



# Nepal Council of World Affairs e-bulletin

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## E- BULLETIN

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## Friendly Visit to Sri-Lanka

The President of Nepal Council of World Affairs, Mr. Hemanta Kharel and Secretary Mr. Bhuban Pathak participated in International Seminar on **Belt and Road Initiative at Five Years: Regional Global Invention** as speaker and commentator respectively. The international seminar was organized By Bandaranike Center for international Studies on 15th -18th November, 2018, held in Colombo, Sri Lanka.



The President of Nepal Council of World Affairs, Mr. Hemanta Kharel **participated in International Seminar on Corridors of Knowledge for Peace and Development** on 4-7 December, 2018, held in Islamabad, Pakistan, at the initiation of Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI). President Mr. Kharel was one of the key speakers in the seminar.



## Vice President visits USA and UK

Vice President of Nepal Council of World Affairs, Mr. Umesh Bahadur Malla, made a courtesy call on His Excellency Arjun Kumar Karki, Ambassador of Nepal to USA. Mr. Malla, during his personal visit to USA, used the occasion to handover a latest publication of NCWA and other related documents, including the official letter from Mr. Hemanta Kharel, the NCWA president addressed to Ambassador Karki.

Similarly, Mr. Umesh Bahadur Malla, the NCWA Vice-President, who was on a personal visit in London, made a courtesy call on His Excellency Mr. Durga Bahadur Subedi, Nepal's Ambassador to United Kingdom. Mr. Malla, handed over a latest publication of NCWA. They discussed the possibilities of extending the cooperation in future.

## NCWA Delegation visits New Delhi

At the friendly invitation of Indian Council of World Affairs, six-member delegation led by Vice President, Nepal Council of World Affairs, Mr. Umesh Bahadur Mall, visited New Delhi from February 4-8, 2019. Others members of the delegations were Secretary General Mr. Ashim Thapa, Secretary Mr. Bhuvan Pathak, Treasurer, Associate Professor Mr. Rabindra Nath Bhattarai and Executive members Mr. Bimal Khadka and Biraj Pradhan. During the visit various issues of mutual concerns, bilateral relations, and trade connectivity were discussed. Both sides agreed to continue such programme in the days ahead too.



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The opening remarks by Mr. Malla, on "India–Nepal Relation: Political, Economic and Cultural Cooperation" and views expressed in that delegation briefly mentioned below.

Extending the cooperation with the national organizations of the other countries and international organizations having similar objectives is one of the important activities of the NCWA. The reciprocal exchange of the visits in the past, NCWA and ICWA have been able to establish cordial and dynamic relationships, thus contributing to the strengthening of relationships not only between our two organizations'. But also between two countries – India and Nepal. Our participation on behalf of the NCWA in today's event is a continuation of this tradition. This would also open up, we further believe, the informal channel of communication termed as track 2 diplomacy apart from the formal channel of diplomacy that would be contributing to Indo-Nepal friendship.

While celebrating 70 years of Indo-Nepal friendship, it would be worthwhile to recollect the very special relations enjoyed by both the countries aided by socio-cultural and religious affinities, despite the adverse situations encountered at times in their relationships due to the international turns of events as well as due to the domestic factors. Nepal is now on a democratic republican order after the abolition of 250 years of monarchical order, and the unitary form of the governance has been replaced by the federal structure consisting of three tiers of government– central, provincial and local. Here lie the challenges for Nepal trying to face new political order as well as to sustain the federal governance structure. In this sense Nepal is still at a stage of political transition. We believe, Nepal's foreign policy needs to be well grounded to respond to domestic needs and priorities, and at the same time needs to take account of her national interests while dealing with bilateral and multilateral relations in the international arena. Against this backdrop India Nepal relations encompassing the multiple dimensions – political, economic and cultural - needs a fresh orientation and approach which is the topics of today's panel discussion.

Foreign Minister of Nepal Hon,ble Pradeep Kumar Gyawali has pointed out, while addressing 70th Anniversary Program of Nepal Council of World Affairs in Kathmandu on August 3, 2018 that "the exchange of visits by the Prime Ministers of Nepal and India in the recent years has contributed to further enhance mutual trust and consolidate bilateral relations. He further states, "our two countries are committed to take forward cooperation and partnership on the basis of equality, mutual trust, respect and mutual benefit, and 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 between India and Nepal, he did shed light on the formation of the bilateral oversight mechanism established in September 2016 as a useful means "for accelerating the progress in the implementation of development projects and address the issues that come up during the process". Stressing upon Nepal's adoption of the independent and balanced foreign policy, Foreign Minister Mr. Gnawali has recently admitted that the relationship with India has reached a new phase.

The above statement of Nepalese foreign minister provides a glimpse of Nepal's foreign policy articulation vis a vis India, and It serves as a backdrop to the deliberations on the various areas of Nepal India cooperation on today's deliberations.

The 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship between India and Nepal- has provided a cornerstone of the relations between two countries till now. The Nepal-India Eminent Persons Group (EPG) which was formed to look into the overall gamut of bi-lateral relations to match the current realities did prepare a single joint report for submission to the prime ministers of Nepal and India. The single report, yet to be endorsed by both the governments aims to replace the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship by a new one, and we believe, the recommendations will redefine Indo-Nepal relations for 21<sup>st</sup> century in the areas of trade, commerce, water resource, people-to-people contact and cultural ties. Further, as a newspaper report suggests, border management and jointly tackling common challenges in areas of combating terrorism, extremism and all kinds of trafficking are also being considered by the joint report.

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Apart from trade and transit as an important aspect of Nepal –India relations which impinges in Nepal's quest for economic and trade diversification, harnessing of water resources needs to be emphasized with tremendous benefit to both countries for power generation, land irrigation, flood control, augmentation of lean season water requirement for Indian plains. The laying of the foundation stone for 900 MW Arun III hydropower project during the visit of Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi to Nepal on May 2018 was an important achievement heralding a new phase of cooperation in energy sector. Further, setting up of an energy banking system to facilitate the exchange of surplus electricity through cross border transmission links could play an important role in reducing Nepal's trade deficit with India.

Promotion of connectivity through the railway linkages and inland water ways could play a vital role in Indo-Nepal economic cooperation. A much needed railway link between Raxaul and Kathmandu as pledged by Prime Minister Modi in August 2018 has aroused a considerable interest and enthusiasm in Nepal. This could be a valuable asset in extending already constructed Jaynagar Janakpur railway network in Eastern Nepal Terai.

Tourism promotion, for both religious and pleasure purpose, is another area with immense development potential which holds the prospects of mutual benefit for economic growth in both countries. Nepal has already declared year 2020 as "Visit Nepal 2020" with 2 million tourists target.

Apart from above areas, a considerable room exists to enhance Nepal India cooperation in several other areas for achieving high and sustained economic growth which include: Agriculture, infrastructure, helping Nepal to promote its export to Indian market by virtue of reforms in tax, custom and other areas such as GST, encourage Indian investors in Nepal, and any other relevant areas.

Here we would also like to stress upon the spiritual religious dimensions of our relationships as evidenced by the religious pilgrimage and spiritual interactions between the people of two countries. The Pashupati Nath with the priests from South India draws as much pilgrims from India as the Vishwanath and Ramesworam temples draws from Nepal. The envisaged Ramayana Circuit and Buddhist Pilgrimage Circuit would bring much more benefit to both the countries cementing the already existing ties between two countries.



## Nepal's Foreign Policy in the Present Context

Nepal Council of World Affairs organized an interaction programme on “Nepal’s Foreign Policy in the Present Context” on January 24, 2019 at NCWA Hall, Pulchowk. Former Foreign Minister Dr. Prakash Chandra Lohani, Former Foreign Minister Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Former Foreign Minister Mr. Mahendra Bahadur Pandey, and Former Ambassador Dr. Shambhu Ram Simkhada, respectively spoke on the topic.



In the programme introductory remarks was given by the President of NCWA, Mr. Hemanta Kharel. Vote of thanks was given by Vice President of NCWA, Mr. Umesh Bahadur Malla, at the end of the programme. At the beginning of the programme, the Secretary, Mr. Bhuvan Pathak, gave welcome remarks. The programme was conducted by the treasurer, Mr. Rabindra Nath Bhattarai.

## 71ST ANNIVERSARY OF NCWA

The Nepal Council of World Affairs held its 71st Anniversary on February 18, 2019, at Hotel Yellow Pagoda, Kathmandu. The venue of the program was fully packed with eminent persons from all walks of life of Nepal, and resident Ambassadors and other dignitaries of friendly countries. Representative from the ministry of foreign affairs and representatives from various governmental and private organizations, including FNCCI, CNI, were also present in the programme. Former President of NCWA, life members of NCWA, former ambassadors, former secretaries, university professors, lawyers, management experts were in attendance. On the occasion the Chief Guest, Hon'ble Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, addressed the Council. In his comprehensive statement, the foreign minister touched upon various aspects of Nepal’s foreign policy that is being taken up by the present government. The programme was moderated by Associated Professor Mr. Rabindra Nath Bhattarai, Treasurer of NCWA.



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## **Nepal will Maintain Best of Relations with its Immediate Neighbors and the World**

- Pradeep K. Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nepal

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.

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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 5<sup>th</sup> 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

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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 multi-lateral 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 co-operation 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

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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 co-operation 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.

## **Importance of Think Tank in the Foreign Policy**

-Hemanta Kharel, President of NCWA

Think Tank generate political space for dialogues and also contribute in developing new ideas it should build a rich bank of research and deep drive a little more into policy framework and play bigger roles on the strategic side. It may view that NCWA should be transformed into an excellent think tank with in depth research and delve into policy framework and play bigger role on strategic side. This would certainly increase the quality and effectiveness of policy making process in Nepal.



Foreign policy can be said, it is the instrument to promote national interest, security, economic prosperity and independent international image. It is the policy pursued by not a political party or by any prevailing government but by a state in course of dealing with international community. It is the guideline on the basis of which a state conducts its foreign relations and behaves at international level. In the contemporary times, the bedrock of interstate relation have become sovereign equality, territorial integrity, non-interference, political independence and peaceful settlement of international disputes.

Nepal's foreign policy is guided by the principles of the UN Charter, panchasheel, International law, norms of world peace and constitution of Nepal. The observation of critics and experts about the history of Nepal's foreign policy, it is said that whoever become ruler their main intention of conducting certain part of foreign policy was to sustain their main regime. Even after the restoration of democracy and republic system, foreign policy could not go beyond party line. Whenever the ruler failed to manage internal affairs they have invited not only trouble but also even put serious limitations to the country's pursuit of independent foreign policy.

After long struggle with many ups and down political transition has somehow ended. The general public have single fold demand for development and prosperity of nation. In this regard Nepalese people want to see a comprehensive consensus in conducting Nepal's foreign policy especially economic diplomacy through internal solidarity among the main political forces. To performed such task independent think tanks are needed that will look a major foreign policy related issues in a strategic manner with holistic approach. Given the fast changing dynamic of the region and

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world and our strategic location with many challenges and opportunities, Nepal's need to have comprehensive review of our overall approaches to foreign policy issues on a regular basis; with all stakeholder, especially those who are directly involved such as foreign experts, private sector, think tanks and academic. To sustain and take the relationship with neighbours and other development partner to new heights, we need to build a more credible track-two-dialogue and more and more exchanges at the people to people level.

One of the serious concern shown by general public, Nepal is facing corruption which is deep rooted in public life. Corruption, a social malaise, has hindered Nepal's development process and posed a threat not only its social system, but also political system. It has not only shattered the economy of the country but also weakened the social fabric of the people in general. In this context Nepal's need national commitment and a very serious efforts for the establishment of sound and good governance, transparency, accountability, dedication, hard work and corruption control. Improvement in the governance system and reduction in corruption assist to conduct efficient economic diplomacy which ultimately promote peace and prosperity in the country.

### **Welcome Remarks by the Vice President of NCWA, Mr. Umesh Bahadur Malla**

Mr. Malla to welcome all on the occasion of 71st Anniversary Celebration of Nepal Council of World Affairs. He welcome to the august presence of Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs, Excellences' representing the various embassies in Kathmandu, former President NCWA and distinguished members of the NCWA. He highlight to the NCWA was established as Nepal Council of World Affairs in 1948, reflected the increasing aspirations of the then political leadership of the country to participate in the post second war political developments at the regional and global level. Since then, at the international front, the NCWA has been a witness to the global change in the world order from the cold war period to the emergence of the multi-polar world of today with the dominant presence of new power centers. At the domestic front, it has been also a witness to the dramatic political transformations within the country encompassing the various phases – the end of the dynastic Rana Rule in the 50s, the advent of party less Panchayat polity in the sixties, the democratic political system with the constitutional monarchy in the nineties.



Mr. Malla says that the NCWA, guided by its lofty objectives of promoting peace and understanding among the nations, has been playing a key role in the Nepal's foreign policy deliberations and other key issues of global concern up till the present, and would continue to do so in the coming days. The NCWA Establishing and strengthening relations with the similar organizations in the region have been among its key achievements. NCWA can play the role of an effective and independent foreign affairs think tank in the country. What is needed, is the availability of more financial and material resources for the NCWA to carry on the various programs, seminar and workshops.

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### Vote of Thanks by the Secretary of NCWA, Mr. Bhuban Pathak

Mr. Pathak says that, Nepal Council of World Affairs has a great role in the present context of Nepal's growing recognition in the international community, especially after Nepal's successful and peaceful transition from monarchy to democratic republic with the constitutional provisions of secularism and federalism. As a think tank organization with its glorious history, it can and should provide essential feedback in formulating foreign policy that can further enhance the country's independent standing amidst our immediate neighbors and the countries beyond having close diplomatic relations with us for promoting mutual understanding and interest. No country is taken seriously if it doesn't have a historical awareness of its own dignity and the realization of its own immense potentials that can be explored while expanding relationship with other countries. And it is for this reason that NCWA is considered the storehouse of nation's intellectual strength and this strength will empower the government to build a vision for the present and the future. Mr. Pathak highlighted to the government too needs to take in to consideration every rational advice given by intellectuals who have acquired expertise and experience in different domains of knowledge and information.



### Tourism Promotion between Nepal-Pakistan

Nepal Council of World Affairs organized a roundtable seminar on ***“Promotion of Tourism between Nepal and Pakistan”*** in collaboration with the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Nepal on February 25, 2019 in Kathmandu. On the occasion, bilateral relations and various issues related to tourism promotion in South Asia were discussed.

In this opening Remarks the president of Nepal council of World Affairs Mr. Hemanta Kharel highlighted the role and contribution of tourism plays in the upliftment of economy of all countries. He gave details about the contribution of tourism sector in the economy whereby it is 25% for Thailand, 9% for Vietnam, 6-7% for Nepal and 5-6% for Pakistan. He mentioned that tourism was vital for creating jobs and increasing the forex reserves. Stating that Nepal and Pakistan enjoyed warm and cordial relations at the government and people-to-people level, he emphasized that both the countries needed to promote tourism to further enhance the bilateral relations. He thanked the Pakistan Embassy and Ambassador H.E. Mr. Mazhar Javed for providing support in organizing the program.



Delivering his presentation titled “Buddhism in Pakistan”, Mr. Om Charan Amatya stated that Buddhism was indeed a sentiment and not a commodity. He declared that he was coming up with a movie on Buddhism and Trans-Himalayan Silk Route covering a period during 1839-40. He hoped that the historical and cultural dimensions of Buddhism in the movie could play an important role

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in promoting tourism. He mentioned that although there were so many Buddhist archeological sites in Pakistan which could act as cultural links between Nepal and Pakistan, lack of information regarding the same has put them in the shadow. He lamented that people in Nepal are unaware about historical and cultural places in Pakistan like Takshyashila and Gandhar. Similarly, few people in Nepal are aware that there is also a province named Punjab in Pakistan which holds 45% of Pakistan's total population.

Former ambassador and former president of NCWA, Prof. Dr. Mohan Prasad Lohani, presented a paper titled on "Promotion of Tourism between Nepal and Pakistan". He mentioned that both the countries would be celebrating the diamond jubilee of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2020 which coincidentally has been declared as "Visit Nepal" year and therefore can be a perfect opportunity for both the countries to promote tourism between them. He stated that Nepal and Pakistan have enjoyed warm,



cordial and problem free relations based on the principles of *Panchsheel* which have been enhanced through the exchange of high-level visits from time-to-time. He highlighted the fact that change of regime in either country has had no effect on the state of bilateral relationship and Pakistan was one of the first countries to support King Birendra's Zone of Peace proposal. He appreciated Pakistan's effort in supporting Nepal by providing scholarships in sectors like medicine, engineering and trade. He informed that Joint Economic Cooperation committee was formed in 1983 for promoting trade activities.

Highlighting the tremendous potential of promoting tourism between Nepal and Pakistan, he stated that Buddhism, cultural heritage and natural beauty were common factors that could play a vital role in this regard. As both the countries are rich in natural beauty, cultural heritage, and other ecological aspects, he said that there was a scope for tourism to flourish through proper planning and implementation. He identified tourism as one of the most important factors in promoting economic diplomacy. He stressed the need for restarting a direct air link between Nepal and Pakistan to realize this potential. He also mentioned that as both the countries were part of China's Belt and Road Initiative, it could also play a vital part in enhancing connectivity between the two countries. He suggested that both the countries should provide gratis visa and concessions on visa to each other's nationals to boost tourism. Furthermore, he also reminded that an agreement on tourism cooperation signed between the two governments in February 2009 should be implemented effectively for promoting tourism between both the countries. ECO DIPLO

Winding up the programme by H.E. Mr. Mazhar Javed, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Nepal, thanked and appreciated NCWA and president Mr. Hemanta Kharel for organizing this program on such an important theme. He also thanked the presenters and commentators for their valuable contributions. He stated that the year 2020, which is the 60<sup>th</sup> year of establish-

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ment of the diplomatic relations between Nepal and Pakistan as well as a visit Nepal year, would be an excellent opportunity to enhance tourism between the two countries. He informed that a working group on tourism between Nepal and Pakistan already exists and a meeting would be held this year for utilizing the 2020 target. He mentioned that although the diplomatic relations were established 60 years ago, the actual relations date back thousands of years and a lot of commonalities can be observed between Takshyashila and Kapilvastu. He emphasized that there was a need to create awareness about history and culture to the younger generation.

He informed that the aim of the program was to identify practically actionable steps for promoting tourism between the two countries. He said that direct air connectivity between Nepal and Pakistan was crucial in boosting tourism and hopefully the government or private sector of both the countries and underlined the need of doing something in this regard in the near future despite the aviation market shrinking in the last six to seven years. He assured that he would convey the message regarding connectivity to his government. He concluded his remarks by stating that with proper planning and awareness programs, tourism between Nepal and Pakistan could definitely be boosted in the future.



## Photo Gallery



## Photo Gallery

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