

Draft

1 September 2016

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister

Rt. Hon. Chief Justice

Rt. Hon Speaker of the Legislature-Parliament

Hon. Deputy Prime Ministers and Ministers

H. E. Mr. Nobuo Kishi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Japan

Heads of Diplomatic Missions

Distinguished guests,

Good Morning and Namaste!

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has hosted this commemorative event to mark the 60th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Japan. On this special occasion, I extend a warm welcome to all of you, and especially to our distinguished guests from Japan.

The presence of the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister of Nepal, and so many other important personalities in this programme underscores the importance we attach to our relations with Japan. Likewise, we are delighted to have with us H. E. Mr. Nuobo Kishi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, representing the Government of Japan. This is a testimony of importance given to Nepal by the Government Japan.

In the annals of Nepal-Japan relations, today is an important day; a day to celebrate the formal journey which we have successfully treaded upon for the last sixty years.

These last sixty years have been the years of mutual trust and cooperation. Cooperation –which has contributed to the socio-economic pursuit of Nepal. Cooperation- that traverse through wide

areas –including agriculture, infrastructure development and human resources development.

Cultural and historical linkages have connected our two countries and people for centuries. Buddha's eternal teachings have inspired the civilizations of both of our countries. Exchange of high-level visits have further enriched our relations. Political relations have always been cordial and friendly. Economic relations have been beneficial to both and stand to offer much for our mutual benefit.

In the last sixty years, our relations have made significant progress –in scope as well as substance, in outlook as well as opportunities. The two countries have worked closely –at bilateral, regional as well as multilateral levels.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Japan has achieved an impressive record of economic development. The ingenious people of Japan have made their country a pioneer in innovation, and one of the largest economies of the world. The economic leap of Japan is exemplary.

Nepal has undergone fundamental transformation in her political landscape. Peace-process is exemplary. Promulgation of Nepal's constitution by an elected Constituent Assembly last year is a milestone in our history. Political aspirations of people have been addressed. We are working hard to ensure the ownership of the constitution by all.

Japan has always remained as one of the largest and reliable development partners of Nepal. Our pursuit for socio-economic development has gained significant impetus from the development assistance provided by Japan, along with the dispatch of trained experts and Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers.

Japan's cooperation has been helpful for the modernization of Nepal's agriculture, infrastructure development, aviation safety, school sector reform, human resource development and many other sectors.

Japan remains an important destination for Nepali students to pursue higher studies. The scholarships for university course including the JDS scholarship which was launched in 2015 have been vital to develop the human resource in Nepal.

Japan inculcates the students with a rigorous work ethic, which Japan is identified with. It instills the ethos of innovation, which Japan is overwhelmingly famous for. And this inculcation of work ethic, of innovation, matters the most when it comes to build a rich base of skilled human resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Relations between Nepal and Japan are not limited to bilateral framework. Both the countries have interacted closely through the regional forum of SAARC, to which Japan is an important observer country.

United Nations provide another significant platform, for close collaboration of our two countries. Both of our countries attach high importance to the UN peacekeeping operations.

Japan has also been providing ODA through UN agencies and International Financial Institutions, including the World Bank Group and the Asian Development Bank.

When the devastating earthquake struck Nepal in April last year, Japan extended immediate support. The prompt dispatch of relief and rescue teams and emergency relief material is a testimony of close friendship between our countries. Japan's substantial pledge to assist Nepal in post-disaster reconstruction demonstrate the strong bond of relations.

As the reconstruction drive has gained momentum, we strongly believe that Japan will augment the level of assistance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nepal-Japan relations are not confined to governments alone. The harmonious relations, goodwill, and mutual admiration between the people of both countries remains the soul of our relations.

Majestic mountains, natural bounties, rich cultural mosaic make Nepal an attractive destination for Japanese tourists. We must further explore to increase the inflow of tourists from Japan to Nepal. Nepal is in need of Japanese tourists more than ever, as our economy is struggling to recover from the devastation caused by earthquake.

Trade and investment are the enabling factors for economic development. They stimulate the economy, connect the markets and drive the development trajectory. To make trade beneficial to both, responsibility lies on our collective efforts. We believe that enhanced market access to Nepalese products in Japan together with simplification of the procedures and standards, relaxation the rule of origin and support for capacity building will help expand Nepal's exports, thereby contributing to grow our economy.

To conclude, I am hopeful that this special year would be instrumental in further promoting our multi-dimensional relations in the days to come. Capitalizing on the cordial political relations we have been enjoying for last sixty years, our pursuit must be to promote economic and commercial ties consistent with the trends of our time.

Our best wishes will always remain with Japan and her people for their continued progress and prosperity in the years to come.

Long-live Nepal-Japan friendship!

Thank you all!