

# Report of the Second NRN Regional Conference

## Foreword:

The Nepali Diaspora has been making continuous inroads in improving their status in the country they have migrated into. Although Nepalis started to migrate to regions other than South Asia quite late but migration to Europe started a little earlier when compared with migration to other regions. It was the students who came to study here settled here first. But now the professionals, entrepreneurs and other groups of people are getting into. Nepalis are exhibiting their skill to survive in the most difficult situation. Today, Nepalis in Europe represent a host of professions and social strata. They are scattered across a number of countries, Nepalis of each strata in each European country may have their unique set of problems, but they have many things in common too. The most important common issue for each and every Nepali in Europe is to preserve the Nepaliness and yet successfully integrate into the Pan European mainstream. Preserving Nepaliness means retaining our social values and being proud of our heritage while integrating into the mainstream indicates becoming part of the European multicultural society.

The European integration process provides challenges as well as opportunities for Nepalis. We are now not merely black manual workers filling the 'dirty' jobs not readily done by the white Europeans. We are part of a migrant community which is involved in creating wealth and enriching the local culture. We can enjoy the rights and privileges offered by a modern multi cultural and multinational state. But in red to benefit from the opportunities we need to enhance our own capability.

During the last few years, the role of Non Resident Nepali is being increasingly acknowledged in Nepal. The Nepali workers toiling in the West and East Asia are sending remittances in huge quantity which is in effect keeping the Nepali economy afloat. The Nepalis who have become successful entrepreneurs outside of Nepal are investing back home. There is increasing discussion among the Nepali Diaspora on how they could contribute to the country and people they belong to. The Non Resident Nepali Association and the assembly of the Non Resident Nepalis in different parts of the world have been instrumental in raising the profile of NRNs in Nepal and among the Nepali Diaspora. In this process questions were being asked how Nepalis in Europe and other rich countries can as a group helps Nepal. I being a Nepali living in Europe for more than .... decades and representing Europe in the NRN ICC was often bombarded with questions about our role and responsibility.

Being part of the "rich North" we can also help our brethren back home in upgrading their knowledge and skills. We can transfer technology required for a modern state. Our experience in a developed democratic society may come handy in the social and economic and political transformation of Nepal. The expectation from us is at a different level than expectation from the persons in foreign employment.

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With this in mind I floated the idea of organizing conference of Nepalis of Europe. In this I readily found my Nepali friends in Germany and the entire Executive Committee of NRN Germany committee firmly behind this idea. The conference was an outstanding success and I am proud to bring out the report of the conference.

When came up with the proposal of organizing a Pan European Conference of Nepalis in Bonn Germany this June, we got instantaneous approval and support from the Non Resident Nepali Association International Coordination Council (NRN-ICC) especiallu or President Dr. Upendra Mahato. I thank him and other colleagues at the ICC for the mental and material support.

When we planned the conference we had our own set of anxiety about the conference participation. At the end we had more than hundred seventy persons from twenty different countries of Europe as well as outside of Europe in the conference. I would like to thank the delegates for their presence as well as total cooperation and understanding during the course of the conference.

I also express our earnest thanks to the partners in NCC of Belgium, Belarus, Russia and UK who surpported the NRN Germany in organizing the event. I also thank the sponsors Sanima, SER, Pit, German Nepal Friendship Association and Asuka Travels and Tours for their physical and material support in organizing the event. Without the support of partners and sponsors, out conference would not have materialized. I also thank the advertisers in the souvenir of the conference.

The credit of successful organistion goes to my friends from NRN Germany especially its President my friend Mr. Dil Gurung, ICC member Mr. Nilendra Shrestha, Mr. Dinesh Manandhar, Mr. Sachit Shrestha Mr. ...Khanal and other colleagues who spent sleepless nights and toiled tirelessly in organizing the event, without their hard work we would have been nowhere. Laslty I thank the media persons, all other organizations and individuals who helped in organizing the seminar, disseminating the outcomes and preparing the reports. I hope this report will be useful for Nepalis living outside of Nepal and also to Resident Nepalis who wish to enroll support of NRNs in Socio economic transformation of Nepal.

Ram Thapa  
Vice President

## **The Conference:**

The Second Non-Resident Nepali (NRN) Regional conference was organized in Bonn, Germany on 2-4 June 2006, by the Non-Resident Nepali Association and National Coordination Council-Germany. The conference was held at Gustav-Stresemann-Institut, Langer Grabenweg 68, 53175 Bonn - Bad Godesberg.

The NRN International Coordination Council (ICC) had earlier decided that such regional conference be held in one of the world regions in the year when the global conference is not taking place. As proposed by the NRN Germany, the ICC decided to hold its second Regional (Europe) conference in Bonn on the above-mentioned date. Over 170 delegates from across Europe and other parts of the World participated in the conference, list attached. The Conference included a cultural show, Regional conference and the meeting of the International Coordination Council. The brief report on what transpired in the conference is given below:

### **2 June 2006 - Pre-conference Activities**

It was the day when the delegates from 18 countries arrived in Bonn. Some of the delegates had spent more than a day on the way to the conference. In the evening, a cultural program was organized at which famous spiritual singer Ani Chhoying and Nepali artists living in Europe (Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium) exhibited their talents – dances, popular and folk Nepali songs. It was attended not only by the delegates but also by other Nepalis and German friends. The evening period (post dinner) was devoted to introduction, informal meetings and socialization. The chanting of Doharis and short poems did really added thrill to the conference.

### **3 June 2006 – Conference Day**

The entire day of 3 June was devoted to the Regional conference. The conference programme is given in annex 1. The summary of the deliberations is given below:

#### **Inaugural Session:**

The inaugural session began with the chanting of Buddhist and Hindu prayer by renowned artist **Anni Dolma Chhoying**.

This session was chaired by ICC President, Dr. Upendra Mahato. As a host, **Mr. Dil Bahadur Gurung**, President of NRN Germany, welcomed all the delegates and guests and thanked for their participation. He thanked the ICC for agreeing to organize the conference in Bonn, Germany. He called on the delegates to make best use of the opportunity and influence on the government of Nepal to make the legislative reforms so that NRNs could contribute to the socio-economic transformation of Nepal. He said, if each NRN can attract a tourist there will be 1.4 million tourist visiting Nepal. If all NRNs are united and put concerted efforts, many of the nations' problems could be resolved. He called upon the NRNs to work for the development of rural areas which are not easily accessible.

**Dr. Upendra Mahato** called on the government of Nepal to make best use of the skills, experiences and resources acquired by 1.4 million Nepalis living in different nooks and corners of the world. He said, NRNs have already invested more than Nepali Rupees 5 billion and much more would come if the government creates conducive environment for invest in Nepal.

Speaking about the role of remittances and of foreign employment in keeping the economy afloat, he called on the government to look into the problems faced by NRNs in foreign employment. Briefing the participants on the progress made on Nepal Investment Fund, he said that the Fund will be registered in Cyprus before the NRN Day in October. Further, he informed that NRNs were in the process of implementing a 20 MW Hydropower project in eastern Nepal.

The NRN Souvenir published on the occasion of the conference and the CD of the second NRN Global Conference was jointly released by Dr. Madan Kumar Bhattarai, Nepali Ambassador to Germany and Dr. Upendra Mahato.

**Ambassador Dr. Bhattarai** spoke about the role NRNs can play. He suggested NRNs should be proactive in linking the society they lived in with Nepal. He also spoke about the increasing number of Nepali professionals and businessmen operating in Europe and hoped that they would take back home the experience and professionalism they had acquired in the country of residence.

**Mr. Ram Pratap Thapa**, vice-President (Europe), thanked all the delegates for coming to Bonn and making the conference successful. He spoke of the need for the Nepalis to enrich the culture of both their motherland and the society they lived in. He strongly urged the government of Nepal to look on the ways of getting the second generation Nepalis interested in Nepal.

### **Plenary Session I - Legal Issues of NRNs**

The First Plenary session was devoted to the legal issues concerning the Status of NRNs. This session was chaired by Mr. Ram Pratap Thapa. **Dr. Upendra Mahato** spoke about the NRN movement: its present status and future. The highlights of his presentation were:

- The NRN movement has crossed many milestones since the First Global Conference in October 2003.
- The NRNA had taken various initiatives including implementation of Charity projects in all 75 districts of the country.
- More than 5 billion worth investment in commercial projects had been made by the NRNs. This was at a time when the country was going through rough period and no foreign investment was coming to Nepal.
- Nepalis going for foreign employment are generally in the lowest skill and earning level. If their skill level could be enhanced through proper training the level of remittance to Nepal would be increased by 20-30 percent.
- NRNs should help in increasing export of Nepali consumable goods and using them, instead of foreign goods. They should also help in getting more tourists visit Nepal.
- We hope the new government will make a NRN law, in line with the recommendations made by the ICC, in order to attract greater involvement of NRNs in the socio-economic transformation of Nepal. The country could also use the skills and experience acquired by the NRNs abroad.
- The Nepalis who have acquired foreign citizenship should be provided with dual citizenship. The permanent PNO card allowing them to live and do business as Nepali citizenship could be contemplated until the dual citizenship law is legislated.
- The government should enact a special law allowing NRNs to have their own organization. Current law does not allow PNOs to include as members of NRNA.

**Capt. Hit Man Gurung**, ICC member-UK, presented on British Gurkhas and Dual Citizenship. Main Points of his presentation are given below:

- The decision of the British Government to provide them with British Citizenship made many Nepalis to denounce their Nepali citizenship. They were even selling their property in Nepal because neither they are allowed to acquire property nor their children can inherit them. This will have long term negative impact on the Nepali economy and remittances.
- The British Gurkhas and their children would like to be connected with Nepal with the provision of dual citizenship.
- In the past, they have been making significant contributions in the development of rural areas they lived in through charity projects. If they are allowed dual citizenship they will continue to hold property in Nepal. They will then visit Nepal regularly, have their relative settled in Nepal and the flow of remittances would be continued.

- The dual citizenship is an emotional issue and the government in Nepal should look into it positively.

Presentation on the challenges faced by the Nepali women in Europe, **Ms. Usha Sharma**, Women Focal Point, NRN-Germany told that Nepali women were facing legal problems in Europe as well as in Nepal. The law in Nepal did not recognize women at par with men in the citizenship issue. She also spoke of the need to increase the participation of women in the NRN movement. The men folks could support the women by bringing to the convention.

Commenting on Usha Sharma's presentation, **Ms. Ranjana Udas**, ICC Women Representative, said that children and husbands of Nepali women married to foreigners would be given Nepali citizenship as recently decided by the new government. Hope women will have more representation in civil jobs and in future constitution assembly. Further, she called for increased participation of women in NRN activities and requested all the NCCs to nominate a focal point for the ICC Women Forum.

In the ensuing discussion, there was full agreement on the need for the government to come up with an appropriate law to encourage NRN to participate in the socio-economic transformation of Nepal. NRNs should take-up projects which will be beneficial to Nepal and provide visibility. NRNs should lobby for making the NRNA a legal body. The participants hoped that the parliament declaration providing equal rights to women would help to resolve some of the difficulties faced by NRN women.

## **Plenary Session II - Economic Issues of NRNs**

This session was devoted to the economic issues related to NRN. The session was chaired by **Dr. Madan Kumar Bhattarai**, Ambassador of Nepal to Germany

**Mr Kumar Basnet**, ICC-Japan, made a presentation on the role of foreign remittances and the ways of channeling it through banks and other regular channels. The main points of his presentation were:

- Nepal is among top 20 countries in terms of remittance receipt as percentage of GDP. The importance of remittances cannot be overestimated.
- Hundi accounts for about 45% and about 55 % is received through formal channels.
- Hundi system is convenient and helps avoid tax but it creates all sorts of problems, including cheating and investigation on money laundering and terrorism.
- Use of hundi is international. It is used when the persons remitting money do not have proper legal documents for work and residence e.g. those in Japan, Korea. The workers and their families back home consider bank as institution of well off and are afraid of entering the well lit and air-conditioned offices.
- The use of hundi can be discouraged by making use of formal channels easier, quicker, cheaper and creating awareness about the possibility of fraud when using hundi. One option is to open branches of Nepali banks in those countries, where remittances are originating from.
- The controlled currency regime of Nepal in the past encouraged the use of hundi.
- Government, NRNs and financial institutions need to work together to discourage the use of hundi.

**Mr. Sharda Thapa**, ICC Vice-president from the Americas, made a presentation on the problems faced by Nepalis in the White collar employment abroad. The main points of his presentation are given below:

- The migrants face difficulty in being accepted by the host society. This is common in all parts of the world.
- To be in the white collar or managerial job is to be influential and effective. This could be beneficial for increased involvement of US business with Nepal. Nepali migrants like other Asian migrants have difficulty in getting top managerial jobs in North America.
- Entrepreneurship among the Asian migrants is much better. But among Nepalis entrepreneurs are not that common. There are about 11,000 professionals and about 2,000 business owners among the Nepalis in the US. Professionals are mostly in technical jobs rather than in managerial posts.
- The problem seems to be the lack of mentoring and networking among the NRN community. This is essential for success in the white collar job. Many NRNs shy away from applying for managerial job. They do not know how to present and position themselves. Job fairs could be helpful

**Ms. Indira Lama**, NCC- the Netherlands, viewed that the problems faced by the NRNs in Europe seemed to be similar to that of the US. In the past, bias against migrants was even more pronounced. She asked the NRNs to identify the career path and pursue it more vigorously. Managerial jobs would not come automatically.

**Dr. Ramesh Maskey**, Prof. of Kathmandu University and Associate Scientist of University of Karlsruhe, made a presentation on the Transfer of Knowledge based Technology. The main points of his presentation were:

- The Brain drain process was a natural one. People go outside looking for opportunity. This can be compared with the flow of rain water from the hills to the sea. So, the main issue is not to stop river from flowing, but to know how to get the water from the sea in the form of rain.
- The brain drain-brain gain cycle can be compared with the hydrological cycle. The internal mechanism of water flowing to lower level makes the water flow to the sea. But the external factors like the heat and the wind take the water back to the mountain in the form of rain. Push factors for brain drain were the opportunity of open environment provided in the developed market.
- For reversing or for getting the developed brain back to the country of origin, we need strong pull factors. As sun and wind act as external force similar thing in the form of government policy and efforts of NRNA to influence in the thermo-dynamics of human psychology.

**Mr. Rajendra Sthapit**, NRN-Germany, made a presentation on the Promoting European Investment in Nepal. The main points of his presentation were:

- Nepal has adopted liberal foreign investment regime.
- There are opportunities for Europeans in fields like agro-processing, hydropower, engineering, services etc. The investment could be linked with trade.
- NRNs should act as information providers for potential investors. The NRNA should have a strong database of opportunities.

**Mr. Kumar Lamsal** from Sanima Bank, Nepal made a presentation on the facilities offered by his bank to the NRNs. As an institution created by NRNs, the bank was geared to provide services to NRNs in the way they liked. The bank could handle the funds for investment and also channel the remittances. It could be a partner in financing, development of projects, remitting money and other banking operations. He also briefly highlighted the 20 megawatt hydropower project being promoted by the Sanima Group.

A healthy and lively discussion took place at the end of the session. The emerged points were:

- Need of awareness about the risks associated with hundi system. Instead of cursing the bad effects of hundi, the formal channels should become competitive and accessible. A package should be considered to make the official channel more attractive, such as, lower commission, higher interest rate in saving account, safe and guaranteed money transfer, etc. There also may be a scope for a NRN bank with branches in all major remittance originating countries.
- There may also be a scope for NRN airline.
- Hydropower was white gold for Nepal. NRNs should consider investing in this sector.

### Plenary Session III - NRN Movement: The Road Ahead

The third plenary session of the day was devoted to the future of NRN movement. This session was chaired by **Mr. Bhim Udas**, ICC International Coordinator. The deliberation was conducted in two parts. In the first part, papers relating to the NRN Movement were presented while in the second part, progress made by NCCs were reviewed.

**Mr. Naresh Koirala**, ICC member from Canada, recapped the events of the last 3 years. The main points of his presentation are given below:

- The NRNA had 2 Global and 2 Regional Conferences. October 11 has been officially recognized as “NRN Day”. He highlighted some of the problems associated with the Association were:
  - No formal registration
  - High and unrealistic expectations from the Nepali society
  - Slow decision making process because the ICC members are located far apart
  - Weak project adoption method
  - Many declarations/announcements but without much of delivery. NRNs have come a long way and don’t want to go back
  - No assured financial resources for operating the Association.

Mr. Koirala then called on to formalize the link between ICC and NCCs. He also called for a mechanism to have sustained fund of the ICC through compulsory contribution from NCCs.

**Prof. Surya Subedi**, Advisor of the ICC, spoke on possible involvement of the NRN community in development of Nepal. The main points of his presentation were:

- Economic prosperity is what Nepal requires now. We should understand where do we stand and what we can do for our country.
- Democracy is back. Institutionalized of democracy is a big challenge.
- People have high expectations- the question is whether the government can deliver. The country has to write a new constitution and time has come to realize the ownership of the constitution. It is not vital whether the monarchy remains or not. Country is beyond monarchy.
- The feudal class needs to be more enlightened, if the country prospers they too will prosper.
- We need to practice secularism and it will make Nepal a strong nation.
- NRNs are agents of modernity.
- NRN is an important agent for economic prosperity, peace and developing natural resources.
- There was proposal for Nepal serving as a transit corridor. The NRNs can conceptualize this project.
- The quality of the development like environment is also an issue of concern.

Commenting on the above presentation, **Professor Karl Heinz** said NRN is a recent movement and it should act as part of the civil society and should work on human rights issues. According to him, the main task of the Association should be a link of the new dispensation of Nepal with the outside world.

Speaking about the expectation of Nepali youth from the NRN community, **Mr. Gagan Thapa**, a prominent Youth leader, called on NRNs to show the way forward for Nepal. The main points of his speech are given below:

- The Jan Andolan represented the voice of the youth and they have shown that they do not tolerate the prevailing system of exploitation and alienation.
- We are in new era of andolan and we should be proud members of the international community.
- Nepal is vast when it comes to culture and tradition.
- We want to leave the past divisions and acquire a new national pride.
- The 19 days of Jana Aandolan was not the act of Political parties, not of SPA and not of Maoists rather it was a movement of the entire Nepal.
- It is not the money we are looking from you.
- You have been living in societies with democratic traditions. We are looking for the ideas and the experience and know how. We expect intellectual expertise from NRNs.
- The country is talking about constituent assembly. But most of the people do not know what a constituent assembly is. But they know they want a new beginning.
- Our expectation from NRNs is support for the new beginning.
- 2 or 3 charity would not bring changes, but the initiatives may bring changes in Nepal.

After the emotional speech of Mr. Thapa the formal paper presentation session ended. Then Representatives of various NCCs were asked to make a brief presentation on the progresses they have made in their respective country. The brief points raised by the speakers are narrated below. The presenters were introduced by the respective ICC members of the respective country.

#### **Australia: Indra Ban**

- A successful “Nepal Festival” was organized in Sydney with participation of about 10,000 visitors in a day.
- 1,000 dollars collected for Public Library project, initiated by Nareshji.
- Representatives from other cities of Australia reserved in the NCC.

#### **Austria Subha Rana**

- Shubha-kamana to the organizers.

#### **Belgium - Yubaraj Gurung**

- NCC facing various constraints. Many Nepalis facing the problem of legal stay in Belgium.
- Some Nepalis are posing as Bhutanese, Indian, Tibetan to seek stay in Belgium
- ICC should guide the NCC whether the asylum seekers and those without valid legal stay are considered as NRN.
- How to provide membership to NRNs- it needs to be resolved.
- Whether we can include them and how membership can be offered.
- The NRNA should be beyond petty political interests.

#### **Cyprus - Niraj G Shrestha**

- Thank you NCC-Germany for organizing such a successful conference.

#### **France - Ashok Upadhaya**

- NRNs are thanking people and cannot be beyond politics.

- The changes in Nepal have generated optimism among NRNs. They are optimistic about the development.
- Thanks to Harihar Aryal, the NRN-France has established an identity for itself.
- NRNA should not only focus on big projects, but also do small projects.

#### **Germany – Dil B Gurung**

- NCC-Germany well established, Local chapters being organized.
- The NCC and the local coordination council are organizing various events.
- The NRN-Germany is a neutral association and is not political, we welcome everyone however do not recognize anyone politically.
- We have to be one in the issue of human rights,

#### **Hong Kong - NCC's President Trilok Gurung through Pritam Shrestha**

- Congratulations to everyone on regional conference for the further development of Nepal
- HK \$42,000. raised for victims of Jana andolan
- Payment through ICC should become the channel for transferring funds.
- NCCs are still confused about the relations with the ICC.
- There are 35,000 Nepalis in HK and there are many Nepali organizations.
- The NCC has tried to keep all within its ambitions. An election was held.
- We need concrete rules and code of conducts for ensuring continued NRN viability.

#### **Japan - Kumar Basnet**

- Recently a meeting of NRN-Japan was held. It elected new officials of the Council with Rajan Pradhanang as President of the NCC. On his behalf, warm greetings to the regional conference.
- Overall development for Nepal should be the goal of the NRN.
- NRN-Japan was established 2 years before. National conference was held in May with a TOKYO declaration.
- The participation of the ICC members at the conference - very encouraging.
- Propose to host the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional conference in Japan.

**Mr. DM Hirachan** added – Training of three Nepali women athletes by NRN.

#### **Qatar – Badri P. Pandey**

- NCCs should highlight the activities undertaken in their countries.
- NCC-Qatar established (there are more than 1 lakh Nepalis in Qatar). There are 60 Associations affiliated to the NCC.
- There were problems, at the initial phase, in establishing the NCC. We had to make the people aware of the concept of NRNs, its goals and mission.
- NRN-Qatar is functioning as champion of NRN in the entire Middle East. There are 8 lakh Nepalis in the region.
- A lots of problems accumulated as many Nepalis are entering the Middle East.
- Doha declaration is still valid (problems still prevailed).
- Health insurance among workers is a serious issue. Many Nepalis are dying in the Middle East. Insurance issue should be looked upon seriously.

#### **Russia - Kumar Karki**

- Participation from Russia always high in the NRN conferences.
- NRN-Russia always ready to come forward to help the NRN movement.
- NRNs from Russia have invested in health, tourism, hydropower and education. They are doing social projects as well.
- We are for democracy and peace in the country.

- We welcome Declaration of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Global conference.
- The law and rules regarding NRN should be made clear.

#### **UAE - Jiwana Niraula**

- NRN identity card should be developed.
- People go to foreign employment not because of will but due to compulsion.
- Resources to be mobilized to help those in distress.
- Remittance should be used for national development.
- Tax free investment for NRNs should be proposed.

#### **UK - Khagendra Nepali**

- NRN-UK formed under the Chairmanship of Mr. Ashok Shrestha.
- Short and long-term action plans contemplated.
- Awareness about the Association being raised.
- The NRN-UK has the mandate to bring the issues of the local NRN community to the fore.
- NRN delegation visited the Nepali Embassy in London to discuss the problems faced by the NRNs in UK.
- Concept paper on long-term plans of NCC-UK being prepared.
- The issue of dual citizenship to British Gurkhas is a burning one.

#### **The Netherlands – Govind Rauniyar**

- 10-member delegation participating in the regional conference.
- NCC-Netherlands formed. Has its own URL [www.nrn.nl.org](http://www.nrn.nl.org)
- Every year AGM will be organized.
- Has organized functions like meeting of Nepalis students in Devender, Nepal millennium concert with NDA, as a partner Association.
- Raised funds to help victims of Jan Andolan.

#### **North America - Sharda J Thapa**

- This Region is a Complex place. There are around 150,000 Nepalis living in the continent.
- There are many Nepali organizations.
- We are working with what was already there
- ANA convention being held in New York.
- You are invited to Chicago to attend the ANMA-NASeA joint Convention in early September.
- Helping ourselves and helping Nepal has been our motto.

#### **Portugal - Purna Hamal**

- Three-member delegation from Portugal participating in the conference.
- Ad-hoc committee formed with the help of Purna Shrestha, President of NCC- Belgium and ICC Vice-president Ram Thapa, as initiated by Rabindra Shrestha, ICC member, Belgium.
- Registration of the NCC already completed. Planning to organize AGM.
- There are around 500 NRNs in Portugal.
- The economic condition of most of the Nepalis is not that good.
- Lots of problems being faced by Nepalis, including legal stay.
- The NCC is involved in social activities (games etc)
- Support voting rights for NRNs in the election of the constituent assembly.

## **South Korea - Rudra Sharma**

- NCC recently formed.
- Doing local programs to promote NRN culture, etc.

After the presentation of the Representatives of the NCCs, Mr. Udas thanked all the representatives. The above-mentioned issues raised by NCCs were clarified. Sagar Nepal, Vice-President asked the ICC to listen to the voice from the Gulf and deal vigourously on the concerns of the persons in foreign employment. There was an universal agreement on the need to lobby with government to reduce the suffering faced by those who have been cheated in the name of foreign employment. As proposed by Dr Jugal Bhurtel, the conference decided to use Nepali language at the NRN conferences as much as possible.

The conference decided to pay respect to those who loss life during the people's movement. The delegates paid respect to the deceased by observing a minute of silence.

The decisions of the conference were formally adopted by the ICC following day are attached.

At the end, President Mahato handed over NRN plaques to the Sponsors and Partners of the conference. He also handed over a letter of appreciation to the Members of the NCC- Germany.

At the closing, Messrs. Kedar Pradhan, Dinesh Manandhar and Sachit Shrestha proposed vote of thanks to the participants. They highlighted the fact that the response to the invitation was overwhelming. They thanked everybody who had helped in organizing the conference. The conference ended with everybody thanking the NRN-Germany for the excellent organization of the event.

## **Decisions of the Second Non-Resident Nepali Regional (Europe) Conference**

More than 170 Non-Resident Nepalis (NRN) residing in 20 countries namely, Germany, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, France, Hong Kong, Japan, Great Britain, Myanmar, Portugal, Qatar, Russian Federation, South Korea, The Netherlands, United Arab Emirates, the USA, gathered in the city of Bonn, Germany from June 2-4 2006, for the Second Non-resident Nepali Regional Conference as well as for the meeting of the International Coordination Council (NRN-ICC). The Regional conference and the ICC have decided to:

1. Welcome the historical changes that have taken place in Nepal and express full commitment to extend all possible cooperation for the success of the Constituent Assembly, overall development and permanent peace in Nepal.
2. Initiate efforts to make it possible for the NRNs to participate in the process of election to the constituent assembly in order to ensure proper representation of views of 1.4 million NRNs residing around the world.
3. Request the Government of Nepal to bring out a new law on Non-Resident Nepalis incorporating all the suggestions made by the NRN Association.
4. Constitute a 9 member Task Force to study the problems and possibilities of foreign employment. Assign the Task Force to prepare appropriate suggestions on the identification of new opportunities and markets for foreign employment, raising awareness on security and insurance, providing loans with concessional interest rates for those aspiring to go for foreign employment and resolving the difficulties faced by persons in foreign employment.

5. Constitute a Dual Citizenship Task Force in order to prepare recommendations, which would be presented to the Interim Constituent Drafting Committee established by the Government of Nepal. The Task Force will lobby for dual citizenship to NRNs. The NRNs serving under the British Gorkha Army have acquired British citizenship, and they have denounced their Nepali citizenship according to the current Nepali law. They are obliged to sell their property and sever their links with Nepal. It has also negatively effected on foreign remittances that used to come from ex-Gorkha soldiers.
6. Assess the progress made on the Kathmandu Declaration during the Second Global NRN Conference. Make all efforts for the implementation of the declaration.
  - Coordinators for 20 districts have been nominated to implement at least one project in each district in the fields of education, health, drinking water and basic infrastructure as a first phase of implementing the 75 districts project as included in the declaration. The project coordinators will have to submit a detailed project profile to the ICC within 3 months.
  - A Public Company with promoters' contribution of 10 million dollar, as an initial capital, for the establishment of \$100 million fund will be registered by 11 October 2006. The prospectus and the business plan of the fund will then be marketed among Nepalis all around the world. An environment will be created for generating \$100 million fund.
  - Financial and Technical Assistance to the infrastructure development of Kathmandu Public Library will be provided.
  - The skill directory, known as Knowledge Bank, will be made more effective with support from National Coordination Councils (NCC). This will support the effective and efficient utilization of the knowledge and skills acquired by Nepalis abroad for the national development.
7. Vice-president DM Hirachan is nominated as coordinator for “One Village One Product” (OVOP) project funded by the Government of Japan. He will be responsible for mobilization of resources and liaison with the Government of Nepal and FNCCI to implement the project.
8. Implement a 20 Megawatt Maikhola Hydroelectric Power Project in Ilam, Eastern Nepal in order to assist in the development of basic infrastructure in Nepal, as an NRN project. This project is expected to partially help fulfil the peak hour demand for electricity in Nepal.
9. Provide suggestions to the Government of Nepal to establish branches of Nepali Banks in countries with a sizeable NRN population. Move the campaign against Hundi System and to encourage NRNs to send remittances only through the formal banking channel.
10. Express thanks to all partners, sponsors, advertisers and supporters, the National Coordination Councils and especially, NCC-Germany for organizing the successful conference and the ICC meeting.