60th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Nepal

Nepal and Japan have built an excellent cordial relationship ever since its establishment in September 1956 through exchanges in various fields mainly economy, culture and tourism. This year marks the 60th anniversary year of the long established diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Nepal is well known to Japanese people for the beautiful and glorious Himalayas. Many Japanese tourists visit Nepal, and they are impressed by the magnificent nature, beautiful cities and villages as well as the warm hospitality of the people of Nepal. Japanese people have shown great solidarity by visiting Nepal resulting in increased credibility for various other potential travellers to tour the country. The friendship between the two countries has been nurtured in histories of the relations among people, and the tie is strengthened every year.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan unveiled a new logo to commemorate the 60th anniversary in consultation with the Government of Nepal. The logo unites Japan’s national flower, Sakura, and Nepal’s national flower, Laligurans, with mountain from each country to represent the friendship between Japan and Nepal. The logo designed by Mr. Hiromitsu Kono has been used by the governments of Japan and Nepal and also by organizations of events endorsed by the governments to celebrate the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Nepal throughout this year.

It is expected that the friendly ties between the people of the two countries would be further strengthened by commemorating various events in both the countries. Like Nepal, Japan is very rich in art, culture and cultural heritage and both countries have taken care to preserve and maintain these areas. This commonality contributes to the depth and interest of collaboration between the two cultures. Embassy of Japan organized numerous events to celebrate the occasion that exhibits the rich traditional culture and arts of Japan. It is hoped that the exhibition have allowed viewers to experience the freshness and variety of current Japanese art and at the same time provide an opportunity for understanding the fundamental appeal.
Japan attaches great importance to the role Nepal can play in the stability and development in the region. Japan is committed to develop and broaden its bilateral relations with Nepal and pledges to continue its support to Nepal’s development. Japan’s support is highly visible in the field of infrastructure which provides the foundation for stronger relationships in future and recently has been investing to focus its cooperation and support in the field of socio-economic development.

Japanese Government have been supporting Nepal through its Official Development Assistance (ODA) through JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) as an implementing agency in various forms such as technical cooperation, ODA loans, grant aid, public private partnership, citizen participation-Volunteer program, JICA partnership program and emergency relief. The support coverage ranges from transport, energy, water and sanitation, education, health, peace building, governance and agriculture that solely aims to enhance Nepal’s development in a comprehensive manner for sustainable and balanced economic growth.

Both Nepal and Japan have a history of helping each other, as we both live in countries with earthquake disasters. After the Great East Japan Earthquake, Japan received blankets from the people of Nepal, and Nepalese residents in Japan provided curry dishes to people living in disaster-stricken areas. Following the Nepal earthquake in April 2015, Japan seamlessly have been providing assistance, extending from emergency and humanitarian assistance to that of recovery and reconstruction. Since then Japan has continued to cooperate closely with the Government of Nepal to achieve as early reconstruction as possible, with an aim to “Build Back Better” from the earthquake disaster.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Nobuo Kishi visited Nepal from 30th August to 1st September, 2016 to attend a special ceremony organized by the Government of Nepal to mark the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Nepal. During his stay in Kathmandu, State Minister Kishi met high-ranking officials of the Government of Nepal and attended the ceremony organized by the Government of Nepal.

Japan has a tradition of celebrating 60th birthday as “Kanreki,” which signifies the turning point in life where a new beginning is celebrated after the completion of first cycle. Likewise both Japan and Nepal is determined to work towards another 60 years of glorious bilateral relations with added accomplishments in terms of camaraderie and development.
CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS
Access to Development: Preliminary Impacts

BANEPAA-SINDHULI (BP HIGHWAY) AND KATHMANDU-BHAKTAPUR ROAD.

Access to viable road system is one of the key factors for the development of a nation like Nepal which is naturally possessing challenging topography. Better road facility seems more like a luxury due to limited number of highways and other commutable regular pathways. Roads and bridges are not only basic infrastructures for transportation of people and goods from one place to another but also the means for development and stimulation of the socio-economic activity that contributes to stability, safety and strengthening the integration process of Nepal.

Government of Japan has been assisting Nepal in building roads and bridges since 1980’s. Two major road projects supported by JICA Nepal are the Sindhuli Road, i.e. the BP Highway and Kathmandu-Bhaktapur road. Sindhuli Road was constructed at the cost of 25 billion Japanese Yen or about 22 billion Nepali Rupees and is one of the largest Japanese Grant Aid Projects. On 3rd July 2015, Japan handed over the road to the Government of Nepal which took nearly two decades to complete the construction which began in 1995. The total length of Sindhuli road is about 160 km, which stretches between Bardibas in the terai to Dhulikhel near Kathmandu and covers districts like Sindhuli, Ramechhap and Kavrepalanchowk. Likewise, 9.1 km stretch of the Kathmandu-Bhaktapur Road widened from the existing 2 to 4 lanes from Tinkune in Kathmandu to Surya Binayak in Bhaktapur. Kathmandu valley now has an important alternative access to the Terai plain via the Sindhuli road that significantly reduces the travel distance and time to the eastern region. The Kathmandu-Bhaktapur road constructed with a Grant Aid of 2.28 billion Japanese Yen or about 2.46 billion Nepali Rupees came into regular operation since 2010 and since its completion has succeeded to reduce the traffic congestion of Kathmandu to a large extent. The construction of Kathmandu Bhaktapur road was implemented from October 2008 to March 2011.

The construction of both these roads have successfully managed to benefit the lives of people living in surrounding areas and elsewhere both socially and economically by providing them easy access to commute to different places with minimum travel time, enhanced transport system, reduced vulnerabilities and also increased trading activities.

Other benefits include the expansion sphere of market for agricultural and dairy products of neighboring farmers; secured supply of essential commodities and to enhance the welfare of rural people improving the access to schools, hospitals, government offices and so on.

With the construction of Sindhuli Road the regional economy also has made major progress since the road was built as the number of people residing in the area increased with the increment of commercial and industrial activities giving boost to households, shops and small factories. This shift promoted sustainable income generating activities which subsequently lessened the dependency on regular employment and foreign nation migration of youths mainly, alongside the benefit of uplifting the living standard of the local people.

Local farmers in Sindhuli districts are now able to sell their products easily in capital or markets of Terai. Sindhuli district alone produced 9,500 tons of sweet orange last year in comparison to 24,000 metric tons, produced in total all over Nepal. Mr. Ram Bahadur Thapa, a local resident of the Jalakanya VDC proudly informs earning NPR 500 thousand annually through farming of sweet oranges (Junar). He also built a house for his family through regular savings from his income and is happy that both his children have better education as they now go to boarding school.

Hotel business in the highway has increased, thanks to better access of roads which has resulted in increased number of local visitors visiting the area. Also it has generated better employment opportunity to people due to the number of new hotels operating there.

Mr. Santosh Kumar Bam owner of a Hotel in the Sindhuli area states that hotel business of his has managed to reap better benefits and good returns to him in comparison to his other hotels ventures in other areas. The highway also has paved way for providing home stay facilities to the tourist and visitors, which has facilitated additional income generating activities for the local villagers.

JIcA's FOCUS AREAS FOR EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY

1. Reconstruction of Rural Housing, Schools, Hospitals and Infrastructures
2. Kathmandu Valley Resilient plan(KVRP) and Rehabilitation and Recovery Plan(RRP) for Gorkha and Sindhupalchowk District.
3. Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) to restore small public facilities and improve livelihood of earthquake victim
The Government of Japan extended a grant assistance nearly NPR 906 million to the Government of Nepal for the execution of the Tribhuvan International Airport Modernization Project (Surveillance System).

TIA modernization project initiated in 2013 facilitates the improvement of airport equipment and the installation of equipment has been completed recently. Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) is making arrangement for the flight testing. Earlier Government of Japan had extended its assistance to the Government of Nepal with 3.559 billion Japanese yen for the Project for Modernization of Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu by installing a Radar System in 1994 and with 1.272 billion Japanese yen for the Project for Improvement of Existing Air Traffic Services System by improving Communication Systems in 1999. The additional assistance is provided for further strengthening of aviation safety in Nepal.

The Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) Modernization Project

The project has two components- installation of new radar at the TIA that would work for terminal approach aircraft to provide radar surveillance up to 50 nautical miles and the installation of radar in Bhattedanda that will provide an en-route surveillance of flights up to 250 nautical miles—up to Dang in the west and the entire country in the east, north and south. The new radar at the TIA will replace existing 18-year-old equipment which was also installed through the Grant Aid support from Japan in 1994.

Once installed the system will start its operation, the radars will monitor small aircraft flying domestic air routes as well as international aircraft flying at high altitudes. The project is expected to address the need for the long awaited installation of a Secondary Radar System at TIA, which will enhance the surveillance capacity of the airport from the existing Approach control to an Area control system. With the installation of this system up to Dang in the west and entire country in the east, north and south of Nepal will be covered, making it easier for TIA Air Traffic Controllers to manage Nepal’s air space more safely and efficiently. Besides, the radars give information about flight movement right from landing and taking off to weather conditions, aircraft identity and altitude, among others.

The improvement in aviation safety in Nepal will certainly contribute to the development of tourism in Nepal.

Improvement of Aviation Safety Facilities in Major Airports in Nepal

The Government of Japan has decided to extend a grant assistance of up to one billion, four hundred and fifty-two million Japanese Yen (JPY 1,452,000,000) to the Government of Nepal for implementing the Project for Improvement of Aviation Safety Facilities in Major Airports.

The objective of the Project is to procure aviation safety facilities such as localizers and other equipment in eight major airports in Nepal- which includes the Tribhuvan International Airport, the country’s only international airport, two major domestic airports (Chandragaddhi & Dhangadhri) and five other major airports in mountainous regions (Jomsom, Jumla, Lukla, Simikot and Rara) thereby improving guidance and landing safety for aircraft at their destination airports.

Air safety is one of the priority sectors of JICA’s cooperation in Nepal. Currently JICA is in the process of implementing the Project for the Development of a Spare Parts Management Center and En-route Radar Control Services, a technical cooperation project. Spare parts and other items required for this project are logged and managed at a supply control center that supports personnel training for this project and strengthens operation, management and maintenance capacity. Through such cooperation, JICA will continue its commitment to improve airport safety in Nepal.
REFORMING THE CIVIL CODE

In Nepal, JICA is largely known for its large scale quality infrastructure projects, you name it, in road, hydropower, water supply, hospitals, support to agriculture, education etc. After the second political movement, one of the biggest tasks for us Nepalese was to write the Constitution of Nepal as per the sentiments and spirit of the People of Nepal. Individual people, organizations from all walks of life and political parties contributed from their side, so did the Development Partners in Nepal. After numerous discussion and analysis, JICA urged that the Constitution of Nepal should not be a hindrance to its Economic growth. Nepali economy should not be fragmented and become less competitive. However, it will take its course of time to reflect the Economic growth into reality and touch each individual people’s lives. So JICA, Supreme Court of Nepal and Ministry of Law further discussed to find areas of cooperation that could reach out to individual people, which eventually was detected to be the support to Civil Code. Government of Nepal formed the “Civil Law Reform and Improvement Task Force” chaired by then Supreme Court Justice and later the Prime minister of Nepal Justice Khila Raj Regmi. To support the drafting of the Civil Code by the taskforce, JICA formed an Advisory Group under the coordination of Prof. Hiroshi Matsuo from Keio University of Japan. The Taskforce and Advisor Group exchanged views where the Advisory Group shared their Japanese practical experiences on the Civil Code and the international practices both in Nepal and Japan. This helped the Task force to review the Civil Code provisions to draft as per local context as well as live up with the international standards.

The Taskforce has already submitted the Civil Code together with other Codes as Civil Procedure Code, Criminal Code, Criminal procedure Code and Sentencing act in the parliament. The Legislation Committee of the parliament has completed the discussion of the Civil Code in 16 different locations across the country. Focused group discussions under the active leadership of parliamentarians and participation of judges, legal practitioners, journalists, civil societies and other are still going on. We hope, by incorporating the comments, suggestions and the process of sharing with the people has made the Codes more acceptable. We are hopeful; the forthcoming sessions of the parliament will pass the Civil Code and other Code on time. Once enacted by the parliament, their dissemination to the people and practitioners will be another challenge for the judiciary sector. The new Code deals with sensitive and crucial issues such as marriage, lending etc., fair enough to satisfy and support individuals who have been deprived of primary rights so far. The new Code then is expected to replace the Muluki Ain which governed the country for more than 150 years. This will make all individual Nepalese feel the difference of political change which they have been anticipating for generations.

PEACEFUL AND HARMONIOUS SOCIETY

STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNITY MEDIATION CAPACITY

The Community Mediation program is gaining popularity amongst local level in Nepal mainly because of its equal and rational advocacy policy. Community mediation is one of the dispute resolution mechanisms for people who do not have access to proper justice system. The community people select the community mediators by themselves and they facilitate the process to resolve the disputes in win-win situation which eventually helps in maintaining social harmony and maintaining sustainable peace building process. The process is time and money saver tool as the beneficiary/victims need not visit the police instead they are conveniently accessed to fair treatment and granted justice. It is also reported that the number of disputes seems to be decreasing at the local level and people are investing their time and ability in local level development. Community mediation formally commenced in 2010 through the Government lead initiative lead by the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MOFALD) with the technical cooperation support of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), however similar practice was followed in Nepal almost 15-16 years back. There are several NGOs which have shown prominent performance of training of community mediators, but there was limited linkage with MOFALD. Community Mediation Capacity for Peaceful and Harmonious Society Project (COMCAP) took significant role to strengthen linkage to advocate the importance of the Community Mediation Program as one of the basic services to be provided by the local bodies to all needy people.

COMCAP was initiated with the main purpose of enhancing capacity and mechanisms for dispute management and was piloted in in Sindhuli and
Improving access to justice mainly to the poor, women and marginalized people is the primary objective of the project. The project selected 10 VDCs in each district and implemented community mediation program. The VDC selects community mediators from each ward and the project organizes training for mediators including one VDC assistant for 8 days. After the training program the Community Mediation Center (CMC) is opened at the VDC office for providing necessary services. The disputants register the dispute at the CMC and CMC starts the process of mediation to resolve the disputes. Generally each of the disputed parties select one mediator and the VDC selects third mediator who works as coordinator for the mediation session. Three mediators facilitate the sessions to settle the dispute and come with a consensus and make agreement paper where both of the parties sign.

The COMCAP aligns project into Local Governance and Community Development Program (LGCDP-II).

In 2014, MOFALD took a lead to draft “Nagarkot Declaration” to address the role and responsibility of MOFALD for the first time as member Ministry of the Mediation Council which was endorsed by the government. This declaration became the milestone for the implementation of community mediation activities through MOFALD. At the same time MOFALD decided to roll out community mediation for local development in Nepal. Then MOFALD requested to JICA to implement the second phase of COMCAP to prepare the roll out plan nationwide. Since then the second phase (2015-2018) of the project has been focusing more on the preparation of the roadmap and establishment of community mediation implementation system to roll out community mediation activities nationwide as requested by MOFALD.

Now, the project supports MOFALD to prepare community mediation guidelines and to develop Monitoring & Evaluation mechanism for community mediation. The project has already prepared the guidelines and shared it in central level workshop chaired by Chief Secretary of Government of Nepal which was inaugurated by Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The Mediation Council has already endorsed the guidelines and will be submitting it to the Council of Ministers for approval through the Ministry of Law and Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.

The project now pilots the draft guidelines in three districts; Morang, Dhanusha & Tanahun. The project selected 3 VDCs from each district and one Municipality from Morang district for the piloting. Post piloting phase MOFALD aims to replicate and expand the same model nationwide.

JICA in History

“Token of love from the people of Japan to the people of Nepal”

○ Construction began in 1982 for 200 bed capacity but later extended to 400 bed capacity
○ Started its services from 14th July 1983
○ Formally inaugurated on 7th March 1986 by then King Late Birendra Bir Bikram Shah
○ Today the hospital is the number one health service provider with the best facilities and resources in the country
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is supporting the recovery and reconstruction work in Nepal post-earthquake that occurred in April 2015. Immediately after the earthquake, Government of Japan dispatched Japan Disaster Relief teams for rescue and medical service through JICA. Subsequently, different projects and programs have been planned and implemented for rebuilding Nepal. Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of the lost and damaged properties seems crucial for Nepal post the earthquake. Most of all rebuilding of priority sectors such as school building, housing, hospital, and water supply recovery are important hence JICA immediately mobilized the financial resources required under its “Build Back Better” concept.

This concept indicates that the timing before the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase is the opportunity to develop a more resilient society than the pre-disaster phase, which is based on “Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030” adopted by the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai in March 2015, and “Sendai Cooperation Initiative for Disaster Risk Reduction” stated by the Japanese government.

1. THE FIRST COMPLETED RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT IS EXPECTED TO EMERGE IN DECEMBER

The old VDC building was damaged and collapsed during the EQ in April 2015 after which the Sindhupalchowk District Development Committee requested JICA for the reconstruction. JICA decided to support this project post-on-site survey. The new VDC building consists of 3 office rooms, 1 lobby room, 1 training space, 1 pantry & storage and 2 toilets (one for common user and one for physically challenged). At the entrance, the wheelchair slope paves way for the people with disabilities. The new VDC office building is located in the same area where the previous office stood.

This is one of the successful outputs amongst JICA’s “Build Back Better” initiatives. Very soon two other reconstructions - District Agricultural Development Office and Chautara Women and Children’s Office in Sindhupalchowk shall be ready for use by April 2017.

2. FARMERS PRODUCED BETTER RICE SEEDS THROUGH JICA’S SUPPORT

Paddy fields in Ichok and Kiwol VDC in northeastern part of Sindhupalchowk district are designated as rice seed production base by District Agricultural Development Office. Most locals suffered huge damage from the earthquake last year. To recover their living condition and economic situation, income generation activities seem to be one of the most imminent needs. Regarding the existing issues, JICA decided to support their livelihood and has provided trainings with regard to the seed production management in various phases of this year’s rice cropping in the areas to improve seed quality. Better seeds can sell in higher prices; local farmers mobilized their scientific methods and practical skills in paddy ground instantly.

The longer monsoon with frequent heavy rain affected the total amount of their rice production this summer in spite of which the trainees in these VDCs could still manage to produce better quality seeds.

Mr. Ganesh Jyoti, manager of Kiwol agricultural cooperative, says; “Reconstruction of seed-storage is extremely important for us seed-selling farmers to secure the seeds”. After Earthquake, we had to keep our seeds in each household, many of whose houses were also collapsed. The shabby condition of our temporary storage including tents or cracked house rooms could not keep the seeds properly which resulted in growing molds and other losses.”

JICA is planning to reconstruct seed storages of each village, which were destroyed in the 2015 Earthquake.
**MATRISISHU MITERI HOSPITAL HANDED OVER TO GOVERNMENT**

On the occasion of 10th anniversary of cordial relationship between Pokhara’s Sub-metropolitan and Japan’s Komagane city, Matrisishu Miteri Hospital has been handed over to the Government of Nepal amidst a formal inauguration function. Honorable president of Nepal Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari inaugurated the newly constructed hospital in Batulechaur of Pokhara on Sep 29th 2016.

The hospital aims to serve the women, children, expectant mothers & infants and comprises of all the necessary facilities to overcome the health hazards. During the event President Bhandari acknowledged the relationship between the two cities and praised the coalition between Nepal and Japan for this noble initiative.

Ambassador of Japan to Nepal his Excellency Mr. Masashi Ogawa stated the hospital shall be working towards controlling and reducing infant deaths and that Japanese government will continue its efforts of support activities in various aspects.

Chief Representative of JICA Nepal office Mr. Jun Sakuma informed that he was delighted to be a support in this noble initiative. JICA implements its support through its Partnerships Program (PPP) in this project.

The newly constructed hospital building and purchase of necessary equipment’s for the hospital is an initiative of various stakeholders of Komagane city in Japan, Nepal Government and local people, with a total investment of NPR 140 million informed the Hospital Development Committee Chairman Mr. Krishna Thapa. The local Municipality will further be supporting the hospital on some portion with additional funding.

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**“GETTING CHILDREN BACK IN SCHOOL” JICA’S EMERGENCY SCHOOL RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT**

JICA pledged financial support for Emergency School Reconstruction Project (ESRP) in partnership with Ministry of Education (MoE). The official ceremony for the commencement event was held at Shree Kalidevi Higher Secondary School in Pyutar, Lalitpur. The project targets to rebuild and retrofit schools in the districts severely affected by Nepal Earthquake thereby contributing to the improvement of education service and earthquake resilience for sustainable economic growth.

The project will cover 14 districts in collaboration with Asian Development Bank in which JICA will cover Lalitpur, Dhading, Nuwakot, Rasuwa Gorkha and Makawanpur.

The ceremony was jointly inaugurated by Secretary of MoE, Mr. Bishwa Prakash Pandit, National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) Expert Dr. Hari Ram Parajuli and Vice President of JICA Mr. Hidetoshi Irigaki on 19 May 2016.

The Project Cost is estimated as 16,522 million Japanese Yen (approximately 132 million USD source AMP, MOF), of which JICA will finance 14,000 million Japanese Yen (approximately 115.3 million USD; source: AMP, MoF). The Government of Nepal agreed this loan agreement with the condition of 40 years repayment and 10 years grace period with 0.01 % interest annually.

Earthquake on April 25th and May 12th 2015 inflicted huge damage in various sections out of which 7000 schools (source: PDNA) were severely damaged.

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**LIVELIHOOD PROGRAM TO RE-ESTABLISH EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS**

JICA introduces livelihood support programme through Quick Impact project (QIPs) in Sindhupalchowk and Gorkha districts. In addition it also has been providing much required support in various other sectors like infrastructure, education, health to the local people of the mentioned areas.

QIP program facilitates to uplift the lifestyle of local farmers who were severely affected by the 2015 earthquake. JICA launched its livelihood package targeting all the farmers who faced difficult situation during the EQ, as their seeds and foods were buried under the rubble. Since the launch the villagers are involved in vegetable farming, enhancing its production, trading the products in the market and also consuming. These activities have improved the income generation capacity of the farmers and the program is quickly gaining popularity amongst the beneficiaries.

Livelihood improvement projects are also followed by large women’s groups in Barpak Village Development Committee where various activities such as seed storage, vegetable production in home garden, goat farming etc. are undertaken. Such skill enhancement activities have improved awareness amongst the women’s groups who are now well equipped with food security at times of disasters. JICA’s assistance in such livelihood programs has managed to support these EQ affected villagers as well as bring them back to normalcy from the incident.

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