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Singapore-Big Success from a Small Country

The Nepal Council of World Affairs (NCWA) organized an interaction program on **"Singapore-Big Success from Small Country"** on May 4, 2023, at its hall in Pulchowk, Lalitpur. Dr. Omkar Lal Shrestha from the National University of Singapore was the chief guest of the program chaired by President of NCWA Mr. Hemanta Kharel. Executive Member of NCWA Mr. Ganesh Rai moderated the program and Secretary General of NCWA Mr. Ramesh Singh gave the vote of thanks.



Delivering his welcome remarks, NCWA President Mr. Kharel highlighted Singapore's history which dates back at least a millennium. The ideological differences, most notably the perceived encroachment of the egalitarian "Malaysian Malaysia" political ideology of Mr. Lee Kuan Yew into the other constituent entities, at the perceived expense of the Bumiputera and the policies of Ketuanan Melayu eventually led to Singapore's expulsion from the federation two years later; Singapore became an independent sovereign country in 1965 with Mr. Lee Kuan Yew as the first prime minister. Mr. Kharel noted that the administrative law in Singapore arose as a response to the advent of the administrative state which is the 20th century product of English administrative law, which Singapore inherited at independence.

Keynote speaker of the program Dr. Shrestha, spoke on Singapore's success, noting that if a decision-maker has a pecuniary or personal interest about the concerned parties in the process; he or she will be disqualified from the decision-making role. He stated that actual bias by a

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decision-maker must be proven on a balance of probabilities, and if this is achieved it conclusively vitiates the decision. However, applications and objections based on actual bias are very rare as the proof of actual bias is often very difficult. The law does not permit a judge to be questioned about extraneous influences affecting his or her mind, as the policy of the common law is to protect litigants who can discharge the lesser burden of showing a real danger of bias without requiring them to show that such bias exists in reality.

Dr. Shrestha said that the rules of natural justice require that persons liable to be directly affected by the outcome of any decision must be given prior notification of the action proposed to be taken, of the time and place of any hearing that is to be conducted, and of the charge or case they will be called upon to meet. He also named five secrets of Singapore's success in line with the lasting legacy of late Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's pragmatic leadership. First, nurturing the "best and brightest": education and competitive compensation. Second, sustaining clean government: keeping corruption at bay. Third, an effective public bureaucracy. Fourth, learning from other countries: the importance of policy diffusion, and fifth, the applicability of Singapore's experience to other countries. He cautioned that others had to keep in mind the contextual differences and the



preconditions for Singapore's success and policymakers in other countries must have the political will and be prepared to pay the high political and economic price for implementing Singapore-style reforms with appropriate modifications to solve their problems.



Nepal-EU Relations and Future Prospects

The Nepal Council of World Affairs (NCWA) organized an interaction program on **"Nepal-EU Relations and Future Prospects"** on May 11, 2023, at its hall in Pulchowk, Lalitpur to further strengthen the existing cordial relationship between Nepal and the European Union. H.E. Ms. Nona Deprez, Ambassador of the Delegation of the European Union to Nepal, was the chief guest of the program chaired by President of NCWA Mr. Hemanta Kharel.



Delivering his welcome address, NCWA President Mr. Kharel highlighted the evolution of Nepal-EU ties since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1973. The EU delegation's office started to operate in 2002, and its status was upgraded to the ambassadorial level in 2009. He noted that from the beginning, Nepal and the EU have enjoyed warm and friendly relations based on mutual respect, goodwill, trust, cooperation and understanding while sharing the same values of tolerance, solidarity and democracy and being proud of their heritage and civilizations. He mentioned that since the establishment of diplomatic relations, Nepal and the EU have continued to cooperate and collaborate in the fields of democracy, good governance, human rights, capacity building, inclusive green growth, human capital development, fight against gender-based violence, youth employment program and linking civil societies to implement some action plans of EU funded scheme.

Mr. Kharel further stated that the EU and its member states have been committed to tackling post-disasters, the Covid-19 pandemic and helping build a more resilient and greener economy. Noting that the exchange of high-level visits further strengthens the bilateral relations, he remarked that

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Nepal and the EU share a deep commitment to multilateralism, rule-based international order and action on climate change. He informed that the EU as a single market accounted for 9.4% of the country's imports (EUR 305 million) in 2019. While the EU imports mainly textiles and clothing from Nepal, it exports mainly machinery, chemicals, agricultural products and other manufactures. Mr. Kharel further pointed out that in 2021, the total trade between the EU and Nepal accounted for £267 million. The EU has also been supporting Nepal in formulating policy measures to overcome the impact of Covid-19 and prepare the country to avail GSP preferential treatment



which could significantly limit losses in the EU markets arising from Nepal's graduation from Least Developed Country status by 2026.

Delivering her keynote address, Ambassador Deprez noted that Nepal is one of the beneficiaries of the EU-sponsored preferential trading regime and hence Nepali products enjoy tariff-free access to the European market for their exports. It is said that

although many other LDCs have succeeded in reaping substantial benefits from this provision, Nepal is yet to make full use of the facility, mainly due to its narrow export base and lack of competence in maintaining international quality standards.

Ambassador Deprez remarked that Nepal will enjoy the EU's most preferential trade regime with zero duties and zero quotas on all products except for arms for a three-year transition period till 2029 even after it graduates from an LDC to a middle-income country in 2026. The GSP Plus is also a preferential trade regime that provides unilateral trade benefits to Nepal for which it has to ratify and effectively implement some 30 conventions related to the environment, human rights and labour rights. She added that Nepal has already ratified most of these conventions but still needs to ratify some conventions including labour inspection, ILO convention, freedom of association and the Cartagena Protocol on bio-safety.

Ambassador Deprez pointed out that all of these instruments will benefit Nepal, its workers and consumers. She said that the EU is increasingly a very big economic market wherein the consumers increasingly want to consume goods that have been produced sustainably on decent work conditions. Stating that political stability matters when it comes to attracting FDI in any country, she informed that the EU is supporting Nepal in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) and creating a more conducive environment for FDI such as a one-stop shop that will make it easier for investors. She however noted that the regulatory environment needs to improve to attract FDI wherein the rules have to be stable and clear as well as implemented properly.

Ambassador Deprez noted that the Delegation of the EU to Nepal has provided support not only to Nepal's overall development policies but also to some specific programs in the provinces where

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HDI indicators are weak. Stating that Nepal is an amazing country, she recollected her travels to Karnali, Sudurpaschim, and Madhesh provinces to support such specific programs. I have met elected representatives in those provinces. Concluding her remarks, she expressed happiness that Nepal and the EU would be celebrating 50 years of bilateral relations next year which could be an occasion to review the bilateral partnership comprehensively and see how the partnership can evolve in the future.



Nepal-EU Relations and Future Prospects

The Nepal Council of World Affairs (NCWA) organized an interaction program on **"Nepal-German Cooperation and Future Prospects"** on May 24, 2023, at its hall in Pulchowk, Lalitpur intending to further strengthen the existing cordial relationship between Nepal and Germany. H.E. Dr. Thomas Prinz, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Nepal was the chief guest of the program chaired by President of NCWA Mr. Hemanta Kharel



Delivering his welcome remarks, NCWA President Mr. Kharel highlighted various aspects of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Germany which was established some sixty-five years ago. He especially commended Germany as one of the major donors for Nepal's development efforts. Germany, it may be recalled, started its development cooperation with Nepal in 1961 by setting up a technical training institute in Thapathali, Kathmandu. Germany also constructed the Middle Marsyangdi Hydro Electric Project. Mr. Kharel noted that the latest round of Nepal-German negotiations on bilateral cooperation focused on energy, transmission lines and infrastructure development. Till 2022, Germany has supported 115 projects in Nepal at a total cost of about NPR 2932 million.

Mr. Kharel mentioned that Germany is Nepal's major export trading country, especially for carpets and textile products. Besides carpets, export to Germany from Nepal also includes handicrafts, silver jewelry, garments, leather, wooden and bamboo goods, tea, essential oils, herbal products and aromatic plants. Nepal's imports from Germany mainly include industrial raw materials,

chemicals, machinery equipment and parts, electric and electronic goods, etc. Mr. Kharel noted that Nepal exported goods worth \$36.5 million to Germany in 2021, whereas Germany exported \$61.2 million worth of goods to Nepal. He further pointed out that during the last 26 years, exports from Nepal to Germany have decreased at an annual rate of 5.25 percent, whereas exports from Germany to Nepal have increased at an annual rate of 3.54 percent which therefore requires a need to work jointly to minimize the trade deficit.

Delivering his keynote address, Ambassador Prinz noted that the relationship between Germany and Nepal has been close and unique since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1962. Recalling the start of the development cooperation in 1966, he stated that both countries enjoy a long history of good and friendly relations. He was hopeful that the



relationship could be further strengthened in the days ahead with the situation gradually returning to normalcy in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ambassador Prinz noted that around 500 Nepali students go to German universities each year for higher studies on full scholarship. As studying in German universities is free, international students only need to pay for their cost of living. The students need to have very little knowledge of the German language for their convenience. He informed Germany has also been offering technical and vocational training opportunities for Nepalis. Stating that Nepal has a unique and adventurous landscape, he recalled his fond memories of traveling around Kathmandu Valley and Upper Mustang.



76th AGM

The 76th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Nepal Council of World Affairs was held on August 19, 2023, at Lainchaur Banquet, Lainchaur, Kathmandu. The meeting passed the annual budget and proposed program for the fiscal year 2080/81 B.S. NCWA Secretary General Mr. Ramesh Singh, presented the annual report of 2080. The report was unanimously passed by the meeting. Similarly, NCWA Treasurer Mr. Bimal Khadka presented the financial statement and annual budget for the next fiscal year 2080/81. The meeting approved the auditor's report and financial report for the fiscal year 2079/80 and appointed to Bhanu and Associate as the new auditor for the next fiscal year. The meeting ended with the concluding remarks from NCWA President Mr. Hemanta Kharel.



Nepal-Pakistan Relations and Future Prospects

The Nepal Council of World Affairs (NCWA) organized an interaction program on **"Nepal-Pakistan Relations and Future Prospects"** on August 8, 2023, at its hall in Pulchowk, Lalitpur to further strengthen the existing cordial relationship between Nepal and Pakistan. H.E. Mr. Abrar H. Hashmi, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Nepal was the chief guest of the program chaired by NCWA President Mr. Hemanta Kharel.



In his welcome remarks, Mr. Kharel highlighted various dimensions of the diplomatic relations between Nepal and Pakistan stating that Nepal and Pakistan hold similar views on many matters of regional and global concern. He added that the ties between Nepal and Pakistan are friendly, problem-free, trustworthy, cordial and strong like Mount Sagarmatha of Nepal and Mount K2 of Pakistan. Noting that the exchange of high-level visits from time to time has significantly contributed to strengthening and deepening bilateral friendship and cooperation, he mentioned that the people-to-people contacts, exchange of cultural delegations and visits of experts from both countries have also contributed to bringing the bilateral relations much closer.

Mr. Kharel further remarked that bilateral cooperation has encompassed different areas, such as cooperation in trade and tourism, joint ventures as well as economic, industrial, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation. A Joint Economic Commission at the ministerial level was formed in May 1983 to promote cooperation in a more systematic, coordinated and integrated manner. He

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pointed out that frequent JEC meetings are necessary not only to review and expedite the implementation of agreements already reached, but also to explore and identify new areas of cooperation. He expressed gratitude that Pakistan has assisted in Nepal's development endeavors by providing soft loans for industrial projects as well as awarding scholarships to Nepali students to pursue higher studies, particularly in technical fields like medicine and engineering in the reputed universities of Pakistan, and also providing staff college training to Nepal army officials.



Delivering his keynote address, Ambassador Hashmi expressed happiness that the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and Nepal has always been cordial based on goodwill, mutual respect, trust and cooperation. He noted that the civilizational commonalities, regional dynamics, cultural and linguistic similarities as well as common ecological and climate change make Pakistan and Nepal multifaceted partners. He further stated that both countries should revive bilateral mechanisms and high-level contacts. Mentioning that both countries were founding members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) he said that Nepal gives high importance to SAARC and is optimistic about reactivating of SAARC process. He commented that the outlook of Pakistan and Nepal on SAARC and its potential role is also similar - as a regional platform to address common challenges to build synergies and promote cooperative relationships in the region.



Ambassador Hashmi stated that Pakistan's foreign policy is one of friendliness and goodwill towards all the nations of the world as it does not cherish aggressive designs against any country or region. He mentioned that Pakistan believes in the principle of honesty and fair play in national and international dealings and is prepared to make its utmost contribution to the promotion of peace and prosperity among the nations of the world. He further commented that Pakistan will never be found lacking in extending its material and moral support to the oppressed and suppressed peoples of the world, and in upholding the principles of the United Nations Charter.

He pointed out that the bilateral trade between Pakistan and Nepal was US\$7.2 Million last year and expressed hope that it has the potential to increase manifold. The two governments signed a trade agreement in July 1982. A Joint Business Council (JBC) exists between the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) and the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI). Ambassador Hashmi informed that the Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI) and Nepal Chamber signed MOUs with Karachi, Islamabad and Lahore Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Besides goods exchanges, he remarked that a huge potential exists in ITeS, especially for the youth from both countries which can push the frontiers to new horizons. He stated that the Nepal-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission (JEC) was set up at the level of Finance Ministers in 1983 to promote economic cooperation between the two countries, and its 6th meeting held in Islamabad deliberated on the areas of trade and commerce, banking and

Exchange of Festivals Greeting

The Nepal Council of World Affairs (NCWA) organized a program to exchange festival greetings on October 18, 2023, at its hall in Pulchowk, Lalitpur to celebrate the upcoming festivals Dashain, Tihar and Chhath, among others.



Photo Gallery



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