



1st NRN GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE CONVENTION

Expanding Nepal's Knowledge Pool through Diaspora

**12-14 October, 2018
Kathmandu, Nepal**



GoN Regd. No. 01-2070/71

Date: 15 October 2018

Summary of deliberations and suggestions made during the 1st NRN Global Knowledge Convention

The 1st NRN Global Knowledge Convention is concluded. The Convention was organized by the Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) in partnership with the Government of Nepal (GoN) on 12-14 October 2018 in Kathmandu, Nepal. The Rt Hon Prime Minister of Nepal Mr KP Oli inaugurated the Convention on the evening of 12 October. Foreign Minister Hon Mr Pradip Kumar Gyawali, Minister of Education, Science and Technology Hon Mr Giriraj Mani Pokharel, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Development Hon Mr Chakra Pain Khanal attended the inauguration ceremony. Similarly, members of the Federal Parliament of Nepal, former ministers, high-ranking government officials, senior authorities of universities and research institutions, leaders of private sectors, accomplished international, national and NRN experts, students attended the Convention.

The convention was comprised of 27 presentation sessions. It covered four plenary and 15 symposium topics. 166 paper presenters and 78 panelists gave input to the Convention. About 400 participants from 21 countries attended this convention.

The proposal to held this Convention was approved by the 2017-2019 Executive Body of NRNA led by the NRNA President Mr Bhaban Bhatta. Mr Kumra Panta (Vice-President of NRNA) and Dr Hem Raj Sharma from The University of Liverpool, UK (Advisor of NRNA) jointly chaired the Convention. An Advisory Board and Organizing Committee of esteemed group of knowledge experts in diverse field of education, research and policy making laid the foundation for this Convention. The Convention aimed to bring together experts from Nepal, Nepali diaspora and international community to share their experiences and prepare an action plan to help Nepal move towards knowledge-based economy.

This document presents a **quick summary** of what happened at the Convention and what were the immediate outcomes. Within three months from now, we are going to release a detailed report encompassing all dimensions of this Convention. In the meantime, all presentation files will be archived on the Convention webpage as soon as possible.

The objectives of the Convention were as follows:

- Identify inadequacies of Nepal Government's Science and Technology (S&T) policies in inviting and encouraging global knowledge investment
- Understand Nepal's S&T State-of-the-Art, and identify knowledge gap in comparison to nation's developmental aspirations
- Identify expertise pools in diaspora community, and explore modalities of transfer-ring such expertise to address Nepal's needs
- Enhance nation's confidence by aligning diaspora's skill, knowledge and innovation to development projects of national priorities

Distinguished invited speakers and panel members addressed the following four plenary sessions:

- Science and Technology Policy
- Knowledge-Based Economy and Development Pathways
- Knowledge and Technology Transfer
- Role of Nepali Diaspora for Development Policies

Invited and contributed papers were presented in the following thematic topics:

- Agriculture and Food Security
- Disaster Risk Reduction



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- Education
- Environment Pollution
- Financial Policy and Investment
- Health Education and Policy
- Hydropower, Transportation and Utility
- New Frontiers in Physical Sciences and Prosperity
- Social Security and Good Governance
- Sustainable Energy
- Technology Transfer and Innovation
- Agro-Food Innovation Supercluster
- Returnee Professionals, Scholarship and Research Funding
- Innovation and Private Investments

Based on the knowledge shared through the paper presentations, panel members' input, and the participants' questions and experts answers, the organizing committee draw certain conclusions and recommendations, that are presented below for respective sessions.

Plenary Sessions:

Science and Technology Policy

- Increase investment in research and development by three-fold
- Prepare and utilize skilled human resources
- Formulate visionary S&T policy and set priorities
- Enhance and institutionalize collaboration
- Mobilize NRNA's resources in support of the above conclusions

Knowledge-Based Economy and Development Pathways:

- Develop vision, targets and conducive pathways for knowledge-based economy
- Achieve double digit growth by embracing evidence-based policies and programs for technology development, and emerging drivers such as greater access to information and mobilization of young demography
- Manage inequality, disparity and distributional issue across income-groups as well as across geographical regions
- Prioritize structural transformation in key sectors such as agricultural modernization, service sector development, and competitively-advantaged sectors of industries
- Facilitate capital, skill and knowledge investment, and access to international market, tourism and trade promotion in collaboration with NRNA

Knowledge and Technology Transfer

- Pursue knowledge investment initiatives using structured organizational approach
- Propose linkages and representations of NRNA in Government Policy and Institutions
- Develop a white policy paper aligned with vision 2030 to mechanize Knowledge Investment by NRNA
- Establish NRNA/GoN Science and Technology endowment Funds

Role of Nepali Diaspora for Development Policies



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- Develop a mechanism to facilitate the participation of NRNA in the development policies of the Government of Nepal
- Utilize diasporas' research strength and experiences of best development policies to reform old and formulate new public policies affecting Nepal
- Expand the role of Nepali diaspora's in modernizing the Government policies pertaining to academic institutions and private sectors to contribute towards national goal of achieving Prosperous Nepal and Happy Nepali

Symposium Sessions:

Agriculture and Food Security

- Initiate collaboration between Nepalese Agriculture institutions, diaspora professional organizations, and relevant academic and government institutions in countries of their residence
- In the changed context of federalism, encourage and help GoN to review and update its Agriculture Development Strategy
- Contribute knowledge and financial investments to various areas of agriculture development in Nepal, including but not limited to, agriculture mechanization, branding and marketing of products for export, Agricultural and Natural Resources Development and Management, food safety and promotion of healthy eating

Disaster Risk Reduction

- Integrate Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Management as integral part of all development policies
- Increase investment for pre-disaster awareness, enforcing infrastructure construction code, and training and advanced equipment for post-disaster management
- Upgrade and adapt to new and emerging technologies for disaster preparedness and management
- Declare road accident as a disaster and help reduce number of accidental death

Education

- Ensure equitable education for all, including physically impaired students
- Formulate education laws to bring conceptual clarity in the role of Federal and local governing bodies
- Quality of education depend on quality of teachers. Encourage participation of academically excellent teachers in education. Involve Diaspora knowledge and experience in all level of education.
- Use education to build capacity so that students will be prepared for the jobs that do not yet exists

Environment Pollution

- Identify science-based indicators to understand the level of environmental pollution
- Assess the negative impact of pollution on public health, agriculture, tourism and overall national economy
- Find short term and long-term solutions based on well-planned policies
- Implement new laws, science and technology based Sustainable Environment Management System, education, awareness, participation and behavioral changer for improving environment



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- Develop a partnership among GoN policy makers, universities, businesses, community and NRN experts to tackle the environmental pollution issues

Financial Policy and Investment

- Encourage NRN and Foreign investment by addressing issues surrounding Double Taxation, Bilateral Investment Protection and Repatriation
- Allow abroad investments by amending Nepalese Investments Restricting Abroad Act 2021 BS
- Corruption measures are needed for the good health of Financial and Stock Exchange Market of Nepal
- Allow brokerage and wealth management licenses to and NRNs and Foreign firms

Health Education and Policy

- Improve mental health, dementia, oral health, reproductive health, and cardiac rehabilitation services in Nepal
- Institutionalize modern health insurance options for universal health insurance
- Increase number of public hospitals to assure public access to health services
- Improve medical education in Nepal
- Modernize drug policy for safe drug use
- Tap into the NRNs financial and human capital to improve on the above listed issues

Hydropower, Transportation and Utility

- Nepal's performance in delivery of mega projects is not satisfactory
- Solution of the problems cannot be found by looking at specific projects in isolation
- There are considerable policy impediments at various stages of project development: from project conceptualization to project design; construction procurement and quality control
- Projects are announced without adequate homework, on ad-hock basis
- Project risk and peer review are not considered prior to projects announcement
- Policy changes to empower project managers, elimination of political interference in project management, to make prior home work by a team of experts and mandatory peer review by independent experts are minimum requirements
- Integrity Knowledge and accountability are the pre-requisites of a successful project delivery
- Respect knowledge and experts. Engineering is very complex.

New Frontiers in Physical Sciences and Prosperity

- Increase funding in physical science education and research
- Encourage Nepali scholars to participate in international scholar exchange programs provided by institutions such as International Center for Theoretical Physics
- Expand the networking and collaboration already started with NRN scientist
- Introduce curriculum in Nepali Universities and increase partnership with the industries to encourage entrepreneurship in Nepal

Social Security and Good Governance

- Make comprehensive social security policy covering social security of private sector, foreign migrant workers and employees from informal sector
- Implement performance-based pay system and non-permanent contract employees in public sector



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- Implement rule of law, transparency, accountability, control of corruption, peoples' awareness and participation, right to information, global local linkage and learn from best practices from abroad to maintain good governance
- Achieve sustainable social security through job creation from public and private sector

Sustainable Energy

- Start following balanced approach in creating energy from mixed sources such as solar, wind, biogas
- Use smart engineering for efficient energy production such as cascade dam and smart meters
- Reduce under supply of power to industries in partnership with the NRN resources
- Increase resources for using smart grids

Technology Transfer and Innovation

- Start Increasing GoN and NRN support for start-up companies in Nepal
- Establish entrepreneurship hub under NRNA leadership
- Create a database of young entrepreneurs and established industries, and start developing products
- Improve patent database and patent enforcement mechanisms

Agro-Food Innovation Supercluster

- Establish an Agro-food innovation supercluster in Nepal
- Start working with Nepal government for shared reliance-based knowledge & partnership that bridges among foreign and domestic laboratories, technology transfer offices, research and academic institutions, small and medium enterprises to ensure global competitiveness of agro-food industries
- Establish entrepreneurship hub under NRNA leadership
- Energize economic growth, employment and self-employment generation in Agro-food sector
- Develop ayurvedic, medicinal and aromatics plants and microbes commercialization for agro-food substitutes

Returnee Professionals, Scholarship and Research Funding

- Utilize returnees' skill, knowledge and expertise for economic development of Nepal
- To encourage return of professionals, government needs to increase funding support for establishing research laboratory in Nepal
- During this convention, in collaboration with labor ministry, NRNA has made an understanding to open training centers for migrant workers in all seven provinces, and also conduct tele-medicine from abroad
- Formal mutual committee among NRNA and labor ministry will be formed to address the urgent issues of migrant workers
- Several scholarship opportunities for Nepali professionals exist but they are not sufficient

Sincerely,

Kumar Panta
Vice President of Non-Resident Nepali Association
Chair, Organizing Committee

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Chair, Organizing Committee
The University of Liverpool, UK