

# MOFA BULLETIN

## *Current Affairs*

February 2017 - March 2017

Vol 1, Issue 5



Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
**Policy, Planning, Development Diplomacy  
and Nepali Diaspora Division**

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## A. Bilateral Affairs

### 1. Fourth Joint Working Group and Joint Steering Committee Meeting on Nepal-India Cooperation in Power Sector

Fourth Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting on Nepal-India Cooperation in Power Sector was held in Kathmandu on 13 February. Mr. Dinesh Kumar Ghimire, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Energy, and Mr. R K Verma, Chairperson, Central Electricity Authority of India, led the Nepali and Indian delegations respectively. The meeting reviewed the progress of some ongoing projects including the ones on cross border system strengthening works, power trade through existing cross-border links and initiation of power trade through Kataiya-Kusaha and Raxaul-Parwanipur links. Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) submitted a proposal on supplying 10 million LED bulbs as communicated by Nepal Electricity Authority for smart metering to achieve energy saving.

Fourth Joint Steering Committee (JSC) meeting on Nepal-India Cooperation in Power Sector was held in Kathmandu on 14 February. Mr. Anup Kumar Upadhyaya, Secretary, Ministry of Energy, led the Nepali delegation, and Mr. P. K. Pujari, Secretary, Ministry of Power led the Indian delegation. The meeting reviewed the decisions of previous JWG/JSC meeting and the ongoing cross-border power projects. Besides this, Nepali side expressed its concerns about urgent requirement to review the tariff by the Power Exchange Committee (PEC) in view of the increment of tariff by 5.5% per annum, after the tenth PEC meeting held in December 2011.

### 2. High Level Visit from India

His Excellency Mr. Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu, Minister of Railways of India visited Nepal to participate in Nepal Infrastructure Summit held on 19-20 February in Kathmandu. Mr. Prabhu, delivering a key note speech as the Guest of Honor at the summit, said that India would create a cross-border railway connectivity as soon as possible in order to connect Kathmandu with two Indian cities — New Delhi and Kolkata. This would not only strengthen cross-border connectivity but also facilitate movement of people of the two countries, he contented.



*His Excellency Mr. Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu, Minister of Railways of India, receiving a token of love*

The Infrastructure summit, jointly organized by Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport of the Government of Nepal, Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI) and Youth Community for Nepalese Contractors (YCNC), brought together

participants from governments and global business community, among others.

### 3. Nepal-Malaysia Senior Official Meeting

First round of Senior Official Meeting to discuss the draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Nepal and the Government of Malaysia was held in Kathmandu on 20-21 February. The meeting focused on the issues pertaining to employment, recruitment and repatriation of Nepali workers. Mr. Govind Mani Bhurtel, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment led the Nepali delegation and Mr. Kesavan Karupppiah, Deputy Under Secretary, Ministry of Human Resources of the Government of Malaysia led the Malaysian side.



*Nepali and Malaysian Counterparts shake hands after conclusion of the first round of SOM*

The two sides relished the outcome of the meeting and expressed hope this it would lead to enhance Nepal-Malaysia cooperation in addressing the challenges regarding recruitment and employment of workers in formal sector. Each side showed firm commitment to finalize the draft Memorandum of Understanding and strengthen the mechanism to protect Nepali workers in Malaysia.

### 4. Line of Credit Review Meeting

Review Meeting of Line of Credit (LOC) from Exim Bank was held between Nepal and India on 21-22 February in Kathmandu. The two sides noted that all 12 projects under LOC-I of USD 100 million had been successfully completed and their Socio-economic Impact Analysis reports had also been submitted.

On LOC-II of USD 250 million, the progress made under the 19 road sections valued at USD

69.34 million was discussed. Overall progress made under this was about 25 percent. Both sides acknowledged that there was a scope to improve the pace of implementation and noted various reasons for delayed implementation of road projects.. The status of Rahughat Hydroelectric Project Phase II was also assessed during the meeting. Similarly, the implementation status of Koshi Corridor Transmission Line Project (220 KV), Solu Corridor Transmission Line Project (132KV) and Modi-Lekhnath Transmission Line Project (132KV) under the same LOC was discussed. .

Progress has been made on the two Irrigation Projects under LOC-III of USD 550 million viz. Mahakali Irrigation Project-III and Koshi Pump Canal & Distribution System. And, 16 road projects including the Mahakali Bridge have been approved by Indian side recently under the LOC-III.

### 5. Indian Finance Minister Visits Nepal

His Excellency Mr. Arun Jaitley, Minister of Finance of India visited Nepal to participate in the Nepal Investment Summit held in Kathmandu on 2-3 March. Delivering a keynote speech at the summit as the Guest of Honor, Mr. Jaitley said that India was firmly committed to partner with Nepal for accelerating economic growth attracting domestic and foreign investment. Ministry of Industry, Nepal Investment Board and National Planning Commission had jointly organized the Nepal Investment Summit.



*Indian Finance Minister Mr. Arun Jaitley addressing the Nepal Investment Summit,*

## 6. Former Japanese Prime Minister Visits Nepal

His Excellency Dr. Yukio Hatoyama, former Prime Minister of Japan visited Nepal on 18-22 March. During his stay in Nepal, His Excellency Dr. Hatoyama had courtesy calls on the Rt. Hon'ble Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Prime Minister of Nepal and other senior political leaders and business persons... He also visited Pokhara and held discussions with the Nepali entrepreneurs based in the city. As a well wisher, Dr. Hatoyama frequently visits Nepal.

## 7. Foreign Minister Participates in the NRNA Asia Pacific Regional Meeting in Malaysia

Hon. Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal attended, as the chief guest, the Fifth NRNA Asia Pacific Regional Meeting held on 19 March 2017 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The meeting was organized under the theme "Skilled Entrepreneurs for Prosperous Nepal".

Addressing the event, Hon'ble Minister said that skills, technology and capital of the NRNs spread across the globe could be a huge asset for Nepal to usher into the path of development and prosperity. He appreciated the NRNs' accomplishments across the globe and urged them to further contribute to Nepal's development efforts.



*Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon. Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat with the participants of the meeting*

Hon. Foreign Minister urged the NRNs to invest in various sectors in Nepal, stating that the country was about to make a headway for stability and development. He further said the government was effortful to protect and promote the rights of Nepali migrant workers abroad, especially in

the Gulf countries. Hon. Foreign Minister further added that the Nepali migrant have been making significant contribution to Nepal's economy through remittances.

In the programme, Nepali Ambassador to Malaysia H.E. Mr. Niranjanmán Singh Basnyat highlighted the steps taken by the Embassy of Nepal in Malaysia for protection and promotion of the interest of Nepali migrant workers in Malaysia.

## 8. Right Honourable Prime Minister Visits China

The Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' paid a state visit to the People's Republic of China on 23-29 March. During the visit, the Prime Minister attended the Opening Session of the 2017 Annual Conference of the Boao Forum for Asia held in Boao and addressed the forum on "Globalization and Free Trade: Asian Perspectives" on 25 March. He stressed the need of making globalization more inclusive and reinvigorated so as to ensure equitable benefits to all countries. Highlighting the case of the LDCs and LLDCs like Nepal, the Prime Minister called for greater market access opportunities through the implementation of duty free quota free (DFQF) provisions, simplification of rules and procedures, enhancement of capacities and the smooth provision of transit arrangements to enable them to reap benefits of globalization. During his stay in Boao, the Prime Minister had a meeting with His Excellency Mr. Zhang Gaoli, Vice Premier of the People's Republic of China. Matters of mutual interests were discussed in the meeting.



*Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' addressing the Boao Forum for Asia in Boao, China*

The Prime Minister and his delegation left Boao for Beijing on 25 March 2017. In Beijing, the Prime Minister called on the Chinese President His Excellency Xi Jinping and had meetings with Vice Premier His Excellency Wang Yang, and CP CID Minister Mr. Sun Tao. In the meetings with the President and Vice Premiers, both sides exchanged substantive views on various aspects of bilateral relations and the ways and means to further expand and consolidate them in keeping with the spirit of good neighborliness. The Chinese side reiterated its desire to see a peaceful, stable and prosperous Nepal. The leaders exchanged views on expanding cooperation in new areas and consolidating the existing ones on areas such as railways, transport transit, cross border economic zones, energy, industrial parks, tourism, trade, investment, cultural exchanges and people to people contacts. The Prime Minister conveyed Nepal's support to the 'One Belt One Road (OBOR) Initiative' and expressed hope that Nepal would gain benefits from China's economic development and prosperity. The Chinese side stated that Nepal would be an important partner in this Initiative, which will benefit Nepal in many ways.

The Chinese side expressed readiness to cooperate in order to increase import of more goods from Nepal. Also, China expressed support to revive Nepal's tourism industry to pre-earthquake status and to make 'Nepal Promotion Year-2017 in China' a success.

The leaders also exchanged views on upgrading Rasuwagadhi border point and an early operationalization of Tatopani border, which went inoperable since the April 2015 earthquakes. Meanwhile they also agreed to implement the agreements and understandings reached in the past and activate all the established mechanisms for further enhancing bilateral cooperation. Also, both sides shared views to work closely on matters of mutual interest at regional and international forums.

Hon Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Foreign Minister of Nepal, His Excellency Mr. Leela Mani Paudyal, Ambassador of Nepal to the People's Republic of China, Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi, Foreign Secretary, senior officials of Foreign Ministry and Officials of the Embassy of Nepal in Beijing were also present in the meetings.



*Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal shakes hands with the Chinese President H.E. XI Jinping*

On 26 March, the Prime Minister unveiled jointly with the president of the Beijing Foreign Studies University a plaque of "Nepal Study Centre" amidst a ceremony held at the University premises. He also delivered a keynote speech on "Nepal-China Relations: Prospects for Growth and Prosperity." The Prime Minister addressed the prominent businessmen and entrepreneurs on the roundtable entitled "Investment Opportunities in Nepal" which was jointly organized by the Embassy of Nepal in China and China Council for the Promotion of International Trade on 27 March.

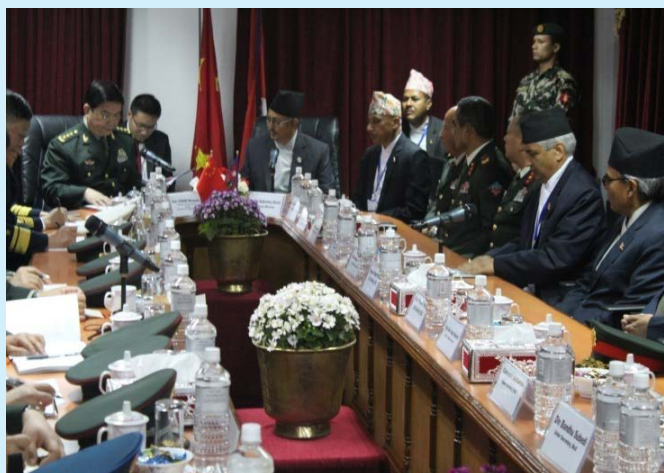
On his way back home, the Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister visited the Tibet Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China. While in Lhasa he had a meeting with His Excellency Mr. Wu Yingjie, Party Secretary of the Communist Party of China at the Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China in Lhasa.

The Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister was accompanied by spouse Mrs. Sita Dahal, Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon. Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Ambassador of Nepal to the People's Republic of China His Excellency Mr. Leela Mani Paudyal, Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi, and senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## **9. State Councilor and Minister for Defense of China Visits Nepal**

General CHANG Wanquan, State Councilor and Minister for Defense of the People's Republic of China paid an official visit to Nepal at the invitation of Hon. Mr. Bal Krishna Khand, Minister for Defense of Nepal on 23-25 March. Two Ministers held talks on major issues of bilateral cooperation

in the field of military assistance. The Ministers signed two MOUs on Military Assistance Gratis totaling RMB 200 million on the occasion. .



*Hon'ble Mr. Bal Krishna Khand, Minister for Defense of Nepal with his Chinese counterpart General CHANG Wanquan, State Councilor and Minister for Defense of People's Republic of China*

General Wanquan also paid courtesy calls on the Rt. Hon'ble Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari, President of Nepal, Rt. Hon'ble Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Prime Minister of Nepal, Hon. Mr. Bimalendra Nidhi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs of Nepal and Chief of Army Staff General Rajendra Chhetri..

## **10. Meeting on Exchange of Indian Currency Notes**

Officials of Government of Nepal and the Government of India held meetings in Kathmandu to discuss the exchange of Indian Currency Notes on 26-27 March . The Government of India demonetized Indian currency notes of 500 and 1000 denominations in December 2016 which came into effect from January 2017. Meetings focused on easing exchange of Indian Currency stock in Nepal. Nepali Currency is pegged with the Indian Currency.

## **11. Deputy Governor of Sichuan Province Visits Nepal**

At the invitation of the Government of Nepal, His Excellency Mr. Zhu Hexin, Deputy Governor of Sichuan Provincial Government of China visited Nepal on 27-30 March. He was accompanied by five senior officials of Sichuan Provincial Government

of China. Mr. Hexin attended "Sichuan, More than Pandas" tourism promotion program in Pokhara and "the Sichuan Food Culture Week 2017" in Kathmandu. Sichuan Provincial Government and the Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu jointly co-organized the programs.

His Excellency Mr. Hexin paid courtesy calls on Hon'ble Mr. Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, and Hon'ble Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Minister for Foreign Affairs during the visit.

## **B. Multilateral Affairs**

### **1. Thirty-Fourth Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva**

A Nepali delegation, led by Hon'ble Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Minister for Foreign Affairs, participated in the High-Level segment of the 34<sup>th</sup> Session of UN Human Rights Council held in Geneva on . The delegation to the Human Rights Council included Mr. Rajib Gautam, Secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, His Excellency Ambassador/ Permanent Representative Mr. Deepak Dhital, Under Secretary Mr. Sudhir Bhattarai of the UN Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as officials from the Permanent Mission of Nepal in Geneva.

The delegation lobbied with the member countries for Nepal's candidacy to Human Rights Council for the term 2018-2020 for which elections are scheduled to be held in November 2017. Nepal also used the forum to inform the international community about its unflinching commitment to the universal values of human rights and the principled position to respect, protect and promote human rights in the socio-political process of Nepal.

During the visit, Hon'ble Foreign Minister held bilateral meeting with His Excellency Mr. Didier Burkhalter, Swiss Minister for Foreign Affairs and discussed various aspects of bilateral cooperation between the two countries as well as the multilateral issues of common interest. Dr. Mahat also held a meeting with His Excellency Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan and discussed the issues facing

landlocked countries and emphasized the importance of working together to face common challenges and promote common interest in the international fora. Hon'ble Foreign Minister also held meetings with Her Excellency Ms. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Minister for International Development and the Pacific of Australia; His Excellency Mr. Mustafa Ramid, Minister for Justice of Morocco; His Excellency Mr. Zahid Ahmad, Federal Minister for Law and Justice of Pakistan and His Excellency Mr. Peter Szijjarto, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary.

The Hon'ble Minister met the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi and discussed, among others, the issues of Bhutanese refugees sheltered in Nepal and stated that it was the responsibility of Bhutan to take back the Bhutanese who were not resettled in third countries. The Hon'ble Foreign Minister also met the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights His Excellency Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein and shared Nepal's commitment for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of all the citizens with equity, equality and justice under the wide framework of the Constitution of Nepal and noted the dynamic nature of the Constitution and its capability to address the legitimate concerns of stakeholders.

In his meeting with His Excellency Mr. Francis Gury, Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), Hon. Dr. Mahat discussed the issues including the benefits of the codification of Nepal's traditional knowledge and cultural expressions towards protecting intellectual property rights of these unique resources. The Director General responded positively with regard to continuing WIPO's support to Nepal.

## **2. High Level Meeting on Trade and Transit Cooperation for Europe-Asia Region in Hanoi**

A High-Level Meeting for Europe-Asia Region on Improving Cooperation on Transit, Trade Facilitation and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development took place on 7-9 March in Hanoi, Vietnam. The meeting was organized jointly by the Government

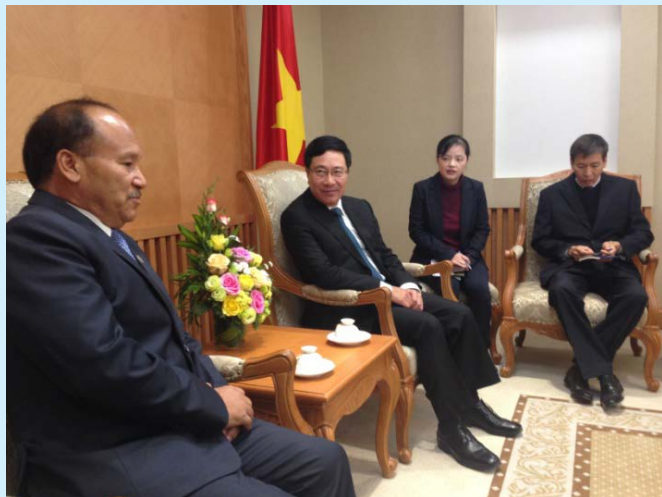
of Vietnam and Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), in close collaboration with WCO, IRU, UNCTAD, UNESCAP, WTO and UNECE and other stakeholders. H.E. Mr. Pham Binh Minh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for UN-OHRLLS, among others, addressed the opening session.

Leader of Nepali delegation, Hon'ble Mr. Romi Gauchan Thakali, Minister for Commerce, addressed the Special Session on "Initiatives to Improving Co-operation on Transit, Trade Facilitation and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by Member States and Inter-Governmental Organizations" and the plenary session 3 on "Enhancing Co-operation on International Trade and Trade Facilitation". The Nepali delegation also included Mr. Tirtha Raj Wagle, Under Secretary at the UN Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mr. Tarka Raj Bhatta, Under Secretary at Ministry of Commerce.

The High Level Meeting underscored the need to incorporate the Vienna Program of Action and the 2030 Agenda into national plans, strategies and budgets and focused on the importance of increased connectivity and cooperation on trade facilitation. It also called for further international support for the bilateral and regional cooperation initiatives of transit and landlocked developing countries in order to fulfil the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Vienna Program of Action. The meeting also assessed the key issues in transit cooperation, trade and trade facilitation in the Europe-Asia region, and the participants shared ideas, lessons, good practices, future policies, programs and initiatives on transit cooperation, trade and trade facilitation between the transit countries and the land locked and the least developed countries. Key recommendations were made on improving transit issues for increased trade potential of both the transit countries and the land locked and the least developed countries.

During the visit, Minister Thakali also paid a courtesy call on His Excellency Mr. Pham Binh

Minh, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Vietnam and discussed matters of mutual interest.



*Hon'ble Minister Thakali in a meeting with H.E. Mr. Pham Binh Minh,*

### **3. Regional Seminar on UN Security Council Resolution 1540**

A Regional Seminar on the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (UNSCR 1540) took place on 14-15 March 2017 in Islamabad, Pakistan. The meeting was jointly organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. It brought together participants from countries in South and Central Asia, China, Japan, Russia as well as representatives from international organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Interpol and representatives from the 1540 Committee Group of Experts. Mr. Tirtha Raj Wagle, Under Secretary at the UN Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, attended the Seminar. In his presentation, Mr. Wagle shared Nepal's national experience and efforts in the implementation of the UNSCR 1540.

The UNSCR 1540, which the UN Security Council adopted in 2004, requires the States to refrain from providing any form of support to non-State actors that attempt to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery, in particular for terrorist purposes. Thus, it seeks to prevent non-state actors from acquiring Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) and plays a crucial role in the global non-proliferation regime.

### **4. Regional Meeting of the Asia-Pacific LDCs on Sustainable Energy**

A Regional Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Least Developed Countries (LDCs) on Sustainable Energy took place in Kathmandu, Nepal on 22-23 March. The Government of Nepal and the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) jointly organized the meeting. In particular, the National Planning Commission and the UN Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs were involved in organizing this regional meeting on behalf of the Government of Nepal.

Hon'ble Dr. Min Bahadur Shrestha, Vice Chairman, National Planning Commission and His Excellency Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) co-chaired the Regional Meeting. Hon'ble Mr. Janardhan Sharma, Minister for Energy of the Government of Nepal delivered a key note-speech at the inaugural session and highlighted the steps taken in the development of energy sector in Nepal. Foreign Secretary Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi also delivered an inaugural address while Hon'ble Members of the National Planning Commission Dr. Swarnim Wagle and Dr. Arvind Kumar Mishra chaired and moderated thematic sessions.



*Participants at the Opening Session of the Regional Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Least Developed Countries on Sustainable Energy, 22 March*

The meeting featured active participation from senior officials and energy experts from the Asia-Pacific LDCs, diplomatic community, regional and international development partners and development



banks, regional organizations, and the UN system, in addition to private sector partners from the energy and investment sectors, as well as relevant foundations and civil society representatives.

The meeting discussed various financing models and initiatives as well as the methods to enhance sustainable energy project development capacities and shared best practices so as to enable and accelerate energy transitions in the least developed countries.

## C. Regional Affairs

### 1. Fifty-third Session of the SAARC Programming Committee



*Meeting floor of the fifty-third session of the SAARC Programming Committee*

The fifty-third Session of the SAARC Programming Committee was held in Kathmandu on 1-2 February. Mr. Mani Prasad Bhattarai, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs chaired the meeting in which all SAARC Member States had participated.

In his opening statement, His Excellency Mr. Arjun Bahadur Thapa, Secretary General of SAARC highlighted the progress made by SAARC since the last meeting held in Pokhara in March 2016. Similarly, in his opening remarks, Mr. Mani Prasad Bhattarai, Chair of the Session stated that SAARC process should be accelerated to make it more efficient, effective and result-oriented in order to fulfill the objectives as enshrined in the Charter.

The Programming Committee is entrusted primarily with the responsibility to deal with the administrative and financial matters of the SAARC Secretariat and its Bodies. The Committee also considered the reports of various SAARC Mechanisms.

### 2. Seventeenth Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting

The Seventeenth Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) was held in Kathmandu on 7 February. The Meeting was preceded by the Second Preparatory Meeting to the BIMSTEC-SOM and the Seventh Meeting of the Joint Working Group on the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat. This high-level Meeting was convened for the first time since Nepal assumed the chairmanship of BIMSTEC in 2014.



*Foreign Secretary, Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi with the delegates of the BIMSTEC-SOM in Kathmandu*

The BIMSTEC-SOM took decisions to revitalize BIMSTEC process so as to bring about tangible results to the lives of people in the region. Nepal offered to host the Fifteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting (Foreign Ministers' Level Meeting) in June 2017 and the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit in Nepal towards the end of this year in consultation with the BIMSTEC Member States. Similarly, Nepal also proposed to convene an expert group meeting on the implementation of the Poverty Action Plan as well as to prepare a Concept Paper on Mountain Economy for exploring and harnessing its potentials.

The deliberations of the Meeting encompassed the important priority sectors such as connectivity, trade, tourism, investment, energy, technology transfer, etc. The Meeting tasked the Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) to be formed to work out the BIMSTEC vision - a roadmap for the Future Directions of this regional organization in line with the UN Agenda 2030. Also, it decided to conclude the BIMSTEC Free Trade Agreement at the earliest.

All the Member States expressed firm commitment to the effective implementation of the Outcome Document of the BIMSTEC Leaders' Retreat held

in Goa, India on 16 October 2016 and its 16-point Agenda of Action. In this context, the Meeting agreed to constitute several expert level Working Groups to implement the said Agenda of Action. The Meeting also agreed to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of BIMSTEC in a befitting manner by organizing various activities in the BIMSTEC Secretariat and respective Member States so as to enhance its visibility in the region and beyond.

### 3. Mr. Amjad Hussain B. Sial assumed office as New SAARC Secretary General

His Excellency Mr. Amjad Hussain B. Sial, Special Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, assumed office as the Secretary General of SAARC from 1 March 2017 upon completion of the tenure of former Secretary General Ambassador Arjun Bahadur Thapa. Mr. Sial is the 13<sup>th</sup> Secretary General of SAARC. He served as the Ambassador of Pakistan to Tajikistan from 2011-2014 and Ambassador/Alternative Permanent Representative of Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN from 2009-2011. He also served as Director of the SAARC Secretariat from 2003-2006.

After his arrival in Kathmandu the Secretary General paid courtesy calls on high level dignitaries of Nepal including Rt. Hon'ble President, Rt. Hon'ble Vice President and Hon'ble Foreign Minister.



*Courtesy Call on Rt. Hon'ble President of Nepal Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari by the SAARC Secretary General*



*Courtesy Call on Rt. Hon'ble Vice President of Nepal Mr. Nanda Bahadur Pun by the SAARC Secretary General*



*Courtesy Call on Hon. Minister for Foreign Affairs by the SAARC Secretary General on 09 March*

### 4. SAARC-FAO Consultation on Sustainability of the Regional Support Unit

SAARC-FAO Consultation on Sustainability of the Regional Support Unit (RSU) was held in Kathmandu, Nepal on 9 March. Mr. Mani Prasad Bhattarai, Joint Secretary and the Chief of Regional Organizations Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nepal chaired the Meeting in the capacity of the Chair of Programming Committee of SAARC. All Member States attended the Meeting.



*Secretary General of SAARC His Excellency Mr. Amjad Hussain B. Sial with the delegates of SAARC-FAO Consultation on Sustainability of the RSU*

The Meeting recommended that Nepal would forward the proposal to continue hosting the RSU in Nepal to the SAARC Secretariat by 15 April 2017 detailing their required strength, capacities, budgetary arrangements, financial implications to the Member States (if any) to continue the activities of RSU. The SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) would also forward to the SAARC Secretariat a proposal along the above lines within the same deadline. The Meeting further decided that upon receipt of the feedback from the Member States, a follow-up meeting will be held in Kathmandu by mid June 2017 to decide on the sustainability of the RSU.

## **5. First Meeting of the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs**

In pursuance to the decisions taken at the BIMSTEC Leaders' Retreat held at Goa, India on 16 October 2016, the First Meeting of the National Security Chiefs (NSCs) of the BIMSTEC Member States was held in New Delhi, India on 21 March 2017. Representatives of all the BIMSTEC Member States were present in the Meeting.



*Delegates of the First Meeting of the National Security Chiefs of BIMSTEC Member States jointly called on His Excellency Sri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India*

The Meeting recognized common threats in traditional and non-traditional security areas faced by the BIMSTEC Member States and decided to deepen security cooperation in the region. The Meeting further decided to take concrete measures to enhance cooperation and coordination among their law enforcement, intelligence and security organizations and enhance capacity building. In the same way, NSCs decided to prepare a comprehensive Plan of Action to enhance maritime security cooperation and specific proposal to enhance space security cooperation as well as set up a BIMSTEC Himalayan Science Council to study the health of the Himalayan ecological system comprehensively and promote scientific cooperation among the respective institutions in the BIMSTEC Member States.

A four-member delegation from Nepal led by Mr. Singha Bahadur Shrestha, Inspector General of Armed Police Force participated in the meeting.

## **6. Seventh Meeting of BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Legal and Law Enforcement Issues**



*7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the SGLLEI in Yangon, Myanmar*

The seventh Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Legal and Law Enforcement Issues (SGLLEI) was held in Yangon, Myanmar on 22-23 March. The Meeting reviewed the progress achieved since the Sixth Meeting of the BIMSTEC sub-group on Legal and Law Enforcement Issues held in New Delhi, India on 17-18 December 2015. It also deliberated on various new areas of cooperation which were considered by the sixth meeting of the BIMSTEC joint working group on counter terrorism and transnational crime held in Sri Lanka. They included the issues such as extradition, cyber crimes and payment devices fraud, trafficking in persons, especially women and children, transfer of sentenced persons, trafficking and trading of illicit firearms, ammunitions and explosives, fake drugs and medicines, among others.

The Meeting agreed to change the title of BIMSTEC Convention on the Cooperation for Prevention and

Combating of Human Trafficking as the “BIMSTEC Convention against Trafficking in Persons’ and also commenced negotiations on it.

During the Meeting, Nepal offered to host the Eighth Meeting of BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Legal and Law Enforcement Issues in Kathmandu in 2017.

## D. Passport and Consular Activities

### Passport Activities

Following number of passport were issued in February and March 2017.

Month	Diplomatic Passport	Official Passport	Ordinary Passport	Travel Document
February	22	106	45,762	11
March	37	65	51,856	12
<b>Total</b>	59	171	97,618	23

### Consular Activities

The numerical details of the service delivery of the Department of Consular Services during February-March 2017 were as follows:

S.N.	Details of Services	No. of Works Performed
<b>A Consular and Legal Counseling Section</b>		
1	Recommendation for Medical treatment, Religious tour, World cycling tour, and others	12
2	Recommendation for Indian education certificate, nationality verification and those who are visiting India for study purpose	257
3	Recommendation for Indian pension	11
4	Recommendation for issuing Nepalese driving license on the basis of foreign driving license held by the Nepali citizen	673
5	Recommendation letter to Indian Embassy for character verification report to Nepali citizens during their period of stay in India	38
6	Recommendations for procurement of chemicals & explosives	13
7	Recommendations letter to Indian Embassy for issuing vehicle permit for vehicles to enter India	5

8	Correspondence to the concerned authorities of Nepal regarding the citizenship renouncement of Nepalese citizens as per their application submitted to the Nepalese missions abroad	19
9	Correspondence letter regarding authenticity of Power of Attorney issued by Nepalese missions abroad	218
10	Correspondence to the concerned authorities of Nepal regarding authenticity of documents issued by the Government of Nepal	35
11	POA, VOR, H-Form Request (Malaysia), and correspondence to the District Administration Office for compensation to Nepalese citizens died abroad	60
12	Correspondence concerning search and rescue of Nepalese nationals to the Nepalese Missions abroad	199
13	Correspondence with regard to repatriation of dead body of Nepalese nationals abroad	40
14	Correspondence to the government agencies in Nepal	24
15	Number of draft received for the compensation from Malaysia	9
16	Handover of compensation amount from Malaysia to the concerned families	4
17	Correspondence to the Nepalese Missions on various subjects including insurance and compensation enquiry	32
18	Correspondence to the foreign missions based in Nepal	20
19	Telephone and e-mail enquiries about insurance and compensation with the Nepalese Missions abroad	310
<b>B Visa and Exemption Section</b>		
1	Issuance of diplomatic/official/gratis visa	400
2	Issuance of diplomatic/official ID Card	76
3	Issuance of SAARC visa stickers	24
4	Number of recommendation for exemption	514
5	Number of visa recommendation to the foreign missions on GON's nominations	327
<b>C Attestation section</b>		
1	Number of attested documents	38,576