeting with Singaporean Foreign Minister Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan on 10 June 2021 reviewing the bilateral relations and cooperation in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

CENTRAL ASIA, WEST ASIA AND AFRICA

Central Asia, West Asia and Africa continued to remain an important destination for Nepali migrant workers. Steps were taken to further strengthen bilateral relations and engagements with the countries in the region. We worked closely with several Central and West Asian countries for rescue, relief and repatriation of Nepali citizens affected by the pandemic. The Ministry and the missions were closely engaged in ensuring the safety and welfare of Nepali workers in the region during the period. Many countries in the region supported Nepal with COVID-19 related supplies and equipment.

In the review period, Nepal and Israel celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of diplomatic relations, exchanging greetings at high levels and organizing programmes in the two capitals. Nepal concluded important agreements with Israel both at the government and business levels

covering the areas of labour, agriculture, immigration, and economic cooperation.

A virtual meeting was held between the Foreign Minister of Nepal and the State Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of UAE in May 2021. The two Ministers discussed the overall status of bilateral relations and partnerships including the cooperation in the context of COVID-19.

EUROPE AND THE AMERICAS

Nepal's relation with countries in Europe and the Americas saw further development during the reporting period. Many countries in the region have been contributing significantly to the socio-economic development of Nepal through development cooperation. They are also Nepal's major partners in the sectors of trade, tourism, and investment.

The President, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister held telephone talks with their counterparts of several countries in the regions. COVID-19 cooperation and other issues of mutual interests were discussed during these conversations. Nepal received substantial support of medical items and equipment from these countries during the difficult period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina, Chairman of the National Assembly paid a visit to Spain in April 2021 and held talks with his counterpart on promoting mutual cooperation. Mr. Lord Ahmed, Chairman of CoP26 visited Nepal in August 2020 to extend invitation for Nepal's participation at the highest level.

During the reporting period, Nepal held bilateral consultation meetings with several countries in the region including Austria, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Poland, and the United Kingdom. Nepal also held the 12th meeting of Nepal – EU Joint Commission on 2 October 2020. Those deliberations focused on further strengthening cooperation in the areas of trade, investment, tourism, energy, technology transfer, and people-to-people relations.

On 21 January 2021, President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari sent a congratulatory message to Mr. Joseph Biden on his assumption of the office as the 46th President of the United States. In her message, the President expressed her willingness to work closely with the new US leadership on matters of mutual interests, both at bilateral and multilateral platforms.

REGIONAL COOPERATION:

Regional cooperation has remained a prominent feature of Nepal's foreign policy. Nepal continued to play an active role in regional organizations for enhancing cooperation in promoting regional growth and development.

During the reporting period, Nepal participated in the 15th and 16th Informal Meetings of SAARC Finance Ministers. Nepal hosted the virtual Informal Meeting of SAARC Council of Ministers on the sidelines of the 75th session of the UNGA and emphasized the significant role of SAARC in bringing substantive improvement in the lives and livelihood of people in the region. Nepal underscored

the need for holding the next Summit as early as possible to give momentum to the SAARC process.

Nepal also organized the virtual Meeting of SAARC Ministers of Education and took part in the First Meeting of the SAARC Planning Ministers and the 58th session of SAARC Programming Committee.

Similarly, Nepal actively participated in the 17th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting, the meetings of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials and several other events organized under the auspices of BIMSTEC. Nepal continued to express its commitment for cooperation with the BIMSTEC member countries in spurring growth and prosperity in the region.

Nepal participated in the 17th Ministerial Meeting of Asia Cooperation Dialogue and other important meetings of the ACD and the SCO.

MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS:

In its multilateral engagements, Nepal continued to place emphasis on reforming the United Nations and making it a more active, effective, and efficient global institution. Nepal has embraced the Charter of the United Nations as a guiding principle of its foreign policy. Amidst the emerging challenges of COVID-19, climate change and other humanitarian crisis, Nepal continued to stress the significance of multilateralism in resolving the highly complex and intertwined problems of the globalized world.

Nepal participated in the 75th session of the UNGA and several other high level multilateral events organized under the themes of poverty, gender equality, climate change, biodiversity, disarmament, and attaining the sustainable development goals, among others. As a champion of the development agendas of the landlocked developing countries and least developed countries, Nepal has been raising the issues like effective implementation of the Istanbul and Vienna Programmes of Action, debts relief as well as financial and technical support to LDCs and LLDCs.

Nepal remained a major troops and police contributing country to UN peacekeeping operations. Nepal has been advocating for the fair and equitable opportunities to serve at the leadership positions in the peacekeeping role of the United Nations.

Promoting vaccine accessibility as global public goods, achieving sustainable and resilient recovery, intensifying efforts in realizing the SDGs, dealing with the climate change impacts, reducing inequality, poverty and hunger and managing global humanitarian and economic crisis etc. remained at the forefront of our multilateral dealings.

Nepal actively participated in the meetings of NAM, G77, HRC, ECOSOC, UNESCAP, ILO, IOM, and many other international organizations during the period.

Nepal got re-elected as a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council for the term of 2021-2023 and a member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women for the term 2021-24.

POLICY MATTERS, ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY AND OVERSEAS NEPALIS

A major achievement of the reporting period on the policy front is the enunciation of Nepal's Foreign Policy 2020. It articulates foreign policy outlook and seeks to guide bilateral relations and multilateral engagements including the promotion of rules-based world order, regional cooperation, economic diplomacy, public diplomacy, protecting the rights and interests of Nepali diaspora and institutional strengthening.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Raghurir Mahaseth held virtual interactions with Ambassadors and Heads of Nepali diplomatic missions abroad in June 2021 in order to exchange views on the country's priorities including the immediate need of vaccines, mobilization of international cooperation for post pandemic economic recovery, and protecting the interests and welfare of Nepali people living in foreign countries.

The Ministry accorded importance to mobilizing the knowledge, skill, capital, technology, network of Nepali diaspora in the socio-economic development of Nepal. A number of virtual programmes and discussions were carried out through Brain Gain Center for utilizing the potentials of Nepali diaspora in national development.

Despite the constraints posed by the pandemic, many economic diplomacy related programmes were organized for the promotion of Nepal's export trade, tourism, investment and for

exploring collaboration and partnership necessary for the country's economic and infrastructural development.

PROTOCOL, CONSULAR AND PASSPORT

The Ministry co-ordinated a number of high-level incoming and outgoing visits and extended protocol services and other required facilitation for diplomatic engagements. Conducting credential ceremonies, facilitating agrément process, organizing the luncheon and dinners in honour of visiting delegations, assisting in the arrangement of their stays, and providing protocol courtesies during important diplomatic gatherings were some of the major protocol functions performed.

The Department of Consular Services continued to provide prompt consular services to the public and diplomatic missions while maintaining the motto of servicing within half an hour. Online service delivery on consular and legal matters including the verification of attested documents was strengthened.

The Department of Passports issued more than 3,00,000 passports during the period. Focus was laid on providing hassle-free and reliable customer-oriented passport services. Online verification of documents

and online payment system were started. Preparatory works were accomplished for the issuance of eMRTD. The Department continued its passport related orientation and training programmes in various provinces in the country and the missions abroad. The groundwork was laid for launching the passport museum.

ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The Ministry continued to promote human resource development and institutional infrastructures through necessary trainings and procurement of property for several missions abroad. Automation work was initiated while upgrading the video conference system. Preservation of historically important documents was given importance. Archiving of the documents has been improved. The construction of new building at Tripureshwor for housing the Department of Passports, the Department of Consular Services, and the Institute of Foreign Affairs reached its final stage of completion. Phase I of renovation and design works of the Ministry's own building in Singh Durbar was accomplished.

REVIEW OF NEPAL'S FOREIGN RELATIONS

1

NEIGHBOURHOOD

INDIA

Relations between Nepal and India continued to grow and strengthen further during the reporting period. Some major bilateral projects such as cross-border petroleum products pipeline, cross-border railway, integrated check-posts, post earthquake housing reconstruction etc. were completed. Other bilateral projects are in progress.

India continued to remain Nepal's largest trade partner as well as the largest source country of tourists visiting Nepal. It was also the second biggest investor in Nepal. During mid-July 2020 to mid-July 2021, Nepal's export to India was NPR 106 billion while her import from India stood at NPR 971 billion, resulting in the huge trade deficit of NPR 865 billion. Both countries continued to cooperate with each other in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

Telephone Call between the Prime Ministers of Nepal and India

Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. K P Sharma Oli held a telephone conversation with Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi on 15 August 2020.

The Prime Minister extended hearty congratulations on the occasion of the 74th Independence Day of India to Prime

Minister Modi and through him to the Government and people of India. He also expressed best wishes for the continued progress and prosperity of the people of India. Earlier, the two leaders talked with each other by telephone on 10 April 2020.

Nepal-India Joint Commission Meeting

The Sixth Meeting of the Nepal-India Joint Commission was held in New Delhi on 15 January 2021. The Nepali delegation was led by Foreign Minister Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali and the Indian delegation was led by External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar.

The Commission reviewed the entire spectrum of bilateral relations that included the important areas such as cooperation in the supply of COVID-19 vaccines, boundary and border management, connectivity and economic cooperation, trade and transit, power and water resources, and culture and education.



The Sixth Meeting of the Nepal-India Joint Commission

The two sides expressed the commitment to work together for an early completion of the boundary works in the remaining segments. The Meeting also discussed the issues of reviewing the Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1950, submission of the report of the Eminent Persons Group, air entry routes, among others.

Nepal-India Foreign Secretary-level Meeting

Nepal-India Foreign Secretary-level bilateral meeting was held on 26 November 2020 in Kathmandu. The Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal and the Indian delegation was led by Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla.

The meeting reviewed various aspects of Nepal-India relations covering trade, transit, connectivity, infrastructure, energy, agriculture, investment, culture & people-to-people relations, among others. The meeting also discussed ways to strengthen the strong cultural and civilizational bonds that exist between the two countries and to further build on the solid foundation of the multifaceted friendly relations for the benefit of the two countries and peoples.



The Foreign Secretaries of Nepal and India at the Delegation-level Talks

Nepal-India Oversight Mechanism

The Eighth Meeting of Nepal-India Oversight Mechanism was held in Kathmandu through video conferencing on 17 August 2020. The meeting was co-chaired by Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi and Ambassador of India to Nepal Mr. Vinay Mohan Kwatra.



The Foreign Secretary Co-chairing the Eighth Meeting of Nepal-India Oversight Mechanism

The Meeting reviewed the status of implementation of the on-going projects under Nepal-India bilateral cooperation. Both sides underlined the need for the expeditious implementation of the bilateral projects and agreed to undertake necessary measures to timely address problems and obstacles in the course of implementation.

Joint Steering Committee (JSC) and Joint Working Group (JWG) on Power Sector Cooperation

The Eighth Meeting of Nepal-India Joint Steering Committee (JSC) on Cooperation in Power Sector was held on 11 December 2020 through video-conferencing. The meeting was co-chaired by Nepal's Energy Secretary Mr. Dinesh Ghimire and India's Power Secretary Mr. Sanjiv

Nandan Sahai. The JSC is the apex bilateral mechanism for enhancing and coordinating various G2G initiatives in power sector.

The meeting reviewed the progress made in the last five years and expressed satisfaction over the timely completion of Muzaffarpur-Dhalkebar cross border 400 kV transmission line, agreement on funding modality for Gorakhpur-Butwal 400 kV line, and the progress on the 900 MW Arun-III Hydro Electric project.

The Meeting reaffirmed the commitment to further strengthening the power sector cooperation between the two countries, including development of an integrated grid, building of more cross-border transmission lines, as required, as well as enhancing investment in Nepal's hydro power and solar power projects.

Prior to the JSC Meeting, the Eighth Joint Working Group (JWG) Meeting on Nepal-India Cooperation in Power Sector was held on 10 December 2020. The meeting reviewed several issues in the power sector cooperation and reported to the JSC through a report.

Inter-Governmental Committee and Sub-Committee (IGC and IGSC) Meetings

Nepal-India Inter-Governmental Committee (IGC) and Inter-Governmental Sub-Committee Meetings (IGSC) on Trade, Transit and Cooperation to Control Unauthorized Trade were held virtually on 7 December 2020 and 3-4 December 2020 respectively. The Meetings reviewed progress made on several agenda items on trade and transit between Nepal and India.

The Nepali delegation to IGC was led by Commerce Secretary Mr. Baikuntha Aryal and the Indian delegation was led by Commerce Secretary Mr. Anup Wadhawan. Similarly, the Nepali delegation to the IGSC meeting was led by Mr. Prakash Dahal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies and the Indian delegation was led by Mr. Amitabh Kumar, Joint Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry of India.

Director-General-level Talks on Customs Cooperation

The twentieth round of the Director-General-level Talks on Customs Cooperation between Nepal and India was held virtually on 19-20 April 2021. The Meeting discussed at length to extend cooperation between the countries in the areas of customs, and other cross border issues and to resolve the difficulties in implementing the procedures relating to import and export of goods between the two countries, including transit of goods and import/export of goods by Nepal from/to third countries through Indian territory.

Letter of Exchange (LoE) on Rail Services Agreement

Nepal and India signed a Letter of Exchange (LoE) for the amendment to Rail Services Agreement (RSA) between the Government of Nepal and the Government of India signed on 21 May 2004. A virtual ceremony in this regard was held on 9 July 2021 to exchange Notes Verbale and signed copies of the LoE between the two governments. The

LoE updates various provisions of the RSA and brings them in line with the latest operational and infrastructure status of Nepali and Indian Railways.



Delegation Members from Nepal and India in the Virtual Meeting

COVID-19 Cooperation

The two countries continued their cooperation in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic together. India supplied 1 million doses of Covishield vaccines to Nepal on grant basis in January 2021. India also supplied 3,48,000 doses of vaccines through COVAX facility and additional 1,00,000 doses to the Nepali Army. India eased the restrictions on medical supplies, including the supply of liquid oxygen, oxygen cylinders, and



India Providing One Million Doses of Covishield Vaccines to Nepal

rented cryogenic tankers to Nepal from India. Nepal purchased 2 million doses of Covishield from the Serum Institute of India.

CHINA

Anchored deeply in the principles of *Panchsheel*, the age-old, friendly, and historically rich relations between Nepal and China were further consolidated and expanded during the review period. Nepal maintained its principled position of respecting the 'One China Policy'.

Despite challenges posed by COVID-19, the two countries collaborated in advancing bilateral cooperation in various areas of mutual interests, including in COVID-19 response and recovery. As a trusted development partner, China provided development cooperation to Nepal in support of Nepal's economic growth and development.

Telephone Conversation between Presidents of Nepal and China:

President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari and Mr. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, held a telephonic conversation on 26 May 2021. During the conversation, President Bhandari appreciated President Xi for his commitment to make COVID-19 vaccines global public goods and thanked him for China's continued supports of medical supplies including additional grant assistance of 1 million COVID-19 vaccines to Nepal. President Xi assured that China would continue to accord priority to Nepal in vaccine support and cooperation.

The two Presidents exchanged messages of congratulations on the historic occasion of joint announcement of 8848.86 meters as new height of Mt. Sagarmatha/Zhumulangma.



Joint Announcement of New Height of Mount Sagarmatha/Zhumulangma at a Ceremony Held Virtually on 8 December 2020

The Foreign Minister Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali and Mr. Wang Yi, State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of China, read out the messages of congratulations from the respective Presidents announcing the new height.

Commemoration of the 65th Anniversary of Bilateral Relations

To commemorate the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and China, congratulatory messages were exchanged at the levels of the President, Prime Minister/Premier and Foreign Minister of the two countries. In their messages, the leaders of both the countries expressed satisfaction over excellent bilateral relations and cooperation, and committed to elevate these relations further.

On 12 August 2020, the 13th Bilateral Consultation Meeting was held between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Nepal

and China at the Secretary/Vice-Minister level in a virtual format. During the meeting, both sides placed emphasis on implementing previous agreements and understandings and further enhancing cooperation in multilateral forums on the matters of common interests. The Nepali side was led by Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi, and the Chinese side, by Vice-Foreign Minister Mr. Luo Zhaohui.

Gen. Wei Fenghe, State Councilor and Minister of National Defense of China, paid a one-day working visit to Nepal on 29 November 2020. During the visit, Gen. Wei paid courtesy calls on President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari and Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli separately and exchanged views on various matters of common interests. He also held a meeting with General Purna Chandra Thapa, Chief of the Army Staff of Nepal Army at Army Headquarters.

Foreign Minister Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali held telephonic conversations with Mr. Wang Yi, State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of China and exchanged their views on issues of mutual concerns including COVID-19 cooperation.

Nepal-China Cooperation in BRI

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Mr. Bishnu Prasad Paudel attended the Asia and Pacific High-level Conference on Belt and Road Cooperation virtually on 23 June 2021 and shared views on promoting cooperation in combating COVID-19 for sustainable recovery.



The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Attending Asia and Pacific High-level Conference on Belt and Road Cooperation

Addressing the Conference, DPM Paudel laid emphasis on strengthened global partnership in defeating COVID-19 and the need to prioritize LDCs and poorer countries for COVID-19 vaccine cooperation. The Conference launched two initiatives under the Belt and Road Partnership on COVID-19 Vaccines Cooperation, and on Green Development.

Cooperation on Development and COVID-19 Response

China has extended valuable support to Nepal in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic since the early phase of its outbreak. The medical assistance from China and its provincial governments of Tibet, Sichuan and Yunnan was helpful in stepping up the public health system and protecting people's lives and livelihoods. China-aided first batch of 8,00,000 COVID-19 vaccines was airlifted to Kathmandu on 29 March 2021. Three months later, Nepal received an additional grant assistance of 1 million doses of Sinopharm vaccines.

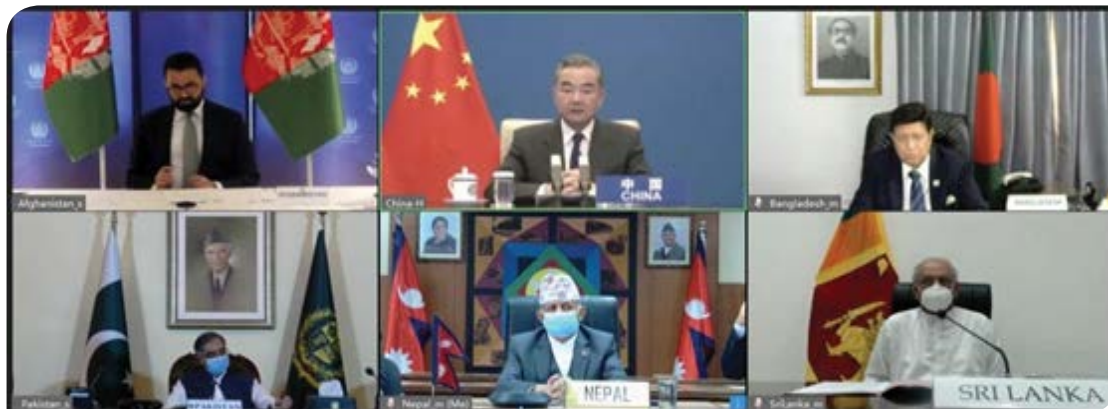


China Providing Additional Doses of COVID-19 Vaccines

Apart from bilateral engagements, Nepal and China also increased mutual cooperation through sub-regional process, particularly on the issue of COVID-19 response. Foreign Minister Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali underscored the importance of solidarity, mutual support and international cooperation in defeating the virus in the video conference of the Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan, China, Nepal and Pakistan on Joint Response to COVID-19 held on 27 July 2020.

On the occasion, Mr. Wang Yi, State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, announced an additional grant of medical supplies worth 5 million RMB to help Nepal fight against the pandemic. Prior to this, the preparatory meeting of the Foreign Secretaries of the participating countries was virtually held on 10 November 2020.

As agreed during the meeting, "China-South Asian Countries Poverty Alleviation and Cooperative Development Center" and "China-South Asian Countries



The Foreign Minister of Nepal Attending Video Conference with the Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka on Joint Response to COVID-19

Emergency Supplies Reserve” were established in July 2021 in Chongqing and Chengdu of China, respectively.

As a follow-up meeting of the Video Conference of Foreign Ministers, the Foreign Secretary/Vice Minister-level meeting was held on 10 November 2020 and Working Group on COVID-19 Response was convened twice at Director-General-level on 6 January 2021 and 30 June 2021, respectively. The meeting discussed various ways and means on forging deeper cooperation in the fight against COVID-19, reinvigorating economic recovery, and enhancing digital economy.

Opening of Consulate General of Nepal in Chengdu

The Consulate General of Nepal in Chengdu was inaugurated on 24 May 2021. The establishment of the Consulate General in Chengdu is expected to promote bilateral economic exchanges & cooperation and contribute to further enhancing the friendly relations between Nepal & China.

2

SOUTH ASIA

Nepal's relations with the countries in South Asia expanded further during the review period. High-level visits and meetings of bilateral mechanism covering trade, transit, tourism, energy and security etc. gave a boost to Nepal's relations with these countries in respective areas of cooperation.

AFGHANISTAN

Nepal and Afghanistan continued to enjoy friendly relations. Nepal continued to hold the view that sustainable peace in Afghanistan will have a significant positive socio-economic impact in the region. The Government of Afghanistan extended cooperation in the rescue and repatriation efforts of Nepali nationals stranded in Afghanistan. The two countries also continued their support and cooperation in international forums for the cause of LDCs and LLDCs.

BANGLADESH

State Visit of the President of Nepal to Bangladesh

Nepal-Bangladesh relations continued to remain cordial and friendly during the reporting period. President of Nepal Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari paid a State Visit to Bangladesh on 22-23 March 2021 at the friendly invitation of the President of

Bangladesh Mr. Mohammad Abdul Hamid to attend the birth centenary celebration of the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.



The President Addressing Bangabandhu's Birth Centenary Celebration Programme

President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari attended as the Guest of Honour in the grand ceremony held on 22 March 2021 at the National Parade Ground, Dhaka to mark the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. In the ceremony, the President delivered a Statement on the theme of "Nepal-Bangladesh Relations and Bangabandhu's Birth Centenary" and highlighted the excellent state of bilateral relations existing between Nepal and Bangladesh.

The President of Bangladesh Mr. Mohammad Abdul Hamid expressed his heartfelt gratitude for the visit of the President of Nepal to Bangladesh and



The President during Meeting with the President (right) and the Prime Minister of Bangladesh (left)

thanked Nepal for its prompt recognition of the independent Bangladesh. Similarly, the Chairperson of Bangabandhu Birth Centenary Celebration Committee Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also commended Nepal's immediate recognition of Bangladesh. They stressed on the need to further strengthening the cordial relations between Bangladesh and Nepal. During the birth centenary celebration programme, a Nepali cultural troupe presented Nepali cultural performance.

During the State Visit, the President held talks with the President of Bangladesh on various aspects of bilateral relations at the Bangabhaban, President's official residence and office. The two Presidents witnessed the signing of four bilateral instruments by the representatives of their respective governments.

During her visit, the President of Nepal visited the National Martyrs' Memorial at Savar and paid homage to martyrs and war heroes. She also planted a Magnolia sapling there. Similarly, the President visited Bangabandhu Memorial Museum and paid tributes to the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The State Visit of the President of Nepal to Bangladesh in March 2021 and signing of various agreements, including on tourism and transit route, have further contributed to expanding and deepening the relations between the two countries.

Telephone Conversation between the Prime Ministers of Nepal and Bangladesh

Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli held a telephone conversation with the Prime Minister of Bangladesh Ms. Sheikh Hasina on 01 September 2021, and extended hearty congratulations on the occasion of the Birth Centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. During the friendly conversation, the two Prime Ministers exchanged views on various matters of common interests, including cooperation in power generation, grid connectivity and power supply from Nepal to Bangladesh, promotion of barrier-free and balanced trade between the two countries, improved transit facility for Nepal through Bangladesh, enhanced connectivity and promotion of tourism.

Nepal-Bangladesh Commerce Secretary-level Meeting

The Sixth Nepal-Bangladesh Commerce Secretary-level Meeting on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held virtually on 8 October 2020. The Meeting discussed trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. Prior to that, the Meeting on Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the Government of Nepal was also held virtually on 06 October 2020. The Bangladesh delegation was led by Mr. Md. Shahidul Islam, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and the Nepali delegation by Mr. Prakash Dahal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies.

Krishi Samagri Company Limited of the Government of Nepal signed an agreement with Bangladesh Chemical Industries Company of Bangladesh on 17 December 2020 for the procurement of 50,000 tons of urea fertilizer from Bangladesh.

During the review period, Bangladesh extended generous medical support to Nepal that included 10,000 vials of Remdesivir and 4,50,000 units of surgical masks among others to fight the COVID-19 pandemic under SAARC COVID-19 Emergency Fund.

BHUTAN

Nepal and Bhutan continued to enjoy friendly relations. The two countries cooperated with each other to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Bhutan supplied 2,30,000 doses of AZ vaccines which will be returned later. .

Nepal imported goods worth NPR 1.20 billion from Bhutan and exported goods worth NPR 63.63 million with a deficit of NPR 56.70 million during the period of mid-July 2020 to mid-July 2021.

MALDIVES

Bilateral relations between Nepal and the Maldives have been growing continuously over the years.

Both countries share huge potentials in the areas of trade, tourism and people-to-people ties. Over 5 thousand Nepalis are working in the Maldives in various fields. Nepali doctors, nurses and engineers are also providing services in the Maldives. Similarly, some Maldivian students are pursuing medical studies in Nepal.

PAKISTAN

Nepal and Pakistan enjoyed friendly relations during the review period. Both countries hold similar views on many issues of common interests and work closely in bilateral, regional & multilateral forums.

On 16 January 2021, a team of 10 Nepali climbers led by Mingma Gyabu Sherpa and Nirmal Purja set a new world record by becoming the first person to reach the summit of K2 in winter, the world's second highest mountain. The group of Nepali mountaineers, including the Ambassador of Nepal to Pakistan, paid a group call on the President of Pakistan. During the call on, the President of Pakistan congratulated the Nepali mountaineers for their historic achievements in the field of mountaineering and added that

16 January 2021 would be remembered forever in Mt. K2 history.



Nepali Mountaineers with the President of Pakistan

Pakistan supported Nepal's fight against the pandemic by contributing USD 3,69,460. The Government of Pakistan also provided 30 ventilators and 30 CPAP breathing equipment to Nepal under SAARC COVID-19 Emergency Fund.

The bilateral trade in the year 2020-21 was in favour of Pakistan. Total volume of export from Nepal to Pakistan was of NPR 100 million and import from Pakistan to Nepal was of NPR 1.14 billion, with a deficit of NPR 1.04 billion for Nepal. Nepal's export to Pakistan

includes big cardamon, plants and parts of plants (including seeds and fruits) intraocular lenses, cinnamon, ginger etc. Nepal's import from Pakistan consists of dates, electro-medical instruments and appliances, spices, maize corn, natural gum, resin etc.

SRI LANKA

The relations between Nepal and Sri Lanka remained friendly and cordial. The relationship is marked by goodwill, mutual understanding and cooperation.

The volume of trade between the two countries remains small. In 2020, Nepal imported goods worth NPR 182 million while its export to Sri Lanka was NPR 14 million. The major exports from Nepal to Sri Lanka consisted of intraocular lenses, spectacle lenses of glass, green tea (not fermented), and essential oil among others. The major imports from Sri Lanka included artificial staple fibres, edible animal or vegetable fats or oil, bottles, flasks, jars, pots and crude coconut oil etc.

3

NORTH EAST ASIA

The existing friendly, cordial and cooperative relations of Nepal with the countries of North East Asian region witnessed further growth and continued cooperation in multiple areas of shared interests and benefits. The high-level engagements, virtual meetings, bilateral consultations, people-to-people contacts and strengthened cooperation in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, among others, reflected important aspects of Nepal's relations with these countries.

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

JAPAN

Nepal's bilateral relations with Japan remained friendly, cooperative and mutually beneficial for both sides. Japanese assistance encompassed a wide range of areas including health, education, transport, and infrastructure development. The close and cordial ties both at high political and people-to-people levels of the two countries were important hallmarks of Nepal-Japan relations. President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari sent a Birthday Message to His Majesty the Emperor Naruhito of Japan wishing for his good health, happiness and continued peace, progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Japan.

Japan provided 16,14,740 doses of AstraZeneca vaccines to Nepal at a time when priority age-groups including senior citizens were in urgent need for inoculation of second doses. Besides, Japan also expressed solidarity with Nepal in combating COVID-19 by providing various medical equipment.



*Handover Ceremony of COVID-19 Vaccines
Supported by Japan*

Japan remained a major trading partner and source country for tourists. Various programmes were organized in the year to promote the bilateral relations and economic cooperation between the two countries. Newly appointed Honorary Consul of Nepal to Fukuoka Prefecture of Japan Mr. Yuichiro Kimoto formally opened his office at a special programme organized on 11 November 2020.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Nepal and the Republic of Korea maintained the momentum of friendly relations. Increased bilateral engagements, cooperation at regional and international forums, strong people-to-people relations and continued development cooperation to Nepal helped in further strengthening Nepal-Korea bilateral ties.

The Republic of Korea extended support in vital areas such as energy, education, health, rural and human resource development. Bilateral trade between the two countries is growing steadily. There are 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.

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Nepal and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea maintained friendly relations during the review period. Nepal upheld its long-standing policy to see lasting peace and stability in the Korean peninsula.

MONGOLIA

Nepal and Mongolia continued to enjoy age-old friendship and cordial relations based on trust, understanding and shared values. Both countries supported each other in regional and international forums, including the United Nations. Growing people-to-people contacts enthused by Buddhism since ancient times has remained a major feature of Nepal-Mongolia relations.

4

SOUTH EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Nepal's engagements with countries in Southeast Asia and the Pacific region were further strengthened during the review period. The assistance of medical supplies and equipment received from Australia, Thailand, Singapore, Cambodia and Viet Nam have been helpful in the prevention and treatment of COVID-19.

AUSTRALIA

Nepal and Australia continued to enjoy friendly and cooperative relations over the reporting period. Nepali diaspora has become an important part of the bilateral relations. More than 58 thousand students are currently pursuing their higher studies in Australian colleges and universities. Nepali students are the third largest group among Australia's international student cohort.



Ambassador of Australia to Nepal Handing Over the Medical Supplies to Nepal Army

Nepal and Australia have remained close partners during COVID-19 crisis. Australia provided emergency medical supplies consisting of masks, gloves and coveralls to Nepal on 5 June 2021.

CAMBODIA

Nepal and Cambodia continued to maintain friendly, cordial and cooperative relations over the period. As a gesture of solidarity with Nepal during the pandemic, Cambodia provided emergency medical supplies including surgical masks, face masks, face shields and ventilator machines etc. to Nepal.

The Embassy of Nepal in Bangkok coordinated the operation of two repatriation flights for Nepali nationals stranded in Cambodia due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Handover Ceremony of Medical Equipment from Cambodia

INDONESIA

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

MALAYSIA

The friendly and co-operative 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 Malaysia's economic prosperity.

In order to promote social security programs and activities for insured Nepali workers in Malaysia, a Memorandum of Collaboration (MoC) was signed between the Foreign Employment Board (FEB) of Nepal and the Social Security Organisation (SOCSO) of Malaysia in February 2021. The MoC will facilitate mutually beneficial collaboration for the exchange of information and promotion of activities in the area of social security including the prevention and treatment of injuries and diseases.

MYANMAR

Nepal and Myanmar continued to enjoy excellent relations based on cooperation, goodwill, and friendship. The shared culture and traditions between the two countries have further consolidated people-to-people relations. Nepal and Myanmar worked closely for the rescue and repatriation of their nationals stranded in each other's countries due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

NEW ZEALAND

Nepal and New Zealand continued to enjoy friendly and cooperative relations over the preceding year. To support Nepal's COVID-19 efforts, New Zealand has committed to provide New Zealand 1 million dollars through UNICEF. This assistance will supplement the measures of emerging health needs and community resilience in Nepal.

THE PHILIPPINES

The bilateral relations between Nepal and the Philippines continued to remain cordial and cooperative. The two countries worked in close coordination for organizing rescue flights for Nepali citizens stranded in the Philippines, as well as for the Filipino nationals stranded in Nepal.

THAILAND

Nepal and Thailand continued to maintain steady relations of friendship and cooperation, which was exemplified by mutual solidarity and support for the control and prevention of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Royal Family of Thailand provided Nepal with anti-epidemic materials and emergency medical supplies including surgical masks, PPE sets, face



Handover Ceremony of Medical Supplies from Thailand

shield, rapid antigen test, and fingertip pulse oximeters, among others.

A significant number of oxygen concentrators were also provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, Thai Overseas Dhammaduta Bhikkhus, Verapuchong Foundation, and the Royal Thai Monastery, Lumbini.

SINGAPORE

Nepal-Singapore relations continued to remain friendly, cordial, and cooperative. Singapore's Temasek Foundation International, in collaboration with MIRXES Pvt Ltd and Lotus Life Foundation, provided urgent medical items to Nepal which included PCR kits, pulse oximeters, RNA extraction machines and kits as well as 30 units of tele-ventilators and 6 units of ventilators.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Raghurir Mahaseth held a virtual meeting with Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore on 10 June 2021. A wide range of issues pertaining to Nepal-Singapore relations and collaboration on fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic were discussed during the meeting.

VIET NAM

The bilateral relations between Nepal and Viet Nam remained steady, marked by friendship, cordiality, and cooperation. The Government of Viet Nam expressed its solidarity in fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic and sent a shipment of medical supplies including PCR test kits in June 2021.



The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Nepal and the Foreign Minister of Singapore during the Virtual Meeting

5

CENTRAL ASIA, WEST ASIA AND AFRICA

The relations between Nepal and the countries in the Central Asia, West Asia and Africa region remained warm and cordial during the reporting period. The Government of Nepal continued to maintain regular engagements with countries in the region to further strengthen the bilateral relations and promote cooperation. As the Gulf region hosts more than 1 million Nepali migrant workers, the Government of Nepal has accorded high priority to strengthening of bilateral relations with the countries in the region.

Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal led the Nepali delegation to the International Conference on Central and South Asia: Regional Connectivity, Challenges and Opportunities held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on 15-16 July 2021. On the sidelines of the Conference, Foreign Secretary Mr. Paudyal held a bilateral meeting with Mr. Abdulaziz Kamilov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and exchanged views on matters of mutual interest, including promotion of trade, tourism, and cultural exchanges.

During the period, the Nepali Missions in the region were engaged in responding to the challenges posed by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in coordinating the chartered flights for bringing workers and medical cargos

to Nepal, care and treatment of infected workers, managing foods and shelters and other supports for distressed workers, among others. In support of various concerned agencies, the Ministry and the missions facilitated the return of around 75,000 Nepali citizens from GCC countries.

BAHRAIN

The relations between Nepal and the Kingdom of Bahrain continued to remain friendly. The successful summit of Mount Everest by the Bahrain Royal Guard including a member from the royal family of Bahrain (Sheikh Mohamed Hamad Mohamed Al Khalifa) has helped in promoting Nepali tourism and in strengthening the relations. Several tourism and investment promotion related events and meetings were organized by the Nepali Embassy in Manama besides extending consular services and relief and repatriation services in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic.

EGYPT

Nepal and the Arab Republic of Egypt continued to enjoy cordial relations over the review period. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the Ministry and the Embassy in Cairo remained active in rescue and repatriation of Nepali nationals from different countries in the region including Libya, Lebanon, Syria, and Nigeria.

ISRAEL

State of Israel has been one of the important development partners of Nepal and has continued to lend its assistance in the areas of capacity development, agriculture, education, health, labour, rural development, water resources and tourism. Israel has also provided COVID-19 related medical assistance to Nepal. Relations between Nepal and Israel continued to strengthen in the year 2020-21.

Nepal and Israel celebrated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2020. To mark the occasion, Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli held a telephone conversation with Israeli Prime Minister Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu and exchanged greetings and best wishes. Expressing satisfaction on the state of bilateral relations that has been growing and consolidating in the past 60 years, both the leaders agreed to further strengthen the relations in the future. Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali and Foreign Minister of Israel Mr. Gabi Ashkenazi exchanged messages of greetings to mark the special occasion of bilateral relationships.

Several activities were carried out to mark the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of relations in each other's capital, including organization of webinars and issuing of a publication on Nepal-Israel Relations & plantation of trees. Both countries signed agreements on the Temporary Employment of Nepali Workers in Israel's Specific Labour Market and its implementation protocol, Mutual Visa Exemption for Diplomatic Passport Holders, and signed an MoU on

the establishment of Agricultural Centers of Excellence. Likewise, chambers of industry and commerce of both the countries signed an MoU to enhance economic cooperation between the private sectors of both countries, especially in the field of trade and investment.

KUWAIT

The friendly relations between Nepal and the State of Kuwait continued to grow further. The Government of the State of Kuwait, through the Kuwait Fund, has been assisting Nepal in irrigation and hydropower sectors. Around 70 thousand Nepalis are working in Kuwait.

Various seminars and programmes aimed at promoting bilateral trade, tourism and labour were conducted in the year. Consular and welfare functions including COVID-19 related testing, quarantine and treatment were carried out. Relief materials were distributed to the distressed Nepali workers. The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) donated portable oxygen concentrators, patient monitors, medical ventilators, hospital bed, pulse oximeters, vital signs monitor, PPE, etc to Nepal.

OMAN

Nepal and the Sultanate of Oman continued to enjoy excellent bilateral relations. Both the countries signed a Land Lease Agreement for building chancery and residence for the ambassador and an Agreement on Mutual Visa Exemption for Holders of Diplomatic, Special, Service and Official Passports of both countries, on 19 October 2020. Initiations were launched to promote bilateral trade, tourism, culture and investment. The

Embassy coordinated the collection, purchase and transportation of 560 medical oxygen cylinders to Nepal.

QATAR

Nepal - Qatar relations remained friendly & cooperative. Qatari people's rising interest in mountaineering activities in Nepal, including from the royal family, has helped promote people-to-people relations. Protecting the interests of Nepali migrant workers and the promotion of culture, trade, tourism, and investment have remained the priority of both countries.

Around 3,20,000 Nepali nationals are currently working in Qatar. The Embassy of Nepal in Doha in coordination with Nepali diaspora and Nepal Business Association Qatar facilitated in sending urgent medical supplies to Nepal including 14 ventilators, 42 oxygen concentrators, 2,100 pulse oximeters and 50 nasal cannula etc.

SAUDI ARABIA

Nepal and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continued to maintain cordial relations during the year. Saudi Arabia is one of the major destinations for Nepali migrant workers. Saudi Arabia's development cooperation continued its focus on upliftment of rural community, agricultural development & energy production in Nepal. Several events held during the period focussed on strengthening the bilateral relations, promoting the economic diplomacy, and protecting the interest and welfare of Nepali workers were organized during the year.

SOUTH AFRICA

Bilateral relations between Nepal and the Republic of South Africa have continued to remain cordial and friendly. During the reporting period, the Embassy of Nepal was engaged in rescuing and repatriating distressed Nepali nationals in some of the African countries. The embassy also held meetings with the business community in South Africa and requested them to invest in Nepal in the potential sectors.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Nepal and the United Arab Emirates have been enjoying friendly and cordial relations based on mutual understanding and cooperation ever since the establishment of diplomatic relations. The UAE is one of the major trading partners of Nepal. There are huge potentials for bilateral cooperation in the domains of tourism, investment in renewable energy, and human resources development.

Foreign Minister Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali held a virtual meeting with Mr. Ahmed Ali Al Sayegh, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the UAE on 31 May 2021 and discussed the overall cooperation between Nepal and the UAE. The Government of the United Arab Emirates provided Nepal with 12 tons of medical supplies and equipment including 150 ventilators to fight the pandemic.

During the reporting period, Nepal participated in Expo 2020 Dubai and other major international events including Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week, meetings of International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and International Participants Meetings (IPM) etc.

6

EUROPE AND THE AMERICAS

Nepal's relations with the countries in Europe and the Americas strengthened further during the year of 2020-21. Several countries in the regions are not only the top trade and development partners of Nepal but have also supported Nepal's advancement in institutionalization of democracy and democratic institutions.

During the peak of COVID-19 crisis, the President, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and the Foreign Secretary remained closely engaged with their respective counterparts of countries in Europe and the Americas through various means aiming to generate support. The Prime Minister wrote an op-ed piece in The Guardian appealing the international community to urgently provide essential medical items, life-saving drugs and vaccines. The President wrote letters to the Presidents of the United States and the Russian Federation as well as to the Queen of Great Britain. The Prime Minister and Foreign Minister wrote letters to counterparts in Europe and the Americas.

As a result of the concerted efforts of the leadership, the Ministry, the embassies and all relevant government agencies, Nepal received international support of medical items and equipment like ventilators and oxygen concentrators from the friends

in Europe and the Americas. Support was also received from philanthropic organizations and Nepali diaspora.

AUSTRIA

Nepal-Austria relationship witnessed the start of an important initiative. The first meeting of Nepal-Austria bilateral consultations took place virtually on 14 October 2020. Joint Secretary of Europe and the Americas Division at the Ministry Mr. Nirmal Raj Kafle and the Head of Asia-Pacific Department of the Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs of Austria Ms. Gabriele Meon-Tschurtz led their respective delegations. The two sides exchanged views on enhancing economic cooperation, expanding and deepening engagements in trade, investment, technology transfer, renewable energy and tourism. Both sides shared the importance of continued cooperation on matters of common agendas such as climate change and mountain development at various multilateral forums.

BELGIUM

The relations between Nepal and Belgium have been marked by goodwill, trust, and mutual respect. These relations have been reinforced by the contacts and engagements between the two countries including at the level of leaderships. On 5 October 2020, the Prime Minister of

Nepal sent a congratulatory message to Mr. Alexander De Croo, the newly appointed Prime Minister of Belgium.

BRAZIL

Nepal and Brazil continued to enjoy friendly and cordial relations. The two countries constructively worked together in international forums on the global issues in general and those being faced by the developing countries and least developed countries in particular. One particular area among them is Brazil's active role in promoting South-South Cooperation. The two countries have been promoting mutual cooperation in the sectors of agriculture, business and investment promotion and hydropower under the platform of the Bilateral Consultations Mechanism established in 2016.

CANADA

The cordial relations between Nepal and Canada continued to consolidate and expand during the period under review. The second meeting of Nepal-Canada Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held virtually on 11 December 2020. Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal and Assistant Deputy Minister of Global Affairs of Canada Mr. Paul Thoppil led their respective delegations to the meeting. A wide range of matters relating to bilateral relations and cooperation were discussed in a cordial atmosphere. The two sides exchanged views on expanding bilateral trade and investment, educational and cultural cooperation, tourism and people-to-people contacts.



The Second Meeting of Nepal-Canada Bilateral Consultations Mechanism

Nepal received valuable support of medical items and equipment from Canada during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

EUROPEAN UNION

Nepal-EU relations have remained friendly, cordial and cooperative based on goodwill, mutual understanding and support. The two sides share common views on democracy and human rights.

The 12th Meeting of Nepal-EU Joint Commission was held on 02 October 2020 via video conference. Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal and Deputy Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific of the European External Action Service, Ms. Paola Pampaloni co-chaired the Joint Commission and led their respective delegations to the meeting. During the meeting, both sides discussed a wide range of issues of mutual interest in a cordial, candid and constructive atmosphere and took stock of the progress achieved and lessons learned in the implementation of ongoing cooperation, particularly in rural development, nutrition, education, governance, trade and investment.



The Twelfth Meeting of Nepal-EU Joint Commission

Responding to Nepal's request for support during the COVID-19 crisis, the EU announced the mobilization of 2 million euros in humanitarian funding. Nepal requested for the activation of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, which allowed for a coherent, collective response and helped pool the support from the EU member states. Fourteen countries including Germany, France, Spain, Ireland, Italy, Denmark, Finland, Belgium, Austria, Malta and Slovenia extended support to Nepal under this mechanism, which was facilitated by the EU Delegation in Kathmandu.

FRANCE

The relations between Nepal and France have been cordial and characterized by friendship, goodwill & mutual understanding. Both countries have a long history of bilateral relations characterized by people-to-people exchanges and mutual cooperation.

The second meeting of Nepal-France Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held on 8 February 2021. The meeting discussed ways and means to promote bilateral trade and investment, transfer of technology, tourism and people-to-people contacts, while highlighting the efforts in

addressing the impacts of climate change. The two sides also shared their national experiences as well as commitment to continuing mutual cooperation in the context of COVID-19. France provided valuable support of medical items to Nepal during the difficult time of the COVID-19.

GERMANY

The bilateral relations between Nepal and Germany remained cordial & cooperative during the period. Germany is one of the major development partners for Nepal. Germany's continued cooperation in socio-economic transformation of Nepal has been instrumental in further deepening the diplomatic ties. Nepal and Germany signed an Agreement for Development Cooperation on 14 June 2021 under which Germany has pledged to provide a total of 34.4 million euros to Nepal, to be spent in health, economic development and energy sectors.

The second Nepal-Germany Bilateral Consultation Mechanism meeting was held virtually on 30 September 2020, which reviewed the whole gamut of political, economic, and cultural engagements as well as multilateral cooperation between the two countries. The meeting has been

instrumental in providing momentum to existing bilateral relations. The Nepali delegation to the meeting was led by Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi while the German delegation was led by State Secretary Mr. Miguel Berger. An Agreement on allowing the spouses of diplomats of both the countries to engage in gainful occupation on a reciprocal basis was signed on 29 September 2020.

Germany has been an important trading partner for Nepal over many years, ranking as the fourth largest export trade destination for Nepali products.

Germany provided COVID-19 related support, both financially and in kind. In addition to 11 million euros during the first wave of COVID-19, the German government provided important medical items through EU's Civil Protection Mechanism during the second wave.

IRELAND

Nepal and Ireland have been enjoying friendly and cordial relations and over the years, the two countries have set up various platforms for promoting mutual engagements. Nepal-Ireland Parliamentary Friendship Group was re-formed in February 2021 under the convenorship of Mr. Sean Crowe T.D., Member of Lower House of the Irish Parliament. The Ireland-Nepal Chamber of Commerce (INCC) was constituted under the chairmanship of Mr. Vincent Barry, Co-Founder and Managing Director of the ICD Business School of Ireland on 8 August 2020.

The Government of Ireland generously provided essential medical supplies to Nepal during the most difficult time of the pandemic. The supplies included a

significant number of ventilators and oxygen concentrators.

POLAND

Nepal and Poland remained closely engaged during the reporting period. The second meeting of Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held on 13 January 2021 where Joint Secretary of Europe and the Americas Division Mr. Nirmal Raj Kafle and Director of Asia and Pacific at the Polish Foreign Ministry Witold Sobkow led their respective delegations. They discussed a wide range of matters relating to bilateral relations and exchanged views on recent developments in both the countries, exchange of high-level visits, economic partnerships and tourism. Both sides underscored the importance of cooperation at multilateral levels on common agendas such as SDGs, climate change and UN peacekeeping. The two sides also discussed the role played by rising people-to-people exchanges in furthering the bilateral relations and the need to utilize potential employment opportunities for mutual benefit.

NORDIC COUNTRIES (DENMARK, FINLAND, NORWAY AND SWEDEN)

Nepal and Denmark enjoyed excellent relations in the past one year and maintained close contacts and engagements. The second meeting of Nepal-Denmark Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held through video conference on 9 November 2020. The Nepali delegation was led by Mr. Nirmal Raj Kafle, Joint Secretary of MoFA and the Danish delegation was led by Thomas Lehmann, Director for Asia, Latin America and Oceania, Ministry of Foreign

Affairs of Denmark. During the meeting, both sides stressed the need for further enhancement of economic partnership in trade, investment, technology transfer & renewable energy.

Denmark provided generous medical supplies to Nepal to help fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nepal and Finland enjoyed excellent friendly and cooperative relations during the year. Finland is one of the major development partners of Nepal providing support in the areas of education, water supply and sanitation and other areas aimed at helping Nepal achieve Sustainable Development Goals. The Government of Finland extended support of medical equipment and supplies when Nepal was facing COVID crisis.

Likewise, Nepal maintained cooperative relations with Norway and Sweden during the reporting period.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Ever since the establishment of the diplomatic relations on 20 July 1956, Nepal and Russian Federation have been enjoying very close and friendly relations underpinned by mutual respect, goodwill, mutual understanding and cooperation. Similarity of views on major international issues have helped Nepal and Russia work together in the international forums. Both countries advocate a just and rules-based international order guided by the generally accepted norms of international law and principles of equal rights, mutual respect, and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries. During the review period, the efforts to explore multiple avenues of cooperation have been made including in the areas

of infrastructure and human resource development. The two sides also remained active in exploring ways to foster mutual cooperation in the face of the COVID-19 outbreak.

SPAIN

Spain was one of the earliest members of EU to provide COVID-19 relief assistance to Nepal. Mr. Magdy Martínez-Solimán, the Director of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation visited Nepal on 20 May 2021 to handover COVID-related materials. In the meeting between Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal and the Director, the two sides exchanged views on bilateral relations, cooperation and post pandemic recovery. Foreign Secretary Paudyal stated that Spain's timely support reflected deep friendship and goodwill that exist between the two countries. Director Soliman conveyed Spain's solidarity to Nepal's fight against the pandemic. Earlier on 19 May 2021, Foreign Minister Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali held a telephone conversation with his Spanish counterpart Arancha Gonzalez Laya to thank Spain for its generous support.

The Chairperson of the National Assembly Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina paid a visit to Spain in April 2021 and had a meeting with Ms. Pilar Llop Cuenca, President of the Senate of Spain on 12 April 2021. The two sides expressed satisfaction over the friendly bilateral relations and agreed on the need to further elevate the parliamentary exchanges.

SWITZERLAND

The reporting period remained important in further enriching Nepal-Swiss bilateral relations with engagements at the highest

level. President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari held telephone conversation with President of Swiss Confederation Ms. Simonetta Sommaruga on 24 September 2020 and exchanged views on measures taken in their respective countries to contain the spread of COVID-19. President Bhandari thanked Switzerland for providing support to Nepal during the difficult time. Both the Presidents discussed the importance of effective climate action.

Switzerland provided support of medical equipment and supplies which included ventilators, test kits and other items.

UNITED KINGDOM

Nepal and the United Kingdom maintained engagements at various levels during the reporting period. Mr. Alok Sharma, President of CoP26, visited Nepal on 17-18 February 2021. During the visit, he paid courtesy calls on the President, the Prime Minister and met the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Forest and Environment. During the meetings, views were exchanged on promoting Nepal-UK relations & advancing collaborations on climate action and energy sector.

A virtual meeting was held between Foreign Minister Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali and the State Minister for South Asia of the United Kingdom Mr. Lord Ahmed on 27 August 2020. During the meeting, the Ministers discussed cooperation in the context of COVID-19 and preparation for CoP26. The two Ministers also had virtual conversations on 8 February 2021 and on 20 May 2021 to exchange views on COVID-19 related challenges amid rapid surge in cases.

The fifth meeting of Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held on 12 November 2020 which discussed a wide range of matters relating to bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest. The meeting took stock of overall state of cooperation between Nepal and the UK. The delegations of both the governments exchanged views on bilateral relation and reviewed the progress made in various aspects, including development cooperation, the British Gurkha matters, cultural relations, people-to-people contacts and educational cooperation.

British support in Nepal's fight against COVID-19 was significant. It provided 45.8 million GBP of direct COVID-19 support in addition to reallocating the 30.2 million GBP of its existing budget to focus on COVID-19 recovery. The UK government also provided important support of medical items including ventilators during the crisis.



Mr. Alok Sharma, President of CoP26 during Courtesy Meeting with the President of Nepal

The UK-Nepal Trade and Investment Forum was announced in London on 10 August 2020 with an objective of promoting Nepal's trade and commerce in the UK and for enhancing British investment in Nepal. The forum will comprise companies and individuals, wishing to enhance trade and investment linkages between Nepal and the UK.

An agreement on the establishment of sister-city relations between Resunga Municipality of Gulmi and Hawkinge Town Council of UK was concluded on 2 October 2020.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The period under review witnessed further strengthening of close and cooperative relations between Nepal and the United States.

The USA has been a major development partner for Nepal, with a total of USD 84.5 million disbursed during the fiscal year 2020/21. The US extended substantial cooperation to Nepal in its fight against COVID-19 pandemic as well, including essential medical supplies through USAID, Department of Defense and INGOs. More importantly, the USA has provided significant quantity of vaccines to Nepal. Many philanthropic organisations, companies, Nepali diaspora and individuals came forward to lend helping hand to Nepal at the time of the pandemic.

In the fields of trade and investment, the USA is a major destination for exports and an important source country for foreign investment and tourism for Nepal. The volume of investment and tourist arrival suffered significant decline due to the pandemic. Nepal looks forward to

enhancing benefit from the preferential facilities accorded by the US under its Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act (TFTEA) of 2015, which gives duty free and quota free access to 77 manufacturing goods from Nepal until 2025.

Regular engagement at various level has been a feature of Nepal-US relations. On 21 January 2021, President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari sent a congratulatory message to Mr. Joseph Biden on his assumption of office as the 46th President of the United States. Similarly, Vice-President Mr. Nanda Bahadur Pun sent a congratulatory message to his US counterpart Ms. Kamala Harris. Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli also felicitated the US President. Foreign Minister Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali sent a congratulatory message to Mr. Antony Blinken, the US Secretary of State. In their messages, the leaders expressed their desire to work closely with the new US leadership on matters of mutual interests, both at bilateral and multilateral platforms.

As part of Nepal's request for vaccine support from major manufacturing countries, President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari wrote a letter to the US President on 28 May 2021. Foreign Minister Gyawali held a telephone conversation with the Deputy Secretary of State, Ms. Wendy Sherman, for COVID-19 support on 23 May 2021. The Ambassador of Nepal to the US held several meetings at the State Department to discuss issues of mutual interest including Nepal's request for vaccines.



Handover Programme of COVID-19 Vaccines from the United States of America

The United States provided Nepal with 1.53 million doses of J&J vaccines on 12 July 2021 as a major humanitarian support. In addition, efforts to acquire vaccines from the US pharmaceutical companies continued.

Trade data of FY 2020-21 shows that USA is Nepal's fifth largest trading partner in terms of total trade and the second largest export destination. Export to the USA increased by 46 percent during the fiscal year 2076/77 in comparison to the previous year, whereas imports decreased by 17.18 percent and the trade deficit has decreased by 59.53 percent. The fifth meeting of the US-Nepal Trade and Investment Framework Council (TIFA-Council) was held virtually on 15 December 2020. The TIFA-Council is a permanent consultation mechanism between the two countries on trade and investment cooperation under the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement signed in 2011. The meeting, which was co-chaired by the Commerce Secretary of Nepal and the Assistant U.S. Trade Representative, discussed investment promotion, implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, e-commerce, intellectual property rights, digital trade, as well as market access. The

meeting discussed the means and ways for utilizing preferential trade benefits offered by the US.

Nepal received valuable support from the US in repatriating the lost Nepali cultural artefacts. Our Embassy in Washington D.C. received two such artefacts namely Vasudeva Kamalaja statue from the Dallas Museum of Arts on 5 March 2021 and Chaturmukhi Shivlinga statue from Art Institute of Chicago on 16 April 2021. The Consulate General in New York coordinated the repatriation of three Nepali antiquities, namely seated Ganesh, seated Buddha in Bhumisparsha Mudra, and Wooden Beam depicting a coloured Apsara, recovered in New York this year. Efforts are being made to repatriate other cultural artefacts lost from Nepal.



Statue Handover Ceremony at EoN, Washington DC

Education, culture, tourism and people-to-people connection are also significant components of Nepal-US relationship. The New York State Assembly recognized through a legislation this year the contribution of Nepali diaspora to the State. The State Assembly adopted a resolution on 25 May 2021 recognizing 'May 29' as the Nepali-American Heritage Day in the State.

7

REGIONAL COOPERATION

Regional cooperation constitutes a major foreign policy engagement of Nepal. During the period under review, Nepal continued to play a proactive and constructive role in the norm-setting processes of all four regional organizations - SAARC, BIMSTEC, ACD and SCO. Our deliberations were focused on promoting these organizations in addressing the collective problems facing the region.

SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION (SAARC)

Nepal remained engaged in the SAARC activities throughout the year. It contributed constructively to the SAARC-related events including various ministerial meetings and Programming Committee meeting. Nepal's overarching focus this year was on tackling the challenges posed by COVID-19 and responding to the crisis and rebuilding better through concerted efforts at the regional level.

On the occasion of the Thirty-sixth SAARC Charter Day on 8 December 2020, Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli extended warm greetings and best wishes to the governments and peoples of all Member States.

The Prime Minister stated that the COVID-19 pandemic presented unprecedented challenges in the region and underlined the importance of more concerted efforts, collaboration and cooperation among the SAARC Member States.

Foreign Minister Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali participated in the 15th Informal Meeting of the SAARC Finance Ministers held virtually on 16 September 2020, on the sidelines of the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Highlighting the key initiatives taken by the Government of Nepal to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen the country's resilience, Minister Mr. Gyawali stressed the need of finding common and innovative ways in responding to the adverse impacts of the pandemic. He also highlighted the necessity of creating regional synergy through a recovery strategy, including creating improved investment climate by reducing the barriers to trade and promoting market access, among others.

Nepal participated in the Sixteenth Informal Meeting of the SAARC Finance Ministers held virtually on 5 May 2021 on the sidelines of the 54th annual meeting of ADB. The meeting was attended by the Finance Ministers/Higher Officials of Finance Ministries of all SAARC Member



Ministers and High Officials from SAARC Member States during the Sixteenth Informal Meeting of the SAARC Finance Minister

States including Nepal, representative of ADB and SAARC Secretary General.

Finance Minister Mr. Bishnu Prasad Poudel stressed the need of global solidarity, collective response and cooperation to suppress the transmission of COVID-19 and measures to protect the lives and livelihoods from the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. He shared the efforts made by the Government of Nepal to upgrade health infrastructure, increase investment on productive and employment generating sectors, and strengthen national capacity for the realization of inclusive socio-economic development of the people.

On 24 September 2020, Nepal hosted a virtual Informal Meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers on the sidelines of the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly. Minister for Foreign Affairs and Chair of the SAARC Council of Ministers Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali addressed the Meeting emphasizing the need to make SAARC an effective and result-oriented regional organization

capable of bringing visible changes in the lives of the peoples of South Asia. He urged the Member States to explore all viable options to hold the 19th Summit at an early date and to generate the new momentum and dynamism in the SAARC process.

Nepal organized a virtual Meeting of the SAARC Ministers of Education/ Higher Education on 'Education sector's response to COVID-19' on 08 October 2020. The Ministers speaking in the meeting assessed the disruption caused in the education sector by the COVID-19 pandemic and expressed how their respective governments have responded to it. The meeting also deliberated on the alternative resources and methods to revitalize the sector.

Vice-Chairperson of the National Planning Commission Dr. Pushpa Raj Kandel led the Nepali delegation to the First Meeting of the SAARC Planning Ministers on the theme, 'Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in South Asia: Shaping the SAARC Vision-2030' on 25



Foreign Secretary of Nepal and SAARC Secretary General during the Fifty-eighth Session of the Programming Committee

November 2020. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation shared their experiences pertaining to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the implementation of SDGs in their respective countries and emphasized the need of collective cooperation and collaboration to lessen the effects of the pandemic. The Meeting adopted a report on contextualization of the SDGs at the regional level, accelerated implementation of 2030 Development Agenda and development financing.

The 58th session of the SAARC Programming Committee was convened virtually on 15 December 2020.

Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal addressed the inaugural session and highlighted the important steps taken by the Organization for promoting regional integration through trade, finance, transport, power, connectivity as well as people-to-people contacts. He reiterated Nepal's unwavering faith in the ideals, principles and objectives of SAARC and expressed its readiness to play a constructive role to advance the SAARC process. He also underscored the need to forge a consensus for holding the stalled

Nineteenth SAARC Summit and its preceding meetings.

Joint Secretary and Head of Regional Organization Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr. Bharat Kumar Regmi chaired the Programming Committee meeting. The Committee, among others, considered its Calendar of Activities for the year 2021, evaluated the progress of the Specialized Bodies and Regional Centers, and considered their budget and programme for 2021.

BAY OF BENGAL INITIATIVE FOR MULTI-SECTORAL TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION (BIMSTEC)

Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli extended warm greetings and best wishes to the peoples of all Member States of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation on the occasion of the 24th BIMSTEC Day on 6 June 2021. In his message, the Prime Minister emphasized the need for collective solutions to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and other regional challenges.



The Foreign Minister (left) and the Foreign Secretary (right) Leading the Respective Nepali Delegations during the 17th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting and BIMSTEC SOM

Nepal participated in the 17th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting convened virtually on 1 April 2021 by Sri Lanka, the current Chair of the Organization.

During the meeting, Foreign Minister Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali stressed that only a dynamic and resilient BIMSTEC could catalyze growth, spur innovation and propel development and prosperity in the region. While recalling the 4th BIMSTEC Summit held in Kathmandu in 2018 that envisioned a better legal and institutional framework for BIMSTEC, he underlined the need to make the 5th BIMSTEC Summit successful in furthering and deepening regional cooperation.

Prior to the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting, 'the Special Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (S-SOM)' was held on 31 March 2021 to make necessary preparations for the Ministerial Meeting.

Delivering his remarks in the meeting, Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal made an assessment of the progress in implementing the decisions of the 4th BIMSTEC Summit and other high-

level meetings following the Summit. He called for concerted efforts to make BIMSTEC an effective organization through deeper cooperation among the Member States for progress and prosperity of the peoples in the region.

The Special SOM deliberated on norm setting and institution building, streamlining of the sectors and sub-sectors of cooperation under BIMSTEC, finalizing of the legal instruments and documents including the BIMSTEC Charter, and BIMSTEC Master Plan for Connectivity, among others.

The 21st session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) was held virtually on 2 September 2020. Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi led the Nepali delegation to the 21st SOM Meeting.

Speaking during the meeting, the Foreign Secretary underscored the need for taking strong measures to make a headway in the identified areas of cooperation, including trade and connectivity. The meeting endorsed the appointment of the next



The Foreign Secretary Addressing the 21st Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM)

BIMSTEC Secretary General, finalized the draft of the BIMSTEC Charter, and finalized the draft of the Memorandum of Association on the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Centres/Entities, among others.

Nepal participated in a web-conference held under the theme 'Bay of Bengal Economic Dialogue 2021: Post-COVID-19 Challenges in the Bay of Bengal Region' on 8-11 February 2021.

The speakers of the conference exchanged ideas and experiences in shaping COVID-19 socio-economic response and recovery plans. They discussed the possibilities of regional economic integration to promote socio-economic welfare through expanding markets for goods and services, maximizing allocation of natural resources, and enhancing the pathways for trade and investment.

The Conference was hosted by the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM) in collaboration with other leading South Asian Organizations. The Nepali delegation led by the Joint

Secretary and Head of the Regional Organization Division Mr. Tirtha Raj Wagle participated in 'the Inaugural Session of the Economic Dialogue' on 8 February 2021.

The Second Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Poverty Alleviation was held virtually on 12 November 2020. The meeting laid stress on the implementation of BIMSTEC Poverty Plan of Action (PPA) as well as the relevance of other priority sectors with respect to Poverty Alleviation in the BIMSTEC region. As a lead country of poverty alleviation, Nepal highlighted the major activities of the Government of Nepal such as identification of the poor families, targeted programs, and access of the poor to natural resources and basic needs.

The Fourth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) was held virtually on 31 August 2020. Nepal highlighted the issues of institutional reforms including the finalization of organogram of the BIMSTEC Secretariat, and BIMSTEC Procurement Procedure, among others.

Nepal also participated in the First Meeting of BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Coordination Committee virtually held in Myanmar on 23 November 2020. Nepal expressed its willingness for grid interconnection with the Member States.

The Third Meeting of BIMSTEC Transport Connectivity Working Group was held virtually on 08 December 2020. The Meeting concluded the Final Draft of BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity.

Similarly, the Second Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Tour Operators was held virtually on 08-09 December 2020. The Meeting deliberated the progress and status of the recommendations made by the First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Tour Operators and Plan of Action on Tourism Development for the BIMSTEC region.

ASIA COOPERATION DIALOGUE

Nepal participated in the 17th Ministerial Meeting of Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) hosted virtually on 21 January 2021 by Turkey as the current Chair. The meeting deliberated on the theme “The New Normal and Safe and Healthy Tourism.”



*The Foreign Minister and the Foreign Secretary
Attending the 17th Ministerial Meeting of ACD*

Foreign Minister Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali stressed the need of close cooperation among the Member States, while underscoring the importance of partnership with private sector for fighting the COVID-19 pandemic in order to bring all aspects of lives, livelihoods, and economies to normalcy, including the tourism sector. He also highlighted the need to ensure easy and affordable access

to vaccines and other essential medical items to this end. The Nepali delegation to the meeting included Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal and senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation.

On 19 January 2021, the Nepali delegation led by the Joint Secretary and Head of the Regional Organization Division of the Ministry Mr. Bharat Kumar Regmi participated in the ACD Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) held virtually to discuss the necessary preparations for the 17th ACD Ministerial Meeting. The ACD SOM deliberated on draft texts of the Ankara Declaration of the Ministerial Meeting, and Guiding Principles for the Functioning of the ACD Secretariat. Matters relating to enhancing cooperation and collaboration in the identified areas of cooperation among the ACD Member States also featured in the meeting.

An Open-ended Informal Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of the ACD was hosted virtually by Turkey as the current chair of the ACD on 30 March 2021. Representatives of all 35 Member States including Nepal attended the meeting. Member States agreed to form Working Group to conduct detailed discussion and form consensus on Chapter IV (Appointment of the Secretary-General) and Chapter VI (Administrative Rules and Regulations) of the Guiding Principles.

Nepal participated in three consecutive sessions of the Working Group on ACD Blueprint 2021-2030 held virtually under the Chairmanship of the Islamic Republic of Iran. ACD Blueprint 2021-2030,

also called ACD Roadmap, comprises six pillars of cooperation with ACD: (i) Connectivity, (ii) Science, Technology and Innovation, (iii) Education and Human Resource Development, (iv) Interrelation of Food, Energy and Water Security, (v) Culture and Tourism, and (vi) Promoting Approaches to Inclusive and Sustainable Development.

SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (SCO)

Nepal participated in a virtual meeting of the National Coordinators of the SCO Member States with authorized representatives of the Observer States and

Dialogue Partners of the SCO convened under the Chairmanship of the Republic of Tajikistan on 17 June 2021. As the Head of the Nepali Delegation, Joint Secretary of MoFA Mr. Tirtha Raj Wagle stressed the vital role of National Coordinators in pursuing the SCO agenda and advancing its implementation to achieve effective outcomes. He also expressed Nepal's interest in attaining the status of 'Observer State' of SCO.

8

MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS

Nepal's collaboration with the UN has been steadily strengthening in all three pillars of the UN system, namely, peace and security, development, and human rights.

Nepal regards the United Nations as the epicentre of multilateralism for addressing the world's complex problems. The only way to overcome such complexities and make the UN "fit for purpose" is to uphold a just, fair, and rules-based international system. Nepal is one of the major troops and police-contributing countries to UN peacekeeping and contributing to the protection and promotion of human rights through active role in the Human Rights Council.

THEME SPECIFIC MULTILATERAL ENGAGEMENTS

International Security and Disarmament

Nepal participated in different disarmament-related events organized by the United Nations and contributed constructively to norms setting against the escalating armaments. It also advocated for building trust and enhancing transparency to contain escalating military expenditure. In events related to counterterrorism, Nepal denounced terrorism in all its forms and advocated for preventing non-state actors from acquiring WMDs. Concerned

about the potential misuse of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, 3D printing, and unmanned aerial vehicles, Nepal urged for increased international collaboration as outlined in the Global Counter-Terrorism Framework. It also called for the capacity building of the developing and least developed countries.

UN Peace Operations

Nepal's commitment and contribution to UN peacekeeping are reflected in Nepal's position as one of the major troops and police-contributing country to UN peacekeeping. Nepali peacekeepers have helped countries deal with the twin challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and sustaining peace. Nepal participated in the thematic and country-specific events organized by the UN Security Council and other agencies of the UN during the period under review. At such events, Nepal urged the UN Secretariat to enhance the safety and security of the peacekeepers utilizing new and reliable technologies. It also called for ensuring adequate and predictable resources and moral support to the UN peace missions to tackle the new and emerging challenges. Nepal advocates for providing balanced, fair, and equitable opportunities to troops and police contributing countries to serve in senior positions of UN peacekeeping missions.

Sustainable Development and Development Issues

Achieving Sustainable Development Goals and graduating from the Least Developed Country (LDC) category were at the core of Nepal's multilateral diplomacy during the reporting period. Apart from that, Nepal has also been playing a leadership role in the international forums on all three pillars of the United Nations' mandates. In February 2021, Nepal was recommended for graduation from the LDC category with a preparatory period of five years effective until 2026 by the UN Committee for Development Policy (CDP). During the 75th session of the UN General Assembly, Nepal was elected as the Chair of the Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee).

Nepal attended the Fifth ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up (FFD Forum) convened from 12 to 15 April 2021, the High-level Event on Culture and Sustainable Development held on 21 May 2021, the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development held on 06 - 15 July 2021, and the High-level Meeting on Water held on 22 March 2021.

Human Rights

In the reporting year 2020/21, Nepal made two major achievements in the multilateral arena by its re-election for the second term as a member of the Human Rights Council (HRC) for the year 2021-2023 and re-election to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) for the term 2021-2024. These accomplishments

demonstrate the international community's acknowledgment of Nepal's progress and commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights at the national and international levels.

Another noteworthy event in the reporting period was the submission of Nepal's third national report during the third cycle of UPR held at the 37th session of the Human Rights Council UPR Working Group. On 21 January 2021, Nepal presented its report highlighting the country's overall progress on the promotion and protection of human rights as well as inclusive development. It also informed the Council about the state of implementation of the recommendations of previous reviews. Nepal also participated in the 46th and 47th sessions of the Human Rights Council held from 22 February to 24 March 2021 and 21 June to 14 July 2021 respectively.

UN Reforms

Nepal continued to reiterate its consistent position on UNSC reforms and called for making it more representative, transparent, and accountable to meet contemporary challenges. Also, Nepal actively participated in the deliberations of the Ad-Hoc Working Group (AHWG) on the Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly (GA), held from February to July 2021. During the meeting, Nepal stressed the need to enhance GA's authority, effectiveness, and credibility as the most universal, chief deliberative, policymaking, and representative organ of the United Nations. In the deliberations of the reform of the United Nations Development System (UNDS), Nepal was of the view that the UNDS should be

able to support all developing countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as per the national plans and strategies in a comprehensive manner.

Climate Change

Nepal is disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change despite its negligible contribution to the emission of greenhouse gases. It is one of the most climate and natural disaster vulnerable countries in the world. Nepal has been actively participating in climate change forums under the UN system and the Treaty Bodies as well as in other coalitions and forums. Nepal also participated in the preparatory meetings leading to the 26th Conference of the Parties (CoP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Engagements with UN Specialized Agencies and Inter-Governmental Bodies

International Labour Organization

Nepal's engagement with the International Labour Organization (ILO) remained in priority in the reporting year. In its interventions, Nepal advocated for safe, secure, and dignified foreign employment. It also urged the international community to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the migrant workers as well as access to adequate healthcare in the fight against the pandemic. Nepal also attended the 109th session of the International Labour Conference held in May-June 2021.

International Organization for Migration

The 111th session of the Council of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) took place on 24-27 November 2020. During the general debate, Nepal highlighted, among others, Nepal-IOM relations and IOM technical cooperation to Nepal.

Colombo Process

Mr. Gaurishankar Chaudhari, Minister for Labour and Employment and Social Security of Nepal, handed over the Chairmanship of Colombo Process to his Afghani counterpart amidst a virtual meeting held on 20 April 2021. Nepal had chaired the Colombo Process since 29 March 2017.

World Trade Organization

Nepal engaged itself with the activities of the WTO and contributed significantly to ensuring free and fair international trade. Nepal participated in the meetings of the Trade Negotiation Committee (TNC) held on 15 July and chaired the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) Board meetings held on 26 November 2020 and 17 June 2021. In all engagements, Nepal actively lobbied for the benefits of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Land-Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs). Nepal also played an active role as the focal point on Trade Facilitation and Aid for Trade core groups for the LDC group.



The President Addressing the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women

The World Health Organization

Nepal's engagement with the World Health Organization (WHO) remained a priority, especially given the need to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. Nepal attended the 74th session of the World Health Assembly where it stressed the need to ensure equitable distribution of vaccines to all and prioritize the most vulnerable first. Nepal also actively participated in other meetings and discussions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic and other areas of the WHO. Nepal is among the 92 low and middle-income countries which are eligible to receive vaccine support from the COVAX facility. Nepal, as the Chair of the SAARC Regional Cooperation Group of the WHO, is a member of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT)-Accelerator Facilitation Council of the WHO.

High-level Participation in Multilateral Forums

Beijing+25

President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari attended the High-level Meeting on the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference (Beijing+25) held virtually on 01 October 2020 on the theme of "Accelerating the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls". In the meeting, the

President stressed on achieving progress on women empowerment and gender equality for justice, peace, and progress. The President also expressed concern over the existing structural inequalities, further aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and called for timely medical care, equal access to the vaccine, and robust recovery plans to address the economic and social needs of women and girls.

P4G Seoul Summit

President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari addressed 'the Leaders Session of the 2021 P4G (Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030) Seoul Summit' through a video message on 30 May 2021. Focusing her intervention on "Inclusive Green Recovery from COVID-19", the President emphasized the importance of investing in climate adaptation in LDCs by increasing their access to climate finance and technology.



The President Speaking at the P4G Seoul Summit

75th UN General Assembly

Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli addressed the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) through a pre-recorded video message on 25 September 2020. In his address, the Prime Minister highlighted Nepal's views on several issues of global importance including peaceful resolution of conflicts, climate crisis, WTO reforms, and the Agenda 2030 for SDGs.



The Prime Minister Addressing the 75th Session of the UNGA through a Pre-recorded Video

Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations

On 21 September 2020, the Prime Minister addressed the virtual High-level Meeting to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations. In his address, the PM called for strengthening and empowering the UN as the centre of multilateralism to deal with the complex challenges confronting the world including the COVID-19 pandemic.

SDG Moment 2020

Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli addressed the first SDG Moment 2020 organized virtually on 18 September 2020. In his intervention, the Prime Minister

expressed his concerns on the disruptions created by the pandemic and urged for positioning SDGs as the compass of clarity to navigate these turbulent times.

United Nations Summit on Biodiversity

Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli addressed the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity held virtually on 30 September 2020. He highlighted the need to strike a balance between people's rights over natural resources and sustained efforts in biodiversity conservation. He emphasized the implementation of urgent climate actions and the need to harmonize the efforts under multilateral agreements and internationally agreed development frameworks.

Leaders' Pledge for Nature: United to Reverse Biodiversity Loss by 2030 for Sustainable Development

Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli addressed the "Leaders' Pledge for Nature: United to Reverse Biodiversity Loss by 2030 for Sustainable Development" held on 28 September 2020. In his pre-recorded message, the Prime Minister called for containing the human-induced depletion of biodiversity.



The Prime Minister Addressing the UN Summit on Biodiversity

High-level Event on “Poverty at a Crossroad: Using Leadership and the Multidimensional Poverty Index to Build Back Better”

Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli delivered his statement at the high-level event entitled "Poverty at a Crossroad: Using Leadership and the Multidimensional Poverty Index to Build Back Better", organized on the sidelines of the 75th UNGA on 24 September 2020. The Prime Minister stressed the need for investing in people and preventing them from relapsing into poverty as a key challenge amidst the current health and economic crisis.

Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond

On behalf of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, the Prime Minister of Nepal addressed the "High-level Meeting on Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Era of COVID-19 and beyond" on 29 September 2020. In his statement, Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli called for financial and technological assistance and concrete support measures to help the Land Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs) recover better from the pandemic and address their debt vulnerabilities.

Climate Vulnerable Forum Leaders Event

Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli addressed the Climate Vulnerable Forum Leaders Event on 7 October 2020 through a video message. Addressing the event, the Prime Minister underlined the existential

threats posed by climate change such as rising temperature, rising sea levels, and melting of glaciers which have impacted the lives and livelihoods from the high Himalayas to the lowlands.

The 31st Special Session of the UNGA in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli led a high-level Nepali delegation to "The 31st Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic", held virtually on 03-04 December 2020. Addressing the special session, Prime Minister Oli called for the genuine collective commitment to fend off the crisis, save lives, and protect societies. He underlined the necessity of universal access to COVID-19 vaccines.



The Prime Minister Addressing the 31st Special Session of the UNGA in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Climate Ambition Summit 2020

Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli addressed the leader-level virtual Climate Ambition Summit on 12 December 2020, co-convened by the United Kingdom, France, and the United Nations in

partnership with Chile and Italy to mark the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Paris Agreement. Underlining some of the priorities and efforts made by Nepal under the climate action, the Prime Minister reiterated Nepal's strong support to the Paris Agreement and urged the global community to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees.

High-level Event to Commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali addressed the High-level Event to commemorate the 'International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons' on 02 October 2020, held on the margins of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly. Addressing through a pre-recorded video, the Foreign Minister said that the world would never be a safer place as long as the spectre of nuclear weapons loomed large. The Foreign Minister also reiterated Nepal's call for a time-bound, general, and complete disarmament of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and stated that nuclear technology should be harnessed for peaceful purposes of promoting health care, increasing agricultural productivity, and saving lives.

Annual Ministerial Meeting of LDCs

Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali addressed the virtual Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), held during the 75th session of the UNGA on 17 September 2020. The Foreign Minister underlined the far-reaching socio-

economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and natural disasters to the LDCs, including Nepal, and called for the launching of a global stimulus package for the LDCs to be implemented with immediate effect.

The 19th Annual Ministerial Meeting of LLDCs

Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali addressed the 19th Annual Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) held on the margins of the 75th session of the UNGA on 21 September 2020. The Foreign Minister welcomed Secretary General's roadmap for accelerating the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) and called for effective partnerships among LLDCs, their transit neighbours, development partners, the UN, and other stakeholders.



The Foreign Minister Addressing the 19th Annual Ministerial Meeting of LLDCs

Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali addressed the Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) held virtually on the

margins of the 75th session of the UNGA on 9 October 2020. This year's theme was “Bandung+65: More Relevant, United and Effective NAM against Emerging Global Challenges, including COVID-19”. In his address, the Foreign Minister underlined the relevance of the Bandung Principles as time-tested and sacrosanct ideals for the peaceful global order. He also stressed on the need for numerical and moral strength of NAM in amplifying the voice of the weak and vulnerable countries.



The Foreign Minister Delivering Statement at the Annual Ministerial Meeting of NAM

G77 and China Annual Ministerial Meeting

The Foreign Minister participated in the G77 Annual Ministerial Meeting held on 12 November 2020 through a pre-recorded video message. In the message, the Foreign Minister stated that the economic and social consequences of COVID-19 have been catastrophic and more acute in the global South and international cooperation is the only way to defeat this dreadful disease and restore the hope of repair and recovery.

Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations

Foreign Minister Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali addressed the Commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) on 26 October 2020. During the occasion, the Foreign Minister appreciated the significant roles played by the UN and reaffirmed Nepal's commitment to multilateralism to create a just, inclusive, and fair world order.

Nepal's 3rd Universal Periodic Review held in the 37th Session of the Human Rights Council Working Group

Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali led the Nepali delegation to the third cycle of Universal Periodic Review of Nepal held during the 37th session of the Human Rights Council UPR Working Group on 21st January 2021.

Delivering the opening statement, the Foreign Minister underscored that the Constitution of Nepal guarantees a wide array of civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights akin to those provided in the human rights instruments. He highlighted the comprehensive, transparent, and consultative legal reform process undertaken, both to implement Nepal's human rights commitments and to drive the federalization process.

46th Session of Human Rights Council

Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali addressed the High-level Segment of the 46th session of the Human



The Foreign Minister Addressing the High-level Segment of the 46th Session of the Human Rights Council.

Rights Council on 23rd February 2021. While addressing the session, Foreign Minister reiterated Nepal's commitment to ensuring full enjoyment of all human rights for women, girls, children, and persons with disabilities. He also urged for international cooperation for ensuring the rights of the migrant workers as well as for delivering global commitment on climate change.

Launch of Human Development Report 2020

Foreign Minister Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali launched the Human Development Report 2020 amid a special function organized by UNDP Nepal on 16 December 2020. The Foreign Minister underlined that the report has evoked a

transformative thought in the form of an era of Anthropocene that will most probably shape the development discourse for several decades.

An Event 'Nepal's Contribution to UN Peacekeeping'

Foreign Minister Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali delivered a statement at an event 'Nepal's Contribution to UN peacekeeping' organized by ISAS, COSATT, and KAS on 19 April 2021, focusing on three key aspects: Nepal's contribution to UN peacekeeping, Nepal's perspectives on peacekeeping, and the challenges to further enhance this flagship contribution of Nepal to the noble cause of international peace and security. On the occasion, he expressed satisfaction



The Foreign Minister Launching the Human Development Report 2020



The Foreign Minister Addressing the Event on "Nepal's Contribution to the UN Peacekeeping"

over the reputation that Nepal has earned worldwide for their professionalism, bravery, dedication, skills, and expertise of Nepali peacekeepers.

Joint Thematic Event on LDCs

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Raghbir Mahaseth addressed, through a pre-recorded video statement, the Joint Thematic Event on the Least Developed Countries convened by the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) under the theme of 'Diversifying the Financing Toolbox to Enhance Investment in the Least Developed Countries' on 18 June. In his statement, DPM Mr. Raghbir Mahaseth expressed Nepal's commitment to making the graduation process smooth and sustainable by mobilizing finances from the public as well as private sectors, and internal as well as external sources.



The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Addressing the Joint Thematic Event on LDCs

NAM Mid Term Ministerial Conference

Nepal participated in the Non-Aligned Movement Mid-term Ministerial Conference held virtually on 13-14 July 2021. Highlighting the notable

achievements of NAM, Nepal stressed that NAM a group of 120 must use its numerical and moral strength to respond to the global challenges such as COVID-19.

Other Important Multilateral Events:

Other important participation in multilateral affairs include participation in the High-level Debate on 'Urban Safety, Security and Good Governance: Making Crime Prevention a Priority for All' on 22 April 2021; the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women on 15-26 March 2021; and the High-level Meeting on the 'Implementation of the Water-related Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda,' on 22 March 2021. Participating at the ministerial level in the events, Nepal shared its initiatives, challenges and best practices in the related areas. Nepal also took part in the UN General Assembly High-level Meeting on HIV and AIDS held on 8 June 2021; and the Second United Nations High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States convened from 28 to 30 June 2021.

A Nepali delegation led by Prof. Dr. Puspa Raj Kadel, Vice-Chairman of the National Planning Commission, participated virtually in the 77th session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) that was held from 26 to 29 April 2021 and elaborated Nepal's efforts in containing the spread of COVID-19. The Nepali delegation also participated in the High-level Political Forum held in New York on 13-15 July 2021 and the 8th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) held



During Elections for New UNHRC Members for the Term 2021-23

in a hybrid modality in Bangkok on 23-26 March 2021.

Similarly, a Nepali delegation led by Chairman of Indigenous Nationalities Commission participated in the 20th session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues held virtually from 19 to 30 April 2021. Nepal also participated in the thirty-second special session on challenges and measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation held from 2 to 4 June in New York; and the high-level virtual event on "Building Resilience for Sustainable, and Irreversible Graduation of the Least Developed Countries" held on 17 June 2021.

Nepal Re-elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council

Nepal was re-elected as a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council for the term of 2021-2023 in the elections held at the UN Headquarters in New York on 13 October 2020. Nepal had been serving as a member of the Council since January 2018.

Nepal Elected to the CEDAW Committee for the Second Term

Ms. Bandana Rana, candidate from Nepal, was re-elected to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) for the second term in the elections held during the 21st Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women, in New York on 9 November 2020.

Nepal's Current Position in Different UN Bodies

S. N.	UN Bodies	Positions	Term of Office
1	The Second Committee (Economic and Financial Committee) of the UNGA	Chair	2020-21
2	Human Rights Council	Member	2021-23
3	The Sixth Committee (Legal Committee) of the UNGA	Vice-chair	2020-21
4	CEDAW Committee	Member	2021-24
5	UN Women	Member	2019-21
6	Commission on Science and Technology	Member	2019-22
8	Commission on Narcotic Drugs	Member	2020-23
9	Commission on Population and Development	Member	2018-22

Nepal's Current Candidatures

Nepal's current candidatures include the following:

1. UN Security Council for the term of 2037-38, elections for which will be held in June 2036,
2. Economic and Social Council for the term of 2024-2026, elections for which will be held in June 2023,
3. Vice- President of the 77th session of the UNGA, elections for which will be held in June 2022,
4. Chair of the First Committee of the UN General Assembly, elections for which will be held in June 2026, and

5. Member of Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC) for the term 2023-2025, elections for which will be held in November 2022.

Diplomatic Relations:

During the reporting period, Nepal established formal diplomatic relations with three countries - Commonwealth of Dominica, the Gambia, and Sierra Leone. The total number of countries having diplomatic relations with Nepal reached 171.

**POLICY MATTERS,
ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY AND
OVERSEAS NEPALIS**

9

POLICY MATTERS

Amid the challenges posed by COVID-19, the Ministry continued to engage with the Nepali missions abroad providing policy feedback and realigning priorities as necessary. Internal preparations continued for the convening of Sagarmatha Sambaad along with affairs of Nepali diaspora and Brain Gain Center.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Raghuraj Mahaseth held virtual interactions with Ambassadors and Heads of Nepali Missions on 15 and 17 June 2021 underscoring the need to play more active and effective role in the promotion of national interest and welfare of Nepali diaspora abroad. On the occasion, he also instructed the missions to scale up the efforts for vaccine accessibility and seek enhanced international supports for post COVID-19 economic recovery.

Earlier, Foreign Minister Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali also held a virtual meeting with Heads of Nepali Missions informing them about the initiatives taken by Nepal to address the COVID-19 pandemic and instructing to maximize the efforts towards further exploring avenues of support at the bilateral and multilateral levels as well as through philanthropic organizations, private sector and Nepali diaspora. He also advised the Heads of Missions to continue giving high priority to the protection and wellbeing of Nepali nationals abroad.

As a unified policy document with clear guidelines on diverse spheres of foreign policy dimensions, the Ministry unveiled Foreign Policy, 2020 in December 2020. The policy addresses the aspiration of the country with clear focus on economic diplomacy and issues of international and regional concerns.



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Raghuraj Mahaseth Interacting with Ambassadors and Heads of Nepali Missions



*Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali
Speaking on Foreign Policy, 2020*

On 20 February 2021, the Ministry organized an interactive programme for the Ministry's officials to orient them on various aspects of newly enacted foreign policy and also to discuss on improvement in the operation of the Brain Gain Center (BGC).

provide policy inputs to agencies seeking MoFA's views and inputs on various issues relating to the works of MoFA and the missions. The Ministry also submitted its periodic reports (monthly, biannual and annual) to the agencies as decided by the Government and the Constitution.

The Ministry continued its internal preparation for organizing the first episode of Sagarmatha Sambaad on the theme of "Climate Change, Mountains, and the Future of the Humanity." The dialogue, postponed due to outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, was originally scheduled to be held in Kathmandu on 2-4 April 2020 in partnership with IFA and Policy Research Institute (PRI).



Interaction Programme on Nepal's Foreign Policy and BGC

In line with the annual plan and programmes, and budget of the Government of Nepal, the Ministry prepared and implemented the annual action plan for the Fiscal Year 2077/078. Divided into 17 activities and 37 milestones, the action plan contained time-bound targets with a clear demarcation of responsibility to the agencies of the Ministry. The Ministry has been publishing the Annual Report and MoFA Bulletin on a regular basis incorporating the activities carried out by MoFA and the missions. The Ministry also continued to

Brain Gain Center, established under the Ministry, organized a Webinar titled "Diaspora Engagement for Higher Education in Nepal: Exploring Possibilities of Collaboration" with the concept of bringing together Nepali diaspora and local policy makers, officials, academics and experts to share views, expertise and experiences and to explore the possibilities of collaboration between national and international universities, academic institutions and government organizations for the transformation of Nepal's higher education.

10

ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY

As economic development through effective economic diplomacy has been one of the major foreign policy objectives, the Ministry organized several economic diplomacy related programmes. The Ministry organized virtual interactions on Nepal's export trade promotion with participation of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Supplies and Trade and Export Promotion Centre, Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Confederation of Nepalese Industries, business organizations, private sectors and the Nepali missions abroad. This was the first time of such interactions. The Ministry also worked out plans for regular organization of such programmes in all spheres of economic diplomacy as

well as for regular programmes dedicated to assess the export potentialities in all seven provinces.

Similarly, despite the difficulties of COVID-19, Nepali missions abroad organized more than 300 economic diplomacy related programmes, mostly virtual. Many of these programmes also focused on increasing awareness of Nepali diaspora on various important issues.

As a part of pre-departure briefing for ambassadors-designate, the Ministry, in coordination with the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA), organized on 17-19 January 2021, an orientation programme for outgoing ambassadors with special focus on the promotion of economic diplomacy.

11

OVERSEAS NEPALIS

The Ministry continued to provide services to Non-Resident Nepali as provisioned in the NRN Act 2064 and NRN Rules 2066. During the reporting period, the Ministry and the missions issued/renewed 1,473 NRN identity cards. The Ministry also facilitated the purchase of land and real estate in Nepal by non-resident Nepalis.

As the COVID-19 pandemic remained a major humanitarian challenge throughout the year 2020-21 with subsequent waves

affecting several countries, the Ministry continued its efforts to rescue and repatriate Nepali nationals from abroad and facilitated the evacuation of foreign nationals from Nepal. The Ministry along with its missions abroad coordinated in the rescue of 6,211 Nepali nationals and assisted the return of 83,795 people to Nepal. Legal assistance was provided to 421 nationals, as well as facilitation to another 29,451 cases related to job loss of migrant Nepalis abroad.

PROTOCOL MATTERS, SERVICE DELIVERY AND GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

12

PROTOCOL MATTERS

The Ministry, during the reporting period, coordinated & facilitated a number of high-level visits including four visits at the Heads of State/ Government levels and arranged twelve credentials presentation ceremonies. Agrément of the Government of Nepal were granted to foreign ambassadors. Letters of Recall and Credence were also issued. A total of twenty foreign ambassadors were granted the agrément.

The Ministry extended necessary support to diplomatic representatives for smooth performance of their functions. The Ministry extended protocol courtesies to state/official guests and VIPs, ensured

protection of visiting dignitaries, and arranged official luncheon and dinners in honour of various dignitaries. The Ministry ensured courteous treatment & appropriate security/protection for diplomatic representatives.

Incoming and Outgoing Heads of Diplomatic Missions

In the past year, eight Heads of Diplomatic Missions and International organizations completed their tour of duty and eleven Heads of Missions arrived Kathmandu to assume their duties. Details of incoming Heads of Missions is annexed below:

Incoming Heads of Missions

S.N.	Name	Designation	Arrival Date
1	Mr. Park Chong-suk	Ambassador of the Republic of Korea	30 July 2020
2	Ms. Nona Deprez	Ambassador/ Head of Delegation of the European Union to Nepal	7 September 2020
3	Mr. Vosita Vorasaph	Ambassador of Thailand	20 October 2020
4	Dr. Pema Gyamtsho	Director General of ICIMOD	27 October 2020
5	Mr. Hanan Goder-Golberger	Ambassador of the State of Israel	29 October 2020

6	Mr. Salahuddin Noman Chowdhary	Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh	05 November 2020
7	Mr. Syed Haider Shah	Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan	22 November 2020
8	Mr. U Sein Oo	Ambassador of Myanmar	12 November 2020
9	Ms. Sara Beysolow Nyanti	Resident Coordinator of UN	9 January 2021
10	Ms. Felicity Jane Volk	Ambassador of Australia	30 January 2021
11	Mr. Kikuta Yutaka	Ambassador of Japan	7 March 2021
12	Ms. Noha Hamdy Ahmed Elegbaly	Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt	10 June 2021
13	Mr. Arnaud Cauchois	Country Director of Asian Development Bank (ADB)	21 August 2021

13

CONSULAR SERVICES

The Department of Consular Services has been providing prompt and efficient consular and legal services to Nepali and foreign nationals. The Department also provides various kinds of services to the Diplomatic Missions and International Organizations stationed in Nepal as per the international law, conventions, practices, and mutual agreements.

The Department has given priority in updating the technology and providing efficient, effective, responsible and accountable service delivery. The Department has maintained its online delivery of consular and legal services including the online verification of

attested documents. Similarly, in coordination with the concerned agencies, online verification of Police Report and Citizenship Certificates has been started. Attestation services are being provided as per the commitment - “Service Delivery within half an hour on submission of the document”. In the year 2077/78, the Department organized observation cum coordination visit to the Consulate General of Nepal in Jeddah from 21 to 26 November 2077.

The major consular services provided by the Department during the last FY are summarized in the table below:

S.N.	Work Details	Quantity
A	Consular and Legal Consultation Section	
1	Recommendation for medical treatment, pilgrimage, world bicycle tour and other issues	42
2	Recommendation for attestation of Indian educational documents, nationality verification and higher studies in India	3,404
3	Recommendation for Indian pension-related matters	7
4	Recommendation for foreign driving licenses to change into Nepali license	54
5	Recommendation for the character verification report to those who lived temporarily in India	345
6	Recommendation for import of chemicals and explosives	153
7	Recommendation for vehicle permit to India	12

8	Regarding renunciation of Nepali citizenship	156
9	Verification regarding power of attorney for land revenue offices.	303
10	Regarding the authenticity of Nepali citizenship and related documents	63
11	POA, VOR, H-form requests, correspondences to districts relating to repatriation of dead bodies and compensation cases	665
12	Cases forwarded to Nepali embassies/consulates abroad regarding search and rescue of Nepali nationals	610
13	Cases forwarded for repatriation of dead bodies	431
14	Draft received as compensation from Malaysia	5
15	Draft handed over to victims (Malaysia)	5
16	Number of compensation amount received for Nepali nationals from Nepali missions abroad	70,71,18,601
17	Number of compensation amount sent to the respective district administration offices as received from Nepali missions abroad	62,08,90,223
18	Number of correspondences to CCMC for dead body management of foreign nationals who died of COVID-19 in Nepal	30
B	Visa and Exemption Section	
1	Issuance of gratis/official/diplomatic visa	1,227
2	Issuance of diplomatic and non-diplomatic identity cards	399
3	Issuance of SAARC visa stickers	1
4	Exemption works	3,000
5	Letters sent to different government authorities	2,625
6	Issuance of visa notes and recommendations	285
C	Attestation Section	
1.	Number of attested documents (number of documents registered for attestation of 1,35,248 persons)	1,79,457
2.	<i>Total Revenue Collected through Revenue Management Information System (RMIS) in FY 2077/78</i>	8,97,28,500

14

PASSPORT SERVICES

The Department of Passports issues passports through 77 District Administration Offices, 19 Area Administrative Offices and 40 Nepali diplomatic missions abroad. Emergency passport services are available directly from the Department. Travel Documents are provided both from the Department and Nepali missions abroad.

Until the end of FY 2077/78, the Department personalized a total of 68,06,913 machine readable passports. In the FY 2077/78, the Department issued 3,39,175 passports, which included 3,48,147 ordinary, 603 official,

and 348 diplomatic passports along with 77 travel documents. During the period, the Department collected Rs. 1,06,73,11,211.40 as revenue. In coordination with Forensic Lab of Nepal Police and Maiti Nepal premised within the Department, the Department also provided services to 17,109 clients. Moreover, missing details of 18,771 persons were sent to Interpol and citizenship certificates of 5,297 applicants were verified from CMIS system of Government of Nepal. The distribution of passports since the FY 2067/68 is depicted in the following table:

Table: Yearly Distribution of Passports

Fiscal Year	DoP	District	Mission	Total
067/68	1,62,558	9,747	1,457	1,73,762
068/69	2,06,639	1,95,510	5,383	4,07,532
069/70	2,29,404	3,04,549	34,174	5,68,127
070/71	4,50,671	4,26,380	1,35,688	10,12,739
071/72	4,52,155	5,42,409	3,42,274	13,36,838
072/73	2,69,944	4,73,795	1,26,607	8,70,346
073/74	1,92,375	3,44,564	20,249	5,57,188
074/75	1,89,635	3,28,655	13,343	5,31,633
075/76	1,71,267	3,33,062	10,817	5,15,146
076/77	1,41,305	2,44,587	12,950	3,98,842
077/78	97,724	1,89,208	62,243	3,49,175
Grand Total	25,63,677	33,92,466	7,65,185	67,21,328

Throughout the year, the Department focused its efforts on delivering prompt and quality services adopting a simple, reliable, transparent, and customer-oriented application process. Quality System Manual and Standard Operating Procedures including various-type simplified forms have been developed. Telephone, email and social networks such as Facebook and Twitter have been used to facilitate and serve the clients. Citizens' Charter and Service Flow Chart have been effectively implemented. Public problems and grievances have been promptly addressed through the Grievance Management Unit formed under the Director General. Emphasis has been given on continuous improvement of services in compliance with the international rules & regulations set by ICAO and other relevant bodies.

The Department has arranged online payment through Revenue Management Information System (RMIS) and introduced Connect IPS for payment related to passport services. Online system for the verification of applicant's citizenship and signature were introduced and further developed so as to provide easy, accessible and prompt service delivery. The Department has been the only government body to receive ISO accreditation from the Nepal Bureau of Standards & Metrology.

In the reporting period, the Department initiated the process for procurement of 2 million eMRTDs (Electronic Machine Readable Passport). After the cancellation of earlier two bids, the Department called the third bid for the Procurement of

Security Printing, Supply and Delivery, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Equipment and Personalization of eMRTDs on 24 September 2020. The bid of IDEMIA Identity and Security France SAS was subsequently approved and the Contract Agreement between the Department and IDEMIA Company was signed on 21 December 2020. Following the approval of the images and texts, the designs of the eMRTD booklets have also been approved in May 2021.

During the period, the Department also initiated preparatory works for the issuance of Seaman's Record Book for Nepalese working in various shipping offices in different countries in accordance with the existing legal provisions, international treaties, agreements and standards. Necessary consultations with concerned agencies were held. As Nepal has not yet become a party to international treaties and agreements such as ILO 185, MLC 2006, STCW, only designing related tasks of the Record Book have been carried out. The Department also worked for systemic improvement of the ordinary electronic passport related to introducing 34 and 66-pages booklets. Initiations have been made for the amendment of Passport Rules, 2077 as to facilitate the introduction of eMRTDs.

The Department has adopted the zero-tolerance policy in cases of corruption, bribery, fraud and other immoral acts or conducts. Regular orientations and trainings have been provided to the staff to enhance the efficiency, positivity, and productivity in service delivery. Despite the difficulty posed by the COVID-19



Orientation Programme in Hetauda, Feb 2021 Orientation Programme in Kuwait, July 2021

pandemic, the Department conducted orientation & training programs on MRP and e-passports at Hetauda, Surkhet and Dhangadhi. Such training programmes were also provided to Nepali missions abroad in Jeddha, Oman and Kuwait.

Other major activities of the Department during the last fiscal year include consultations with concerned agencies of the Government of Nepal on controlling the forged documents during passport application and integrating the e-passport database system into National ID Management Information System. Discussions were held with the National Information Technology Center and Disaster Recovery Centre on migration, security and storage of MRP and e-passport related data. Office

maintenance and beautification were carried out.

The Department also started preparation for establishment of the Passport Museum through collection and storage of previously used passports, passport related articles, memos, books/booklets, ancient passports, passports used by high authorities in the past, sample passports of foreign countries etc. Process has been started to develop Library Management System Software with the purpose for collecting the old passport books/booklets through sending of alert mails.

The annual budget of the Department for the FY 2077/78 was Rs. 1,23,87,76,280 and 94.82% of the capital budget was spent.

15

ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

During the reporting period, due importance was given to institutional reforms, human resources development, property procurement and constructions of new infrastructure and facilities for the Ministry as well as its departments and missions abroad. Amid the pandemic situation, the Ministry remained active in receiving the COVID-19 related information and assistance from missions including Nepali diaspora.

During the reporting period, the Ministry welcomed newly appointed Foreign Secretary Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal, amid a brief function, held on 09 October 2020. Mr. Paudyal assumed his official duty the same day. The Ministry also bid farewell to then Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi on 01 October 2020.



Assumption of Duty by the Newly Appointed Foreign Secretary (right) and Farewell of the Former Foreign Secretary (left)

Management of Physical Infrastructures

In line with the government's policy, the Ministry focused on purchasing new land and constructing buildings for its missions and staff while also enhancing the management of the existing properties. Preliminary architectural/engineering design of the Embassy building in Canberra has been prepared. Similarly, 3,664 square meters of land has been purchased for the Embassy of Nepal in Riyadh.

Construction of a multi-purpose building at Tripureshwor, Kathmandu for the Department of Passports, the Department of Consular Services, and the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) was completed. Likewise, the phase-I works consisting of renovation, interior design and landscaping of the Ministry's building inside the Singh Durbar premises was completed.

Human Resource Development:

As an effort to enhance competency, morale and professionalism of the employees, the Ministry nominated its officials to participate in different trainings, seminars and workshops on the subjects like international relations, diplomacy and foreign



Newly Constructed Multi-purpose MoFA Building at Tripureshwor, Kathmandu

policy. Recruitment, placement and transfer of the staff within the Ministry, the departments and the missions abroad were carried out as necessary.

Installation and Development of Technology for Information and Communication:

Realizing the need of a high-end video conference system, a CISCO video-conference system along with other required accessories, software and internet security have been installed in multi-purpose meeting hall of the Ministry. Customized accounting software with the real time reporting on budget related data and information has been developed.

Archive Management:

The Ministry completed classification and sorting of historically and archaeologically important documents. Archiving of the classified documents is under process.

Financial Resource Management:

Accountability, transparency, efficacy, and efficiency are taken into consideration while mobilizing the financial resources. Outstanding irregularities accumulated over the years have been minimized.

Revenue Collection in FY 2020/21 (Rs in 000)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Nepali Missions Abroad	Department of Passports	Department of Consular Services	Grand Total
5,647.53	17,51,385.2	10,67,311.2	89,732.54	29,14,076.47

Budget Allocation and Expenditure in the Fiscal Year 2077/78 (Rs in 000)

Particulars	Budget Allocation	Expenditure	
		Budget	Percentage
Recurrent	55,78,572	50,55,693	90.63
Capital	12,54,500	10,03,174	79.97
Total	68,33,072	60,58,867	85.3

APPENDICES

I

MAJOR HIGH-LEVEL VISITS

A. Outgoing

S.N.	Dignitary	Country	Dates	Remarks
1	President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari	Bangladesh	22-23 March 2021	State Visit
2	Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali	India	14-16 January 2021	The 6 th Meeting of Nepal-India Joint Commission
3	Chairperson of the National Assembly Mr. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina	Spain	06-18 April 2021	Official Visit

B. Incoming

S.N.	Dignitary	Country	Dates	Remarks
1	State Councilor and Minister for National Defense	China	29 November 2020	Official Visit

II

AGREEMENTS/MOUs

SN	Agreements/MoUs	Date
1	Agreement between the Government of Nepal and the Government of the State of Israel on Mutual Visa Exemption for Holders of Diplomatic Passports	20 August 2020
2	Land Lease Agreement for building Chancery and Residence for the Ambassador between Nepal and Sultanate of Oman	25 August 2020
3	Agreement between the Government of Nepal and the State of Israel on the Temporary Employment of Nepali Workers in Israel's Specific Labor Market Sectors in the State of Israel	30 September 2020
4	MoU between the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development of the Government of Nepal and MASHAV - Agency for International Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel on Nepal - Israel Cooperation on Agriculture Center of Excellence	30 September 2020
5	Agreement on the establishment of sister-city relations between Resunga Municipality of Gulmi and Hawkinge Town Council of UK	02 October 2020
6	Agreement between the Government of Nepal and the Government of the Sultanate of Oman on Mutual Visa Exemption for Holders of Diplomatic, Special and Service and Official Passports	19 October 2020
7	Implementation Protocol to the Agreement between the Government of Nepal and the Government of the State of Israel on the Temporary Employment of Nepali Workers in Specific Labour Market Sectors in the state of Israel/ Auxiliary Workers in Long - Term Care Facilities	21 January 2021
8	MoU between Nepal Chamber of Commerce (NCC) and Federation of Israeli Chamber of Commerce (FNCCI)	11 January 2021

9	MoU between the Government of Nepal and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on Tourism Cooperation.	22 March 2021
10	MoU between the Government of Nepal and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on Strengthening Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary (SPS) Cooperation	22 March 2021
11	Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) between the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the Government of Nepal for the year 2022-2025	22 March 2021
12	Exchange of Letters on designation of Rohanpur-Singhabad railway route as an additional transit route for movement of traffic-in-transit between Nepal and Bangladesh and also for third country transit trade.	22 March 2021
13	Letter of Exchange (LoE) for amendment to Rail Service Agreement	9 July 2021



MEETINGS OF BILATERAL CONSULTATION MECHANISM

S.N.	BCM	Venue and Date
1	13 th Nepal-China Bilateral Consultations Mechanism	Virtual Format, 12 August 2020
2	2 nd Nepal-Germany Bilateral Consultations Mechanism	Virtual Format, 30 September 2020
3	12 th Nepal-EU Joint Commission	Virtual Format, 02 October 2020
4	1 st Nepal-Austria Bilateral Consultations	Virtual Format, 14 October 2020
5	2 nd Nepal-Denmark Bilateral Consultations Mechanism	Virtual Format, 9 November 2020
6	5 th Nepal-UK Bilateral Consultations Mechanism	Virtual Format, 12 November 2021
7	2 nd Nepal-Canada Bilateral Consultations Mechanism	Virtual Format, 11 December 2020
8	2 nd Nepal-Poland Bilateral Consultations Mechanism	Virtual Format, 13 January 2021
9	6 th Nepal-India Joint Commission	New Delhi, 15 January 2021
10	2 nd Nepal-France Bilateral Consultations Mechanism	Virtual Format, 08 February 2021

IV

MAJOR STATEMENTS

Statements of the Head of State, the Head of Government and the Foreign Minister, 2020-2021, UN, IO and IL Division

A. The President

1. Message by President of Nepal Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari at the Virtual 2021 P4G Seoul Summit at the Leaders' Session, Seoul, 30 May 2021
2. Statement by the President of Nepal, Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari, at the High-level Meeting on the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing+25), New York, 1 October 2020

B. The Prime Minister

3. Statement by Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli at the 26th International Conference on the Future of Asia, 20-21 May 2021
4. Statement by Prime Minister and the Leader of the Nepali Delegation Mr. K P Sharma Oli at the High-level Meeting to Commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the United Nation, New York, 21 September 2020
5. Statement by Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli at the SDG Moment Friday, 18 September 2020
6. Statement by Mr. K P Sharma Oli, Prime Minister of Nepal, at the Biodiversity Summit during the 75th United Nations General Assembly, 30 September 2020
7. Statement by Prime Minister and the Leader of Nepali Delegation Right Honorable Mr. K P Sharma Oli at the General Debate of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 25 September 2020
8. Statement by Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. K P Sharma Oli on behalf of the Group of the Landlocked Developing Countries at the High-level Meeting on Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond, New York, 29 September 2020
9. Address by Mr. K P Sharma Oli, Prime Minister of Nepal, to the High-level Virtual Side Event at the UN General Assembly on "Poverty at Crossroad: Using Leadership and the Multidimensional Poverty Indexes to Build Back Better" 24 September 2020
10. Statement by Prime Minister of Nepal K P Sharma Oli at the Climate Ambition Summit, 12 December 2020

11. Statement by Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. K P Sharma Oli at the '31st Special Session of the UN General Assembly in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic', New York, 3 December 2020
12. Statement by Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. K P Sharma Oli at the Virtual Climate Vulnerable Forum Leaders Event Organized in Conjunction with the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly 2020, 07 October 2020

C. The Foreign Minister

13. Remarks by Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal the Video Conference of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the People's Republic of China, Nepal and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Joint Response to COVID-19, 27 July 2020
14. Remarks by Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal during the Joint Announcement of the new height of Mount Sagarmatha/ Zhumulangma, 08 December 2020
15. Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali during the Video Conference of the Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka on Joint Response to COVID-19, 27 April 2021
16. Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at Event to Commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, 2 October 2020
17. Virtual Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) on the Margins of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, 09 October 2020
18. Statement by Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs, at the Conference on 'Nepal's Contributions to UN Peacekeeping', 19 April 2021
19. Address by Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at the 73rd Anniversary of Nepal Council of World Affairs (NCWA), Kathmandu, 1 March 2021
20. Statement by Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Head of the Nepali delegation at the High-level Segment of the 46th Session of Human Rights Council Geneva, 23 February 2021
21. Opening Statement by Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Leader of the Nepali Delegation to the 37th Session of the Human Rights Council Working Group on Universal Periodic Review Geneva, Thursday, 21 January 2021
22. Opening Remarks by Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal (Chairperson) at the Virtual Informal Meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers, Kathmandu, 24 September 2020

23. Statement by Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal, at the 19th Annual Ministerial Meeting of LLDCs, 23 September 2020
24. Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at the Annual Ministerial Meeting of LDCs, 17 September 2020
25. वेल्ड एण्ड रोड सहयोग सम्बन्धी उच्चस्तरीय एशिया तथा प्यासिफिक सम्मेलनमा माननीय उपप्रधानमन्त्री तथा अर्थ मन्त्री श्री बिष्णु प्रसाद पौडेलज्यूले सम्बोधन गर्नु हुने मन्तव्य, २३ जून २०२१

**MESSAGE BY PRESIDENT OF NEPAL MRS. BIDYA DEVI
BHANDARI AT THE VIRTUAL 2021 P4G SEOUL SUMMIT AT THE
LEADERS' SESSION, 30 MAY 2021, SEOUL
INCLUSIVE GREEN RECOVERY FROM COVID-19**

His Excellency the President of the Republic of Korea,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to His Excellency President of the Republic of Korea for organizing this important Summit.

At an inflection point of history when human civilization is engulfed in climate crisis, the current COVID-19 pandemic has further aggravated the situation.

In such adversary, successful implementation of the Paris Agreement and achievement of the SDGs with ambitious NDCs have become more critical than ever.

Nepal has committed to an ambitious NDCs with the long-term goal of becoming a carbon-neutral country by 2050.

A nature-based green economy and market system are vital to address the climate change issues comprehensively.

All countries, and particularly the large emitters of greenhouse gases, must provide additional financial and technical resources for their mitigation, adaptation, finance, and technology transfer.

We must work to enhance the climate adaptability of the people of the least developed countries by increasing their access to modern technology.

I am confident that this Summit organized on the eve of COP-26, to be held in Glasgow, UK this year, will further contribute to the consolidation of climate finance and enhancement of climate justice.

Excellencies,

As a mountainous country, Nepal has always been highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Due to the degradation of the environment, the youth, farmers, and the underprivileged community, especially the elderly, women, and children, are grappling with various adversities.

With the cooperation of all, we must ensure women's leadership roles in climate policies and actions.

There is a need to organize climate adaptation programs targeting all stakeholders, including future generations.

Direct access to finance and technology must be ensured to create a conducive environment for LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, and mountainous regions.

Nepal has always joined hands with the international community at any crisis the world has ever faced.

I wish the Summit every success while expressing my commitment to work closely with the international community at this defining moment of crisis engendered by climate change and COVID-19.

Thank you!

**STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF NEPAL, MRS. BIDYA DEVI
BHANDARI, AT THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON THE
TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOURTH WORLD
CONFERENCE ON WOMEN (BEIJING+25)
NEW YORK, 1 OCTOBER 2020**

Theme: Accelerating the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls

**Mr. President,
Excellency the Secretary General of the United Nations,
Distinguished Delegates**

I begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this historic meeting to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action serves as a transformative blueprint for gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.

Despite a steady progress achieved in twelve critical areas of Beijing Declaration, it will take time to fully realize those commitments.

Structural gaps and challenges still persist in society.

The COVID-19 pandemic has risked further aggravating inequalities.

We should not let the pandemic stall our progress.

Ensuring timely medical care, equal access to vaccines and robust recovery plans that take care of the economic and social needs of women and girls are necessary.

This will be a test for the decade of action on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving of the SDG 5.

Nepal is a state party to major human rights instruments including the CEDAW.

We have mainstreamed gender agenda as an integral part of national development by integrating them in the Constitution and laws.

We have strengthened law enforcement and implemented targeted interventions to end gender-based violence and discrimination.

Free air evacuation services have been provided to save the lives of the women from the remotest part of the country suffering from pregnancy and maternity-related complications.

At present, women occupy 41 percent of elected offices in federal, provincial and local governments and over 24 percent in civil service. Total 83 percent of women in Nepal are in labour force.

These achievements are attained through long struggle and persistent constructive efforts.

We can achieve the objectives of the Beijing Declaration by removing gender stereotypes, rectifying long-standing inequalities and matching our commitments with action at national, regional and international levels.

The movement of women's empowerment must continue till we achieve full and substantive equality.

We remain committed to eliminate remnants of discrimination and plug the implementation gaps.

Excellencies,

To conclude, I would like to emphasize that gender equality is essential and important right for the continuity of life and the world.

It is the only path to justice, peace, and progress.

This historic occasion is an opportunity to reaffirm our resolve to end barriers in the way of realizing all inherent potentials of women.

Thank you.

**महिला सम्बन्धी चौथो विश्व सम्मेलनको पच्चीसौं वार्षिकोत्सव (बेइजिङ +२५) को अवसरमा आयोजित उच्चस्तरीय बैठकमा नेपालका सम्माननीय राष्ट्रपति श्रीमती विद्यादेवी भण्डारीज्यूको सम्बोधन
न्यूर्योक, १ अक्टोबर २०२०**

मूलनारा: “सबै महिला, किशोरी तथा बालिकाहरूलाई सशक्त बनाई लैङ्गिक समानताको गति तीब्र बनाऔं”

अध्यक्ष महोदय,
संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघका महामहिम महासचिव,
विशिष्ट महानुभावहरु।

महिला सम्बन्धी चौथो विश्वसम्मेलनको पच्चीसौं वार्षिकोत्सवको अवसरमा यो उच्चस्तरीय बैठक आयोजना गर्नुभएकोमा म अध्यक्ष महोदयप्रति हार्दिक धन्यवाद व्यक्त गर्दछु ।

बेइजिङ घोषणापत्र तथा कार्ययोजनाले महिला, किशोरी तथा बालिकाहरूको समानता र सशक्तिकरणका लागि रुपान्तरणकारी खाका प्रदान गरेकोछ ।

बेइजिङ घोषणापत्रमा अन्तरनिहित सरोकारका बाह्रक्षेत्रहरूमा क्रमिक रूपमा प्रगति हुँदैगएको भएपनि ती प्रतिबद्धताहरु पूर्ण रूपमा हासिल हुन अझै समय लाग्नेछ । समाजमा संरचनागत खाडल तथा चुनौतिहरु कायमै छन् ।

कोभिड-१९ को महामारीले असमानताको जोखिमलाई अझ बढाएकोछ । यो महामारीलाई हाम्रो प्रगतिको बाधक बन्नदिनु हुँदैन ।

समयमै स्वास्थ्य स्याहार, खोपमा समान पहुँच एवम् हिला, किशोरी तथा बालिकाहरुको आर्थिक तथा सामाजिक आवश्यकताहरू सम्बोधन गर्न पुर्ण लाभका योजना जरूरी छन् ।

‘दिगो विकास कार्यसूची २०३०’ को कार्यान्वयन दशक एवम् दिगो विकासको पाँचौं लक्ष्य प्राप्तिका लागि त यो एक महत्वपूर्ण परीक्षण नै हुनेछ ।

नेपाल सिड (CEDAW) लगायत मानव अधिकार सम्बन्धी प्रमुख दस्तावेजहरुको पक्ष राष्ट्र रहेको छ । हामीले लैङ्गिक मुद्दालाई राष्ट्रिय विकासको अभिन्न अंगको रुपमा संविधान एवं कनुनमा नै व्यवस्थित गरेकाछौं ।

लैङ्गिक हिंसा तथा विभेद अन्त्यका लागि लक्षित कार्यक्रम तथा कानुनको कार्यान्वयनलाई सुदृढ तुल्याएकाछौं ।

भौगोलिक रुपम विकटतम् क्षेत्रमा रहेका प्रसववेदनामा छटपटाएका गर्भवती र सुत्केरी महिलको जिवन रक्षाका लागि हवाई उद्धारको व्यवस्था गरिएकोछ ।

वर्तमान समयमा नेपालमा संघ, प्रदेश र स्थानीय सरकारका कूल निर्वाचित पद मध्ये ४१ प्रतिशत र निजामती सेवामा २४ प्रतिशत भन्दा बढी महिला कार्यरत छन् भने ८३ प्रतिशत महिलाहरु श्रमबजारका विभिन्न क्षेत्रमा संलग्नछन् ।

यी उपलब्धिहरु लामो संघर्ष र निरन्तरको सृजनात्मक प्रयासबाट प्राप्त भएका हुन्।

लैङ्गिक रुढीवादलाई हटाएर, परम्परादेखि चल्दै आएका असमानतालाई सच्याएर एवम् राष्ट्रिय, क्षेत्रीय तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रियस्तरमा हाम्रा प्रतिबद्धताहरु र तिनको कार्यान्वयनबीच समन्वय कायम गरेर बेइजीङ्ग घोषणापत्रका उद्देश्यहरु हासिल गर्न सकिनेछ ।

पूर्ण एवम् सारभूत समानता हासिल नभएसम्म महिला शसक्तिकरणको अभियान जारी रहनु पर्दछ ।

विभेदका अवशेषहरु निर्मूल पार्न र कार्यान्वयनमा रहेका कमजोरीलाई सुधारन हामी प्रतिबद्ध रहेका छौं ।

महामहिमज्यूहरु,

अन्त्यमा, लैङ्गिक समानता जीवन र जगतको निरन्तरताको लागि अपरिहार्य र महत्वपूर्ण अधिकार हो भन्ने कुरामा म जोड दिन चाहन्छु ।

यो न्याय, शान्ति एवम् प्रगतिको एकमात्र मार्ग हो ।

आजको यो ऐतिहासिक क्षण महिलामा अन्तरनिहित सबै संभावनाहरु हासिल गर्ने मार्गमा रहेका अवरोध अन्त्यको संकल्प गर्ने अवसर पनि हो ।

धन्यवाद ।

**STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER MR. K P SHARMA OLI
AT THE 26TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE
OF ASIA, MAY 20-21, 2021**

Theme: Shaping the Post COVID Era: Asia's Role in the Global Recovery

Mr. President of Nikkei Incorporated,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentleman.

I feel honoured and privileged to have this opportunity to attend, though virtually, the 26th International Conference on 'The Future of Asia'.

Over the years, this Conference has provided a significant platform to deliberate the issues of regional and global significance and contributed to our quest for solidarity and cooperation among the countries in the Asia Pacific region. I thank the Nikkei for this initiative.

The theme for this year, '**Shaping the Post COVID Era: Asia's Role in the Global Recovery**', is quite topical. I am confident that our discussion will contribute to strengthening Asian solidarity as we all strive to battle out the deadly virus and embark on the post COVID-19 rebuild.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Past few years have become a watershed in world's history. We have witnessed a sea change in international geopolitical landscapes. Of all the changes we have seen and we have gone through, Asia's resurgence has become a phenomenal one.

Indeed, Asia has undergone fundamental and unparalleled transformation rarely seen in its history – in lifting millions of people out of poverty, in achieving technological advancement and in many other dimensions. As a result, shifting the gravity of global traction towards the East has become a defining feature.

As the entire world grappled with the challenges of protecting people and societies from the pandemic, some of the fellow Asian countries demonstrated the best practices and success stories in keeping the losses at minimum. Asian countries have also been at the forefront of vaccine cooperation as well as in advancing in WHO and other forums the cause of vaccine equity and access. This is a telling sign.

Asia's resurgence is but natural. Its potentials are as large as its geographical size, if not larger. With one third of the landmass of the world and home to 60 percent of the world's population, Asia enjoys a vibrant demographic dividend. Young and multitalented tech-generation of Asia will, I believe, be increasingly assertive in shaping the global agenda in the years to come.

Dear Friends,

On the face of this unprecedented difficulty, the time-tested Asian values of fraternity, peaceful co-existence and sense of equity and justice are proving once again their merit. These values were born out of our collective, civilizational conviction on harmony, discipline and primacy of the larger public good and interest.

In the background of the scarcity of COVID-19 vaccines, the most critical public goods today, we are saying, let's share these life-saving shots. Our values emphasize more on sharing, caring and co-existing.

Asia is the most diverse society and hence, the tolerance of diversity is the hallmark of our character.

Asia is the region with rich civilizational history. This is the region that gave birth to great thinkers, leaders, innovators, explorers, scholars and researchers. We were once far ahead in term of level of intellectual advancement or the level of physical development. Past 200 years remained the time of exception, when most of the world prospered and we fell behind. Poverty and backwardness became Asia's identity. Today, scenario is changing. Our ways and our values are gaining weight.

At a time when most of the world was clouded by superstition and ignorance, our region gave birth to Buddhism, one of the world's most enlightening and human-centered philosophical system. In a small town of Southern Nepal called Lumbini, Buddha, the light of Asia, was born. As his message travelled to the rest of Asia and to the world, the huge reservoir of knowledge and wisdom, aesthetics and spirituality, way of life and pattern of social organization spread around, benefitting humanity.

Today, my country is taking steps to develop Lumbini as the international Peace City.

Excellencies,

Like other Asian countries, Nepal takes pride in its glorious history and rich and diverse cultures. We feel, rightly so, that Nepal is an example in the management of diversity. **Unity in diversity, Peaceful Coexistence, and Bashudhaiva Kutumbakam** have become the ethos of our socio-cultural life since time immemorial.

We now aim at creating a civilized, modern and egalitarian society leaving no one behind while keeping our rich cultural heritage very much alive. For this, we have given importance to political stability, good governance, rule of law, liberty, freedom and justice as well as social and cultural cohesion. We are the believer in comprehensive

democracy, which seeks to empower people politically, socially, culturally and technologically.

Driven by the national vision of “**Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali**”, we are effortful to unleash all our economic potentials and achieve rapid economic growth, which is inclusive and sustainable.

Our plan to graduate from the LDC status is on track so far. Similarly, we envisage to become a middle-income country as well as realize the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

In the longer term, we have set a vision for 25 years to make Nepal a developed country by the end of this century. Our periodic development plans and policies are geared to attain this development goal.

In order to fulfil this development aspiration, we seek continuous support from our close friends, development partners, and regional and multilateral financial institutions. We also invite the private sector from countries around the world who can capitalize on Nepal’s vast investment potentials and contribute to our growth.

On its external outlook, Nepal continues to uphold the policy of constructive and cooperative engagement with our friends. We have adopted a balanced and independent foreign policy. 'Amity with All, Enmity with None' has become our mantra in conducting our foreign relations. We seek to maintain and further consolidate our relations with the neighbouring countries, development partners and other friendly countries on the basis of sovereign equality, justice, mutual respect and mutual benefit.

Dear Friends,

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were making steady progress in most of our development indicators. For three years in a row, a sustained high growth of over 7% had been achieved. This gave us a lot of confidence in our potential as well as the resilience of our economy.

However, the first wave of the pandemic hit our economy hard and caused negative growth. We were just reviving some of our economic sectors with gradual reopening when the more threatening second wave of the pandemic started to pound on us severely. This is certain to leave a devastating impact on our economy for the years to come.

The second wave has turned out to be more infectious and lethal. Positivity rate has been sharply rising and so is the number of infected people. Over 8,000 new cases daily for the past several weeks is too high for a country with a moderate size population and too burdensome given the constraint of our resources and healthcare infrastructure. Even though the mortality rate is relatively low, the graph of the precious lives lost due to COVID-19 is rising at triple digits for past several days.

My government has taken requisite measures to control and prevent the spread of the pandemic. Testing, tracing and treatment facilities have been increased. We are trying our level best to provide critical health care to the infected population.

Confronted by this colossal threat, I have made an appeal to the international community and philanthropic organizations around the world to provide us with vaccines, diagnostic tools, oxygen kits, critical care medicines and equipment to help us protect our people's lives. We are thankful that we have started receiving some help.

I take this opportunity to convey to our friends in the region and beyond that Nepal urgently requires more of your support, in particular supply of oxygen and vaccine. Though we have already started vaccination with the support of our neighbours, over half a million people of ours in critical age group are yet to receive even the first dose of vaccine.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The impact of the pandemic has been disproportionate across different countries and segments of populations. More vulnerable countries and societies have been hit harder. It will be difficult for them to stand back in the absence of robust, meaningful and enhanced global partnership. It is my belief that the international community should consider some sort of COVID-19 response fund so as to help recover the severely affected countries.

At a time of worldwide humanitarian crisis, we must rise to the challenge in addressing it collectively. I call upon the governments of advanced nations to come forward with maximum flexibility in, for example, fair distribution of vaccines and waiving intellectual property rights for production of vaccines in developing countries. We can prosper together once all populations are safe and duly protected.

Indeed, 'whole of the government' and 'whole of society' approach may not be sufficient to overcome the massive crises we are facing. It is the 'whole of the region' and 'whole of the world' approach that is critically required.

The virus has also reinforced that in this connected world, nobody is safe until everybody is safe. Scaled-up vaccine cooperation among us will be critical in ensuring early post pandemic recovery in the short term. In the medium and long term, there will be a need for increased development cooperation, enhanced focus on sustainable development goals, strong actions on climate change, reopening international borders, resuming supply chains, providing more trade opportunities for the least developed countries, facilitating investment and transfer of technology.

Countries like Nepal have also been disproportionately borne the brunt of climate change, for no fault of their own. Disastrous impacts are seen in the form of melting glaciers and likely glacial lake outbursts in our Himalayas. Needless to say, any ecological disruption on mountains have impacts on oceans.

With a view to focus on impacts of climate change on mountains, Nepal has initiated Sagarmatha Sambaad, named after the Mount Everest. This dialogue originally scheduled in April 2020 had to be postponed due to the pandemic. We are going to convene this in October 2021 so that the Sambaad could provide inputs from the perspective of mountainous countries for COP26. We hope to have high-level participation from all your countries and institutions.

We are also in favour of an ambitious climate deal during CoP26, which should contain strong green finance instruments, financial support and capacity-building for climate-vulnerable countries. This will help ensure a green recovery and environmental sustainability.

With our five years of experience of post earthquake reconstruction, we have realized that however colossal the damage might have been inflicted by natural or man-made disasters or pandemic, we can build back better. What is required is a strong regional and global partnership and sound national institutions.

Dear Friends,

As we deliberate on shaping the post COVID-19 era and Asia's role in it, I wish to call upon all distinguished Heads of Delegation of fellow Asian countries as well as intellectuals and the private sector attending this important conference to work together to build a peaceful Asia, a robust Asia and a prosperous Asia. To this end, we need to ensure that no country and society is left behind.

All Asians desire for the Asia, where countries can sort out differences peacefully through dialogue and can then work in concert for the region's greater welfare and prosperity. No doubt, when peace and harmony prevail in Asia, it prevails in the world map and serves once again as the beacon of a better, happier and more sustainable world order.

Friends, let us accept the important lessons that this pandemic has taught us.

Let us work together with utmost sincerity, harmony, solidarity and cooperation.

Let us strive continuously for constructive, peaceful and harmonious coexistence among ourselves.

Because, that is Asian tradition. That is our Asian value. That is who we are and where we come from.

I thank you all for your kind attention.

**STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER AND THE LEADER OF
THE NEPALI DELEGATION MR. K P SHARMA OLI AT THE
HIGH-LEVEL MEETING TO COMMEMORATE THE 75TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATION
(NEW YORK, 21 SEPTEMBER 2020)**

Theme: The future we want, the United Nations we need: Reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism

**Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Distinguished delegates.**

It is a privilege to be part of this historic occasion marking the 75th anniversary of the UN.

We are convening at an unprecedented time.

The impacts of COVID-19 have hit across lives, economies and societies with toughest brunt felt by the weakest and most vulnerable countries.

Today is an occasion to reaffirm our commitment to peace, prosperity and justice.

We, as humanity, have a responsibility to strengthen the UN and empower it as the centre of multilateralism to deal with the complex challenges the world is confronting.

Nepal's partnership with the United Nations has been ever-growing in all three pillars.

We have been providing one of the most dedicated and professional services to the UN peace operations for over six decades.

The UN has been a key partner in our development process.

We continue to contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights constructively. We believe that all human rights are equal and must be treated in their totality.

Mr. President,

The United Nations is at 'generational crossroads' of continuity and transformation.

It faces a test of delivering on the ever-increasing expectations:

- to protect the neediest countries and peoples,

- to promote the sovereign equality and dignity of all,
- to fight against the threats like pandemics, climate crisis and terrorism, and
- to ensure total elimination of nuclear, chemical, biological, radiological and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Building on the achievements, it is also our collective responsibility to make the world body more 'fit for purpose'.

Now is the time to do so.

First, there is no alternative to unity, solidarity and cooperation. We must reaffirm these values and commit ourselves to move beyond rhetoric to action.

Second, it is important that the UN is focused on the twelve 'action points' highlighted in the Declaration we adopted today and mobilize support for the entirety of the SDGs so that no one is left behind.

Third, with timely reforms, we must enable UN to build a just, fair, and rules-based international order where no nation is superior than others.

Finally, we need to strengthen the UN and ensure that it is stronger and better prepared to tackle the existential threats and emergencies.

To conclude, Mr. President, let us solemnly commit ourselves at this historic 75th anniversary to build a more prosperous and happy global community in an atmosphere of comprehensive democracy. Let us make the UN fit for this purpose.

Thank you!

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER MR. K P SHARMA OLI AT THE SDG MOMENT, FRIDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2020

Excellencies the Heads of State and Government,

UN Secretary General Mr. Antonio Guterres,

Distinguished Delegates:

At the outset, I would like to commend the Secretary General for convening this high-level event.

We are meeting at a critical juncture. The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated livelihoods, disrupted economies, and distressed the public health and social security systems.

Most importantly, as we embark on the decade of action and delivery of the 2030 Agenda, the pandemic has derailed the momentum of its implementation. The challenges have compounded, and gaps have widened.

However, this is not a moment to shift the goalposts further. Nor is it a time to back off in despair.

To navigate these turbulent times, the SDGs must serve as the compass of clarity.

Excellencies,

Sustainable development is at the center of Nepal's development vision and priorities. It underpins our national aspiration of "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali".

We have mainstreamed the SDGs into the national plans and programs. They are now being localized.

Showcasing our progress in SDGs, we presented our second Voluntary National Review Report in High-level Political Forum in July this year.

We have made some significant achievements in key areas –including poverty reduction, food security, education, gender equality, basic sanitation, and energy access. Our people have been enjoying fundamental rights and freedoms as enshrined in the Constitution.

However, the challenges and gaps remain. The current health crisis threatens our hard-earned gains, pushing our plan to graduate from the LDC status in peril.

This COVID-19 pandemic has affected the countries in special situation such as LDCs, LLDCs and SIDs disproportionately.

Their freezing economy, shrinking revenue, increasing public expenditure, rising poverty and unemployment have severe impact in the attainment of the SDGs.

We welcome the global initiatives and support measures taken in response to COVID-19.

But this is not enough.

Aligning these support measures with the 2030 Agenda, Istanbul Program of Action, Vienna Program of Action, Addis Agenda and the Paris Agreement is equally important.

For this, there is an urgent need to accelerate action at all levels and by all stakeholders beyond rhetoric.

Our message should be of a cautious hope to steer the decade of action as well as recovery with sustainability at its core.

In conclusion, a renewed sense of urgency and accountability in our collective efforts is critical to build back better, and to ensure that no one is left behind.

Thank you!

**STATEMENT BY MR. K P SHARMA OLI, PRIME MINISTER OF
NEPAL, AT THE BIODIVERSITY SUMMIT DURING THE 75TH
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
30 SEPTEMBER 2020**

Theme: ‘Urgent Action on Biodiversity for Sustainable Development’

**Mr. President,
Excellencies the Heads of State and Government,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished delegates.**

I begin by thanking the Secretary General of the United Nations for convening this important summit.

Biodiversity resources are a lifeline for us. They provide fresh air, clean water, food and livelihood, mineral and medicine, and help sustain human life and economy.

Biodiversity connects generations and surpasses national boundaries.

Living in harmony with nature is part of Nepali culture.

Our ancient sages and saints have passed down valuable knowledge of biodiversity and taught us the value of its conservation.

Therefore, Nepal accords high priority to biodiversity conservation and has made a good progress.

Protecting biodiversity constitutes a critical component of our national aspiration of **“Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali”**.

Twenty-three percent of our geography has been designated as protected area and we have achieved Aichi Target – 11. We now plan to expand it to 30 percent by 2030.

Nepal’s progress in landscape level conservation and trans-boundary cooperation on migratory species are considered as success stories. So is the engaging of communities to managing human–wildlife conflict.

Availability of clean energy from hydro-electricity has reduced stress on biodiversity.

Through strong law enforcement system and enhanced cooperation at international level, we have achieved zero-poaching of rhino for almost a decade.

We have almost doubled the number of tigers well ahead of the target year of 2022.

The world can learn from our experience.

Excellencies,

Nepal's mountain ecosystem is unique laboratory and true source of knowledge to inquisitive scholars, researchers and scientists. Mountain ecosystems make critical common property resources for the benefit of humanity which extends beyond our borders.

Human encroachment, pollution, climate change and wildlife crime all have negative impacts on biodiversity.

It is a multi-stakeholder business that requires commitment and action from all actors nationally and internationally.

We need to set more ambitious targets with a right balance of people's right over natural resources and its sustainable protection.

We also need sustained investment in biodiversity conservation.

Implementing urgent climate action is a moral obligation. We need to harmonize the efforts under multilateral agreements and internationally agreed development frameworks.

Let us stand united, save this beautiful planet forever for our posterity. We have no right to compromise their future. Let us make it more habitable than today.

Let us muster requisite political will, promote ideas and innovations and act robustly to conserve biodiversity.

Thank you!

**STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER AND THE LEADER OF
NEPALI DELEGATION MR. K P SHARMA OLI AT THE GENERAL
DEBATE OF THE 75TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK, 25 SEPTEMBER 2020**

Theme: -The future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism – confronting COVID-19 through effective multilateral action

Mr. President

Excellencies the Heads of State and Government,

Mr. Secretary General,

Distinguished delegates:

I extend warm greetings to you all from Nepal, the land of Gautam Buddha and Sagarmatha, also known as Mount Everest.

I join other leaders in expressing our profound grief and agony on the loss of lives around the world due to COVID-19, including in my own country.

I congratulate you, Mr. President, and other members of the Bureau on your election and assure you of Nepal's full support.

The outgoing President deserves our appreciation for successfully steering the 74th session of the Assembly.

We commend the Secretary General, Mr. Antonio Guterres, for his tireless efforts to enable the UN to deliver at this difficult time.

Mr. President,

We are passing through an extraordinary time. The COVID-19 pandemic is confronting us as a crisis of epic proportion.

Be it the magnitude of public health crisis, impact on livelihoods and societies or global economic recession, the fallouts of the pandemic have been colossal.

We support the efforts of the United Nations, World Health Organization and the World Bank Group in leading the global response to the pandemic. In particular, we commend the UN Secretary General for launching the Comprehensive Response to COVID-19.

What matters most in the ongoing health crisis is an easy, smooth and affordable access by all to anti-COVID-19 vaccines after they are developed; sharing of knowledge and experiences; and provision of timely supply of medical equipment and medicines.

Protecting the lives of the people both from disease and hunger is the supreme duty of the Governments. While we have deployed all our efforts and resources to that end, international solidarity becomes equally important.

It is worrisome that the crisis is unfolding against the backdrop of an already uncertain international order.

Geo-political tensions are resurfacing. Peace and stability still remain an unfulfilled aspiration in many parts of the world.

Challenges such as arms race, climate change, and disasters impede the prospects of peace and sustainable development.

The invisible virus has only made the severity of these maladies visible. This has further aggravated the trade tensions, global inequality, financial uncertainty, and debt crisis.

Multilateral cooperation has been an obvious casualty in the face of unilateral tendencies and protectionist policies.

The theme of ‘the future we want, and the UN we need’ resonates very well with the present situation.

It is unthinkable to talk about degrading the value of multilateralism at a time when its relevancy becomes more pronounced than ever. Larger global good, not the parochial national interest, should underpin multilateralism and the rules-based order.

This historic 75th anniversary of the United Nations is a time to muster stronger political will for an enhanced international cooperation and solidarity and envision a future that is safer, more equitable and just.

Only a collaborative, democratic, science-based and coordinated global partnership will help us face the difficult months and years ahead.

Mr. President,

As we embark on the decade of action and delivery to implement the Agenda 2030, the current crisis has pushed us to the brink of losing the gains made in achieving the SDGs.

The countries like LDCs, LLDCs and SIDs are facing limitations of resources, social protection, and requisite health infrastructures. The distress has been further compounded by the halt in tourism, remittances and disruptions on supply chains and trade.

Poverty is increasing, mostly in developing countries, for the first time in the last twenty years.

The current crisis threatens hard-earned achievements in key areas, pushing our plan to graduate from the LDC status in peril.

In order to prevent inequalities from deepening, timely realization of SDGs should be the fulcrum of our actions, compass of our aspiration, and the signpost of our recovery efforts.

We must reach to those who are at the bottom.

Excellencies

The Secretary General's opening statement rightly highlights the current challenges facing the world and provides a way-forward.

Nepal is deeply concerned about the worsening humanitarian situations in Libya, Syria and Yemen.

Protracted conflicts inflict painful miseries to the innocent civilians.

Nepal calls for peaceful resolution of all such conflicts, led and owned by the people of the respective countries.

We would like to see peace and stability in the Middle East with a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security with secure and recognized international borders based on the relevant United Nations resolutions.

Effective and sustainable peacebuilding efforts must ensure inclusive national leadership and ownership.

As a major troop and police-contributing country and a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, Nepal has unfailingly responded to the UN's call for deployment without any caveat.

With over six-decades of partnership in UN peace operations, Nepal's commitment to international peace and stability is stronger than ever. We consider the troops and police-contributing countries should have a greater share of decision-making positions both in headquarters and in the field missions.

Safety, security and dignity of peacekeepers are vitally important as we increasingly engage in complex multi-dimensional peace operations.

Predictable, adequate and sustained resources are equally fundamental for the success of peace operations.

The global community needs to unite against the transnational problems such as terrorism, organized crime, illicit financial flows, human and drug trafficking.

Nepal condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations; or other activities inflicting pain and suffering to the innocent people.

We call for an early conclusion of a comprehensive convention against terrorism.

Mr. President,

In 2019, the world military expenditure amounted to US dollar 1.9 trillion.

Even a fraction of those resources could bring respite to the millions of people suffering from poverty, hunger, and deprivation.

The arms race, weaponization of outer space, and cyber warfare inflict a huge cost on humanity.

We all know what is more important at present- nuclear weapons or accessible vaccine against COVID-19!

The world needs more masks, not muskets; more protective equipment, not destructive weapons; and more social spending to save lives, not military spending to destroy lives.

Even when disarmament related processes including the NPT Review Conference are postponed due to the pandemic, the concerned parties must continue to fulfill their treaty obligations to make the world safer.

We reiterate our call for a general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction.

Regional approaches to disarmament complement the global initiatives. As the host country to the UN Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, we underline the need to strengthen such regional approaches including the ‘Kathmandu Process’.

Mr. President,

Climate crisis continues to pose an existential threat. The silence of the large emitters should not lead to the failure of responsibilities.

Nepal has dedicated more than 60 percent of its territory to the service of ecosystem. Our forests and mountains work as environmental purifiers.

Our mountains contribute to the climate and ecosystem of oceans through hundreds of snow-fed rivers streaming down to the oceans. Nepal’s Himalayas function as natural climate stabilizer. They contribute to maintain natural cooling system as they lie in the hottest zone of the planet between the tropic of Cancer and Capricorn. Apart from this, they contribute to the natural recharge system ensuring continuous supply of fresh water essential for living beings.

There is an organic link between mountains and oceans in maintaining the natural climate cycle. In this sense, Nepal's mountains are not only our assets, but they are of global significance in view of their vital contribution to the maintenance of health of the planet.

Our economic activities and mode of power generation are the most climate friendly. It is an unpleasant irony that we substantially contribute to sustaining the ecosystem and emit negligibly, yet we bear the severest brunt of climate change.

Global warming has eroded the health of our high mountains and ecosystems. Global pollution and climate change have contributed to the fast melting of ice which must be a matter of serious concern for all of us. This may lead to the outburst of glacial lakes resulting in huge loss of lives and properties downstream.

We call for full and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement, robust climate action and easy access to climate financing.

We are concerned about the deteriorating health of the overall ocean ecosystem due to the excessive human activities. We must preserve the common heritage of mankind. Prudent behaviour on the part of all stakeholders, especially the coastal states is critically important to maintain the ocean ecosystem.

Nepal appreciates the progress achieved so far in the BBNJ process and looks forward to its successful conclusion.

Excellencies,

Global trading system has been pushed into peril. Reform of WTO has become urgent to ensure a level playing field and rebuild trust.

The WTO should launch a renewed and revitalized global trading framework that enables the LDCs and LLDCs benefit equitably.

Aid for Trade has to be channelled for export competitiveness and resilience.

Progress in technology has been a major drive for development and change. Addressing digital divide and capacity constraints of LDCs is crucial for realizing a fair share of benefits of e-commerce and technology dividend. They must have an easy and affordable access to technology.

Mr. President,

Nepal's commitment to human rights is total and unwavering.

Nepal's democratic constitution guarantees the universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms and other principles such as multiparty democratic polity, pluralism, independent judiciary, separation of power, rule of law, proportional representation, periodic elections and social and economic justice.

Nepal does not condone impunity in serious violations of human rights. We are fully committed to concluding the ongoing transitional justice process in line with our commitment. Concerns of the victims will be addressed.

The year 2020 also marks the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women. While we have made significant strides in ensuring rights and empowerment of women; we are also committed to address the gaps and challenges.

Currently, as a member of the Human Rights Council, Nepal continues to contribute constructively to promote human rights with an objective approach in a holistic manner.

With a view to contribute further, Nepal has presented its candidature for re-election to the Human Rights Council for the term of 2021-2023. We count on the valuable support of all UN Member States to our candidature.

Nepal attaches high priority to the safety, security and wellbeing of the migrant workers. Providing adequate safeguard from exclusion, xenophobia and discrimination against migrant workers must be a common agenda of all at this difficult time.

Wider ownership and implementation of Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is essential to make migration work for all.

Nepal has hosted thousands of refugees for decades on a humanitarian ground. Refugees' right to return to their homeland in safety and dignity must be honoured by all.

Mr. President,

In my address to the 73rd UN General Assembly, I had outlined the monumental political transformation in Nepal and its consolidation through a democratic constitution written by the people's representatives.

Having resolved the fundamental political issues, we are now focused in bringing economic transformation envisioned around the national aspiration of 'Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali'. This aspiration takes a cue from the 2030 Agenda, and the notion of comprehensive democracy that looks after not only political rights and freedoms of the people but also takes care of the economic, social and cultural rights and wellbeing.

We have created an investment friendly atmosphere with overall improvement in good governance. We need international support measures in the form of technical, technological, financial and investment.

Despite resource constraints, we have significantly increased investment in rural infrastructures and social sectors.

The hazardous mode of river-crossing through tuins has been replaced by bridges.

We provide monthly social security payments to the elderly, single women, persons with disability and the destitute.

We have launched the provision of health insurance for elderly people further expanding its coverage.

Children from Dalits and marginalized communities in backward areas are provided with monthly scholarships at all schools. Basic education is made free for all with the provision of books and educational materials.

We have achieved nearly universal enrolment and gender parity of children in school, and significantly reduced girls drop out.

We have turned the country free from open-defecation. This way, we have started a new era of a decent way of life.

By extending social care and protection, we have made our cities free from street-children, street-people and beggars.

We have healed the wounds of earthquakes. We have reconstructed residential houses, schools, colleges, hospitals and heritage sites. We have also relocated people to safe areas.

All these achievements reflect the wider enjoyment of social and economic rights by our people.

Mr. President,

The Charter of the United Nations, non-alignment, the five principles of peaceful coexistence, international law and norms of world peace guide Nepal's foreign policy. We believe in 'amity with all and enmity with none'.

Guided by these principles, the Government of Nepal is firmly committed to safeguarding Nepal's sovereignty, territorial integrity and maintaining friendly relations with its neighbours and all other countries in the world.

We support an inclusive and fair international order founded on equality, mutual respect and justice.

As a believer in regional economic cooperation, we are playing our due role under the frameworks of SAARC, BIMSTEC and ACD.

Mr. President,

The United Nations has an unparalleled scope, legitimacy and normative impact.

Nepal reposes enduring faith in multilateralism with the United Nations at the centre.

We underline the need to reform the UN Security Council to make it more representative, transparent, democratic, and accountable. The principle of sovereign equality must remain at the core of all reform initiatives.

We also underscore the importance of the ongoing processes of GA Revitalization and Review of Peacebuilding Architecture.

Reform must aim at making the UN more efficient, effective and transparent that complement national efforts to bring positive change in peoples' lives thereby ensuring equal dignity of all peoples.

We support the reform measures initiated by the Secretary-General and expect that the UN would make significant positive impacts on the neediest countries.

Compared to 1945, the founding year of the United Nations, the world has emerged with better knowledge, more advanced technology and many other advances in different fields. However, challenges of global scale still persist. This provides greater scope and reason for global partnership.

Contrary to this, it is unfortunate that we witness in some quarters lesser desire to work under the multilateral framework.

We, the Member States, must shoulder the responsibility to strengthen the UN and pursue the path of multilateral cooperation. There is no alternative to this.

Just as the United Nations was created in the devastation wrought by the Second World War to lead the world on the path of peace, security and development, why not we think in the same vein a more prosperous and healthier world in the wake of the invisible yet equally powerful enemy of COVID-19?

To conclude, Mr. President, the founders of the United Nations chose peace over war, cooperation over collision, development over deprivation and human dignity over denigration.

At this historic 75th anniversary of our Organization, let us recommit to uphold those values and work together in a spirit of cooperation and solidarity to lead humanity to peace and prosperity.

Thank you!

**STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER OF NEPAL MR. K P SHARMA
OLI ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF THE LANDLOCKED
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AT THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING
ON FINANCING THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT IN THE ERA OF COVID-19
AND BEYOND 29 SEPTEMBER 2020, NEW YORK,
(VIRTUAL PLATFORM)**

Right Honourable Prime Ministers of Canada and Jamaica,

Mr. Secretary-General

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Group of 32 Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), I commend the Governments of Canada and Jamaica as well as the United Nations Secretary-General for convening this High-level Meeting.

We welcome the timely initiative for coordinated and multilateral efforts on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond launched on 28th May 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put public health systems and our economies under stress. It has severely impacted people's lives and livelihoods.

While the developed countries have undertaken the unprecedented fiscal and monetary policy measures to save their economies from the crisis, the policy response in many developing countries, especially in the most vulnerable like LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS have been weaker because of decline in trade and tourism earnings, reduced FDI, and servicing of external debts amid plunging foreign exchange inflows.

On behalf of the LLDC group, I wish to extend our support to the options outlined in the documents before us and, in particular, call for the concerted actions in the following areas:

First, we urgently need the suggested global coordination and cooperation mechanism for joint trade and investment promotion for crisis-relief. Such mechanism should give priority to the special needs of the LLDCs that require capacity development to harness trade, achieve structural economic transformation and to realize the SDGs.

Second, financial support to LLDCs is critical to boost up the urgently needed resilient infrastructure and trade facilitation mechanisms for smooth flow of goods which are key to their recovery.

Third, LLDCs need to be supported in their efforts to achieve digital transformation.

Fourth, we call on the international community to support development of strong and resilient health systems, underpinned by universal health coverage, that focus on equitable access, quality and financial protection, and easy and affordable access to vaccines once they are released.

Fifth, concrete support measures should be put in place to address debt vulnerabilities including through debt cancellation for highly indebted countries, debt relief by international creditors, exchange or reprofile debt to reduce debt service, writing-off debt, debt swaps for highly indebted countries, debt buy-backs and support market access.

Sixth, we call on our development partners to maintain current official development assistance levels given its crucial importance to support our countries to recover sustainably. Among the LLDCs, the financial gap to implement the SDGs appears more acute in the LDCs. They need predictable external support measures in the form of aid, investment, technology innovation, development and transfer.

Seventh, we call on International Financial Institutions to prioritize the special needs of the LLDCs in their recovery efforts.

Eighth, we request the UN system and other international and regional organizations to give priority support to the LLDCs' recovery efforts – including the effective execution of Roadmap for accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action.

Finally, we call on the private sector to actively engage in the recovery efforts, particularly in sustainable development projects, including through the PPPs.

To conclude, let me reiterate the unfailing support of the LLDC Member States in implementing the global development agenda.

I thank you!

**ADDRESS BY MR. K P SHARMA OLI, PRIME MINISTER OF
NEPAL, TO THE HIGH-LEVEL VIRTUAL SIDE EVENT AT THE
UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON “POVERTY AT CROSSROAD:
USING LEADERSHIP AND THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY
INDEXES TO BUILD BACK BETTER”
24 SEPTEMBER 2020 (9:00 NEW YORK)**

**Excellencies the Heads of State and Government,
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

I commend the Government of Chile, MPPN and OPHI for hosting this event.

As we begin the decade of implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, progress in poverty reduction should be a primary indicator of assessing our overall performance.

The Constitution of Nepal enshrines several indicators of multiple poverty as fundamental rights of the citizen that include right to food, right to basic education and primary health care, right to clean water and sanitation, right to decent housing, and right to social protection. The constitution guides us to strive for establishing an egalitarian society. Our economic policies are aimed at promoting economic growth with equity and social justice.

Our goal is to end all forms of discrimination, deprivation and improve the quality of lives of our people. We are committed to ensure that ‘no one remains hungry, and no one dies of hunger’. We also aim at securing human security as early as possible to end all forms of poverty in the country.

We have implemented targeted programs to reducing poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and improving delivery of essential services. Education is compulsory up to basic level and free up to secondary level. Primary health care is free for all citizen. Subsidized health insurance scheme has covered a large section of people. Insurance against COVID-19 is also in implementation.

Universal access to renewable energy, basic water supply and sanitation is being achieved soon. Safe and decent housing schemes of the government is offering better housing facility for the poor. More than one third of the people are covered by one type of social protection or the other.

Income generating activities through government targeted programs, micro finance services, and interventions of cooperative and community organizations have been successful to reduce absolute poverty more than one percentage point every year for some years now. All these have contributed for overall reduction of poverty and improvement in human development indices.

Overall, we have institutionalized our approach of looking at poverty through the prism of more than absolute income. Considering poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon, we have considered both the monetary and non-monetary aspects of poverty in our national development strategy.

In partnership with OPHI, Nepal published first Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) in 2018. The report identified that the incidence of multidimensional poverty in Nepal has declined by half from 59% in 2006 to 29% in 2014.

The two indicators- nutrition and schooling- in which we were lagging behind have received renewed priority.

Nepal will release updated second report of National MPI within this year reflecting the status as of 2018-19. By aligning with the SDGs, we have set a target of reducing MPI to 11.5% by the end of 2024.

To complement this endeavour, Nepal has undertaken series of Living Standards Survey, Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey, and Demographic Health Survey for monitoring both the monetary and non-monetary measures of poverty. The 12th round of the decennial population census in 2021 will add significant value in this process.

Investing in people and preventing them from re-lapsing into poverty remains the key challenge. In devising appropriate policies, credible MPI data would provide a useful base. However, in a country of diverse geographical, social, economic and cultural conditions like Nepal, we must generate MPI at a much-disaggregated level so that resources could be judiciously allocated to reduce inequality and meet our aspiration of 'Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali' along with eliminating all kinds of inequality.

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted our effort to end absolute poverty and move to reducing all other forms of poverty as soon as possible. We have been making best efforts to protect lives of our citizen against both the health and economic threats posed by the pandemic. I firmly believe that with sincere national endeavour and larger global development cooperation and dedicated support measures, we can overcome this pandemic, achieve economic recovery and move to the path of speedy development.

It is high time that States reorient economic priorities and re-allocate resources for building and maintaining of basic social protection, health care and education.

Thank you.

**STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER OF NEPAL MR. K P SHARMA
OLI AT THE CLIMATE AMBITION SUMMIT
12 DECEMBER 2020**

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

I commend the leadership of Chile, France, Italy, UK and the United Nations for convening this summit.

The COVID-19 has forced us to postpone the COP-26. However, our quest for a cleaner and greener earth cannot be postponed.

Nepal strongly supports the Paris Agreement and the call to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees.

We are committed to the promotion of climate-resilient development and aim to move towards a zero-carbon economy.

To promote green growth and green recovery, we prioritize producing clean and renewable energy, promoting e-mobility, low carbon infrastructure and ecotourism.

We aim to extend protected area from 23% to 30% by 2030 and preserve biodiversity.

I urge the world to recognize value of the Himalayas to maintain ecological balance in the oceans and control global warming.

Nepal will submit enhanced NDCs by the end of this year and develop an ambitious Long-Term Strategy to reach net zero scenario by 2050.

We are developing a National Adaptation Plan and corresponding Climate Finance Strategy and Roadmap by 2021.

We will introduce climate resilient adaptation plans in all 753 Local Levels by 2030.

Easy and adequate access to climate finance becomes critical for us to implement these ambitions.

We seek hands of all countries to march ahead for a greener journey together.

Thank you.

**STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER OF NEPAL MR. K P SHARMA
OLI AT THE '31ST SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL
ASSEMBLY IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC'
3 DECEMBER 2020, NEW YORK**

Mr. President

Mr. Secretary-General

Excellencies, and

Distinguished Delegates.

I thank you, Mr. President, for convening the Special Session on the COVID-19 Pandemic.

With its unprecedented scope and speed, the pandemic has affected everyone, everywhere. The tragedy is unspeakable, with over 1.3 million lives lost and almost all societies, economies, and nations severely suffered.

The present pandemic is not just a health emergency. It is a wake-up call against the widening inequality among and within the nations and humanity's failure to live in harmony with nature.

Yes, we all are in the same firestorm. Some of us may think that we are well protected, but it is not so. All of are in danger.

The pandemic has taught us a precious lesson. This world is a small boat, we all are its passengers. We like it or not, we share the same fate.

Mr. President,

Like any other countries, Nepal was not prepared for the crisis of this scale.

However, we have deployed all political, economic, human, and technological resources at our disposal to contain the virus.

We are guided primarily by the three objectives of strengthening of health care system; protecting people's lives; and building a sustainable and resilient recovery.

Testing and treatment services are provided free of charge to the needy people. Necessary infrastructures, human and financial resources, and medical equipment are ensured to the health systems in federal, provincial, and local levels.

Beginning from almost none, we extended PCR testing facility to 68 laboratories across the country. More than 70 hospitals have been designated as COVID-19 hospitals. We are moving ahead with the target of building hospitals with basic health care facilities in all 753 Local Levels.

We developed total 48 sets of COVID-19 related Protocols and Guidelines.

Raising public awareness about health protocols, safety and sanitization through social organizations, individuals, mass media, social media and daily briefing by the Health Ministry have been particularly useful.

Mr. President,

Nepal commends the United Nations, and in particular the WHO, for their global coordination and leadership during the crisis.

While we confront the challenges, a robust global response is a must to fend off this crisis.

First and foremost, we must give a fresh lease of life to multilateralism.

We need a revitalized multilateralism that is capable of tackling pressing challenges of our time, from poverty, hunger and rising inequality to climate crisis and global pandemic.

For this, we must choose a path of cooperation and solidarity, not solitary action.

Second, the pandemic should not be used as a pretext for backtracking from international solidarity and commitments. Countries in special situation stand in need of greater support to stabilize their economy, safeguard fiscal space, and tackle debt crisis.

Third, while we are encouraged by the good news about vaccine, uncertainty looms large if this will be available for all. We commend the initiative of COVAX to ensure access to vaccines to all- the rich and poor.

The world will not be safe from the pandemic unless universal coverage of vaccine is ensured.

When the entire humanity is in crisis, we strongly believe that life-saving vaccines cannot be the means of maximizing profit. They must be truly global public goods affordable and accessible to all countries and all people.

Finally, as we look to recover and rebuild better, our efforts must be aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. We must invest in health and social protection systems; invest in infrastructure and create jobs.

National endeavours in this regard must be complemented by international support measures.

The present crisis demands a genuine commitment to save lives and global unity to protect societies. Human civilizations have always endured devastating challenges and recovered better.

We must not falter. We must act now, and act as one community, one civilization and one world.

We must rebound better than ever leaving no one behind.

Thank you.

**STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER OF NEPAL MR. K P SHARMA
OLI AT THE VIRTUAL CLIMATE VULNERABLE FORUM
LEADERS EVENT ORGANIZED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE
75TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY 2020 (07 OCTOBER 2020)**

**Madam Chair, Your Excellency Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

I begin by congratulating Bangladesh for assuming the Chairmanship of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) and coordinating this important event.

Climate change today poses an existential threat. The best available science tells us that with rising temperature, rising sea levels, and melting glaciers, humanity is on the wrong side of the race against nature.

Retreat of the glacial ice due to global warming has negatively impacted the lives and livelihoods of the Himalayan and high mountain civilization, induced disasters in the lowlands and caused rise of the ocean levels.

Nepal's snow-fed rivers nourish the basins and ultimately help cleaning of the ocean ecosystems. They serve as natural climate stabilizer signifying the organic linkage between mountains and the oceans.

It is ironic that the climate vulnerable countries like ours have borne the brunt of inaction of others.

The impacts of climate change do not respect political boundaries. Therefore, the vision set by the CVF for increased commitment by all nations to limit the rise of global temperature to 1.5°C is now more important than ever.

The inception of 'Survival Deadline' today highlights the urgency of climate action.

The large emitters should break their silence and scale up climate ambitions to send a strong signal.

This is a time to walk the talk.

It is a time to inspire others by example with full and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement.

For us, every year counts and reducing every fraction of a degree in temperature matters.

It is a question of survival for the vulnerable countries.

CVF has always been on a frontline with good track record to lead the long-term sustainable solution to climate change. It is important to keep the climate issues at the top of global political agenda as we prepare for COP 26 next year.

Nepal remains committed to communicate enhanced Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) by the end of this year.

Climate action for the vulnerable countries like us rests in access to climate financing, affordable technology, and implementable adaptation and mitigation programs.

Excellencies,

The COVID-19 crisis has devastated human lives and economies.

But the pandemic can be an opportunity for a greener and more sustainable health and economies. The lesson learnt can be useful to tackle climate change with the similar sense of urgency and priority at national, regional and international levels.

The need is to tread on the right path.

The need is to unite for climate actions, not to pitch politics against climate change.

The need is to have a common plan- the plan of sustainable solutions.

There is no time to lose.

Action must start now, as this is a question of our survival.

I thank you!

**REMARKS BY MR. PRADEEP KUMAR GYAWALI, MINISTER
FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF NEPAL THE VIDEO CONFERENCE
OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN, THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF CHINA, NEPAL AND THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF
PAKISTAN ON JOINT RESPONSE TO COVID-19
(MONDAY, 27 JULY 2020)**

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

Your Excellency Mr. Mohammed Haneef Atmar, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Your Excellency Mr. Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Good evening to you all,

Excellencies,

At the outset, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to my good friend-Your Excellency Mr. Wang Yi, the State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, for your insightful opening remarks. I appreciate your initiative and leadership in convening this video conference to exchange ideas for jointly combating the spread of COVID-19 pandemic in our neighbourhoods and beyond. I am glad that this virtual conference is taking place on the eve of the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and China.

I would also like to take this opportunity to greet and welcome the honourable foreign ministers of Afghanistan and Pakistan in this virtual conference.

Excellencies,

The sudden outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has posed a serious threat to human health, safety and wellbeing in our region and beyond. It has affected almost every nation on earth, infected millions of people worldwide, and claimed more than six hundred thousand precious lives. I express my profound grief over every life lost and extend my deep condolences to the families and loved ones of those who died from the novel coronavirus infections since its first outbreak late last year.

It is a matter of great concern that the virus has overstretched our health care systems, disrupted normal economic activities and brought daunting challenges to the task of socio-economic development in our countries. It has badly affected our economies and jobs, restricted the movement of peoples within and across countries, and transformed the way we work, do business, and interact with each other. In a nutshell, it has affected every human being more acutely, and slowed the development process across the world.

On the other hand, the pandemic has also put into sharp focus the values of our common humanity. We acutely realize the importance of solidarity and cooperation that sustain us as one humanity with shared future. I believe that pandemic like COVID-19 can only be contained and defeated through genuine cooperation and joint efforts.

Hence, there should be genuine solidarity and mutual support as well as international co-operation and collective efforts to combat this pandemic together. I believe we all agree to the importance of global institutions that uphold multilateralism and international justice, and provide assistance and support to countries that need them the most to cope with such pandemic as COVID-19.

We believe that international organizations such as WHO should be strengthened further and supported with more resources and technologies to promote cooperation, collaboration and synergetic global response against the pandemic. Bilateral, regional and international co-operation will be crucial in complementing our efforts for containing and defeating the virus, and bringing back the global economy to normal operation.

Excellencies:

It is obvious that joint efforts and cooperation combined with adequate domestic measures constitute the key to defeat and eliminate the menace of COVID-19 as the pandemic respects no borders and spares no ethnic groups or particular races.

I am happy to endorse the agenda advanced by our esteemed friend-State Councilor and Foreign Minister of China Mr. Wang Yi to build political consensus on joint response to COVID-19 by strengthening joint prevention and control and promoting practical cooperation for resuming economic development.

Let me share with you that we have built common and cordial understating on the outbreak and spread of pandemic and its impact in our countries. Our leaders are on a regular contact with the leaders of the friendly countries to take stock of the fast-spreading pandemic in our respective countries and to extend support and cooperation to each other in times of need.

In this context, I fondly recall the recent telephone conversation between the Rt. Hon'ble President of Nepal Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari with the President of China His Excellency Mr. Xi Jinping. The Solidarity Message extended by the President of Nepal to the President and people of China on 4th April 2020, the day of national mourning to commemorate the front-line heroes of the pandemic who sacrificed their lives while

combating the COVID-19 infections, as well as the tweet by the Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister of Nepal on this occasion speak eloquently of the close contacts and concerns at the highest political level on the situation of pandemic in our respective countries.

Likewise, my own telephone conversation with my esteemed friend Wang Yi on the unfolding situation in our respective countries and our commitment to solidarity, support and cooperation to collectively fight the virus stand testimony to our collective resolve to face the pandemic together. Similarly, the recent video conference with the leaders of SAARC and the video conference of the BRI countries convened a few weeks ago by our respected friend and State Councilor Wang Yi in promoting collaboration to jointly combat the COVID-19 pandemic in the BRI partner countries are examples of building common understanding and jointly tackling the spread of the pandemic in our countries and the region.

These are all excellent examples of the deep and multi-faceted co-operative relations between Nepal and the People's Republic of China and other friends which, apart from being close and friendly neighbours, are also important Belt and Road Initiative partners.

We appreciate China's role in providing crucial support and cooperation to the needy countries. In this context, we welcome President Xi Jinping's announcement at the 73rd World Health Assembly that China will treat anti-COVID-19 vaccines as global public goods, and that will be made easily accessible and affordable to all people and countries in the world. There is no doubt that this wise and generous policy will go a long way in nurturing a feeling of safety and security among the people throughout the world. We are encouraged by the ongoing researches on anti-COVID-19 vaccines. It will not only rekindle peoples' hope but also revive societies and economies, and enable them to resume their previous tempo and rhythm, and help countries return to normal mode of life at an early date.

Excellencies,

As a land connected to the southern route of the ancient Silk Road, it is a matter of great honour for Nepal to be a partner of China's BRI Initiative that seeks to boost connectivity and trade along the Belt and Road countries.

We are confident that BRI will support the process of economic transformation of landlocked Nepal and similar other countries by expanding and upgrading its connectivity networks and integrating its economy into the global market.

We believe that under President's Xi's visionary leadership, Belt and Road Initiative will contribute to eradicating poverty by deepening and expanding trade, revolutionizing industries, creating jobs and improving the living conditions of the people and increasing economic opportunities. In realizing these lofty goals, we hope that the Trans-Himalayan Multidimensional Connectivity Network, together with the Nepal-China Cross-Border Railway, will play a prominent role.

For combating the COVID-19 pandemic, Nepal looks forward to working together with our immediate neighbour- China, and our friends Afghanistan and Pakistan by exploring the possibilities of mutually beneficial co-operation in areas that need an effective and concerted response.

Building robust health systems in our countries will be of critical significance in safeguarding our peoples against the threat of infectious diseases such as COVID-19. Protection of life assumes paramount importance in our daily governance.

I appreciate the readiness of China to scale up cooperation with Nepal, Afghanistan and Pakistan in testing, treatment, medicine and vaccines, as well as assisting them with capacity building in the field of public health. This is a welcome initiative from our close friend and neighbour-China. We thank Excellency Wang Yi for this generous offer.

In this context, we feel the need to ensure unimpeded anti-epidemic supply chains, as well as smooth and adequate flow of goods and equipment across the border that supports our development projects and revives the trade and business activities in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic. We also support initiatives for the movement of people with adequate epidemic prevention and control measures in place.

It is a matter of happiness that over the past several months, China has provided medical assistance and support to many countries across the world. This is a good example of international humanitarian assistance for saving precious lives and stemming the tide of infection.

Excellencies,

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you that, during the period of the epidemic, Nepal-China co-operation in fighting the pandemic has remained quite strong.

China has remained at the forefront in providing the much-needed anti-COVID-19 medical supplies to Nepal, such as masks, PPEs, testing machines, kits and other vital items. Several provinces, municipalities, charitable institutions, business enterprises, friendly associations and individuals have also provided such support to Nepal.

Nepal attaches topmost priority to save lives and contain the infections of the virus. As of today, Nepal has witnessed over 18,000 corona virus cases with 45 deaths and more than thirteen thousand cases of recovery. We have mobilized all necessary resources at our disposal to combat and contain the virus. Our efforts have been quite effective in containing the pandemic. We lock-downed the country for almost three months and took adequate measures to stop the spread of the infections in the communities.

Now, the situation is under control and the pandemic is receding. However, challenges persist. We have taken all precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the virus. With the decreasing number of daily infections, we have recently decided to ease the

lockdown and open the country for the normal movement of people and operation of businesses. Domestic and international air flights will resume from the middle of August. Life is gradually returning to normal mode.

However, there is no room for complacency. We should be cautious and vigilant all along. Hence, additional medical supplies and logistics will be needed to cope with the future infections that may occur. We appreciate China for its cooperation all along and look forward to its continued support and cooperation in the supplies of much-needed medical logistics in the coming days as well.

Excellencies,

Nepal stands ready to work with China and other neighbouring countries to advance the cooperation for jointly containing and defeating the corona infections, and build a community with a shared future for mankind.

I thank you for your kind attention. My special thanks go to His Excellency Wang Yi for his consistent leadership in combating this pandemic collectively through cooperation and mutual support. We applaud China's leadership in this regard and join hands with you all in collectively eliminating this pandemic from our region and the world by adopting necessary preventive measures and educating our people to live and lead healthy and secure life without fear even amid the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you all once again for your patient listening.

**REMARKS BY MR. PRADEEP KUMAR GYAWALI, MINISTER
FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF NEPAL DURING THE JOINT
ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NEW HEIGHT OF MOUNT
SAGARMATHA/ZHUMULANGMA
(08 DECEMBER 2020)**

Namaste and good afternoon

Your Excellency Mr. Wang Yi,

Your Excellency Mr. Lu Hao,

My cabinet colleague Hon. Ms. Padma Kumari Aryal,

Distinguished members of both delegations

Dear friends!

I feel honoured and privileged to be part of this important event and join Your Excellency Mr. Wang Yi and other members of our two delegations.

This is, indeed, a special moment for us all.

Mount Sagarmatha or Zhumulangma has remained an eternal symbol of good neighbourly relations and continued friendship between Nepal and China.

Last year, our two countries agreed to jointly announce the new height of Mount Sagarmatha/Zhumulangma.

After completing a rather arduous and meticulous field survey works by our respective survey departments and jointly processing of the surveyed data by our technical committee, the two governments agreed on the new height of Mount Sagarmatha/Zhumulangma.

In view of the significance of this particular event and to mark the special occasion, the Right Honourable President of Nepal and His Excellency the President of the People's Republic of China have exchanged their congratulatory messages.

I have the honour to read out the message of the President of Nepal, Rt. Honourable Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari, addressed to His Excellency Mr. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China.

Quote:**Excellency,**

It gives me great pleasure to state that Nepal and China have always remained good friends, close neighbours and trusted partners. Since time immemorial, our two countries have been enjoying friendly relations marked by immense goodwill, strong friendship, close cooperation, mutual trust, and genuine appreciation of each other's legitimate interests, concerns and sensitivities. Our two countries are not only committed to the five principles of peaceful coexistence as salient features of bilateral relationship, but also have abided by its true spirit in maintaining and consolidating the bond of friendship. In this spirit, Nepal unequivocally stands for one China policy. Over the years, Nepal-China relations have grown stronger and deeper to our mutual satisfaction. I firmly believe that good neighbourly relations and partnership in the field of economic development, connectivity and people to people contacts serves well the interests of our two governments and peoples while contributing to achieving peace, stability and development. Nepal joined Your Excellency's vision for promoting shared prosperity through the Belt and Road Initiative with the aspiration of building a web of infrastructures for connecting trade, investment and people between our two countries through the development of Trans-Himalayan Multidimensional Connectivity Network.

I have the honour to happily recall my State Visit to the People's Republic of China in April 2019 and Your Excellency's State Visit to Nepal in October 2019 and the initiatives we took together to further consolidate our traditionally close relations by expanding cooperation in wider areas of mutual interest. It was during this visit that we both decided to elevate our relations to a Strategic Partnership of Cooperation Featuring Ever-lasting Friendship for Development and Prosperity. This partnership along with a host of agreements signed during the visit have ushered us into a new era of bilateral engagements and collaboration. Both of our governments are committed to implementing those agreements and MOUs so as to realize the shared aspirations of socio-economic development and prosperity of our two countries and peoples.

On this background, I have the distinct pleasure to underline that as per the understanding reached between our two governments during Your Excellency's visit to Nepal last year on the joint announcement of the height of Mount Sagarmatha/Zhumulangma, our relevant authorities have successfully completed the joint processing of the surveyed data and come up with the new height of Mount Sagarmatha/Zhumulangma.

At this historic moment, after having measured and jointly processed the survey data by the respective survey departments of our two countries, I am pleased to join Your Excellency to jointly announce the snow height of 8848.86 meter as the new height of Mount Sagarmatha/Zhumulangma.

Excellency, it is a historic day today. Indeed, accomplishing this important task with our own human resource and technical capacity is a significant achievement. While sharing this happy moment, I extend my sincere congratulations to the Governments and peoples of both Nepal and China. I also wish to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to all the people involved in this process, more specifically to the survey officials of both countries, whose hard work and diligence accomplished this important task.

Today, a special state of happiness comes also with the fact that Mount Sagarmatha/Zhumulangma has not only been an immortal identity of Nepal but also a symbol of pride intrinsically linked to the popular emotion, love and sentiment among the people of Nepal. Equally we take pride on that Mount Sagarmatha/Zhumulangma remains a perennial symbol of age-old friendship between Nepal and China.

I am confident that Nepal-China relations closely linked, as they are, by mountains and rivers will reach as high as the new height of Mount Sagarmatha/Zhumulangma and will remain as pure as the white snow and as majestic as the standing of the Himalayas.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Bidya Devi Bhandari

His Excellency Mr. Xi Jinping

President of the People's Republic of China

Beijing

Unquote

Excellency,

Indeed, this is a historic day.

There are many other milestones we want to achieve together by way of building connectivity, promoting trade, development, investment, tourism, culture, education, and so many other areas where our two countries are committed to working together.

I am confident that the spirit of close friendship and partnership will take our relations from strength to strength.

I thank you all.

**REMARKS BY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS MR. PRADEEP
KUMAR GYAWALI DURING THE VIDEO CONFERENCE OF
THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF AFGHANISTAN, BANGLADESH,
CHINA, NEPAL, PAKISTAN AND SRI LANKA ON JOINT
RESPONSE TO COVID-19
(27 APRIL 2021)**

Your Excellency Wang Yi, State Councilor and Foreign Minister of Peoples' Republic of China,

Excellencies Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

Distinguished delegates!

Namaskar, Nihao and a very good afternoon!

Let me begin by extending our sincere appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Wang Yi for hosting this important meeting to follow up our meeting virtually held in July last year.

Our battle against COVID-19 pandemic that started more than a year ago continues even today as the humanity still grapples with the virus.

Rising cases with new variants in our region and beyond, and rapid infection among people of all age groups, including the children, have been quite alarming.

I join Your Excellency Wang Yi in expressing our sympathy and solidarity with the Government and people of India in their fight against the new wave of COVID-19.

There are no signs of disappearance of the pandemic anytime soon.

It is very disheartening that more than 3 million people have already succumbed to the pandemic and over 143 million people infected with this virus, the world over.

In Nepal, over 3 hundred thousand people have been tested positive so far. Total death rate is about 1.07% which remains well below the global average. Total recovery rate stands at 95.9%. We have vaccinated more than 2 million people with priority basis.

Providing proper health care to every citizen has become yet again an uphill task. With this, lives and livelihoods too are under strain.

We have now put new measures in place including closure of schools, colleges and restriction of number in religious and social functions so as to contain the spread of the virus. Local administration has been empowered to impose localized containment measures in high-risk areas, including regulation of non-essential services, suspension of gatherings and crowds.

Excellencies,

As we know, the best way to control the pandemic is fighting against it collectively through strengthened cooperation, solidarity and partnership among ourselves.

By now, anti-COVID-19 vaccines have already been rolled out in different countries. We appreciate President Xi's public announcement to make COVID-19 vaccines as global public goods and make them accessible and affordable to the developing world.

We remain grateful to the Government of China for the generous support of eight hundred thousand doses of Sinopharm vaccines as well as other essential medical supplies and logistics. I thank Your Excellency Wang for the announcement of additional support of medical items to Nepal. Concerned officials of Nepal will coordinate and transmit our requirement of priority items shortly for the utilization of this generous assistance.

An important lesson we have learnt from this pandemic is that no one can be safe until everyone is safe. The virus does not know national boundaries. It does not differentiate between small or big, rich or poor, east or west, north or south.

Availability and affordability of the vaccines has become even more critical as the world-wide production of the vaccines is yet to meet the global demand.

In order to save precious lives of our people and defeat this pandemic, we need more concrete vaccine cooperation internationally.

Nepal supports the WHO-led COVAX facility to ensure equitable access for all countries to the approved COVID-19 vaccines. All vaccine producing countries should ensure that COVAX facility is accorded as a priority recipient of COVID-19 vaccines.

Excellencies,

The economic fallout of the pandemic has been widespread and profound. Nepal's impressive economic growth in pre-COVID-19 years has started shrinking.

Some important sectors like agriculture, remittances, tourism, manufacturing which remain the mainstay of the economy have not yet revived fully. Employment opportunities have declined. People in critical line of poverty threshold are under enormous strain. Businesses are badly hampered. Supply chains are yet to become normal. We have not been able to transition to a viable economic alternative either.

Since we all South Asian countries have faced almost similar challenges in the recovery and revival, it may be pertinent to underline certain measures and steps that may be useful as we confront the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic:

First, solidarity and cooperation at the bilateral, regional and global levels should be further strengthened and synergized to defeat the virus. The momentum of economic activities will gather pace once the transmission of the virus is fully contained. Building of health infrastructures and sustained support of medicines, vaccines and medical equipment and logistics continue to be critical for countries like Nepal.

China's proposal to keep reserves for emergency supplies to participating countries is commendable. We would be happy to work together with China and all friendly countries who are represented here to make this provision open, inclusive, sustainable, and demand driven.

Second, vaccine cooperation is critical element in overall COVID-19 related cooperation. Both availability and affordability of vaccines are important for countries that do not produce them. We must do away with a situation of stockpiling of vaccines in one country and scarcity of the same in other countries. They must be genuinely global public goods where access of everyone must be ensured. We appreciate China's assistance of COVID-19 vaccines and look forward to their availability in affordable price.

Third, smooth and uninterrupted operation of international borders for two-way trade flow is of great importance to ensure post pandemic economic recovery at a relatively quicker pace. What is important is to gear our efforts towards putting in place adequate health and safety measures and allow the smooth movement of goods.

Fourth, we must also ensure smooth movement of people across national boundaries following sufficient health and safety protocols. Such movement facilitates traders, officials, entrepreneurs, students, travellers, experts, technical manpower and workers. This will also help boost tourism industry. As the vaccines are rolled out, we may need to discuss on how we can better coordinate with the movement of people across national frontiers.

Fifth, continuity and resumption of major development projects is critically important to build our economies at this difficult hour. In view of this, within a new normal and within the parameter of health guidelines, Nepal has facilitated the movement of contractors, experts, technicians, workers as well as the project equipment for the on-going development projects. It is in fact most crucial to bring socio-economic development activities back on track. We are in close coordination with Chinese side to expedite the works in the China-aided and other commercial projects in Nepal.

Sixth, development partners should continue to providing development assistance and help create trade opportunities. Increasing investment, creating domestic employment opportunities, providing technology to promote SMEs, among others, would go a long way in bringing our economic growth back on track.

China's proposal to create the Poverty Alleviation and Cooperative Development Centre and the E-commerce Cooperation Forum on Poverty Alleviation in Rural Areas would be important to this end.

Poverty remains the biggest hurdle to achieve SDGs. As China has been able to eradicate absolute poverty within quite a short span of time, our cooperation and our partnership with China in this area will be crucial for us.

Sharing of experiences and lesson learnt, supporting farmers and small businesses, leveraging their skills, knowledge and resources, linking their products to a regional and global supply chains are all important for our efforts to poverty alleviation.

At the end, Excellencies, let me stress that Nepal stands ready to join hands with friendly countries to further consolidate our cooperation and collaboration in the spirit of solidarity and friendship in stamping out the pandemic and build our economies.

I thank you all for your kind attention.

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS MR.
PRADEEP KUMAR GYAWALI AT EVENT TO COMMEMORATE
THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE TOTAL ELIMINATION OF
NUCLEAR WEAPONS, FRIDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2020**

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

At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this event to commemorate the international day for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

We are living in unprecedented times. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused disruptions in lives, livelihoods, and economies.

However, the pandemic has taught us an important lesson that human lives are more precious than anything else.

In nine months, we have lost over a million lives to the pandemic. But, we can lose more lives within a wink of an eye in case of a nuclear explosion- whether accidental or intentional.

The scientific race for vaccines has kept our hope alive to win the war against this virus. But no vaccine would save us from the nuclear catastrophe. Death, destruction, and devastation would be much more severe, inhumane, and indiscriminate- both for the present and future generations.

Despite this, it is ironic that huge amount is spent on nuclear weapons every year, which is much higher than official development assistance to the neediest and poorest countries.

It is time to reflect on where our investment should be:

- On nuclear weapons or poverty reduction?
- On eternal annihilation or environmental conservation?

Answer to these questions is plain and simple. We need to focus on the security and wellbeing of our people and humanity at large.

The dividend of disarmament should be diverted to achieving SDGs.

A small fraction of the costs of armament could save millions from hunger and disease; and can supply safe drinking water and basic health services.

More diplomatic efforts can be devoted to the protection of environment, trade promotion, and economic development if we all abide by nuclear disarmament regimes including NPT, CTBT, and TPNW.

To conclude, Mr. President, I reaffirm Nepal's principled position that universal peace and security can only be ensured through a time-bound, general and complete disarmament of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

Nepal believes that the peaceful use of nuclear energy and the complete disarmament of nuclear weapons are two sides of the same coin.

Nuclear technology should be harnessed for peaceful purposes of promoting health care, increasing agricultural productivity and saving lives.

The world will never be a safer place as long as specter of nuclear weapons looms large.

Thank you.

**VIRTUAL MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE NON-ALIGNED
MOVEMENT (NAM) ON THE MARGINS OF THE 75TH SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
09 OCTOBER 2020**

Theme: Bandung+65: More Relevant, United and Effective NAM against Emerging Global Challenge Including COVID-19

Mr. Chairman

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates.

I would like to begin by thanking the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Chair of the Non-aligned Movement, for convening this Meeting.

We appreciate Azerbaijan's dynamic leadership provided to our movement during these difficult times.

The Online Summit of the NAM Task Force held in May 2020 was a worthy initiative in mustering international support against COVID-19.

We are confident that the 31st special session of the UNGA being convened at the request of the NAM will be able to garner wider international support, solidarity and commitment to fight this pandemic.

Mr. Chairman,

Sixty-five years ago, 29 Asian African countries, including my own country Nepal, assembled in Bandung with the shared aspiration of peace, prosperity, harmony and justice.

The leaders stood for equality among nations, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference and economic cooperation.

They advocated for human rights and prosperity for all.

And, more importantly, they called for addressing global challenges and crises through cooperation and collaboration.

The ten Principles enunciated in the Bandung Declaration laid the foundation of Non-aligned Movement.

Adopted at the backdrop of complex international geo-politics, these principles are time-tested and stand relevant. They bear even greater meaning today when the very foundation of cooperative global order confronts with parochial nationalism and the return of geopolitics.

The challenges posed by COVID-19 and its impacts on the poorest and most vulnerable people calls for greater international collaboration and support. The pandemic has taught us that no country- whether big or small- is immune from the challenges of global proportion.

Effective and coordinated efforts are needed to address the current and emerging challenges and emergencies. Only through larger international collaboration and synergy we can win the pandemic. United we stand stronger, divided we will fail, and the virus will win.

Therefore, this is not a time to abdicate from international responsibility and resort to self-centered nationalism. This is a time to internalize the cost of discord and benefit of cooperation, strengthen multilateral institutions and promote multilateralism with the United Nations at its centre.

We must retain the spirit of solidarity and cooperation. This is the only way where all nations large or small can coexist in peace and dignity.

With its numerical and moral strength, NAM should claim its rightful place and amplify the voice of the weak and vulnerable countries in their fight against the pandemic. NAM must prove itself as a collective voice of reason and a source of strength to its membership.

For this, we the Member States of NAM, need to recommit ourselves to make the Movement more effective and faithfully adhere to its principles.

The current crisis requires investing in health systems, social protection and poverty reduction; removing of trade barriers; and accelerating of efforts to address the climate crisis. NAM has to take a leadership role in these areas.

The challenges confronted by the LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS are unique and different. They require robust support measures in the form of preferential trade, investment, technology and knowledge transfer and development cooperation. This has become even more important in the face of the present global health crisis and resulting economic downturn.

With only one decade left to achieve the 2030 Agenda, we must accelerate its implementation and build sustainable and resilient pathways to address the long-term developmental consequences of COVID-19.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I reaffirm Nepal's profound commitment to the principles of NAM and pledge our continued cooperation to its processes and initiatives.

I thank you.

**STATEMENT BY MR. PRADEEP KUMAR GYAWALI, MINISTER
FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AT THE CONFERENCE ON ‘NEPAL’S
CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UN PEACEKEEPING’
19 APRIL 2021, HOTEL HIMALAYA, KUPONDOLE
(3-6:10 PM SINGAPORE TIME) (+2:15 NST)**

Dr. Nischal N Pandey

Professor C Raja Mohan

Mr. Christian Echle, and

Distinguished participants:

At the outset, I would like to commend the efforts of ISAS, COSATT, and KAS for organizing this event on ‘Nepal’s Contribution to UN peacekeeping’.

I thank the hosts for inviting me to share my thoughts on the theme which is of paramount importance for Nepal.

I would like to build on what the previous speakers have said and will try to focus on three key aspects: Nepal’s contribution to UN peacekeeping, our perspectives on peacekeeping, and the challenges we face in our efforts to further enhance this flagship contribution of Nepal to the cause of international peace and security.

Since the first deployment in 1948, the scope of UN peacekeeping operations has evolved significantly. Over the seven decades, UN peacekeeping has advanced itself from ‘ceasefire monitoring’ to ‘multi-dimensional’ operations. It now entails not only military and police personnel but also civilian experts of various fields such as rule of law, justice, human rights, women empowerment, and economic reconstruction for promoting peace, stability, and development.

Peacekeeping has continued to remain not only a unique innovation but also an effective tool available to the United Nations to maintain peace and security in the troubled parts of the world. It is more so during the crises. Therefore, the call for adequate and predictable resources and support to UN peacekeeping missions has been more critical than ever before.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In line with Nepal's unflinching faith in the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, we have been a steadfast partner and a consistent contributor to UN peacekeeping since 1958, which was only three years after our joining the UN.

Needless to say, Nepal's decision to join the UN peacekeeping was to support the noble cause of maintenance of international peace, security and stability. Over the six decades, our peacekeepers have acquired immense international exposure and experience of working in a complex security environment. The longstanding involvement of our personnel has helped them treasure the skills, expertise and confidence required in a professional army.

Through participation in UN peacekeeping, Nepal has earned an international repute as a country committed to upholding the principles as stipulated in the UN Charter. 'The norms of world peace' has been one of the fundamental bases of Nepal's foreign policy. We wish to prosper in peace and spread the same message to the global community through our blue helmets. After all, peace, harmony and compassion are the innate attributes that we inherited from Buddha, the apostle of peace and the enlightened son of Nepal.

Dear Friends,

Nepal contributes to UN peacekeeping in multiple ways:

First of all, through its constructive participation in different international negotiations, Nepal contributes to the setting of normative frameworks which guide the peacekeeping operations. It is an active member of the Special Committee on UN peace operations, popularly known as the C34 Committee at the UN. Nepal focuses particularly on improving safety and security of UN peacekeepers, enhancing partnership among different stakeholders, protecting the civilians, peace-building and sustaining peace in conflict-affected countries, and enhancing the participation of women and youths in peacekeeping and peace-building activities.

Nepal also participates in the triennial Contingent-Owned Equipment (COE) working group which determines the rates of reimbursements to the troop and police-contributing countries. It chaired the COE working group in 2017. Similarly, Nepal is active in the Fourth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly which deliberates on all aspects of peacekeeping and special political missions. Nepal has served twice as the Chair of the Fourth Committee as of now.

Second, Nepal contributes financially to UN peacekeeping operations by paying the assessed contribution as per the rules of the United Nations. The assessed contribution to each of the missions is based on the size of the economy of a country.

Third and important, we contribute through the deployment of troops, formed police units, and individual police and military officers, at the request of the UN headquarters. Nepal has also contributed through the provision of niche capabilities such as engineers, military police, and special force contingents. Additionally, Nepali civilian experts have participated in peace missions in their personal capacity.

Nepal has thus far participated in 61 peacekeeping and special political missions with a total contribution of more than 1, 51,000 peacekeepers. As of March 2021, a total of 5,681 Nepali peacekeepers have been serving in 12 peacekeeping and special political missions in 11 countries. Currently, Nepal is the fourth major Troops and Police Contributing Country. However, this achievement has its own cost. 82 fellow compatriots have made the ultimate sacrifice in line of their duty with hundreds of others left wounded.

Nepal has always responded positively to every call of the United Nations even at the shortest notice. Our peacekeepers are deployed in some of the most fragile and complex security environments. Nepal deploys its peacekeepers without any national caveat to enhance the performance of peacekeepers. We have stated our commitment that we stand ready to contribute 10% of our total military size to peacekeeping missions at the United Nations' request.

Nepal has supported every effort of the UN Secretary-General on combating Sexual Exploitations and Abuse (SEA). It has also signed the Voluntary Compact on preventing and addressing the SEA. It has been implementing a zero-tolerance policy against sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers.

Similarly, Nepal has already endorsed the Kigali principles on Protection of Civilians. Before deployment, we provide a tailor-made training to its peacekeepers which includes, inter alia, the issues of protection of civilians, human rights and humanitarian law, and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Aware of the responsibility of the peacekeeping missions to promote the sustainability of the local ecosystem, Nepali peacekeepers have also contributed to preserving the sanctity of the local environment.

Fourth, Nepal contributes to enhancing the professional capabilities of peacekeepers from other fellow troops contributing countries. Birendra Peace Operations Training Centre (BPOTC) in Panchkhal, the oldest training institute in the region, has earned a reputation as a centre of excellence for peacekeeping training and its courses are recognized by the UN.

Dear Friends,

Allow me to share some of our general perspectives on peacekeeping:

We believe that for the achievement of sustainable peace, the UN peace operations need to aim at addressing the root causes of conflict. This may require coordinated and inclusive socio-economic transformation of the conflict-affected countries. And for

that to happen, system-wide coherence including in planning, designing, and executing peace operations is critical. We should be mindful that the UN peacekeepers are not the permanent force but the interim means that help generate environment for the conflicting parties to find an appropriate political solution to the conflict. Peacekeepers, by the virtue of who they are and what their mandate is, should refrain from being involved in the internal political dynamics of the place they are deployed. Deployment of peacekeepers should be demand-driven.

Nepal also believes that peacekeeping missions cannot substitute an inclusive and nationally owned conflict resolution method. It underlines the importance of national ownership and leadership in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. The root causes of conflicts should be addressed through a participatory political settlement. Since sustainable development and sustaining peace approaches complement and reinforce each other, the prevention strategies should be integrated into the national development plan.

Likewise, every conflict situation is different from the other and would need own kind of solution. Nepal itself has well demonstrated that a nationally driven, home grown political process cannot only best manage the post conflict situation but also ensure sustainable peace in the society.

The local community, including youths, women, community leaders and social activists, should be engaged in the promotion of social harmony, tolerance, and understanding among themselves. Externally imposed measures cannot be sustainable. The ownership and primacy of local actors should be strengthened. To take Nepal's example once again, during Nepal's peace process, around 2800 Local Peace Committees were established at the local level. These Committees were instrumental in promoting people's participation in building and sustaining peace.

We believe that the cardinal principles of peacekeeping, such as consent of the parties, impartiality, and non-use of force, except in self-defense and defense of the mandate are important fundamentals for achieving a political solution to a conflict.

The mandates of peacekeeping missions should be clear, achievable, realistic, sequenced, and prioritized with adequate and predictable financing. Similarly, the mandates should support the host government's initiatives for achieving sustainable development with sustained peace. Success of peacekeeping operations largely depends on the full ownership by the UN Security Council as well as clear definition of roles of responsibilities and the key actors. Also, any mismatch between mandates and resources jeopardize the functioning of the mission as well as safety and security of peacekeepers.

Equally important it is that mandates should be clearly communicated to the peacekeepers at the operational level on the ground. The performance of the mission should be considered a responsibility of the mission leadership. The leadership should

be empowered as well as held accountable for the whole-of-mission performance including for the performance of the troops and police, for which a mission-specific performance indicators are essential.

To ensure the overall ownership of the mandate of the peacekeeping operation, it is important that the prospective troops contributing countries be adequately consulted. Nepal also stresses that commensurate with the its contribution to UN peacekeeping, the participation of Nepali citizens in senior positions, both in the fields as well as at the UNHQs should be increased.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Participation in peace missions is not devoid of risks and challenges. I take this opportunity to highlight a few of these challenges and share my thoughts on how these can be addressed.

First, in recent years, the security threats and targeted attacks against UN peacekeepers have increased considerably. Nepal upholds that the safety and security of the lives and dignity of the peacekeepers should be adequately guaranteed through the development of a mechanism to provide timely support and reinforcement to the peacekeeping missions when needed. Nepal encourages the Secretariat to enhance the safety and security of the peacekeepers including through the utilization of new and reliable technologies. We also emphasize the importance of peacekeepers' health security including during the current pandemic.

Second, the lack of timely procurement of contingent owned equipment, including armored personnel carriers, has also hampered the timely deployment of our peacekeepers. It has also compromised their safety and security.

Third, the delayed reimbursement for the service rendered to the peacekeeping missions has affected maintaining and enhancing the existing operational capabilities and training activities of the peacekeepers. The lack of adequate resources due to the late payment and withholding of assessed contributions from certain UN Member States has resulted in deferred reimbursement to the troops contributing countries.

And the fourth, the demand for high-tech troops is ever increasing in multidimensional missions. The use of frontier technologies like drones, AI, etc. is increasing for ensuring the effective implementation of the mission mandates including protection of civilians, and safety and security of peacekeepers. Investing in these capabilities has emerged as a new challenge before us.

Dear Friends,

You may all agree that Nepal is known for the impeccable track record of loyalty, professionalism and world-class performance of its peacekeepers. We are committed to take measures for further enhancement of our peacekeepers' profile and performance –

be it through greater effort to meet the gender parity benchmark of the United Nations or through investment in exposure of our security forces to the advanced technology.

I conclude by expressing my gratitude to all peacekeepers for their sincere contribution to the noble cause of upholding peace and security around the world. I am sure today's discussion will provide wider perspectives on how peacekeeping role of the United Nations can be made more effective, sustainable and attuned to the changing circumstances. I wish the Conference a productive and successful outcome.

I thank you for your attention.

**ADDRESS BY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS MR. PRADEEP
KUMAR GYAWALI AT THE 73RD ANNIVERSARY OF NEPAL
COUNCIL OF WORLD AFFAIRS (NCWA)
KATHMANDU, 1 MARCH 2021**

**President of the Nepal Council of World Affairs,
Executive Board Members of the Council,
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen.**

I am delighted to be back to this forum once again.

I thank you Mr. President and Members of the Council for organizing this event and for having me here.

It is always a pleasure to be amongst a cross-section of personalities who have made contributions to Nepal's foreign policy and international relations from their respective capacities.

I would like to acknowledge the role played by Nepal Council of World Affairs in promoting healthy discourse on matters related to Nepal's foreign policy as well as on topics of national, regional and international significance. Such discourses have helped to enrich the quality of policy dialogues.

As I am given a relative liberty from the organizers, today, I am going to share my thoughts on Nepal's foreign policy priorities. Before that, I will offer some highlights of the progress made since the formation of the present government three years ago.

Excellencies,

As you all are aware, the unprecedented outbreak of COVID-19 has inflicted impacts on all aspects of national life and significantly changed the mode of our engagements with the international community. Virtual meetings and interactions have replaced physical conversations and dialogues. We were on the right track to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The pandemic has slowed down the pace of progress. It has put huge stress on our health infrastructure, crippled the tourism sector and affected inflow of remittances. In the backdrop of economic vulnerabilities, we are resolutely focused

on warding off its negative impact in realizing the national aspiration of 'Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali'.

The foremost priority of the Governments has been the protection of people's lives and livelihoods. With the generous support of our neighbor India, we have rolled out the vaccination drive to the priority population. This has been complemented by generous support of additional amount of vaccine from our neighbor China. We are grateful to our neighbors as well as friends around the world for their continued support during the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic has taught us the importance of global solidarity in events of such large-scale emergencies. We are committed to advocate for and support to the bilateral, regional and international initiatives that promote such solidarity and cooperation among the nation states and aim to strengthen multilateral institutions created to address such global challenges.

Dear Friends,

As the present government has just completed three years in office, I feel it pertinent to share where we stand on some of the critical indicators that matter to the lives of our people.

Peace and security situation has improved. We have been able to bring almost all disgruntled political groups to the political mainstream through dialogue. Backchannel talks are underway with the CPN led by Biplab.

Nepal fared generally well even during the pandemic. Anti-COVID-19 vaccines are being provided to all citizens free-of-cost. Over nine hundred thousand people have been lifted out of absolute poverty. The per capita income has increased to US dollar 1,097—a 35 percent rise in Rupees terms. The 2020 Human Development Report has recorded improvements in education, health, drinking water and sanitation.

An additional 2,718 kilometers road has been blacktopped and additional 333 megawatts of electricity has been added to national grid. The population having access to electricity and drinking water has reached to 90 percent.

Post earthquake reconstruction is in concluding phase, including the restitution of some rich and treasured historical monuments. Seven hundred thousand private homes have been built.

Literacy rate has reached an encouraging 85 percent. With basic education made free for all, universal enrollment and gender parity at school level have been achieved.

The economy of the country showed improvement and resilience even during the pandemic. The Economist, a renowned British weekly, listed Nepal among top 10 emerging economies. The World Bank's Doing Business Indicators-2020 has correctly acknowledged the improvements in investment-friendly atmosphere. Nepal has made improvement in 14 governance indicators. We are among the countries to have made

good progress in human development, ease of doing business, hunger, peace, rule of law, corruption control and transparency, happiness, and gender parity indices.

For the first time, Nepal has graduated from the World Bank's low-income category to lower-middle income category. The UN Committee on Development Policy has recently recommended for Nepal's graduation from an LDC status. This makes an important watershed in the development trajectory of the country.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I hope you are aware about the developments in the political front. The Supreme Court has given its verdict. Accordingly, the Right Honourable President has called for the session of the Parliament to be convened from 23rd of Falgun. The Government remains firmly committed to the democratic process and we have full confidence in our constitutional system.

As regard to the conduct of our foreign relations, the Constitution of Nepal defines the fundamentals of Nepal's foreign policy. Besides defining the core parameters of national interests, the Constitution also guides us to pursue independent foreign policy by adhering to the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, non-alignment, panchasheel, international law and the norms of world peace. Last year, the Government adopted a consolidated foreign policy document that outlines broad foreign policy principles and priorities and emphasizes on the strengthening of institutions to implement them. Cognizant of the evolving global situation, Nepal has been conducting foreign policy to the service of our core national interests and achieve economic development and prosperity. 'Amity with all, enmity with none' has been the motto of our foreign relations.

Firmly pedestaled on the cardinal principles of national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, freedom and national unity, our foreign policy aims to preserve and promote national interest and conduct foreign relations on the basis of equality, justice, mutual respect and benefits.

At the bilateral level, Nepal remains committed to maintaining friendly relations with her neighbors and all other countries in the world. Over the years, both the substance and our engagements with the immediate neighbors—India and China—have increased manifold. We maintain close and cordial relationship with them based on goodwill, trust, mutual respect and cooperation. Nepal fulfills its commitment not to allow any activity in her territory against the neighbors and expects similar spirit of cooperation from our neighbors on the matters of our concern.

High-level engagements with India have contributed to further enriching the already intense relationship characterized by robust people-to-people contacts, cultural linkages and extensive economic partnership. We have achieved good progress in some of the landmark connectivity projects, such as, the Motihari-Amlekhgunj Petroleum Pipeline, the first cross border pipeline in the region, and operationalization of Integrated Check Post in Birjung and Biratnagar, and completion of Jaynagar-Kurtha section of railway.

Recently, in January this year, we held a bilateral meeting of Nepal-India Joint Commission at the level of Foreign Ministers. We reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations from border management to cooperation in the areas of trade, transit, culture, education, and health, among others. As regard to the unfinished tasks of the boundary, both sides are committed to resolve them through dialogues.

Similarly, Nepal and China enjoy close and cordial relationship, which is based on the five principles of peaceful co-existence. Appreciation of each other's aspirations as well as respect for each other's concerns and sensitivities has been the hallmark of our relationship. Nepal is fully committed to one China policy. Nepal-China relations have witnessed substantive growth with the exchange of high-level visits and an enhanced level of economic partnership. The President of China visited Nepal in 2019 after an interval of 23 years. Connectivity, trade, investment as well as several other areas of development have been our priorities for collaboration. With the entry into force of the Transit Transport Protocol, we have also agreed to implement the trans-Himalaya multi-dimensional connectivity network that will open up new vistas in cross-border transit transport.

Beyond our neighborhood, Nepal maintains close and cooperative relationship with the development partners as well as the destination countries of Nepali migrant workers.

Nepal's relations with the development partners and major powers have always remained cordial and cooperative. For the first time in about 20 years, Prime Minister Rt. Hon. K P Sharma Oli paid official visits to the United Kingdom and France. In my capacity as the Foreign Minister, I paid official visits to the United States after 17 years and the Russian Federation after 14 years.

Our development partners have been major sources of finance and technology in critical areas of Nepal's development endeavor for decades. We are grateful to our development partners for this generous cooperation and continued goodwill. Nepal received moral support from our development partners during the peace process. In the aftermath of the devastating earthquakes of 2015, there was an overwhelming support in rescue, relief and reconstruction. Support measures from our development partners in the forms of technical, financial, trade and investment will be important as we prepare for graduation from LDC status. Support for the timely realization of sustainable development goals will contribute to post COVID-19 recovery efforts as well. We continue to work towards enriching the substance of cooperation in our bilateral engagements with these countries.

We also attach high importance to our relations with the countries of destination of Nepali migrant workers. We have engaged extensively with these important partners for the safety, security and wellbeing of our migrant workers. The Right Honourable Prime Minister and myself held several telephone calls with high-level leaders from the labour destination countries with a view to addressing the specific concerns and vulnerabilities of Nepali migrant workers in the context of COVID-19. Nepal's emphasis continues to be on the issues related to decent work, ethical recruitment, welfare of migrants including

female workers, consular support and cooperation, financial literacy, and labor market assessment. We are keen to expand broader economic partnership with these countries beyond labour migration and intend to promote trade, tourism, investment and people to people contacts.

In the regional context, we aim to promote economic cooperation, peace and development. Nepal's commitment to regional cooperation is evident from our active engagements with SAARC and BIMSTEC processes. As the current chair of SAARC, we have engaged with all the Member States in a constructive and cooperative spirit. It has been our consistent view that the SAARC process needs revitalization for effective delivery on its stated objectives, including the promotion of mutual trust and confidence among its members.

As mandated by the 4th Summit held in Kathmandu, BIMSTEC is in the process of institution building and further consolidating modalities of cooperation.

Nepal is also keenly participating in the activities of other regional organizations, including the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) as a member and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as a dialogue partner.

Excellencies,

Nepal's multilateral engagements are longstanding and productive. We take the universal values and principles enshrined in the UN Charter 75 years ago as the cardinal principles for international relations. We consider that the United Nations should be at the center of multilateralism and global efforts towards achieving peace, security and development.

The relevance of multilateralism has become more pronounced as we confront with global scale challenges ranging from pandemic to transnational organized crimes to terrorism. Nepal commits to collaborate for strengthening of a just, fair and rules-based world order.

Three years after joining the United Nations, Nepal began its contributions to the cause of international peace and security. Currently the fourth largest troop and police contributing country, Nepal's contribution to the UN peace operations has earned worldwide respect.

As an LDC, we are also working at global platforms on a number of agendas that bear importance to us, such as enhancing effectiveness of development cooperation and securing transit rights of landlocked countries.

Climate change and biodiversity are critical issues for Nepal. Nepal firmly supports the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement. As we prepare for the COP26, we intend to contribute to the larger policy discourse on climate change by dedicating the first episode of 'Sagarmatha Sambaad' on 'Climate Change, Mountains and the Future of the Humanity'. Nepal recently updated the NDCs on climate change. We are

developing a long-term strategy for a net zero-carbon scenario by 2050. A higher level of climate financing is needed for achieving these targets. We believe, COP26 provides an opportunity to generate much-needed political will to save the planet for humanity.

Our commitment to human rights and rule of law has been unwavering. In fulfilling its obligations under the instruments to which we are a state party, Nepal very much stays in the course. Earlier this year, we successfully concluded the third cycle of UPR. We are encouraged by the interests and appreciation shown by the UN Member States.

Over the years, Nepal has started enhancing its visibility in the international arena. For the first time, Nepal has been invited to the World Economic Forum and the Oxford Union. Nepal has been re-elected as the member of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) and also at the CEDAW Committee. Currently, Nepal Chairs the 2nd Committee of the 75th UNGA and Board of the Enhanced Integrated Framework under the WTO. Having entrusted to various other intergovernmental bodies and processes, we have been working alongside the international community on global agendas.

Dear Friends,

Nepal's diplomatic outreach has expanded significantly with the establishment of diplomatic relations with a total of 168 countries.

On economic diplomacy, promoting Nepal's export trade, foreign investments, technology transfer, tourism industry and safeguarding the interests and wellbeing of our migrant workers are our main priorities. We intend to promote Nepal's soft power by utilizing the country's natural beauty and cultural heritages, among others.

The role of Nepali diaspora in national development and building cultural connections has been well recognized. We are committed to protecting interests of Nepali nationals abroad and to utilizing knowledge, expertise and capital of the NRNs. Brain Gain Center, created in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2018 with the objective of utilizing knowledge and expertise of diaspora in national development, has now over a thousand entries. We are in the process of further consolidating the BGC as a bridge between Nepali diaspora and Nepal's national development endeavors.

Before I conclude, let me once again thank the NCWA for hosting this important event and bringing together a galaxy of foreign policy practitioners, experts and diplomats. The goal of a country's foreign policy is to serve its vital national interests and support realization of national aspiration. Nepal's foreign policy has served that goal very well.

I thank you for your attention.

**STATEMENT BY MR. PRADEEP KUMAR GYAWALI, MINISTER
FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND HEAD OF THE NEPALI
DELEGATION AT THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE 46TH
SESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
GENEVA, 23 FEBRUARY 2021**

Madam President,

Madam High Commissioner,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates

It is a great pleasure to represent Nepal in the 46th session of the Human Rights Council.

At the outset, I congratulate you madam President and the Bureau of the Council, and assure you of our full support in steering the session.

Madam President,

The world continues to bear the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic. Development of vaccines and vaccination drive that followed give a hope to every country, including Nepal.

In this context, we sincerely appreciate our neighbours India and China for the vaccine support. We are also encouraged by the recent announcement of initial vaccine delivery by COVAX. We have already rolled out vaccination programme to our priority population

Madam President,

Nepal's commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights is total and unequivocal. We firmly believe in the universality, indivisibility, interdependence, interrelatedness and mutually reinforcing nature of human rights, including the right to development.

We are a party to all major international human rights instruments including seven of the nine core instruments. The values and standards enshrined in those instruments have been incorporated in our national legal, policy, and operational frameworks.

The Constitution of Nepal is founded on universally recognized human rights values and principles including equality, non-discrimination, justice, and the rule of law, among others.

Social justice is deeply embedded in our democratic system. Special measures have been taken to enable weaker sections of our society to enjoy fundamental rights and for their fair representation in all spheres of national life. Discrimination in any form is punishable by law.

Nepal has abolished death penalty. As a secular State, freedom of religion is guaranteed by the constitution. The religious tolerance and harmony in Nepali society has remained exemplary.

We recognize the role of civil society, human rights defenders, and the media in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Conforming to the Paris Principles and accredited as ‘A’ category, the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal monitors the human rights situation and enjoys independence in fulfilling its mandate.

Madam President,

We have incorporated Sustainable Development Goals into our national development plan with a view to realizing them by 2030. Complementing the SDGs, Nepal at present is focused in realizing the national aspiration of “Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali”.

We are committed to ensuring full enjoyment of all human rights for women and girls. Nepal’s progress in terms of gender equality and empowerment is reflected in over 41 percent of federal, provincial and local elected offices being represented by women. Areas such as girls’ education, women’s representation in civil service, security agencies and other gainful employment opportunities have all recorded impressive progress.

Every woman has the right to safe motherhood and reproductive health. We have pledged to eliminate all forms of child labour and child marriage.

We are fully committed to the rights of persons with disabilities. Measures of positive discrimination have enabled their participation in political and public life.

As a major country of origin, safety, security, dignity, and welfare of migrant workers remain our utmost priority. Protection of rights of migrant workers, including women migrant workers, and combating human trafficking requires cooperation at origin, transit and destination countries.

As a mountainous least developed country, the impact of global warming is of a particular concern for us. Delivering on climate commitment at national, regional, and global level is important to enable our people fully enjoy all human rights.

Madam President,

Two independent Commissions – the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission for Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons- are investigating the incidences of conflict-era human rights violations. Nepal reaffirms its commitment to

conclude the transitional justice process and remains steadfast that there would be no blanket amnesty in cases of serious violation human rights.

Last month, the third cycle of Nepal's review under the UPR was successfully concluded. We are currently examining the recommendations received in the process.

Nepal greatly values the work of Special Procedures mandate-holders. We look forward to welcoming the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food and Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights this year.

We are committed to fulfil our reporting obligations. Preparation of the latest reports under CAT, ICCPR, ICESCR, and CRC is in progress.

Madam President,

As we work together for a shared goal of promoting and protecting human rights of all and creating a peaceful, prosperous and just world, consistent commitment to multilateralism and cooperation among the UN Member States is critically important. Only through a balanced and objective approach in the universal protection and promotion of all human rights everywhere gives credence to what we do here in the Council and how can we serve the best interests of the people that matter our work the most.

Before concluding, I want to register our profound gratitude to all UN Member States for their support to our re-elections to the Council and the CEDAW Committee as well as assure our constructive engagement with the fellow Member States of the Council to serve its purpose.

I thank you.

**OPENING STATEMENT BY MR. PRADEEP KUMAR GYAWALI,
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE LEADER OF
THE NEPALI DELEGATION TO THE 37TH SESSION OF THE
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON UNIVERSAL
PERIODIC REVIEW, GENEVA, THURSDAY, 21 JANUARY 2021
(13:45 HRS TO 17:15 HRS.)**

Madam President,

Madam High Commissioner for Human Rights,

Distinguished Members of the Working Group,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present Nepal's national report to the UPR Working Group. I appreciate the Human Rights Council for the arrangements made for this review despite the constraints posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Madam President,

Nepal is guided by the spirit of dialogue and cooperation and considers the Universal Periodic Review as a truly unique, constructive and cooperative mechanism. Let me convey our gratitude to members of the Troika, namely, India, Argentina and Burkina Faso, for facilitating Nepal's review. As I present the updates on the status of implementation of the recommendations and major strides taken by Nepal since the last review, I reiterate Nepal's willingness for an open and constructive dialogue with the Member and observer States during this review.

As a member of the Council for the second term, Nepal is grateful to all the UN member States for their support to our candidature during the recently held elections for both the Human Rights Council and CEDAW Committee. Nepal remains firmly committed to the work and effectiveness of the Council for the promotion and protection of human rights.

Today, I am accompanied by the Chief Secretary of the Government of Nepal, Secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers and the Secretaries of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs; Home Affairs; Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs; Health and Population; Women, Children, and Senior Citizens; Labour, Employment and Social Security; and Education, Science and Technology.

Nepal's Ambassador and Permanent Representative in Geneva and officials of the Permanent Mission are joining from Geneva.

A dedicated Committee led by the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers was formed with cross-sectoral representation for the preparation of the national report. Wider outreach and consultation with the National Human Rights Commission, other constitutional commissions, provincial government and local level bodies, civil society, community organizations, human rights defenders, and the media immensely contributed to the preparatory process. Most of them also provided with the written inputs. In the context of COVID-19 related health protocols and lockdown, some of the planned consultations and workshops had to be conducted in virtual format in all seven provinces, where more than 700 Civil Society Organizations participated. Two consultative meetings were held with the Law, Justice and Human Rights Committee of the House of Representatives. Draft National Report was also disseminated for feedback and comments from all stakeholders and general public. Inputs thus received were incorporated in the final report prior to the submission.

Nepal firmly believes in the universality, indivisibility, interdependence, interrelatedness, and mutually reinforcing nature of human rights, including the right to development. Our commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights is total and unequivocal and we believe that the rule of law and human rights should be evenly operational at national, regional, and international levels. As a State Party to seven core human rights Conventions and six Optional Protocols; seven humanitarian Conventions, including the four Geneva Conventions of 1949; 11 ILO Conventions; and 14 other international and two regional conventions that have direct bearing on human rights, Nepal strongly upholds the values enshrined in those Conventions.

These values are duly internalized in our Constitution in the form of comprehensive bill of fundamental rights, democratic polity, pluralism, the rule of law, accountable government, inclusive participation, and social and economic justice.

A country emerging from conflict amidst compounded odds including the massive Earthquake of 2015 and recurrent natural disasters; we have made sincere efforts for the promotion and protection of human rights of our people.

Madam President,

Nepal had accepted a total of 152 recommendations during the 2nd cycle of UPR in 2015, most of which have now been implemented. A dedicated mechanism at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers was designated for the monitoring of the implementation.

Since the last review in 2015, Nepal's periodic reports under CRC, CRPD, CERD, and CEDAW were considered by the respective treaty bodies. Preparation of such reports under CAT, ICCPR and ICESCR are in progress.

Nepal acceded to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol) in June last year. We intend to build necessary legal and institutional capacity for joining additional international instruments.

Nepal attaches great importance to the work of Special Procedures Mandate-Holders. In 2018, Nepal invited Special Rapporteurs on the Human Rights of Migrants and Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women for a country visit. We look forward to welcoming the Special Rapporteur on the right to food and Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights this year.

Madam President,

The National Human Rights Commission of Nepal, an independent Constitutional body, has been working as a powerful watchdog to protect and promote human rights in the country. Accredited as the “A” category institution, the Commission fully embraces the Paris Principles, and exercises a wide range of investigatory, supervisory, directive, and recommendatory powers for the promotion and protection of human rights.

Other independent thematic Commissions on Women, Dalit, Indigenous Nationalities, Madhesi, Thar, and Muslim Community have been actively working for the promotion and protection of rights and interests of the specific communities.

Nepal’s independent judiciary acts as the guardian of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It has the power of judicial review to assess the constitutionality of any laws passed by federal, provincial, or village or municipal legislature. The Judiciary has given landmark judicial pronouncements, expanding the scope of human rights jurisprudence.

Madam President,

Nepal embarked upon a new era of political transformation in 2006 which was consolidated by the democratic Constitution adopted in 2015 by the Constituent Assembly. The Constitution guarantees a wide array of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights akin to those provided by international human rights instruments. It consolidates an inclusive and participatory federal democratic republican order following the successful transformation of conflict into peace through a home-grown, nationally led and owned peace process.

The Constitution of Nepal is founded on the value of equality and non-discrimination and guarantees special provisions for the empowerment and development of the backward section of society. Nepal has long abolished death penalty. Effective constitutional and judicial remedies are provided in case of infringement of the fundamental rights. As one of the pioneer countries to implement National Human Rights Action Plan since 2004, we are now implementing the 5th series of such Action Plan. Implementation and follow up of UPR and treaty bodies recommendations are integral part of it.

Over the past four years, a comprehensive, transparent, and consultative legal reform process was undertaken both to implement Nepal's human rights commitments as well as to drive the federalization process. Necessary fundamental-rights-implementing-laws have been enacted within three years after the adoption of the Constitution. Several prevailing laws have been revised and consolidated, and dozens of new laws have been enacted.

A new set of rights, such as, right to live in a clean and healthy environment; right to food; right to social security; and the rights specific to senior citizens and children have been guaranteed by the Constitution.

In 2017, Nepal successfully held free, fair, transparent, and broad-based participatory elections at the federal, provincial, and local levels, embracing the principle of proportional and inclusive representation while institutionalizing democratic and accountable governance at all levels. Nepal has a woman as the Head of State. Earlier, we had women as the President, Chief Justice, and Speaker of the Parliament at the same time, which reflects a rare example of women empowerment in national leadership. It is mandatory to have at least two women out of five local-level ward members and one of them must be from the Dalit community.

Currently, women constitute 41 percent of elected public offices and 25 percent of civil service. Women participation in labour force has reached 83 percent. As we recently celebrated the 25th anniversary of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Nepal is happy to share these achievements.

Women are fully empowered by the Constitution and enjoy right to lineage and equal rights in the family matters and property. Sexual and reproductive health rights of every woman and girl have been firmly established by law. Sexual violence constitutes a serious crime. Polygamy, child marriage, forced marriage, sexual harassment in the workplace as well as sexual and domestic violence are strictly punishable by law. Enforcement of the laws related to human trafficking and domestic violence has been further strengthened to end gender-based violence and discrimination.

Nepal stands among a few countries that have been implementing UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security through a National Plan of Action. We are one of the pioneer countries to implement gender-responsive budget system since 2007.

Madam President,

Right to peaceful assembly and association, freedom of expression, and right to information are prerequisites for good governance. Nepal regards civil society and the media as indispensable partners in the promotion and protection of human rights. Nepal has formulated Digital Nepal Framework 2019 to unlock Nepal's growth potential through the wider use of digital technology. In an ever-changing digital world, ensuring

access to quality information, digital inclusion, and the protection of every citizen's privacy and wellbeing becomes important consideration.

A multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-cultural country, Nepal believes in equality, inclusion, secularism, non-discrimination, social justice and development of all of its people.

Discrimination on the basis of class, caste, region, language, religion, and gender are outlawed. Discrimination in public places and in the use of public services and utilities is strictly prohibited. Stringent legal and enforcement measures have been taken to investigate and punish any of such acts. Untouchability is strictly punishable under the law.

Nepal has ratified the ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples. The Indigenous people and those from the communities on the verge of extinction have the right to get special opportunities and benefits from the state. Two independent and empowered entities – the Indigenous Nationalities Commission, a constitutional body and the National Foundation for Development of Indigenous People, a statutory body, work to look after the rights and interest of indigenous people. The right-based policy measures are incorporated in the national development plans for ensuring their participation.

The Constitution guarantees special measures for minorities and the marginalized sections of the society so as to enable them to enjoy fundamental rights and receive a fair share of representation in all spheres of national life.

Inclusive development interventions have been made to improve living condition of the backward section of our society and empower them in all aspects of national life and nurture social harmony and cohesion. Targeted programs for poverty reduction, literacy and employment generation have been implemented. The 15th National Development Plan, which is currently under implementation, aims at promoting inclusive economic growth and creating broad-based foundation for prosperity.

Being a secular State, the Constitution of Nepal guarantees freedom of religion as a fundamental right. Social and cultural harmony, tolerance, and unity in diversity are the inherent tenets of Nepal's identity. The Penal Code criminalizes hate speech, attacks against the religious sites and activities aimed at creating religious discords. Nepal believes that freedom of religion cannot be impaired by coercion or monetary inducement for conversion.

Nepal has been giving utmost importance to tackling the issues of torture, impunity, gender-based violence, exclusion, and inequality. The right of a victim of crime, right against torture, and right against preventive detention has been recognized as the fundamental rights. Any form of physical or mental torture or cruel, inhuman, or

degrading treatment for any reason is prohibited, and those acts are punishable by law. A victim of torture is entitled to compensation.

Human rights cells have been established in all security agencies, including Nepal Police. Conditions of the prison have been improved with the piloting of open prison system.

The National Penal Code criminalizes torture, rape, and other forms of sexual violence. Statutory limitations for the prosecution of cases of torture and rape have been extended.

Nepali laws protect the right to justice for the victims of crimes in all stages of investigation, adjudication and social rehabilitation. Special arrangements have been made for victims of rape and sexual violence with regard to limitation and privacy in hearing the cases.

Nepal remains committed to conclude the transitional justice process through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons. Nepal's transitional justice process is guided by the Comprehensive Peace Accord, the directives of the Supreme Court, relevant international commitments, concerns of the victims, and the ground realities. The Government is steadfast that there would be no blanket amnesty in cases of serious violation of human rights.

Nepal considers NGOs and Civil Societies as the building blocks of democracy and human rights and has been forging a constructive and cooperative partnership with NGOs, INGOs, Human Rights Defenders and Civil Society Organizations. A total of 237 INGOs and more than 51,000 NGOs are affiliated to Social Welfare Council, Nepal, which reflects a strong manifestation of the important space being provided to the civil society in Nepal. The reports submitted by NGOs for this review are the testimonies of their vibrant presence in Nepal.

The Constitution has guaranteed the rights of sexual minorities to participate in the State bodies on the basis of inclusive principle. To protect the identity of LGBTI persons, the census and electoral rolls recognize them under "others" category for data entry. Citizenship certificates and passports have been provided with identity of "others" category. Discrimination based on sexual orientation is punishable.

Madam President,

Nepali labour laws protect equal pay for equal value of work for both men and women. The Government has also specified minimum wages for workers. A minimum paid employment of 100 days has been guaranteed for those who do not have gainful employment. Women workers are entitled to paid-maternity leave. Forced labour has been prohibited. Workers have the right to form trade union and engage in collective bargaining.

Nepal has become one of the pathfinder countries of the global partnership, Alliance 8.7, to fulfill its commitment towards ending all kinds of child labour by 2025. Nepal reaffirms its commitment to the promotion and protection of the rights of the child. Ending child labour, forced labour, and trafficking in children is in high priority of the Government.

The right-based and inclusive approach has been adopted while devising the plans and policies to protect the rights of persons with disabilities. The Disability Rights Act, 2017 recognizes self-empowerment of persons with disabilities. New building code requires public buildings to be disability friendly. Provision of adequate resources and infrastructures for quality and inclusive education of children with disabilities remains our continued priority.

Every community has the right to basic education in its mother tongue, and the right to preserve and promote its language, and script. The right of every child to receive a free and compulsory basic education, including books and educational materials has been protected by law. Every citizen is entitled to get free education up to the secondary level. Universal enrolment and gender parity in school have been almost achieved with a significant reduction in dropout of girls. Monthly scholarships and day meals are provided to the children from Dalits communities, backward regions, and other marginalized communities. Hygiene kits are provided to the adolescent girl students. Distance learning via radio and online classes has been conducted in the pandemic situation.

The Government has reserved 45 percent of scholarships for higher education in medical sciences to students graduated from community schools and for those coming from backward section of our society. Other programs such as day nutrition, scholarship to 50 percent girls at the primary level and provision of women teachers in a specific ratio have produced positive results in terms of increasing enrolment and reducing dropouts.

Human rights education constitutes part of curriculums of education institutions and training of the public officials, including security agencies. Awareness-raising activities have been regularly conducted by both the Government agencies and civil society organizations. Necessary legal and institutional mechanisms have been established to ensure access to justice for all.

The extension of social care and protection has made our cities free from street-children, street-people, and beggars. “Street Children Free Kathmandu Valley” initiative has been implemented and over a thousand street children have already been rescued.

Necessary laws have been enacted to safeguard the right to a clean environment and access to clean drinking water and sanitation. In September 2019, Nepal declared herself as the open defecation free country.

Every citizen has the right to free and equal access to basic health services from the State. Significant progress has been made in strengthening the health system and improving health services of the citizens to ensure universal health services. Under the National Health Insurance scheme, Government of Nepal pays premium for health insurance of the poor, orphans, elderly and persons with disabilities. The coverage of the insurance has been extended to 563 Local Levels of 58 districts with a target of universal coverage eventually.

Free medical treatment is provided to senior citizens above 75 years of age for severe diseases related to heart, kidney, and cancer. Health insurance for the elderly people has been further expanded.

We have recently laid foundations for the construction of basic hospitals in all 396 local levels across the country to provide quality health services at the local level. Infectious disease hospitals are being built in each of the seven provinces.

The elderly, single woman, Dalit, persons with disability, destitute, indigents, and people belonging to the ethnic group on the verge of extinction receive monthly social security allowances. Social security and special protections are recognized as fundamental rights of senior citizens. A comprehensive contribution-based social security scheme has been rolled out by the Government that provides coverage to the workers in formal and informal sectors.

Nepal attaches high priority to the safety, security, and wellbeing of the migrant workers. We have concluded bilateral agreements with several destination countries for the security, protection and welfare of the migrant workers. Effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development along with the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is essential to make migration safe, dignified and work for all.

The President Women Upliftment Program, Prime Minister Employment Program and Prime Minister Agricultural Modernization Project are being implemented as the flagship programs to generate employment within the country. Returnee migrant workers are provided with concessional loans and other incentives to start self-employment or entrepreneurial activities.

Even though we are not a party to the Refugee Convention and its Protocol, Nepal has sheltered Tibetan and Bhutanese refugees for decades on humanitarian grounds. The extradition law of Nepal fully recognizes the principle of non-refoulment.

Madam President,

The reconstruction work of residential houses, schools, colleges, hospitals, heritage sites, and infrastructures damaged by the devastating earthquakes in 2015 is nearing completion. We have built better infrastructures and capacity for responding to the natural disasters and protecting the lives of people.

Effective and timely implementation of SDGs and other internationally agreed development goals through enhanced partnership and collaboration is a key to the protection of all human rights, including the right to development. Nepal has mainstreamed SDGs into the national development plans and policies with a view to realize them by 2030.

Poverty reduction remains an overarching development agenda of the Government. We have aimed to reduce poverty to 5% by 2030 and 0% by 2043. We are committed to achieve zero hunger goals of SDGs by ensuring food and nutrition for all. We have been working with the vision of “No one should remain hungry, no one dies of hunger”. Prime Minister Agriculture Modernization Project, Advanced Seed Program and Agriculture Insurance Programme have been implemented to ensure food and nutrition security.

Being a mountainous and agricultural country, Nepal is vulnerable to climate change challenges such as melting of glaciers, glacial lake outbursts, soil erosion, decrease in productivity, desertification, loss of biodiversity, floods, and landslides, which have become recurring challenges. Nepal is developing a National Adaptation Plan and corresponding Climate Finance Strategy and Roadmap in all local levels. We have set an ambitious target of achieving a net zero-carbon scenario by 2050.

Human Development Index Report 2020 shows some improvement in Nepal's HDI value. Our economy has recently been elevated to a lower-middle-income country and we are preparing to graduate from the status of the least developed country. Nepal was recording strong economic growth rates in the years preceding to the pandemic.

The health and education-related indicators, especially nutrition and schooling, in which we were lagging behind, have received renewed priority, including through reforms of public schools for quality education. Investing in people and preventing them from relapsing into poverty remains the key challenges.

Nepal under the able leadership of Prime Minister Rt. Honourable Mr. K P Sharma Oli has embraced a long-term vision of “Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali”. Despite resource constraints, we have significantly increased investment in infrastructures and social sectors.

Good governance has been our priority. Adequate resources have been allocated both for prevention as well as investigation and prosecution of the cases of improper conduct and corruption.

Madam President,

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has severe impact on livelihoods, economy, public health and social security systems. The Government of Nepal has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic through measures, such as, prevention, control, isolation, quarantine and treatment and has adopted various health and safety protocols in compliance with WHO guidelines. We are guided primarily by the three objectives

– strengthening of the health care system, protecting people’s lives, and building a sustainable and resilient recovery.

Testing and treatment services are provided free of charge to the needy people. Necessary infrastructures, human and financial resources, and medical equipment are ensured to the health systems at all levels. With a combination of measures employed, we have been able to keep low mortality and higher rate of recovery among the COVID-19 patients.

With the outbreak of a new variant of the virus and continued risk of transmission, Nepal, like other LDCs is struggling with capacity constraints. Strengthening the health care system and addressing the needs of vulnerable segment of population remain our top priority.

While development of vaccines has given a new hope, availability and affordability of vaccines becomes critical for a country like Nepal requiring greater international cooperation and solidarity. We commend the initiative of COVAX and generosity of our neighbours to ensure availability of vaccines. The Government of Nepal has already decided to provide the vaccines free of cost to the people.

To conclude, Madam President, Nepal is striving its best for achieving the sustainable development goals and remains committed to ensuring the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by every citizen. I look forward to a constructive dialogue as we continue the review process.

I thank you for your kind attention.

**OPENING REMARKS BY MR. PRADEEP KUMAR GYAWALI,
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF NEPAL (CHAIRPERSON)
AT THE VIRTUAL INFORMAL MEETING OF THE SAARC
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, KATHMANDU,
24 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**Hon. Ministers for Foreign/External Affairs of SAARC Member States,
Heads of Delegation,
Foreign Secretaries,
His Excellency the Secretary General of SAARC,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good afternoon and Namaste!**

I am pleased to welcome you all in today's Virtual Informal Meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers. I wish to express my sincere thanks to Your Excellencies and the distinguished Heads of Delegations for being able to join this meeting this today. I look forward to having a constructive deliberation on the agenda items before us. I am confident that with our collective efforts we will come up with some tangible takeaways from this meeting. Needless to say, this is a forum where we discuss common regional issues by remaining within the parameters outlined by the SAARC Charter.

I also take this opportunity to welcome His Excellency Mr. Sala Weerakoon, Secretary-General of SAARC and commend him and his team for making excellent preparation for this meeting.

Excellencies,

SAARC has made a long journey since its inception in 1985. An effective, efficient, and result-oriented SAARC capable of bringing visible changes in the life of the peoples has always been our aspiration.

In the last 35 years, we have achieved some important milestones in key areas. We have created institutional and legal frameworks, intensified our efforts in such areas as alleviating poverty, reducing inequality, promoting trade and commerce, expanding connectivity, deepening people-to-people contacts, and expanding contacts with external organization having similar objectives and purposes.

The progress report of the Secretary General suggests that we need to do more to tackle both the traditional and emerging challenges facing the region through deeper and meaningful cooperation.

Excellencies,

The COVID-19 pandemic has been shaking every foundation of development and deeply impacting humanity in our region and all over the world. We have seen the fallouts of COVID-19 in our economy, in our education system, in our social life and people's livelihood. The number of infected cases is on the rise.

Shrinking revenue, rising public expenditure, and increasing unemployment will further aggravate the situation in the coming days. COVID-19 is going to pose a serious security threat to the wellbeing of millions of people in South Asia.

The SAARC Leaders' Video Conference hosted by Prime Minister of India His Excellency Shri Narendra Modi on 15 March 2020 remained instrumental in forging regional partnership to fight the pandemic.

In these trying times, it is vital to expand connectivity and ensure smooth supply of essential medicines and medical equipment. Sharing of knowledge, experience, technology and best practices could help develop resilience and to fight the pandemic collectively.

Excellencies,

During the 18th SAARC Summit held in 2014 in Kathmandu we agreed to hold the meetings of the Charter bodies regularly.

The delay in convening the 19th SAARC Summit and the absence of formal meetings of the SAARC Charter bodies since 2016, has greatly impacted the functioning of our organization. Consequently, key regional arrangements and instruments, and important undertakings and activities have been on hold for a long time. This has raised a serious question about the relevancy of the regional cooperation process that our leaders so thoughtfully launched and nurtured. We need to explore all viable options to generate the momentum and dynamism in SAARC. It is incumbent upon us to work towards creating an environment conducive to hold the Summit and other Charter body meetings.

The trading arrangements like SAFTA and SATIS are yet to come into full operation. Despite many commonalities in terms of geography, history, civilization, and culture, we remain one of the least integrated regions in trade and connectivity compared to other regions. We need to enhance our cooperation in the core areas of trade, investment, agriculture, energy, connectivity, and climate change.

Excellencies,

Nepal is fully committed to advancing the SAARC process forward in a spirit of unity and solidarity among fellow Member States. Given the huge potentials in the region, we need to chart a long-term course with a view to utilizing these resources through deeper integration.

Mutual trust and confidence among the Member States are vital to achieving the objectives of SAARC. While we may have difference on certain issues, the SAARC process must be insulated and allowed to move forward because we have invested so much time, energy and resources in it. We want to see a SAARC that is both vibrant and united. We must build on our collective strengths and narrow down the differences on the matters of regional cooperation.

Therefore, we must take a bold decision to push the process forward with a strong commitment to deepen cooperation in areas which can really transform the development landscape of this region. Concentration rather than proliferation should be the guiding norms. It is an unpleasant irony that a region, which is rich in both natural and human resources, continues to languish in poverty and hunger at a time when many other regions are making incredible progress in several areas.

This region has huge potentials for development. Apart from development challenges, we continue facing the challenges that cannot be addressed with efforts of an individual member state. The complex and transboundary nature of the challenges make the process regional cooperation indispensable. Therefore, cooperation has no alternative; the cost of non-cooperation will be colossal.

Thank you!

**STATEMENT BY MR. PRADEEP KUMAR GYAWALI, MINISTER
FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF NEPAL, AT THE 19TH ANNUAL
MINISTERIAL MEETING OF LLDCS
(23 SEPTEMBER 2020)**

Mr. Chairman,

Honourable Ministers,

Secretary-General Mr. Antonio Guterres

USG and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS Ms. Stikeman

Distinguished Delegates.

Let me extend sincere appreciation to Kazakhstan for providing excellent leadership to the Group.

I thank the UN Secretary-General Mr. Guterres for his solidarity and support.

I also commend the role played by Madam Stikeman and her team in promoting the cause of LLDCs.

Mr. Chairman,

At the dawn of the defining decade in achieving SDGs, COVID-19 has shaken the world.

The disruptions of pandemic have been profound. It has revealed the gaps, compounded the challenges, and multiplied the hardships.

With preventive restrictions on travel and transportation, the fallouts of the crisis on LLDCs have been much severe. As the means to respond to the crisis are limited, our countries are struggling to fend off this double-edged sword of health and economic crisis.

LLDCs face several challenges because of their remoteness and geographical isolation. Distance escalates the cost of development and trade. The dismal productive capacity has further crushed our trade competitiveness.

Excessive commodity dependence has exposed LLDCs to the shocks and fluctuations in international markets. Perennial and large trade deficits have been a sad reality for many LLDCs.

Unhindered, cost-effective and accessible infrastructures coupled with smooth trade-facilitation measures open up the doors of global market.

Investment in infrastructures for LLDCs is an investment in the lifeline of their trade and development.

The potentials unleashed by e-commerce and digital technologies could transform LLDCs by liberating their economies from the rigid clutches of geography. Access to easy, affordable and reliable technology becomes critical for that.

Adverse impacts of climate change such as outburst of glacial lakes, floods, retreat of glaciers, desertification also pose a serious threat to LLDCs. Unfortunately, the current climate finance architecture has no dedicated window for LLDCs.

Mr. Chairman,

The Mid-term review of the VPOA has given us a clear idea on the progress and gaps. We must build on the Call for Action, contained in the political declaration, and intensify our efforts to implement six priority areas of VPOA at all levels –national, regional and global.

An effective partnership between and among LLDCs, their transit neighbours, development partners, UN and other stakeholders will be crucial for this.

Secretary General's roadmap for accelerating the implementation of VPOA is therefore an important step.

What else could be a better way for a system-wide response as we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Organization?

In the quest of transforming LLDCs to land-linked with vibrant economies, our response needs to be two-fold.

First, we must put in place a predictable and reliable transit regime and connectivity infrastructures.

And second, we must enhance productive capacities by capitalizing on the new technologies and embracing low-volume high-value products.

For the present, international solidarity should be there in containing the COVID-19 pandemic and addressing the economic fallouts.

In the long run, all means of support, including ODA, trade, technology, and capacity building need to be deployed to support the LLDCs.

Only a genuine spirit of global solidarity to complement the efforts of the LLDCs can ensure that they ride out the current storm and emerge stronger in future.

In Nepal, we have mainstreamed the 2030 Agenda and the VPOA into our national plans and programs. Transforming Nepal to a land-linked country underpins our national aspiration of “Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali”.

To materialize this aspiration, we have focused on building transport infrastructures, enhancing connectivity, and improving investment environment, among others. Our investment in social and human development sector, and reforms in governance have produced positive results.

Let me conclude, Mr. Chairman, by reaffirming Nepal’s commitment to cooperation and solidarity for promoting the Group’s common interests and making the leap to land-linked-ness by leaving no one behind.

I thank you all.

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS MR.
PRADEEP KUMAR GYAWALI AT THE ANNUAL MINISTERIAL
MEETING OF LDCs, 17 SEPTEMBER 2020
9:00- 13:00HRS**

Mr. Chairman,

Honourable Ministers,

USG and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS Ms. Stikeman

Distinguished Delegates.

I would like to thank Malawi for organizing this meeting and for steering the activities of the Group during these challenging times.

I also appreciate the role of the USG and High Representative and her team for the diligent work to support the LDCs.

Mr. Chairman,

The COVID-19 pandemic has made ravaging impact on LDCs. Loss of exports, decline of investment, remittances and tourism coupled with commodity price shocks are causing far-reaching socio-economic consequences.

Given the sweeping impacts of the pandemic all over the world, LDCs risk losing the ODA flow.

The pandemic has also amplified the inherent vulnerabilities of the LDCs. These countries are struggling to devise effective response, due to the limitations in resource base, social protection and health systems.

We acknowledge the support and swift action taken by the United Nations, G20 countries, the IMF, World Bank, WHO and other multilateral and bilateral development partners in response to COVID-19.

But this is not sufficient.

We need to devise other enabling conditions as well, where ODA shortfalls are compensated by lifting of trade barriers, debt relief, transfer of technology and knowledge, and scaling up aid for trade.

Technology transfer to the LDCs is critical to build a foundation for more equal and prosperous world.

Emergency global health package for LDCs including the quick, affordable, and universal access to anti-COVID-19 vaccine, once it is developed, is equally important.

This is a time that we promote international cooperation and solidarity and strengthen multilateral institutions like the United Nations to address the challenges the world is facing.

As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, this is also a fitting moment to ensure that LDCs challenges and concerns find due space and priority in all multilateral processes, including the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

A landlocked and least developed country, Nepal has its own share of the brunt of the pandemic.

It has wrought our economy to a standstill impacting industry, employment, trade, revenues, tourism, and remittances. It is likely to constrain Nepal's economic growth to less than 2.3% during this fiscal year.

Vulnerabilities to climate change and natural disasters further accentuate our development challenges.

Our hard-earned development gains are under threat, and the pandemic risks our plan for a smooth and sustainable graduation from the LDC status.

However, our aspiration for graduation has not weakened.

Mr. Chairman,

We are in the final stage of the implementation of Istanbul Programme of Action. Our focus must be on its unfinished business.

It is also a time to reflect upon the gap between the action-plan and its implementation and identify the bottlenecks that need our introspection.

We acknowledge various international support measures and initiatives taken so far to support the LDCs and implement the IPOA.

Our efforts must be towards creating jobs and advancing inclusive growth. This will not be possible without an enhanced level of external finance, including the FDI. Every country must be enabled to gain from the trade.

In this context, we reiterate the call for a global stimulus package for the LDCs to be funded and implemented with immediate effect.

To conclude, **Mr. Chairman**, LDCs deserve special attention of the international community in their efforts to achieve peace, development and prosperity. Reaching furthest behind first demands our concerted and collective effort because the decade of action and delivery of SDGs will not be realized if LDCs are left behind.

I thank you.

**वेल्ट एण्ड रोड सहयोग सम्बन्धी उच्चस्तरीय एशिया तथा प्यासिफिक सम्मेलनमा
उपप्रधानमन्त्री तथा अर्थमन्त्री श्री बिष्णुप्रसाद पौडेलज्यूले सम्बोधन गर्नुहुने मन्तव्य
(९ असार २०७८ तदनुसार २३ जून २०२१)**

**शिर्षक: दिगो पुनरुत्थानका लागि महामारी विरुद्ध लड्न सहयोगको अभिवृद्धि
(Promoting Cooperation on Combating the Pandemic for Sustainable Recovery)**

महामहिम वाङ् यी

माननीय परराष्ट्र मन्त्रीज्यूहरु

महिला तथा सज्जनवृन्द !

नमस्कार/शुभसन्ध्या !

यो महत्वपूर्ण सम्मेलन आयोजना गर्नु भएकोमा महामहिम वाङ् यीलाई धन्यवाद दिन चाहन्छु ।

कोभिड-१९ विरुद्धको हाम्रो लडाईं विगत एक वर्षदेखि अझै जारी छ । यो विश्वव्यापी महामारीले जनस्वास्थ्य र जनजिविकामा पारेको प्रभाव निकै विनाशकारी रहेको छ ।

पछिल्लो समय नेपालले यसको घातक दोश्रो लहरको सामना गर्नु परेको छ । हाम्रो यथेष्ट प्रयासहरुका फलस्वरूप संक्रमण दर क्रमिकरूपमा घट्दै गईरहेको छ । यो कठिन समयमा उदार सहयोगका लागि चीन र अन्य मित्र राष्ट्रहरुलाई धन्यवाद दिन चाहन्छु ।

हामीले कोरोना महामारीबाट हरेक व्यक्ति सुरक्षित नहुञ्जेलसम्म कोहि पनि सुरक्षित हुँदैन भन्ने कठिन पाठ सिकेका छौं । यो भाइसलाई परास्त गर्न साँचो भावनामा आधारित विश्व सहयोग र ऐक्यवद्धताको आवश्यकतापर्दछ । यो उद्देश्य प्राप्तिका लागि नेपाल प्रतिवद्ध रहको छ ।

यस महामारीबाट छुटकारा पाउनका लागि कोभिड भ्याक्सिन महत्वपूर्ण रहेको छ । हामी ठान्दछौं कि कोभ्याक्स लगायतको माध्यमबाट कोभिड भ्याक्सिनको निष्पक्ष र न्यायपूर्ण वितरण महत्वपूर्ण हुन्छ ।

महामारीको प्रभाव सापेक्षिक रुपमा अति कम विकसित मुलुक र समाजको गरिब वर्गमा अत्याधिक पर्न गएकोले भ्याक्सिन सहयोगमा उनीहरुलाई प्राथमिकता दिइनुपर्दछ ।

कोभिड भ्याक्सिनको उपहारको लागि हामी चीनको हार्दिक प्रशंसा गर्दछौं । कोभिड भ्याक्सिनलाई विश्वव्यापी सार्वजनिक वस्तु बनाउने चीनको घोषणाको हामी सराहना गर्दछौं ।

यस सन्दर्भमा, आज घोषणा हुने “वेल्ट एण्ड रोडको साझेदारीका लागि कोभिड भ्याक्सिन सम्बन्धी इनिशियटिभ”को हामी समर्थन गर्दछौं । मानिसहरुको जीवन, जिविकोपार्जनको रक्षा गर्न एवं आर्थिक पुनरुत्थान हासिल गर्न यो इनिशियटिभ महत्वपूर्ण हुनेमा हामी विस्वस्त छौं ।

महामहिमज्यूहरु,

महामारीपश्चातको आर्थिक पुनरुत्थान अर्को महत्वपूर्ण एजेण्डा हो, जसको लागि हामीले “समग्र क्षेत्र” र “समग्र विश्व”को भावना अनुरूप कार्य गर्न आवश्यक छ ।

दिगो विकासका लक्ष्यहरुको कार्यान्वयनका लागि अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय सहयोगको वृद्धि, अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय नाका एवं आपूर्ति श्रृङ्खलाको पुनः सञ्चालन, सौविध्यपूर्ण बजार पहुँच र अति कम विकसित मुलुकलाई लगानी तथा प्रविधिको हस्तान्तरण, पुननिर्माण एवं पुनरुत्थानका लागि प्रमुख सहयोगी तत्वहरु हुन् ।

महामहिमज्यूहरु,

नेपालले जलवायु परिवर्तनको अनपेक्षित र नकरात्मक असर खेप्नुपरेको छ । हिमनदी पग्लने, हिमतालहरु फुट्ने, अनियमित मौशमको स्वरुप, असामान्य बाढी र प्राकृतिक प्रकोपहरुको रुपमा विनाशकारी प्रभावहरु देखिएको छ । यस्ता प्रकोप हालैका वर्षहरुमा निरन्तररुपमा बढ्दै गईरहेको पाइन्छ ।

यसै कुरालाई मध्यनजर गर्दै नेपालले शुरु गरेको अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय सम्वाद मञ्च “सगरमाथा सम्वाद”को पहिलो संस्करण यस वर्षको अक्टोबरमा जलवायु परिवर्तन शिर्षकमा आयोजना गरिंदैछ । कोभिड महामारीका कारण गत वर्ष स्थगित भएको “सगरमाथा सम्वाद”को निष्कर्षले “कोप २६”प्रकृयाको लागि आधार प्रदान गर्नेमा हामी विश्वस्त छौ ।

आगामी “कोप २६”मा जलवायु सम्बन्धी उच्च महत्वकांक्षी योजनाको सहमतिका लागि नेपाल आह्वान गर्दछ । यस किसिमको सहमतिले सहज एवं पहुँचयोग्य जलवायु वित्त, प्रविधि हस्तान्तरण र जलवायु परिवर्तनका दृष्टिले कमजोर मुलुकहरुको क्षमता विकास तथा जलवायु परिवर्तनको असरको न्यूनिकरणका साथै अनुकूलनमा योगदान दिने हुनुपर्दछ भन्ने हामी ठान्दछौ ।

शिघ्र एवं हरित पुननिर्माण र दिगो विकास प्राप्तिका लागि आजै घोषणा गरिने “हरित विकासका लागि वेल्थ एण्ड रोड सम्बन्धी इनिसियटिभ” को पनि हामी स्वागत गर्दछौ ।

धन्यवाद ।



PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS BY FOREIGN AMBASSADORS

SN	Name of Ambassador	Accreditation/Country	Date
1	Mr. Park Chong-Suk	Residential/South Korea	27 September 2020
2	Ms. Nona Depress	Residential/EU	27 September 2020
3	Mr. Vosita Vorasaph	Residential/Thailand	03 December 2020
4	Mr. Hanan Goder-Goldberger	Residential/ Israel	03 December 2020
5	Mr. Salahuddin Noman Chowdhury	Residential/Bangladesh	03 December 2020
6	Mr. U Sein Oo	Residential/Myanmar	03 December 2020
7	Mr. Syed Haider Shah	Residential/Pakistan	15 February 2021
8	Ms. Felicity Jane Volk	Residential/Australia	15 February 2021
9	Mr. Kikuta Yutaka	Residential/Japan	16 April 2021
10	Mr. Freddy Svane	Non-residential/ Denmark	16 April 2021
11	Mr. Dionyssios Kyvetos	Non-residential/Greece	16 April 2021
12	Mrs. Elonora Dimitrova Eleonora	Non-residential/Bulgaria	16 April 2021

VI

KATHMANDU-BASED FOREIGN AMBASSADORS COMPLETING TOUR OF DUTY

SN	Name	Designation	Return Date
1	Ms. Veronica Cody	Ambassador/ Head of Delegation of the European Union to Nepal	29 July 2020
2	Ms. MashfeeBinte Shams	Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh	20 August 2020
3	Dr. David James Molden	Director General of ICIMOD	5 October 2020
4	Dr. MazharJaved	Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan	20 October 2020
5	Ms. Phillipa Jill Bradford	Representative and Country Director of UNWFP	6 February 2021
6	Mr. Roland Schäfer	Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany	15 July 2021
7	Mr. Lasse Bjørn Johannessen	Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway	23 July 2021
8	Ms. LubnaBaqi	Representative of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)	31 July 2021

ABBREVIATIONS

ACD:	Asian Cooperation Dialogue
ADB:	Asian Development Bank
AZ:	AstraZeneca
BBIN:	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal
BGC:	Brain Gain Center
BIMSTEC:	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
BPWC:	BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee
BRI:	Belt and Road Initiatives
CCMC:	COVID-19 Crisis Management Coordination Center
CEDAW:	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CoP26:	26 th Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC
COVAX:	COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access
COVID-19:	Corona Virus Disease 2019
CPAP:	Continuous Positive Airway Pressure
DoCS:	Department of Consular Services
DoP:	Department of Passports
DPM:	Deputy Prime Minister
ECOSOC:	Economic and Social Council
EIF:	Enhanced Integrated Framework
eMRTD:	electronic Machine Readable Passports
EU:	European Union
FDI:	Foreign Direct Investment
FEB:	Foreign Employment Board
FY:	Fiscal Year
G77:	The Group of 77

GAVI:	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations
GBP:	British Sterling Pound
GCC:	Gulf Cooperation Council
HRC:	Human Rights Council
ICAO:	International Civil Aviation Authority
ICIMOD:	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
ICTs:	Information and Communication Technologies
IFA:	Institute of Foreign Affairs
IGC:	Inter-Governmental Committee
IGSC:	Inter-Governmental Sub-Committee
ILO:	International Labour Organisation
INGOs:	International Non-governmental Organizations
IOM:	International Organisation for Migration
IRENA:	International Renewable Energy Agency
JSC:	Joint Steering Committee
JWG:	Joint Working Group
KOICA:	Korea International Cooperation Agency
LDCs:	Least Developed Countries
LLDCs:	Land Locked Developing Countries
LoE:	Letters of Exchange
MCC:	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MoF:	Ministry of Finance
MoFA:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoU:	Memorandum of Understanding
MRP:	Machine Readable Passport
MW:	Megawatt
NAM:	Non-Aligned Movement
NDCs:	Nationally Determined Contributions
NPR:	Nepali Rupee
NRNA:	Non-resident Nepali Association
NRNs:	Non-resident Nepalis
P4G:	Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030

PCR:	Polymerase Chain Reaction
PPE:	Personal Protective Equipment
PRI:	Policy Research Institute
RMB:	Ren Min Bi
RoK:	Republic of Korea
RSA:	Rail Services Agreement
PTA:	Preferential Trade Agreement
SAARC:	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAFTA:	South Asian Free Trade Area
SATIS:	SAARC Agreement on Trade in Services
SCO:	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goals
SOM:	Senior Officials' Meeting
TEPC:	Trade and Export Promotion Center
TNC:	Trade Negotiation Committee
TPCC:	Troops and Peace Contributing Countries
UAE:	United Arab Emirates
UK:	United Kingdom
UN:	United Nations
UNDS:	United Nations Development System
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCAP:	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNGA/GA:	United Nations General Assembly
UNHRC:	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRCPD:	United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific
UNSC:	United Nations Security Council
UPR:	Universal Periodic Review
USA:	United States of America
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development
USD/ US\$:	US Dollar

VPoA:	Vienna Programme of Action
WHO:	World Health Organization
WMDs:	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO:	World Trade Organisation

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