**Statement by Honourable 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 neighbors 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 fulfill 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 Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Leader of 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,**

1. I have the honor 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,**

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Nepal’s Ambassador and Permanent Representative in Geneva and officials of the Permanent Mission are joining from Geneva.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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,**

1. Nepal had accepted a total of 152 recommendations during the 2ndcycle 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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,**

1. 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.
2. Other independent thematic Commissions on Women, Dalit, Indigenous Nationalities, Madheshi, Tharu, and Muslim Community have been actively working for the promotion and protection of rights and interests of the specific communities.
3. 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,**

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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 25thanniversary of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Nepal is happy to share these achievements.
7. 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.
8. 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,**

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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 15thNational Development Plan, which is currently under implementation, aims at promoting inclusive economic growth and creating broad-based foundation for prosperity.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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,**

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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, 2017recognizes 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.
4. 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.
5. 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 enrollment and reducing dropouts.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. 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,**

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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 re-lapsing into poverty remains the key challenges.
7. Nepal under the able leadership of Prime Minister Rt. Honorable 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.
8. 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,**

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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 neighbors to ensure availability of vaccines. The Government of Nepal has already decided to provide the vaccines free of cost to the people.
5. 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**.

**Statement by Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Government of Nepal at the 17th Ministerial Meeting of Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) (Virtual, Ankara, 21 January 2021)**

**Mr. Chairman,**
**Hon. Ministers,**
**His Excellency the Secretary General of ACD,**
**Distinguished Delegates,**
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**
**Good Morning and Namaste!**

Let me begin by expressing my sincere appreciations to the Government of the Republic of Turkey for successfully steering the organization and hosting this meeting. I commend the Secretary General of ACD and his team at the Secretariat for the excellent preparation.

Nineteen years ago, in 2002, we founded the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) with the objective of promoting dialogue, mutual understanding, and interdependence among Asian countries and improving the quality of life of our people. I believe, today’s meeting will be yet another milestone in generating further impetus to the ACD process towards this direction.

As we confront with the unprecedented crisis of COVID-19 pandemic, the theme of the meeting “The New Normal and Safe and Healthy Tourism,” carries a significant meaning for the new normal that we have to live with.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The pandemic has caused a colossal damage everywhere disrupting our lives, livelihoods, and economies. It has also hugely impacted the hard-earned development gains, including achievement of SDGs. Tourism, undoubtedly, is the hardest-hit sector by this pandemic.

Nepal has placed top priority to protect people’s lives from the disease and hunger. We have initiated necessary policies and programs to provide budgetary relief, incentives, and stimulus packages to the affected people and sectors, including the tourism sector.

Nepal has scrupulously been executing safety, health and sanitation protocols in all tourism related activities supported by awareness programs at people’s level. Domestic and international flights are being gradually opened ensuring compliance with proper health and security measures. Our focus is to save jobs and keep the economy afloat, and revive the travel and hospitality industry following new set of norms and health protocols.

We are keen to work with fellow member states in boosting the testing, tracing, screening and treatment of the Covid-19 patients. Synchronized and effective systems need to be put in place for testing of international travellers at the source, transit and destination countries to reduce the health risk and develop confidence of the travellers.

Close cooperation among the member states as well as partnership with private business is critically important for bringing the tourism sector to normality, particularly while opening international borders, flights, and peoples’ movement.

Sharing of best practices, knowledge, skills and experiences in this regard would also be highly crucial so as to sustain the new norms in the new normal and prevent sudden upsurge of the pandemic.

In parallel, we need to ensure easy and affordable access to vaccines and other essential medical items to check the virus and gradually return to the normalcy.

**Mr. Chairman,**

As an emerging global economic powerhouse, Asia assumes the leading role in global trade, supply chain, and innovation. Blessed with abundant natural and human resources; and, being a rich mosaic of diverse history, culture, civilization, geography, economies and political systems; the continent truly holds a high potential for socio-economic development, technological advancement and prosperity.

Development and improvement of quality of infrastructure is a key to build connectivity in ACD region, economic integration, inclusive growth and people-to-people contact. For a landlocked country like Nepal, ensuring all modes of connectivity will be the key enabler to narrow the development gap and achieve equitable and inclusive growth.

Equally vital would be the promotion of investment and business activities in such priority areas as agriculture, energy, connectivity, tourism, education, science, technology and innovation, as well as sustainable development.

It is imperative to enhance cooperation and collaboration for mitigation and adaption of the adverse impacts of climate change and natural disasters.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Nepal accords high priority to regional cooperation. We have full confidence on principles, values and goals of ACD. We stand ready to proactively engage with the fellow Member States to advance the ACD process.

We believe that ACD can play a significant role in strengthening mutual trust, forging common understanding, and promoting cooperation and collaboration among the Member States for peace, stability, shared development, and prosperity of the Asian nations.

I thank you all.

**Talks Given by Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, at the Indian Council of World Affairs (Sapru House)**

**New Delhi, 15 January 2021**

**Ambassador Dr. T C A Raghavan, Director General of ICWA**
**Distinguished diplomats, scholars, and professors present here, and those who have joined us virtually,**
**Friends from the media,**
**Ladies and Gentlemen.**
It is indeed a great pleasure for me to speak before this distinguished audience.

I sincerely thank the Indian Council of World Affairs for this opportunity and for the warm reception. I thank you, Ambassador Dr. Raghavan, for your kind words of introduction.

That many eminent people are virtually linked for this conversation reflects the interest you all have on Nepal.

For me, this demonstrates your goodwill about Nepal as well as the importance attached to Nepal-India relations.

**Dear Friends**,

Nepal is not unfamiliar to you. Neither is the kind of political transformation that Nepal has achieved in the recent decades.

It rarely happened elsewhere in the world that a society succeeds to smoothly shift from armed conflict to peaceful political process, agrees on the agenda of socio-political restructuring, accomplish the journey from bullet to ballot and the entire process culminates in the making of the inclusive constitution by people’s elected representatives.

The Constitution that we made guarantees human rights and fundamental freedoms to all citizens without any discrimination. It seeks to promote socio-economic justice to the backward communities in our society. In the past three years, our focus has been on translating the same constitutional aspiration into reality.

In a diverse society like ours, where political forces carry contesting ideologies, managing transition was not easy. But we did it with a firm resolve. It was a resolve to transform society and empower everyone.

I must mention here that in accomplishing this historic change, we received valuable support from all of our friends and well-wishers in the neighbourhood and around the world, for which we are most thankful.

Post-constitution transition remained short. As envisaged in the Constitution, elections were held for local, provincial and federal legislatures in 2017. After 20 years’ gap, the local bodies received elected leadership. And we have already started to see the positive impacts of the empowered local bodies at the grassroot level. The newly established provincial governments have also proven their importance.

A decision has recently been taken to go to the sovereign people for a fresh mandate. These elections will be yet another important occasion for expressing popular will and further strengthening our democratic foundation.

Political process having taken a settled course, our focus is now on the other aspects of people’s freedom, namely freedom from poverty and underdevelopment; freedom from hardships of deprived living; freedom from worry about the basic needs; freedom to pursue a healthy and prosperous life.

We are fully aware that political gains can only be sustained if we are able to create a robust economic foundation.

And to this end, our government, under the leadership of Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli, is resolutely focused on realizing the national aspiration of **‘prosperous Nepal, happy Nepali’**. For this, we have rearranged our economic development priorities, defined time bound goals, and implemented them with all our strengths.

In the past three years, Nepal has made significant strides in various dimensions of socio-economic transformation. The pace and intensity of the transformation has never been more visible and impactful. The country has progressed on most of the development indicators.

Prior to COVID 19 pandemic, Nepal was in the list of top 10 countries with high economic growth. The rate of growth had been above 6.5% continuously for the past 3 years. At the same time, poverty level was reduced by 1.5% every year.

During the same period, Nepal achieved significant improvements in more than 14 global indicators. It is encouraging that we were among the top 10 countries in making improvements in human development index, ease of doing business, hunger index, peace index, rule of law, corruption control and transparency, happiness index, and gender parity.

Trade deficit has come down by 10%; FDI has increased; development cooperation has increased; and we are in a better situation in terms of foreign currency reserve.

Works related to strategic infrastructure critical for Nepal’s   development including cross border railways, East-West electric railway, waterways, new airports, Kathmandu-Terai Expressway are moving ahead. Construction and upgradation of Mid Hill Highway together with expansion of East-West Highway are ongoing.

Guided by the motto of economic growth with social justice, the government has initiated the contribution-based universal social security scheme. Health insurance has reached more than sixty districts.

Despite Covid 19, school enrollment has reached 98%. In health sector, just last month, we laid the foundation stone for new hospitals of 5 to 15 beds capacity in 396 urban and village municipalities to be built simultaneously. This was a historic announcement made with the purpose of ensuring people’s access to health services even in the remotest part of the country.

Post-earthquake reconstruction works are nearing completion, including the restitution of some of the rich and treasured historical icons. Seven lakhs private homes have been built and I am glad to share that these include 47 thousand houses built under government of India’s generous assistance. People living in vulnerable locations have been shifted to safe settlements.

We are mindful that these achievements are not adequate. There is much more to do.

Our development needs are immense and aspirations are boundless. Resources are limited and challenges are numerous. And many of these challenges we cannot confront alone; many of our aspirations we cannot meet by our lone efforts.

That is why we need partners; we need friends. Natural start of such friendship is neighbourhood. We see a natural connection between our aspiration for prosperity with the prosperity of our big neighbours.

This would mean for us a robust economic partnership that enables us to grow and unleash our potentials;

* a partnership that helps overcome Nepal’s structural bottlenecks as landlocked and least developed country;
* a partnership that fosters mutually rewarding and beneficial trade relationship;
* a partnership that propels the process of industrialization, flow of investment, transfer of technology and connects our economies in value chain;
* a partnership that leads to better utilization of our natural resources for sustained economic growth and development; and
* a partnership that makes our relations impactful to the lives of our peoples.

**Distinguished Friends**,

Our two countries are connected by geography as well as history, by nature as well as culture. Both our societies are blessed with ancient wisdom and heritage whose timelessness has been universally recognized.

When we come to the context of our relations today, the key question is how much we can serve the aspirations of people; to what extent we can be supportive of each other’s quest for growth and development.

Both our countries are highly diverse societies and have our own unique experiences of managing this diversity. We have similar aspirations and face identical challenges in pursuit of respective national goals. Our developmental challenges are similar too. Poverty is still significant in our countries. We face the urgency to ensure that our people have a decent home, decent clothes and quality food; that our youths receive quality education that makes them competent and competitive.

These common urgencies do tell us why economic development should be more crucial in our contemporary conversations; why we need to forge close economic partnership to that end; and why cooperative relations between our two countries is important.

Nepal-India relations are the vast confluence of political and economic interactions as well as unique ties at people-to-people level. It cannot be confined to one dimension alone.

In political sphere, both countries have been brought closer by their steadfast commitment to democratic values, practices and system of governance. India has demonstrated how democracy and development could be successfully pursued together so as to promote overall progress and prosperity of the people.

Nepal is equally effortful to consolidate democracy and strengthen democratic institutions so that the gains of our long struggles remain unshakable.

In order to carry forward our multi-faceted relations, we have built a large network of bilateral mechanisms in almost all sectors of cooperation. There are close to three dozen mechanisms that are currently functioning at various levels and in different areas.

I am in Delhi this time to hold the meeting of one such important mechanism with my distinguished counterpart, Dr Jaishankar, the External Affairs Minister of India.

Needless to say that relationship between neighbours has its own characters. Mutual trust, understanding and respect for each other’s sensitivities and concerns contribute to strengthen the foundation of such relationship. Building and nurturing trust is absolutely essential for the health and harmony of the relations.

In this spirit, we desire to start the conversation with a view to resolving the question of boundary alignment in the remaining segments. Many of you may be aware that Nepal and India share over 1,800 km long international boundary most of which is jointly mapped. Only in the stretches of some kilometers, the work remains to be completed.

Finding an agreeable boundary alignment in these segments may not only take us to the stage of fully settled international boundary but may also help generate positive vibe in public sentiment as well as help instill greater degree of trust and confidence in bilateral relations. I believe that we can work out and reach that stage.

While both sides have agreed to resolve the boundary question through talks, we have also shown wisdom that despite the difference in one area, the momentum of our overall engagements is continued. We are also mindful that we should not let any outstanding issue between us be there forever and become irritant in an otherwise friendly relationship.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

For Nepal, India remains the largest trading partner. However, the problem of bilateral trade deficit looms large. Our economy cannot sustain this alarmingly high trade imbalance.

In the process of the review of the bilateral trade arrangement, we have proposed certain measures that would offer us some genuine space and help us expand our export base. We expect positive and forthcoming consideration of these measures. Nepal is not a competitor of India in trade. I am sure many of you would agree when I say that making Nepal economically strong serves India’s interest too.

We have likewise flagged a few proposals for expansion and streamlining of the current transit arrangements. We like to see an early conclusion of this review process as well.

Nepal and India are endowed with resources, both natural and human. The 21st century should not merely be the century of potentials and resources – lying untapped and unused. It should be the century of dream realization.

Talking about potentials, hydropower development is an important sector of bilateral economic partnership. It will benefit the people and industries of both our countries. We need to generate a success story by sincerely implementing the projects agreed in the past. Pancheshwar project comes atop. Our recent conversation on this transformative mega project has been encouraging. Once realized, Pancheshwar will not only be a big project on its own but also set a success story of how we can make arrangements for cost and benefit sharing in harnessing of our vast water resources.

Indian investors are already finding traction in investing on hydro projects in Nepal. Two large scale projects have been initiated – one by a public enterprise and the other by a private investor.

In order to facilitate cross border trade of electricity from projects like these, our two countries concluded a bilateral Power Trade Agreement in 2014 incorporating the provision about free trade of electricity. Power traders and developers are awaiting issuance of a facilitative procedures for cross border electricity trade.

Nepal’s desire is to see an early possibility of unhindered trade of electricity among at least the BBIN countries.

The importance of connectivity cannot be overemphasized. We need to further expand air connectivity, air routes and road and rail linkages. Added to these are railways, waterways and other components of cross-border transit, transport hardware and software.

Lately, we have made noticeable progress on some of our flagship connectivity projects. Our Prime Ministers inaugurated a year ago Motihari-Amlekhgunj Petroleum Products Pipeline, the first cross border pipeline in the region. We are talking about further expansion of pipeline infrastructure.

Integrated Check-posts have been developed and operationalized at two major border points streamlining the cross-border movement of goods. More such Check-posts are on the plan.

Progress has been made on cross border railways too. Required preparatory steps are being taken for the development of Kathmandu-Raxaul railway. Our experts have undertaken homework on inland waterways as well. These initiatives will not only make us more connected but also contribute to Nepal’s transformation from land-locked to land-linked situation.

Beyond the respective border, our two countries do share a dream of regional prosperity and better regional cooperation. We work together in SAARC, BIMSTEC and BBIN. Even during the Covid 19 pandemic, we explored the possibility of regional cooperation among the SAARC countries. We thank the Prime Minister of India for taking the initiative to convene the virtual summit of SAARC leaders.

In international forums, Nepal and India are both advocates of the issues uniquely faced by developing countries and do raise voice for a fairer and more inclusive global development architecture. We speak for a better level playing field for all countries.

**Dear Friends,**

We are in the changed context both at home and abroad. Accordingly, we want to inject fresh perspectives into our relations with external world.

Our foreign policy priority begins at our borders. Talking about India, our intention is to strengthen the foundation of our relations; to expand and consolidate it; and to bring the relations to the next level. Our objective is clear and unambiguous.

We are two countries of different size, populations, level of economic development. The scope of our ambition is different, so is our strength. India is aspiring to be a global power, both politically and economically. Nepal’s ambition is to be a more stable and prosperous country.

As a close neighbour, we are delighted to see India’s incredible achievements: be it the infrastructure build-up or industrialization; be it the advancement in technology, or in terms of the seven decades of successful democratic practice.

Today as we wait for the availability of COVID 19 vaccines, India is one of the few front runners that have started vaccinating the people. This has given us a great hope. I take this opportunity to congratulate India and its innovative companies for the success. Being next door, we believe we too will be availing these vaccines.

**Dear Friends,**

Nepal was among the few countries that remained independent throughout its history. In this very fact is rooted the abounding sense of national pride of today’s 30 million Nepali people. We, therefore, hold dearer than anything else the principles of sovereign equality, mutual respect and non-interference.

We pursue an independent foreign policy and our conduct of external relations is based on a balanced outlook. We do not harbour ill-will against anyone. Amity with all and enmity with none is our motto. Guided by the same principles, we seek to foster relations with neighbours and all friendly countries around the world.

Prime Minister Oli said, while in this very city three years ago, that Nepal desired to create a strong edifice of trust in our relations; desired to create a relationship which would make our generation and the future equally proud. We want to see a 21st century Nepal-India relationship, which is forward looking and firmly founded on equality, mutual respect, justice and understanding of each other’s concerns and sensitivities.

For that, we should sincerely attend to the issues that we have inherited from the past; address them appropriately and should creatively work out the agendas for future. With the same objective, we created an Eminent Persons’ Group in 2016 and mandated them to review the entire spectrum of Nepal-India relations and recommend measures to upgrade them in the changed context. EPG has done its work and our job is to receive their report and implement.

One of the tasks assigned to EPG was the task of recommending the inputs for the review of past treaties and agreement, including the Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1950. We have agreed to revise, adjust and update the Treaty to better reflect the current reality and to further consolidate and expand our friendship. We need to do it sooner than later.

To conclude, our conviction is unwavering that Nepal-India friendship stands on a robust foundation. Our connection is deep and engagement comprehensive. Yet we should be mindful equally that healthy relations require continuous nurturing, creative thinking, promptness and readiness to understand each other in changing dynamics. I am sure we have that competence.

Thank you!

**Remarks by Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs, at the launch of Human Development Report 2020, entitled “Human Development Report 2020: The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene”**

**10:30 am – 12:30 pm, Wednesday, 16 December 2020**

**Hon. Krishna Prasad Oli, Member of the National Planning Commission
Dr. Yubraj Khatiwada, Former Minister for Finance
HE Nona Deprez, EU Ambassador
Dr Pema Gyamtsho, DG, ICIMOD
Mr. Yannick Glemarec, Executive Director, Global Climate Fund,
Ms. Ayshanie Labe, UNDP Resident Representative to Nepal,
Distinguished Panelists,
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

**G**ood afternoon and Namaskar to you all!

Let me first of all thank Ms. Ayshanie Labe, Resident Representative of UNDP in Nepal, for inviting me to this important ceremony of launching Human Development Report 2020.

For three decades, Human Development Reports have fundamentally shaped the ideas and policy discourse on alternative assessment of development and wellbeing. The criteria used for measuring human development have been the basis for advancing social development agenda, including in Nepal. The contents of the HDR reports have served as useful policy resources for many countries.

Successive human development reports since 1990 have highlighted critical dimensions of human progress and sustainable development, thereby informing, encouraging and assisting the Governments and stakeholders to address the impediments in the way of enlarging choices. They have also widened the conceptual foundation of human development as a capability to lead life one values the most.

Over the years, the very concept of human development has evolved and adapted considerably to encompass newer elements and dimensions that expands human wellbeing, freedoms, and choices. This year, the report heralds an epoch-making transformation that has taken place in the inter-relationship between human and nature, and signals humans’ entry into an uncharted territory of Anthropocene- where humans shape the future of the planet, not the other way round.

The concept of human development has been re-interpreted in the report to account the profound impact of climate change and environmental degradation that we have experienced. The report asserts that in this uncertain and challenging new phase, human development cannot be defined by ‘capability’ to expanding choices alone, but also by the ‘agency’ and ‘value’ – that is ability to participate in decision making and make the most desired choices.

The report talks appropriately on planetary imbalances and social imbalances , and calls for just transformation that extends human freedoms while easing planetary pressures and underlines the need for whole-of-society response.

Conceptually, it develops a new planetary-pressure-adjusted-human-development-index (PHDI) and gives HDI a new dimension of accounting the impact a country makes to the planet.

The report has evoked a transformative thought in the form of an era of Anthropocene that will most probably shape the development discourse for another several decades.

This comes at a time that the world just celebrated the 5th anniversary of the Paris Climate Accord. World leaders have pronounced higher national ambitions and reinforced their commitment to firmly implement the Accord. This might look merely a coincidence. However, given the level of climate urgency felt around the world, this human development report is a significant addition to alert against the insatiable human action.

We just heard comprehensive presentations and rich intellectual commentaries on the report and its content. I believe the report will continue to invite further stimulating deliberations as we go on.

**Dear Friends,**

Now, let me relate the alarm ringing in the report to the context of Nepal and how we consider we could address the situation.

We Nepalis are the followers of nature-friendly culture. Our culture and traditions have taught us to live in harmony with nature, which is Nepali way of life. We consider rivers, mountains, trees, ponds and lakes as sacred places and abode of deities. We want to link this cultural value for the conservation of nature, protection of environment and mitigating and adapting with the impact of climate change.

Nepal strongly supports the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the call to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Mr. K P Sharma Oli addressed the climate ambition summit hosted to mark the 5th anniversary of the Paris Agreement last week and outlined the roadmap for Nepal’s ambition towards a net-zero greenhouse gas emission by 2050. Coinciding this, Nepal submitted its updated, more ambitious and progressive Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC-2020).

We are committed to the promotion of climate-resilient development and aim to move towards a zero-carbon economy. We have prioritized producing clean and renewable energy as well as promoting e-mobility, low carbon infrastructure and ecotourism. By 2030, Nepal aims to maintain 45% of the country’s land under forest cover and aims to extend protected area from 23% to 30% and preserve biodiversity.

Nepal’s mountains are not only source of fresh water for millions, but also serve as climate stabilizer and help maintain ecological balance in the oceans.

While implementing the NDC, Nepal remains committed to prioritize the issue of gender equality and social inclusion and ensure full, equal and meaningful participation of women, children, youth, indigenous peoples and marginalized communities in all stages of the implementation process. I believe this is where we match with the emphasis of this year’s HDR on human ‘agency’ and ‘value’.

While easy and adequate access to climate finance becomes critical for us to implement these ambitions, we are keen to join hands with all countries to march ahead for a more sustainable journey together.

With a view to contribute in our own way to the climate change agenda, we are committed to host the Sagarmatha Sambad when the COVID-19 situation becomes normal.

Human development is a path that leads us to live a happy and meaningful life. In order to successfully navigate through the age of Anthropocene, we do not have a choice of continuing the business as usual. It is a call to pursue entirely a new path that all countries, societies and economies must adopt to save humanity from unforeseen crises and dooms.

The most reassuring path is deploying sustained action through mechanisms of social norms and values, incentives and regulations, and nature based human development. Without this, we cannot address the most critical challenges of Anthropocene- mitigating and adapting to climate change, protecting biodiversity and ensuring human wellbeing for all.

Before conclude, I would like to quote Nobel laureate Pablo Neruda, ‘The bare earth, plantless, waterless, is an immense puzzle. In the forests or beside rivers everything speaks to humans. The desert does not speak. I could not comprehend its tongue; its silence…’

I believe, this report in the 30th year of HDR, will mark a paradigm shift in terms of new development thought, process and action for promoting sustainable human development in an extraordinary time that we are living in.

I thank you.

**Virtual Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at 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 the 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 Minister for Foreign Affairs Honourable 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.

**Opening Remarks by Hon. 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. Esala 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, 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 Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal, at the 19thAnnual Ministerial Meeting of LLDCs
(23 September 2020)**

Mr. Chairman,
Honorable Ministers,
Secretary-General Mr. Antonio Guterres
USG and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS Ms. Utoikamanu
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 Utoikamanu and her team in promoting the cause of LLDCs.

Mr. Chairman,
At the dawn of the defining decade in achieving SDGs, the 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 neighbors, 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 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 Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at the Annual Ministerial Meeting of LDCs**
**17 September 2020**
**9:00- 13:00hrs**

**Mr. Chairman,
Honorable Ministers,**
**USG and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS Ms. Utoikamanu**
**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 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.

**Statement by Honourable Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Head of the Nepali delegation at the High-Level Segment of the 43rd Session of Human Rights Council**
**Geneva, Tuesday, 25 February 2020, 16:00 hrs.**

Madam President
Madam High Commissioner
Excellencies,

I feel honoured to be back to the Council again.

This session is taking place at the beginning of the new decade marked by optimism, empowerment and equality.

With the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration, the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, and a full circle of a hundred years of multilateralism, we have come a long way towards realizing the common aspiration of ‘leaving no one behind’ by ensuring opportunity, justice and human rights for all.

These landmark events remind us of our determination to maintaining world peace, protecting human rights and fundamental freedom, and embracing socio-economic progress.

Nepal remains steadfast in those commitments, principles and values.

Nepal firmly believes in the universality, in-divisibility, inter-relatedness, inter-dependence and mutually reinforcing nature of human rights, including the right to development. We believe that the rule of law and human rights must be evenly operational at national, regional and international levels.

We are a party to all major international human rights instruments including seven of the nine core such instruments. We have internalized those values and standards into our national laws, policies and practices.

The Constitution of Nepal is founded on universally recognized human rights and such other principles as inclusive multiparty democratic polity, pluralism, the rule of law, and representative and accountable government. Independence of judiciary and full freedom of press are the salient tenets of Nepal’s Constitution.

Social justice is integral to our democratic process. The Constitution guarantees special measures for weaker sections of our society to enable them enjoy fundamental rights and receive a fair share of representation in all spheres of national life.

Nepal, as a secular State, guarantees freedom of religion as a fundamental right. The religious tolerance in Nepali society is exemplary.

We recognize the role of the grassroots community organizations, civil society, human rights defenders, and the media as the indispensable partners in the promotion and protection of human rights.

The National Human Rights Commission of Nepal conforms to the Paris Principles and stands accredited as ‘A’ category national human rights institution.

As one of the pioneer countries to implement National Human Rights Action Plan since 2004, we are now preparing the 5th National Action Plan.

Madam President,
Having achieved democratic political order and stability in the country, Nepal is now focused to realize the vision of “Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali”. We have mainstreamed Sustainable Development Goals into the national development plan with a view to realize them by 2030.

We practice equality and non-discrimination and remain committed to ensuring full enjoyment of all human rights by women and girls. The progress made by Nepal in terms of gender equality and empowerment provides a reason to be proud.

Marking the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child last year, we have pledged to ending all forms of child labour, ending Child Marriage and enacted the Right to Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Act.

We are fully committed to the rights of persons with disabilities. The measures of positive discrimination that we have implemented to enable them participate in political and public life have produced good impacts. Provisioning of adequate resources and infrastructure for quality and inclusive education for children with disabilities remains our continued priority.

Madam President,
Migration has been one of the defining phenomena of our time.

Being one of the major countries of origin; safety, security, dignity and welfare of the migrant workers is a matter of paramount importance for us.

Protection of rights of migrant workers, including women migrant workers, and combating trafficking in person requires cooperative efforts at national, regional and international levels. We believe that the historic commitment expressed through Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) provides a framework of cooperation to ensuring migration benefits for all.

A clean, healthy and sustainable environment is essential for the full enjoyment of all human rights.
As a mountainous country, impact of global warming is of particular concern for us. While we support Council’s attention to human rights vis a vis climate change, Nepal has initiated a multi-stakeholder global dialogue forum- Sagarmatha Sambaad- named after the world’s tallest mountain, known as the Mt. Everest, to deliberate on the issues of common interest.

The first edition of this dialogue will be convened in Kathmandu from 2 to 4 April this year on the theme of ‘Climate Change, Mountains and the Future of the Humanity’.

Madam President
Nepal presents a uniquely successful case of nationally led and owned conflict transformation and peace process.  We are dealing with the incidences of conflict era human rights violations through two independent Commissions – the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission for Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons. The term of the Commissions has been extended to ensure the completion of their work. The newly appointed Commissioners have started functioning in full swing.

We stand firmly to our commitment to addressing remaining issues of transitional justice in accordance with the Comprehensive Peace Accord, directive of the Supreme Court, relevant international commitments, concerns of the victims, and the ground realities.

Nepal appreciates the continuous goodwill and understanding of the international community.

Madam President
The Human Rights Council and its mechanisms have been playing important role in promoting universal respect for all human rights.

The UPR has successfully evolved as a transparent and fair process of promoting dialogue and cooperation and a meaningful exercise for the improvement of human rights situation everywhere.

In Nepal, we have been implementing the outcome of the second cycle of UPR in earnest under an updated plan of actions. Nepal looks forward to the Third Cycle of Review in November this year.

Nepal attaches great importance to the work of Special Procedures mandate-holders. We continue to be constructively engaged with them. We welcome country visits by Special Procedures at a mutually convenient time. We regularly respond to the Communications of the Special Procedures and treaty bodies.
We are committed to our obligation to submit periodic reports on regular basis. In 2018 alone, Nepal’s periodic reports under CRPD, CERD and CEDAW were considered. Preparation of latest reports under CAT, ICCPR, ICESCR and CRC are underway.

Our experience as a member of the Council has inspired us to consolidate democracy, advance socio-economic transformation, and promote universal respect for and observance of human rights. We have made utmost efforts to fulfil our pledges and commitments.

In this spirit, Nepal has submitted candidature for the membership of the Human Rights Council for the second term 2021 to 2023. We count on the valuable support of all UN Member States.

We have strong faith in the values of multilateralism to strengthen and sustain our common aspiration of a peaceful, prosperous and just world. We remain committed to working together in a balanced and objective manner for the universal protection and promotion of human rights.

I thank you.

**Remarks by Honorable Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs,at the 72nd Anniversary Program of Nepal Council of World Affairs**

**(16:30 hrs, 16 February 2020, Kathmandu)**

Chief Guest of the Program Vice President Right Honorable Mr. Nanda Bahadur Pun,
President of Nepal Council of World Affairs,
Excellencies and Members from Diplomatic Community,
Representatives from United Nations, Academia, Private Sector and Civil Society,
Friends from the media,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

Namaskar and Good Afternoon to you all.

It is a pleasure and honour to be present in this commemoration of the 72nd anniversary of Nepal Council of World Affairs (NCWA).

While thanking the NCWA for inviting me at this important event, let me begin by congratulating its office bearers and members on this special occasion.

NCWA deserves our appreciation for hosting this annual event almost regularly with fruitful and creative deliberations on pertinent topics of foreign policy and international relations.

Today, I have been asked by the host to speak a few words on Nepal’s foreign relations and the relations with neighboring countries. The topic demands to touch all aspects of Nepal’s external relations, including with the neighbors. I will be brief and try to do justice to this rather comprehensive topic.

Distinguished friends,

The world today is highly connected, complex and inter-dependent. Survival, security and prosperity have been basic elements that every nation state endeavors to maximize. At the same time, creating an international order that is conducive for all to exist, prosper and thrive is important for peace and security. This demands cooperation among nations and their willingness to act collectively to respond to the challenges of global scale. As a dignified member in the comity of nations, Nepal’s efforts have been around this basic character of modern nation states. Safeguarding Nepal’s independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity; protecting national interest and the interests of its people; and ensuring Nepal’s security and economic wellbeing have been all along the fundamental tenets of Nepal’s international relations.

The Constitution of Nepal has guided basic framework for the conduct of Nepal’s foreign relations. The Constitution also defines core elements of our national interest. Safeguarding of the freedom, sovereignty, territorial integrity, nationalism, independence and dignity of the country, border security, economic wellbeing and prosperity and the rights of the Nepali people are defined as the elements of Nepal’s national interest. Service to the national interests is therefore the primary objective of our foreign policy goal.

The Constitution also directs Nepal to pursue independent foreign policy and adhere to the principles of the UN Charter, non-alignment, Panchsheel, international law and the norms of world peace while conducting foreign relations. In doing so, sovereign equality and dignity of the nation are two critical elements that Nepal attaches great importance.

These guiding principles and our time-tested practice of external relations have enabled us to take independent posture on international issues, articulate our views on merit basis, contribute to the world peace, and nurture friendship with all countries of the world.

Nepal practices ‘amity with all, enmity with none’ and considers international relations should be based on justice, sovereign equality, mutual respect and shared benefit. We want to promote Nepal’s credentials as an open, progressive, and democratic State.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nepal maintains friendly and cooperative relations with both of her immediate neighbours: India and China. Maintaining close and cordial relationship with them is our priority. Our relations have expanded manifold in the sphere of political, economic, cultural, trade, tourism, investment, and people-to-people exchanges. Nepal’s neighbourhood provides opportunities for expanding economic linkages. Regular exchange of high level visits and increasing people to people contacts have further strengthened these relations and deepened the spirit of cooperation. Nepal is conscious of the legitimate interests of our neighbours and will not allow any activity against them in our soil and expect the same understanding from our neighbours.

Nepal and India enjoy historically close and multi-faceted relations. These relations are nurtured by extensive people to people level contacts and socio-cultural bonds that we share for centuries. The exchange of visits by the Prime Ministers of Nepal and India in April and May 2018 has contributed to further enhance mutual trust and consolidate bilateral relations. Our two countries are committed to take forward cooperation and partnership on the basis of equality, mutual trust, respect and mutual benefit. We have agreed to advance cooperation in the core areas of agriculture, railway linkages and inland waterways.

The high level visits in 2018 provided major push for the implementation of ongoing development projects. Some of the flagship projects, such as, Motihari to Amlekhgunj Petroleum Pipeline and Integrated Check Posts in Birgunj and Biratnagar have been completed. Similarly, reconstruction of over 45,000 housing units in Nuwakot and Gorkha districts under the assistance of India have been completed and they were handed over to the residents last month. Construction of remaining housing units is undergoing. Construction of Jay Nagar-Kurtha section of the rail project has been completed. This will ultimately link Bardibas with Jaynagar upon completion of another 34 Km section of the rail line. Detailed project report of Birgunj-Kathmandu electric railway is being prepared this year. Arun III hydro-electricity project under Indian investment is progressing well after the foundation stone of the project was jointly laid by the two Prime Ministers. More projects enhancing production, trade and connectivity are in focus for the future.

You are aware that the Government of Nepal is in communication with the Government of India for a dialogue and settlement of the border issue of Kalapani through diplomatic means. We anticipate mutually convenient dates for the meeting would be worked out soon on this issue. The leaders on both sides have displayed clear vision, commitment and required political will to take the relationship to a higher plane of trust, cooperation and friendship. Prime Minister K P Oli’s vision of ‘prosperous Nepal, happy Nepali’ is unleashing, among others, Nepal’s connectivity potentials with both of our neighbors and building necessary infrastructures for that purpose and goes well with India’s policy of ‘neighborhood first’ and Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of ‘sab ka saath sab ka bikash’.

Nepal and China enjoy a long history of close and cordial relationship, which is based on the five principles of peaceful co-existence. Appreciation of each other’s aspirations as well as respect for each other’s concerns and sensitivities has injected an important element of trust in our relationship. Nepal remains fully committed to one China policy. We admire China’s neighbourhood diplomacy guided by the principles of sincerity, amity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness.

During the official visit to China by the Right Honourable Prime Minister of Nepal we agreed to intensify implementation of MoU on cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative to enhance connectivity. The cooperation covers building of dry ports, roads, railways, aviation and communications network within the framework of Trans-Himalaya Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network.

We have concluded some important agreements with China in recent years for enhancing multidimensional connectivity between the two countries. The Protocol on implementing Transit Transport Agreement has already been signed that provides Nepal access to the Chinese seaports and dry ports and facilitates the operationalization of the transit transport agreement. This is an important milestone towards Nepal’s transformation from a landlocked country to a land-linked country. Another MoU for building cross-border transmission line with China concluded last year is also equally important in terms of promoting multi-dimensional connectivity. Trans-Himalayan Railway will be a game changer. Our two countries have already signed MoU on Cooperation in the Railway Project. Pre-feasibility study of this project has already been completed and now we are in the process of feasibility study and preparation of detailed project report.

The visit to Nepal by Chinese President Xi Jinping in October last year was a significant milestone in the annals of relations between the two countries. Total twenty agreements were signed during the visit which includes cooperation to enhance road, railway and tunnel connectivity along with increasing Chinese investment in Nepal. The visit provided a momentum for the speedy implementation of the agreements reached in the past and to carry on the decision taken during the visit of the Chinese President.

We consider the growing economic development and strength of our neighbours as an opportunity for us to move ahead with economic development. We admire our neighbours for their continued goodwill and support to our national aspirations and for their cooperation in the development efforts of Nepal.

Nepal’s relations with the countries in the extended neighbourhood are based on mutual respect, goodwill and understanding which we wish to sustain and consolidate. They are further nurtured by growing cultural and traditional ties. Our priority is to further explore, open up and diversify our relations especially in the areas of trade, investment, tourism and people-to-people exchanges.

Nepal has always maintained cordial and cooperative relations with major powers and development partners. Their goodwill and support to Nepal in her development endeavour has been an enduring aspect of our friendship. We value this cooperation and remain grateful to our development partners for their continued support. We look forward to a greater partnership to promote investment and technology transfer for our economic development and implementation of sustainable development goals. We continue to work towards enriching the substance of cooperation in our bilateral engagements with these countries.

Labour migration has become an important aspect of Nepal’s foreign relations. A large number of Nepali nationals are engaged in foreign employment and the remittances they send home make a sizable share of our economy. Therefore, it becomes Government’s priority to work closely with the countries of destination for safety, security and wellbeing of our migrant workers. In recent years our engagements with the labour destination countries have been more intensive and enriched by exchange of high level visits, and progressively growing trade and investment. We look forward to expand and diversify the scope of cooperation with these countries so as to encompass the broader areas of economic partnership involving trade, investment, tourism and civil aviation, among others.
Dear Friends,

Nepal continues to engage at regional and sub-regional level for promotion of economic cooperation and connectivity. As the Chair of SAARC, Nepal has done its best for the revival of the stalled SAARC process. We have been actively working at BIMSTEC to promote economic cooperation, connectivity and prosperity. Nepal plays its due role in Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) as its member and in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as a dialogue partner.

In the multilateral arena, Nepal supports multilateralism to promote a just and equitable international order in which all States – big or small – fulfill their international obligations in good faith, and enjoy equal opportunity to achieve their aspirations for development and prosperity. We consider that stability and predictability in the global order is essential for maintaining international peace and security. Nepal believes in rule-based and just multilateral system with the United Nations (UN) at its centre. We have abiding faith on the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

As an active member of the UN, Nepal has contributed significantly for over six decades to the maintenance of international peace and security and protection of human rights. Nepal currently stands 5th largest troop and police contributing country in the UN peace operations.

Nepal attaches high importance to the protection and promotion of human rights. Human rights hold the centre stage in our Constitution. We are a State party to twenty-four international human rights-related instruments, including seven out of nine core Conventions. Nepal considers all human rights are universal, in-divisible, inter-dependent, inter-related and mutually reinforcing.

As a member of UN Human Rights Council Nepal has played objective and impartial role in the Council. To further contribute to the work of the Council in an impartial manner and share our achievements in human rights, Nepal has presented candidature for re-election to the Council for the term 2021-23.

Nepal continues to champion the cause of LDCs, LLDCs, South-South and triangular cooperation in the UN and other international forums.  Solidarity and cooperation with LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS will continue to characterize our deliberations.

Nepal accords high priority to the issue of climate change. Nepal supports effective implementation of the Paris Agreement and calls for enhanced level of climate finance and technology transfer for the adaptation and mitigation.

As a responsible member in the comity of nations, we intend to contribute to the larger policy discourse on issues of common importance. To this end, Nepal has decided to establish a multi-stakeholder permanent dialogue forum in Kathmandu – ‘Sagarmatha Sambaad’- to deliberate on prominent issues of global, regional and national significance. The first episode of the Sambaad will be held in the first week of April 2020 in Kathmandu under the theme of ‘Climate Change, Mountains and the Future of the Humanity’.

To conclude, let me stress that the ultimate purpose of a country’s foreign policy is to serve its vital national interests and support realization of national aspiration. Nepal’s foreign policy has served her national interest well in the context of changing global and regional dynamics. We remain conscious that fundamentals of our foreign policy comply with the constitutional provisions and our practice remains consistent, coherent and credible.

I thank you all for your attention.

**Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs Honourable Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at “International Conference for Understanding and Peace”**

**Lumbini, 11 December 2019**

Chair of this Session,
Vice Chancellor of Lumbini Buddhist University,
Venerable Vice Chair of Lumbini Development Trust, Excellencies,
Eminent scholars from home and abroad,
Distinguished delegates, panelists and participants,
Friends from the media,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Namaskar and Good Morning to you all.

At the outset, I would like to thank the organizers, Lumbini Research Centre for Peace and Understanding, in collaboration with Lumbini Buddhist University, Lumbini Development Trust and Nepal Council for World Affairs,  for inviting me to this important gathering of eminent scholars discussing international understanding and peace.

I welcome the distinguished international delegates to Nepal and wish for their comfortable stay.

I particularly appreciate the organizers for choosing Lumbini as the venue of this conference. There cannot be a better choice. It is an honour and privilege to speak on peace from the birthplace of Lord Buddha, the apostle of peace.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Quest for peace and understanding has been a long and cherished goal of humanity all along the history. Civilizations have evolved, thrived and prospered due largely to the prevalence of peace. They have died due to lack of it.

We are talking about peace in the world, peace among the States, peace among the communities, peace among the religions and cultures, peace among civilizations and peace of mind within an individual. They all are inter-related and mutually reinforcing.

We have seen unprecedented prosperity and progress achieved in a state of peace at all levels.

At the same time, major catastrophes have occurred in the course of history in absence of peace and temptation to war.

We have seen devastating world wars. We have seen making and unmaking of nation States. We have seen long and perennial animosity between and among civilizations and death of civilizations. We have seen crusades between religions to prevail one over the other. We have seen massacre and genocides between and among communities. We have witnessed ethnic cleansing and mass exodus of people due to their colour, faith, ethnicity or origin.

As if this is not enough, we have seen race for armament of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons. It is an irony that competition for weapons of mass destruction basically emanates from the rich and prosperous parts of the world and now extends to lesser prosperous regions as well.

Though it is pretended for ensuring effective deterrence for their security, in reality race of nuclear arms never ensures security, rather creates a state of suicidal security dilemma.

Let me quote the teachings of Buddha from Dhammapada that seems pretty relevant to this state of affairs.

I quote

“The kind of seed sown will produce that kind of fruit.
Those who do good will reap good results.
Those who do evil will reap evil results.
If you carefully plant a good seed, you will joyfully gather good fruit.”

Unquote.

Race for weapons of mass destruction exactly resembles this irony. It is not a good seed to be sown. Nor will it produce good fruits to enjoy.

Gautam Buddha spread the message of peace across the world. His was the message for reason, harmony, co-existence, love and compassion. It was an inclusive message of peace for all without any distinction on the basis of nationality, race, color or any other denomination. It was a message for equality, justice and truth which constitute the fundamental basis for peace.

Regrettably, whenever Buddha’s message has been crossed or ignored, there have been wars and devastation, human suffering and destruction.

Dialogue and engagements are the tools to promote peace. Dialogues have potentials to prevent wars as well as to conclude war and restore peace.

**Dear Friends,**
A more systematic global attempt for the establishment of peace and promotion of cooperation among the nation States began in the ashes of the First World War.

However, due to lack of dialogue and understanding, peace could not prevail for long. The world was pushed into another devastation of Second World War.

Then we created an edifice of United Nations to ensure peace and collective security through cooperation and collaboration among Member States.

This edifice has been largely successful to avert a world-scale war. However, many parts of the world unfortunately have been engulfed in internal conflicts, inter-state conflicts, communal strife, and low intensity wars. Scales of damage wrecked by these conflicts compound in millions of lives, trillions of dollars of properties damaged and immense suffering of human being, including innocent children, women and elderly.

None of these conflicts have brought stability and peace by themselves. It is ultimately the dialogues, negotiation, engagements and collaboration that have transformed conflicts into peace.

Our own experience of 10 years of armed conflict followed by successfully negotiated peace process speaks volumes of the importance of dialogue and understanding in promoting peace. Our peace process is a testimony of how requisite political will and accommodation, negotiation and dialogue can resolve conflicts.

Having achieved political stability, we are now focused on socio-economic transformation with the overarching aspiration of “Prosperous Nepal Happy Nepali”.

Harmony and co-existence make essential ingredients of our culture. We believe in *“Vawatu Sarba Mangalam* (May all be blessed with auspicious) and *“Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”* (The world is a family). Unity in diversity is our basic mantra of cohesive society.

At the international level, Nepal believes in friendship and harmony in the world. Nepal has always stood for total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. We support peaceful resolution of international and inter-state disputes. We have stood for fairness, justice and peace in international affairs. We have passionately espoused the cause of the LDCs, LLDCs and the countries in special situation and called for greater international solidarity for their development. We have consistently promoted the agenda of climate justice as well as implementation of the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.

For over 62 years, Nepal has been rendering extraordinary contribution to international peace and security through our participation in UN peace operations. Currently Nepal stands as the 5th largest troop and police contributing country to the UN Peace operations. Our troops and police have successfully protected civilians from violence, helped respond to humanitarian crises, create an environment conducive to peaceful settlement, helped maintain truce, implement peace agreements, clear landmines and assist in laying foundation for durable peace.

We are a member of the UN Peace Building Commission and active member of the Group of Friends of Mediation that promotes the peaceful means of dispute settlement.

Our voice of reason and conscience resonates in other important UN entities and international forums as well. In the Human Rights Council we speak for the voiceless in an objective and impartial manner. In ILO we promote social justice and dialogue.

Overall, we support multilateralism, rule-based international order, and international cooperation and collaboration to address global issues of common concern.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Pursuit of peace has always been humanity’s highest aspiration. Sometimes, peace is understood as the opposite of conflict, violence or war. Certainly war historically has been the fundamental antithesis of peace. But a sound state of peace is more than that.

Albert Einstein says,

“Peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice, of law, of order- in short, of government”.

Absence of conflict or war merely provides a condition for the beginning of peace. True peace includes personal wholeness, righteousness, political justice, human dignity and equal opportunity for development in all dimensions- individual, cultural, social, ecological and political.

They all collectively and individually contribute for political peace in a larger organized society. Sense of partnership, collaboration, participation, respect for voice and dissent and legitimacy are the source of political peace. Few exceptional individuals like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Junior and Nelson Mandela followed non-violence as a means of attaining the goal of political peace.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Development is the prerequisite for peace. Deprivation, lack of basic human needs and underdevelopment fuel dissatisfaction in the society, which eventually invites the conflict. So human centric development is the foundation for sustainable peace. The adoption of the Agenda 2030 was a display of the commitment for inclusive development at its best. The Agenda can be implemented if similar spirit holds at the core of our actions with renewed sense of partnership and each side shouldering the responsibility, to attain the most desired peace in the world.

Achieving the sustainable development goals hinges on resources.

Desire for peace is human nature. However, peace needs continuous nurturing. Conflicts, discords, armaments, animosity breeds wars. Wars become devastating when they are aided and assisted by advanced automated technology. The world has produced enough ammunition, nuclear or otherwise, to destroy the world several times. Display of arms against arms is not a solution to the problem. Neither arms can foster peace. What is the need of the hour is dialogue and understanding. Dialogues enable and nurture greater understanding between and among individuals, communities, leaders, nation States, civilizations and religions. Understanding facilitates dialogues and helps to establish and sustain peace.

All stakeholders have a role to play in promoting peace and understanding between and among nations. Governments, civil society, religious institutions and scholars, academicians, think tanks all can play a role in promoting peace and understanding. Events like this can be useful forum to promote the message of peace. Such an effort carries greater attention when it is held at the birth place of Lord Buddha.

I wish the organizers of this event all success in this endeavor.

I thank you all.

**Closing Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at the 24th AFID Conference on Intellectual Disabilities**

Kathmandu, 6 December 2019

President of Asian Federation of Intellectual Disabilities,
Chair of the organizing Committee of this Conference,
Delegates, panelists and participants of the conference,
Friends from the media
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Namaskar and Good Evening!

Let me thank the organizers for inviting me to this event. It is a privilege and honor to be here today. I feel close by heart to both the issues and people that this conference was dedicated to.

I thank the AFID for choosing Kathmandu as the venue of this conference. I welcome all international participants in Nepal.

Trust that you have had a comfortable stay and a productive and fruitful outcome.

As you wrap up the conference, I am sure that you had sufficient opportunity to deliberate on the theme of the conference- “Equity, Equality and Inclusion of People with Intellectual Disabilities”. This seems to be a thoughtfully chosen theme which should receive high importance from the Governments, civil society, private sector and the media alike.

According to WHO estimation, about 15% of the world’s population lives with some form of disability and about 200 million people have an intellectual disability.

We must recognize that to be intellectually disabled is not an individual’s choice. It transcends the boundaries and is found in all societies, economies and religions. They are just people with different abilities and we have to support and encourage unleashing their potentials. They are members of our family, our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, uncle and aunts, very much part of our society.

They are right-holders and are entitled every right and benefit that all other members of our society enjoy. They are subject of equal protection of law. We can make an equitable and inclusive society only when we walk the road together.

Let me quote a statement by Stephen Hawking.

“We are all different, but we share the same human spirit. Perhaps it’s human nature that we adapt and survive.”

Unquote.

This group of people requires support, respect, and special enabling provisions to be fully able to enjoy their rights. Socio-psychological and emotional support stands very important. Such a support and special provisions should begin at home and extend to the community and State at large.

It is a responsibility of every civilized and democratic society to render special provisions to the persons with disabilities in general and persons with intellectual disability in particular. All other stakeholders in the society also have their role to play. I am confident that this conference has been able to come up with recommendations to be implemented by all of them.

Ignorance and poverty stand as impediments to the protection of persons with intellectual disability. Therefore, greater awareness, creation of supportive environment, provision of adequate resources and programmatic interventions at all levels should be our priority.

Inclusion of persons with disability becomes critical not to leave anyone behind as we gear up to the implementation of transformative sustainable development goals. We have to encourage them to mingle with, engage in enterprises, let them learn language, speak and communicate in the language they feel comfortable and let them gain vocational training and skills for self-empowerment.

At community level, rehabilitation centers, teaching and learning centers, health and sports centers, cultural programs could be the healing tools. More than that, love, care and affection strengthen their morale to overcome the hardships.

Ladies and Gentleman,
Let me briefly share with you what we have been doing in Nepal with regard to ensuring equity, equality and inclusion of the persons with disabilities in general and persons with intellectual disabilities in particular.

Nepal is a State party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and has submitted its periodic report well in time. We are now implementing the recommendations of the CRPD Committee.

The Constitution of Nepal is founded on the ideals of equality and non-discrimination. It has guaranteed comprehensive sets of human rights, including for the persons with disabilities.

Discrimination on the basis of disability is strictly prohibited. They have the right to live in dignity and honor. They have the rights to inclusion, social justice, social security, education, participation in the State institutions and right to access to public services and benefits.

Special provisions have been made for their protection, support, empowerment and development as well as to ensure their access to education and enhance representation.

To implement those rights enshrined in the Constitution, a comprehensive Disability Rights Act was enacted in 2017 in compliance with the CRPD.

The Act fully adheres to the right-based approach, recognizes diversity within the disability, eliminates derogatory words, and criminalizes the use of such words.

It also creates institutional mechanism to coordinate, monitor and promote the effective implementation of those rights at all levels of government.

We have introduced National Policy and Plan of Action on Disability (NPPAD) which is under implementation now.

Nepal’s culture and family values strongly encourage taking care of the differently able members within the family.

The Government of Nepal has also undertaken some key programmatic interventions with a view to implementing the constitutional and legal provisions.

Interventions, such as, promotion of community-based rehabilitation, production and distribution of assistive devices, provision of ID Cards, social security allowances, and full tax exemption to assistive devices, vehicles, and wheelchairs are some of the most utilized provisions.

In addition, monthly welfare allowance is paid to persons with profound and severe disabilities including the children. Scholarships and incentives such as residential scholarship; device and support scholarship; transportation subsidies; and motivational scholarship have been provided.

The Government provides resources to disabled peoples’ organizations to implement targeted programmes and support the people with psychosocial disabilities through counselling, treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration.

Mental health medication is included in the list of essential drugs that the Government makes available through the local health facilities. A separate Mental Health Policy has been approved to address the issues related to the persons with intellectual disability.

For over 13 years, Nepal has been implementing special reservation system in public sector employment opportunities to the persons with disabilities and has encouraged private sector for the same through tax incentives. Income tax threshold for persons with disabilities has been extended by 50% in comparison to others.

We have created institutions at different levels to exclusively work in the interest of the persons with disabilities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
While sharing these positive efforts on the part of the Government, I am equally aware of the unique challenges that Nepal is confronted with in the way of protecting rights, interests and welfare of the persons with disabilities. The mountainous terrain of the country, high risk of natural disasters, modest level of technological development and capacity to afford modern assistive devices account some of the challenges that we face today.

We have endeavored to address those challenges through mobilization of all three tiers of government and enhancing partnership with civil society organizations and development partners. We need to invest more resources on infrastructures and technology.

To conclude, I am confident that the outcomes of this conference will provide useful ideas to calibrate and further reinforce our efforts and help to strengthen the partnership among the government, private sector, academia, media and social society for the common cause of supporting and enabling persons with intellectual disabilities.

I thank you all for your kind attention.

**Remarks by Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali Minister for Foreign Affairs**

**at the 46th Annual Function of JICA Alumni Association of Nepal (JAAN)**

**(6 December, 2019, Kathmandu)**

Chair of this Program and President of JAAN Dr. Ram Chandra Bhusal,
Hon. Balananda Paudel, Chair, National Natural Resources and Finance Commission,
E. Maschamichi Saigo, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal,
Ms. Yumiko Asakuma, Chief Representative, JICA Nepal Office,
Dr. Md. Mozzamle Haque Khan, President of JICA Alumni Associations’ Forum of SAARC Countries (JAAFSC),
Friends from Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning and Namaskar!

First of all, I would like to extend my thanks to the organizer for inviting me as the Chief Guest in this esteemed gathering of 46th Annual Function of JICA Alumni Association of Nepal (JAAN).

I am pleased to know that JAAN in collaboration with JICA Alumni Associations’ Forum of SAARC Countries (JAAFSC) is also organizing an international seminar on ” Disaster in South Asia: Interventions, Challenges and Lessons Learnt” on this occasion.

I am also delighted to know that representatives from JICA Alumni Association of all SAARC countries are participating in this program. I have also learnt that JICA Office Representatives of a few SAARC countries are also here in this august gathering. I welcome all of you to this historic and beautiful city of Kathmandu and wish for your pleasant and fruitful stay.

Dear Friends,

Nepal and Japan have been enjoying excellent bilateral relations based on friendliness, understanding and mutual cooperation ever since the establishment of formal diplomatic relations in 1956.

Our shared cultural values based on Buddhism has played an instrumental role in deepening ties at peoples’ level.

Exchange of high-level visits at different levels have greatly contributed to further enhancing our bilateral relations. In this context, I would like to recall the recent visit of Rt. Hon. Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari, President of Nepal, to Japan to attend the Enthronement ceremony of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. On that occasion, the President of Nepal and Prime Minister of Japan exchanged views on wide ranging issues of bilateral interests. I myself paid an official visit to Japan in November 2018 followed by the visit of Japanese Foreign Minister to Nepal in January 2019. These visits have buttressed the edifice of our bilateral relations to our mutual benefits.

Japan has been a longstanding development partner of Nepal. It has supported Nepal towards her overall development efforts. Japan’s cooperation encompasses human resources development, education, health, road and other infrastructural development, agricultural development and horticulture, including vegetables and fisheries. Japan has also helped Nepal in the social development of the country.

Each year the government of Japan has been offering scholarships to the Nepalese government officials and students. Moreover, the Japanese Volunteers have been supporting the government and local communities through their expertise in agriculture, traffic management and human resources development and so on.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to learn of the joint organizing of seminar today by JAAN and JAAFSC on natural disaster management focusing on South Asian experiences and challenges. This is a welcome initiative.

Considering the occurrence of different hazards as regular phenomena in South Asia, this seminar is going to be very useful, timely and relevant. The findings of the seminar, I believe, will be beneficial for all the governments in South Asia as well as other concerned including academia.

Nepal as a party to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 strongly emphasizes disaster risk management and hopes for the engagement at all-of –society and all-of –State institutions’ levels.  We are committed to translate the Seven Global Targets and Four Priorities for Action defined by the Framework as far as practical.

Though a voluntary and non-binding agreement, the framework believes that the State has the primary role to reduce disaster risk by sharing the responsibilities with other stakeholders including local government, private sector and other stakeholders.

In line with global and regional framework and best practices of the friendly countries, Nepal has also put in place some key policies, acts and action plans, including Disaster Risk Reduction National Policy, 2075, Disaster Risk Reduction Management Act, 2074 and Disaster Risk Reduction National Strategic Action Plan, 2018-30. Our current national plan envisions ensuring resilient and safe Nepal from disaster risk.

The Government is expediting the configuration of institutional arrangements at federal, state and local levels to enable the stakeholders’ proactive and coordinated participation in disaster risk management.

Dear Friends,

The physiographic settings and the climatic characteristics of the South Asian region is favorable for the high incidence of both geological and hydro-metrological hazards. Countries of the South Asian region are vulnerable to different calamities like drought, flood, glacier melting, land sliding, cyclones, earthquakes, windstorms etc. South Asian Region has a history of devastating earthquakes, floods, landslides, droughts and cyclones that have caused economic and human losses.

South Asia is extremely vulnerable to natural disasters; over a thousand major events such as landslides, glacial lake outburst (GLO) and avalanches, floods and drought, storms were reported within the past four decades.  It is important to note that marginalized groups e.g. women, the poor and indigenous people are most vulnerable to climate risks.

Fast melting Himalayas pose serious risk for water resources in the region. Subsistence of very large population, around one fifth of global population, is based on Himalayas’ snow -fed rivers in the South Asia.

Moreover, Nepal is situated in the seismically active Himalayan mountain belt dominated by the northward movement of the Indian tectonic plate towards and below the Eurasian tectonic plate.

In retrospect, I still recall the horrible devastating earthquake that hit Nepal in April, 2015.  JICA, our long-term development partner, has been helping Nepal for post-earthquake recovery and reconstruction in the main priority areas such as School and Housing Reconstruction, Public Infrastructure, Cultural Heritage, Livelihood Recovery and Recovery Planning and Disaster Preparedness.

I am happy to share that despite of unimaginable damage caused by devastating earthquake, the post-quake reconstruction in our country is moving ahead fast and smoothly, in the spirit of building back better. The reconstruction of more than 8,00,000 individual houses is in the final stage and similarly, the reconstruction work of heritages, school buildings, hospitals and  government offices is also moving ahead. We are confident that reconstruction process will concluded within next two years.

Taking seriously the alarming challenge caused by climate change, Nepal is going to host a global dialogue Sagarmatha Sambaad under the theme of climate Change, Mountains and Future of Humanity in April 2020. We are hopeful that this Sambaad will provide us a platform for intensive deliberations, sharing and knowledge generation for sustainable and resilient development model and green economy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am really moved by the fact that JAAN is a professional body with highly motivated members and Executive Committee. It is committed to the implementation of its calendar of operation. It has been contributing to strengthening good relation between Nepal and Japan and in the nation building through its several activities.

I appreciate the contributions made by JAAN in strengthening ties between Nepal and Japan. Moreover, its contribution in the revival of JAAFSC has also been laudable. I encourage JAAN to continue its efforts in nation building especially through community development initiatives.

Dear Friends,

I am confident that this seminar would serve as a forum for strategic communication of opinions of experts to the larger audience of our region. I wish once again all the best for the successful completion of the JAAN’s Annual Function and international disaster management seminar.

I am sure that your stay in Kathmandu will be productive, enjoyable and memorable.

I thank you all for your kind attention.

**Remarks by Hon. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs at a reception held at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations**
**Moscow, 26 November 2019**

H.E. Anatoliy Vasilievich, Rector, Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO)
Distinguished faculty members,
Dear students,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I extend to you all warm greetings on behalf of the Government and people of Nepal and on my own.

My sincere thanks go to the Institute of International Relations for organizing today’s programme. The Institute’s continued partnership with the Embassy of Nepal at different forums reflects nothing but true affinity, close academic interaction and growing people-to-people exchange.

It is my distinct honour to meet with the faculty, students and researchers of this Institute of high repute here in Moscow on the occasion of my official visit to the Russian Federation.

I have heard a lot about the extraordinary contributions of MGIMO in the articulation of Russian foreign policy. As alma mater of top Russian diplomats, intellectuals and politicians, I commend your stellar performance, particularly in enhancing the scope of research and knowledge base in the field of contemporary global politics.

I am very pleased to be present amongst you to exchange our views and experiences on how we can best contribute from our respective sides to further strengthening the already warm bilateral relationship between Nepal and Russia.

We greatly value the continued dialogue and exchange by engaging all walks of life and different sectors of development. I offer my sincere appreciation to you all for playing an active role in strengthening multi-faceted ties that exist between Nepal and the Russian Federation.

Nepal and the Russian Federation are old and good friends. Ever since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1956, we have maintained cordial and friendly relations. This year marks the 63rd anniversary of the establishment of formal ties. I would like to extend warm felicitations to all of you on this happy occasion.

**Esteemed Friends,**

In my presentation today I will briefly touch on three key aspects: Nepal-Russia relations; Nepal’s foreign policy orientation in the changed context; and Nepal’s development journey ahead and our priorities.

Let me first  pick up Nepal-Russia relations.

Nepal greatly values the bond of friendship it enjoys with the Russian Federation. Our relations have progressively evolved over the years to cover political, economic, social, cultural and educational dimensions. It is a multidimensional partnership.

Continued engagements at various levels and mutual cooperation in the areas of common interest have nurtured our friendship.

Parliamentary and judicial exchanges and frequent visits by high officials of both countries have contributed to widening the scope and enriching the substance of our relationship.

The objective of my visit this time, in my capacity as Foreign Minister of Nepal, has been to bolster trust, deepen political understanding, promote economic, commercial and cultural ties and strengthen collaboration in dealing with regional and global issues of common concern.

In this light, Foreign Minister Lavrov and I exchanged substantive views on a wide range of topics during our official talks yesterday. We agreed to work together to take our relations to the next level through enhanced political engagement and promotion of mutually beneficial cooperation in diverse fields. We underlined the importance of exchanging high level visits between the two countries, activating established bilateral consultation mechanism and concluding a host of agreements and understanding to further cooperative partnership.

I am satisfied with the outcome of our discussions and our consensus on the road ahead to realize the full potential of our mutual cooperation.

As you are aware, my visit has taken place in the fundamentally changed national context of Nepal. Nepal’s long political transition following a decade-long armed conflict has ended. A new democratic and inclusive Constitution promulgated in September 2015 has settled long-standing political issues. The elections held in 2017 under the provisions of the Constitution have produced a stable government with over two-thirds majority in the Parliament first time in two decades, thereby ending the cycle of political instability. Policy clarity and consistency in development efforts has been realized and the ‘Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali’ has been defined as country’s overarching national aspiration. A clear sense of direction and commitment in the conduct of an independent and balanced foreign policy based on the notion of ‘amity with all, enmity with none’ has underpinned our worldview.

This visit is also about Nepal’s commitment to reenergizing all aspects of multi-faceted Nepal-Russia friendship. Needless to say, the full spectrum of our friendship is much more than the formal contacts. There has been an increasing level of cultural cooperation and interactions engaging the private sector and other people-to-people exchanges. Students, entrepreneurs, diaspora, scientists, artists, mountaineers, tourists and importantly the academia from both the countries have made significant contributions.

People-to-people relations give added value to Nepal-Russia relations, which began with the visit of the renowned Russian Scholar Ivan Pavloviech Minayev to Kathmandu in 1875. It has been reinforced by Russian literary icons like Tolstoy, Chekhov, Gorky and Pushkin who have great influence in Nepali literature. It is heartening that many Russians have attraction towards the Hindu, Buddhist and the Eastern philosophy.

Some Nepali and Russian nationals are residing in each other’s countries for a variety of reasons. I thank the Russian community for hosting Nepali nationals and supporting them.  I also express my sincere thanks to the friendly Russian people for their help in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in 2015. As Foreign Minister Lavrov told yesterday, the true friendship came into full play when Russia promptly and spontaneously sent a team of medical doctors along with humanitarian supplies for rescue and relief.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is encouraging to witness continued progress achieved by the Russian Federation over the decades. In the fields of technologies, infrastructure, innovation and research, the progress has been remarkable. The Government, people and the academic circle of Nepal greatly appreciate these and many other stellar achievements made by the Russian Federation.

The steady course taken by Russia in achieving sustainable economic development, industrialization and high-end technological advancement have been glaring example of its perseverance and dedication. Over the decades, the Russian partnership with the global south has been increased.

Nepal sincerely appreciates support and cooperation extended by the Russian Federation in industrial and infrastructure development in the past. The technical cooperation has helped significantly lay the groundwork for Nepal’s economic development.

Nepal has learnt from Russia the development planning model.  Nepal adopted systematic and planned development efforts since 1956 and we have in place the 15th edition of the Development Plan. The best practices of the Soviet Planning model have helped Nepal shape its planning framework.

On a different note, Russian scholarships on higher education for Nepali students and public-sector professionals have been highly useful. There are a number of Nepali nationals trained in the Russian Federation occupying higher positions in politics, administration and the private sector today.

Nepal and the Russian Federation have been working closely in multilateral forums as well. One important avenue I would like to mention is the United Nations, which Nepal considers to be the cornerstone, custodian and emblem of multilateralism. With emphasis on a just and balanced world order for peace and stability, Nepal believes in multilateralism and rules-based international order.

At a time when the world is facing multiple challenges, the Russian initiatives in global fight against terrorism, cybercrime, climate change and other pressing global issues have been commendable. Let me underline that primacy of international law and value of world peace in the conduct of foreign policy help reduce tension and conflict.

Nepal has been contributing to the maintenance of the international peace and security by consistently and substantially supporting UN peacekeeping operations. Our troops are presently working in 15 out of 16 peacekeeping missions around the world and mostly in the troubled parts of the world. Russia, being a permanent member of the UN Security Council, has an important role to fulfill, together with other members, that peacekeeping missions accomplish their objectives in a timely manner within the given mandate. We call for enhanced consultation and coordination with TCCs/PCCs when taking important decision on peace missions.

Regional cooperation is one of the defining attributes of international relations today. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), founded jointly by the Russian Federation and other friendly countries in the region, is a new opportunity for institutionalizing a long-lasting environment for peace and prosperity in the region, and beyond. As a Dialogue Partner, Nepal has found SCO as an additional platform for engaging in mutually beneficial projects in a wide areas including trade, transit, investment, energy, agriculture, small and medium enterprises and culture. We are looking for a full-fledged membership of the organization to enhance our contribution. We are thankful to the Government of the Russian Federation that it was in Ufa, Russia, the decision to grant Nepal the dialogue partner status was taken.

Nepal has been collaborating, directly or indirectly, on matters of common interest with the Russian Federation in all available platforms. We will continue this in future.

Let me inform you, in this context, the Government of Nepal has established a permanent dialogue forum, Sagarmatha Sambaad (Mt Everest Dialogue) to deliberate on contemporary issues of national, regional and global significance. The first episode of this international dialogue platform will be devoted to the theme ‘climate change mountains and future of humanity’ and will be held on 2-4 April next year in Kathmandu. This will provide yet another opportunity for Nepal and Russia to strengthen partnership in the collective interest of humanity.

**Distinguished guests,**

Next aspect is Nepal’s foreign policy orientation.

Never colonized and subjugated, Nepal has always remained an independent nation. This speaks of our glorious history and evolution as a nation.

Our foreign policy orientation is very much influenced by this legacy. As I stated earlier, we pursue an independent, non-aligned, balanced foreign policy based on the philosophy of friendship and cooperation with all countries in the world. We do not believe in enmity. We do not nurture ill feelings towards anyone.

The UN Charter, the Panchasheel—the five principle of Peaceful Coexistence, non-alignment, respect for international law, value for world peace guide our foreign policy. We believe that respect for every country’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries are the essential ingredients of healthy inter-state relationship.

As with any other country, Nepal also gives priority to its relationship with its neighborhood and extended neighbourhood. We have defined that our relationship with neighbours and other countries is based on the principle of sovereign equality, mutual respect and benefit. Guided by this principle, the present Government has made substantial efforts to enhance and consolidate friendly ties and cooperative partnership with neighbours and other friendly countries. It is our principled commitment which we are translating into action that we will not let our territory to be used against the interest of our neighbours and any other friendly nation. This has helped us earn confidence and trust of neighbours.

Our immediate neighbours happen to be the world’s two most populous countries and the fastest growing economies. It gives Nepal ample prospects for its economic development. We have the potential to be a vibrant bridge connecting the two sides for common benefits.

As a region full of potentials, diversity and challenges, South Asia should continue to engage in promoting the collective interest with utmost sense of regional solidarity, mutual respect and accommodation divergent views. We want peace and stability in our region and beyond. We believe that all differences can be resolved amicably through peaceful means.

Major powers, such as the Russian Federation, development partners and other friendly countries are in the priority of our foreign policy orientation. We have significantly enhanced our partnership with this group of countries. We are committed to further widen and deepen our relationship for mutual benefit. These countries are an important source of our development financing and trade relationship. Beyond neighbourhood, they are also a source of inbound tourists and technology.

The labour receiving countries are also in our priorities, as a large number of Nepali migrant workers are living there for employment. We are trying to diversify our relations with them to cover such vital areas as trade, investment, tourism and transfer of technology.

Regional cooperation features prominently in our foreign policy priority. We want to promote meaningful regional cooperation for the collective well-being of the people in the region. We attach importance to SAARC and BIMSTEC as principal vehicles for regional cooperation in our region. As I said earlier, we want to enhance our engagement in SCO. We are also pursuing the objective of sub-regional cooperation within the framework of BBIN-Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal. We are also a member of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue.

Our commitment to UN Charter is unflinching. We are a strong supporter of multilateralism. As discussed earlier, the UN is an indispensable global institution for us as it is the only legitimate organization which is capable of dealing with a host of contemporary issues we face today. Ours is an international perspective that believes in collective prosperity of mankind and rejects unilateralism. We stand for general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction. We support nuclear free zones and peace zones. We unequivocally condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

We call for a just, harmonious, inclusive and peaceful world order where all nations enjoy their rights while fulfilling their obligations in good faith.

Economic diplomacy has been a key component of our overall diplomacy.  We are building economic partnership with friendly countries focusing on trade, investment, tourism, technology transfer, climate financing and decent jobs for migrant workers. Our diplomatic missions have been tasked to promote economic diplomacy to support our national drive for rapid yet sustainable development.

Distinguished friends,

Let me touch on the last component of my presentation. That is about our development priorities.

Economic transformation is our most important national task ahead. We are still an LDC.  We have additional difficulties as well. We are a country emerged from conflict and we are also a landlocked countries. This sums up the nature of our development challenges, which are of course manifold and complex.

Development is a national responsibility and we are fully aware of it. But our domestic resources are not sufficient to overcome our huge development challenges. And, we do not have luxury to wait for long, as we are lagging behind. We have to quicken the pace.

Our immediate goal is to graduate from LDC and become middle-income country by 2030 which is also the deadline for the realization of SDGs. We have envisioned a long-term plan to achieve national prosperity by 2041. We will redouble our efforts to realize the national aspiration of ‘Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali’ within this timeframe.

Towards realizing the national aspiration, we will expediate the process of economic development. While internal resources are important, we count on international support and goodwill to enhance trade performance and seek enhanced level of foreign direct investment. With a view to attracting foreign direct investment, we hosted an Investment Summit in Kathmandu in March this year. The Summit attracted a large number of prospective investors, including from Russia.

To make the business environment more attractive, friendly and competitive, investment related laws and institutions have undergone constant reform. For example, Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Act (FITTA), Public Private Partnership and Investment Act, Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Act have been promulgated and One-Stop Service has already been operationalized. Some other legislative reforms are in the pipeline such as Intellectual Property Rights Act.

Nepal’s friendly investment climate is evident from the World Bank’s Doing Business Report. Its latest report ranks Nepal among South Asia’s most favourable countries for ease of doing business.

Nepal has huge hydropower potentials. Exploitation of this precious resource can change the economic face of our country and the region. Investment in this sector is highly profitable as there is no problem of market. Regulatory framework exists to facilitate export of power generated in Nepal to India and Bangladesh.

Agriculture, tourism, mines and minerals, infrastructure development and IT are some of the areas where investment can be highly profitable. We have a liberal investment regime that allows investment in almost all sectors. Negative list is very short. We also offer a range of incentives that are unique and special to our context.

At this juncture, Nepal has high hope of solidarity and support from our trusted friends. Your own involvement or encouragement to the business community to explore investment opportunities in Nepal would go a long way. Nepal is fully committed to protect your investments. Political stability gives policy stability, which is the fundamental element to ensure predictability in foreign investment regime.

At present the level of trade and economic engagement between Nepal and the Russian Federation stands at a modest level. Rather than staying discouraged with the figures, I think it should be taken as an opportunity to attain a higher and swifter level of trade, commercial and investment engagements between us.

It is upon us–the Governments, the private sector, academia and people of all walks of life–to strive for meaningful and substantive cooperation in all sectors, including trade, investments and tourism. There is a need to energize the role of Nepal-Russia Chamber of Commerce and Industries towards building business networks and kickstart doable projects in hand.

As you may be aware, Nepal is celebrating 2020 as Visit Nepal Year. An increased number of Russian friends to visit Nepal for tourism would greatly help the campaign. Nepal is a must-visit destination in one’s lifetime. Famous Poet Rasul Gamzatov was right when he described Nepal as ‘diamond yet to be crafted’. Investment in Nepal’s tourism infrastructure, which remains one of the lucrative areas, will also greatly help boost Nepal’s economy.

The Embassy of Nepal will work closely with you all, including the Non-Resident Nepali Association, Chambers, Friendship Associations and other partners, to make the Visit Nepal Year a success. As your good friend and also as the Foreign Minister, I would like to extend to you all a very warm invitation to visit Nepal at your convenience.

As I conclude, I once again appreciate you all for organizing this function and also for your kind presence. Ambassador Rishi Ram Ghimire and his team deserve my special appreciation for the hard work.

I am confident that today’s interaction will contribute to continue the momentum of our exchange and mutual understanding. This platform should continue to explore new ideas, academic exchange and avenues towards further enhancing Nepal-Russia relations in the coming years. I count on your support and solidarity.

I thank you.

**Remarks by Honorable Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs at the International Conference on Protection of Rights of Migrant Workers**

**(12 November 2019, Kathmandu)**

Chief Guest of the Conference Vice President Right Honorable Mr. Nanda Bahadur Pun,
Honorable Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security Mr. Gokarna Bista,
Honorable Chairperson of National Human Rights Commission of Nepal Mr. Anup Raj Sharma,
HE Valerie Juilliand, UN RC
Honourable Members of the Parliament,
Honorable Dr. Carlon Alfonso Negret Mosquera, Chairperson of Global Alliance for National Human Rights Institutions,
Honorable Members of the National Human Rights Commission,
Hon. Chairpersons and Members of National Human Right Institutions of various countries,
Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,
Representatives of Development Partners, United Nations Agencies, Private Sector, Civil Society, Academia and the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen.
Namaskar and Good afternoon to you all.

It is a distinct honour and privilege to be at this important International Conference on Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers organized under the auspices of National Human Rights Commission.

I would like to express my gratitude to the organizer for inviting me to share my thoughts at this important occasion.

Before I begin, I would like to extend warm welcome to all international participants to Nepal and wish for your comfortable stay.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Migration has been a defining phenomenon of our time.

We have seen migrant workers being important vehicle of high economic growth, infrastructure development and critical source to replenish the shortfall of working population in many countries.

Skills, knowledge and labor of migrant workers have been important force of production in the receiving countries and they provide critical human resources for agriculture, industries, trade and other sectors.

Migrant workers have also been the carrier of goodwill and source of co-existence and diversity in many countries.

On the other hand, the remittances sent by migrant workers have been significant source of income to their families back home that has played important role to keep economy of the countries of origin vibrant.

They have helped both the countries of origin and destination to strike balance between labour supply and demand; stimulate innovation, transfer skills and technologies; and assist to attain sustainable development.

If managed well, migration has a potential to create a win-win situation to all three parties in the process- the countries of origin, countries of destination and the migrant workers themselves.

According to UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, there are 164 million migrant workers worldwide in the year 2017. Data shows that annually 2.5 million Asian workers are leaving their country of origin in search of works to various destinations in Western Europe, US and countries in the Middle East.

As the number and demand for migrant workers increases worldwide, associated issues and challenges tend to surface in the process of recruitment, transfer, employment, social security and repatriation.

Most notably, in our own experience and from the experiences of elsewhere extrapolated from well-documented studies, the issues of low and discriminatory wages, unhygienic working conditions, violence and sexual harassments are some of the critical challenges faced by the migrant workers.

There are other challenges that further expose migrant workers to risks and vulnerabilities.

The issues such as low wages, exploitation, non-payment or delayed payment of wages, and cheating and malpractices in the recruitment process are some of the challenges that demand careful attention. Migrant workers tend to be vulnerable to human traffickers and smugglers. This is more severe among the low skilled labourers in comparison to the skilled workers.

All these factors have implications to the welfare, wellbeing and human rights of the migrant workers.
Often they do not find themselves in a situation to express their problems and seek redress through locally available mechanism under the laws of the host government. Lack of knowledge of local rules and regulations coupled with language barriers and cultural differences come as impediments for them to avail legal remedies and administrative grievance handling processes.

In recent years, there is growing international awareness about the challenges faced by the migrant workers and the need to respect basic human rights and welfare of this group of people.

Adoption of the International Convention on Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families in 1990 was an important achievement in this regard.

Similarly, negotiation and adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) was another significant milestone towards holistically addressing the issues surrounding migration in general, including the migrant workers.

GCM provides a framework for cooperation to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration and address the risks and challenges associated with the process. It offers sound way forward to decent job, health and safety at the workplace, non-discrimination in wage on the basis of gender, nationality and cultural difference of the migrant workers.

What is important at this stage is implementation of the agreed commitments contained in the GCM, engage in constructive dialogues and cooperation in addressing migrant workers related issues and enhance their welfare and protection.

Ladies and gentlemen,
A significant number of Nepali youths are living in different foreign countries as migrant workers. Therefore, the issue of migrant workers receives high importance in the policies and diplomacy of the Government of Nepal. Protection of the rights and interests of migrant workers, addressing the issues of exploitation and discrimination constitute critical areas of priority to the Government of Nepal.

A State party to various 24 human rights related international instruments and different ILO Conventions including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Nepal attaches high importance to issues of human rights of all people. Lord Buddha’s teachings of peace, humanity, compassion and oriental philosophy of human dignity, freedom and benevolence like सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिन: सर्वे सन्तु निरामया: (May all be happy, May all be healthy) deeply inspire us. We have abolished death penalty and practice non-discrimination as sacrosanct. We have built national institutions and necessary legal and policy frameworks for promotion and protection of human rights.

The Constitution of Nepal guarantees right to labour and right against exploitation. Our laws guarantee equal pay for equal value of work. The Foreign Employment Act, 2007 and its implementing regulations 2008 govern and regulate outward migration for foreign employment and rights and welfares of the migrant workers.

The Foreign Employment Policy aims at reducing risks and vulnerabilities of migrant workers and creating a safe, dignified and managed working environment.

The National Human Rights Commission, an independent national human rights institution, functions as oversight agency in areas of promotion and protection of human rights. We are glad to see that NHRC in recent years has paid equal attention to the rights and welfare of the migrant workers.

A member of UN Human Rights Council, we have played constructive, objective and impartial role for the promotion and protection of human rights of all around the world. We would like our people wherever they live and work as migrant workers enjoy rights equal to that of local population in the work place and receive equal economic and legal security from the country concerned.

In close coordination, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Consular Services and Nepali diplomatic Missions abroad provide necessary services and protect interests and welfares of our migrant workers, including through rescue and repatriation services in time of difficulties.

Nepal attaches high importance to the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Goals 8 and 10 related to the migrant workers. While main thrust of the present Government has been to create employment opportunities at home for our youth, with a view to better protect rights and interests, provide safety and prevent unfair practices in the process of those going for foreign employment as migrant workers, the Government of Nepal has accorded priority to concluding bilateral labour agreements with the labour receiving countries.

As a significant number of our nationals work as migrant workers, Nepal remains keen to work with all stakeholders and partners for the protection and promotion of the rights, interest and welfare of migrant workers.

This requires close collaboration and cooperation between the countries of origin and destination. Other national and international stakeholders can add value in building synergies and effectiveness in our actions. The constructive role of recruitment agencies, private sector, civil society actors and the media is equally important.

Skills and capacity development, comprehensive pre-departure, on arrival and before return orientation to the migrant workers would help them understand their rights and responsibilities and the available remedial measures in case of violations. Use of information and communication technologies would be useful in protecting the rights of migrant workers.

A year after the adoption of the GCM, I believe this Conference would offer an opportunity to the participants for open and interactive dialogues in assessing the risks and challenges that the migrant workers are facing today and in exploring the ways to address those challenges in a cooperative and collaborative manner.

I wish to extend my best wishes for the success of this Conference.

I thank you all for your attention.

**Points for Intervention for Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali**
**at Panel Discussion under Plenary 1: From Kathmandu to Tokyo and Beyond – Committing to a Healthier, Better Nourished Future at Scaling Up Nutrition Global Gathering (SUNGG) 2019**
**(9:00 hrs, 5 November 2019, Hotel Yak & Yeti, Kathmandu)**

Honorable Vice President, Honorable Ministers and high level dignitaries from the SUN Member Countries,
Her Excellency Ms. Henrietta Fore, Executive Director of UNICEF and Chair of the SUN Lead Group,
Her Excellency Ms. Gerda Verburg, UN Assistant Secretary-General, and Coordinator of the SUN Movement,
Members of SUN Business Network, SUN Civil Society Network, SUN Donor Network and UN Network for SUN,
Distinguished delegates and distinguished members of the Panel,
Representatives from Civil Society, Development Partners, United Nations Agencies, Private Sector Partners, Academia, Media, Parliamentarians and Delegates from different countries,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Namaskar and a very Good Morning to you all!

First of all, let me welcome all distinguished delegates from SUN Movement Member Countries to Nepal and wish for your comfortable stay.

I would also like to thank the SUN Movement Secretariat for choosing Nepal as the venue of the global gathering this year.

And, I feel privileged to be at this important event today.

Today’s food for thought is that the food merely is not enough. It is the good nutritious food that makes people healthy, a pre-requisite for the development of a nation. Nutrition is the best investment for the future. Good nutrition provided during the first 1000 days determines the quality of life for the next 1000 months.

However, it is sad that millions of people around the world still lack enough food and many more eat poor quality diets. Malnutrition in all its forms continues one of the leading causes of poor health and poverty globally. We need to focus on developing sustainable food systems that have the potential to nourish human health as well as prevent environmental degradation. The theme **“Nourishing People and Planet Together”** is a fitting choice for this gathering.

**Nepal and Scaling Up Nutrition Movement:**

Nepal is one of the forerunners in the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement.

In 2010, within the framework of Multi-sectoral approach, Government of Nepal launched the Golden 1000 Days Initiative, a nationwide Public Awareness Campaign, in collaboration with different development partners.

For better nutritional outcomes among most disadvantaged children, in 2010, the Government of Nepal launched a nationwide targeted program of Universal Child Cash Grant to the Dalit children under five and children under five in five districts of Karnali, the remotest area in Nepal.

On 5 May 2011, Nepal became the fifth country to join the SUN Movement.  Ever since, Government of Nepal has taken various measures to scale up nutrition by developing coherent policy and legal framework; aligning programmes around a common results framework; developing a periodic financial tracking and results framework; and strengthening political commitments. The SUN Movement has proven to be a valuable platform to convene, mobilize, share, learn, advocate and drive a coordinated approach to ending malnutrition.

Nepal was also one of the countries that launched the ‘Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Under-nutrition (REACH)’ initiative in 2011 aiming to strengthen nutrition policies and procedures in alignment with the multi-sectoral approach.

**Challenges of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2**

The Sustainable Development Goal 2 aims to end hunger by 2030 and ensure access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food for everyone, all year round, thereby ending all forms of malnutrition.

In Nepal, we have challenges to reduce number of stunted, under-weight, wasted and under-nourishment and anemia among the children and women. Conversely, for a growing number of children, obesity has become an emerging challenge – contributing to the double burden of malnutrition.

The proposed targets for Nepal for SDG 2 include a reduction in the prevalence of undernourished to 3 percent and the reduction in the prevalence of underweight children – under five years of age –to 9 percent by 2030.

The other targets aim to reduce the prevalence of anemia among women and children and increase per capita food grain production.

Enabling institutions, strengthening partnership, creating conducive environment and encouraging more investments are essential to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Government of Nepal is making every effort to scale up nutrition and deliver for their people a place free of malnutrition by 2030.

**The Multi-sector Nutrition Plan**

The Government of Nepal is fully committed to achieving Sustainable Development Goals and the World Health Assembly targets related to nutrition. While our efforts to tackle malnutrition began much earlier, it gained considerable momentum after joining the SUN Movement in 2011.

In 2011, the Nutrition Assessment and Gap Analysis was carried out and endorsed by the Government which led to the development of the Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan in Nepal. While the first plan covered the period from 2013 to 2017 and integrated different sectors from agriculture and water and sanitation to education and governance, the second Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan – for the period of 2018 to 2022 – builds on the firstplan and is being implemented throughout the country. The second plan places emphasis on achieving nutrition-related Sustainable Development Goals for Nepal. The second plan:

* focuses on gender empowerment and equitable emphasis on populations disproportionately affected by malnutrition;
* takes a life cycle approach, starting with the first Golden 1000 days;
* aims to forge a strong relationship with the 753 local governments and provides a special directive on operationalization of MSNP in the context of federalism;
* gives a stronger emphasis on monitoring and accountability for implementation; and
* establishes a strong link with Universal Child Cash Grant for better nutritional outcomes.

The estimated budget of implementing MSNP II is nearly USD 500 million, out of which, the government will be contributing 60 percent and development partners are contributing 40 percent to implement the Plan.

The Constitution of Nepal enshrines the right relating to food and health. For this, we have been focusing on reducing the poverty and inequalities among the women and marginalized ethnic and caste groups; prioritizing actions for the poorest and most vulnerable people to ensure that no one is left behind and to follow the principle of universality without any discrimination.

**Way forward and commitments**

The Government of Nepal aims to meet the Sustainable Development Goals and World Health Assembly targets along with the targets set by 15th periodic plan of Nepal through a number of key commitments:

**Commitment 1: Increasing investment to eliminate all forms of malnutrition and ending hunger:**:

The government of Nepal remains committed to expanding nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive programmes nationwide by 2020 under the framework of the Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan, benefiting more than three million children under the age of five through nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions; providing iron-folic supplementation to all 3.5 million adolescent girls and 1.9 million pregnant and nursing women. The total budget for the Plan is nearly USD500 million, but there is an urgent funding gap of approximately USD200 million. We urge our partners to help us fill this critical gap.

**Commitment 2: High-level political commitment to tackle impacts of the climate and environment related crisis**:

Nepal is prone to natural disasters such as earthquake, floods, landslides and avalanche. We are one of the climate vulnerable countries. To tackle the food and nutritional challenges that are consequently affected, Nepal will formulate and implement a robust policy and strategy by 2020 in a coherent and integrated fashion that strengthens humanitarian development drive.  This includes a social protection and sustainable agriculture system for sustainable nutrition impact.  The Government of Nepal is committed to developing a strong policy framework connecting Disaster Risk Reduction with regular ongoing nutrition programs at federal, provincial and local government levels to mitigate adverse effects of the different types of natural disasters, shocks on nutritional outcomes.

**Commitment 3: More nutrition-sensitive and nutrition specific research and development:** Considering the climate and environment related crisis**,** the Government of Nepal will prioritize agricultural and other research and development with stronger focus on nutrient-dense foods such as fruits, vegetables and legumes, treatment of severe and moderate acute malnutrition, control of micro-nutrient deficiencies, and Infant and Young Child Feeding and Care in a life cycle approach. Appropriate policy measures will be initiated by 2022 to significantly promote production of nutrient-dense and locally grown traditional foods. The implementation of the Right to Food and Food Sovereignty Act will be further promoted.

In addition, the Government of Nepal will review existing policies and ensure key policy measures are in place to tackle the impact of the climate related crisis and improve the resilience of rural production systems and value chains – while managing a sustainable increase in its goods and services. We will also ensure the environmental sustainability while promoting the technology transfer in agriculture.

**Commitment 4: Investing resources to strengthen advocacy and awareness around all forms of malnutrition including under-nutrition, obesity and micronutrients deficiencies.**

By 2020 the Government of Nepal will endeavor to develop policy measures to address adverse effects of processed and packed foods on nutrition, especially on infant feeding, micronutrients deficiencies and overweight/obesity.

To conclude, let me emphasize that this Global Gathering has provided an opportunity to reinforce the government’s commitment to eliminate all form of malnutrition including emerging nutrition challenges due to climate related crisis, changed lifestyle and processed foods as well as to achieve the World Health Assembly Targets 2025 on nutrition and Sustainable Development Goals 2030. This has also been a platform to promote new investment in this critical area and to provide clear strategic direction for the future.

I believe this is an excellent opportunity to share our stories – our achievements in nutrition and the challenges we collectively face. This is also a forum to renew our commitment and pave the way for the next phase of the Movement both at the country level, and 2020 Global Nutrition Summit, Tokyo.

I thank you for your attention.

**Statement by Honorable Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs**
**at the NAM Ministerial Meeting**
**Baku, Azerbaijan 23-24 October 2019**

**Your Excellency Elmar Mammadyarov Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan**
**Honourable Ministers,**
**Excellencies, and Distinguished Delegates,**
**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

I would like to begin by congratulating you on your unanimous election as the Chair of this Meeting.  I express my delegation’s full support in the discharge of your responsibilities.

I want to thank the Government and people of Azerbaijan for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to us. We are happy to be in this beautiful and historic city.

Let me also commend the leadership of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for efficiently steering the Movement over the last three years.

**Mr. Chair,**
The founding fathers of the Non-Aligned Movement chose universal peace over conflict, uniting commonalities over dividing differences, shared prosperity over unequitable development and balanced multi-polarity over hegemonic bipolarity.

This Movement is an epitome of our collective pursuit for peaceful, just, fair and equitable world order. Drawing its strength from the Bandung Principles, the Movement has always led the path towards international solidarity and cooperation in the wake of ever-increasing challenges.

However, at present, our collective efforts to establish a peaceful and prosperous world are hindered by multiple challenges.

Poverty and hunger still exist as blemishes on human dignity. Achievements in scientific inventions, technological advances, and managerial innovations have not yet succeeded to soothe the pain of disease and deprivation. Fair distribution of economic development and prosperity remains a far dream for millions of people trapped into abject poverty.

The world economy has bounced back from Great Recession and has been achieving global growth since 2010 but it has failed to raise the hope of the bottom billion for a better future.

There is an unequal distribution of the benefits of globalization, which leaves the poor and vulnerable countries behind. These countries have become more vulnerable to the adverse impact of the financial and economic crises.

Increasing incidents of terrorism, transnational organized crimes, violent extremism, and hate speeches, among others, have become everyday phenomena.

The menace of climate change is outpacing our response. Unfortunately, it is the poorest and most vulnerable who are hit hardest by the impacts of climate change despite their negligible emissions.

Multilateralism has been under attack due to growing trends of populist nationalism and protectionism. We must strengthen the multilateral system by upholding and defending the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations (UN) and the principles of international law.

A strong, transparent and democratic UN would be an effective institution for global governance.

It is in this light that the relevance of NAM and its principles become more pertinent.

**Mr. Chair,**
Needless to say, peace and security and sustainable development have complementary and mutually reinforcing relationship.

No peace and security can ever be sustained without achieving sustainable development. Similarly, no sustainable development can ever be achieved without sustaining peace and security.

It is worth noting that money spent on prevention of conflict globally is much lower than the cumulative human, social and psychological costs incurred due to cyclical conflicts. Most of the countries suffering from the brunt of conflict and underdevelopment are the members of this Movement.

Conflict begets conflict and respects no national boundary. Arms race and conflicts dissipate the resources and arms add fuels to the conflicts.

Therefore, NAM, as a group of 120 countries, has a special responsibility to use its numerical and moral strength to ensure adequate and predictable resources in preventing conflicts and helping its members achieve peace and stability.

The NAM membership, in the spirit of solidarity, should support each other in building domestic capacity by sharing their experiences, best practices and resources through the South-South Cooperation mechanism.

**Mr. Chair,**
Nepal, as a founding member, believes that a stronger and revitalized NAM is a sine qua non for achieving peace, development and security.

The principles of NAM constitute the fundamentals of Nepal’s foreign policy. They are enshrined in our Constitution to guide our international relations.

Nepal believes that the principles of sovereignty and sovereign equality of States, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of any State and pacific settlement of international disputes are the cardinal principles of the multilateral system.

Our Movement is for equal rights, equal opportunities, equal protection and equal respect for all countries.

The reforms in the international financial systems are also critically important for timely achievement of sustainable development goals. They need to be further democratized to make them more open, transparent and equitable.

Trade and investment are not just engines of growth but important tools to ensure inclusive growth and sustainable development. Therefore, the international trade and investment regimes should be universal, open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory so all countries would be benefitted equitably.

**Mr. Chair**
Before I conclude, I wish to state that, after the success of our unique and home-grown peace process that culminated in the promulgation of the new constitution in 2015, Nepal’s priority now is on economic transformation and sustainable development.

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda is our national priority and is integral part to our graduation from the LDC status. We anticipate an enhanced, predictable and continued international support including from the NAM membership for a smooth transition and sustainable graduation.

While Nepal is committed to doing all it can, including in forging partnerships among public and private sectors at home, it looks forward to an increased cooperation and partnership with all our international partners for necessary resources, investment, technology and other forms of support.

Finally, I commend the progress made by the senior officials meeting on the Declaration and Outcome Document to be adopted by the 18th Summit of the Non-aligned Movement. I am confident that we will be able to have productive deliberations in this Meeting and contribute to making the Summit a historic one.

I thank you for your attention.

**Speech by Honourable Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs at the reception organized by His Excellency Ambassador of Nepal to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.**
**Yangon, 19 October 2019**

The Rt. Honourable President,
Excellencies,
Friends from Media,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Namaste and Good Evening !

I wish to begin by thanking ambassador Udas and the Embassy family for hosting this reception in honour of the Rt. Hon’ble President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari.

Let me covey to you warm greetings and best wishes from Rt. Hon’ble President, the government and people of Nepal, the land of Buddha and Sagarmatha.

We are delighted to have this wonderful opportunity to meet with Hon’ble Union Ministers, Provincial ministers, Mayors and representatives of other local authorities of the Union of Myanmar and the distinguished diplomatic community representing many governments around the world. We are equally delighted to meet with people from different walks of life , business community, faith organizations, media, members of Nepali community and of course, the friends and well-wishers of Nepal.

Thank you for your kind presence here this evening. We have taken this as your love and good will towards Nepal and Nepali people.

Nepal and Myanmar established formal diplomatic relationship in March, 1960. But the people to people to relationship has continued from hundreds of years. Nepal and Myanmar enjoy excellent bilateral relations which are not confined to official level, relations at the level of people are quite strong.

The Right Honourable President of Nepal Mrs. Bidhya Devi Bhandri is on a state visit to this great friendly country at the invitation of His Excellency U Win Myint, the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. This is the first ever visit by the president of Nepal to Myanmar and by a Nepali Head of State in nearly four decades.

Rt. Hon’ble President of Nepal and His Excellency the President of Myanmar had fruitful discussions on further expanding and consolidating Nepal Myanmar relations that are age old and multi-dimensional. The Rt. Hon’ble President also had substantive discussions with Her Excellency the State Counsellor, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi that covered important aspects of Nepal Myanmar relations. In the course of past one year both countries have signed important bilateral instruments in the fields of trade and investment, tourism and culture.

Nepal’s foreign policy is guided by the principles of Panchaseel, charter of the United Nations, NAM and international law and norms of world peace. We have steadfast commitment to a rule based order. The overarching theme of Nepal’s foreign policy is “amity with all and enmity with none”.

The present government is committed to strengthening ties with neighbour as well as all other friendly countries in the world on the basis of the principles of sovereign equality, mutual respect and benefit. Regional cooperation is an important component of our foreign policy. We believe in multilateralism with United Nations at the center of global affairs.

Our diplomatic engagements have significantly increased recently resulting in substantial enhancement of cooperation with neighbours and other partners. Most recently, the President of China visited Nepal. The visit has been highly successful in elevating Nepal China relations to new height. We are expecting other high level visits in the near future.

I am pleased to inform you the Government of Nepal is hosting “Sagarmatha Sambad” (Everest Dialogue) in April 2020 in Kathmandu to galvanize international efforts to address the adverse impacts of climate change. We all are aware that the mountainous countries, small island developing states and countries with low lying coastal lands are among those hit hardest by the climate change which has assumed crisis proportion. We would expect participations from various countries including the countries you represent here.

Ladies and Gentlemen, you are aware that Nepal has undergone transformation of historic proportions. We have settled all political issues that we confronted for the last seventy years through the promulgation of a highly democratic and inclusive constitutions. The general elections held in 2017 produced a majority government thereby ending the cycle of political instability. We have achieved much needed political stability today.

Women are guaranteed 33% seats in the Federal and Provincial parliaments and 40% at the local level. Following the 2017, historic elections, the representation stands at 41% in all elected bodies. This is a major achievement in ensuring inclusive governance in the country.

Our focus today is on socio-economic transformation. “Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali” is our national aspiration and our development activities are guided by this aspiration. We aspire to become a middle income country and attain Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. We look forward to your continued support and cooperation in our efforts to realize these goals.

We are organizing visit Nepal 2020 next year to give tourism development a qualitative boost. We appeal to you to visit Nepal next year. Nepal has to offer many things both in terms of both nature and culture.

Lumbini is the birthplace of Gautam Buddha and the fountain of Buddhism. We look forward to receiving support and cooperation from friendly countries in our effort to develop it as a centre of world peace and learning. It is a common heritage of mankind which has enormous values for world peace and harmony.

In this respect, I would also like to inform that a new international airport in Lumbini, the birth place of Lord Budhdha, is on the verge of completion and will come into operation early next year. Excellencies, we have proposed to organize the United Nations International Day of Vesak in 2021 in Lumbini.

Let me conclude by saying I look forward to continuing an open and regular dialogue with you all about issues pertinent to your home country and to Nepal, via our mission stationed here and my ministry as well. As to my Myanmar brothers and sisters, I would like to express my gratitude for the warm hospitality extended to us. We are returning to our homeland with beautiful indelible memories and goodwill of people of Myanmar. With our shared values and common outlook, I have every confidence we will remain close partners and friends.

Thank You.

**Statement by Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal at the “Myanmar-Nepal Friendship and Business Opportunities” programme jointly organized by Myanmar-Nepal Friendship Association and Myanmar-Nepal Chamber of Commerce**
**Yangon, 19 October 2019**

Mr. President, Myanmar-Nepal Friendship Association
Mr. President, Myanmar-Nepal Chamber of Commerce
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Friends from Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Namastey!
Min-ga-la-ba!

I am delighted to be here with you today. I have had similar privilege before but this one is special. Because our meeting is taking place on the occasion of the state visit of Rt. Honourable President of Nepal to Myanmar. It is a unique gathering, a perfect combination of business and friendship associations, both playing an important role in cementing friendly ties between our two countries. This certainly gives me an added pleasure.

Although Nepal and Myanmar formally established diplomatic relations six decades ago, both countries have maintained contacts for a very long period of time. Our ancient land links, marital associations, cultural similarities, deep respect towards each other, and practice of Buddhism have brought us closer. Myanmar nationals of Nepali origin have further strengthened our relations as a bridge. The friendship association has immensely contributed in nurturing people to people contacts which remains at the core of any bilateral relationship. I would like to see them working proactively to promote understanding, good will and cooperation between our two countries. Buddha’s eternal teachings of love, compassion and empathy influence daily life of the people in both countries.

Nepal had opened its Consulate in 1949 in Yangon, well before we established formal diplomatic relations in 1960. The establishment of diplomatic relations further cemented the bilateral relations.

Beyond the bilateral domain, Nepal and Myanmar are active members of BIMSTEC and Asian Cooperation Dialogue. This gives them an opportunity to collaborate to advance common interest within the framework of regional cooperation. We are of the view that countries in Asia should work together based on Oriental values and norms to contribute to development and prosperity for the entire Asian continent.

Talking in the multilateral context, even broader opportunities are there for them to work together in various multilateral forums such as United Nations, NAM, G-77. Today’s world where basic tenets of multilateralism are under attack, solidarity and unity among developing countries is essential to overcome the challenges of contemporary world and ensure a just, fair and rules based international order.

Let me reflect on the bilateral relations.

President Rt. Honourable Bidya Devi Bhandari is on a state visit to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at the friendly invitation of His Excellency U Win Myint. This is the first ever visit by a president of Nepal and by a head of state of Nepal in nearly four decades. This visit assumes a special significance in the context of far reaching changes that our two countries have undergone in recent years. Our two countries have started the exchange of high level visits in recent years. I recall with pleasure the official visit of His Excellency Myint in August last year. We also had the privilege of welcoming the State Counsellor Her Excellency Aung San Suu Kyi in November. In one year alone, we have been able to conclude three important bilateral instruments in the fields of trade and investment, tourism and culture. These instruments carry immense importance in furthering economic and cultural ties between our two countries. We already enjoy strong political relationships.

Lumbini, birth place of Lord Buddha and fountain of Buddhism as well as world peace, is a sacred place for Buddhist around the world. Thousands of Buddhist pilgrims including from Myanmar visit Lumbini every year. Lumbini is more than a religious site; it is also a cultural treasure of humanity listed under the UNESCO heritage sites. I am happy to note that the Government and the People of Myanmar have contributed for the development of Lumbini. I would add one more fact in this connection; the pagoda built by Myanmar in Lumbini has remained a centre of attraction for Buddhist pilgrims from Myanmar and the world. It would be my remiss if I fail to acknowledge the outstanding contribution made by former Secretary-General of UN, U Thant, who hailed from Myanmar, for his for galvanizing international support for the development of Lumbini.

To facilitate tourists and other people, a new international airport is on the verge of completion. Once in operation the airport will greatly facilitate international travel to and from Lumbini. This will help realize the objectives of visit Nepal year 2020. This is only one dimension. Nepal has to offer a lot of unique things ranging from natural beauty as manifested by majestic Himalayas, flora and fauna to rich cultural treasures. Cultural diversity is our asset and peaceful co-existence is our way of life. We would like to welcome our friends from Myanmar to visit Nepal as our tourism products intend to meet the expectations of tourists of all kinds and for all purposes.

Mr. President,

With the successful promulgation of Constitution in 2015 and elections at all three levels of local, province and federal, we have a stable government in Nepal after decades. Now the Government has concentrated its focus on socio-economic transformation with clearly defined objectives of improving people’s standard of living and achieving higher and sustainable economic growth.

The overarching national aspiration that has guided our development vision and action is “Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali”. We intend to become middle income country by 2030 and achieve the SDGs by the same deadline. With the Government economic policies and constant hard work of the people, we have achieved 7.1 percent economic growth in the last fiscal year and we are likely to maintain this rate for the current fiscal year.

Nepal and Myanmar both are developing countries. We have common development challenges. We have a combined population of 83 million, which could be a big market. Our policies are liberal and our visa regime is also liberal. Therefore, I would like to urge the business community of Myanmar to visit Nepal and explore the opportunity for business.

The Government of Nepal is steadily and determinedly working towards building a business-oriented, investment-friendly environment in Nepal through various policy, structural, and legal reforms and introducing new market-friendly incentives and policies to make Nepal a profitable business destination. Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Act has been thoroughly revised and updated and the Public Private Partnership and Investment Act has been promulgated to provide a sound regulatory framework for investment. Laws pertaining to intellectual property rights are under consideration for revision.

Nepal has trade and investment cooperation agreement with Myanmar. The Nepali businessmen are keen to work with the businessmen from Myanmar. Nepal’s Federation of Cottage and Small Industries (FNCIS) and Union of Myanmar Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industries (UMFCCI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the promotion of business between two countries.

The Government has opened almost all sectors for foreign direct investment. The negative list is very short. Our two countries have the advantage of huge markets in our neighbourhood. Moreover, regional forums like BIMSTEC offer a promising future for expanding trade and investment opportunities in the region.

Being an LDC, we have preferential access to some of the international markets.

We have untapped natural resources. We also have huge demographic dividend with 57 percentage of working age population. Every year over 500 thousand youths enter into job market. We have educated and trained working population. Combination of both makes investment in any sector in Nepal highly profitable. Hydropower and infrastructure development, agriculture, tourism, information technologies, manufacturing, mines and minerals have been identified as priority areas for investment.

Other incentives related to investment such as tax, foreign exchange, repatriation of capital, import, visa, land acquisition, company registration are quite attractive and the government has installed a one stop service to facilitate visa process in a time bound manner.

Disposable income of locals is increasing rapidly due to remittances from abroad, creating new local markets for products as well as new pools of talent within the labor market.

Dear Friends,

We successfully organized Investment Summit in March, 2019 and Infrastructure Summit in September, 2019. I recall the participation of His Excellency U Thaung Tun, Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations at the Investment Summit. Both the summits witnessed active participation from many countries. Investment Summit saw investors pledging to finance several mega projects. The later summit saw extensive discussions focused on the global and regional megatrends, including climate change, and their relevance to the local context, issues surrounding infrastructure project delivery, financing modalities, and opportunities for cross-border economic cooperation and investments.

We understand that protection of your investment and reaping eventual profit is your priority. The Government of Nepal is fully committed and capable to protecting foreign investment with assured profit. We have formulated laws to protect your investment.

We have robust institutional set up that looks after investment in Nepal. Nepal Investment Board, chaired by the Right Honorable Prime Minister is a dedicated organization that looks after major investment projects. Similarly, the Department of Industry and Industrial Promotion Board have further strengthened existing investment mechanism.

As we look towards the future, I am confident that our common values and shared interests will continue to unite us. Our close relationship has only strengthened with time. We value cultural similarities that exist between our two countries. We value trade and business which are the bases of our economies but we also value our friendship and trust between our two nations and people. Let those values never diminish.

As our two governments have expressed strong determination to work together for enlarging the scope of economic cooperation, it is but natural that we expect our business communities to match the spirit and take concomitant efforts to realize the vision set forth by the government. My job here today is to appeal to the business communities of both countries to forge collaborative partnerships in realizing potentials that our two countries offer.

I would like to thank the organizers once again for this opportunity to address you all in this platform,

Thank you.

**Statement by Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Fourth Indian Ocean Conference**
**(Male, September 3, 2019)**

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

His Excellency Mr. Tandi Dorji, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Royal Government of Bhutan,
His Excellency M. Joaquim Jose Gusmao dos Reis Martines, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries of Timor Leste,
Shri Madhav Rao and other Distinguished Members of the Organizing Committee,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Namaskar and good evening!

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

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

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

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

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

**Excellencies,**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Distinguished Delegates,**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Excellencies,**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

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

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

**Distinguished Delegates,**

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

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

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

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

I wish the conference a grand success!

Thank you!

**Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at a Seminar on “Nepal’s Foreign Policy: Orientation and Priorities” organized by United Nations Association of Nepal
Kathmandu, 09 August 2019**

**Chairman of the United Nations Association of Nepal,
Excellencies,
Friends from the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

At the outset, let me thank the United Nations Association of Nepal for hosting this seminar and inviting me to speak on this important theme.

Before I touch upon the subject matter of today’s seminar, let me briefly go through the background that shaped and inspired Nepal’s world view as it grew a consolidated nation state from the fragmentation that this region witnessed in the 18th century.

We are proud that Nepal is one of the oldest independent States in Asia. Nepal’s recorded history is a testimony of our practice of foreign policy with neighbouring countries even before the unification.

Prithiv Narayan Shah has eloquently articulated the unique geopolitical situation of Nepal in the metaphor of a ‘yam between two boulders’. Though the connotation and understanding of the “yam” has undergone significant change with the time, modern Nepal’s foreign policy draws on its underlying message ever since. Safeguarding of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity were inherent in the ‘notion of yam’. Nepal even chose self-imposed isolation for over a century but retained her independence in the face of expanding colonialism in the region.

The political change of 1951 opened up the country and expanded our external outreach. Throughout the series of political upheavals and systemic transformation that followed in the past 70 years, basic tenets of our foreign policy remained consistent with necessary adjustments in its nuances and strategies.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**
The Constitution of Nepal guides basic framework for the conduct of Nepal’s foreign policy. The Constitution also defines core elements of our national interest. Safeguarding of the freedom, sovereignty, territorial integrity, nationalism, independence and dignity of the country, border security, economic wellbeing and prosperity and the rights of the Nepali people are defined as the basic elements of Nepal’s national interest. It is intrinsic that service to the national interests is the primary objective of our foreign policy goal.

The Constitution also guides Nepal to pursue independent foreign policy and adhere to the principles of the UN Charter, non-alignment, Panchsheel, international law and the norms of world peace. Maintaining foreign relations on the basis of sovereign equality and enhancing dignity of the nation is an important element of our foreign policy.

These guiding principles have enabled us to take independent posture on international issues, articulate our views on merit basis, contribute to the world peace, and nurture friendship with all countries of the world.

Within the framework set by the Constitution, safeguarding of Nepal’s sovereignty, and independence and ensuring non-interference in the internal affairs of the country becomes a paramount priority for the Government in all of its external engagements.

We want amity with all, enmity with none, and consider international relations should be based on justice, sovereign equality, mutual respect and shared benefit. We want to promote Nepal’s credentials as an open, progressive, and democratic State.

We support multilateralism to promote a just and equitable international order in which all States- big or small- fulfil their international obligations in good faith, and enjoy equal opportunity to achieve their aspirations for development and prosperity. We consider that stability and predictability in the global order is essential for maintaining international peace and security.

A country transformed from armed conflict, we would be happy to share our hard-earned experience of successful nationally-led and owned peace process for the benefit of the countries in conflict or those in transition.

Having achieved internal political stability, we want to focus on the achievement of economic development with the overarching goal of ‘prosperous Nepal, happy Nepali’. Development imperatives at home guide our diplomatic engagements abroad. We have devised policies and national development plans accordingly. Focused pursuit of economic development agenda will remain a key priority of our economic diplomacy. Graduating from the status of LDC and attaining the middle-income status by 2030 are set as our milestones.

More recently, another dimension of Nepal’s standing in global stage has been added by expanding Nepali diaspora. A number of Nepali diasporas have excelled in the field of academics, science and technology, medicine, engineering, arts, designs, architecture, culinary skills, literature, industries, sports and adventures. Many of them have written their own success stories of entrepreneurship. They have individually and collectively contributed for the promotion of Nepal’s image in the world stage.
As a new initiative, the government has recently launched Brain Gain Centre at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to connect and attract knowledge, skills and expertise of Nepali diaspora to the service of the country.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**
Nepal has maintained friendly and cooperative relations with both of her immediate neighbours: India and China. Maintaining close and cordial relationship with them is our consistent priority. Our relations have expanded manifold in the sphere of political, economic, cultural, trade, tourism, investment, and people-to-people exchanges. We look forward to further strengthening of these relations. We admire our neighbours for their continued goodwill and support to our national aspirations and for their cooperation in the development efforts of Nepal. We consider the spectacular economic development of our neighbours as an opportunity and desire to benefit from that. We are conscious of the legitimate interests of our neighbours and will not allow any activity against them in our soil and expect the same from our neighbours.

Our relations with the countries in the extended neighbourhood are based on mutual respect, goodwill and understanding which we wish to sustain and consolidate. They are further nurtured by growing cultural and traditional ties. Our priority is to further explore, open up and diversify our relations especially in the areas of trade, investment, tourism and people-to-people exchanges.

Our relations with major powers and development partners have always remained cordial and cooperative. Their goodwill and support to Nepal in her development endeavour has been an enduring aspect of our friendship. We value this cooperation and remain grateful to our development partners for their continued support. While development cooperation from our partners through the Government channel in alignment with our priorities, leadership and ownership is important for us, we look forward to an enhanced level of investment and technology transfer. We continue to work towards enriching the substance of cooperation in our bilateral engagements with these countries.

Labour migration is an important issue for Nepal. A large number of our citizens are engaged in foreign employment and the remittances they send home make a sizable share of our economy. Therefore, it becomes Government’s priority to work closely with the countries of destination for safety, security and wellbeing of our migrant workers. In recent years our engagements with the labour destination countries have been more intensive and enriched by exchange of high level visits, and progressively growing trade and investment. We look forward to expand and diversify the scope of cooperation with these countries so as to encompass the broader areas of economic partnership involving trade, investment, tourism and civil aviation, among others.

**Dear Friends,**
Nepal is an ardent supporter of the rule-based and just multilateral system with the United Nations (UN) at its centre. We have abiding faith on the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and have adhered to them in letter and spirit.

As an active member of the UN, Nepal has contributed significantly for over six decades to the maintenance of international peace and security and protection of human rights. Nepal currently stands 5th largest troop and police contributing country in the UN peace operations.

Nepal attaches high importance to the protection and promotion of human rights. Human rights hold the centre stage in our Constitution. We are a State party to twenty-four international human rights-related instruments, including seven out of nine core Conventions. Nepal considers all human rights are universal, in-divisible, inter-dependent, inter-related and mutually reinforcing.

Currently Nepal is a member of UN Human Rights Council, and also serves as the coordinator of Asia Pacific group in the Council. We are a member of UN Peace Building Commission, Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Commission on Science and Technology for Development, Executive Board of UN-WOMEN, and Deputy Member of the ILO Governing Body. We are coordinator of Colombo Process of Labour Sending Countries and Chair of the Enhanced Integrated Framework Board of WTO. A Nepali expert is serving as a Vice Chair in the CEDAW Committee.

Nepal supports the UN reform initiatives with equal emphasis on all three pillars- peace and security, development and human rights- and to make the global body more efficient, effective and responsive to the need of our time.

Nepal stands for peaceful solution of international disputes. We support national leadership and ownership of any solution to internal conflict and apolitical role of the agencies like the United Nations.

Nepal continues to support total and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction. Nepal condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and believes that terrorist acts cannot be justified on any ground whoever may be the perpetrator.

Nepal accords high priority to the issue of climate change, which is one of the biggest challenges of our time. We contribute negligible in the global greenhouse gas emission. However, as a mountainous country with fragile ecosystem, we are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change and global warming. We, therefore, support effective implementation of the Paris Agreement and call for enhanced level of climate finance and technology transfer for the adaptation and mitigation.

Nepal continues to champion the cause of LDCs, LLDCs, South-South and triangular cooperation in the UN and other international forums.  Solidarity and cooperation with LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS will continue to characterize our deliberations.

Promoting regional economic cooperation remains our priority. A year ago, Nepal successfully hosted fourth BIMSTEC summit in Kathmandu. As the Chair of SAARC we have been consistently putting our efforts to revive the stalled SAARC process. Nepal plays its due role in Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) as its member and in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as a dialogue partner.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**
Before I conclude, let me state that our efforts have been to ensure that Nepal’s foreign policy serves its purpose to safeguard the vital areas of our national interest in the context of changing global and regional dynamics. We are also fully aware that fundamentals of our foreign policy remain consistent with the constitutional provisions and our practice remains coherent and credible. Recently, we hosted a National Dialogue on Foreign Policy with an objective of forging minimum common understanding on the critical foreign policy areas. We consider that such exercise should continue in the future as well.

With a view to promoting deliberations on contemporary issues of global importance, we are preparing to host Sagarmatha Dialogue in Nepal early next year. We hope Sagarmatha Dialogue to be a unique contribution of Nepal in the policy deliberations that will be an important forum to broaden our understanding of the major issues shaping the global and regional order in our time.

I thank you all for your attention.

**Remarks by Hon. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali,
Minister for Foreign Affairs at a Workshop on
“The Belt and Road Initiative in Nepal: Opportunities and Challenges”
7 August 2019**

 Chairperson of the workshop Mr. Anand Pokharel, Former Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation
Foreign Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister DR. Rajan Bhattarai
Prof Liu Weidong, CAS
Prof Shivlal Bhusal, Dean
Prof Dinesh Poudel
Hon Members of Parliament
Distinguished Professors from Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and
TU
Distinguished Participants
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Namaste and Good Morning to you All !

At the outset, I would like to thank South Asia Institute of Advanced Studies and Chinese Academy of Sciences for their cordial invitation to me to address the workshop on “the Belt and Road Initiative in Nepal: Opportunities and Challenges.”

The topic is timely and pertinent for our deliberation. The workshop is important as it brings together the scholars and experts from diverse fields. I would like to welcome the team of professors from the Institute of Geographical Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences, for travelling all the way from China to Nepal to attend this program, and highly appreciate for conducting the research on the green BRI in the Himalayan Region. I hope their findings will be beneficial to all of us.

I believe such regular interactions, deliberations and exchange of views by experts help to have comprehensive understanding of a project of global scale like BRI.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Belt and Road Initiative is a visionary undertaking of President Xi Jinping launched in 2013. It is a significant milestone that aims at promoting comprehensive connectivity and cooperation among the countries and people in the region and beyond. More than 130 countries have signed the MoU and some others have expressed their willingness to join this landmark initiative. We do believe that it will have a paramount impacts in the development landscope of the region and beyond, in 21st century.

We are happy to witness the miraculous development in China in a relatively short span of time. It has been able to lift its people out of poverty within few decades; not long ago an agrarian economy and has now become the second largest economy in the world.

Connectivity in a comprehensive manner is at the core of the BRI. Five priority areas as set by the BRI are in one way or the other aim to enhance connectivity to build a community of shared interests that fosters development and prosperity.

The connectivity projects of the Initiative will help to support the development strategies of the countries along the Belt and Road in keeping with their national priorities, tap market potential in this region, promote investment and consumption, create demands and job opportunities, enhance people-to-people and cultural exchanges, and mutual learning among the peoples of the relevant countries. Since the multilateralism and collective efforts are facing some challenges, and the tendency towards self-centeredness and protectionism is emerging, initiative like BRI can play an instrumental role to develop collectivism and to protect the spirit of economic globalization with more substantive value addition.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nepal has entered a new era of peace and stability with the promulgation of a new Constitution in 2015 and the successful holding of elections in all three tiers resulting into the formation of strong governments at all levels. You may all know that Nepal aspires to become a middle-income country by 2030 and graduate from LDC status at an early date. The single-minded pursuit of the government remains development and prosperity.

To achieve these goals, we require massive investment in infrastructure development. We also require huge investment of capital and modern technology as well as expertise in the related fields. We believe that Chinese assistance and collaboration through BRI can be significant in supporting our development needs in infrastructures.

Nepal has become a part of the BRI after it signed an MoU in 2017. We are committed to implementing the MoU of Cooperation under BRI to promote sustainable development consistent with our development needs. Efficient connectivity will unfold manifold opportunities in various fields including in trade, investment, manufacturing and tourism.

Nepal and China are committed to enhance connectivity encompassing vital components such as ports, roads, railways, aviation and communications within the framework of Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network. It is a matter of happiness that Joint Communique of the Leaders’ Roundtable of the 2nd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation has included in its annex “Trans-Himalayan Multi-dimensional Connectivity Network, including Nepal-China cross-border railway”.

We believe that BRI can support countries like Nepal to grow and prosper at an accelerated speed. As a framework to spur investment and enhance connectivity, BRI can be instrumental in addressing development bottlenecks arising out of connectivity and mobilizing finances for development while ensuring win-win benefits. Being a lanlocked country, Nepal is paying atleast 20 percent additional cost to its production and transit-transport cycle. It is contributing (negatively) to shrink its competitiveness in global market. This fact speaks a volume about the critical importance of connectivity to Nepal.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have concluded some important agreements with China in recent years for enhancing multidimensional connectivity between the two countries. Recently concluded Protocol on implementing Transit Transport Agreement between the two countries provides Nepal access to the Chinese seaports and dryports. This is an important milestone towards Nepal’s transformation from a landlocked country to a land-linked country. I am happy to share with you that we have completed all necessary internal procedures to bring the protocol into effect. Also, we concluded another MoU for building cross-border transmission line with China last year. Trans-Himalayan Railway will be a game changer in our development journey. Our two countries have already signed an MoU on Cooperation in the Railway Project. Pre-feasibility study of this project has already been completed and now we are in the process of feasibilty study and preparation of detailed project report.

Recent development in the areas of tourism, aviation, trade, cultural exchanges and people to people contacts are encouraging. we should explore the ways to unleash the potentials on the area of economic cooperations in the days ahead.

Rt. Hon. President paid a state visit to China in April this year and addressed the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation held in Beijing. The visit provided us a good opportunity to share our views on the importance of Belt and Road Initiative in promoting connectivity and realizing the sustainable development goals for countries like ours. I would like to fondly recall the very indepth statement (s) made by President Xi, where he highlighted the core concepts of BRI, including sustainabilty and green development .

Green BRI is call of the day at a time when we are witnessing the adverse impact of climate change. Unsustainable patterns of production and consumption have accelerated environmental degradation. Countries like Nepal are bearing the brunt of climate change despite negligible emissions from our side. Women and underprivileged community have been its main victims. The only way forward is development of green economy. While striving for economic development, BRI can play an important role in transforming to clean-energy mode and low-carbon economy.

The proposed BRI projects should aim at utilizing the rich resources along the Himalayan range and improving the quality of lives of peoples in those areas, while carefully examinig the sensitivity, vulnarabilty and fragileness of the Himalayas. The facilities and infrastructures thus created should support conservation efforts and help overall development of that region in a sustainable manner.

Nepal wills to contribute the green economy. Endowed by huge hydro resources with more than 40,000 MWs comercially feasible generating capacity, Nepal has great potential in this regard. If we can utilize the potentials of solar, wind and other means of renewable energy alongwith the hydropower, our contribution will be paramount in the region. We want to collaborate with the neighboring countries and welcome more investment and technology transfer in this area.

To materealize the vision of BRI in general, and Trans-Himalayan connectivity infrastuctures in particular, indepth researchs are extremely important, in the areas of geography, goology, hydrology, environment, economics, cultures and many mores. In this regard, collaboration between the think tanks and research institutes like CAS and Nepali research institutes will be very meaningful.

I believe that the workshop will bring forward pragmatic ideas to be utilized to tap the opportunities offered by the BRI.

Once again, I would like to thank the organizers for bringing forth this important topic for deliberations among the experts from diverse sectors.

I wish the workshop a success.

Thank you all for your kind attention !

**Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali on
“Nepal-India Relations: Development and Dynamics” at a Talk Programme
organized by Pushpalal Memorial Foundation
(18 July 2019, Hotel Summit, Lalitpur)**

**Chairman of Pushpalal Memorial Foundation and
Former Prime Minister Hon. Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal,
Hon. Ministers and Members of Parliament,
Ambassador of India to Nepal
His Excellency Shri Manjeev Singh Puri,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen**:

It is a great privilege and honour for me to speak on the theme of **“Nepal-India Relations: Development and Dynamics”**. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Chairman of Pushpalal Memorial Foundation for organizing this talk programme and also providing me with this opportunity to share my views.

 Let me begin with the historical relationship between Nepal and India. We know the relationship between our two countries is time immemorial. History tells us that even before the modern nations of Nepal and India came into existence, small kingdoms and princely states existing in the present territories of Nepal and India had developed flourishing relationship, both at the level of the government and the people. The bilateral relationship continued to grow in the subsequent times, reaching the present stage. This active relationship in continuity speaks volumes of engagements, friendship and cooperation between our two countries.

The closeness of the relationship between Nepal and India is based on the robust foundation of geographical proximity, civilization and cultural bonds, friendship between the two peoples, and similar perceptions on many global and regional issues including shared values. Nepal and India are two independent and sovereign countries; they are immediate neighbours, sharing a long stretch of boundary; and they exist side by side and interact much more densely in every sphere of life. When we realize this fact, we become further closer. And, it also automatically demands from us more efforts to take the relationship to a new height.

**Distinguished Participants,**

It is with this spirit that the two countries have maintained friendly and cooperative relationship at the highest political level. High level visits at increased frequency have helped not only strengthen friendship but also fructify the relationship in areas of mutual interest. In this context, I would like to fondly recall the visits of both prime ministers and four round of talks last year, which have contributed significantly to further cementing the bilateral ties and to explore the new vistas of cooperation.The growth of the relationship has produced tangible outcomes in many sectors, such as trade, transit, investment, tourism, culture, education, development cooperation and so on. Besides, continuous dialogues, exchange of ideas, and agreements, including through dozens of bilateral mechanisms, have substantially contributed to add dynamism to the relationship.

It is a matter of satisfaction that Nepal-India relations have been growing in multi-dimensional ways, creating myriads of opportunities. However, this does not mean that the relations are bereft of problems and issues. They are there; and it is not unnatural for any friendly neighbouring countries with wide gamut of relations and dense interaction. What we need to do is to continue removing obstacles, resolving issues and moving forward towards extracting the benefits from enhanced bilateral cooperation.

And what gives us enormous satisfaction is that we have clear  vision, sufficient commitment and required capability in both sides to address those issues.

Another important aspect in our relationship is that we have to understand the sensitivities of each other. If there is a trust that sensitivities are well taken care of, it will help grow the relationship smoothly. We need to continue strengthening cooperation for controlling the cross-border criminal and unwanted activities, which harm both countries. Similarly, we must prevent unscrupulous elements from using the soil of one country against another. Furthermore, a practical solution is also to be worked out for reducing Nepal’s huge trade deficit with India, as the huge imbalance in trade shows a negative picture.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**,

Given India’s huge population, big size of economy, industrial capacity and technological progress, it has remained a major source of investment, import items, tourist inflows, technological support, and development cooperation to Nepal. India is on of the biggest source of foreign investment in Nepal in terms of amount. Among the source countries of tourists coming to Nepal, India is on top of all. Likewise, in Nepal’s total imports and exports, India occupies a prominent position. On the part of Nepal too, investment, export of goods and tourists outflow into India are there, though in a smaller scale. These facts and figures vindicate the depth and dynamism of our relationship. Here, what we need to do is to create a win-win situation for both countries. We have to work out plans for ensuring it in a sustainable way.

The areas of cooperation in our two countries are so wide and all-encompassing that potentials exist in almost every sector. We are blessed with enormous natural resources; we have young and active population; our history, culture and civilization are rich. Additionally, people-to-people bonds are strong and dynamic. Interdependence and interconnectedness are intense. India’s economy has already taken momentum, securing a respectable position in the global economy. It is an opportunity for Nepal to take the benefit from this economic growth. In Nepal too, economic growth rates have started going up, which can benefit India as well.

On of the critical issue to collaborate with, is the issue of climate change. Since the challenges of climate change has scaled up in unprecedented points, probably we should have to use the term climate crisis or urgency rather. As both countries are linked with similar climate system, ecology and Himalayan ranges, problem we face are almost identical. We can even talk the daily weather forecasts nowadays, the potential floods in Terai and adjoining parts of Northern India alarms millions of people everyday. It is a issue, which warrants us to work collaboratively, with sensitivity and urgency

It is rare to have a highly favourable situation in both countries, which is available at present, as reflected in the stable governments enjoying the two-thirds majority in the parliaments, enormous faith of the peoples in the leaders, accelerating economic growth rates, clear visions for development and prosperity, and strong commitments for delivery of outcomes to the peoples. I see it as a golden opportunity for both Nepal and India. We must do everything possible to tap this opportunity.

On the one hand, we need to work on a new agenda for development and shared prosperity in the changed scenario; and, on the other hand, we have to complete the unfinished tasks, clearing ways for novel ventures. These twin tasks are to be performed simultaneously. Old treaties and agreements await review for making them appropriate in the present context. Completion of long-standing bilateral cooperation projects of great significance, such as Pancheswor and Hulaki Roads, require due priority. Similarly, resolution of the boundary issues and the permanent solution to the problems of inundation are other important works to be accomplished.

I am happy to share the facts that a number of flagship projects between Nepal and India have been carried out. Some of them have already been completed and some are in the phase of implementation. The petroleum pipeline project from Motihari to Amlekhgunj is almost ready for operation. The Integrated Check Post in Birgunj has already started functioning and the next one in Biratnagar is awaiting its operationalization. Likewise, some segments of Hulaki Roads have been completed. The process for Raxaul to Kathmandu Railway line has begun with preliminary survey. The works relating to Inland Waterways have also started. We are developing strong connectivity with India through railways and waterways. Cooperation in the field of agriculture is taking momentum. New air entry points have been finalized to pave the way to boost the Nepali aviation industry. I am sure it will phenomenally help enhance movement of goods and people with less cost and less time.

When we talk about our relations, we should also take into account global developments, as they do have implications on bilateral relations. The world today has seen unprecedented developments in geo-politics, geo-economics, technology, and inter-state relations. Nationalistic fervor, protectionist policies, apathy to multilateralism, and dissociation from global and regional compacts and commitments have unexpectedly changed the dynamics of cooperation among countries. In such a volatile situation, countries like ours have to forge strong cooperation in order to secure common interests from the international and regional engagements.

**Distinguished Participants**,

The Government of Nepal has dedicated its entire efforts towards realizing the national aspiration of “Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali”. To help contribute to this drive,  we count high the collaboration with India. We welcome increased amount of investment from India into Nepal in areas of our national priority, such as hydro-power, transport infrastructure, tourism, agriculture, ICT, mines and minerals, education, health, manufacturing, etc. These investments will benefit not only Nepal but also India. In the areas of trade, enhanced market access for Nepali products in India as well as trade facilitation are required for reducing the trade deficit of Nepal, making the trade beneficial for both countries. Similarly, as we are going to celebrate the year 2020 as the “Visit Nepal Year”, we expect more tourists from India to Nepal in 2020 and beyond. From Nepal’s side too, a lot of Nepali people visit India every year as tourists. This is one of the important areas of cooperation between our two countries. As before, I am confident that Nepal will continue receiving increased amount of development cooperation from India. While saying so, I would like to thank the Government of India for continuously extending development cooperation to Nepal in the past as well as increasing the amount of such cooperation to Nepal in the budget announced recently.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

After the historical political change, Nepal now is perfectly poised for development and prosperity. It is based on the facts on the ground. First, the country has political stability with a government enjoying two-thirds majority in the parliament. Second, with a new constitution as well as new and revised laws, legal base has taken strong roots. Third, good governance and reform in public service have received adequate priority. Fourth, revenue mobilization and financial discipline has created conducive environment in the economic and financial sector. Fifth, the Government of Nepal has given a tempo to development works. Sixth, a lot of incentives and facilities for foreign investors, industrialists and businesspersons are available in the country. Seventh, necessary infrastructure and facilities are being expanded for foreign tourists for their comfortable and enjoyable stay. Finally, the Government of Nepal is committed to strengthen ties with its immediate neighbours and other friendly countries around the world. I am confident that such a propitious environment will serve as a bedrock for the growth of our relations, accruing great advantages to both countries.

To end, I would like to say that there is every room for the expansion and deepening of Nepal-India relations in the days ahead. Both countries are replete with potentials. There is also the will and determination to realize these potentials for their development. With mutual understanding and trust at all levels, we can continue reaping the benefits of our friendship and cooperation. I see a brighter side in Nepal-India relations. I wish it to remain brighter forever.

I thank you for your kind attention.

**Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at the National Dialogue on Foreign Policy, Kathmandu, 29 June 2019**

<https://mofa.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/%E0%A4%B5%E0%A4%BF%E0%A4%A6%E0%A5%87%E0%A4%B6-%E0%A4%A8%E0%A5%80%E0%A4%A4%E0%A4%BF-%E0%A4%B8%E0%A4%AE%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%AC%E0%A4%A8%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%A7%E0%A5%80-%E0%A4%B8%E0%A4%82%E0%A4%B5%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%A6-%E0%A4%95%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%B0%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%AF%E0%A4%95%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%B0%E0%A4%AE%E0%A4%AE%E0%A4%BE.pdf>

**Keynote Address by Hon. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs
at Nepal Promotion Programme for Honorary Consuls General/ Consuls of Nepal on 26 June 2019, Kathmandu**

Honorary Consuls General and Consuls of Nepal,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Namaste and Good Morning!

It is indeed a great pleasure to address this first ever gathering of Honorary Consuls/Consuls of Nepal’s hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Let me thank you all for your valuable participation in this important Nepal Promotion programme.

We intend to showcase Nepal and its potential through your active participation and cooperation for the promotion of trade, tourism, foreign investment and foreign employment in the outside world. I am confident that the program will be informative, interactive and productive and will contribute to furthering Nepal’s national economic interests abroad.

Distinguished participants,
I am happy to share with you the recent developments in our country. With the promulgation of a democratic and inclusive constitution in 2015, Nepal has successfully completed the nationally-led and owned unique peace process. The new constitution embraces universally accepted democratic values, norms and principles. Competitive multi-party elections, respect for fundamental human rights, free press, independent and impartial judiciary, strong commitment to rule of law and good governance remain the salient features of our constitution. The constitution has institutionalized democratic gains of the people achieve through successive people’s movement and established a federal democratic republic as per the wish of the people of Nepal.

Through the elections held in 2017, federal governance structures in all three tiers (namely federal, provincial and local level) have been operationalized. Strongly mandated governments both at the federal level and in all seven provinces have been formed. Likewise, 753 local governments have been functional across the country. With these developments, the protracted political transition has come to an end.

Now the government’s single-minded focus is on development and prosperity. For this, we have embarked on a journey of socio-economic transformation. We have defined ‘Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali’ as our overarching national aspiration. We aspire to be a nation that is economically prosperous, institutionally sustained and socially inclusive.

To achieve this vision, we strive to attain high economic growth through the mobilization of both domestic and foreign investment, optimizing our export trade, promoting tourism and forging synergetic partnerships with private sectors and other stakeholders.

Earlier in March this year, we successfully organized Investment Summit to showcase Nepal’s enormous potentials as a promising investment destination in multiple sectors. During the Summit, 77 projects were presented and we received a number of investment proposals, from our immediate neighbors and other friendly nations, to advance these projects.

Distinguished participants,
Political stability has been achieved that ensures predictability, consistency, coherence and stability in policies.

Needless to emphasize, all political parties in Nepal have common voice on the agenda of development and prosperity.

The Government is fully committed to creating an investment-friendly environment not by words but by actions. In this context, we have undertaken a number of policy, legal, institutional and procedural reform measures. This will enable investment from domestic private sector and foreign investors.

The Constitution of Nepal has guaranteed property rights, and also has taken a clear State Policy to encourage foreign capital and technological investment.

Nepal has adopted liberal economic policy and welcomes foreign capital and technological investment in national priority sectors.

We have enacted two important legislations namely Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Act (FITTA) and Public-Private Partnership and Investment Act to encourage investment.

The Public Private Partnership and Investment Act provides one stop service for any foreign investment of over Nepali Rupees 6 billion or a hydropower project over 200 MW capacity. The one stop service has come into operation. Similarly, FITTA ensures national treatment for any foreign investment and repatriation of return has been guaranteed.

We offer an attractive incentive package in terms of corporate taxation, import duties, and export facilitation. Tax rates are predictable and tax holidays are guaranteed by the law for those industries that meet the criteria.

Procedures for land acquisition, company registration, environmental assessment and infrastructure development have been simplified. Online registration and payment system have been put in place.
With an aim of promoting good governance and rule of law, the government is committed to implementing zero-tolerance policy on corruption.

An independent judiciary, capable of adjudicating industrial and investment related disputes on a fast-track basis, has been a mainstay of our legal system.

Distinguished participants,
Nepal is a land of ample opportunities for investors. We allow 100 percent investment in almost all sectors. The negative list is very short.

As we are rich in natural resource endowments and have huge demographic dividend, Nepal’s future for development is very bright. Let me highlight some of the major areas that have the potentials to transform the economic landscape of our country.

With its vast geographical and bio diversity-comprising the arable land just 80 meter above the sea level to the top of the world, Nepal offers immense potentials for investment in agriculture sectors.
More than 40,000 MW of hydropower is economically viable. However, a fraction has been realized so far.

The Power Trade Agreement with India, MoU on BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection and MoU on Power Trade between Nepal and Bangladesh serve as an important regulatory framework to encourage investment in hydropower projects.

Nepal is also a reservoir of mines and minerals such as iron, cement and precious stones. Investment in this sector is equally profitable.

An attractive tourist destination with world renowned heritage sites, most favoured trekking routes, fascinating wild lives and amazing scenic beauty, with hospitable and welcoming people, investment in tourism sectors guarantees high return from investment.

Distinguished participants,
Nepal is located between India and China, two of the fastest growing economies with more than 2.5 billion population. We enjoy excellent relations with both of our neighbours. Nepal has been enjoying trade preferences with neighbours. Therefore, investors in Nepal do have assured markets.

In addition to this, Nepal, as an LDC, enjoys duty-free and quota free market access in advanced economies including EU and the USA.

Investors will also be benefitted by the relatively competitive labour forces available in Nepal. We have about 57 percent of population representing the working age group. English-speaking human resources are easily available in Nepal.

We have signed Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements as well as Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreements with a number of countries.

Despite of our best efforts, FDI flow in Nepal remains minimal. Under such circumstances, we need to execute robust economic diplomacy, soliciting potential investors that investment in Nepal is profitable with win-win opportunities for both investors and Nepal.

Distinguished participants,
I would like to underline that huge investment is need of the day. It is a top priority of the Government. In this situation, we have an important responsibility of branding Nepal’s image abroad as promising destination for investment. Effective economic diplomacy is the call of the day.

Missions and Consulates General should regularly organize promotional activities on trade, investment, culture and tourism and advocate for Nepal’s interest in the countries they are accredited to.

We need to convince investors that political climate is supportive. Regulatory framework is sound. Policy, legal and institutional framework is enabling and encouraging. Regional ambience is equally promising.

We are celebrating the year 2020 as Visit Nepal Year with a goal to attract more than 2 million tourists. We need to publicize Nepal’s tourism potentials in respective countries to meet our goal.

We need to establish good network with local business community, NRNS, business chambers, tourism and donor agencies and disseminate information on economic issues through them.

Regular contact with media and expanding network with businesses and investors is also essential to publicize Nepal’s positive image abroad. Local journalists can be encouraged to travel to Nepal and write promotional blogs in local media.

Our collective efforts for socio-economic prosperity and progress of Nepal will deliver desired outcome.

I am confident that discussion and interaction today and tomorrow will enhance understanding, clear confusions, if any, and encourage us to move with full confidence to contribute to our goal of development and prosperity.

I thank you for your kind attention and wish you a pleasant stay.

**परराष्ट्रमन्त्री माननीय श्री प्रदीपकुमार ज्ञवालीले परराष्ट्र मन्त्रालयमा आज आयोजित पत्रकार**
**सम्मेलनमा जानकारी गराउनुभएको विषयमा जारी प्रेस नोट**
**२०७६।२।१९**

**1. सम्माननीय उपराष्ट्रपति श्री नन्दबहादुर पुनको अष्ट्रिया भ्रमण**
सम्माननीय उपराष्ट्रपति श्री नन्दबहादुर पुन अष्ट्रियाका राष्ट्रपतिको निमन्त्रणामा भियनामा आयोजित जलवायुसम्बन्धी अष्ट्रियन विश्व शिखर सम्मेलनमा सहभागी भई हिजो स्वदेश फिर्ता हुनु भयो । उहाँ जेठ १२ गते त्यसतर्फ प्रस्थान गर्नु भएको थियो। सो क्रममा जलवायु सम्बन्धि अष्ट्रियन विश्वशिखर सम्मेलनको उच्च सत्रलाई संबोधन गर्नु हुँदै सम्माननीय उपराष्ट्रपतिले जलवायु परिवर्तनको विश्वव्यापी प्रभावबाट नेपालले भोगिरहेको समस्या र जलवायुपरिवर्तनको प्रभावन्यूनीकरण र अनुकूलनका लागि नेपालले गरिरहेको पहलका बारेमा विश्वसमुदायलाई जानकारी गराउनुभयो। भियनामा रहँदा सम्माननीय उपराष्ट्रपतिले अष्ट्रियाका राष्ट्रपतिसँग दुई पक्षीय भेटवार्ता गर्नुका साथै संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघको ‘भियना अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय केन्द्र’ को ४० औं वार्षिकोत्सव समारोहमा सहभागी हुनुभयो । त्यस्तै सम्माननीयउपराष्ट्रपतिअष्ट्रियाकोटेरोलप्रान्तकोईन्सब्रुकसहरमानेपालीराजदूतावासद्वारा आयोजितअन्तर्राष्ट्रियसगरमाथादिवससमारोहमाप्रमुखअतिथिकोरुपमासहभागीहुनुभयो।
उपराष्ट्रपतिको अष्ट्रिया भ्रमणले नेपाल र अष्ट्रियाबीच रहिआएको मैत्रीपूर्ण सम्बन्धलाई थप सुदृढ तुल्याउन मद्दत पुग्नुका साथै जलवायुसम्बन्धी अष्ट्रियन सम्मेलनमा उपराष्ट्रपतिको तहबाट भएको सहभागिताले जलवायु परिवर्तनको मुद्दामा नेपालको गहिरो प्रतिबद्धता र प्राथमिकता प्रकट भएको छ ।

**2. सम्माननीय प्रधानमन्त्री श्री के पी शर्मा ओलीज्यूको भारत भ्रमण**
सम्माननीय प्रधानमन्त्री श्री के पी शर्मा ओलीज्यूले भारतका प्रधानमन्त्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदीको शपथ ग्रहण समारोहमा सहभागी हुने सन्दर्भमा मिति २०७६।०२।१६ र १७ गते मित्रराष्ट्र भारतको भ्रमण गर्नुभयो ।सो क्रममासम्माननीय प्रधानमन्त्री श्री के पी शर्मा ओलीज्यूले भारतीय प्रधानमन्त्रीलाई बधाई एवं सफल कार्यकालको शुभकामना प्रकट गर्नुका साथैउहाँसँग द्बिपक्षीय तहमा भेटवार्ता समेत गर्नुभयो ।
भ्रमणका दौरान सम्माननीय प्रधानमन्त्रीले नेपालको राजकीय भ्रमणका लागि आमन्त्रण गर्दैसम्माननीय राष्ट्रपतिज्यूलेपठाउनुभएको निमन्त्रणाभारतका महामहिम राष्ट्रपतिसमक्षप्रस्तुत गर्नुभयो । त्यस्तै सम्माननीय प्रधानमन्त्रीज्यूले भारतका प्रधानमन्त्रीलाई नेपाल भ्रमणका लागि आमन्त्रण गर्नुभयो, जुन निमन्त्रणा भारतका प्रधानमन्त्रीले सहर्ष स्वीकार गर्नुभयो ।

**3. सम्माननीय प्रधानमन्त्री श्री के पी शर्मा ओलीज्यूको आसन्न युरोप भ्रमण**
सम्माननीय प्रधानमन्त्री श्री के पी शर्मा ओलीज्यूले आगामी ८ देखि १५ जुन २०१९ सम्म युरोपका विभिन्न मुलुकहरुको भ्रमण गर्नुहुने कार्यक्रम रहेको छ ।
प्रधानमन्त्रीज्यू अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय श्रम संगठन (ILO) को शतवार्षिकीको अवसरमा आयोजना हुने विशेष समारोहमा भाग लिन ९ देखि १० जुनसम्म स्वीट्जरल्याण्डको जेनेभामा रहनुहुने छ । सो अवसरमा प्रधानमन्त्रीज्यूले १० जुनमा आयोजना हुने ILO को शतवार्षिकीको विशेष समारोहलाई सम्बोधन गर्नुहुने कार्यक्रम रहेको छ । जेनेभामा रहँदा साइडलाइनमा सम्माननीय प्रधानमन्त्रीले केही द्विपक्षीय भेटघाट गर्ने कार्यक्रम समेत रहेको छ ।
सो पश्चात् प्रधानमन्त्रीज्यूले १० देखि १२ जुन २०१९सम्म मित्रराष्ट्र संयुक्त अधिराज्यको औपचारिक भ्रमण गर्नुहुने छ । उक्त भ्रमणको दौरान उहाँले संयुक्त अधिराज्यका प्रधानमन्त्री महामहिम Mrs. Theresa May सँग ११ जुनमा द्विपक्षीय भेटवार्ता गर्ने कार्यक्रम रहेको छ । साथै, उहाँले अक्सफोर्ड विश्वविद्यालयमा १० जुनमा आयोजना गरिने एक विशेष समारोहलाई सम्बोधन गर्ने कार्यक्रम तय भएको छ।
त्यसैगरी, प्रधानमन्त्रीज्यूले १२ देखि १४ जुन २०१९ सम्म मित्रराष्ट्र फ्रान्सको औपचारिक भ्रमण गर्नुहुने कार्यक्रम रहेको छ । सो भ्रमणको अवसरमा प्रधानमन्त्रीज्यूले उहाँको फ्रान्सेली समकक्षी महामहिम Mr. Edouard Philippe सँग १२ जुनमा द्विपक्षीय भेटवार्ता गर्नुहुनेछ ।

**4. Brain Gain Center**
विश्वकाविभिन्नस्थानमारहेकानेपालीहरुकोज्ञान, सीपरक्षमताकोपहिचानगर्ने, अभिलेखगर्नेरमुलुककोविकासमापरिचालनगर्नेउद्धेश्यलेपरराष्ट्रमन्त्रालयमा Brain Gain Center (BGC) स्थापना गरिएको छ। औपचारिक रूपमा यसको सञ्चालन २०७६।०२।१९ गतेबाट भएको छ। BGC एक अनलाइन डाटावेसहो। यसको सञ्चालन, संयोजन र सहजीकरण परराष्ट्र मन्त्रालयको नीति, योजना, विकास कूटनीति तथा विदेशमा रहेका नेपाली सम्बन्धी महाशाखाबाट हुनेछ।
यस केन्द्रका मुख्य उद्धेश्यहरु निम्न अनुसार रहेका छन्:
१. विश्वकाविभिन्नस्थानमारहनुभएकानेपालीहरुकोज्ञान, सीप र क्षमताको पहिचान गर्नेतथाअभिलेख गर्ने,
२. विदेशमा रहनु भएका विद्वत वर्गलाई मातृभूमिको विकासमा योगदान गर्न प्रोत्साहन गर्ने,
३. सरकारी, गैरसरकारी तथा निजी क्षेत्रका संस्थाहरु र विदेशमा रहनु भएका विद्वत वर्गहरुबीच सम्पर्क कायम गराउने र ती क्षेत्रलाई आवश्यक दक्ष जनशक्तिको आपूर्तिमा सहजीकरण गर्ने,
४. विदेशमा रहेका विद्वत वर्गलाई मुलुकको विकास प्रक्रियामा परिचालन गर्ने,
५. उहाँहरुले मुलुकको विकासमा गर्नु भएको योगदानको कदर गर्ने।
हालसम्म यस केन्द्रमा विभिन्न ४१ मुलुकबाट ५०० भन्दा बढी नेपालीहरु आवद्ध भई सक्नु भएको छ।यस सम्बन्धी विस्तृत जानकारी [www.mofa.gov.np/bgc](https://mofa.gov.np/bgc/) बाट लिन सकिन्छ।

**5. National Dialogue on Foreign Policy**
मुलुकले अवलम्बन गर्नुपर्ने परराष्ट्र नीतिका सम्बन्धमा देशभित्र एक साझा दृष्टिकोण तयार पार्ने उद्देश्य राखी परराष्ट्र मन्त्रालयले आगामी १४ असार २०७६ (२९ जुन २०१९) का दिन एक अन्तर्कृयात्मक छलफल कार्यक्रम (National Dialogue on Foreign Policy) आयोजना गर्न लागेको छ । नेपालमा हाल नयाँ संविधान जारी भई उक्त संविधानले मुलुकको अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय सम्बन्धसम्बन्धी निर्देशक नीतिको उल्लेख समेत गरेकोपृष्ठभूमिमा नेपालका राजनैतिक दलहरू, परराष्ट्र मामिलाका क्षेत्रमा अध्ययन अनुसंधानरत संस्थाहरू एवं परराष्ट्र मामिला विज्ञहरू सहितका सरोकारवालाहरूको सहभागितामा आयोजना गरिने उक्त Dialogue ले संविधानको मर्म एवं भावना अनुरूप वर्तमान विश्व परिवेशलाई सुहाउँदो परराष्ट्र नीति निर्माण गर्नमहत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका खेल्ने मन्त्रालयको विश्वास रहेको छ ।

**Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali
at the ‘International Forum on Mountain Tourism’ and
Launching Ceremony of ‘International Mountain Tourism Day’
Kathmandu, 29 May 2019**

**Mr. Chairperson
Mr Fu Yingchun,  Executive Secretary General
of International Mountain Tourism Alliance
Mr Deepak Raj Joshi, CEO Nepal Tourism Board
Mr CN Pandey, Chairman Nepal Association of Tour and Travel
Agents Mr Yang Shichao, CDA of Embassy of China Excellencies,**

**Distinguished delegates
Entrepreneurs, and
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Namaste and a very Good Morning!

First of all, I would like to thank the organizers for inviting me to participate and speak a few words in this ‘International Forum on Mountain Tourism, Nepal’. I am also pleased to learn about the launching of ‘International Mountain Tourism Day’ today.

I extend my congratulations and best wishes on the occasion of Sagarmatha day.

On behalf of the Government of Nepal, I would also like to welcome all delegates to this programme. In particular, special welcome to the international delegates from our friendly countries!

I thank you for travelling all the way to Nepal and wish you a very pleasant and fruitful stay here.

In fact, it is really heartening to learn that this event has brought together experts and tourism entrepreneurs from more than 30 countries. I appreciate the initiative and thoughtful decision of the organizers to host this event on mountain tourism.

I am much hopeful that this broader network stands fruitful in sharing of experiences and expertise, and learning from each-other in the field of mountain tourism.

**Dear Friends,**

When asked about his feat of reaching the summit of Mt. Everest on this day back in 1953, Sir Edmund Hillary said, ‘It is not the mountain we conquer; but ourselves’. If we go by what he said, we have come a long way in ‘conquering ourselves’ over the last sixty-six years.

That historic landmark achieved by Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay Sherpa left to us not just an event in the history of mountaineering and adventure tourism but also a way of realizing our potential and understanding our relationship with nature.

Climbing mountains is a process, not an event. Mountaineering in particular and other forms of tourism in general are therefore a process of befriending nature by human beings.

In Nepal, which has eight out of ten tallest mountains on earth, mountains, of course, constitute a fascinating destination for adventure tourism with their majestic beauty and pristine nature.

The history of mountaineering tourism in Nepal dates back to 1950s. Since then, Nepal has always been a life time attraction for mountaineers. Thousands of Nepali nationals and foreigners have already reached the summits of various mountains.

This is a happy story that we all cherish. We are effortful to retain the primacy of our mountains as the centre of global attraction for adventure tourism.

However, the vignettes of man’s scaling up of mountains do not suffice to describe their splendour and beauty.

Mountains are neither fair nor unfair, neither good nor bad, neither friendly nor dangerous. There are ‘just there’ for us to admire and ponder on.

For us in Nepal, mountains are our identity markers and promoters of our image at the international arena. And for everyone interested to know about them, they are most powerful, ‘most awe-inspiring and most unconquerable’. Mountains are the places where legends live and where everything is bigger than life.

**Dear Friends,**

Today, we all are concerned about the growing consequences of climate change upon these ‘wonderful gifts’ of nature. It is not simply because of their value in the eco-system but also because of their importance as a source of livelihood and survival for millions of people living downstream.

In the last five decades, rise in global temperatures and a fall in the amount of precipitation in the mountain region have led to mountain glaciers shrinking by over 30 percent. This comes as a strong reminder that mountains are not at all immune to the climate assault.

In this context, a major challenge before us is to implement our resolve to preserve mountain ecology in the larger interest of mankind. It is imperative therefore that we all take concrete actions before it is too late.

It is not least in realization of this fact that mountains and issues concerning their promotion and conservation have received priority in the policies and programmes of the Government of Nepal.

The new policies and programmes of the Government of Nepal for 2019/20, for example, emphasize the promotion of tourism sector with proper utilization and conservation of topographical diversity including mountains.

This is in line with the SDG goal number 15.4 that relates the need for conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, for sustainable development.

**Dear Friends,**

Given the country’s topography and landscape, Nepal has abundant prospects for touristic activities such as mountaineering, trekking and travel, among others. In addition to the mountains, the ever flowing Himalayan rivers, glaciers, large lakes, green valleys, beautiful waterfalls and the national parks are the major attractions for tourists visiting Nepal.

Tourism has been an important sector of Nepal’s economy. It, like in any other developing country, has been playing a very significant role in poverty reduction. It has also contributed to employment and income generation with its linkages to different sectors of the economy.

We remain effortful in attracting more quality tourists to Nepal. Visit Nepal Campaign 2020, which will be run with a goal of bringing in two million tourists, is one such effort. Of course, mountain tourism will be, as always, a major priority in our Campaign.

To conclude, I am confident that the deliberations in this programme will add value to our continued efforts towards promoting sustainable mountain tourism. I am equally confident that it will help enhance our understanding of mountains and our relations to them.

I wish this International Forum all success!

I thank you all for your kind attention.

**Statement by Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs, at the Workshop on
“Enforced Disappearance in Asia: Prevailing Laws, Challenges and Solutions”
Kathmandu, 27 May 2019**

**Chair of the Workshop and chairperson of the INSEC Dr Indira Shreshtha,
Vice Chair of the UN committee on Enforced Disappearances Rainer Huhle,
UN Residential Coordinator HE Valerie Julliand,
Pioneers of the Human Right Movement,
Participants and guests from the Asian Region, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I begin by thanking the organizers- Informal Sector Service Centre and Advocacy Forum- for inviting me to be part of this session of the workshop. I would like to welcome all the foreign delegates and wish your please to stay in Kathmandu.

The issue you have chosen to deliberate during these two days is important to all of us, particularly the countries that have emerged from varieties of internal upheavals or conflicts.

I am confident that this exercise would be useful to learn from each other’s experiences and strive for the betterment.

**Dear Friends,**

Nepal’s democracy is an outcome of long struggles to secure fundamental freedom, human rights and justice to all of our citizens.

The Government elected by overwhelming popular mandate and led by the leaders who sacrificed everything for the establishment of rights and freedom to the people, remained in prison for many years, or suffered human rights violations, is resolutely committed to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedom of our people.

For this reason, Nepal has made strong constitutional and legal safeguards against all human rights violations, including the act of enforced disappearances and ensured adequate judicial remedies in case of violations.

The Constitution of Nepal guarantees right to freedom to every citizen and protects people’s personal life and liberty.

The Constitution provides that no person can be taken into custody without informing the ground for such arrest. Arrested person’s right to be produced before the court within 24 hours and the right to consult with a lawyer is protected as the fundamental right.

The Constitution is explicit that unless there exists sufficient ground of imminent threat to the sovereignty, territorial integrity or public peace and order of the country, no person can be held under preventive detention. Existence of such a situation is determined by the court of law not by law enforcement authorities.

Information about the situation of a person who is held under preventive detention is required to be communicated immediately to his or her family members or relatives. Any person subjected to preventive detention in bad faith is entitled to claim compensation from the State.

Right against physical or mental torture or cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment is guaranteed with adequate judicial remedies in case of infringement of such right. The person or authority involved in such treatment is punishable by law.

To comply with the order of the Supreme Court (2007) and to make necessary legal protection against the act of enforced disappearance, the penal code of Nepal has criminalized such act and provided legal remedies to the victim.

Nepal is a State party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture, Cruel or Inhuman Treatment or Punishment. We have adhered to the provisions of those instruments in good faith. Our commitment to human rights is total.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Nepal transitioned through a stage of internal conflict. As per the spirit of the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) signed between the Government and the then rebel party in November 2006, one of the important task of the peace process was to find the truth, make the perpetrators of serious violations of human rights accountable and provide reparation to the victims.

With the view to implement the CPA and in line with the provision of the Interim Constitution and the order of the Supreme Court, Nepal in 2015 established two separate commissions- the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission on the Investigation of Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP) to deal with the conflict era human rights violations.

The mandate of the Commissions is based on the principles of truth-seeking, inquiry, accountability, reconciliation, reparations and measures of non-repetition.

The CIEDP has collected over 3 thousand complaints and commenced preliminary investigation of over 2 thousand and 2 hundred cases. The Mandate of the CIDEP has been extended up until February 2020 and the Government is in the process of appointing members of the commission to complete the remaining tasks.

For this purpose, necessary amendment to the Act was done recently to initiate an independent process of selecting the candidates to serve in the Commissions.

As required by the TRC Act, the Government of Nepal has constituted an independent five member recommendation committee headed by former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

The Committee is mandated by law to recommend most qualified persons to serve in the two transitional justice commissions. The Committee has begun its work and is expected to complete it in due course of time. Upon appointment of the members of the Commissions,

At the same time, to address the concerns raised on the TRC Act, the Government is preparing to submit amendment to the Act in the current session of the Federal Parliament. A broad based consultation was conducted in an open, inclusive and transparent manner. The comments, feedbacks and suggestions received are being examined to further enrich the content of the amendment Bill.

The Government of Nepal reiterates that the perpetrators of serious violations of human rights will not go unpunished.

We have reaffirmed in every appropriate occasion that transitional justice process will be guided by the Comprehensive Peace Accord, directive of the Supreme Court, relevant international commitments, concerns of the victims and the ground realities. Independence of the Commissions will be guaranteed and adequate resources including budgetary, human and technical will be ensured by the Government of Nepal.

Nepal successfully traversed through an arduous journey of peace process with strong resolve and commitment of Nepali political leadership, unwavering support of Nepali people, and the continuous good will and understanding of the international community, including the United Nations.

Despite the pains and losses of the past internal conflict, the nationally led peace process that followed was able to bring fundamental democratic transformation in political, social and human rights realm of the country.

Those achievements have now been firmly institutionalized in the Constitution of Nepal. Sustaining peace has been the earnest desire of Nepali people and this becomes critically important for the consolidation of hard earned political achievements.

As a country that steered through the uniquely successful peace process, Nepal is confident that we have the capacity and necessary political will to conclude the transitional justice process in equally unique and satisfactory way.

**Dear Friends,**

Often times, the legacy of a conflict is very complex and generate contradictory perspectives because of the intrinsic plurality of social memories. The subtlety and criticality of the issue demands us to avoid generalization and consider all nuances into account. We must find a way to address the grievances of the victims, and accommodate the long term need of the society and the nation to build sustainable peace.

Building peace in post conflict situation is a complex process that requires restoring political machinery and civil service, holding free elections, drafting a new constitution, guaranteeing a minimum physical security, stabilizing the economy, rebuilding the economic infrastructure, reintegrating the former armed group, helping the victim, keeping the confidence of international community and finally tackling the transitional justice.

On top of that, ensuring ownership of all political forces in the process remains critical element to the success of a peace process.

In Nepal we broadly achieved all these elements through a long but inclusive process of dialogue and accommodation, mutual respect and negotiation taking the supreme interest of the country at the centre by all stakeholders. They were the key elements for the success of Nepali peace process.

As we consolidate peace for achieving far reaching political, social, and economic reforms, we consider that development, democracy and respect for human rights are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

Our peace process had an organic evolution that addressed root causes of the conflict through a democratic restructuring of the State in an inclusive, transparent and participatory manner taking into account the great diversity of Nepal. This process was enriched by the contributions from the civil society, media, and scholars alike.

Since the Government has expressed willingness to plug the perceived shortcomings in the TRC Act by way of amendment, we need to allow the institutions to function and look for the outcome. We cannot be misled by conjecture. The CIDEP is tasked with the publication of its report based on the evidence and appreciation of the facts. The final result of the two commissions will certainly demonstrate the aspects of truth and justice that we want the two commissions to deliver on.

Government of Nepal has reiterated that the perpetrators of the serious violations of human rights will not go unpunished. Similarly, the independence and impartiality of the Commission will be guaranteed and adequate resources including budgetary, technical, and human will be provided by the Government of Nepal.

To conclude, let me stress that human life is highly regarded in our culture. The idea of justice has had a deep reverence for compassion, repentance, and forgiveness. These values along with the principles of rehabilitation, reformation, reconciliation, and transformation have always been showing us the path towards full respect for dignity of human life.

We need to reflect on our past, contemplate the future, and carry forward the present to bring a closure to our painful memories.

In the capacity of the active participant of Nepali Peace Process, I have interacted with the family members of the victims. I can feel the sufferings of them. To wait the beloved one every day and night without any rays of hope is one of the most painful situation of human life. I express my personal commitment as well to conclude this process at earliest.

So far the Convention on Enforced Disappearances is concerned, Nepal is closely studying this, and will take due consideration in the right course of time. I would like to update you that Nepal is the country which is the party of almost all major treaties and conventions related to Human Rights.

I wish you all to have a fruitful and engaging sessions ahead. I hope that the deliberations that you will have here today will be valuable to those that need it the most.

I thank you all.

**Speech to be delivered by the Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs, at a Symposium on
“Reiwa Era: Japan’s Foreign Policy and Nepal-Japan Relations” organized by
Japanese University Alumni Association, Nepal (JUAAN)**

**24 May 2019**

**H.E. Masamichi Saigo, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal,**
**Former Nepali Ambassadors to Japan,**
**Distinguished Paper Presenter,**
**Members of JUAAN,**
**Distinguished guests,**
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Namaste/Good Afternoon! Konichiwa !**

At the outset, I would like to thank the Japanese Universities Alumni Association (JUAAN) for organizing this symposium on a very important and timely theme.

Similarly, I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Khadga K. C. who is going to have an excellent presentation on Reiwa Era, Japan’s Role and Prospect in Changing Global Power Dynamics. I hope, Prof. K. C. will touch upon almost all aspects of Nepal-Japan relations. Valuable comments by eminent discussants will throw light on the importance of the topic. I would like to briefly touch on the theme of today’s symposium.

We are happy that our friendly country Japan has entered a new era after the accession to the throne by His Majesty Emperor of Japan Naruhito in May 1, 2019. On this auspicious occasion, I would like to congratulate the Government and the people of Japan and express best wishes for the continued peace and prosperity of the friendly people of Japan. There will be high-level representation from Nepal in the coronation ceremony of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan in October this year.

Nepal and Japan are traditional friends. Both countries have been enjoying cordial and friendly relations marked by mutual respect, trust, understanding and cooperation ever since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1956. These relations have been further strengthened by the exchange of high-level visits at different times. My visit to Japan last year and the return visit of the Foreign Minister of Japan His Excellency Taro Kono within two months of my visit have helped further nurture our relationship.
Nepal and Nepali people have tremendous love and goodwill towards Japan and Japanese people .Buddhism has brought our two countries and peoples closer. We have strong people-to-people contacts. In this context, I would like to recall the visit of a Japanese Buddhist Monk Rev. Ekai Kawaguchi who visited Nepal in 1899 on his way to Tibet in search of holy Buddhist scriptures. He was the first Japanese national to visit Nepal. He introduced Nepal and the birthplace of Lord Buddha – Lumbini – to the Japanese people through his writings and publications. He laid the foundation of the people-to-people relations between Nepal and Japan. Since then, the people-to-people contacts between the two countries have been expanding. Currently, over 85,000 Nepali people are engaged in various professions in Japan.

Our relations cover political, economic, cultural and people-to-people dimensions.

Japan has been one of the major development partners of Nepal for long time. Japanese development assistance to Nepal dates back to early 1950s. Both countries have signed the Agreement on Technical Cooperation in 2003, under which Nepal receives cooperation in the fields of training, Japanese experts, volunteers, study missions, project type assistance, machinery and equipment, and development studies. Truly speaking, the cooperation of Japan has reached the grass root level in Nepal.

We are happy to note that Kulekhani Hydropower Project, Dhulikhel-Sindhuli-Bardibas Highway Project, TU Teaching Hospital, Nagdhunga Tunnel Construction Project, Improvement of Water Supply System in Pokhara, School Sector Reform Programme, Human Resources Development (JDS) Scholarship are some of the major projects under cooperation of Japan. Government of Nepal highly appreciates Japan for its continued support and cooperation in the socio-economic development endeavours of Nepal. Japanese projects are highly appreciated for their quality and modern technology.

We welcome the decision of the Government of Japan to enlist Nepal as a source country for inviting Nepali workers in the Japanese labour market. The signing of Memorandum of Cooperation on the specified skilled workers in March this year has added new dimension of bilateral cooperation in the labour field.

Tourism is another promising area where both countries have tremendous prospects for cooperation. Every year a significant number of Japanese tourists visit Nepal. In this connection, I am happy to share with you that Nepal Airlines Corporation is going to operate its direct flight between Kathmandu and Osaka sector from early July this year. We are also expecting direct flight of Nepal Airlines Corporation between the capital cities of the two countries.

We believe that operation of these flights will significantly contribute in making the Visit Nepal Year 2020 a success.

We appreciate Japan for its active role as an observer in the SAARC. The establishment of SAARC-Japan Special Fund (SJSF) has facilitated implementation of many activities since its inception in 1993.

As the current Chair of the SAARC, we sincerely appreciate the Government of Japan for its assistance to SAARC members in various fields.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world is in the state of flux. New developments are taking place with speed and pace not witnessed before. The change has both positive as well as negative prospects. Safe and secure future of the world depends on the proper management of change.

The world is interconnected and interdependent. Interdependence among the countries across the world is growing stronger. Cooperation among the countries is expanding and deepening. Yet trends of unilateralism, protectionism and populism are also rising. This has generated confusion, uncertainties and contradictions.

It is known to all that geo-political weight of Asia is growing. Global balance of power is shifting to this part of the world. With the changes in global power structures, norms and values are also naturally redefined. Increasing competition for either maintaining or gaining supremacy is the fact of the day.

We need a peaceful and harmonious world where all countries get opportunities to grow and prosper. We stand for a just, fair, inclusive and equitable world order founded on the principles of sovereign equality, mutual respect, non-interference and cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Japan’s rapid socio-economic development within a short span of time has been notable. It has the experience of growing out of the worst devastation caused by the rivalries among the powerful countries. It truly understands the value of peace and harmony.

I am confident that the new Reiwa Era, that is interpreted as a beautiful harmony will be successful in developing harmony among different countries and civilizations. It will be successful in promoting commonalities that bind us together.

To conclude, once again I would like to thank the JUAAN for organizing this important symposium. I believe that compilation of today’s in-depth discussions will be useful for all readers.

Thank you!

**Keynote Speech by Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal at Nepal-China Economic and Trade Forum**
**Beijing, 28 April 2019**

**Rt. Honorable President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari**
**Distinguished members of the Nepal-China Business Community,**
**Members of the Nepali delegation,**
**Friends from Media,**
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I feel honoured to have this opportunity to share a few words at this Nepal-China Economic and Trade Forum being organized with the participation of prominent business leaders from Nepal and China.

I would like to thank the Embassy of Nepal and Economic Joint Committee of China Commercial Stock Enterprises for organizing this important meeting.

Rt. Honourable President has already highlighted the importance of Nepal-China bilateral relations and prospects of doing business in the changed political context in Nepal. To avoid the repetition on some contents, I will be rather brief with particular focus on the potentials in the areas of trade and investment between our two countries. I would also briefly touch upon the various reform measures undertaken by the Government of Nepal to create an investment friendly environment.

As you are aware, Nepal and China have been enjoying excellent relations since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1955. These relations have been expanding and deepening in multiple areas including economic, cultural, technical and people-to-people relations.

Nepal and China are close neighbours. Our relations are trouble-free.

Nepal is firmly committed to One China policy. We have a principled position that we do not allow our soil to be used against China.

**Distinguished Business Leaders!**

China has astonished the world with its unprecedented development in a relatively short span of time. It has been moving miraculously from poverty to plenty. Nepal cherishes the progress and prosperity of China. While setting an example of rapid socio-economic development, China has become one of the major sources of foreign direct investment across the world.

As a close neighbour and a friendly country, Nepal wishes to be benefitted from the progress and prosperity of China. Nepal views stable, strong and prosperous China as an opportunity for its development and prosperity.

I am happy to note that China is one of the most important development partners of Nepal. It is also one of the largest trading partners, one of the largest sources of FDI as well as tourists to Nepal.

We appreciate the Government and people of China for their continued support and cooperation to our development efforts.

Economic engagements between our two countries carry a long history. I am happy to share that Nepal served, for a long period of time, as a transit route between China and India and beyond for trade.

Given the changed global context and development needs of Nepal, such engagements need to be revitalized, further deepened and expanded.

**Dear friends!**

To our great relief, decade-long political transition in Nepal has come to an end after the promulgation of the Constitution in 2015. As per the spirit of the Constitution, necessary laws have been enacted and the political gains have been institutionalized. A stable government has been formed and development agenda has been set with the motto of “Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali.”

Sole focus of the Government is to uplift the living standard of the people.

We aspire to become a middle-income country by 2030 and graduate from LDC status at an early date. At the same time, we aim to realize the SDGs. To achieve these goals, we require massive investment in infrastructure development and induction of advanced and innovative technology, for which our domestic resources are insufficient. Therefore, we need the support and cooperation of the international community including neighbours to fill in the resources gap.

We welcome foreign investment. We are committed to protecting foreign investment. We have an investment-friendly environment and which will be further improved.

As I said earlier, we have a stable government. Stable government ensures policy stability and consistency, which is a pre-requisite for boosting confidence of the investors.

Political stability also guarantees peace and stability that is essential for the safety and security of the investors and their investment.

With the demographic dividend of working age population in majority, with yet to be tapped huge natural resources, with the increasing domestic market of sizable proportion of middle class, and with the strategic geo-location between the two largest markets of the globe –Nepal is an attractive investment destination.

**Dear Friends,**

As the CEO of the Nepal Investment Board and the representatives from private sector of Nepal will shortly present about the investment prospects in Nepal, I will briefly share a few words with you on the same topic.

We have introduced major policy changes in order to simplify procedures, maintain clarity and transparency and guarantee the easy repatriation of the profit. In the past few months, we have made substantial progress in improving investment climate in the country. A sound regulatory framework has been established with the enactment of two key legislations: Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Act; and Public-Private Partnership and Investment Act.

The Public-Private Partnership and Investment Act provides one stop service for any foreign investment of over Nepali Rupees 6 billion or a hydropower project over 200 MW capacity.

Statutory provisions pertaining to land acquisition, company registration, environmental assessment and infrastructure development have been relaxed and simplified.

We offer an attractive incentive package in terms of corporate taxation, import duties, and export facilitation. Tax rates are predictable and tax holidays are guaranteed by the law for those industries that meet the criteria.

Nepal offers tremendous opportunities for the investors. It is still a virgin land for investment in every sector. Almost every sector including hydropower, manufacturing industries, IT, services, tourism, mining, herbal medicines, and agro-based industries is open for foreign investment. Attractive profit the foreign companies are making in Nepal is an evidence that proves investment in Nepal is an opportunity.

Market competition is very low at the moment. Therefore, it is prime time for Chinese companies to enter into Nepali market for reaping optimum profit from their investment.

Investors will also be benefitted by the relatively cheap labour forces available in Nepal. English-speaking human resources are also easily available.

We have signed Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements as well as Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreements with a number of countries.

All political parties in Nepal have common voice on the agenda of development and prosperity. It was reflected during the Investment Summit held in Kathmandu last month.

We are highly encouraged by the significant presence of the investors from different countries and international organizations. The largest number of the investors in the Summit was from China. It indicates the growing confidence of the Chinese investors on Nepali market. We expect receiving the largest investment from China.

The Summit was also a reflection of trust and confidence of foreign investors on Nepal. It is an evidence of the proper environment being created for investment in Nepal.

**Dear Friends,**

Tourism is yet another sector for investment. Nepal has unparalleled natural beauty and incredible cultural treasures. Natural and cultural diversity make Nepal a tourist paradise round the year. The Government has announced the year 2020 as Visit Nepal Year with the aim of attracting 2 million tourists in a year. We also seek investment for upgrading tourism infrastructure, including hotels and resorts.

Therefore, it is opportune time to invest in Nepal. Business environment in Nepal is conducive from all respects.

Tap the opportunities; invest your capital and technology in Nepal, and reap the benefit. I assure you that you will gain while investing in Nepal. And, Nepal will also gain in the form of job creation and trade expansion, among others.

We welcome you in Nepal.

Thank You, Xie Xie!

**Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali
at a Function Jointly Hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and
the French Embassy to Mark the 70th Anniversary of the
Establishment of Nepal-France Relations
Army Officers’ Club, Bhadrakali, Kathmandu, 20 April 2019**

**Ambassador Francois-Xavier Leger,
Distinguished Guests, and
Ladies and Gentlemen**

Namaste, bonjour !

It was five days ago, on 15 April, a ravaging fire caused damage to the Notre-Dame Cathedral, a monument of cultural, architectural and historic importance not only for France and French people but also for the entire world. Words cannot describe the pain of watching the spire of one of the world’s great heritages collapse due to the terrible fire. On behalf of the people and Government of Nepal, I extend my sincere sympathies and solidarities to the French Government and people as they try to cope with this tragedy.

First of all, I would like to thank Ambassador Leger for taking the initiative to organize this event and inviting me to participate in it. I feel honoured to speak a few words in front of you all.

I thank the colleagues both at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French Embassy for their contributions in the lead up to today’s programme jointly hosted to mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Nepal-France relations. Let me also acknowledge the support of Nepal Army, especially their kind gesture to provide this venue for free.

I would also like to thank you all, our distinguished guests, for joining us today. I congratulate and extend my best wishes to all of you on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of our historic relationship.

Dear Friends,
France was the fourth country with which Nepal established its diplomatic relations. It speaks volumes about the importance Nepal attaches to its relations with France.

Yes, Nepal and France are far apart in terms of geographical distance. But, our similarities and common interests are much nobler and higher than this distance. Our countries are home to rich civilizations, cultures and traditions. Mountainous topography and mountaineering culture are deeply linked to our identity. Values of liberty, equality, peace and coexistence underpin our political, social and economic development efforts.

Over the last seven decades, a lot has happened both in Nepal and France. France has achieved a remarkable level of socio-economic development on the foundations of peace, stability and democratic governance. Similarly, in Nepal, though we are yet to achieve the desired level of economic development, our political gains have been both far-reaching and exemplary.

We continue to remain inspired by the development and progress of France. At a time when we have prioritized the socio-economic development of the country on the backdrop of political achievements, we look up to France for a stronger bilateral collaboration and cooperation. In particular, our priority is to enhance economic partnership in the areas of foreign direct investment, trade expansion, tourism linkages and technology transfer.

Dear Friends,
Over the years, Nepal-France relations have evolved into a cooperative and dynamic partnership encompassing political, economic, developmental, cultural and educational spheres.
France is one of the development partners and a reliable friend of Nepal. We remain thankful to the Government and people of France for their support and contribution to Nepal’s economic and social development.

Recently, there has been much progress in terms of our bilateral cooperation. Recent visits by Nepal’s Foreign Secretary to France and French Secretary-General to Nepal have provided a fresh momentum in our relations. Our goodwill Ambassador’s role has also been instrumental towards this end.

I am aware of the significant interests of French companies to invest in Nepal’s infrastructure. This is very much important as we strive to attract foreign direct investment vis-à-vis our motto of ‘Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali’.
France is one of the largest trading partners of Nepal. France stands at the fourth and eighth ranks respectively in the list of Nepal’s import and export destination countries. Our trade linkages have been growing, albeit gradually, also in the context of the preferential access granted to Nepali products by the European Union.

We welcome over 30,000 French tourists to Nepal every year. As we observe 2020 as ‘Visit Nepal Year’, we hope French people will continue to make Nepal their favoured destination and that this number will increase.

Nepal and France also work constructively in multilateral forums including at the United Nations. We believe that France has a crucial role to play, not only in European affairs but also in global issues, in promoting a rules-based international system, preserving multi-lateralism, and pursuing the spirit of Paris Climate Accord.

All these instances we have before us demonstrate an excellent friendship built on the ideals of cooperation, mutual interests and respect towards each other. The statistical figures of our partnership may be small but they provide a strong foundation to work further- as the French proverb rightly says: Petit a petit, l’oiseau fait son nid, which means, ‘little by little, the bird makes its nest’.

Hence, as we observe this important milestone of the 70th anniversary with various programmes, both in Nepal and France, we must not lose sight of the opportunity to consolidate the partnership in all spheres of our relations. Our aim must be to make it a take off point for an enhanced level of engagements with special focus on economic relations.

I believe that, we must utilize this year to bring out the best of our bilateral relations. This may be possible including through the following measures and initiatives:

First and foremost, high-level political contacts are extremely important in strengthening any diplomatic relationship. It has been quite long time since we had an exchange of high-level visits at the political level. The 70th anniversary may be the right occasion for this.

Second, substantive economic component is very much critical for enhancing a bilateral partnership. Further economic engagements in the mutually beneficial areas will be in the interests of both countries.

Third, cultural contacts and people-to-people relations constitute another aspect of our relations. This is nurtured by mutual love and goodwill prevalent at the grassroots level of our societies. Our partnership can prosper only when the public, including the diaspora communities, get engaged.

And, finally, our collaboration at multilateral forums for the global cause of peace, security and development must be strengthened. Given France’s key role in global affairs, we must strengthen our cooperation especially in the areas of development, climate change and peacekeeping, among others.

To conclude, an anniversary is indeed a time to reflect on the contributions, achievements and the past experiences, which make the relationship unique and beautiful. However, we must also remember that an anniversary is not an end-point. It is also an occasion to make a resolve to grow and develop further.

We all know, a single individual alone cannot whistle a symphony. A whole orchestra is needed to play it. For the growth and development of Nepal-France relationship as well, all stakeholders including political leaders, diplomats, civil servants, business communities, civil societies, students, media persons and most importantly the common people have their part to play. Let’s us work collectively towards enhancing the bonds of this long and historic friendship.

I thank you for your attention. And, once again, congratulations and best wishes on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of Nepal-France relations!

**Opening and Concluding Remarks delivered as a Chair by Hon. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs, at the first plenary session: Investment Opportunities in Nepal in “Nepal Investment Summit 2019”, Kathmandu 29 March 2019**

**Opening remarks by Chair**

**Honourable Ministers**
**Honourable Chief Ministers**
**Excellencies the Ambassadors**
**Distinguished Panelists,**
**Fellow Participants!**

I am pretty delighted to welcome you all in the first plenary session of Nepal Investment Summit 2019. At the outset, let me express my sincere appreciation for the opportunity to chair the session. I am highly encouraged by your overwhelming participation in the Summit. I wish your pleasant stay and successful business mission in Nepal.

It is certainly not my intention to reiterate what has been delivered about the subject in the inaugural session a short while ago by the Rt. Honorable Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and also by the Honorable Finance Minister Dr Yuba Raj Khatiwada. However, I wish to highlight some of the important points that will set the context for our deliberations.

It is often said that this is an era of Asian century. With unprecedented economic dynamism, global development landscape is being changed and locus of global geo-economics is being shifted towards Asia. Our neighbours–China and India have already emerged as global economic powerhouse. With this development in the neighbourhood and Nepal’s strategic location between them have unleashed immense investment and business opportunities in Nepal.

In this context, the recent political developments in Nepal have also presented encouraging environment for that matter. Following the promulgation of new constitution and the conclusion of local, provincial and federal elections, the long-awaited political stability has been achieved in the country with the strong federal government of two-third majority. Political stability, in fact, brings in policy continuity and consistency. Favourable political milieu equally entails a conducive atmosphere for undertaking much-needed socio-economic transformation in the country. In line with this vision, the present Government has set its utmost priority to realize the motto of ‘Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali’. It essentially means leaving not a single Nepali behind and making the entire country rich. In that sense, political stability and economic prosperity complement each other in a virtuous cycle.

Our vision of socio-economic transformation embraces the targets to graduate from LDC status at an early date; to become Middle Income Country and achieve SDGs by 2030. These targets are being taken up by the upcoming five-year plan. The plan also aims to attain double-digit growth to meet these targets. Mobilization of domestic finance alone will not be adequate to achieve these ambitious development goals. Foreign direct investment is, therefore, must. is essential to meet our requirements.

Over the last three decades or so, the country has been pursuing liberal economic policies and competitive market regime. The new constitution has categorically espoused this spirit with the provision of welcoming foreign capital and technological investment in priority sectors. Almost all sectors have been open for foreign investment and the sensitive list for investment is kept very short. Hydropower, agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, infrastructure, ICTs, mines and minerals are some of the promising sectors for investment in Nepal. The labour cost in Nepal is competitive and low. Qualified and skilled workforce is available at reasonable cost.

With a view to creating an enabling environment for domestic and foreign investors in line with the constitutional spirit, the present Government has undertaken a number of policy, legal, institutional and procedural reforms.

On the policy and legal front, many new laws have been made consistent with the new constitution. Recently, the two key legislations, namely Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Act (FITTA) and Public-Private Partnership and Investment Board Act (PPIBA) have been enacted. The FITTA ensures national treatment for any foreign investment and repatriation of return has been guaranteed. The introduction of automatic route system will facilitate foreign investment-related procedures in a simple and predictable manner. The PPIBA provides one stop service for foreign investment exceeding 6 billion rupees or hydro project over 200 MW capacity.

Governance and rule of law plays an important role in creating environment for making investment and doing business in the country. Needless to say, good governance is a sin qua non for the expansion of economic activities as well as for the attainment of economic prosperity. We have accelerated our crusade against corruption with absolute zero-tolerance policy on it. The introduction of social security system for workers will promote congenial industrial relations and thereby contribute to conducive investment climate.

Nepal offers an attractive tax and export incentive structure to investors. Procedures for land acquisition, company registration, environmental assessment and infrastructure development have been simplified. Online registration and payment system has been put in place.

Connectivity remains critical in making investment decisions and also for smooth business operations. Reliable infrastructure network reduces the cost of doing business. It is the policy of Government to build critical infrastructure. Electricity supply for industries has been made almost 24/7. Major power projects are on the verge of completion. We will soon become power surplus country. Road networks within and beyond border have witnessed much progress. Construction of Kathmandu-Terai Fast Track is moving ahead. One SEZ is in operation and some others are in the pipeline. Digital connectivity also remains under our priority and is under expansion.

Sound management of macroeconomic fundamentals have made investment in Nepal risk-free. Conclusion of BIPPA with friendly countries ensures protection of investment and that of avoidance of double taxation provides investment incentives. The upcoming policy and legal reform in the intellectual property sector will offer more benefits under various multilateral instruments.

We understand that reform is a continuous process. We are committed to it. We will do it with the private sector on board. We will undertake necessary measures to sustain an investment and business-friendly atmosphere in the country.

As I said earlier, Nepal is located between the world’s two largest markets—China and India. Nepal enjoys preferential market access to both with duty-free export facilities for most of its products. Nepal as an LDC enjoys similar preferential arrangements with many developed and developing countries including EU and USA. With rising middle-class population, even the domestic market is expanding. For prospective investors in Nepal, market will not be the problem.

Connectivity tops the agenda in our engagements with neighbours. Port facilities in India have improved. New transit route through inland waterway is being developed. Transit procedures are being simplified through the use of modern technology. Transport Transit arrangement with China will provide us another transit corridor for international trade.

The prospect of regional electricity market is growing. Policy and regulatory framework for power trade is being developed. Cross-border transmission lines are being constructed. The conclusion of MoU on BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection has enlarged the prospect of regional power trade. The MoU on Power Trade between Nepal and Bangladesh has further expanded the power market.

I am glad to share with you that Nepal is resource-rich country with abundant water resources, population dividend, biodiversity, and wonderful landscapes together with trainable workforce and hospitable people. It is a virgin land for lucrative investment. Business profile of multinationals operating in Nepal reveals that none of them have gone bankrupt. They have made handsome return and have contributed huge amount to our treasury.

In a nutshell, investment in Nepal is a profitable venture. Political climate is favorable. Policy, legal and institutional framework is enabling and encouraging. Regional ambience is equally promising. In this context, we call upon and welcome investors to think about investing in industrial venture and business operations in Nepal. This will turn out to a win-win situation for both investors and Nepal.

**Concluding Remarks**
**Distinguished Participants,**
Globally, foreign direct investment accounted for two fifths of total foreign financial flows to LDCs in 2018. This is a huge portion of money that matters to our economic development. Therefore, I assure you that our commitments to attract and facilitate foreign direct investment in the best possible business climate will stay the course for decades to come. That is, we will adopt more and more foreign investment friendly policies in the days ahead.

Perhaps I underline that regional business climate is improving both under bilateral and regional frameworks. Thus investing in this country also opens the way for integrating into regional value chains thereby gaining efficiency and sustainable growth of businesses.
As a matter of fact, the scale of foreign investments to date is scanty. But the growth in FDI is impressive as it stands at 26 percent per annum in the last five years. I think this alone is a pointer that business climate in Nepal is improving steadily.

In my capacity as the Foreign Minister of this country, I wish to share you that concluding bilateral investment promotion and protection agreements, double taxation avoidance agreements and participation in regional investment agreements are our top priority. We have already concluded half a dozen BIPPAs, nearly a dozen DTAAs and negotiating regional investment agreements in BIMSTEC and SAARC. I am confident that this will further ameliorate business environment in the days ahead.

Furthermore, I am delighted to inform you that large-scale connectivity projects with neighboring countries India and China including BRI projects are already underway and accordingly we have focused on massive infrastructure developments within the country as well. Thus I believe that investments in these projects will be profitable and completion of these projects further open up new business opportunities and help existing businesses to flourish further.

Currently, we are working on Country-Specific FDI Facilitation Strategies in order to ensure matching potential foreign investors of a particular country and priority investment sectors in Nepal. We are also planning to catalyze building close relationships between research and training institutions in investment sectors. I think this will facilitate win-win investment partnership between host and source countries.

Likewise, we are well-poised to mobilize all our missions across the globe to facilitate foreign investment through essential services to investors: they include quick responding to inquiry and information seekers, solving problems, facilitation of first-time country visits for investment purposes and after-care services throughout investment cycle.

At this juncture, it is pertinent to realize the indispensable role of NRNs that have been a succor in almost every sphere of national life since some decades. I fondly recall the NRN Global Knowledge Conference held last year, which provided us with inputs on how to best utilize their knowledge, skills, capital and experiences. I appeal NRNs to come forward more vehemently.

It is true that foreign investors sometimes roll back or retract their decisions due to some uncertain local factors. But, we have the greatest resources to our rescue. Nepali Disapora abroad, which is around 5 million, has their steering committee in about 80 countries. I would like to sincerely recommend all foreign investors not to flinch back but find an NRN partner who aids you to cut across any hurdle at local level. So, I appeal both NRNs and foreign investors to come forward in partnership or separately whichever way suits you best.

I hope this summit helps you in tapping the best business opportunities in Nepal and it will be a huge success for us and for you all equally. Do believe that we highly value your insightful and pragmatic comments and suggestions to chart our future course.

Finally, I want to commit before you that we will also hold bilateral investment meetings through our embassies as and when necessary. I am confident that we will have continuous engagements in the coming days.
Once again, I heartily thank you all for your active participation, keen attention, and invaluable contributions to this plenary session.

**Statement delivered by Hon. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs, at the Second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation**
**Buenos Aires, Argentina, 20 March 2019**

**Mr. President,**
**Excellencies, Heads of State/Government and ministers
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and gentlemen.**

It is my honour and privilege to participate in the Second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation in the beautiful city of Buenos Aires, which is witness of the important and historic Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) adopted here 40 years ago. The BAPA Conference in 1978 not only set a bedrock for cooperation among developing countries but also became a synonymous with South-South Cooperation itself.

I would like to join the speakers before me in thanking and appreciating the generosity of the Government of Argentina for hosting as well as for making excellent arrangements for the Conference. We also appreciate the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the UN Office for South-South Cooperation for substantive as well as other preparations.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, and other officers on your appointment to lead this important Conference. I would also like to assure you of our full support in discharging your important responsibilities.

I align my statement with the statement of the Group of 77 and China delivered by the State of Palestine.

**Mr. President,**

South-South Cooperation is more relevant now than ever before.

The development landscape has changed significantly. The South has developed an enormous potential for economic transformation. The progress some members of the South have achieved over the decades has not only widened the scope of the cooperation, but has brought us closer towards realizing the purpose of ‘collective self-reliance’. While sharing of experiences and best practices between and among the countries of the South will go a long way, the cooperation needs a more concrete and meaningful form.

This is time to further diversify and strengthen our cooperation: in scale, in scope, in quality and in its effectiveness.

South-South Cooperation, as complementary to and not as a substitute for the North-South Cooperation, plays an important role for the effective and timely implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other internationally agreed development outcomes such as IPOA and VPOA.

**Mr. President,**

Let me highlight what cooperation means to a landlocked LDC like Nepal that has just begun an economic transformation to sustain its successful political gains that culminated in the democratic Constitution in 2015. To realize the ambition of the Constitution, the Government has already initiated transformative process in a holistic approach with a resolve of   “Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali”. 41 percent women representations in the federal, provincial and local elected bodies, introduction of Comprehensive Social Security Program, Nationwide Health Insurance Program and Prime Minister Employment Program among others, are the instruments to achieve prosperity and happiness. We have internalized the SDGs in our national policies and planning. We wish to graduate from LDC stage at earliest and to become middle income country by 2030. There is need of enhanced level of investment to accelerate the economic growth which demands scaled up international cooperation.

We know that those who have a long journey to travel should walk fast. And we are prepared to walk fast and catch up with fast growing economy.

But we are not alone in this journey. We are confident that international cooperation and partnership, including South-South cooperation, are important components in realizing our national development goals and objectives.

**Mr. President,**

Lastly, allow me now to highlight four important principles for my country:

* First, some members in the South despite being similar development ambitions are far lagging behind. They need even more understanding, partnership and cooperation. Principle of ‘leaving no one behind’ should be placed at the core.
* Second, our cooperation should have a focus, a clear focus on poverty eradication. SDG 1 is the biggest battle we have and perhaps the most cross-cutting, and therefore a *sine qua non* for making the world a better place to live.
* Third, gender equality, inclusiveness, concrete steps to mitigate the adverse effect of climate change and the social justice, among others, should be the guide posts of development perspectives. Women and youths should be assured for better opportunities and more investment must be guaranteed in education and technological innovations.
* Finally, our development experience tells that all forms of cooperation should respect national ownership and leadership, and focus on country needs and priorities. And global peace and stability is the prerequisite, because cost of conflicts mainly goes on the shoulder of Global South.

To conclude, Mr. President, I reiterate Nepal’s call for meeting commitments, forging partnerships, increasing cooperation and redoubling our efforts, including through the South-South Cooperation, to support the countries that need the most. Nepal is ready to work together with all fellow member states and all stakeholders to this important end.

I thank you.

**Remarks by the Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at the 71st Anniversary Programme of Nepal Council of World Affairs**

**Kathmandu, 18th February 2019**

**Chairman and the Office Bearers of Nepal Council of World Affairs,**
**Excellencies,**
**Distinguished Participants,**
**Friends from the media,**
**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Namaste and a very good afternoon.

At the outset, let me thank Nepal Council of World Affairs for inviting me to this important event organized to mark its 71st Anniversary.

I wish to congratulate the Council and its office bearers on their successful marching the journey of seven decades and extend my best wishes for the continued progress of the Council. I commend Council’s efforts to provide a forum for dialogues and discourse in the domain of foreign policy.

Since its inception, the Council was active to host luminaries in foreign policy and diplomacy from within the country and abroad. I wish that the Council will be able to carry on this tradition of quality deliberations, revive the vibrancy of its membership, and generate a community of foreign policy experts.

This would be a fitting service to the objectives of this Council.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Nepali people are proud of their independent history and sovereignty. The Constitution of Nepal has clearly defined the areas of national interest and provided broad policy framework for the conduct of independent foreign policy. Principles of Panchasheel, non-alignment, UN Charter, international law and norms of world peace have remained guiding principles for our foreign relations.

Our foreign policy aims at safeguarding sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and protection of national interest. Within this framework, promoting Nepal’s credentials as an open and progressive democratic State at the international level; and pursuit of effective economic diplomacy to the service of overarching objective of “Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali” remain twin goals of our external engagements.

Amity with all and enmity with none is the motto in managing our international relations. We value equality, justice, respect and mutual benefit in the conduct of foreign relations.

Building on the hard earned political stability, Nepal at present strives to achieve economic development and prosperity. The present Government is committed to bring economic transformation of the country and improve quality of life of the people. We have mobilized our diplomatic apparatus to pursue these objectives by promoting foreign direct investment, tourism, technology transfer, and export trade. We are equally striving for consolidating inclusive democracy and ensuring good governance. Our unflinching commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms will be stronger with political and economic empowerment of the people.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We enjoy cordial and friendly relations with our neighbors. We have further strengthened trust, goodwill and expanded the scope of cooperation and economic partnership with our two immediate neighbors. In addition to the regular exchange of high level visits, increasing people to people contacts have further strengthened and deepened our relations.

Nepal and India enjoy civilizational, geographical, socio-economic, and cultural relations. The visits of the Right Honorable Prime Minister to India and the visits of His Excellency the Prime Minister of India to Nepal twice last year have contributed to further enhance mutual trust and consolidate bilateral relations.

Nepal and China are age old friends. Our relations as they are based on the principle of peaceful co-existence have always remained friendly and cordial. The visits of Right Honorable Vice President and Right Honorable Prime Minister to China last year have further consolidated the bilateral relations.

Equally important is our relation with the friendly countries in our extended neighborhood, the labour receiving countries and the other countries in the comity of nations. We attach high importance to our relations with the major powers and permanent members of the UN Security Council, the European Union and its member States, and our traditional development partners.

Considering the importance of establishing formal relations with UN member states, we have steadily expanded our diplomatic outreach to 163 countries.

**Dear Friends,**

We believe in regionalism as a vehicle for trade and economic growth. Last year, we successfully hosted fourth BIMSTEC summit in Kathmandu. We are the Chair of SAARC and have consistently worked to revive the stalled SAARC process. Last year in September we hosted informal meeting of SAARC Council of Ministers in New York on the sidelines of the UNGA. We are a member of Asian Cooperation Dialogue and a dialogue partner of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

We believe in constructive multilateralism to serve our collective interests. Nepal remains actively engaged in the multilateral forums. Our faith in the principles and purposes of the UN Charter is unwavering. We consider United Nations as the centre of multilateralism to deliberate on global issues of common concerns. We do not see contradiction in multilateralism and national interests and are committed to a rules-based multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core.

We understand the multilateral rules and architecture are not perfect and they must be made fit-for-purpose to deliver on the global agenda including the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Therefore, we stand for timely and comprehensive reform of the United Nations for global peace, accountability and effective service delivery in view of the burgeoning global problems and dwindling resources. We hold that the reform of the Security Council should reflect the emerging realities and embrace democratic principles and fair representation.

Over six decades of Nepal’s exemplary participation in the UN mandated peace operations have been widely acknowledged. Currently, Nepal stands 5th largest troop and police contributing country to the UN peace operations. Considering Nepal’s contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security, Nepal has been elected as the member of the Organizational Committee of the Peace Building Commission for the term of 2019-2020. Nepali peacekeepers have proven their competence as highly professional and dedicated savior of peace and humanitarian protection.

We continue to maintain principled and independent position on major issues of global concern. We support general and complete disarmament, especially of all weapons of mass destruction. We condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We support peaceful settlement of all international disputes and consider diplomacy and dialogue as the most legitimate means of reducing differences and resolving conflicts.

Currently Nepal is a member of the Human Rights Council. We have presented our candidature for re-election to the Human Rights Council for the term of 2020-22. As a state party to 24 human rights related international instruments, including 7 out of 9 core human rights conventions, Nepal always stands for apolitical examination of human rights issues. We continue to faithfully engage with the relevant UN human rights mechanisms such as the UPR process, the Special Procedures mechanism and treaty bodies. Our commitment to human rights and fundamental freedom is total and we are committed to fulfill our human rights obligations in good faith.

Though we are not a party to the Refugee Convention and its Protocol, we have hosted Bhutanese refugees on humanitarian grounds. They have the right to return to their home country in safety and honor and this must be respected.

Nepal firmly stands for the implementation of the Paris Accord on Climate Change. Right Honorable President’s representation to the COP 24 reflects the high importance attached by Nepal on this critical issue of our time. Climate vulnerabilities of the countries like ours is real and we call for international community’s substantial support in terms of climate finance and technology for adaptation and mitigation.

Nepal remains steadfast in its call for the effective implementation of all relevant international agreements to address the specific development needs of LDCs and LLDCs. We call for progress in the stalled process of Doha Round of trade negotiations and implementation of earlier decision on special and differentiated treatment to the LDCs and LLDCs in particular.

Safety, security and well being of our migrant workers remain an area of vital interest for us.  We have been closely working with the countries of origin and destination through bilateral and multilateral processes. Currently Nepal is the Chair of the Colombo Process, a regional process of labour sending Asian countries. We hosted the Fifth Senior Officials’ Meeting and Sixth Ministerial Consultation of the Colombo Process in November last year.

Nepal constructively contributed during the negotiation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and was represented at Ministerial level in the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Compact in Marrakesh in December last year. Nepal’s emphasis on decent work, ethical recruitment, welfare of migrants including female workers, consular support and cooperation found good space in the compact.

**To conclude, ladies and gentlemen,** let me emphasize that the mainstay of today’s diplomacy is the pursuit of economic agenda. We will strive to promote our vital economic interests through activities aimed at attracting more foreign investment in our national priority sectors, expanding our export trade and promoting tourism, among others. We will strive to widen the avenues of cooperation with our neighbors in conformity with our national interest and priorities.

Consistent with domestic and external realities, we continue to follow the unfolding opportunities and try to benefit from them by readjusting our strategies as appropriate.

The enormous international goodwill towards Nepal and Nepali people, ever expanding Nepali diaspora, our culture, civilizational heritage make our soft power. We will continue to harness existing soft power and build on its strengths for the long term benefit of the country and the people.

I thank you for your kind attention.

**Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at the Kantipur Conclave Kathmandu, 18 February 2019**

Theme: “Nepal in the World Stage”.

Honourable Minister for Finance,
Mr. Moderator,
Excellences,
Friends from Media,
Ladies and gentlemen.

At the outset, let me thank the Kantipur Media Group for inviting me to this conclave and for the opportunity to share my thoughts.

I willconfine myself on the given theme- **Nepal in the World Stage** and dwell upon foreign policy and diplomacy- especially on how we are promoting national interests in bilateral, regional and multilateral spheres.

For that, let me begin by a quote from the address to the nation by the Right Honourable Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli a few days ago on the completion of one year in office by the present Government.

**I quote:**

“Nepal has improved its foreign relations in the spirit of ‘amity with all, enmity with none’. Nepal has demonstrated balanced foreign policy while maintaining visible presence in global affairs. It is a matter of satisfaction [that] Nepal’s voice is being heard in regional and international forums. Attraction, appreciation and confidence of the global community towards Nepal has grown.”

**Unquote.**

This statement by the Prime Minister succinctly captures the present state of Nepal in the world stage.

Now, let me briefly outline how this has been so and how we intend to further consolidate our foreign relations to the service of Nepal’s core national interests.

The Constitution of Nepal provides guiding framework for the conduct of our foreign policy and international relations. Our foreign policy aims at safeguarding sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and protection of national interest. Within this framework, promoting Nepal’s credentials as an open and progressive democratic State at the international level; and pursuit of effective economic diplomacy to the service of overarching objective of “prosperous Nepal and happy Nepali” remain twin goals of our external engagements.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As you all know, Nepal began to open up to the outer world only after 1950. Our place in the global stage therefore represents the achievements of our foreign relations thereafter.

The journey so far has been characterized by the expansion of bilateral relations, expansion of trade, commerce and economic relations, acquiring membership of most of the multilateral organizations, including the United Nations, championing of regionalism, adherence to the principles of UN Charter, non-alignment and strong commitment to international law and norms of world peace.

This has enabled us to take independent posture on international issues, articulate our views on merit basis, contribute to the world peace, and nurture friendship with all countries of the world on the basis of sovereign equality.

Having said that, let me touch upon where we stand today.

We have maintained harmonious and friendly relationship with both of our immediate neighbours.

The Right Honourable Prime Minister’s official visit to India and the official visit of Indian Prime Minister to Nepal twice last year have elevated the relations to newer heights. Pending issues are being addressed in a spirit of mutual cooperation and friendship. Implementation of development projects under India’s cooperation has gained momentum. We have agreed to increasing cooperation in agriculture, railways and cross-border waterways and they have already been taken up with priority. The scope of development cooperation has been expanded manifold.

During the Prime Minister’s visit to China, 14 various MoUs and Agreements were signed on cooperation in projects related to railways, road and energy sector. We have agreed to intensify implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative to enhance connectivity, encompassing such vital components as ports, roads, railways, aviation and communications within the overarching framework of Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network. With the agreement on the text of the Transport Transit Protocol, door has been opened for Nepal to use roads and ports of China for access to and from the sea.

Exchange of visits with our immediate neighbours in my capacity as Foreign Minister and existence of strong relationship and contacts between the governments and people at different layers have further consolidated our age old ties with them.

As much as our relation with our immediate neighbours is important politically, we consider them as combination of opportunities to benefit from their unprecedented economic transformation, and source of trade, tourism and investment.

Our relations with the countries in extended neighbourhood are nurtured by growing cultural and traditional ties. We have intensified exchange of high level visits andare striving to diversify our engagements in the areas of trade, investment, tourism and people-to-people exchanges. The Presidents of Sri Lanka and Myanmar, the Prime Ministers of Bangladesh, Pakistan, Cambodia and Thailand, and State Councilor of Myanmar visited Nepal last year alone.

Our relations with the labour receiving countries have become substantial by the presence of significant number of Nepali migrant workers, exchange of high level visits, and steadily growing trade and investment. The Right Honourable President paid official visit to Qatar last year and UAE the previous year. Nepali migrant workers in the Gulf and South East Asian countries have been a major source of remittances that account a sizeable source of national income. They have also significantly contributed for the economic development of the destination countries and serve as a bridging bond of exchange and friendship.

Our relationship with major powers and development partners have remained cordial and friendly. Exchange of bilateral visits with these countries continue to grow. The Prime Minister had bilateral meetings with the President of Switzerland, Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom and Canada on the sidelines of 73rdUNGA. Prime Minister Right Honourable Mr. K P Sharma Oli visited Costa Rica and held bilateral meeting with the President there.

In my capacity as Foreign Minister, I visited Belgium, Luxembourg, Austria and Portugal, and renewed our partnership with the European Union. I also visited Japan and my Japanese counterpart paid return visit to Nepal immediately after that. My visit to the United States of America and meeting with my counterpart provided opportunity for high level political contacts between the two countries after many years. In all of those visits we have been able to renew, nurture and consolidate bilateral relations, understand each other’s concerns and interests, and expand mutually beneficial agendas of economic cooperation.

Foreign Secretary’s visit to France to participate in the Paris Peace Forum in November and French Secretary-General’s return visit to Nepal last month represented the high-level contact between the two foreign ministries in many years.

Last year alone, we held bilateral political consultations and meetings with China, United States of America, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Republic of Korea, Myanmar, Australia, Canada, France, Mongolia and Poland.

On the multilateral front, Nepal has been an active member of the United Nations since 1955. Nepal’s contribution to the maintenance of world peace through participation in the UN peace operations for over 60 years has been widely acclaimed. Currently, Nepal stands as the 5th largest troop and police contributing country. Nepal has served in the UN Security Council twice.

At present, Nepal is a member of UN Human Rights Council, coordinator for Asia Pacific region in the Human Rights Council, member of UN Peace Building Commission, Deputy Member of the ILO Governing Body, Chair of Committee on Conference, member of UNICEF Executive Board, member of Executive Board of UN-WOMEN, member of Commission on Science and Technology for Development, coordinator of Colombo Process Countries, focal point for trade facilitation in the Group of Least Developed Countries in WTO, vice-chair of UN Disarmament Commission, and a Nepali expert is serving as a member of CEDAW Committee.

We are a state party to twenty-four international human rights related instruments, including seven out of nine core Conventions.Nepal considers all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent, interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Nepal has maintained consistent and dignified position on the issues of world peace and disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction. Nepal’s commitment to human rights, sustainable development, multilateralism and rule-based international order is widely acknowledged.

Nepal continues to champion the cause of LDCs, LLDCs, South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the UN and other international forums. Nepal was the coordinator during the 4th UN Conference on LDCs held in Istanbul. We continue to champion the rights of LLDCs and are a founding member of the International Think Tank for LLDCs.

The Right Honourable President’s representation to the 24th Conference of State Parties of UNFCCC reflects Nepal’s commitment to address climate change and priority accorded by the Government to this critical issue of our time.

Prime Minister Right Honourable Mr. K P Sharma Oli addressed the 73rd United Nations General Assembly in September last year and articulated Nepal’s views on disarmament, world peace, international security, human rights and sustainable development, among others.

Nepal became a party to the International Agreement establishing the UN University for Peace in San Jose last year. Prime Minister Right Honourable Mr. K P Sharma Oli addressed the university during his visit to Costa Rica and the university conferred honorary doctorate on him.

Invitation to Nepal’s Prime Minister to participate in the Annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland for the first time since its establishment 50 years ago represents a recognition of the increasing profile of Nepal. Prime Minister’s address to the important panels of WEF and exchange of views with the world leaders in Davos greatly enhanced Nepal’s international standing.

On regional front, Nepal chaired and successfully hosted fourth BIMSTEC summit in Kathmandu last year. We are the Chair of SAARC and have consistently worked to revive the stalled SAARC process. Last year in September we hosted informal meeting of SAARC Council of Ministers in New York. We are a member of Asian Cooperation Dialogue and a dialogue partner of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Having established diplomatic relations with 163 countries, our diplomatic outreach is widening. Currently we maintain 30 Embassies, 3 Permanent Missions, 6 Consulates General and 71 Honorary Consuls to serve our national interest across the globe.

Nepal gathered considerable international attention during the conflict period and the political transition that followed. We are considered as one of the rare success stories of the peace process. We have now emerged a confident democratic nation fully capable of taking forward economic development and prosperity agenda for the benefit of our people. Poverty remains a scar in Nepal’s collective conscience and we intend to erase it at the earliest and utilize our demographic dividend for our own development. Nepal aims to graduate from the LDC status at an early date and become a middle income country by 2030. For that, we remain fully committed to implement SDGs to meet the targets ahead of the stipulated timeframe.

More recently, another dimension of Nepal’s standing in global stage has been added by expanding Nepali diaspora. A number of Nepali nationals have risen to senior positions in the UN and other international organizations. A number of Nepali diasporas have excelled in the field of academics, science and technology, medicine, engineering, arts, designs, architecture, culinary skills, literature, industries, sports and adventures. Many of them have been successful entrepreneurs in different corners of the world and have attained significant progress in their respective fields. They have individually and collectively contributed to the signing of Nepal’s image in the world stage.

Nepal is also known for its natural beauty, adventure sports, ancient arts, architecture, culture, and for the hospitality and warmth of its people. There exists enormous goodwill towards Nepal and Nepali people.

Together, they make important soft power for Nepal.

In sum, Nepal’s standing in the world stage presents an encouraging trajectory. Nepal aspires to attain a decent level of economic development and further enhance its international standing as a progressive, democratic and equitable society. In its international relations Nepal will continue to stand for justice, equality and mutual benefit among the countries.

I thank you all for your attention.

Thank you!

**Remarks by The Hon’ble Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs, at a Seminar on “Nepal-India Relations: Issues, Emerging Trends and Boosting Cooperation” organized by the Asian Institute of Diplomacy and International Affairs (AIDIA)**
**Kathmandu, 17 February 2019**

**CEO/Founder of Asian Institute of Diplomacy and International Affairs Mr. Sunil K.C.,**
**Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs Mr. Bimalendra Nidhi,**
**Ambassador of India to Nepal, H. E. Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri,**
**Ambassador-designate of Nepal to India Mr. Nilambar Acharya,**
**Distinguished participants,**
**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

I thank Mr. Sunil K.C., CEO/Founder of the Asian Institute of Diplomacy and International Affairs, for organizing this seminar and inviting me to speak. I found the theme of the seminar, “Nepal-India Relations: Issues, Emerging Trends and Boosting Cooperation” highly relevant. I am sure that the deliberations during this seminar would be helpful in generating insights into the ways for further enhancing cooperation between our two countries.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Needn’t to say, Nepal and India enjoy a cordial and friendly relationship. Our relations are age-old, time tested, comprehensive, deep and extensive. Linkages of history, culture, tradition and religion have further nurtured our relations. Social and economic lives of our peoples are interlinked. A firm commitment to the principles of peaceful coexistence, sovereign equality, mutual respect and understanding of each other’s aspirations and sensitivities characterize our relations.

Regular exchanges, both at high political level and at the people-to-people level, reflect the depth of our relations and form the very foundation of our engagements in diverse fields.

We remain thankful for India’s generous support and cooperation in our development efforts over the decades. India’s cooperation in infrastructure development and human resource development among others has been helpful in achieving socio-economic transformation of the country.

Our two countries hold tremendous potential of enhancing cooperation in diverse sectors. Long historical bonds, interdependency in diverse sectors and desire of the people of both side ask us to establish a broader collaboration and common efforts in our development journey. However, the immense natural resources that we have been gifted with have not yet been properly harnessed. Economic interlinkages are yet to be consolidated. We are yet to benefit fully from mutual complementarity in many other areas. We need to make further efforts for a meaningful partnership so as to ensure mutually beneficial outcomes.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Talking about the national context of Nepal, I would like to share with you that our whole focus is on translating the present Government’s motto of ‘Prosperous Nepal and Happy Nepali’ into reality. In order to realize this, we strive to achieve socio-economic development and prosperity, building on the dividend of political transformation.

However, we will need huge financial resources including foreign investment in productive sectors in our quest. I am happy to mention here that we are hosting an International Investment Summit on 29-30 March this year to invite foreign investors to Nepal. Our full efforts are currently focused on ensuring a predictable, secure and attractive investment climate in Nepal. In this context, we invite Indian investors to participate in the Summit as well as to make substantial investment in Nepal. If worked properly, we can establish a vivid and wide-range production, supply and value chains in the interest of both side.

Tourism is on of the most important area of bilateral cooperation. Having the shared the cultural and social traditions, values and way of life, both countries can be benefitted by tourism. There are a number of cultural and religious sites common to our people in both countries. Promotion of linkages between Hindu and Buddhist heritage sites in the two countries would be important to further consolidate cultural bonds as well as to promote tourism.

This holds more significance as we continue to promote tourism as a vital sector to contribute to our economic growth. As Nepal is observing 2020 as Visit Nepal Year with a target of welcoming two million tourists, meaningful engagement between the public and private sectors of our two countries would be vital.

Nepal and India can generate more benefits by promoting robust economic partnership. India has been making speedy progress in advancing its economy. We look forward to a strong partnership with India for the transformation of our economy to sustain our drive of economic prosperity.

Nepal and India share the collaborative platforms in various regional and sub-regional forums. Our countries have vital role in the SAARC and BIMSTEC. In the pursuits of regional development, we are engaged closely in these forums. BBIN initiative provides yet another important platform for sub-regional collaboration. As South Asia is the least integrated region despite of huge natural and Human Resources, it is in the interest of both countries to promote regional cooperation, collaboration and joint efforts to face the common challenges.

Technology is the key to innovation and transformation. India, equipped with the modern technology, has established itself as a leading force in driving development. Nepal also aspires to benefit from India’s technological expertise and innovation. Transfer of knowledge and technology will enable us to accelerate the pace of economic development.

Infrastructure development remains a priority of our partnership. Socio-economic development cannot advance in the absence of adequate infrastructure. Geographical proximity and open border offer us an opportunity to develop connectivity in all forms – road, rail, water and air. I am pleased to recall that our two countries are working seriously towards developing cross-border railways, roadways, inland water ways, airways and electrical grid connectivity to promote trade, tourism and investment. Latest understandings in these sectors are encouraging.

Hydropower development is the area that promises great opportunities for collaboration. We have not been able to fully exploit our huge water resources potential despite the pressing need of energy in both countries. We need investment and technology as well as free access to power markets to move forward.

Trade and transit are vital components of Nepal-India bilateral relations. India is our top trading partner in terms of both export and import while Nepal is among India’s top twenty export destinations. A matter of concern in this regard is Nepal’s growing trade deficit, which we must address for our trade to create a win-win scenario. We need more trade facilitation measures, including removal of all barriers. Both sides need to expedite early conclusion of the ongoing comprehensive review of the bilateral Trade Treaty.

Our two countries are endowed with resources, we need are innovative ways and means to harness these resources for economic growth and development for mutual benefit. Development should be the important pillar of our relations in the present context.

India’s achievements in economic fronts are remarkable. It has built infrastructure, developed manufacturing, excelled in services trade, expanded export base and increased agricultural productivity. As India progresses, we see in that an abounding opportunity to benefit. A stable and prosperous Nepal is equally beneficial to India as well.

Adverse effects of climate change can be felt everywhere and widely. It has posed a serious threat to the lives of millions people both side. It is a challenge which can faced only by collaborative efforts. Despite of tremendous achievements in the science, technology and innovations, millions people are still deprived and facing poverty. This is the problem which can be finally triumphed only by collective measures. Terrorism still poses a serious challenge against the humanity, and its black shadows is still roaming in this region. It too warrants the common and coordinating resolve. In the nutshell, our relation requires a higher level of collaboration and partnership.

While speaking about the relations that we would like to see in the context of the 21st century, I would like to fondly recall the exchange of visits by the Prime Ministers of Nepal and India in April and May last year which has generated a new dynamism in our bilateral relations. Our two sides are committed to taking bilateral relations to newer heights by strengthening ongoing cooperation in diverse spheres as well as to expanding partnership on the basis of the principles of equality, mutual trust, respect and mutual benefit. While focusing on effective implementation of all the past agreements and understandings, both sides have intensified engagement for addressing the outstanding matters with the objective of advancing cooperation in all areas.

In view of such focused attention from both sides on enhancing engagements in the areas of common interest, we look forward to a mutually beneficial outcome in coming days. Nepal aims at further deepening its cooperation with its immediate neighbour- India with particular focus on advancing economic partnership.

I conclude by thanking once again AIDIA for organizing this seminar and for this opportunity to share my observations. I wish this event a success.

Thank you.

**Raisina Dialogue 2019, New Delhi**
“World Reorder: New Geometries, Fluid Partnerships, Uncertain Outcomes”
Remarks by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal, The Hon’ble Pradeep Kumar Gyawali,
January 10, 2019

**Chair of the Session,**
**Excellencies,**
**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Let me start by thanking the Ministry of External Affairs of India and the Observer Research Foundation for giving me this honour. It is a rare privilege to share my humble thoughts before this distinguished audience.

In its fourth year, Raisina Dialogue has become a great platform for churning of innovative ideas.

Generation and dissemination of ideas has been the outstanding tradition of our region. This region was once the wonderful home of the greatest among human civilizations, far advanced in research, innovation, ingenuity and intellectual artifact reflecting the rich tradition of “वादे वादे जायते तत्वबोधः” or “through discourse, essence can be extracted”.

When science and scientific thinking was little known to the world, this region had already produced Vedas and Vedanta; when idea of modern statecraft was still in nascent stage elsewhere, this region had already brought up Arthashastra; when human-centred thoughts were yet to be born, this region already prided itself on Buddhism, the core massage of which is the peace, happiness and welfare of humanity. The uniqueness of ideational pattern of our region is the unwavering conviction on social harmony, discipline, order and larger public good.

**Dear Friends,**
Much has been said about the changing world order, the shifting paradigm of the world politics, and the rapidly transforming geopolitical milieu around us. Without repeating what scholars and practitioners have already thrashed out so profusely, I wish to make a modest attempt to touch on a couple of questions: what the changing world scenario means for a relatively small country like Nepal, for our neighbourhood and the region; and what kind of global and regional arrangements we would like to see. While doing this, I will also touch upon some aspects of Nepal-India relations today and what these relations would mean for the region and beyond.

Attributes that characterized the world order in the past decades are now covered in the mist of uncertainty. Globalization has been challenged by the very people, who once stood as its determined proponents. Free flow of people, I mean the working people, in fact never happened as restrictions of various nature continued and such restrictions have further been reinforced. What globalization effectively meant was the free flow of goods and services of those who could produce. This pillar of trade globalization seems to be getting shaken today.

Globalization: we may have liked it or not. It has its pros and cons sides. But one thing is true: under globalization, countries were able to uplift unprecedented number of their people out of drudging poverty. Trade exponentially grew; industries expanded; value chains were set up; millions of jobs were created, including in developing countries; and economies were transformed. This was not a small achievement by any means.

There were small players like us who could not reap the full benefits of globalization. We consistently demanded that a level playing field had to be created; an enabling environment had to be there for all to prosper; and the growing economic disparity must be addressed. We continued to voice that no country should be left behind in this historic march towards prosperity. We demanded reform, but we never sought alternative of globalization; never opposed rules-based arrangements of global trade.

Today, the same arrangements face big questions not from us but from the big players, in whose ideas the arrangements were rooted.

Today, technological advancement has brought us closer than ever before and made us more known to each other; but in the mindset, we are getting farther and the border that surrounds us is getting tighter.

Today, the world has become more peaceful than before, but still military expenditure has soared up higher than ever: expenditure that could otherwise have gone for development.
While the world is becoming more interdependent, the challenges ahead require to be addressed with more collective efforts. These include challenges posed by the growing tendencies to weaken multilateralism and collaboration.

While the humankind is making progress to understand and predict the dynamics and adjust with the rule of nature, ironically, we are creating such a situation where unpredictability is prevailing and pre-set rules are being shaken.

What triggered today’s anti-globalization wave? Was it the 2008 financial crisis and its associated impacts on day-to-day life in the developed world? Was it the Brexit referendum? Was it some of the ‘costly wars’? If yes, could these have been avoided? Could the respective leaderships have taken an alternative decision that would yield results otherwise? Does leadership just mean catering to the short-term public sentiments or do leaders have responsibility to sway public opinion for a better result and a more collective welfare? Does the world today seriously lack statecraft required to keep things in better order and organized way? These questions are set to irk us as we embark onto this fluid and uncertain transition.
Uncertain because the existing world order stands challenged and the new order is yet to take shape.

Uncertain because the nature, definition and structure of world power is changing but the new power equation does not seem to be fully acknowledged.

Uncertain because the old alignments are fading and the new ones, at times of hitherto unthought kind, seem to be emerging, which are yet to stand solid and as durable.

Uncertain because there is a growing skepticism about tenacity of what was once deemed as universalism and universal values and the alternative values are yet to take shape.

Uncertain because there are still believers in good number that the current wave against globalization and liberal world order could just be transient and we would all soon return to the same ‘normalcy’.

Anyway, geopolitical contest is today’s reality and economy is at the heart of this contest. Unlike in the past, today it is less of ideological divide, more of who gains from what sort of trade and economic arrangements. And such contest has at times tended towards the zero sum game of harming each other. One good thing about today’s contest is that unlike in the past there is less threat of interstate military warfare. Not so good thing, however, is that the contest has sometimes been pungent.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**
Small countries do not have resources and capacity to be engaged in such geopolitical contestation.

A country like Nepal has always been a firm advocate of rules-based, predictable international order. We are a believer in multilateralism, where we can get our voices heard; problems and challenges recognized; and support be extended. Small countries may not have adequate strength and competence to engage in bilateral deals with bigger players and this is why they cherish the cushion provided by collective negotiations in multilateral and regional forums. Rules-based order is essential for our survival.

We have always been supporter of multilateral institutions like the United Nations. What we have wanted, though, is its reform to reflect the current realities.

We have always supported rules-based trading arrangements under WTO. What we have wanted is a meaningful preferential treatment to less capable, least developed countries like us so that we can catch up.

We have constructively participated in the existing global economic architecture and have demanded that such architecture should be inclusive, democratic and enabling for the most resource-constrained countries. We have stressed that gaps and deprivation must be addressed.
Nearer in the region, we have always been a campaigner for greater regional integration. We stand for strengthening SAARC and BIMSTEC and the implementation of the agendas of BBIN sub-regional cooperation.

Next door, we have always emphasized on the importance of good and harmonious relations between our two big neighbours. When these two rise together, the rise of Asia becomes unstoppable. We were encouraged, in this context, by the positive vive that last year’s Wuhan summit created. We are of the view that one country’s rise should not be seen as a threat to the other. It could be an opportunity to rise together. The only thing is that right sort of arrangement for rising together has to be there and leaders in the region are capable of getting that ensured.

Having possessed a third of the Earth’s landmass and almost two thirds of the world population, mostly young and energetic, Asia is the fascinating combination of economic strength, demography and unique value system. And with the developed and prosperous Asia, the world will be transformed because this will mean the end of the largest chunk of world poverty.

Cognizant of the fact that we can work together in neighbourhood for our mutual benefit and common prosperity, we have been emphasizing the need of a trilateral partnership between our three countries. Such partnership would entail working together for better physical connectivity, deeper economic linkages and greater people-to-people connections.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**
Nepal pursues an independent foreign policy. Our conduct of external relations is based on a balanced and independent outlook, which is rooted in the historical fact that we were among the few countries that always remained independent, free from any sort of colonial rule. The 28 million Nepali people harbour today an abounding sense of national pride and patriotism.

Patriotism that does not have ill will against anyone: our people have always demonstrated great degree of resilience in times of difficulties and their confidence was never shaken. Amity with all and enmity with none is our motto in foreign policy. We seek to foster relations with neighbours and all friendly countries around the world based on justice, sovereign equality, trust, mutual respect and benefit.

Nepal is a peace loving country and shuns any kind of military alliance.

**Distinguished Audience,**
In this august forum where we are talking about world’s transformation, I feel tempted to share with you the transformation of historic proportion that Nepal has been able to achieve in the past few years. Unlike the current global transformation towards fluidity and uncertainty, ours has been transformation towards stability and predictability. With the making of a democratic and inclusive constitution in 2015 and subsequent formation of strong elected governments in the centre, provinces and local levels, Nepal has entered into a new phase, where our main quest is growth, development and prosperity.

Past two decades were challenging time for Nepal. First the country went through a decade long armed conflict and then long transition marked by uncertainty about how we are to seek a constitutional settlement of conflicting political perspectives. Success of peace process depended on our ability to reach this settlement. We finally did it thanks to the prudence of our political leadership, perseverance of our people and support and solidarity from international community. We were mindful of the cost of instability: our development was pushed back; we remained in stagnation while others advanced.

Now under Prime Minister Oli’s leadership, we are committed to work in such speed that would enable us to make up for the two lost decades. We have set a development vision with the slogan of ‘Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepalis’. We have the potential and what we need is resources and technology.

We are known for richness in water resource, which we are yet to convert into hydropower; we are known for natural beauty and cultural diversity, due to which our tourism industry is growing.
We are aware that single-handedly we cannot reach the destination of prosperity. We must seek support from our development partners from around the world, including our rising neighbours.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**
India is our close neighbour, with whom Nepal’s relations have been comprehensive and multifaceted. Our economic partnership is robust and has a long history. India is our biggest trading partner, source of FDI and a main transit country. We are connected by geography as well as history, by our religions as well as culture.

Apart from taking effective measures for the implementation of all the agreements and understandings reached in the past, we have common understanding on the need for reinvigorating the existing bilateral mechanisms to promote cooperative agenda across diverse spheres.

Our enhanced engagements at different levels, in particular in recent times, have contributed to taking the bilateral relations to newer heights.

We cherish India’s progress and prosperity. Its accomplishments in many spheres are notable. The wonderful journey of India as a major economic powerhouse is an inspiration for many people around the world and more so in our neighbourhood.

To increase the flow of goods and augment trade between our two countries, we are focused on investing in infrastructures and streamline procedures. We are aware that cross-border connectivity is very important to unleash development potentials and to spur growth.

The importance of connectivity cannot be overemphasized for a landlocked country like ours. With India, we are advancing connectivity by railway and waterways. When I talk about connectivity I recall what Prime Minister Modiji eloquently highlighted, during one of his visits to Nepal, as the HIT formula (highways, information ways and transmission ways). We appreciate in this context a recent positive step taken by India towards making cross border trade of electricity possible. Given Nepal’s hydropower potential and investors’ interest in it, it has long been our demand that cross border trade of electricity be opened up just like other tradable commodities.

**Dear Friends,**
Back to the world geopolitics again, there is no denial that we all have our respective fundamental national interests that we cannot compromise on. At the end of the day in electoral democracy, we must answer to our people, serve them best and make them happy. It is equally true, however, that there are issues beyond our respective border that we cannot tackle in isolation: issues which our domestic audience is not necessarily aware of and for this reason require correct guidance from leadership. Past experience tells us that global challenges require global solution. At a time when the number and intensity of such challenges have grown manifold, thinking of the world as one is all the more required.

Climate change is one such colossal problem of our time that is staring at us and challenging us if we have the strength, conviction and collective will to find a solution. Reports after reports have forewarned of impending disaster and called for immediate actions. It is disheartening, therefore, particularly for small, vulnerable, resource constrained and least prepared countries like us, to see that the fate of Paris Agreement looms in uncertainty.
Our report card of the Millennium Development Goals was a sort of mixed. We did well with some of the goals while progress in other areas remained illusive. Without collective actions, SDGs will not fare better. Partnership for development is a critical aspect of realization of these internationally determined goals. We are, therefore, concerned about the shrinking development assistance.

As I already said, advancement in information and communication technology has tremendously benefitted us in many ways. This has made us more connected and made us more informed. This advancement has not come without challenge. How are we prepared to address today’s cyber anxiety? Cyber or satellite collapse? As a byproduct of ICT appears the challenge of fake news and propaganda. Information empowers people; misinformation betrays. How are we going to enable our people to rightly filter between information and misinformation?

Likewise, how we are going to tackle the challenges associated with the most contemporary scientific advancements? Robots have started to perform many of the jobs humans did in the past. How are we going to create alternative jobs for our people? Are we all prepared for half men, half robot kind of working environment? How shall we address the chasm that will possibly be created among us by Artificial Intelligence? How are we going to manage the possible unmanned military capability?

New forces of division in the form of sectarian violence, religious extremism and terrorism are gaining ground posing huge threat to individual liberty, democratic institutions and rule of law. Are we able to overcome these without collective efforts?

Growing volume of world trade is taking place over the water. How we are going to make the oceans safer? How are we going to prevent maritime conflict? How are we going to ensure that landlocked countries get better access to sea for trade and transit?

**Distinguished Audience,**

Challenges the world faces today are too big and too many to be overcome by our lone efforts. History is our witness. There has always been a positive correlation between our collective efforts and world’s peace and prosperity. Such efforts are more required today.

Let us, therefore, be prepared to correct our obsession with short-term gains and think in a larger perspective of long-term collective welfare. Let us contribute to build bridges rather than barriers. Let us act in synergy rather than in isolation. Let us embrace fraternity rather than narrow communalism. Let us aspire for a better world where we collectively work for common prosperity; a world which future generation can proudly inherit.

I thank you for your kind attention.

**Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali**

**Asia-Pacific Summit, 1 December 2018**

**“Nepal’s Peace Process: The Dawn of a New Era”**

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished Participants,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Namaste and good afternoon**!**

It is a distinct honor and privilege for me to extend our warmest welcome to all distinguished guests who have joined us for the Asia-Pacific Summit.

Our deliberations on this occasion will focus on issues pertaining to the pursuit of peace, prosperity and stability in the world. I do hope that the variety of perspectives and diversity of experience that such discussions bring will be helpful in addressing the many challenges that we face in ensuring a peaceful, secure and stable world.

It is with this objective in mind that I wish to share with you the unique experience of Nepal’s own home-grown, nationally-initiated and –led peace process that successfully put an end to a decade-long armed struggle, and brought together forces from across the political spectrum to begin a new chapter in Nepal’s long and glorious history.

**Distinguished Guests,**

In the past seven and a half decades, Nepal witnessed several episodes of struggles for political freedom, economic development and social progress, the aspirations, which were repeatedly thwarted by the unchecked ambitions of an absolute monarchy. In 1961, for example, Nepal’s nascent democracy suffered a severe blow in the form of a royal ‘coup’ which pushed the country into another three decades of autocratic party-less Panchayat system.

The incessant and resolute struggles of the Nepali people for democracy and modernization finally culminated into the People’s Movement of 1990, which led to the restoration of multi-party democracy. Unfortunately, our naïve initiative to confine monarchy within the constitutional set up failed again, since the monarchy couldn’t give up its longing for power. In addition, the deep-rooted structures of exclusion and exploitation perpetrated by a centuries-old feudal system continued unabated. Against this backdrop, the conflict in the form of an armed struggle began. A peaceful and peace-loving nation had to admit a dark blot in its history. Though it played an important role in fermenting political transformation, regrettably, the ultimate cost of the armed conflict fell upon the people of Nepal. During the decade-long struggle, several thousand lives were lost; many families were torn apart and vital infrastructure suffered irreparable damages.

While the world entered the new millennium, the King harbored the ambition of reviving absolute monarchy, pushing the nation into the labyrinth of dictatorship.

It was at this critical stage that the mainstream political parties and the Maoist rebels realized the need to overthrow absolute monarchy and resolve the decade-long conflict in a peaceful manner. To attain these twin objectives, twelve-point understanding was signed between seven political parties and the rebels, which would be the founding stone of Nepal’s peace process. A compromise was reached this way: the mainstream parties agreed to pursue the constituent assembly election and the republican setup and the Maoists became ready to give up the arms and join the mainstream democratic course. The agreement reflected a prudent and far-sighted – albeit rather late – realization on the part of Nepal’s political parties to honor the popular will of the Nepali people for peace,, democracy and modernization.

Immediately after, there was a rapid build-up of momentum in the democratic struggle. A peaceful popular uprising, also known as the Second People’s Movement or April Uprising, succeeded in forcing the King to yield sovereign power to its legitimate owner –the Nepali people. The dissolved Parliament was reinstated – and expanded later – as an interim legislature-parliament for broader representation.

The comprehensive Peace Accord signed in November 2006 between the Government and the Maoists formally ended the armed conflict. The other agreement signed was on the management of arms and armies. These accords were indeed the milestones in Nepal’s homegrown, nationally owned and -led peace process. An interim government was formed with the participation of former rebels to carry out the onerous tasks that lay ahead.

The management of arms and combatants was handled through in-depth and extensive consultations among stakeholders to pave the way for a smooth political process. Some combatants were absorbed into the national army; most of them were reintegrated in society. In tandem, several initiatives were taken for further reform the Nepali Army to make it even more professional and politically neutral while ensuring civilian oversight.

To build confidence among the parties of the conflict in implementing the peace agreement, Nepal invited a UN Mission, with small size and limited mandate, – mandate to monitor arms management. By and large, its presence in the early days of the peace process was helpful in supporting confidence-building measures among the parties of the conflict. Later we realized that Nepal’s political parties had full trust and confidence in each other’s capability, competence and motivations to carry forward, thence forward the peace process on our own.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

As part of the peace process, and to realize the long-held aspirations of the Nepali people, the Constituent Assembly election was held in 2008. The Nepali people voted for an inclusive and representative Constituent Assembly, which declared Nepal a federal democratic republic, abolishing the 240-year old monarchical system. However, the first assembly could not agree on the draft constitution owing to the inconclusive debates on several vital issues such as the structures of governance, mode of representation and the basis of federalization. Another election became necessary for seeking a fresh mandate.

The second Constituent Assembly continued the democratic process and ultimately adopted a new constitution in September 2015 with the support of over four-fifth majority. The constitution institutionalized federal democratic republic polity in Nepal.

The overwhelming consensus on the new constitution marked a uniquely successful conclusion of the nationally owned peace process in Nepal. The new Constitution has received wide support and acceptance of the Nepali people, because the Constitution guarantees equality, safeguards fundamental rights and ensures opportunity for all by putting an end to all forms of discrimination. This is no small feat, reflecting the extensive consultations and constructive discussions during the lead-up to its promulgation.

Last year, the constitutionally mandated elections at all the three tiers of the government – federal, provincial and local, were concluded with a record turnout. The left alliance, which included the formal rebels, won the overwhelming support of the people. Also resonant in the people’s mandate was the strong call for unification of the two largest left parties of Nepal.

Now the Nepal Communist Party leads the government with over three-fourth support of the parliament. With this historic mandate, Nepal has achieved much needed political stability, and is marching on the way toward a new era of socio- economic transformation. Just a few days ago, for example, the Government started the implementation of an elaborate social safety net for the people.

Our peace process had three major dimensions. On political front, we have accomplished the historical mission by formulating a democratic, just and progressive constitution and introducing a federal and inclusive state structure, which mirrors the multilingual, multicultural and multiethnic society of Nepal. On military or security side, we have settled the combatant issue thru mainstreaming them and making the National Army more representative, inclusive and professional. Now we are finalizing the transitional justice where we have to heal the wounds of conflict, to ensure the new life to thousand of victims and have to end the impunity and prevent reoccurrence of conflict. We are clear- there will be no any blanket amnesty for gross human rights violations, though our major focus will be on the reconciliation.

Despite insuperable challenges and difficulties, we have successfully navigated through the difficult waters of conflict resolution. Ours has been an exemplary model of peace process and democratic transition. People from a diverse spectrum of political ideologies and backgrounds and from the heterogeneous mosaic of linguistic groups, ethnicities and regions have come together in the political process for a political settlement that caters to their dreams and aspirations for a brighter future. Never before in Nepal’s history were its people consulted at such length, and with such intense sense of purpose and goal-orientation.

Nepal’s experience with peace making and peace-building has been eminently indigenous, with many salient features that are unique to our special circumstances. To quote Prime Minister Rt. Hon. KP Sharma Oli, “Nepal’s case is a unique example of peaceful and democratic transformation. It is a telling testimony that dialogue triumphs the differences; and ballot triumphs the bullets.” *(UNGA statement 2018)*

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Let me now share my thoughts with you about the lessons that we have learned from our peace process.

The important lesson from our experience is that we should not lose sight of the long-term prospects for peace, and that the parties in the conflict should keep on engaging with each other and seek the common grounds despite their differences in perceptions and positions. The spirit of accommodation, consensus and confidence building is a *sine qua non* for the successful resolution of conflict. Equally important in any homegrown peace process is strong political will, national leadership and ownership.

As I mentioned earlier, national ownership and leadership have been key features of Nepal’s unique peace process. There are, however, several other significant features in our peace process that deserve special mention, and among them are *shared vision and unity of purpose; agreed process and mechanisms, consultation and debate; change with continuity; initiative and leadership; and, pragmatism and flexibility.*

*Vision and Unity of Purpose:* By signing the 12-point agreement, all the major political forces in Nepal had agreed to a single vision: the vision of a democratic, peaceful, prosperous and socially advanced society by ending autocratic monarchy. Therefore, whenever there were any disagreements, such as in the wake of the failure of the First Constituent Assembly, we knew where to look for: the initial vision for a peace, democracy and prosperity. Other actions would follow on this major consensus, as they eventually did.

*Agreed process and institutions:* To bring the conflicting parties closer, and to promote ownership, common process and institutions are extremely important. Peace process is not a unilateral step, where one side decides and the other just abides or follows. We developed such institutions and processes, where both side agreed to sit together and deliberate. The 12-point understandings, Cease fire agreement, Comprehensive Peace Accord, Agreement on the management of arms and ammunitions, Interim constitutions were such frameworks, among others, which guided the peace process. Likewise, Interim parliament, Special committee for combatant management and Constituent Assembly were some important mechanisms, which played the role of common bodies in decision making*.*

*Consultation and debate:* The devil lies in the detail, as they say. Therefore, several precious years were lost in agreeing on the details of a peaceful, democratic and prosperous society we all wanted to build. However, we did not block the full expression of each other’s voices, concerns and fears, because they reflected not discord but debate.

For a time, it seemed as though the cacophony of disparate voices that had permeated through to the very depths of society would shake our confidence and run over any semblance of order or a pathway of conflict resolution. But then gradually, but surely, a pattern evolved. Extreme forms and expressions of ideas began to falter and then died down with a whimper.

What followed was a spectacular unanimity and consensus on all major issues that we had been grappling with for so many years. Or if there was no unanimity in the beginning, the process itself gave the answer. For instance, there were some grievances during the constitution drafting, and a small number of assembly members abstained in the process. But when the new election under constitution was declared, all sections of society, with overwhelming turnout, participated. Likewise, we began to realize that identity is important, but then it is neither immutable nor unchangeable; besides, we all have multiple identities, all at the same time. We realized that all sections of society should find fair and equitable representation in all layers of political bodies, but then it would also be a good idea to elect some parliamentarians directly for the purpose of promoting leadership and accountability.

*Change with continuity:* So, while the country was going through a period of momentous change, there was an underlying system of continuity that ensured that abrupt change would not disrupt social structures by setting undesirable precedents. The House of Representatives, which had been dissolved by the King, was re-instated to function as a legislature-parliament by expanding it with the inducting of members from the CPN (Maoist). It was a classic case of change with continuity.

*Initiative and Leadership:* However, none of such historic change would have been possible without powerful initiatives and strong leadership. Leadership, in turn, is a product of the material conditions of a society, and the special conditions of our country during those years mandated special initiatives. Given the prevailing security conditions in the country, only strong leadership with a view of the distant future in the eyes, and of the welfare of the Nepali people in the heart, could have dared to sign the 12-point agreement in the first place. I again want to emphasize how much important the role of national leadership is, because for some elements, whether they are insiders or outsiders, both conflict and peace is equally beneficial like trade. Sometimes they invest in conflict and sometimes in peace. If the national actors cannot take the lead, there is always a risk of vicious cycle of never ending conflict.

*Pragmatism and flexibility:* Finally, I would like to emphasize the crucial role of pragmatism and flexibility for mutual accommodation, compromise and give-and-take. The history of Nepal’s peace process is replete with numerous instances of pragmatism and flexibility exercised by all parties in achieving their common goals. Three instances of them come instantly to my mind: successful integration of the former Maoist combatants, where the national army and the former rebels agreed to bury their hatchets and made significant compromises early on; when the mainstream parties and CPN (Maoist) quickly realized it was time to move on by agreeing to jointly proceed with the peace process without help from outside the country; and when it was necessary to hold elections for the Second Constituent Assembly, all major political parties were able to agree on the modality of conducting those elections without much delay.

These are all important lessons, and we need to discuss them honestly, and also credit them duly, lest we forget the how in the past twelve years we have traveled through a most tortuous road fraught with too many roadblocks and far more numerous danger zones to land where we are today.

Today, the peace process has culminated not only in the management of armed conflict but also to the political transformation of enormous proportions. This has come at a high price for which the Nepali people have shed enormous amounts of blood, sweat and tears. It is time to move on, and to make good on those promises, which were made to our martyrs who willingly sacrificed their lives for the sake of liberty and national rejuvenation.

Since the political issues have now been settled after a series of protracted struggles, we have a great responsibility for nation building ahead of us. We are well aware of the fact that political transformation can hardly be sustained without social progress, economic transformation and modernization. It is in this sense that the challenge of consolidating and strengthening the edifice of durable peace in Nepal warrants equally far-sighted vision and mutually reinforcing efforts such as those which were required for initiating and completing the peace process.

The sustainability of peace hinges on the happiness of the people and the prosperity of the nation. Cognizant of this, the Government has set a vision for ‘Prosperous Nepal and Happy Nepali’. Ultimately, the realization of this goal will be the ultimate reward, and the best guarantor, of everlasting peace in Nepal.

With these few observations, I would like to conclude my remarks and thank you all once again for your kind patience.

Thank you.

**Speech by Hon. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs on the theme: “Role of Nepali Diaspora for Development Policies” at Plenary Session 4 of the First NRN Global Knowledge Convention**
**(October 13, 2018, Time 4:00-6:10 PM**)

Chair of the Session Dr. Bhekh Bahadur Thapa
Moderator Mr. Khagendra Dhakal
Distinguished Panelists,
Researchers,
NRN Members,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am extremely delighted to address this august session on the theme: Role of Nepali Diaspora for Development Policies.

First of all, I thank the organizing committee for giving me the opportunity to share my thoughts.

I touched upon the role of Nepali diaspora to some extent in my remarks at the inaugural session yesterday. I will be brief this time.

With this convention, an important platform for NRN experts and professionals and their counterparts at home has been created to engage in intellectual discussions, debate and knowledge exchange. Cross-fertilization of ideas, views and thoughts is certainly a matter of our mutual interest to deepen quality of knowledge, learning and policymaking.

In this sense, I commend all the panelists for their comprehensive and insightful views focusing on the “Role of Nepali Diaspora for Development Policies”.

NRNs and Nepali Diaspora have been making important contribution to Nepal’s development process for quite some time. There is much larger scope for their engagements in development policies.
As you know, following the promulgation of the new constitution and successful holding of three-tier elections, we have ushered in a new era of peace and stability. It is absolutely necessary for us to make this hard-earned peace sustained for generations to come.

Peace and stability can only be enduring when we achieve and maintain a high, broad-based and inclusive economic growth. The growth that is essential to realize our dream of Prosperous Nepal and Happy Nepali. The present Government has, therefore, accorded top priority to economic transformation to make this dream come true. Our collaboration is necessary for giving support to meet this goal.

In this context, let me underline that maintaining stability, advancing socio-economic transformation, ensuring social justice, good governance and rule of law in the country become all the more critical.

Studies have demonstrated that the rate and quality of development largely depends on evidenced-based policies and sound institutions that implement them in a result-oriented manner. Towards this direction, the Government is making necessary policy and institutional reforms.

However, there are many challenges that lie ahead on our path to fulfill the development dream.
First challenge is to build positive and inclusive institutions;
Second challenge is to enhance quality of factors of production;
Third challenge is to gain efficiency in the economy;
Fourth challenge is to meet double-digit growth rate;
Fifth challenge is to reduce poverty and inequality;
Sixth challenge is to bridge massive infrastructure gaps;
Seventh challenge is to build greater financial resilience;
Eighth challenge is to address risks of climate change vulnerability;
Last challenge is to allocate resources equitably in federal setup.

In overcoming those challenges, an enhanced level of economic partnership with NRNs, Diaspora and private sector is essential.

We have undertaken liberal policy framework in the country, but still it is not sufficient. There is a further need to Government undertake policy reforms. Diaspora can certainly contribute to make more conducive development policies at home as they are well-versed in concepts at work place and context at birth place.

Human capital is a key component in policymaking. Role of knowledge, skill and technology ideas is vital in human capital formation.

Besides investing more in the active factor of production (human capital) within the country, we are eager to make best use of knowledge of those who love Nepal, whose blood is Nepali and whose heart is Nepali. It is undoubtedly the NRNs and Diaspora who are in a unique position in enriching the quality of our human capital. We take every measure necessary for their meaningful engagement.

For a country grappling with brain drain, this event is a stepping stone for reversing it in the form of brain gain. Our ideal goal is to attract best brains into our beloved motherland.
In this context, I congratulate NRNA for their timely initiative to set up Nepal Policy Institute (NPI). The Government of Nepal has also made a similar institute named Policy Research Institute. The collaboration between both the institutes would be relevant and useful for making sound development policies in our country.

No doubt, we need a high economic growth for prosperity. For this, we have a goal of double-digit economic growth. To achieve this goal, physical, social, legal, administrative and economic institutions and infrastructure need be put in place.

Yet again, there is a need to improve good governance, policies, rules and laws and utilize excellent professional capabilities in government, private sectors and diaspora as well.
Once we create positive and inclusive institutions through legal reforms, quality of factors of production such as land, labour and capital will certainly go up.

By using these factors efficiently, we hope to achieve efficiency in our country’s economy.
The gain in efficiency will cause an expansion in the economy which will result in higher economic growth.

It is only through continuous high economic growth and its equitable distribution can prosperity sustain in the country.

In the course of economic development, we require huge resources. Since our domestic saving is not sufficient to meet our resources need, we have to mobilize foreign resources through foreign direct investment.

The Government has been taking various policy, institutional and programmatic initiatives to encourage and facilitate FDI and NRNs’ investment through economic diplomacy.

We are constantly striving to attract investment on export trade and tourism sector. We are also focusing on foreign employment management, technology transfer and climate change financing.

Undoubtedly, knowledge, skills, technology and capital from NRNs and Nepali Diaspora will provide a much-needed impetus for economic development.

Let me give a few account of NRNA and Nepali diaspora’s contributions in the country. NRN Investment and Infrastructure Company that already financed in hydropower sector and a recently initiated investment fund worth of ten billion are an encouraging gesture. Installation of Buddha statue in International Court of Justice; Laprak VDC Post Earthquake Model Residence Project (573 Houses Construction); Local Community Support Programs in Various Districts and many more can be added up in the list. Your promising efforts in making investment in the motherland are really appreciative.

Allow me to spell out me of our priority areas where you can make a visible difference.
• Technologies and techniques for high-yielding agro-varieties that are exemplary in Israel and Australia;
• Agro-mechanization as can be found in Japan or USA;commercial, educational and governance digitalization as practiced in Korea;
• Education and human resource development strategies as those of Singapore and Australia;
• Infrastructures like that of China, development of alternative energies alongside hydropower, science and technology as well as best practices in environmental protection.

As I spearhead the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and being the focal Ministry for NRNs, we expect insightful well-researched policy inputs and recommendations from the Convention.

The Foreign Ministry is always supportive of NRNs right from the beginning to create an enabling environment for them and make most of their meaningful engagements in the country. We are planning to conduct a census like NRN survey in order to take stock of NRN expertise and explore a suitable area of their engagements.

I am confident that knowledge sharing between NRNs and the Government of Nepal will pave the way for developing creative and innovative use of tangible and intangible resources that NRNs and Nepali Diaspora have in order to brighten the face of the motherland.

To conclude, Janani Janma Bhumischa Sworgadapi Gariesi (Mother and Motherland are greater than heaven). We will march ahead shoulder to shoulder as one to accomplish our duty to the motherland.
Thank you for your kind attention.

**Statement delivered by Hon. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal, at Nelson Mandela Peace Summit**
**New York, Monday, 02 October 2018**

**Madam President,**
At the outset, I commend you, Madam President, for convening this important Summit to mark the birth centenary of Nelson Mandela.

I feel honoured to offer sincere tributes to a statesman extraordinaire of our time. He is indeed an epitome of struggle, freedom, human dignity and democracy.

The strength of unity; power of discipline; influence of humility; and result of diligence are the lessons we learn from his life. He taught the importance of reconciliation, forgiveness and compassion, even by forgiving those who had taken his everything away.

Truth eventually emerges triumphant, no matter how strong the adversaries are. The sense of fortitude and sacrifice defeat even the most invincible. His career spanning anti-apartheid activist to visionary President is a living testimony. His ideals will continue to inspire humanity. Nepal proudly recalls its service as a member of the UN Special Committee against apartheid since its inception and as a vice chair for 25 years.

**Madam President,**
Nepal, the birthplace of the apostle of peace, Buddha, has unwavering faith in peace. Our long contribution to the UN peace operations testifies it.

Nepal shares the vicissitudes of Africa’s revolutionary past. Our history is illustrated by long struggles against aggression of imperialists; authoritarian regimes; socio-economic and political oppression; and the most recent peace process.

Nepali people have demonstrated exemplary resilience in pursuit of peace. Political forces exhibited wisdom and chose path of peaceful resolution of conflict through dialogues and accommodation, the ideals embraced by the late Nelson Mandela.

The home-grown, nationally owned and led peace process successfully transitioned the country to a state of stability and peace after the peaceful democratic elections were held under the Constitution adopted by people’s representatives.

Each conflict situation is unique and demands context-specific solution. As there is no universal model for conflict resolution, there is no single model for addressing the issues of peace and justice. The main thrust of our peace process has been to achieve reconciliation by healing the wounds of the conflict. We believe that as long as the parties to the conflict choose to address accountability issues through a functioning national justice system and seek accommodation through reconciliation, it would be unnecessary to suggest for a recourse to international justice system. This is our understanding about the Para 19 of the political declaration. Nepal has allowed independent transitional justice process take its course as per the laws. We are now well on the path of reconciliation by ensuring social justice, nurturing inclusive society, and delivering good governance.

Nepal reaffirms its faith in the values of world peace. We stand ready to share experiences of our successful peace process.

While I share this success story, conflicts around the world continue unabated. Aspiration of millions for equality, justice, peace and development continue to elude us even after seven decades of the establishment of the United Nations.

Our commitment to forgiveness, reconciliation, humanity and peace – not just in words but in actions – would be true tributes to Madiba.

I thank you

**Statement by Hon. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal, at the Annual Ministerial Meeting of LDCs**
**(New York, 26 or 27 September 2018)**

**As delivered**

**Mr. Chairman,**
**Honorable Ministers,**
**Under Secretary General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS,**
**Distinguished Delegates.**

At the outset, I commend Bangladesh for its role as chair of the Group of Least Developed Countries for the last three years, leading the Group so successfully, and welcome Malawi as interim chair of the Group.

I also take this opportunity to appreciate the role played by the UN Secretary-General as well as by the OHRLLS team.

**Mr. Chairman,**

LDCs are the battleground on which the 2030 Agenda will be won or lost. Stakes are high for us. And the cost of non-achievement is even higher.

In implementing 2030 Agenda, the experience till date shows a mixed progress for LDCs. Nepal is localizing the SDG implementation, remains committed to a balanced and robust economic development with a high growth rate.

Only a handful of LDCs are expected to reach the SDG target of at least 7% GDP growth per annum by 2019.

The increasing trade tensions these days hurt the furthest behind most. More than that, it assaults the very philosophy of a rule-based and fair global trade regime.

The structural constraints of poverty, inequality and unemployment continue to impede the pace of progress in LDCs. Adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters and internal conflicts further compound the challenges. Those LDCs, which are also geographically constrained, such as landlocked and small islands, are more vulnerable to these shocks. They bear higher cost of production, transportation and low comparative advantage of their exports.

International community should come forward to ensure market access, remove tariff and non-tariff barriers, lift quantitative restrictions, and help capacity building and technology transfer. They need financing and investments to conquer poor infrastructures, narrow production and export bases, dismal capital formation, and low factor productivity.

It is high time that all stakeholders, including the international community, deliver on their commitments.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The priorities of the Istanbul Program of Action (IPOA), re-endorsed by its Mid-Term Review, are critical to the development of LDCs. What we need is a strong synergy between the implementation of IPOA and the 2030 Agenda.

Nepal welcomes the operationalization of Technology Bank for LDCs in Turkey. With this, SDG target 17.8 has been achieved, the first ever target to have been met. The Bank needs to be adequately resourced, so that it can provide much-needed science, technology and innovation support to LDCs.

This year, in its triennial review, the Committee on Development Policy (CDP) has recommended four countries for graduation. It is encouraging that never have so many countries been identified for graduation at a single review.

Still, we fall short to meet IPOA’s aim to enable half of the LDCs to meet the graduation criteria by 2020. A robust response is required to ensure that a greater number of LDCs are prepared for graduation. Most importantly, the graduation must be smooth as well as sustainable.

For many LDCs, the graduation criteria itself fails to capture the reality in its entirety, which deserve a revisit.

Nepal met two out of three criteria for graduation for the second consecutive triennial review this year, but we still have low per capita income. Sustainability of our development progress is a major challenge. As the country is recovering from the disastrous earthquake of 2015 and continues to remain vulnerable to natural disasters, the decision regarding our graduation has been deferred till 2021.

We are now intensifying our development efforts to build ground for sustainable graduation as well as to become a middle-income country by 2030.

**Mr. Chairman,**

In June this year, the UN Member States adopted a transformative resolution on repositioning of UN Development System. It is our hope that a reinvigorated system works better for LDCs. If the system fails, LDCs would bear the severest of the brunt.

As I conclude, Mr. Chair, I would like to stress that the development path of LDCs should not remain slow, long and vague. The crucial phase of implementing 2030 Agenda as well as IPOA cannot go squandered. The greatest challenge in front of us is resource gap. International support measures should complement our national efforts.

The clock is ticking, and we cannot afford to lose a single opportunity.

I thank you all.

**Remarks by Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal at the Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)**
***New York, Wednesday 26 September 2018 (9 AM – 1 PM)***

*As delivered.*

*[Theme- “Upholding the UN Charter and the Purposes and Principles of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM): Towards a Culture of Peace”]*

**Mr. Chairman,**

I would like to appreciate the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for the leadership provided to this movement.

I also thank the Coordinating Bureau for selecting a very relevant theme for today’s interaction.

**Mr Chairman,**

The world today is facing uncertainties. Multilateralism is confronting with cynicism. The idea of a rule-based, just and equitable international order meets with challenges.

In different regions, conflicts remain unabated. The race for armaments and disregard of international law endanger international peace and security. Violence in many parts of the world has brought untold miseries, deaths and agony.

The battle against poverty is still not won. Inequality within the countries as well as between the North and the South is increasing. The forces of globalization have not benefitted all. Tentacles of terrorism have plagued many countries and people.

In these uncertain times, the challenges today are many; and global are their ramifications.

This context calls us to go back to the basics-

* to reflect on the solemn pledge that the world made almost 73 years ago through the UN Charter, to save the succeeding generations from the ‘scourge of war’;
* to reflect on the fundamental principles of NAM which are time tested and are as relevant as they were at its founding.

These principles are the universal norms for conduct of healthy inter-state relations, and they make guiding ethos of the foreign policy of my country.

As the torch bearer of rule-based, inclusive and multilateral world order, the onus lies on our Movement to uphold the UN Charter as well as the principles of Non-Aligned Movement, both of which are the embodiment of culture of peace.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Also going back to another basic, we should not forget that the seed of wars and conflicts is sown by the ‘culture of violence.’

The first line of defence against this should be built in the minds of people –by instilling in them the ‘culture of peace’- the culture which is inclusive and tolerant; the culture of solidarity and social cohesion; and the culture of pluralism and peaceful co-existence. These are the values that the UN Charter and the founding principles of our Movement bind us together.

The citadel of peace cannot stand upright if we fail to anchor it well in the way of our living, thinking, attitude and behaviour.

The culture of peace is also about shared prosperity and full realization of all human rights, including the right to development. It is about full adherence to peaceful means for the settlement of disputes.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Our Movement – a mosaic of different cultures, faiths, political beliefs and social systems –has been a platform for promoting dialogue among cultures, civilizations and religions.

We cannot remain a bystander when members of our own Movement are engulfed in violence and conflicts. The very principles of the Movement must inspire the Member States towards building a culture of peace. We ought to muster courage to desist from such state of violence, and nurture culture of peace first within ourselves.

As a founding member of the Movement, Nepal upholds its faith in the principles of NAM. We firmly believe in its continued relevance as its principles transcend time.

A country that went through a decade-long conflict and resolved it resolved through a home-grown and uniquely successful peace process, Nepal is strongly convinced that peaceful and inclusive dialogue leads to the lasting peace.

Needless to say, sustaining peace cannot be complete without addressing the root causes of conflicts, delivering development, practicing equality, respecting diversity; and cultivating a sense of ownership among all. In multicultural societies, this is a precursor to peace, stability and harmony.

Nepal believes that the culture of peace is the ultimate signpost to the path of peace, happiness and prosperity for humanity.

In the end, Mr. Chairman, I would like to conclude by encouraging the fellow members to act with solidarity and unite our strengths to contribute to the world peace, while leaving no one behind.

I thank you all for your attention.

**Statement Delivered by Minister for Foreign Affairs at 62nd General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency**

62nd General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency Statement Delivered by Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Leader of the Nepali Delegation Honourable Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali

Vienna, 17 September 2018

Madame President

Madame Acting Director General

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

 I begin by congratulating you, Madame President, on your election to the chair of this General Conference. I assure you of my delegation’s full support.

Madame President,

Nepal’s abiding faith in multilateralism emanates from our deep commitment to the principles and purposes of the UN Charter, the values of Panchasheela, and the norms of world peace. We consider that only through dialogues, negotiations and engagements in multilateral setting, the world community can address the global challenges that we in isolation cannot. As the world becomes increasingly complex, the problems we face become equally intractable. This is where the value of multilateralism, collaboration and cooperation among the sovereign States appears critical to build synergy, muster strength and confront the challenges collectively.

Nepal considers that all three pillars of the United Nations- peace and security, human rights and development- should receive equal emphasis. We believe that advancement in science and technology should contribute to the strengthening of the development pillar of the United Nations.

Almost three years have passed since the UN General Assembly adopted the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development with a commitment to leaving no one behind. This is a fitting time that we deliberate in this important forum how the nuclear science and technology can be beneficially utilized for attaining SDGs. I am glad to note that IAEA has calibrated its activities to facilitate this process and help achieve the goals related to health, clean water, agriculture, nutrition, food security, climate action and access to energy for all. These are critical areas for reducing poverty, sustaining progress and enhancing benefit of technological advancement for humanity. Indeed, with its fundamental tenet “atom for peace and development” IAEA had always captured the very essence of this idea.

Madame President,

We deeply value our membership and partnership with IAEA. Though use of nuclear science and technology is still very limited in Nepal, our joining as a Member State of IAEA in 2008 has broadened our understanding of application of nuclear technology and its utility for socio-economic development. Important innovations in medicine, energy and other industrial applications have been developed through the use of nuclear technology. Countries like ours need technical support for properly utilizing nuclear science and technology for development, building capacity, complying with the safeguard regime and ensuring safety and security of nuclear and radioactive materials.

Since the signing of RSA[1] Concerning the Provision of Technical Assistance and the Fifth Agreement to Extend the 1987 RCA[2] for Research, Development and Training in 2012, Nepal has become beneficiary of IAEA’s technical cooperation. The area of technical cooperation includes building of national infrastructure for radiation safety, developing radiation health service infrastructure, increasing animal productivity and trans-boundary diseases control, improving crop yield for food security, education in nuclear physics and chemistry, and non-destructive testing among others.

We have seen good results of the projects in the application of nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes. Nuclear medicine services have been strengthened and expanded in Nepal. Diagnosis and treatment of cancer disease has become more effective and affordable to the needy and poor. The cooperation has helped capacity building of Nepali technical experts as well as institutional capacity building of some academic and scientific institutions. Now we are engaging with IAEA to prioritize national programs and projects with a view to sustain the achievements and help implementing SGDs. Last year we had the pleasure to host the Director General of IAEA Mr. Yukiya Amano on visit to Nepal.

Nuclear science and technology should be used only for the peaceful purposes within recognized safeguard framework of IAEA. To give it an effect, in 1972, we signed the Comprehensive Safeguard Agreement with IAEA. Ever since, we have not only adhered to the Treaty provisions but also stood for stringent safeguards measures and IAEA verifications. Nepal has introduced Nuclear Materials Regulatory Directives and has adopted National Nuclear Policy. We are in the process of enacting separate nuclear law to create a sound regulatory framework within the country. We believe that only a robust regulatory framework at the national levels can ensure better nuclear security and safety at the global level.

Madame President,

Nepal strongly believes that the international community, while complying to such frameworks prescribed for the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, should equally espouse the principles of general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction particularly the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons. We believe that resources of armaments should be diverted to peace and development. We consider that sustainable peace can be achieved only through dialogues and collaboration, not through armaments. We believe in utilizing science and technology for creating new and fair development opportunities for all.

To confirm this belief, Nepal was one of the original signatories of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons which we ratified in 1970. We are a signatory to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Last year we supported the adoption of the Nuclear Weapons Prohibition Treaty and later we signed it. Ratification process of both of these treaties is being initiated with due priority. We are a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention and Biological Weapons Convention. We strongly support UN Security Council resolution 1540 and remain fully committed to its implementation. These international regimes not only compliment but also support and sustain the momentum towards non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament with NPT as its cornerstone.

Madame President,

Before I conclude, allow me to briefly update about the uniquely successful peace process through which Nepal transitioned to a state of democratic peace and stability. In the process we concluded a decade long armed conflict peacefully, managed arms and armed combatants and integrated them into the society, restructured the State, empowered women and hitherto marginalized communities, managed diversity and adopted democratic constitution through an inclusive and democratically elected Constituent Assembly and formed stable governments in all three tiers of federal structures through democratic elections. It was a home-grown, nationally led process owned and supported by our people. The peace process has established a culture of dialogue, accommodation, and mutual respect among the stakeholders within the country.

To sustain the political gains and building on the democratic foundation that has been created, we are now focused on attaining economic development with a vision of ‘Prosperous Nepal and Happy Nepali’. This vision is closely aligned with SDGs, and we intend to implement this through promoting investment, propelling economic growth, creating job, maintaining stability, and ensuring social justice, good governance and rule of law.

Excellencies,

In today’s globalized world, no country can walk alone in the pursuit of development and prosperity. Only through partnership, cooperation and collaboration we can collectively reach to that destination. Nepal is keen to forge that partnership for collective prosperity.

I thank you for your attention.

Valedictory Address by Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs, in International Conference on Belt and Road Initiative: Opportunities and Implications for Nepal and the Region organized by Master’s Program in International Relations and Diplomacy (MIRD), Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu on 12 September 2018.

Vice Chancellor of Tribhuvan University,
Program Coordinator of MIRD
Distinguished Experts from Different Countries
Distinguished Participants
Dear Students
Friends from Media
Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me begin by thanking the Tribhuvan University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences for bringing out such a pertinent topic Belt and Road Initiative: Opportunities and Implications for Nepal and the Region for deliberation.

I have immense pleasure to speak a few words as valedictory remarks in this enlightened gathering. As the program has come to an end after extensive deliberations on the topic among the experts from Bangladesh, India, Laos, Nepal, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand, we have already heard thoughtful remarks and summary as well by distinguished experts on country specific perspectives on BRI and its opportunities and implications.

The Rt. Hon. Prime Minister of Nepal K P Sharma Oli has already shed light on the theme of today’s Conference in his inaugural speech this morning. You might have got the opportunity understand Nepal’s perspectives on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). I would like to put my brief remarks on the same topic. This may sound repetitive.

‘The Trans-Himalayan Silk Road’ and ‘The Tea Horse Trail’ dating back to millennia were ancient routes of great influence. Nepal was a lynchpin in that ancient Silk Road. The trans-Himalayan routes had immense influence on the life of a vast stretch of land extending from present-day western China, Central China to Turkmenistan, Bamiyan (Afghanistan), Mongolia, Nepal, Bangladesh (Chittagong), Sri Lanka, and India (from Kolkata to Kashmir).

The large-scale trade and cultural exchanges between South Western China and South Asia since ancient times contributed not just to cross-border trade and commerce but also to cross-civilizational exchanges and cross-fertilization of ideas across the continents.

In view of these historical facts, we have welcomed the BRI, a landmark initiative taken by the President of the People’s Republic of China, His Excellency Xi Jinping with the aim of ‘building a community of a shared destiny’ and greater cooperation among nations. We visualize great opportunity to work together with China in this broad mission for peace, prosperity and harmony.

**Dear friends,**
China has made unprecedented strides in socio-economic and technological developments. It has improved significantly the quality of life of its people. Its willingness to share the fruits of development with neighbouring countries for mutual benefits through the BRI is commendable. In view of historical linkages between Nepal and China as well as considering the present day reality between the two countries, Nepal has joined the BRI last year.

As you are aware, after the consolidation of political gains, we, in Nepal, have embarked on the journey of socio-economic transformation. Our vision is guided by the goal of “Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali.”

In order to achieve this overarching goal, we need, among other things, to develop physical infrastructures within the country and enhance cross-border connectivity with both of our neighbours.

Connectivity within the country and across the borders is very important for development. This is also a prerequisite for regional cooperation. As Nepal enjoys excellent bilateral relations with both of our neighbours, India and China, which have emerged as global economic powers, we would like to take advantage from their progress and prosperity.

Our development needs are many but resources at our disposal are limited. We hope that BRI could help meet our financial needs for project development.

Recently, during the visit of the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister of Nepal to China, our two countries agreed to intensify the implementation of bilateral MoU on BRI to enhance connectivity encompassing such vital components as ports, highways, railways, aviation and communication under the overarching framework of trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network.

Under this framework, our two countries have already started cooperation for cross-border railway project. Development of cross-border railways between Nepal and China is a priority for the Government of Nepal along with other connectivity related infrastructure. Whereas cross-border optical fibre link between Nepal and China has already come into operation since early this year.

We have recently finalized the text of Protocol to the Agreement on Transit Transport signed between Nepal and China in 2016. This will enable us to get access to the East Asian sea via Chinese territory. Being an LDC, this is an important aspect of diversifying Nepal’s access to sea for its transit transport. We want to transform our country from a land-locked to a land-linked one.

We have similar cross-border connectivity with India in the forms of highways, railways, info-ways and pipeline. We hope these initiatives would be milestones in linking the South Asia with south western part of China via Nepal in the future.

Thus, connectivity has become one of the important foreign policy priorities of Nepal.

**Dear friends,**
We think that the projects related to BRI should aim at utilizing the rich resources available along the Himalayan range, and improving the quality of lives of peoples in those areas. The facilities and infrastructures thus created will not only raise the standards of living of the people, but also support the conservation efforts and help for sustainable development of that region.

Most important thing is that, contrary to perceptions in certain quarters, we will be guided by our enlightened national interest to select and implement the project.

We also believe that the concept of trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network comprising the components of railways, highways, ports, aviation and communication linkages across the Himalayas would be significant for opening up new vistas of economic engagements in multiple areas and supporting for the livelihood of peoples in the region. For advancing cooperation under the trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network, we need more understanding, collaboration and partnership.

Nepal has abundant natural resource endowments, whereas Chinese enterprises have technological and financial resources for investment. We need to work assiduously to synergize from these vast potentials for development projects in the coming days.

BRI is not just about physical connectivity. People to people exchange is also a vital component of BRI. Tourism is an area where China and Nepal both can benefit through greater cooperation. Developing tourism services would be a promising area to forge bilateral collaboration for win-win cooperation since Nepal is endowed with natural beauty, cultural diversity and unique adventure sites.

Co-operation and exchanges among academic institutions, think tank, research institutes and intellectuals between Nepal and China are equally important in order to sharing experiences and harmonizing the learning process between the two countries. It is a matter of satisfaction that regular exchange of visits and interactions are taking place between the universities and think tanks of Nepal and China.

**Dear friends,**
Nepal and China have been enjoying excellent bilateral relations for over a period of six decades. In fact, our contacts are quite old dating back to millennia. Our enhanced partnership in economic field will match the trust and understanding we enjoy in our political relationship. The BRI offers such a unique opportunity for us to cooperate and collaborate for common benefit.

I believe the conference has been able to achieve the outcomes as anticipated. I also believe that the compilation of views shared by experts will be useful for all of us.

Once again, I appreciate and thank the coordinator and team of the Master’s Programme in International Relations and Diplomacy, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences for arranging such a wonderful program on contemporary issue and for inviting us.

Thank you for your kind attention!

**Opening statement of Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hon. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Namaste and good morning!

I am pleased to welcome all of you to this Ministerial Meeting.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to Your Excellencies, the Honorable Foreign/External Affairs Ministers of the BIMSTEC Member States, for accepting our invitation to attend this Meeting.

I wish you all a very pleasant stay in Kathmandu.

This meeting precedes the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit which will commence tomorrow. Therefore, today’s deliberations and decisions will be of vital importance for the success of the Fourth Summit and also for further strengthening of cooperation under the BIMSTEC process.

**Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,**

BIMSTEC that connects South Asia with SouthEast Asia-two vibrant growth poles- is a unique regional platform. Our region shares history, geographical contiguity, great civilizations and has huge potentials. Bestowed with natural and human resources, we can collectively contribute to realizing a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable Bay of Bengal region.

Moreover, the recent global economic outlook points to a bright sky with emerging Asia having strong growth prospect. BIMSTEC countries individually remain at the forefront of the economic dynamism. Collective regional economic framework certainly enables BIMSTEC to perform better on economic front.

However, we are still grappling with numerous economic, social and environmental problems. The challenges of poverty, hunger, backwardness, inequality, natural disasters, environmental degradation, terrorism, organized crimes, illicit drugs and human trafficking; to name a few are daunting. This is a sad predicament and ignominy for us.

BIMSTEC has completed two decades of journey. Though we have made some progress, it has not matched the potentials. So, it is a time for retrospection and serious analysis.

This is the time to address this precarious situation in a determined manner. This is the time to do away with business-as-usual approach. We must pursue our goals with renewed vigor in a focused and time-bound manner. We must display our quick, collective and firm response to our collective problems. What is required is sincere pursuit of concerted efforts with the common understanding that deeper integration results in a win-win outcome for all of us.

If we are to achieve regional growth and prosperity, there is a need to deepen rather than broaden and proliferate areas of cooperation under BIMSTEC. Tangible results ensure credibility of our enterprise. Therefore, rationalizing the priority areas and concentrating on core economic areas such as connectivity, trade, tourism, energy, and agriculture is imperative.

Connectivity is the enabler; energy is the locomotive; technology is the accelerator; investment and trade is the driver of regional growth and prosperity for bringing about structural as well as socio-economic transformation in the region. These transformative factors of regional growth and prosperity should top the BIMSTEC agenda from now onwards. They can be the game changer in our march to shared prosperity.

**Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,**

Poverty remains a great challenge in our region. Poverty in one part of the region is a threat to prosperity everywhere in the region. We must eradicate it through the effective and timely implementation of the BIMSTEC Poverty Plan of Action in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As the lead country, Nepal remains committed towards this end.

Our region is one of the least integrated regions of the world in trade and physical connectivity despite the fact that not very long ago, the Bay of Bengal used to be a centre for global maritime trade, and a hub of commercial and cultural exchange. The Bay of Bengal was a linchpin between various cultures, societies and civilizations.

Therefore, BIMSTEC should focus on re-vitalizing those links from the past, and on enabling the drivers of integration among the Member States. Negotiations on BIMSTEC Free Trade Agreement are yet to be concluded. Early conclusion and operationalizaion of all trade related instruments is critical for enhancing economic engagements in the region.

We must ensure a competitive incentive structure for our private sector to encourage them to trade and invest in the region. We must make the cost of non-trading in BIMSTEC higher. In this context, BIMSTEC economic and business forums should work together to this end.

It is a matter of satisfaction that a master-plan on transport connectivity is being developed to expand and upgrade connectivity in the region. Initiatives for grid interconnections will also be taken forward after signing of its MoU in this Summit in order to enhance region-wide energy cooperation. Energy trade must be placed in the agenda for further cooperation.

The Bay of Bengal region is vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters. We suffer disproportionately from the adverse impact of climate change. Ecological interdependence of our region from high mountains to deep seas calls for strong collaborative partnership amongst us.

Peace and stability is very important for development. Our region is not free form menace of terrorism and other transnational organized crimes. We have to work together to defeat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and combat other transnational crimes.

**Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,**

We have to move from commitment to implementation phase. We must make BIMSTEC mechanisms functional and result-oriented. Secretariat must be strengthened with adequate resources.

Moving forward, I wish to touch upon three important areas for our consideration.

First, growth and prosperity require tangible progress in trade integration, particularly early progress in the reduction of non-tariff barriers; streamlining regulatory frameworks and harmonization of standards. Trade and transit facilitations must be given top priority. TNC negotiations on all trade-related instruments must be concluded at the earliest.

Second, transport, energy and ICT connectivity must receive our top priority. We must work together closely to promote sustainable transport networks, sustainable energy and power grid interconnections, and information highways.

Last, we must address shared vulnerabilities and risks posed by natural disasters, food security and climate change. Resilient and innovative BIMSTEC is absolutely critical to sustaining momentum of growth dynamics, taking into account special circumstances and needs of LDCs and LLDCs.

For making progress in these areas, what we need is an enhanced level of political will. After all, a regional organization can flourish only with the stronger commitment of its Member States.

Nepal attaches great importance to regional cooperation under BIMSTEC. It is one of our foreign policy priorities.

I look forward to having a constructive and productive discussion today.

Please allow me to express my appreciation to our colleagues for their hard work both in the Special and Nineteenth Sessions of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials’ Meeting.

I would also like to commend His Excellency [Mr. M. Shahidul Islam](https://mofa.gov.np/press-release-on-secretary-general-of-the-bimstec-h-e-mr-m-shahidul-islam-called-on-the-rt-honorable-prime-minister-mr-k-p-sharma-oli/#_blank), Secretary-General of BIMSTEC and his team for their utmost efforts for preparatory works of this Meeting.

With these words, I conclude my opening remarks.

Thank you.

**Remarks by Hon. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal as a Chief Guest at a Talk Programme on BIMSTEC: Connecting South and Southeast Asia organized by Centre for South Asian Studies (CSAS)
Kathmandu, 24 August 2018**

Director of the Centre for South Asian Studies, Dear Dr. Nischal Nath Pandey Ji,
Distinguished Speakers,
Distinguished Guests, and
Ladies and Gentlemen

Namaste and Very Good Afternoon!

First of all, I would like to thank you, Dr. Pandey and CSAS family, for inviting me to this program and providing an opportunity to speak a few words in front of you all.

I would also like to commend Dr. Pandey and CSAS family for timely organization of this talk program on **BIMSTEC: Connecting South and Southeast Asia.** As we wind up our preparations for the 4th BIMSTEC Summit and its preceding meetings, the programs of this kind will certainly help enrich our understanding about BIMSTEC and its role as a bridge between South Asia and South-east Asia.  I believe today’s program has been an opportunity to deliberate on the realities and future priorities for the Bay of Bengal region.

As you all know the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit is being organized next week on the theme of ‘Towards a Peaceful, Prosperous and Sustainable Bay of Bengal Region’. This theme itself is an embodiment of the BIMSTEC member states’ lofty aspirations of peace, sustainable development and prosperity. I am confident that the Leaders will explore ways and means of realizing these common aspirations and chart out concrete actions in order to further strengthen and steer the BIMSTEC process towards these goals.

**Dear Friends,**

BIMSTEC region is bestowed with the abundance of natural, cultural and human resources. Nearly one-fourth of the world population lives in this region. The size of the economy of the region is over 3 trillion US Dollar and is growing annually at 6.5 percent. This is an evidence of the vast opportunities BIMSTEC possesses for greater regional cooperation and collaboration.

The region also possesses shared history, great civilizations and compelling potentials.  The region has a history of exchanges connecting peoples, societies and cultures since long before the advent of modern forces of globalization. Diversity in the region has always been an attribute that not just ‘divides and differentiates’ peoples, but on the contrary, binds them together as an enabler for mutual benefit and enrichment.

**Dear friends,**

BIMSTEC region today faces old development challenges and it is not immune to new vulnerabilities. While we have to continue our fight against the ills of poverty, inequality, unemployment and disease, new problems such as climate change, terrorism, and transnational organized crimes demand our concerted efforts. These challenges cannot effectively be addressed through isolated domestic interventions alone. Therefore, we must find a collective and coordinated response to our common challenges and problems.

This is where the importance of regional cooperation under BIMSTEC is all the more important.

BIMSTEC, as a regional organization, was conceived to connect South Asia and South East Asia as a dynamic bridge. The vision was to connect South Asia which currently has a population 1.7 billion and 3.3 trillion US Dollar of GDP with South East Asia that has 643 million inhabitants and 2.76 trillion US Dollars of GDP.

BIMSTEC not only connects South and South-East Asia, it also links the ecologies of the Great Himalayas and the Bay of Bengal. The organic linkage between White Mountains of Himalayas and Blue Waters of the Bay of Bengal is a defining marker of BIMSTEC region.

Apart from geographic connectivity, BIMSTEC also possesses shared cultures, beliefs, religions and civilizations. The values of peace and non-violence preached by Buddha inspire the peoples living in the region. With shared values, histories, ways of life, and destinies that are interlinked, BIMSTEC represents a common space for peace and development.

The importance of BIMSTEC lies in connecting these two regions for the shared benefit and prosperity of the peoples of the Bay of Bengal region.

BIMSTEC is well positioned to make notable contributions towards advancing regional connectivity, linking SAARC and ASEAN. For a landlocked country like Nepal, BIMSTEC carries more significance. It bears the prospects for propelling economic growth by connecting the hinterlands of the Himalayas to the ports of Bay of Bengal.

This bridging aspiration is driven by the potential economic rewards of greater regional connectivity. By fostering intra-regional connectivity around the region, we promote trade and investment. Such inter-linkage of trade and investment will promote regional value chains to capitalize on our human and natural resources. The geographic linkages of the region will then be complemented by economic linkages.

The leverage South Asia and South East Asia have will dramatically increase once the two regions are well connected and better integrated through BIMSTEC. South Asia will find its way into and across the Pacific whereas South East Asia will have easier access to Central Asia and Europe.

Such economic linkages will further promote existing people-to-people relations among countries in the region. It will also instill the Bay of Bengal consciousness in people of the region who already share common cultures, values and beliefs.

I believe such connectivity and inter-linkages can truly transform the Bay of Bengal region into a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable region.

**Dear Friends,**

We must concede that BIMSTEC has not been able to live up to the expectations of the peoples of this region even after 20 years of its establishment. We are yet to make substantial progress in the issues of mutual interest such as trade and transit facility, physical and digital connectivity, infrastructure, and realization of free trade area. The peoples of this region are earnestly expecting BIMSTEC to deliver.

It is my firm conviction that we must work together with the concerted efforts to make BIMSTEC a deliverable organization. It’s high time we channelized our means and efforts towards implementing what we have agreed on. We must also stay focused and committed to develop new concrete actions to steer the BIMSTEC process more effectively.

I am confident that the upcoming BIMSTEC Summit will be instrumental in appropriately addressing relevant issues of mutual interest of the member states. After all, it is in the benefit of all peoples in the region to develop BIMSTEC as a vibrant and fulfilling organization connecting South and Southeast Asia.

I thank you all for your attention.

**Remarks by The Hon’ble Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs, at a Get together Reception organized by Nepal Bharat Friendship Society to celebrate the 72nd Independence Day of India**

**Kathmandu, 16 August 2018**

President of Nepal Bharat Friendship Society, Mr. Prem Lashkery,
Former Vice President Mr. Paramananda Jha,
Former Prime Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai,
Ambassador of India, H. E. Shri Manjeev Singh Puri,
Mayor of Kathmandu Metropolis Mr. Vidya Sundar Shakya,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am thankful to Nepal Bharat Friendship Society for inviting me to this event organized to commemorate the 72nd Independence Day of India. I feel honourd to be a part of this celebration. On this happy occasion, I would like to extend my warm greetings to Ambassador Puri and through him to the Government and people of India. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate them for the remarkable achievements made by India over the last seven decades of freedom from the colonial rule.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This day reminds us of a glorious moment of triumph on the 15th of August 1947 which not only brought to an end the dark era of repression in India, but also generated an inspiration for the peoples around the world for freedom and self-rule. It also demonstrated that peace and non-violence would be the best way to win freedom. Today as India is celebrating its historic Independence Day, we pay our tribute to the apostle of non-violence, the great Mahatma Gandhi.

In this context, let me recall the whole-hearted support extended by the people of Nepal for freedom movement of India and active participation of some of our prominent leaders like B.P. Koirala, Man Mohan Adhikari and Krishna Prasad Bhattarai of the time in it. Our leaders fought shoulder to shoulder with their Indian friends to liberate India from colonial rule.

Today, a firm commitment to the principles of peaceful coexistence, sovereign equality, mutual respect and understanding of each other’s aspirations and interests and respect of each other’s sensitivities characterize our relations and should continue to do so. Age-old ties of history, culture, tradition and religion have nurtured our relations. The spheres of our cooperation have expanded into extensive partnerships in multiple areas of common interest at bilateral, regional and international levels. India’s cooperation in infrastructure development, human resource development and projects in much needed sectors such as hydropower development has been instrumental in our efforts to achieve socio-economic transformation of the country. Besides recognizing the catalytic role of connectivity in stimulating economic growth and promoting people-to-people contacts, we focus our attention on advancing cooperation in water resources, strengthening trade and economic linkages, and promoting religious and cultural ties, to name a few.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This day also brings to our mind the steady journey of India since August 1947 towards the consolidation of national independence and institutionalization of a firm democratic foundation. India has shown to the world how democracy and development could be advanced simultaneously to promote overall progress and prosperity of the people.

The achievements India has made in the last 71 years of independence are truly inspiring. India stands firmly at the forefront, among other nations, with its distinct position in economic development, social progress, and scientific and technological advancement. A population of 1.3 billion consisting mostly of young, innovative and enterprising section has been a great dividend. India’s economic growth rate has been high over the years. India’s IT sector remains one of the best in the world. It is making great strides in space research. The rapid building of infrastructure, expansion of trade and increase in agriculture productivity have transformed the country’s destiny.

Nonetheless, there are many challenges. And our challenges are similar in many respects. Both our countries are not fully free from poverty, illiteracy, disease, food insecurity and insufficient infrastructure. The vast natural resources that we have been gifted with are yet to be properly harnessed. Economic interlinkages are yet to be consolidated. We are yet to benefit fully from mutual complementarity in many other areas. All these necessitate further efforts for a meaningful partnership so as to ensure mutually beneficial results.

In this context, I fondly recall the exchange of visits by the Prime Ministers of Nepal and India in April and May this year which has generated a new dynamism in our bilateral relations. Our two sides are committed to taking bilateral relations to newer heights by strengthening ongoing cooperation in diverse spheres as well as to expanding partnership on the basis of the principles of equality, mutual trust, respect and mutual benefit. Besides economic, social and other areas of cooperation, we are expanding cooperation in the core areas of agriculture, railway linkages and inland waterways. While focusing on effective implementation of all the past agreements and understandings, both sides have intensified engagements for addressing the outstanding matters within the stipulated time frame of September 2018 with the objective of advancing cooperation in all areas.

Likewise, we are expecting the final report of the EPG-NIR to be submitted soon which, I believe, will suggest a clear guideline for the excellent relations between our countries as required for the 21st century.

In view of such focused attention from both sides on deeper and wider engagements in the areas of common interest, we look forward to a mutually beneficial outcome for our two countries and peoples.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Once again, I would like to express my best wishes for the continued progress and prosperity of the people of India on this occasion. I also wish this get together reception a success.

Before I conclude, I pray for early recovery and good health of Shri Atal Bihari Bajpai ji the veteran, esteemed and renowned leader and good friend of Nepal.

Thank you.

**Statement by The Hon’ble Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs at the function organized by Nepal-Pakistan Friendship and Cultural Association to celebrate the 71st Anniversary of the Independence of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan**

**14 August 2018**

Rt. Hon. Vice-President,
Mr. Himalaya Shumsher Rana, President of Nepal-Pakistan Friendship and Cultural Association
His Excellency Dr. Mazhar Javed, Ambassador of Pakistan
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to attend this special function organized by Nepal-Pakistan Friendship and Cultural Association to celebrate the 71st Anniversary of the Independence of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. While expressing my sincere appreciation to the Association for this initiative, I would like to extend warm congratulations and best wishes to the Government and the friendly people of Pakistan on this happy occasion. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Pakistani people for successful conduct of the recent general elections in Pakistan in a democratic way. We look forward to working closely with the new government.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to note that ever since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1960, Nepal and Pakistan have been enjoying cordial and friendly relations characterized by goodwill, mutual understanding and cooperation. Our two countries have been working together at bilateral, regional and international levels to promote mutual interest. Enhanced engagement in the political, economic, cultural and other spheres would further strengthen relations between our two countries and peoples.

There is no doubt that the exchange of visits at high level immensely contributes to further strengthening bilateral relations. In particular, I would like to fondly recall the official visit of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to Nepal in March this year which provided both sides with the opportunity to discuss various matters of mutual cooperation. The visit also held special significance as it was the first one by a foreign head of government after the formation of the present government in Nepal.

As neighbours in South Asia, Nepal and Pakistan share common aspirations for the socio-economic development of our peoples. However, many common developmental challenges confront us in this quest. In order to address such challenges and fulfill our aspirations, there is a need to explore more avenues of deeper cooperation in the coming days.

A peaceful, stable and prosperous South Asia is in our interest. As a common platform, SAARC can play a pivotal role in advancing prosperity in the region. What we need to do is to revitalize SAARC. We must make it an organization that delivers tangible outcome. Without deeper integration we cannot enjoy the fruits of regional cooperation. To achieve results, we must focus on core areas of trade, investment, tourism, and connectivity. Nepal always remains proactive in realizing the objectives enshrined in the SAARC Charter and as the current Chair has been working closely with Member States in the spirit of solidarity, cooperation and partnership.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sustainable economic growth and social development are perquisite to enhance the quality of life of our people. In this context, a meaningful and mutually beneficial engagement between Nepal and Pakistan holds significance. We have good potential in furthering mutual benefit in economic sphere. The current figure of bilateral trade is not reflective of the vast potentials that we possess. In order to further promote economic cooperation, enhanced focus should be laid on strengthening existing mechanisms and simplifying enabling regulations. We also need to ensure holding regular meetings of the joint mechanisms to explore and realize the potentials of further trade, investment, and industrial joint ventures.

It is worth mentioning that there is enormous possibility of further cooperation in the areas of agriculture and tourism between Nepal and Pakistan. More exchanges in the cultural field would help deepen people-to-people relations. Importantly, Nepali students have benefited from higher studies in Pakistan. Seats provided by the Government of Pakistan for medical education have been of great support in building our manpower in this crucial field.

As we explore the possibility of enhancing bilateral economic engagements, the active role of the private sector remains important. At the same time, the mechanisms and linkages established between the business communities of our two countries need to be revitalized.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am privileged to reiterate that Nepal attaches high importance to its relations with Pakistan. As we strive for deeper and wider bilateral relations, we look forward to continued cooperation and exchanges at different levels in coming days for the mutual benefit of the two countries and peoples.

Once again, I would like to express my best wishes for the continued progress and prosperity of the people of Pakistan on this auspicious day.

Thank you.

**Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, at the Launching Ceremony of the “SAWTEE Centre for Sustainable Development” (SAWTEE-CSD)
Kathmandu, 06 August 2018**

**Vice Chairman of National Planning Commission, Honourable Prof. Dr. Pushpa Raj Kadel,**
**Former Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat,**
**Dr. Posh Raj Pandey ji, Chairman of South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE),**
**Former High Representative for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, Gyan Chandra Acharya ji,**
**Excellencies,**
**Friends from the media,**
**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

I feel honoured to be amongst you this afternoon at the Launching Ceremony of the SAWTEE Centre for Sustainable Development (SAWTEE-CSD).

I congratulate SAWTEE and its pioneers for establishing the Centre for Sustainable Development. I also congratulate Gyan Chandra Acharya ji for leading the Centre and wish for its success. Someone who was in a position to advocate the cause of LDCs and LLDCs during the negotiation of Sustainable Development Goals, this is a fitting job that Gyan Chandra ji has chosen to undertake.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As the distinguished former speakers have shed light on different elements of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), I wish to limit myself to share my perspectives on some of the critical areas that are important for us.

The SDGs represent the most comprehensive development agendas ever evolved through consensus of the world community. Adoption of this in 2015 reflected the resolve of humanity to fight poverty and extricate itself from the state of under-development.

This bears a special meaning to the least developed countries like Nepal. It has generated enormous hope in LDCs as this represents the most holistic development promise to them ever since the vulnerabilities and special needs of the group was recognized in 1971.

The SDGs build on the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) but encompass much more than that. For LDCs and LLDCs, SDGs represent the substantial addition to the MDGs, Istanbul Program of Action (IPOA), the Vienna Program of Action (VPOA), Addis Ababa Action Agenda and other internationally agreed development goals and targets.

While all the earlier efforts have made positive contributions in bringing shared understanding, shared commitment as well as visible improvement in the human condition, SDGs aim at leaving no one behind and taking forward everyone in this journey.

Through the implementation of cross-cutting 17 goals and 169 indicators, SDGs intend to culminate in ending poverty and hunger from the face of the world. This is ambitious but through our collective efforts it is achievable. We must start this journey from the local and national level.

Nepal remains committed to achieve these goals before 2030. Building on our experience and relative success in the implementation of MDGs, the Government of Nepal has fully internalized the SDGs into the national policies and plans. It is imperative now to mainstream and integrate them in the provincial and local level plans and programmes. We were the first country to prepare national plan of action for SDGs. Nepal participated in Voluntary National Review at the High Level Political Forum last year and we are preparing for the next year’s review of the progress after 4 years of the SDGs’ adoption.

Implementation of SDGs is critical for Nepal’s ambition of graduating from the LDC status. Progress in SDGs can contribute for smooth and sustainable graduation as we endeavour to raise our performance in income criteria.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

After years of political transition, Nepal has now achieved political stability. The conflict had its toll in terms of a generation of youth flying from the country and remaining outside of the school. We invested our valuable time, enormous political capital, economic resources and that of people’s resilience to conclude the peace process. This has established culture of dialogue and accommodation among the stakeholders within the country, which is manifested in the promulgation of a democratic and inclusive constitution in 2015. This has also raised people’s expectation.

One of the biggest challenges of our time is ending poverty which is the overarching goal of the SDGs. The government intends to address this situation by aligning targeted programs with economic, social and environmental pillars of the SDGs. The recently pronounced policies and programs of the government and the federal budget for this fiscal year are aimed at fulfilling that objective and building foundation for making “Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali”.

Nepal has abundant natural resources. We have potential to meet our energy needs and generate resources for other development purposes by tapping hydropower potential. Geographical proximity to India and China provides Nepal a unique opportunity to benefit from unprecedented economic transformation taking place there that opens up immense opportunities for trade and investment.

In order to realise SDGs, Nepal needs to attain higher productivity and economic growth. Promotion of innovation, entrepreneurship, manufacturing, and the small and medium-sized enterprises can play critical role in this process. Nepal also needs to focus on capacity building and infrastructure development.

As a least developed country, Nepal has to invest its limited resources with great prudence. Agriculture is the largest contributor in national GDP. Majority of our population lives in rural areas and depends on agriculture for livelihoods. However, for agriculture to be an attractive enterprise for younger generation, we need to modernise it, encourage commercial farming, and search market access for agro-products.

**Dear Friends,**

Progress on all of the SDGs will be stalled if women’s empowerment is not put at the top of the agenda. Realization of gender equality hinges upon the full empowerment of women and girls. So is the importance of ensuring inclusion of marginalized communities and the Dalits in the mainstream of the development process and render social justice to all of our people. The Constitution of Nepal has guaranteed gender equality and equal rights for all. Investing in education is the call of our time. Providing technical and vocational training and creating job should be our priority. Quality and inclusive education has the capacity to bring positive social and economic transformation in the country. Our own experience of inclusiveness has proved this reality.

Our demography is young but lacks modern skills. Finding decent jobs for them at a time when the world is witnessing the fourth Industrial Revolution is a challenge for us. For over a decade, migration and by extension remittance has remained a major component of our economy. Nepal attaches great value in ensuring safe, orderly and regular migration. We have stressed on creating a fair and win-win situation for all, including the migrant workers. At domestic level, we are pursuing this matter in earnest and are committed to eradicate all forms of labour related issues by 2028.

The cost of natural disasters is rising sharply in terms of human tragedy and devastation. Nepal is one of the most vulnerable countries in terms of natural disasters. The pain of earthquake in 2015 has not fully subsided yet which resulted in pushing 2% of our population into poverty. Nepal disproportionately suffers from climate change despite its negligible contribution in greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore it has been our endeavour to implementthe Paris Agreement in line with the spirit of 2030 Agenda. At international level, we call for the common but differentiated responsibilities, equity and respective capabilities should be at the centre of its implementation.

Rule-based international trading system has potential to create win-win situation for all if it is implemented with special but differentiated treatment to the LDCs and LLDCs. Nepal has identified its major export items and devised strategies to address trading and competitiveness challenges faced by export sector. We intend to address the constraints of institutional capacity, trade and investment promotion, trade facilitation, intellectual property rights, and issues related to trade in services. Reducing the trade deficit is of paramount importance. Identifying new sources of exports and reducing the cost of exporting goods has been our priority.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As a shared commitment, the Government of Nepal has started the process of effective implementation of SDGs. However, our effort alone will not be enough. Realization of the most ambitious goals will remain elusive in absence of the means of implementation. There exists a gap between the ambition and the resource commitment internationally. It calls for multi-pronged approach and solid international partnership. We need reliable and sustainable financing and technology transfer to overcome capacity and structural impediments. Developing multi-stakeholder partnership to share knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial support is seen as critical to overall success of the SDGs. Public-private and civil society partnership as well as timely and full implementation of the IPOA, VPOA, and Addis Ababa Action Agenda in full synergy and coherence with the 2030 Agenda are equally important.

Implementing SDGs is a collective responsibility of all stakeholders including the non-governmental actors. All out efforts from our partners within the country and outside through investment in the activities that directly contribute to propelling growth and economic development are required to bring a change in the ground. Nepal faces development challenges in all fronts. This requires sustained investments and complementary efforts from all fronts to yield concrete results in the ground. I hope the CDS that is being launched today would play its role in this effort.

The Government of Nepal welcomes the contribution from civil society partners and is keen to join hands with all stakeholders in our journey to achieving the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

With these words, I conclude my remarks.

I thank you all for your attention.

**Remarks by the Minister for Foreign Affairs Honourable Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at the 70th Anniversary Program of Nepal Council of World Affairs**
**Kathmandu, 03 August 2018**

**Mr. Chairman and the office bearers of the Nepal Council of World Affairs,**

**Excellencies,**
**Friends from the Media,**
**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

1. I feel privileged to address this august gathering organized to mark the 70th anniversary of Nepal Council of World Affairs.
2. I would like to congratulate the Council and its office bearers on its 70th anniversary and extend my best wishes for the continued success and progress of the Council as an important policy forum. I thank you all for inviting me to be part of this occasion.
3. The Council probably is the oldest think-tank in Nepal to deliberate on foreign policy and other issues of global concerns. There was a time when everyone would look upon the Council to host talks of distinguished foreign dignitaries or deliberate on the pertinent issues of foreign relations that bear importance to Nepal. While it is a matter of satisfaction to see the Council surviving for 70 long years, it is also befitting to expect the Council thriving both in terms of quality of deliberations and inclusiveness in its membership. The Council should be able to attract interests among the young and dynamic generation for it to further grow and contribute to fulfill its founding objectives.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. As guided by the Constitution of Nepal, the principles of the UN Charter, *Panchasheel*, international law and the norms of world peace continue to inspire the conduct of our foreign policy. We pursue an independent foreign policy based on our national interest. Friendship with all and animosity with none has remained the hallmark of our engagements in the comity of nations. Sovereign equality, mutuality of interest, justice and mutual respect provide the basis for the conduct of our international relations. Informed by these universally accepted norms of inter-state relations, we have steadily expanded our diplomatic outreach to 161 countries of the world that constitutes over 80 percent of UN membership.
2. The present Government attaches high importance to the socio-economic development of the country which is key to sustaining peace and stability, and enhancing quality of life of our people. Our desire to attain a decent level of prosperity in short run and sustaining of the gains for longer term development of the country is informed by the need and aspiration of our people for achieving economic transformation in our own life time. This resolve of the nation is well reflected in the policy and programs of the Government for the current fiscal year which is aimed at building a foundation for the coming five years.
3. With a view to realize those objectives, it has been our priority to mobilize all the resources at our disposal, including our diplomatic apparatus. We have emphasized on promoting economic development agendas through strategic pursuit of economic diplomacy. Garnering international support for economic development and promoting foreign direct investment, tourism, technology transfer, and export trade are some of the important areas that we would like our diplomatic machinery to focus on to complement the national development objective.

**Dear Friends,**

1. Nepal’s neighborhood provides opportunities for expanding economic linkages. We enjoy cordial and friendly relations with both of our immediate neighbors. We continue to build mutual trust and goodwill and promote cooperative relations with them. Regular exchange of high level visits and increasing people to people contacts have further strengthened these relations and deepened the spirit of cooperation. Nepal stands committed not to allow her soil to be used by any undesired element against the interest of our neighbors and we expect similar sensitivity accorded by our neighbors on the maters of our concern.
2. Nepal and India enjoy historically close and multi-faceted relations. These relations are nurtured by extensive people level contacts and socio-cultural bonds that we share for centuries. The exchange of visits by the Prime Ministers of Nepal and India in April and May this year has contributed to further enhance mutual trust and consolidate bilateral relations. Our two countries are committed to take forward cooperation and partnership on the basis of equality, mutual trust, respect and mutual benefit. We have agreed to advance cooperation in the core areas of agriculture, railway linkages and inland waterways. While focusing on effective implementation of all the past agreements and understandings, we have intensified engagements for addressing the outstanding matters by September 2018. The bilateral oversight mechanism established in September 2016 has proved to be a useful means to accelerate the progress in the implementation of development projects and address the issues that come up during the process. The Eminent Persons Group has concluded its mandated task and we are anticipating submission of the report soon.
3. Nepal and China enjoy a long history of close and cordial relationship, which is based on the five principles of peaceful co-existence. Appreciation of each other’s aspirations as well as respect for each other’s concerns and sensitivities has injected an important element of trust in our relationship. Nepal remains fully committed to one China policy. We admire China’s neighborhood diplomacy guided by the principles of sincerity, amity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness.
4. The recent official visit to China by the Right Honourable Prime Minister of Nepal remained fruitful in further strengthening the friendly relations. We have agreed to intensify implementation of MoU on cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative to enhance connectivity. The cooperation covers building of dry ports, roads, railways, aviation and communications network within the framework of Trans-Himalaya Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network. We believe that this will open up a new era of cross-border cooperation and foster trade, commerce and investment.
5. Equally important is our relations with the friendly countries in our extended neighborhood and the labour receiving countries. We have been closely working together and engaged extensively with these important partners for the safety, security and well being of our migrant workers. We are keen to expand this relationship in the broader areas of economic partnership to promote trade, tourism, investment and people to people contacts for mutual benefit. Nepal also currently chairs the Colombo Process, a Regional Consultative Process on migration comprising 12 Asian labour sending countries. 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.
6. Nepal’s extended neighborhood also manifests itself through regional organizations such as SAARC and BIMSTEC. As you are well aware, Nepal is the current chair of both these organizations and continues to work together with fellow Member States to further accelerate these regional processes for achieving regional economic cooperation. Nepal is hosting the 4th BIMSTEC Summit towards the end of this month. We are engaged with other Member States to revive the stalled SAARC process. Our association with the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) has allowed us to be linked with our friends stretching all sub-regions of Asia. We are seeking observer status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to which we are a dialogue partner now. These regional bonds have kept growing and we believe that together with our bilateral initiatives, they will help us in our pursuit of economic development and prosperity.
7. Our relations with our development partners have been a very important part of our foreign relations. We attach high importance to our relations with the permanent members of the UN Security Council, the European Union and its member States, and our traditional donor and development partners. This relationship has remained cordial and cooperative both in bilateral fronts as well as in multilateral arena. Some of these partners have been the longest companions of our journey to economic development and modernization. We are grateful for their steadfast support and cooperation over the years, and we expect enhanced level of economic partnership to drive our mission of economic development and prosperity. We believe that there is a tremendous potential for expanding partnership in the areas of trade, investment and technology transfer. We have a common understanding with our development partners to multiply the existing success stories of development cooperation through the alignment of development assistance with our national priorities and to build synergetic effects in development. It has been our common goal to ensure that development assistance provides desired results.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. Nepal remains actively engaged in the multilateral arena, including at the United Nations. Our faith in the principles and purposes of the UN Charter is unwavering and our belief in multilateralism remains consistent. We consider United Nations as an indispensible organization to deliberate upon and resolve the global issues of common concern. We support the UN reform initiatives to provide equal emphasis on all three pillars- peace and security, development and human rights, and to make the world body more efficient, effective and responsive to the need of our time. We continue to maintain principled and independent position on major issues of global concern. We support total and complete disarmament, especially of all weapons of mass destruction. We condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We support peaceful settlement of all international disputes and consider diplomacy and dialogue as the most legitimate means of reducing differences and resolving conflicts. We continue to firmly support the Paris Convention on Climate Change. As a member of the World Trade Organization, we stand in support of rule-based international trading system with special and differentiated treatment to the LDCs and LLDCs in particular. We consider the relevance and importance of the non-aligned movement as a principle continues even today.
2. Nepal has contributed to the maintenance of international peace and security through its effective participation in UN mandated peacekeeping operations for past six decades. Currently, Nepal stands 6thlargest troop and police contributing country to the UN peace operations. The ultimate sacrifice made by 73 of our brave peacekeepers in the line of duty exemplifies our commitment to the cause of world peace. Nepali peacekeepers have proven their competence as the most professional and dedicated savior of peace and humanitarian protection. To reinforce our commitment to the protection of civilians, we have endorsed the Kigali principles and have joined the UN Secretary General’s Voluntary Compact against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.
3. Besides contributing to UN peace operations, Nepal has its own unique experience of peaceful transformation from armed conflict to peace and democracy. Our uniquely successful, nationally owned and home-grown peace process provides a case study for countries in transition and those going through conflict. The Constitution of Nepal which incorporates the most progressive provisions of social justice, inclusive democracy and fundamental rights is the outcome of that successful peace process. Our experience can be useful for them how a nationally owned peace process can lead to a success. We are keen to share this unique experience for the benefit of larger humanity.
4. Nepal’s active advocacy for the cause of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS and our solidarity and co-operation with these countries remain important part of our multilateral engagements. Under UN’s initiative, Nepal Chaired and led the 4th LDC Conference in Istanbul in 2011. Nepal remains steadfast in its calls for the effective implementation of all relevant international agreements to address the specific development needs of the countries in special situation.
5. We have set a goal of graduating from the LDC status at the earliest feasible time. The triennial review conducted by the UN Committee on Development Policy has concluded that Nepal meets two out of three criteria for the graduation. We are committed to raise the third and the most important criteria, the per capita income, to a decent level so that we could steer through the graduation in a smooth and sustainable manner.
6. Nepal actively contributed to the negotiation of sustainable development goals (SDG). We were the first country to prepare national plan of action for their implementation. We have fully aligned our national development plans with the SDGs to comprehensively address the issues of poverty and under-development and not to leave anyone behind in the process.

**Dear Friends,**

1. Our commitment to democracy, pluralism and the universal values of human rights and fundamental freedoms is unwavering. Those were the ideals for which we fought for seven decades. We hold them dear and do not ‘take them for granted’. This commitment is translated in our role in the Human Rights Council, where we remain a member for the term 2018-20 and have also announced our bid for re-election to the Council. Nepal’s role at the Council reflects our position for apolitical and objective examination of human rights issues on non-selective, even-handed and merit basis. We stand for a system that is transparent, accountable and embraces universally accepted democratic values.
2. Nepal is a party to 24 international human rights related instruments, and 7 out of 9 core human rights instruments. We continue to faithfully engage with the relevant human rights mechanisms such as the UPR process and the Special Procedures mechanism and treaty bodies. Given the level of economic development and capacity of the country, our undertaking of international human rights obligations remains among the top. We consider that by attaining economic development and providing means for implementation of human rights obligations can substantially enable the enjoyment of human rights by all.
3. As you all are aware that we have just come out of long and painful conflict and protracted peace process. As we are focused in the reconciliation and healing process of the post-conflict society, we are equally sensitive and committed to avoidance of impunity and ensure justice to the victims.

**Finally,**

1. Before I conclude, let me put on record my appreciation to the Nepal Council of World Affairs in bringing out its Annual Journal, which I am sure will provide valuable insights on various contemporary issues. I congratulate all those involved in this useful endeavor.

I thank you all for your attention.

**Remarks by Hon’ble Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs at a ceremony to handover “Wheelchairs of Hope” organised by the Embassy of Israel in Kathmandu together with Lions Club of Kathmandu Capital District 325-A2 and Karuna Foundation Nepal.
17 July 2018 in Kathmandu.
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H.E. Mr. Benny Omer, Ambassador of Israel to Nepal
Mr. Govinda P. Adhikari, Chairperson of Karuna Foundation Nepal
Dr.Bhagawan Koirala ,Vice Chairperson of Karuna Foundation Nepal
Lion Sudarshan Dhar Pradhananga, District Governor, Lions Club of Kathmandu Capital District 325-A2
Beloved children with disabilities present on this occasion
Distinguished Friends
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am really delighted to attend this ceremony on the handover of the Israeli “Wheel Chairs of Hope”being organised by the Embassy of Israel in Kathmandu together with Lions Club of Kathmandu Capital District 325-A2 and Karuna Foundation Nepal to mark the 70 Years of Independence of the State of Israel. On this occasion, on behalf of the Government of Nepal, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as on my own, I would like to extend by heartiest congratulations to the Government and the people of the State of Israel and wish for continued peace and progress of the people of the State of Israel.

The six-decades of partnership and cooperation between Nepal and Israel has been immensely fruitful and productive in the development efforts of Nepal. I feel glad to note that Nepal was the first country in South Asia to have the diplomatic relations with the State of Israel. Over the years, our bilateral engagements and cooperation have been growing incessantly with renewed strength every year which ultimately is in the interest of our two countries and people.  The exchange of high level visits between the two countries beginning from 1960s and mutually beneficial cooperative relations in the diverse fields including agriculture and irrigation, human resource development, science and technology, tourism and civil aviation and foreign employment   have brought our two countries and people closer to each other.

Let me take this opportunity to restate that Government and the people of Nepal highly regard the humanitarian support and solidarity extended by the Government and people of the State of Israel during the devastating earthquakes in April 2015. We had received a humanitarian mission of over 250 Doctors, much needed for rescue and relief operations, sent immediately after the earthquake by the Government of Israel.

After my assumption of office as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nepal, we made an arrangement for hosting the First meeting of the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism (BCM) between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the two friendly countries in Kathmandu in March 2018 at the senior officer’s level.  Matters of bilateral and mutual interests were thoroughly discussed on that occasion. Following the BCM meeting in Nepal, there has also been a ministerial level visit to Israel in the recent past.

I would like to appreciate Your Excellency the Ambassador and the Embassy of Israel in Kathmandu for coming up with this idea of supporting the children with disabilities in Nepal and co- organizing this event to that effect. I take this event as a symbolic gesture of empathy and support to our children. I would also like to congratulate the other two co- organisers- the Lions Club of Kathmandu Capital District 325-A and the Karuna Foundation Nepal for the initiatives you have taken for addressing the concerns of the children with disabilities in Nepal. I am sure the ‘’Wheelchairs of Hope” will bring about a new ray of hope and aspiration to our young children with disabilities for realizing their full potential in the society they are living in. The philanthropic activities of this kind do matter significantly when it comes to changing the future of our children who need additional support. In that sense this is an exemplary initiative on the part of the organisers.

I have a firm belief that everyone is born with a unique and special ability. Physical disability cannot and should not be a permanent obstacle to the progress and development of our children in their lives. It is essential that the government agencies, private sector, civil society, academia and all other segments of society work hand in hand to change social attitude towards disability and ensure favourable environment for all round development of our children with disabilities. We need to create conditions in which they are entitled special opportunities and facilities so that they can reach their full potential. Their voices need to be heard and their rights need to be ensured in the society.

It goes without saying that our future rests on the hands of our children. The government of Nepal, realising this fact,is fully committed to increase the access of our children with disabilities to education, medical services and skill development activities. Decade-long conflict, inadequate physical infrastructure causing serious accidents and lack of enough health facility is contributing to add on the problem. Our objective is to make sure that disability stops being a perennial source of pain and suffering. There are ample examples in which children with disabilities through their persistent efforts, hard work, and perseverance have brought remarkable changes to their societies by the time they reached their adulthood.Children,however, need support and protection to set such examples.I am confident that our policies and programmes, our strong desire and commitment coupled with revolutionary changes brought about by science and technology would herald a new dawn in the lives of the children with disabilities in the time to come.

The Constitution of Nepal has enshrined the right to equality and non-discrimination as fundamental rights of all citizens.The Government of Nepal adopted various schemes and programmes that include social security allowance, Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR), and reservation quotas to enable persons with disability live with dignity and honour in community. The Government has been making efforts to increase enrollment of children with disabilities in school with the provision of different types of scholarships and incentives.The Coordinating efforts by government, civil societies community and the concerning family are extremely important.

At the moment near about 77000 children with disabilities have been enrolled in school education system out of which about 65000 children with disability are in basic education school (Grade 1 to 8).

Before I conclude, I would once again like to extend my sincere thanks to the Embassy of Israel in Kathmandu for materialising this event today and providing me this opportunity to be part of a noble cause as the Chief Guest. Being a father of the daughter with physical and mental disability, I feel emotionally attached to such programmes and community. Let me reiterate that the event today is the reflection of the subsistingstrong bond of friendship,understanding and cooperation between Nepal and the State of Israel which have been growing steadily towards the mutual satisfaction of our two countries. My sincere appreciation also goes to two other organisers- the Lions Club of Kathmandu Capital District 325 -A2 and Karuna Foundation Nepal.

Finally, let me express my hope that this is not the end of journey of philanthropic activities that benefit our children with disabilities. I look forward to be part of many more initiatives like this in the future.

I thank you all.

**Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, at the Talk Program on “Nepal and United Nations: Partners for Peace and Development” organized by United Nations Association of Nepal**

**Kathmandu, 12 July 2018**

**Mr. Chairman,**
**Excellencies,**
**Colleagues from the media,**
**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

I feel honored to be amongst you this afternoon. I would like to thank the organizers for inviting me to this forum.

Discourses on the pertinent themes like that of today are always useful. I found the theme aptly chosen and relevant. I hope the United Nation’s Association of Nepal will continue such discussions in the future as well. Let me directly enter into the topic of today and share my thoughts on this.

The ideals of sovereign equality, peace, justice, and progress espoused by the UN Charter continue to inspire us. Nepal has an abiding faith and commitment to the principles and purposes of the UN Charter. Nepal’s constitution recognizes them as the guiding elements of our foreign policy.

It is close to seven decades, even before Nepal became its member, Nepal and the United Nations began partnership for development. It all began at a time when Nepal had just emerged from centuries of isolation and the country needed expertise and technical know-how to steer through the path of openness, development and modernization. Those experts that came to Nepal in early 1950s under the UN technical assistance represent the early incarnation of UN’s partnership in the development of Nepal. That partnership has steadily grown and extended to the present.

After we became member of the United Nations in 1955 our partnership and engagements increased manifold and we have remained a dedicated and active member of the organization. Ever since, this partnership has grown, expanded and developed to include wide range of thematic areas and geographical coverage of Nepal.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Nepal’s partnership with the United Nations permeates to all three pillars of the organization, i.e. development, peace and security, and human rights. Let me briefly touch on each of them.

Nepal’s association with the UN and contribution to different UN specialized agencies has been long, constructive and fruitful. Some of the UN specialized agencies that are there in the governance of international public goods and cross-border regulation of communications and air transportation have been partner in their respective fields ever since we became the member of these agencies.

In the development front, we have been partners in increasing the coverage of vaccination, controlling disease, improving maternal and child health, reducing child and maternal mortality, and improving hygiene and sanitation. Our collaboration with the UN continues in expanding literacy, increasing enrollment of children into schools, reducing drop outs, improving girl’s education and increasing women’s participation and empowerment. These efforts have contributed for bringing marked change in the human and social development indicators and achieving the MDGs and SDGs. UN’s cooperation in the eradication of malaria, leprosy, tuberculosis and controlling of pandemics and epidemics has remained significant. UN has been partner in disaster preparedness, mitigation and response, and we have worked together to reduce vulnerabilities, enhance resilience and protect environment.

UN funds and programs like UNDP has been a partner for development and the face of UN in Nepal for decades. We have received UN’s assistance for management of refugee population for years. We have received relief services and food aid in time of disasters and emergencies, and humanitarian assistance to the refugee population. UN has been assisting us in the provision of food for work in remote areas to cope with food shortage and nutrition problem as well as in the building of local level infrastructures. UN agencies support extends to the conservation and preservation of natural and man-made heritage sites. They have been partner for promoting social dialogue and decent job. We have received technical assistance and capacity building for the modernization and improvement of agriculture sector and assistance in fulfilling critical resource gap in that process.

UN has brought new ideas and technical expertise in development process. Its partnership in improving human development indicators and implementation of MDGs was significant in the past. Our partnership with the UN has now transitioned to the focused implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UN has been a key partner in that process to help us achieve the goals as per the national development plans and priorities.

In this spirit, last year Nepal stressed on the need to evolve United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) through a genuine consultative process of the Government stakeholders, and make UNDAF a true outcome of a country-owned and country-led process so that it could help attain its objectives. Nepal’s assertion to make that important document a broad-based and country-owned emanates from our desire to bring a requisite focus to those SDGs that are critically important for Nepal to achieve in the short run so that a solid base could be created for the attainment of the rest.

Building on our relative success of the implementation of the MDGs, it has been our priority to implement and achieve the 17 goals and 169 targets of the SDGs before 2030. We have taken some concrete steps to that direction. We have fully internalized them into our national policies and plans. They are now being implemented in earnest. This entails a massive mobilization of resources, and requires unique technical capacity. Our partnership with the UN in the coming years would be to marshalling of our combined resources and capacity towards achieving those goals. Poverty alleviation remains the overarching goal of the SDGs and through that we can collectively consolidate peace and development cherished by our people for long.

In this regard, we are encouraged by the adoption of the resolution 72/279 by the UNGA in May this year. The resolution carries a fundamental repositioning of UN development system in decades. This is intended for robust implementation of SDGs where the country concerned is at the centre of the entire process. We look forward to the impending repositioning that is aimed at addressing the gaps, building synergy and improving accountability, steering clear from the politicization of development. With the new system in place, we anticipate carrying forward of the implementation of all SDGs with equal emphasis and priority so that a balanced and an evenly process of development could be achieved.

As you all know, the Government has outlined ‘Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali’ as its overarching development goal. The recently pronounced policies and programs of the Government and the budget statement for the next fiscal year are aimed at attaining of that goal. While we are aware that there is an enormous task ahead, we seek cooperation of our partners, including from the UN system, for an enhanced level of economic partnership.

**Dear Friends,**

Maintaining international peace and security is the major objective of the United Nations. Nepal on its part has been contributing to the fulfillment of this objective for decades. True to our commitment to the principles of the UN Charter, we started contributing to the UN mandated peacekeeping operations just three years after Nepal joined this world body. This is the 60th year of Nepal’s participation in the UN peace operations. Ever since, over one hundred and thirty-five thousand Nepali peacekeepers have provided best of their services to over 42 different peace operation missions around the world. In the process, seventy-three Nepali peacekeepers have made ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. Nepal currently stands 6th largest troop and police contributing country to the UN peacekeeping.

With its steadfast commitment to global peace, Nepal has remained a dependable and enduring partner in the UN peacekeeping operations often taking responsibilities in some of the most challenging situations. Nepal has never let the request of the UN down even at the shortest of calls. We have shown flexibility for inter-mission relocation of troops, deployed our officials in most difficult and challenging missions in terms of safety and security and have been fulfilling our commitment even during the period of internal conflict at home.

The fame and repute of Nepali peacekeepers as the most competent, dutiful and dependable peacekeepers has been further enhanced by Nepal’s participation in such operations without national caveats. This has allowed the United Nations the much needed ground level operational flexibilities to significantly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the peace operations and fulfill its mandates.

Nepali peacekeepers’ unique capacity to respect and empower community, earn their confidence and trust, and dedication to the fulfillment of the mandate have rendered them as one of the most sought after UN peacekeepers.

Our long experience in UN peace keeping tells us that the UN Security Council must be guided by the unity of purpose explicitly articulated in the mission’s mandate. Peace operations must be member- states driven process where UN General Assembly should have a better role, than it has today, in deciding the nature and mandate of the operations. Three key pillars of peace keeping operations i.e.- stabilizing the security situation, supporting national political process and ensuring economic revitalization- should always be holistically taken at the centre of the mandate. Our experience says that the ultimate aim of peacekeeping or peace building should be the socio-economic transformation of the conflict-affected countries.

To make such operations successful and capable of delivering on the mandate, we have called for substantive, institutionalized and structured consultation with troops and police contributing countries at all stages of UN peacekeeping. We attach high importance on the protection of civilians especially children and women, and have a policy of zero tolerance on sexual exploitation and abuses.

In line with this policy, last year Nepal joined the UN Secretary General’s compact on Sexual Exploitation and Abuses. We attach high importance on respect for the personal safety and security as well as dignity and honor of the peace keepers. As the demand for more robust engagement at the ground has increased in modern day peace operations, legal protection for the peacekeepers in the event of collateral damage remains equally important.

We consider that timely revision of the incentive structure should be a permanent feature to keep high morale of the officials serving in difficult circumstances. A fair share of representation in the leadership role, both at the UN headquarters and field missions, proportionate to contribution of the countries concerned is critically important.

There have been many happy anecdotes and examples of utmost bravery, dedication, discipline and sense of duty displayed by our peacekeepers even in extremely challenging environment and life threatening situations. They have received accolades for outstanding services and for the protection of people. Our happiest moments have been many, including when, as a recognition of the Nepalese peacekeepers’ contribution to the UNIFIL, a Nepalese soldier was included in the entourage of the then UN Secretary General to receive the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the UN in 2001.

As part of our continuous engagement with the UN in the maintenance of international peace and security, recently we had the pleasure to host Under Secretary General for Peace Keeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, and last year we had hosted Under Secretary General for Field Support. Both of these visits have provided good opportunities to enhance further cooperation in the areas of peacekeeping.

Nepal had its own share of the internal conflict followed by a home grown and successful peace process. United Nations supported us during the initial phase of our peace process through a focused and limited-mandate political mission for monitoring of the arms and combatants. We appreciate the UN for this support. As the political transition has ended and a new era of political stability has emerged in Nepal, our experience of the peace process may be useful to the countries in transition and those gone through conflict. We would be happy to share those experiences as a uniquely successful and home-grown brand of the peace process and contribute to the peace building elsewhere.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

With regard to the third pillar of the United Nations, I reiterate that Nepal’s commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights is total and unflinching. Despite the relatively smaller size of our economy, level of development and capacity, we have been party to 24 international human rights related instruments, and 7 out of 9 core instruments. True to our commitment, we have regularly submitted our periodic reports to the treaty bodies and faithfully implemented the outcomes after the consideration of the reports. This year alone three of our periodic reports are being considered by different human rights treaty bodies.

Our engagement with the UN human rights mechanism, including the human rights council and its special procedures mechanism as well as the UPR process, has been constructive. This year alone we have invited three special procedure mandate holders for the country visit. This is substantial for a country of our capacity and resources.

As a member of the Human Rights Council, Nepal’s role in the Council has been constructive. We firmly stand by the UNGA resolution 60/251 and the principle that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated and mutually reinforcing. We recognize and adhere to the objectivity, non-selectivity and elimination of politicization and double standards in dealing with human rights issues.

At the home front, two amendment Bills related to the transitional justice mechanisms are under the process of submission to the Parliament. With laws in place, and terms of the two Commissions been extended, this will allow the investigation of all allegations of serious violations of human rights and ensure justice and accountability. I reiterate that there will be no blanket amnesty to serious violations of human rights.

**Dear Friends,**

The world we live in has increasingly become complex and unpredictable. We share concerns on the seeping crisis in multilateralism. Nepal always stands for multilateralism and considers the United Nations as an indispensable organization. We regard the United Nations as the only legitimate forum to deliberate and resolve the international issues of common concern.

Under the UN initiative, Nepal Chaired and led the process of Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries during the 4th UN Conference for LDCs held in Istanbul. The Conference adopted Istanbul Program of Action (IPOA) for the Decade 2011-2020. The IPOA charts out international community’s vision and strategy for sustainable development of LDCs with a strong focus on developing their productive capacities. In line with the goal of the IPOA, Nepal has been preparing for the next cycle of review for graduating from LDC status.

At present, Nepal contributes to the UN processes as the Chair of the Bureau of Committee on Conference; Vice-Chair of the Executive Board of the UNICEF; Vice-Chair of the 28th Meeting of State Parties to the UN Convention on Law of the Sea; Vice-Chair of the Disarmament Commission; member of the UN Human Rights Council; member of the Executive Board of the UN Women; member of the Commission on Science and Technology Development; and Deputy Member of the ILO Governing Board. A member from Nepali trade union is also serving in the ILO Governing Board and a Nepali has been serving at the CEDAW Committee as its member.

Through these roles we have been closely working with the UN and contributing to the multilateral process.

With these words, I conclude my remarks. I thank the United Nations Association of Nepal for the felicitations and good wishes extended to me.

I also thank the organizers for having me in this useful forum and providing the opportunity to share my thoughts on this important theme.

I thank you for your attention.

**Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at the Dinner hosted for the Diplomatic Community**
**Kathmandu, 09 July 2018**

**Honourable Ministers**
**Excellencies**
**Ladies and gentlemen.**

Saraswati and I have the pleasure to welcome you all to this dinner hosted in your honour. I thank you for joining us this evening.

It has been close to five months since the present Government assumed the responsibility and over three and a half month since I assumed the foreign Ministry portfolio. We have had occasions to meet individually and in other different formats. This evening is dedicated collectively to you and in your honour.

As you are well aware, the Right Honourable Prime Minister has clearly outlined the direction, priorities and behaviour of Nepal’s foreign policy when he shared the Government’s vision for the coming five years with the diplomatic community in March.

**‘Amity with all, and enmity with none**’remains the soul of our foreign policy. Nepal’s adherence to the principles of the UN Charter, Panchasheel, and the norms of world peace confirms to this. Guided by this spirit, we attach high importance to our relations with all countries and organizations that you represent.

Our policy of engaging constructively with all of our friends and partners has been mutually beneficial. We continue to work closely with our neighbours, major powers, development partners, countries in our extended neighbourhood, labour receiving countries, United Nations and multilateral financial institutions.

I consider this an opportunity for me to express our gratitude to all of our friends and development partners for the close and collaborative partnership that we enjoy. You all have been dependable friends and partners in the high and low that Nepal endured in past two decades. We remain thankful to you all for your continued support and cooperation in Nepal’s development efforts.

**Excellencies,**

In these few months of the Government in office, we have endeavored to enhance mutual trust and promote cooperation with our neighboring countries in the areas of our national priority. We have also renewed our partnership and have been engaging with all friendly countries in different continents.

The recent successful exchange of visits by the Prime Ministers of Nepal and India has contributed to promote trust and goodwill between the two countries and further consolidate bilateral relations.

We have agreed to strengthen ongoing cooperation and expand partnership on the basis of the principles of equality, mutual trust, respect and benefit. We agreed to advance cooperation in the areas of agriculture, railway linkages and inland waterways, among others.

The Prime Minister had a successful visit to our northern neighbor, China. We have agreed to intensify implementation of MoU on cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative to enhance connectivity. The cooperation covers building of dry ports, roads, railways, aviation and communications within the framework of Trans-Himalaya Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network. We believe that this will open up a new era of cross-border cooperation and foster trade, commerce and investment.

In the meantime, we had the honour to host the Prime Minister of Pakistan on a bilateral visit. The visit, taken place after a gap of many years, was successful in cementing the bilateral ties between our two countries.

Serbian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs visited Nepal in early May.

During this period, we have had fruitful bilateral consultation meetings with Brazil, Denmark, EU, Israel, Russia and Switzerland. All of these engagements have been successful in further consolidating the friendly bilateral relations.

In the regional front, we are preparing for hosting the 4th Summit meeting of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sector Economic and Technical Cooperation (BIMSTEC) towards the end of August this year. Different meetings of the technical committees under the SAARC have been held.

Nepal participated in the Ministerial Meeting of the non-aligned movement held in Baku, Azerbaizan and Ministerial Meeting of International Think Tank for LLDCs held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia at the Foreign Minister’s level.

In the same period, three Under-Secretaries General of the United Nations visited Nepal.

**Excellencies,**

As you all know, the motto of the present government is ‘Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali’. We know that there are challenges ahead, and realization of this goal is not possible with our efforts alone. In recognition of these challenges as well as the distance we have to travel on our way to prosperity, we expect to be engaged in an enhanced level of economic partnership in trade, investment, technology transfer, and tourism beyond development cooperation.

Maintaining stability, advancing socio-economic transformation, ensuring social justice, good governance and rule of law have been the overarching objectives of the present government. Promoting and adhering to the values and norms of integrity, transparency, and accountability are equally important priorities of the Government. They are applicable to both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. With regard to the concern related to the draft integrity policy, I may clarify that the Government has no intention of curbing or discouraging the participation of stakeholders, including the civil society organizations, in our development efforts. They have been important partners in development and will continue to remain so.

While we encourage civil society organizations in our development activities, we are also aware of the ‘gaps’ that we need to address. We expect our civil society partners to avoid duplication, contribute in areas that help create jobs and bring tangible benefits to the people, and avoid scattering of scarce resources. Our sole objective isto addressthose gapsso that developmental benefits reach to the people. This has also been the voice of the civil society themselves for long that they function in a transparent and accountable manner. It is but natural for the government to expectthat the civil society partners align their activities with the policy and priorities of the Government so that synergetic effects could be generated in our development efforts.

Our commitment to democracy and the universal values of human rights and fundamental freedoms is total and unwavering.We have reached to this stage with decades of struggle and sacrifices of Nepali peoplefor the cause of democracy and freedom. This Government can never compromise on those achievements and values that we fought for. Respect for diversity and pluralism constitute the very spirit of Nepali society and this Government stands on that foundation. Therefore our commitment to pluralism is absolute.

This year alone will see Nepal’s three different periodic reportsbeing considered by three different human rights treaty bodies.

In March, we hosted Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, and we are preparing for the visit of special rapporteur on the violence against women, and special rapporteur on right to food this year.

Two amendment Bills related to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons are currently under consideration of the Parliament. With the new law in place and terms of the Commissions been extended, this will allow the investigation of all allegations of serious violations of human rights and humanitarian laws and ensure justice and accountability. There will be no blanket amnesty to serious violations of human rights.

**Excellencies,**

We live in a complex and unpredictable world. We share the concerns about the simmeringuncertainties in multilateralism. However, Nepal’s faith in multilateralism remains unshaken. We consider the United Nations as anindispensable organization in multilateral affairs and supportits reform for further strengthening. United Nations is the only legitimate forum to deliberate and resolve the international issues of common concern.

We are encouraged by the adoption of the resolution on repositioning of UN development system by the UNGA recently. This is intended for robust implementation of SDGs. We look forward to the impending repositioning that is aimed at addressing the gaps, building synergy and improving accountability, steering clear from the politicization of development.

Nepal will continue its contribution to the UN Peacekeeping Operations. Our own experience of the peace process may be useful to the countries in transition and those gone through conflict. We would be happy to share our experience as a uniquely successful and home-grown brand of the peace process and contribute to the peace building elsewhere.

We welcome the 2018 Inter-Korea Summit between the leaders of the South and North Korea and resulting thaw on the Korean peninsula. We also welcome the rapprochement between the United States and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and hope this will result into denuclearization and a lasting peace in the region.

**Excellencies,**

The pace of reconstruction has moved on satisfactorily. We are close to the final phase of the reconstruction and rebuilding of the individual houses, which we anticipate to be completed in a year. Reconstruction and restoration works of the heritage sites and the public buildings are too moving smoothly that will take some more time to complete. We are grateful to all our friends and partners for their cooperation and generous assistance in this process.

Since the political transition is over and a new era of political stability has emerged in Nepal, our priorities and modalities for engagement demand commensurate adjustments. We are in an early phase of federalization. It is incumbent upon us to make this process successful. The Constitution allocatesthe matters related to foreign relations under the competence of the federal government.It is in this context that we had to devise code of conduct and advise our partners from the diplomatic community to follow the official channel of communications on the mattersofdevelopment partnership. The Ministry of Foreign Affairsremains available to facilitate you in that process.

With these words, I once again welcome you all to this dinner. Allow me to purpose a toast for the continued friendship and cooperation between Nepal and the friendly countries and institutions that you all represent.

I thank you all for your attention.

**Statement by Hon. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal at the inaugural Ministerial Conference of the International Think Tank for the Landlocked Developing Countries Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**

**(11-12 June 2018)**

**Mr. Chairman,
Honourable Ministers,**
**Excellencies,**
**Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen.**

First of all, I congratulate you all on the happy occasion of the inaugural conference of the International Think Tank for the Landlocked Developing Countries (ITT-LLDCs), which we are concluding today, and express my best wishes for the success of the Think Tank.

I would like to thank and appreciate the Government of Mongolia for hosting this inaugural conference of the Think Tank and for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements made for the Conference.

I commend Mongolia for the leadership and important role it has played over the years towards establishing the Think Tank. I also recognize the role played by all Member States of the Think Tank that helped to bring this important achievement in the form of international think tank for Land-locked developing countries.

I also take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Governing Board for their substantive work during their session last month. I believe this conference s been able to guide the process of the ITT-LLDC in a more firm footing.

Nepal attaches great importance to this organization. This has created an enormous hope among the land-locked developing countries. In fact, we are happy that Nepal’s accession, as the 10th member, triggered the entry into force of the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of the Think Tank in October 2017.

The establishment of the Think Tank is a milestone achievement for the LLDCs. We believe that the organization like ITT should have been established long ago but it is never late to start a good thing. ITT represents this good beginning for our collective good. We believe that the Think Tank can and should play a critical role in promoting the interests of LLDCs.

**Mr. Chairman,**

LLDCs have special development needs and challenges arising from their landlockedness, remoteness and geographical constraints. Addressing these challenges is key to their inclusive growth, which in turn will contribute to raising human development and reducing poverty in these countries.  This is also the overarching goal of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPOA) with a focus on all six priority areas.

Nepal considers that the VPOA should be mainstreamed in our national development policies and plans as well as that of transit countries. The work programmes of United Nations and other international organizations designed to support the LLDCs should also be aligned with the objectives and goals of the VPOA in a coherent manner.

We should also be able to harness full potentials of science, technology and innovations, including the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and space technologies to overcome the constraints to the development of LLDCs. Technological innovations do have potentials to reduce the burden of landlockedness and open up the vistas of opportunities. We heard a good deal of insights in this regards yesterday.

As we are preparing for the Mid-Term Review of the implementation of VPOA in 2019, we acknowledge that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be in tandem with the VPOA for the much-needed synergy to achieve results on the ground.

As the first ever intergovernmental body of the LLDC group, the Think Tank has an important responsibility. It should be fully operationalized so that it can contribute, through top-quality research and advocacy, towards improving the ability of landlocked developing countries to build capacity for benefiting from the international trade. Focus in this regard should be to carry out in-depth research on converting “landlockedness” into “landlinkedness” and on various ways and options the LLDCs can diversify their economies. It is also important that ITT should focus on attracting more FDI by conducting more research on building capacities, raising confidence of investors through minimizing risks and creating more conducive domestic environment. Similarly, ITT also needs to focus its studies and research on smoothening transit facilities and associated issues.

ITT’s role in equipping and preparing our representatives and diplomats in international trade negotiations can be crucial. In this regard, we thank the ITT for bringing out the useful Handbook for Practitioners. Backed with quality inputs and support, LLDCs will be in better position to contribute to and benefit from such processes.

**Mr. Chairman,**

It is important to ensure adequate resources required for effective operationalization of the Think Tank. In this regard, Nepal is ready to contribute what it can, and for now pledges to make **a modest one-time contribution of USD** **30,000** for the Think Tank.

Support from all sides will be important. We need to expand our outreach to encourage all fellow LLDCs to join the Think Tank. I also call upon all the developed land-locked countries as well as transit countries, development partners and international organizations to continue their solidarity for LLDCs and support the Think Tank.

I conclude, Mr. Chairman, by highlighting one fact that the success of the Think Tank is also the success of LLDCs. So, we should join our hands for developing the Think Tank into a credible, respected and useful international organization.

I thank you for your attention.

**‘Nepal-China Relations and Development Prospects in Trans-Himalayan Region’
Speech by Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at Sichuan University, Chengdu**

**20 April 2018**

Mr. Vice President of Sichuan University
Distinguished Professors
Members of Faculties
Researchers and Scientists
Dear Students and Scholars
Friends of Nepal
Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to begin by thanking Sichuan University for inviting me to speak here this afternoon. As one of the earliest institutions of higher education in southwest China, Sichuan University has a rich history of pioneering research and educational reforms in China. The University has been at the forefront of supporting socio-economic development through education, and science and technology.

Its integrated multi-disciplinary approach to education and its emphasis on cultivating among the students qualities such as respect for humanity, drive for innovation and nurture international outlook are captured well by its motto, which says: Hai Na Bai Chuan, You Rong Nai Da (The Sea Receives Waters from All Rivers, and A Wise Man Listens to All Views).

Such noble gestures of welcome and acceptance are typical characteristics of Chinese culture. These profound values have played a great role in building the foundations not only of China’s great civilization but also, when speaking of cities like Chengdu, in developing vibrant cities of innovation and modernization through their eclectic, expansive and inclusive ambience.

Chengdu is the center of the Southern Silk Road. History tells us that ancient Sichuan, with Chengdu as its most important city, linked South Asia through Yunnan, Tibet, Nepal, Myanmar, India, and Thailand, and extended as far as the Middle East.

In the days ahead, we should build on these excellent roots of civilizational, geographical and cultural affinities to further connect our countries and societies in order to achieve common prosperity in the trans-Himalayan region.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Many people are familiar with the Silk Road traveled by Marco Polo to reach Beijing in the thirteenth century. Basically, this route included Western and Central Asia, the Persian Gulf, and the ancient caravan route which is now Iran, Iraq and Turkmenistan, onward to the Gobi Desert before reaching the durbar of Kublai Khan in Beijing.

But there are other important Silk Routes as well. ‘The Trans-Himalayan Silk Road’ and ‘The Tea Horse Trail’ dating to millennia ago are ancient routes of great influence. Recent studies reveal that the grottoes of Dunawang of Gansu Province and Mustang of Nepal have similar characteristics and belong to the same time period. They leave us an onerous task of exploring the southern Silk Road stretching those two passes through Sichuan.

Nepal was an important lynchpin in that ancient Silk Road. The trans-Himalayan routes had immense influence on the life of a vast stretch of land extending from present-day western China, central China, Turkmenistan, Bamiyan (Afghanistan), Mongolia, Nepal, Bangladesh (Chittagong), Sri Lanka, and India (from Kolkata  to Kashmir).

The entourage of royal attendants of Princess Bhrikuti in the seventh century CE brought not only Budhhism but also Nepali craftsmanship to Tibet. Some of this cultural heritage traveled to other places in China, which can be witnessed even today. For example, the Lama Temple in Beijing as well as some temples in other places in China, contain ancient relics with Nepal’s indigenous Ranjana script. Similarly, the White Pagoda of Beijing is an excellent example of the expanse of Nepali architecture in China.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

The large-scale trade and cultural communication between South Western China and South Asia since ancient times contributed not just to cross-border trade and commerce but also to cross-civilizational cultural exchanges and cross-pollination of ideas across continents.

The wealth generated by the trans-Himalaya trade helped build marvelous architecture and monuments in Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur in Nepal. The Buddhist Newars of the Kathmandu valley were at the forefront of the entrepreneurial communities traveling to vast swathes of the Asian heartland. The influence of Nepali craftsmanship and trade was immense in Tibet and beyond. The pagodas, stupas and ancient Buddhist art Pauva from Nepal have great influence in Chinese society. The trans-Himalayan trade across the belt is also a classic example of exchange between two ecological zones.

The middle and lower regions of Nepal produce a surplus of grains, but suffer from a lack of salt. The arid Tibetan plateau that expands to Qinghai, Gansu, Yunnan and Sichuan, contains many salt-lakes but not much grain-producing lands or climatic conditions. The constant demand for grains on one side and for salt on the other provided a basis for stable exchange system, facilitating payment, credit and exchange. Those specializing in trade, transportation, storage and distribution could settle in otherwise inhospitable climates, and keep the caravan of trade moving.

That was the underlying logic of trade between our two countries.

Indeed, trade was an important pillar of the economies of both Nepal and western China in ancient time.

Unfortunately, the vibrant commercial exchange that underlined such a long history of cultural interface slowed down considerably by the beginning of 19th century with a slew of factors, including colonization and innovation of new technologies in Europe. Europe became the center of knowledge, economy and power.

The need of the day is to envisage a new paradigm of co-operation and commerce across the Himalayas for a win-win outcome, embedding such collaboration in the frame of bilateral co-operation between Nepal and China.

Nepal wishes to promote peace and prosperity through mutual co-operation in enhancing and deepening connectivity. Being the conduit for commerce the exchange of civilizations has been Nepal’s forte in the past. We want to lay renewed focus on this comparative advantage that we enjoyed in the past and is equally relevant at present with brighter prospect.

To this end, I propose to suggest the outlines of this new basis of trans-Himalayan co-operation initiatives.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Thanks to the Belt and Road Initiative, the rich history of cultural and commercial exchange between Nepal and China is poised at revival and rejuvenation.

For Nepal, it is also a moment of pride as we work together with China in this historic mission for greater peace, prosperity and harmony.

The proposed BRI projects encompassing cross-border roads, railways, oil pipelines, information highways, energy grids, skyways and transmission highways should aim at utilizing the rich resources along the Himalayan range, and  improving the quality of lives of peoples in those areas.

The facilities and infrastructures thus created will not only raise the standards of living of the people residing in those far-flung areas, but also support conservation efforts and help overall development of that region.

During its long history, Nepal always prospered when commerce flourished, and its economy faltered when trade dwindled across the Himalayas. I am fully confident that as the Himalayan range re-emerges as a vital connecting link, Nepal’s trajectory of economic development will witness a rapid and positive transformation. It is my pleasure to share you that Nepal and China shared common views on developing a trans-Himalayan multi-dimensional transport network with long term vision during my meeting in Beijing early this week.

I would like to stress that the aspirations for development in Nepal will remain elusive without setting up a proper manufacturing base and manufacturing can’t be competitive without innovative industry in the country. The manufacturing industry with innovative activities not only raises productivity but also creates jobs for the people. The challenge for us is how to retain the youths who leave the country every day in large numbers in search of job overseas, by creating decent job opportunities at home.

**Development of cross-border railways between Nepal and China is a priority for the Government of Nepal along with other connectivity related infrastructure.** Coupled with their geographical proximity as well as the proposed infrastructural projects across the Himalayas, Nepal and China can work together in promoting economic activities in the Himalayan belt by creating systems of value-chains to their mutual advantage. I believe that China’s enormous manufacturing base, advance technology and its huge domestic market, together with Nepal’s rich natural, geographical and locational resources, will create the right mix of value chain and complement for continued economic growth.

Similarly, agriculture development is the areas where there is huge scope for co-operation between the two countries.

Dissemination of Chinese agricultural technologies in Nepal can raise overall production, crop yields and raise incomes for farmers, including for those who rely on high-altitude and high value farming. Mechanization of agriculture in Nepal’s fertile lands will enable Nepal to increase exports and create employment for its young people.  Chinese enterprises, on the other hand, will have opportunity to introduce and invest in advance technologies of agriculture production in Nepal to command fair return on their investment.

Similarly, Nepal has abundant natural resource endowments, whereas Chinese enterprises have the technological and financial resources for investments. We need to work assiduously to realize this vast potential opportunity for development. For example, hydropower has the potential to fundamentally transform Nepal’s developmental landscape, if exploited properly. Chinese enterprises have rich experience, capability, technology and fund to harness water resource for mutual benefit.

Chinese investors may utilize the investment opportunities in Nepal for mutual benefits.  The Government of Nepal is fully committed to providing security to Chinese investors.  Nepal enjoys duty-free-quota-free market access for its products in many developed and emerging economies. This could serve as an incentive for investors to invest in manufacturing sectors.

Resources such as forests and timber, herbs, cool climatic zones, are areas where we can develop together.

Tourism is an area where China and Nepal both can benefit through greater cooperation. Developing tourism services would be a promising area to forge bilateral collaboration for win-win cooperation since Nepal is endowed with natural beauty, cultural diversity and place for unique adventure not yet fully developed.

In the first three months of 2018  we received more than 36,000 tourists from China,  ranking it as top source country of tourists visiting Nepal.  Similarly, the number of Nepalis coming to China has increased in recent years. More than 6000 Nepalis are currently living in China, pursuing higher studies, or being engaged in employment and business.  Many Nepalis are beginning to choose China as a destination for travel and tourism. In addition, sizable numbers of Nepalis are also coming to China for leisure, training, study visits, sports activities, seminars and research programs.

These figures and activities indicate the magnitude and intensity of our ever growing contacts between Nepal and China at people to people level. Exchanges between peoples of the two countries are growing steadily. As 21st century’s diplomacy is focused on public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy, such exchanges will help both countries to nurture and sustain better understanding and goodwill and contribute for creating harmonious society.

Co-operation         and exchanges among academic institutions, think tank, research institutes and intellectuals between Nepal and China are equally important in order for optimizing and harmonizing the learning and development endeavor in either place. Production of knowledge for continued vitality of economic activities is the most essential ingredient and integral part of development endeavor. Sichuan University can play vital role in that area.  I appreciate the Sichuan University for their efforts to go beyond border and collaborate with the universities in south Asia that includes Nepal. I also would like to thank the University for providing learning opportunities and platform to the academicians, students, and researchers of Nepal and substantially contributing for their capacity building endeavor.

**Dear Friends,**

China is a global economic powerhouse, which gives it an important role to play in promoting world peace, development and stability.

In this context, we appreciate China’s efforts at forging co-operative links between countries in the region and beyond. We appreciate the role of the BRI as an initiative aimed at addressing the infrastructural and structural bottlenecks of development. Building cross-border infrastructure is very important for landlocked countries like ours. We expect the Belt and Road Initiative to contribute to our development efforts.

Additionally, connectivity will help Nepal exploit the full potentials of its economic possibilities. Connectivity lies at the core of all development activities.

Meanwhile, it will also help cement our ties through enhanced people-to-people relations.

In the past five years, we have seen phenomenal political, economic, and technological changes globally and in the region.

Among these significant developments has been China’s various innovative programs and institutions for global growth and harmony under the broader theme of Belt and Road Initiative.

Time is ripe now to revive the ancient glory acquired from exchanges between Nepal and China. Nepal stands ready to work together for trade and economic integration towards common prosperity.

The development of infrastructures along the trans-Himalayan region is critical for promoting economic opportunities by ensuring efficient movement of people, services and goods across the region.

To attain this goal, cooperation and understanding is required to optimize the benefits of trans-Himalayan connectivity.

Therefore, Nepal and China should focus their cooperation arrangement for building the critical infrastructure in the Himalayan region and remove the barriers for a seamless movement of people, goods and services.

We have already reached an understanding to work together to attain this goal at the earliest, and I do believe that we will reach there soon.

**Dear Friends, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Before concluding, let me share with you my conviction that Nepal and China are set to gear up their cooperation to a new height for mutual benefit and win–win outcomes.

At a time of historic socio-economic transformation across the globe where poverty levels have fell down to record lows and global prosperity has shored, we cannot afford to let underdevelopment and poverty wean the talents and promise of people anywhere in the world.

It was in this spirit that I discussed the scope of further enhancing co-operation between Nepal and China with the leaders of China during my current visit. And I am very happy to share with you that China, as always, has remained an enthusiastic supporter of our efforts at national development.

I would like to appreciate the South Asia Institute of Sichuan University for their continued efforts to promote Nepal-China relations.

With this note, I also would like to thank you all for your presence and kind attention.

Long live Nepal-China Friendship!

Thank you!

**‘Nepal-China Relations in the Twenty-First Century’**
**Speech by Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at Roundtable organized by China Reform Forum, Beijing
19 April 2018**

Mr. Chairman
Friends of Nepal
Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me begin by thanking China Reform Forum for inviting me to address this Roundtable and share my thoughts on Nepal-China relations on the occasion of my first official visit to China as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal.

I am glad to learn that the Forum has been making enormous contributions to the policy-making process through informed policy recommendations.

I am sure that there are many areas of development policy where think-tanks in Nepal and China can cooperate together for achieving better development outcomes.

In the process, it will also advance our relations further through exchanges of research findings and scholar’s exchanges.

In my remarks today, I will first highlight the glorious history of Nepal-China relations, Nepal’s policy on its relations with China, and then briefly touch upon our development challenges before concluding with what I consider should be the priorities of Nepal-China relations in the 21st century.

**Dear Friends**:

The history of Nepal-China relations goes long beyond the formal establishment of our diplomatic relations in1955.

The roots of Nepal-China relations may be traced back to the caravan trade millennia ago. This so-called ‘Tea Horse Trail’ that originated in South West China and passed through tortures mountain passes to the vast swath of southern slope of Himalayas, connecting Nepal and China, was a thoroughfare for civilizational exchanges. Our ancestors took risks to traversing mighty Himalayas in pursuit of better life and significantly contributed for advancement of civilization across them.

The retinue of traders, horsemen and caravan plying this route brought not only Buddhism but also other features of Nepali culture and craftsmanship to China through Tibet, Yunnan, and Sichuan and beyond.

No surprise then that Nepal’s Ranjana script is found in ancient relics housed in the Jiangxi and Beijing.

Recent scholarship has corroborated such historical interface, and shown that there existed intense cultural exchange and commercial interchange between South Western China and Nepal since ancient times.

This exchange facilitated not just cross-cultural understanding and cross-fertilization of ideas but also proliferation of profound civilizational values of acceptance, plurality and inclusivity as preached by Buddhism and Confucius alike. Lord Buddha’s teachings have profoundly impacted the socio-cultural lives of the Nepali and Chinese peoples.

There is a long history of social contact like travel of Faxian, Buddhabhadra and Xuan Zan across the Himalayas from early 5th century to 7th century AD. Their travelogue and translations have richly contributed in disseminating Buddha’s teachings in China.

Likewise, Bhrikuti, the Nepali princess married to Tibetan prince Song-tsen-Gampo in the 7th century, helped greatly to spread Budhhism across China.

Araniko, popularly known as ‘Anige’, upon invitation of Emperor Kublai Khan, travelled all the way from Nepal to Beijing in the 13th century and built the famous White Pagoda, also known as *BáitǎSì*, which is still standing high in the heart of Beijing reflecting deep rooted friendship between the two countries.

**Dear Friends:**

Such extra-ordinary relations between our two countries based on historical legacy and geographical logic have gained great momentum in the sixty-two years of diplomatic relations.

The governments of the two countries have established several institutional mechanisms for regular dialogue. The regular exchange of visits at high levels has contributed in deepening mutual understanding and communication at top levels.

Our cultural, trade and economic relations are growing fast even though we have yet to fully resolve several challenges such as burgeoning trade deficit and infrastructural constraints.

Our people-to-people relations are growing equally fast. This was in full display following the devastating earthquake of 2015 that killed around 9000 people and left thousands homeless in Nepal.

As the Chinese saying goes, *‘Only when the year grows cold do we see that the pine and cypress are the last to fade; only when we get into trouble do we know who our genuine friends are*’.

China is a real, trusted friend for Nepal, and this was amply demonstrated in the aftermath of the earthquake.

The prompt support and assistance Nepal received from China for rescue and relief as well for reconstruction was overwhelming and unprecedented.

Nepali people fondly recall the generous support accorded by Chinese people and government be it for any natural or man-made crises Nepal faces or be it for the socio-economic development of the country.

In turn, the Government and the people of Nepal have always stood with China in times of need and in the international forums. One China policy and not allowing anti-Chinese activities in our soil forms the core of our friendship with China. On China’s part, it has consistently and firmly supported Nepal’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence, faithfully observing the principle of non-interference in our internal affairs.

Our relations are based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and their sincere pursuit by both countries has made us  trusted friends and reliable partners. Our relationship is marked by mutual trust, understanding, goodwill, cooperation and appreciation of and respect for each other’s concerns and sensitivities.

Today, we are among the founding members of AIIB and a partner under the Belt and Road Initiative, both China-led global initiatives. That is the level of commitment we have for China, and will always remain so.

We admire China’s neighbourhood diplomacy guided by the principles of sincerity, amity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness. Nepal also attaches highest importance to its relations with neighbours.

Nepal takes pride in seeing China’s growing profile on the world stage, both politically and economically. China’s role is very important in shaping global agenda for a just and equitable world order.

We strongly believe that Nepal-China friendship will always be in the interest of our two countries and people. Territorial size, population and level of development have never been the elements of constrain in defining Nepal-China friendship.  Rather, sovereign equality and mutual respect have always remained at the centre, buttressing our cooperative partnership.

**Dear Friends**:

This is the state of overall Nepal-China relations today. We are proud of this. Nepal’s least developed status is a matter of serious concern for us. We have achieved fundamental transformation in political realm. An era of political stability has just begun in Nepal. Achieving the same level of transformation in economic realm would be our topmost agenda ahead. We have defined our motto, “Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali” and all our activities will be directed towards this end. In realizing this goal, we count on support and cooperation from our trusted friend China. China has been a reliable partner in Nepal’s development journey for a long period of time. We believe that Nepal-China partnership for economic development is very crucial for us to realize our national development aspirations.

From a forward looking perspective, we need to identify the areas where Nepal and China need to focus their collective efforts in the days ahead.

The world has undergone phenomenal changes in the past six decades of Nepal-China diplomatic relations. Innovations in every field, and unprecedented development in transportation, and information technology have made profound impacts in human life. China has emerged as an economic power house with global vision of inclusive and harmonious development. The world’s poverty incidence has gone down significantly for which China deserves special mention since it has succeeded in lifting 700 million people out of poverty. In the sectors of railways transportation, sharing economy, online payments, and e-commerce, as well as artificial intelligence, energy and agriculture productivity, China has made unparalleled progress. With a growing role in international relations for global peace and harmony, China has emerged as a major factor of global stability and growth. On the other hand, Nepal too is endowed with enormous potential with 30m population and abundant natural resource endowment, cultural diversity, natural beauty and relatively agile diligent youthful population.  Being a most diverse topography ranging from the top of the world to almost sea level flat land within an aerial distance of 150 km, Nepal is a resource-rich country.  There are many areas where Nepal and China can complement each other for mutual prosperity.

To my mind, there are five interlocking areas where we should work together for achieving rapid economic prosperity.

1. ***Transport and Connectivity***

In his visit to China in March 2016, Prime Minister K. P. Sharma Oli laid top priority on promoting connectivity between our two countries. This was because infrastructural deficiencies have prevented the full potentials of trade, commerce and people to people contacts between the second largest economy of the world – China – and Nepal from being fully realized.

It has, in the process, also prevented Nepal to benefit, to the maximum extent possible, from the rapid economic growth in the immediate neighbourhood of China. Transit facility from China will leverage Nepal from transit bottleneck in our international trade. Therefore, connecting through rail, road, power, telecommunication, airways and connecting Nepal to outside world through China are the topmost priority agendas for fully harnessing the unleashed potential within us.

I believe that such connectivity will have transformative impact on development in Nepal’ in pursuit of economic growth and social progress. Thus it will herald a new era in Nepal’s economic development. In this connection, the concept of trans-Himalayan multi-dimensional transport network with long term perspective was agreed during my meeting with H.E. Wang Yi, State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of China yesterday. We reached a common consensus that the development of this network will bring prosperity in the trans-Himalayan region and beyond.

1. ***Agriculture, Industries and Technology Transfer***

Agriculture is the mainstay of our economy, as 2/3 of our population is dependent on agriculture. However, it is a pity that the country has become a food importer from what it used to be a net food exporter.

Dissemination of Chinese agricultural technologies and mechanization of agriculture in order to improve productivity and efficiency in production,  is the area where Chinese enterprises can explore the opportunity. As I have mentioned earlier paragraph Nepal is the virgin land where we can produce a product of our choice in natural environment due to climatic variations and vegetations Nepal embodies.

1. ***Unlocking Human Potentials***

In terms of population, Nepal is among the middle-sized countries in the world. Its approximately 30 million people have 30 million dreams, of having a stable and prosperous society within their own lifetimes. Nepal has relatively young, economically active and agile population of which 60% are between the ages of 15 to 60 years and is one of the highest among the developing countries. China and Nepal can work together to utilize this resourceful population for creativity and resilience for stimulating economic activities in Nepal and China through production value chain.

Unlocking the full potentials of the human capital in Nepal will herald a new era in Nepal’s economic development*.*

1. ***Natural Resources and Environment***

Nepal’s rich renewable natural resources, particularly aquatic resources and, cultural diversity, adventure tourism and scenic beauty, are significant, and are likely to evolve into an important pillar of co-operation between the two countries. Nepal is listed on the best tourism destinations in the world by various rating agencies in the past several successive years including best value destination by lonely planet in 2017 and Kathmandu as one of the most interesting visiting place to visit in 2018 by rough guide.

Theoretically Nepal can produce 83000 MW of hydropower of which about 1% is exploited so far till now. Power development is another area that Nepal can offer with tremendous potential for cooperation.  China has technology, capital and experience in the area. Nepal and China can work together for mutually beneficial cooperation.

Nepal possesses vast resources of high value medicinal herbs, forests and timber, which can be harnessed together.

1. ***Trade and Investment***

There are several areas under Belt and Road Initiative in the fields of trade, commerce and investment which hold great promise for co-operation between Nepal and China.

Trade is the engine of growth, and investment is the propeller of that engine.

As we saw before, both Nepal and China, as important parts of the ancient Silk Road Belt, have benefited in the past from vibrant trade and commerce in the region.

Nepal has been adopting a policy of economic liberalization since the early 1990s where all economic policies are set to a liberal framework.

To take advantage of the investment opportunities in Nepal, both the governments should encourage Chinese investments in the most promising sectors such as infrastructure development, hydropower, agriculture and minerals, and tourism.

There are high hopes in Nepal on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) put forward by President H. E. Xi Jinping. The BRI aims to have peace and prosperity in the region and beyond, which holds far-reaching implications for the development of its neighbours.

**Dear Friends:**

In Nepal, our focus is on strengthening inclusive growth.

As Nepal draws out from a long transition and moves towards graduating from LDC status by 2022 and acquiring a middle income status by 2030, we need to move with great speed and vision.

For that, Nepal will have to focus on promising sector such as hydro-power, industries, tourism, and agriculture as well as gainful employment of the youth population.

A comprehensive economic partnership between Nepal and China will help achieve these goals quickly and sustainably.

This is the vision I have for Nepal-China relations in the era of 21st century. The vision is one of common development and common efforts. It is a vision of shared prosperity through mutual support and collaboration.

I believe all of you assembled here will agree with me that a stable and prosperous Nepal will be in the long-term interest not only of Nepal and China, but also the entire region.

Let me therefore conclude by emphasizing the crucial role of close economic partnership in further cementing Nepal-China ties.

I thank you all for your kind attention and participation.

Thank You.

**Statement by  Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal, during the Joint Press Address with H.E. Mr. Wang Yi,
State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of China
(Beijing, 18 April 2018)**

**State Councilor and Foreign Minister His Excellency Mr. Wang Yi**
**Dear friends from media,**
**Ladies and Gentleman,**

1. This is my first visit to China as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal. This is my first bilateral visit. I have come to China after the formation of the new Government following the successful holding of elections of all three tiers of federal set up under the new constitution. I am thankful to the Government of China for the kind invitation and for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to me and my delegation.
2. As State Councilor and Foreign Minister His Excellency Wang Yi just stated, we held very fruitful and comprehensive talks covering all important aspects of Nepal-China relations today. I am satisfied with the outcome of bilateral talks. I found genuine willingness on the part of the Government of China to support in our development efforts to make Nepal a prosperous country.
3. Neighborhood constitutes topmost priority in our foreign policy. We attach great importance to our relations with China. In line with our principled position, I reiterated Nepal’s firm commitment to One China policy. We have the policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of any other countries. We appreciate China’s neighborhood diplomacy guided by the principle of sincerity, amity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness. Our relations are guided by the ‘Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence’. Friendliness, cordiality, understanding, mutual cooperation, and appreciation of and respect for each other’s aspirations and sensitivities are the hallmarks of our relationship.
4. Nepal and China have made significant strides in recent years. We have agreed to seize the available opportunities in both countries to take Nepal-China bilateral relations to a new level for mutual benefits.
5. We comprehensively reviewed the progress made in the implementation of the agreements reached during the recent high-level visits including the visit of the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Mr. K. P. Sharma Oli to China in March 2016. Transit Transport Agreement and MoU on Launching the Joint Feasibility Study of Nepal-China FTA are among the key instruments signed during the visit. We exchanged our views on the draft protocol to the Transit Transport Agreement and agreed to intensify negotiations in the coming days for its early finalization. I requested His Excellency Foreign Minister to take supportive measures to correct the huge trade imbalance faced by Nepal in its trade with China.
6. We also shared views on the implementation of MoU on Cooperation under the BRI. Nepal has expectation that the Initiative should contribute to the development of physical infrastructures, enhancing cross-border connectivity including railways and roads, promotion of trade, tourism and investment, and people-to-people relations. We shared our common views on the development of cross-border multi-dimensional transportation network.
7. Nepal has undergone transformation of historic proportions in the last one decade. Our constitution is fully operational now with the conclusion of all elections and formation of Government at the centre and provinces with strong majority. Nepal has now entered into an era of peace, stability and development. The present Government’s topmost agenda ahead is economic transformation for the prosperity of the people of Nepal with the motto “Prosperous Nepal and Happy Nepalis”. In order to achieve these goals, the present Government of Nepal has accorded high priority to connectivity, which includes railways, highways, info ways and transmission lines between Nepal and China. We want partnership with China in these areas for mutual benefits in the coming days.
8. We agreed to continue the regular exchange of high level visits and agreed to regularly convene the meetings of the established bilateral mechanisms.
9. I thanked the Chinese Government for continuously supporting us in our development efforts. Through our joint efforts, important works have been initiated recently including the agreement to mobilize RMB 2 billion for projects related to reconstruction including Arniko Highway Repair Project and reconstruction projects for cross border bridges in Tatopani and Rasuwagadhi. We stressed the need for an early reopening of the Tatopani-Zhangmu port linking the Arniko Highway. We also agreed to upgrade existing border ports.
10. We discussed about the early conduct of feasibility study and preparation of DPR of Nepal-China Cross Border Railway line stretching from Keyrong to Kathmandu and from Kathmandu to Pokhara and Lumbini.
11. We agreed, in principle, to establish a coordination and implementation mechanism for identifying projects of mutual interest and benefit and to facilitating the effective implementation of the Chinese government’s aided projects.
12. We also agreed to make joint efforts for tourism promotion of Nepal. We expect the support of the Chinese Government in publicizing the major tourist destinations of Nepal in major Chinese cities.
13. We also shared our views and ideas on continuing our cooperation at regional and international forums on matters of common interest.
14. It has been a rewarding and fruitful meeting. I thank, once again, State Councilor and Minister for Foreign Affairs H.E. Wang Yi for providing me this excellent opportunity. I have invited His Excellency Wang to visit Nepal at his earliest convenience to continue our dialogue further.

Thank you.

**Remarks by Foreign Minister Pradeep K Gyawali atReception at Embassy of Nepal, Beijing 17 April 2018**

**Ambassador Paudyal,**
**Representatives of the diplomatic corps in Beijing,**
**Members of the Nepali community in China, Media-persons, and Friends:**

I am glad to be here amongst you this evening.
I arrived in Beijing this morning for my first official visit to China as Minister of Foreign Affairs.

I bring with me the greetings and best wishes of Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, and the Government and people of Nepal, to President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Keqiang, and the Government and people of China.

The people of Nepal extend their sincere congratulations to the Chinese people for the remarkable achievements of the past 7 decades of nation building and the four decades of opening up and reform.

I myself would like to congratulate the Chinese Communist Party, as well as the Government and the people of China for successful conclusion of 19th CPC congress in October 2017 and the two sessions in March 2018 that have come up with major policies of opening up and inclusive development for shared benefits.

Nepal is happy to witness the peaceful development of China and sees greater prospects for global economic development and stability with increased involvement of China in managing global affairs based on principles of peaceful coexistence, Pancha Sheela”.

Nepal too has made historic achievements in the political realms in the past year by successfully concluding all the major milestones mandated by the Constitution through the successful holding of the three tiers of elections.

The concept of grassroots government as envisaged by the Constitution is finally a reality.

We now have a government that commands the confidence of more than 2/3rd members of the Parliament.

More importantly, we have embarked on the road of durable peace, political stability, and socio-economic transformation.

The vision propounded by PM Oli as “Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepalis” is the vision of a society where people will enjoy decent lives and the young people will have productive jobs.

We are fully confident that we will achieve our cherished goals of creating a peaceful, stable and prosperous society in the foreseeable future.

Dear Friends:

We greatly value our relations with China and appreciate the continued support to the people of Nepal by China irrespective of major political changes in Nepal and changes in the outside world.

Tomorrow, I will hold a bilateral-level talk with State Councilor and Minister for Foreign Affairs H.E. Wang Yi and also call on the state leaders during my stay in Beijing.

I will also visit Chengdu and meet provincial leaders for cooperation before leaving for Nepal.

We will discuss all aspects of Nepal-China relations, and exchange views on further expanding and deepening them.

I will also emphasize the significance of frequent exchanges of high level political visits for further strengthening relations of trust and friendship.

Dear friends,

Last year, Nepal and China signed an MoU on co-operation under the Belt and Road Initiative.

Earlier in 2016 we signed a number of agreements and reached  various understandings for promoting mutually beneficial cooperation.

In 2017, Vice-President Rt. Hon’ble Nanda Bahadur Pun and Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda’ visited China.

Deputy Prime Minister Krishna Bahadur Mahara paid two visits during the same period.

Vice-Premier of China H.E. Wang Yang paid a very important and productive visit to Nepal in 2017.

Similarly, Chinese investors have been showing keen interest in investing in Nepal, and the number of Chinese tourists visiting Nepal is also increasing rapidly.

These activities have enhanced Nepal-China co-operative relations, and we should keep up the momentum.

In this context, I am happy to note that Nepal-China co-operation has been expanding in multiple directions in recent years and there is great potential to expand it.

We need to enhance them further in the spirit of good neighborliness and friendliness for mutual benefit.

**Dear Friends:**

To make the vision of a prosperous Nepal a reality, we will focus on laying the physical, economic and social infrastructure and exploit the full potentials of the rich resource endowments that we are blessed with.

To attain this noble objective, we need the support and understanding of all, including the Nepali nationals residing abroad.

I invite all Nepalis, both at home and abroad, to contribute from their respective ends to realize this momentous goal of nation-building.

**Dear Friends:**

Today, we launched the book “The Selected Speeches of Prime Minister KP Oli”, translated into Chinese.

The publication of this anthology reflects the interest in China regarding Nepal’s recent political developments. Readers of this publication will learn of Prime Minister Oli’s views on important contemporary issues as well as his vision for a prosperous and forward-looking Nepal.

I express my sincerest thanks to Pangoal Institute and South Asian Institute of Sichuan University for their initiative and support in bringing out this publication.

**Dear Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Before I conclude, let me share with you that China has been very supportive of the all-round development of Nepal and such support and goodwill has been of crucial significance.

We look forward to similar support, goodwill and understanding in the days ahead as we embark on the road of socio-economic development in the country.

Let me also express my sincere appreciation to the Embassy for its efforts in strengthening Nepal-China relations through its activities.

With these few words, I would like to express my sincere thanks to you all for your presence here today, and wish you all the best!

Thank you!

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