

A REPORT

on

Briefing-cum-Interaction Programme for
the Nepalese Ambassadors (Designate)
to Different Missions Abroad,
held at

Godavari Village Resort, Lalitpur

(From October 12-14, 2007)

Organized by:

**Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) in Collaboration with
Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

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Editorial Board

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Introduction

Founded in 1993 as an integral part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) has the objective of producing knowledgeable and skilled manpower required for the foreign services of Nepal. The Institute has been conducting various training programmes, seminars, interactions, discussions and conferences on a number of issues related to the national interest.

As per its mission, IFA, in close collaboration with MoFA, organised a three-day Briefing-cum-Interaction Programme for the Nepalese Ambassadors (designate) to various missions abroad at the Godavari Village Resort in Lalitpur from October 12-14, 2007.

Refreshing the participant guests about the contemporary foreign policy issues, highlighting modalities of operational guidelines of the Nepalese foreign policy, discussing pertinent issues of national interests and helping operate the Nepalese diplomatic missions abroad in a more effective and efficient manner were some of the major objectives of the programme.

A total of 28 resource persons (See Annex I) made their elaborate presentations and deliberations on a wide range of issues from economic diplomacy, peace and constitutional process, trade and commerce, tourism and culture, labour and remittance, banking and foreign employment, hydropower to several other emerging issues and challenges and the Nepalese foreign policy in the changed context. Altogether 25 diplomats, including 21 newly designated Nepalese ambassadors (See Annex II), took part in the programme. The programme schedule is also attached at the end (See Annex III). This was the first ever programme of this kind in which such a large number of diplomats of Nepal gathered together to share their knowledge and ideas.

Inaugural Session

Hon'ble Minister for Education and Sports, Mr. Pradip Nepal, who was also looking after the Foreign Ministry portfolio in the absence of the Foreign Minister, graced the inaugural session as the chief guest. **Foreign Secretary, Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya** was the guest of honour. The opening session was held under the chairmanship of **Prof. Dr. Gopal Pokharel, Executive Director of IFA**.

Delivering his inaugural address, **Minister Mr. Nepal** said that the newly appointed ambassadors of Nepal had a greater responsibility to carry out, as they were the representatives of the *Janaandolan II* (April Movement).

“The role of the ambassadors is quite challenging because they have to enhance the country’s image abroad,” he said.

Emphasising the need for discarding the conventional diplomacy, he urged the new envoys to concentrate their efforts on promoting Nepal’s trade, tourism and culture in the countries where they were going to carry out their responsibilities.

“Although we are a small nation, we have unique topographical and cultural diversities. So, we must capitalise on them,” he added.

Drawing the participants’ attention towards the tremendous potentialities of hydropower in Nepal, he said that the country would be richer if hydropower development was accorded top priority.

Talking about the dilapidated condition of Nepal’s embassy offices in the United Kingdom, the United States and Japan, he suggested that the offices should be repaired and maintained.

Similarly, **Foreign Secretary Mr. Acharya** was of the opinion that the foreign policy was extension of the domestic policy abroad.

Stressing the need for implementing the foreign policy in practice to promote the national interest, he said that it was an art of negotiation.

He asked the newly appointed ambassadors of Nepal to protect the national independence, integrity and sovereignty by enhancing the national interest.

“We need to enhance foreign relations in a broader scale and solicit assistance and cooperation from the foreign countries for our national development,” he said.

He called for the envoys to focus their efforts not only on boosting political ties but also enhancing trade relations without compromising with the country’s national sovereignty.

“The ambassadors have the responsibilities of maintaining as well as expanding the existing ties of Nepal with other countries,” he said.

Terming the increased interest of the international community in Nepal as an opportunity, he laid due stress on widening the country’s foreign relations.

Extending his thanks to IFA for organising the programme for the new envoys, he said that a brief orientation would be organised for them before their departure for their respective assigned countries. He also wished for the success of their tenure.

Delivering his welcome address, **Prof. Pokharel** said that the Nepalese people had destiny in their hands after long feudalism and isolation.

“Because the new envoys are the representatives of the popular movement, they have greater responsibilities to be carried out,” he said.

Talking about the present volatile political situation, he stressed the need for political stability and economic development.

He said that the ideas and thoughts of the envoys would be helpful in formulating a more pragmatic foreign policy of Nepal.

Delving on the economic aspects of the foreign policy, he called for promoting the concept of economic diplomacy.

He also asked the envoys to maintain close coordination with MoFA and other line ministries and agencies for an effective implementation of foreign policy.

He hoped that their interactions with the various experts and scholars would be very helpful.

Earlier, Prof. Pokharel offered bouquets to the chief guest and the guest of honour.

Extending a vote of thanks, **Ms. Anjan Shakya, Deputy Executive Director of IFA**, expressed the belief that the briefing-cum-interaction programme would be turned into a valuable forum for the newly appointed envoys and experts from diverse fields to share their ideas and experiences.

She said that Nepal, despite being a small nation, had to play a significant role in the international arena to safeguard the territorial integrity, national sovereignty and independence, which would eventually help promote the national interest.

Shedding light on the roles of the Nepalese diplomatic missions abroad in promoting economic diplomacy, she said they needed to work as facilitators for exploring potential markets for the country’s products.

Working Sessions

The entire working session of the three-day programme was divided into 10 various parts. Three sessions were organised each day. After the resource persons made their presentations, the floor was opened for discussions. Prof. Pokharel, Executive Director of IFA, was the moderator at the whole working session.

First Session (October 12, 2007)

This session was concentrated on the theme of Nepal Government's policy on industry and commerce along with private sector perspective. A total of five resource persons made their presentations at the session. **Mr. Purushottam Ojha, the Secretary at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies (MoICS), Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, former President of the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), Mr. Jagdish Prasad Agrawal, the then Officiating President of the Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI), Mr. Surendra Bir Malakar, President of the Nepalese Chambers of Commerce (NCC) and Mr. Rajendra K. Khetan, President of Young Entrepreneurs' Council (YEC) and Vice dean of Honourary Consul Generals Corp in Nepal,** made their presentations.

Presenting his paper entitled "Investment and Trade Policy of the Government of Nepal", Mr. Ojha dealt with Direct Foreign Investment (FDI) Policy 1992, Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Act 1992, Trade Policy 1992 and Role of Nepalese Missions in Trade and Investment Promotion.

Highlighting the role of the Nepalese diplomatic missions in trade and investment promotion abroad, **Mr. Ojha** suggested that they should promote Nepal as one of the investment destinations of the world.

He asked the newly appointed envoys of Nepal to highlight the various legal provisions related to trade and investment and other infrastructures in the international forums. "The missions should also organise meetings of potential investors," he suggested.

He also suggested the diplomatic missions that they should issue business, residential and other visas to investors.

He urged them to help facilitate the private sector in the marketing and promotion of the Nepalese products in the international markets. "The missions should keep informed on tariff and non-tariff barriers imposed by the concerned countries and report to MoFA and MoICS," he said.

Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, former President of the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), presented his paper on "Overall Aspects of Private Sector Perspective."

In his paper, Mr. Shrestha stressed the need for Nepal to properly utilise the vast resources. “We are very rich in natural resources, but due to the political instability and old mindset of politicians, we have been unable to exploit such resources,” he opined.

He urged the diplomatic missions to make additional efforts for promoting Nepal’s trade abroad and attracting FDI. “I would like to request the new ambassadors to keep on informing the governments of their assigned countries about the Nepalese products,” he said.

Indicating lack of proper initiatives on the part of the government as well as the private sector in the areas of economic development, he said that Nepal was not only a landlocked but also a brain-locked country.

Shedding light on the vital role of the Non-Resident Nepalis (NRNs) for bringing in foreign investment, he said that they could be more potential ambassadors of the country with their good network.

While talking about the various sectors of investment in Nepal, he said that hydropower, tourism and service sectors were prominent areas. “The government of Nepal should conduct more exchanges of delegation,” he said.

Concluding his remarks, he suggested that the country should have a predictable investment environment and the government should strengthen the embassies abroad by increasing facilities.

Focussing his presentation on the theme of “**Nepal Government’s Policies on Industry and Commerce (Private Perspective)**”, **Mr. Jagdish Prasad Agrawal, the then Officiating President of the Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI)**, said that the geo-limitation of Nepal was an important opportunity rather than a problem. “If we have enough exportable products, we have giant markets—India and China--- at the periphery.”

Mr. Agrawal also said that Nepal held high prospects of biotechnology.

Laying his attention on the trade related laws of Nepal, he said that rigidity was unfavourable, but flexibility was welcoming.

He asked the envoys to promote economic diplomacy in their assigned countries. “Match-making of investors from Nepal and the concerned countries should also be their area of focus,” he said.

He also called them for establishing target-oriented relationship with the assigned countries.

He suggested that the ambassadors should change their working style so as to boost the country’s trade relationship with foreign countries.

“Nepal’s friends should be encouraged to visit the country so that they can give priority to invest in our country,” he said.

He also asked the envoys to explore small investors by matchmaking with the Nepalese investors. “Successful NRNs living in different countries should be appointed the economic ambassadors of Nepal,” he said.

Presenting his paper on the same theme, **Mr. Surendra Bir Malakar, President of the Nepalese Chambers of Commerce (NCC)**, stressed the need for the Nepalese diplomatic missions abroad to adopt more effective economic diplomacy instead of following the conventional type of diplomacy.

Dwelling on the private sector perspectives, Mr. Malakar asked the envoys to be proactive and work independently for the promotion of the national interest.

Shedding light on the importance of FDI in Nepal, he urged the new envoys to disseminate updated information about the country’s trade, tourism, hydroelectricity, foreign employment promotion, and foreign joint investment to foreign investors.

“The envoys should have knowledge about the country’s trade and industrial policies, foreign investment and technology transfer laws, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Bay of Bengal Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and South Asia Free Trade Area (SAFTA),” he said.

He assured the envoys that the NCC, which had been lobbying hard for the promotion of economic diplomacy, would assist them for materialising it.

Citing Bhutan’s rapid economic development through water diplomacy, he pointed out the need for Nepal to follow suit.

Talking about the significant contribution being made by remittance in the national economy, he stressed promoting and expanding foreign employment.

Another resource person **Mr. Rajendra K. Khetan, President of Young Entrepreneurs’ Council (YEC) and Vice dean of Honourary Consul Generals Corp in Nepal**, made his presentation on “*Role of Nepalese Diplomacy for Developing International Trade in Nepal in the Evolving Multilateral Regime.*”

Mr. Khetan’s paper was divided into six parts: Globalised Context, Overview of Major Arrangements, Link with EU (European Union), Pitfalls, Role of Diplomacy and Roadmap.

Underlining the role of diplomacy in promoting the country’s trade and tourism, he said that it could help highlight the country in the international arena. “It is diplomacy that can help attract foreign investment and technology and promote the national interests through bilateral, regional and multilateral forums,” he said.

He suggested Nepal's diplomatic missions abroad to boost the country's image in the international arena and promote it as a travel destination. "Promoting economic diplomacy abroad is the need of the hour for Nepal," he said.

He also emphasised urgency for Nepal to work for trade facilitation and protection of patent rights of the Nepalese products. "We must focus our efforts on infrastructure development and increase easy and seamless access to persons and goods alike," he said.

Floor Discussion

Following the presentation of papers, the floor was declared open for discussion.

Mr. Bala Bahadur Kunwar, the Nepalese Ambassador to Pakistan (designate), stressed strengthening the Indo-Nepal relations for enhancing socio-economic cooperation between the two neighbours.

Mr. Pramesh Hamal, the Nepalese Ambassador to Belgium (designate), suggested that the presentations on such vital issues should be made in detail.

Mr. Hamal asked the resource persons how Nepal could attract FDI. He also asked them whether the Indian and the Chinese strategies related to promotion of FDI would be applicable for Nepal.

Dr. Rishi Adhikari, the Nepalese Ambassador to Malaysia (designate), wanted to know how much FDI was invested in Nepal.

Mr. Bijay Kant Lal Karna, the Nepalese Ambassador to Denmark (designate), asked them whether there was any specific strategy for the diplomatic missions to work in bringing in FDI in an effective and efficient manner.

Mr. Tanka Karki, the Nepalese Ambassador to China (designate) said that the envoys would do only what the government assigned them to do. He also asked the government to clarify what it expected from the countries they were deployed.

He urged the government to prioritise economic issues in the national agenda.

Mrs. Gunalaxmi Sharma B.K., the Nepalese Ambassador to Myanmar (designate), was of the opinion that infrastructures should be developed for gearing up the process of socio-economic development of the country.

Responding the questions raised by the participants, **MoICS Secretary, Mr. Ojha** underscored the need for congenial environment, provision of incentives, market accessibility, reduction of transaction costs and paper work, simplification of procedures, reformation of governance systems and establishment of peace in the country to increase FDI.

Speaking about the areas of investment, he said that timber products, horticulture, tourism, hydropower generation and agriculture should be prioritised for the promotion of FDI.

He emphasised the need for strengthening coordination between and among the government's mechanisms.

Other paper presenters also addressed the questions raised from the floor.

Second Session (October 12, 2007)

Three resource persons-**Mr. Madhav Prasad Ghimire, Secretary at the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA), Mr. Subash Niraula, the then Officiating Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), and senior tourism expert Mrs. Ambika Shrestha** --- made their presentations on **Nepal Government's Policies on Tourism and Culture, Marketing & Promotion of Nepal as a Tourist Destination and Private Perspectives on Nepal Government's Policies on Tourism and Culture** respectively.

Presenting his paper, **MoCTCA Secretary, Mr. Ghimire** said that Nepal holds a lot of tourism attractions ranging from scenic beauty to culture and adventure.

Depicting various challenges facing the Nepalese tourism industry, he underlined the need for increasing accessibility, generating public awareness about the importance of tourism, development of human resources, marketing and promotion of the products abroad and implementing the government's policies in a more effective manner.

He said that tourism had contributed about 3 per cent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and generated about 11 per cent of the total foreign exchange earnings.

According to him, tourism is a strong vehicle to distribute economic benefits and enhance livelihood of the rural masses.

Highlighting the role to be played by the newly appointed ambassadors, he expected that they would help in building Nepal's image as a safe tourist destination.

He urged them to contribute to promoting Nepal's tourism, and coordinate with MoCTCA and NTB. "The Nepalese diplomatic missions should also facilitate Nepal's participation in international tourism fairs and mart and exchange of tourism and cultural visits," he said.

He also called for them to initiate the process of signing Air Services Agreement and enhance connectivity and help in maintenance of link of NTB's website with all the existing and newly established diplomatic missions. "They need to assign a dedicated staff to look after tourism at the major tourism generating markets like India, the USA, the UK, Germany and France and make arrangements of distributing Nepal's specific promotional brochures to each and every tourist visiting the Nepalese missions for visa."

He expressed the view that the diplomatic missions should run tourism specific promotional programs at least two times a year and advise MoCTCA and NTB to create market specific promotional materials for major tourism generating countries.

Shedding light on the importance of tourism, **Mr. Nirola** asked the Nepalese diplomatic missions in various countries to accord top priority to the promotion of the country's tourism sector.

In his paper, he mentioned that Nepal's tourism industry started reviving with the beginning of the peace process. "Many countries have softened their travel advisories after following the peace process," he said.

Regarding the country's tourism products, he said that Nepal has a number of unique and unparalleled attractions to offer to tourists having varied tastes and interests.

Stressing the roles and responsibilities of the diplomatic missions abroad for tourism promotion, he suggested that they should consider tourism as a key component of economic diplomacy because of its significant contribution in the country's socio-economic development. "The embassies and consulates should establish a tourism cell and help promote Nepal as a tourist destination," he said.

He also asked them to provide NTB with market intelligence and feedback of the changing travel trends. "They should coordinate with tourism stakeholders and partners," he added.

He also said that they needed to promote the concepts of "send home friends" and "Nepal for all seasons."

Making her deliberations, **Mrs. Shrestha** said that it was the private sector that had initiated the process of promoting the country as a tourist destination abroad.

Terming tourism 'a backbone' of Nepal's economy, she complained that potential sector had not received proper attention for its development. "As a multi-faceted industry, tourism benefits the various sections of the society, including the people at the grassroots level," she said.

Citing an example of Spain as a tourist destination, she said that the European nation receives tourists three times more than its total population per year.

She emphasised the necessity for promoting tourism diplomacy to give a desired boost to Nepal's economy.

She assured the envoys that the private sector was ever ready to help them in their efforts to promote Nepal as a tourist destination abroad.

She requested them to work on increasing international flights to Nepal. "We should encourage friendly countries and foreign investors to build more international airports in Nepal," she said.

She pointed out the need for mobilising the EU to help bring in dignitaries to Nepal, which would be more promising. “Foreign tourism media people should be encouraged to visit Nepal,” she added.

She further said that Nepal had known to the outside world due to conflict. “It is right time for us to capitalize on it for tourism promotion. Encourage the people there to visit Nepal telling that no tourist has been harmed even during the conflict,” she said.

She suggested that the missions should help in softening the travel advisories abroad.

“Since we have Ayurveda, educational institutes and hospitals in Nepal, we should try to establish tourism universities here with the help of foreign investors,” she said.

She was of the opinion that Nepal should not open everything. “We should keep something safe,” she said.

Floor Discussion

Following the presentations of the resource persons, some questions were raised from the floor.

Mr. Bijay Kanta Lal Karna, the Nepalese Ambassador to Denmark (designate), asked what kind of new Nepal the author had envisaged. He also suggested that NTB should change its logo in the changed context.

Mr. Hamid Ansari, the Nepalese Ambassador to Saudi Arabia (designate), advised MoCTCA and NTB to incorporate icons of mosques in tourism promotional materials of Nepal, as the country had been declared a secular state.

Mr. Tanka Karki, the Nepalese Ambassador to China (designate), opined that Nepal would reap benefits from tourism if it tried to bring in tourists from Lhasa, which is expected to attract about 6 million tourists by 2010.

Addressing the queries raised from the floor, **MoCTCA Secretary, Mr. Ghimire** said that Nepal had been passing through a transitional phase.

With regard to the query of making new Nepal, he said that new Nepal should be free of hunger and poverty.

Speaking about incorporating icons of mosques in tourism promotional materials of Nepal, he said that the issue had come to their notice and they would work on it in the days to come.

In response to the question of attracting tourists from Lhasa, he said that Qinghai-Lhasa train service might help Nepal to bring in more tourists from China.

Other resources also responded the queries raised from the floor.

Third Session (October 12, 2007)

This session was dedicated to hydropower diplomacy. In the session, **Hon'ble Minister of State for Water Resources, Mr. Gyanendra Bahadur Karki**, and the **Managing Director of the Chilime Hydropower Company Ltd., Dr. Damber Nepali**, made their presentations on the theme of hydropower diplomacy.

Minister Mr. Karki highlighted the roles of the newly appointed Nepalese envoys abroad in accelerating the socio-economic development of Nepal. "The new Nepal would be peaceful, prosperous and inclusive where there would be no any discrimination," he said.

Emphasising the importance of utilising the country's huge water resources, he said that it was necessary for Nepal to develop water resources at all costs.

He also said that despite having an immense potentiality of hydropower and over 100 years of hydro electricity development in Nepal, the nation was compelled to rely only on about 560 MW of electricity.

Disclosing the government's plans, he said that 5,000 MW of electricity would be generated in the next 10 years. He also revealed the fact that the government had already distributed licenses to various power companies to produce around 4,000 MW of electricity.

"The government has the policy of encouraging the hard working companies and discouraging those who were simply holding licenses.

Citing an example of Bhutan, he said that Nepal had the strength of providing energy to the whole South Asia through hydropower generation.

He suggested that the envoys should seek foreign cooperation and assistance in fulfilling the government's objectives of generating 5,000 MW of hydroelectricity to leave prosperous Nepal for the future generation.

Concluding his remarks, he said that the process of negotiation regarding attracting foreign investment in Nepal's hydropower development had been going on. "We have initiated negotiations with the friendly countries like China, India, Korea and Egypt for our hydropower development," he added.

Initiating his presentation, **Dr. Nepali** talked about the various stages of hydropower development such as preparation of the Detailed Project Report (DPR)/feasibility study, public hearing, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), PPA, financial closure and issuance of construction licenses.

Saying that developing hydropower was a very easy job, he stressed the need for selecting good sites/resources, managing financial resources, technical and construction capabilities and marketing (internal and external).

He said that political stability, political willpower and simplified administrative processes were the major requirements for hydropower development.

Highlighting attractiveness of hydropower projects in Nepal, he discussed about high head, good river flow, and accessibility, and easy power evacuation, good annual energy generation, less construction cost, short construction period, attractive rate of return, long lasting and minimum risk and easy engineering.

Bringing to light the difficulties of implementing hydropower projects in Nepal, he said that the project location and accessibility, limitation of transmission lines, long payback period, high interest rate on loan and local people's demands were some of the obstacles to the country's hydropower development.

Regarding constraints associated with energy generation cost, he elaborated on the newly imposed Value Added Tax (VAT) in all items, duties and taxes, corporate tax (20%), and market price inflation of construction materials. He, however, said that the hydropower projects would yield long-term benefit. "Hydro projects have perennial sources of raw material and low maintenance and operation costs in Nepal," he added.

He indicated some risk factors of hydropower projects: frequent changes in laws and policies, natural disasters, political turmoil, local people's pressure, market situation (fuel, construction materials, etc.) and delayed construction.

He discussed about the project development modality.

In Nepal, equity participation in hydropower projects is as follows: Nepal Electricity Authority (51%), NEA staff (25%) and general public (24%)

In the final part of presentation, he said that the NEA was the single power purchaser in Nepal and stressed the need for a policy for International Power Purchasers (IPPs).

Floor Discussion

After their presentation, some of the participants raised their suggestions and queries.

Mr. Hamid Ansari, Nepalese Ambassador to Saudi Arabia (designate), suggested that the Indo-Nepal Treaty of 1950 should be amended and cross-border development plans should be formulated to control financial disasters and human casualties during the flood period.

Mr. Ansari cited an example of many Nepalese engineers losing their lives when he visited the Bagmati Barrage in Sarlahi a few years back.

Mr. Tanka Karki, Nepalese Ambassador to China (designate), observed that the newly appointed envoys had to work hard for attracting more foreign investments in Nepal and initiate proceedings to bring in more bilateral and multilateral aid and grants.

Mr. Karki was of the opinion that Nepal should have a clear national policy on hydropower to deal with India on that issue. He also suggested that projects should be classified between those, which could be accomplished with national capital, and those requiring foreign investment.

He called for the government to discourage the tendency of simply holding licenses.

Citing an example of delaying the completion of the Integrated Mahakali Pancheshwor Project, he asked the government to come up with a clear policy of giving permission to the power companies to start with new projects only after completing the existing ones.

Mr. Surya Kiran Gurung, Nepalese Ambassador to the Russian Federation (designate), wanted to know how far it was feasible for Nepal to transfer hydropower through the satellite.

Responding the various queries raised from the floor, **Minister Mr. Karki** said that the Ministry of Water Resources had issued a global tender notice for the construction of the Arun III and the Budhigandaki Projects through BOOT (Build, Own, Operate and Transfer) system realising the need for increasing certain MWs of hydroelectricity.

He informed that the Means and Resources Committee selected a total of 14 companies from across the world. "The report is going to be submitted to the parliament," he disclosed.

According to him, if the report is approved by the parliament, the two projects will come into effect soon. "But no attractive company has shown its interest in the Budhigandaki Project," he added.

Regarding the Upper Trishuli Project, he said that China had shown its interest in constructing the project through line of credit.

In terms of the issuance of licenses, the government has introduced a policy to encourage only hard working companies and the licenses of those who were just holding licenses would be scrapped.

In regards to revising the Treaty of 1950 with India, the Parliament had also felt its necessity.

He further informed that Nepal and India had reached an agreement to construct four transmission lines to supply power.

Discussion about the potentiality of hydropower in Nepal, he informed that the government was planning to conduct more researches on it.

Wrapping up his statement, he said that the government was very liberal in developing hydropower through national capital and BOOT system.

Similarly, concentrating his attention on transmission of power through the satellite, **Dr. Nepali** said that it was still under research.

Concerning the size of constructing hydropower projects by using domestic capital, he said that such capital could only materialise projects of 100-150 MW.

First Session (October 13, 2007)

The session was concentrated on the theme of **Three-Year Plan and an overview of economic situation of Nepal with particular focus on economic diplomacy**. **Dr. Jagdish Chandra Pokharel**, the Vice-Chairman of the National Planning Commission (NPC), **Prof. Dr. Madan Kumar Dahal** and **Dr. Mohan Man Sainju**, former Nepalese Ambassador to the United States of America, presented their papers entitled “**Base of Three-Year Interim Plan**”, “**An Overview of Nepalese Economy: Current Status, Problems and Prospects**”, and “**Economic Diplomacy: An Outline**” respectively. **Mr. Bimal Wagle**, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Finance, made his deliberation on an overall aspect of Nepalese economy.

Making his presentation, **Dr. Pokharel** highlighted the background of the current Three-Year Plan (2064/65-066/67). He disclosed the fact that the Three-Year Plan had aimed to work as per the spirits of the historic Janaandolan-II and aspirations of the people, to materialise the various political agreements, and to institutionalise the Interim Constitution and diverse issues based on the minimum common programmes of the Interim Government.

According to him, the plan document was prepared after making consultations with various stakeholders of more than 70 Village Development Committees (VDCs) in 30 districts, and political parties at the central levels, civil society members, professional groups and the people from various walks of life.

Shedding light on the objectives of the plan, he said the plan was directed towards helping to establish durable peace in the country and giving a feeling of change to the people through reducing the existing level of poverty and inequality.

Emphasising the strategies of the plan, he said that the plan was particularly concentrating its efforts on relief, reconstruction of physical infrastructures and reintegration of the displaced people, creation of employment opportunity and its extension, pro-poor and wide economic growth, promotion of good governance and effectiveness in service delivery, increasing investment in physical infrastructure, adoption of inclusive development system and operation of targeted activities.

Talking about the priority areas of the plan, he said that due focus would be laid on reconstructing the damaged physical infrastructures, rehabilitation of the displaced people due to conflict and their social reintegration and adjustment.

“Priority would also be accorded to the development of hydropower, roads, irrigation facilities and tourism promotion, communication systems, human resource development, education and health.

Showing the major policies adopted by the plan, he said that the structural and legal frameworks would be prepared for leading the country to federal structure.

“With the principle of market economy, a public welfare development policy will be embraced through collaborative efforts of the government, cooperatives and private sectors,” he said.

He said that efforts would be made for making the overall economic spheres more gender and social inclusive. “The contribution made by households with subsistence level of livelihoods to the national economy will be recognised and the focus will be laid on their development.”

Delving on the ongoing peace process in the country, he said that a secure environment would be created for attracting more domestic as well as foreign investments.

He also informed that special target policies would be adopted for food security and socio-economic empowerment of the underprivileged sections, dalits, ethnic communities, Madhesi, disabled, ex-Kamaiyas and labourers.

Regarding foreign assistance, he said that a system would be established for taking foreign aid as per national necessity and priority. “For an effective management of foreign assistance, a mechanism would be established for ensuring coordination and partnership among the donors,” he said.

According to him, the areas of assistance will be mapped and all sorts of foreign assistance will be reflected in the national budget. “Foreign assistance will be mobilised for reconstruction, restructuring, rehabilitation and reintegration and inclusion,” he added.

He said that the foreigners, who were interested to forge partnership with the Nepali investors, would be encouraged to invest in the areas related to trade and other economic sectors.

“An effective policy will be adopted for attracting the investment of the Non-Resident Nepalis,” he said.

In his paper, **Prof. Dr. Dahal** depicted a broader picture of the Nepalese economy and said that the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) was an important vehicle for economic development for Nepal.

Stressing the vision of the Nepalese economy, he said that it was to build a strong economic nation state through active participation of people by ensuring a high quality of life to each individual and household in a given timeframe.

“The objective of the Nepalese economy is to transform Nepal from low to upper-middle income economy by attaining a high, sustainable and broad-based economic growth rate and eliminating absolute poverty within the next 20 years from now,” he said.

He further said that the ultimate goal of the Nepalese economy was to make Nepal the ‘Switzerland of Asia’ through creating an International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) and establishing a regional hub for tourism development. “The strategic objective is to substantially increase the Gross National Income (GNI) at par with upper-middle income economies ensuring GNI per capita exceeding US dollars 5000 per annum and to reduce absolute poverty from 32 percent to zero by 2025,” he said.

Exploring the master-bottlenecks to Nepal’s economic development, he said that landlockedness, rugged topography with limited croplands, poor resource base, high extent of poverty, low commercial exploitation of natural resources and optimal use of human resources, pro-longed conflict, weak integration of domestic economy with regional and global economies, staggering corruption and absence of good governance were hindering the development process.

He also highlighted water resources (hydropower), tourism, human resources and remittances, and bio-diversity, especially ecosystem and species, as the major foundations of the Nepalese economy.

Recommending the strategies for gearing up pace of economic development, he stressed the need for increasing exports with diversification of commodities and destinations having comparative advantages at international market. He also suggested that foreign investment should be attracted to tourism, hydropower, biodiversity and manufacturing sectors.

Highlighting the need for Nepal to promote foreign employment in destinations providing lucrative salary and compensation to ensure greater quantum of remittances.

Depicting the pre-conditions to economic development in Nepal, he called for ensuring security, peace and stability in the country through developing national consensus among the political forces.

In the same way, he asked the government to provide good governance by improving transparency and accountability especially in the context of managing state-funding activities.

“We need to check rampant corruption in politics, bureaucracy and business sectors that have capsised Nepal into high risk country for safe investment,” he said.

Realising the importance of two economic giants at the periphery of Nepal, he asked the government to maximize benefits from the economic progress achieved by

neighbour economies by substantially improving economic relations and promoting joint ventures with India and China with respect to hydropower, tourism and manufacturing sectors.

According to him, it was necessary to mobilise effectively both bilateral and multilateral international cooperation by initiating mega-projects such the Arun III and Karnali for hydropower development, construction of the East-West Railway connecting the Indian border on both east and west for infrastructure development, and development of networking of ropeway connecting north-south.

Emphasising the necessity of strong sector-strategy to back up quantum jump in the economic front, he suggested that agriculture should be commercialised through developing high value crops (tea, coffee, cardamom, jute, sugarcane, oilseeds, tobacco, pulses and tropical products).

He also expressed his views regarding empowering women, dalit, indigenous groups, minorities, and disabled and backward communities representing all three ecological areas- mountain, hills and Terai for rapid economic development in Nepal.

Similarly, Prof. Dahal asked the government to create additional employment opportunities at home by developing partnership with private sector, and also promoting foreign employment at destinations ensuring lucrative salary and compensation for increasing the magnitude of remittances.

Identifying appropriate approaches towards building a strong economic nation-state, he called for creating an International Financial Services Center (IFSC) and maximising the benefits from the wave of liberalisation and economic reforms.

Concluding his remarks, the scholar said that it was an appropriate time to exhibit strength and prove credibility to build Nepal a strong economic nation-state for survival and prosperity by inducting common sense paradigm of development.

Presenting his paper, **Dr. Sainju** said that Nepal, being the most open country from trade barriers, had very attractive policies for foreign investors from the points of view of investment, conditionalities and repatriation provisions.

Highlighting the areas of economic interest of Nepal, he said that development aid and grants, investment, trade diversification, utilization of water resources, tourism and foreign employment were the prominent ones.

Recommending the tactical means to promote economic diplomacy, he asked the newly appointed envoys to promote Nepal by highlighting why Nepal should be a country of interest for economic relations.

While initiating dialogue with the foreign investors, he suggested that the ambassadors should look from investors' perspective as to why Nepal should be their target destination for tourism, investment and a token of affection.

He also urged the envoys to pick up policy pronouncements of the host country that relates Nepal as a potential country because developed countries had policy commitments to help and assist backward countries in the form of least developed characteristics on other criteria. “You need to assist and promote private sector of Nepal for accelerating economic development,” he added.

As facilitation is a form of providing forum, he asked them to organise social events and help increase their access to home front.

Sharing his experiences, the former ambassador requested the new ambassadors of Nepal to have updated information and coordinate the governmental and allied agencies.

Similarly, he suggested that the envoys should use the premises of Nepal’s embassies for organising social events like accompanying the delegations and facilitating their host country organisations.

Shedding light on the importance of Friends of Nepal to promote economic diplomacy, he asked the envoys to mobilise them within and outside the country.

Before wrapping up his presentation, Dr. Sainju said that new democratic Nepal would have better prospects for economic diplomacy if everything went smoothly.

Dwelling on an overview of economic situation of Nepal, **Mr. Wagle** called for strengthening coordination between and among various ministries.

Indicating the current economic growth rate of the country, he said that it declined by 2.5 percent due to untimely monsoon and political instability. “Considering the present economic growth rate of Nepal, it may take us for about 22 years to reach Bhutan’s level,” he said.

He suggested that there should be balance between liquidity market and content market and deficit should be controlled to achieve a desired economic growth.

He said that the country’s current inflation rate stood at 3 percent and if the rate continued, it could reach as much as 9 percent in the near future.

Portraying a bitter picture of trade deficit of Nepal, he said that it was increasing every year. “How long will the country sustain by relying only on remittance?” he asked.

He stressed the need for Nepal to increase productivity through investing in infrastructures to attract the private sector for national economy.

Showing negative network of banks in Nepal, he called for having healthy competitions for strengthening cooperation and coordination among them.

According to him, weak procedures of punishing defaulters, high rate of liquidity, excessive growth of financial institutions and political instability in the country were the major reasons responsible for making the banking sector weak.

He was of the opinion that the government should attract NRNs to invest in Nepal and supervise the capacity of central bank for maintaining stable economy.

He also suggested that the existing institutional mechanisms of MoFA should be revised the ministry should have a strong network among different other ministries in general and the Ministry of Finance (MoF) in particular.

Floor Discussion

Following their presentations, the floor was declared open. The participants made the following queries and suggestions:

Mr. Surya Nath Mishra, Nepalese Ambassador to Qatar (designated), raised his query about some effective measures to be adopted by the government to overcome the problems associated with malnutrition, poverty, illiteracy and political instability in the country.

He also asked the paper presenters about the reasons behind Nepal's inability to attract reliable foreign investors in hydropower generation despite having an immense potentiality.

Mr. Bala Bahadur Kunwar, Nepalese Ambassador to Pakistan (designated), opined that there should be good mutual coordination and cooperation among Nepalese Embassies, MoFA and MoF for quick dissemination of information and prompt decisions.

He asked the all the ministries to provide them with adequate reference materials for consultation.

He also opined that the provision of land ceiling and fragmentation would result in less productivity.

He suggested that the potentialities of navigation in the Koshi River and the Gandaki River should be explored.

Mr. N. P. Upadhyaya, Consul General of Nepal in Lhasa, asked the scholars whether the dependency of Nepal's economy on remittance was going to a right direction.

Mr. Tanka Karki, Nepalese Ambassador to China (designated), observed that strategic location of Nepal was a boon for increasing national economy and enhancing trade.

Mr. Karki said that considering land as private property would not help in agricultural transformation in the country.

Mrs. Gunalaxmi Sharma B.K., the Nepalese Ambassador to Myanmar (designate), asked the government to initiate immediate measures to control the problem of uterus prolepses of women in different parts of the country.

She was also of the opinion that promoting tourism would help in the socio-economic transformation of people.

Mr. Ganesh Yonjan, the Nepalese Ambassador to Japan (designate), sought some effective measures to overcome the problem of institutional mechanism in different ministries.

Dr. Rishi Adhikari, the Nepalese Ambassador to Malaysia (designate), said that Prof. Dahal did not discuss about the feudal system of land ownership in Nepal.

Responding the queries raised from the floor, **Dr. Jagadish Chandra Pokharel, Vice Chairman of NPC**, said that NPC had adopted two strategies of macro as well as micro projects to reduce poverty in Nepal.

He also said that various community-oriented programmes had been initiated to benefit the people at the grassroots level.

He disclosed the fact that three regional airports would be constructed in near future to reduce the pressure at the Tribhuvan International Airport.

In terms of initiating any new project, he said that there was necessity of political commitment from all the parties.

In response to a query raised from the floor, he said that the government would work effectively in reducing the problem of uterus prolepses of women in different parts of the country.

He accepted the fact that MoFA should be the hub of all the ministries so that the coordination would be maintained and information would be disseminated on time.

He asked the newly appointed ambassadors to depute more conscious and knowledgeable staff members at the front desks.

Responding the queries raised from the floor, **Prof. Dahal** said that Nepal should adopt a more effective and practical policy with India considering the open border between the two close neighbours. He suggested that Nepal should a policy based on national consensus policy to check land fragmentation.

In terms of remittance, he said that available statistics were not clear. He asked the concerned government agencies to identify informal sources too. Prof. Dahal said that majority of remittance had been used in unproductive sectors.

Finally, he urged the envoys to work for Nepali labourers abroad.

While answering the queries, **Dr. Sainju** also suggested that the structure of MoFA should be restructured.

He also stressed the need for cultivating a culture of burden sharing and interdependence among the ministries and Nepalese embassies.

Sharing his experiences, he said that there was gap in plan and implementation and policy and practice in Nepal.

Finally, he asked the envoys to develop positive attitude while initiating any work, which would be considered good for the country and the people.

Mr. Wagle also addressed various queries posed from the floor.

Second Session (October 13, 2007)

Four resource persons-**Mr. C. P. Gajurel, Head of Foreign Relations Department of the, Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), Prof. Dr. Mohan P. Lohani, Former Ambassador to Bangladesh and Former Executive Director of IFA, Prof. Lila Sharma, Former Ambassador and Mr. Gajendra Bahadur Shrestha, Honorary Consul General of Sweden to Nepal, and Dean of Honorary Consular Corps- Nepal, made their presentations on Peace and Constitutional Process (Maoist's Perspective), Synopsis of an Overview of Foreign Policy of Nepal in the Changed Context, Foreign Policy in the New Context: Opportunities and Challenges, and Ten Tips for Ambassadors** respectively.

In his deliberations, **Maoist leader Mr. Gajurel** highlighted the two ways of entering into peace process: being defeated and win-win process. "The CPN (Maoist) entered into the peace bid through a win-win process," he said.

Concentrating his attention on the over decade-long People's War in Nepal, he said that the party realised that the armed revolution was not necessary and entered into the peace process. He also made it clear that his party raised arms as a last resort to establishing permanent peace and prosperity by dismantling all sorts of discrimination prevailing in the country.

Speaking about the rising expectations of the people after the April Movement, he asked the government to fulfill their genuine demands for establishing permanent peace in the country.

Terming Constituent Assembly (CA) polls as the national agenda, Mr. Gajurel said that they were very sincere to hold a real CA election.

Realising the importance of CA polls, Mr. Gajurel said, "CA has its own goal. It is not a general election. It cannot be held time and again".

He further said that the people had given the mandate to the Interim Government to hold CA election and make the country a republic one.

Accepting the fact that the country was in a transitional phase, he said, “We want to give an outlet to the transition through peace process”.

Highlighting the role of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) in making the April Movement a success, he said that they had played a pivotal role in mobilising the people to protest against the autocratic Gyanendra regime.

He claimed that had there been no PLA, the April Movement would not have been successful.

Calling the ongoing movement of Terai as a ploy of regressive force, he said that there won’t be permanent peace in the country unless the ill elements from Terai were eradicated completely.

Projecting the prospect of new Nepal, he said, “Nepal has good prospect in hydroelectricity generation, tourism, herbal products and agriculture”.

Emphasising the importance of human resource, Mr. Gajurel was of the opinion to invest in human resource for all-round development of the country. He further said European countries had been facing the scarcity of human resource.

In terms of establishing republic system of governance in Nepal, he said that it would not be achieved unless monarchy was dissolved. Further more, Mr. Gajurel added that Nepal would be prosperous, stable and peaceful if the seven parties would accept republican system and proportional representation.

He also made clear that proportional representation of all castes and creeds of people must be guaranteed for establishing inclusive Nepal.

Finally, he said that his party believed in the seven-party unity and the ongoing peace process. We will never run away from CA elections,” he assured.

Presenting his paper, **Prof. Lohani** explained preservation of national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and promotion of national interests as the primary objectives of the country’s foreign policy.

“History, geo-strategic location, cultural identity and background, socio-economic conditions and the international political and economic environment serve as important variables in shaping the foreign policy of a country,” he said.

He further said that Nepal was proud of her glorious history of national independence, as the country has never been subjugated by any colonial power. “In fact, Nepal’s uninterrupted success in the struggle for maintaining her independent national existence has been highlighted by several scholars at home and abroad,” he added.

He added that for over a century, Nepal had remained chained to a family autocracy under which it had been difficult, if not impossible, for the country to diversify her external relations confined only, in 1947, to four countries, namely, India, France, the

UK and the USA. “The people’s movement of 1951 ushered in a new era of democratic rule in the history of Nepal,” he said.

He said that Nepal’s foreign policy, for over four decades, had been based on and governed by the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, the principles of non-alignment and *Panchasheel*, world peace and respect for international law.

He expressed the view that continuity and change in Nepal’s foreign policy was the need of the hour.

Focussing his attention on the ongoing peace process in Nepal, he said that the international community, including the USA, the EU, Japan and the Russian Federation, was equally concerned to see the success of the peace process.

He called upon the newly appointed envoys to take up their assignments seriously and with a sense of commitment to the promotion of national interests, irrespective of their ideological background and orientation.

Presenting his paper, **Prof. Sharma** stressed that Nepal’s foreign policy should seek to realise the vision of making her a peaceful, stable and prosperous country in the region and beyond.

“The task before our foreign policy is to ensure that our aspirations for peace, stability and our sensitivity are respected and reciprocated,” he said.

He said that strengthening bilateral cooperation with immediate neighbours and with major world powers would continue to be one of the primary focuses of Nepal’s foreign policy,” he added.

He also said that while pursuing traditional relations and cooperation with major powers like Japan, the USA, the UK, Germany, the Nordic countries and Australia, efforts must be made to open new and beneficial cooperation with countries such as the Russian Federation and South Africa.

Stressing the need for taking into consideration the environmental and resource-related issues, he said that the domestic efforts to make judicious use of water resources available in Nepal must be reinforced by weaving into foreign policy the growing international concern.

He further said that the great economic strides made by China and India and rapid growth in the bilateral trade and economic relations had opened up new prospects for Nepal to reap benefits.

Highlighting the importance of the Nepalese Diaspora, he said that it had evolved as an important feature of national life and presented yet another opportunity and challenges for Nepal’s foreign policy. “Our foreign policy must be able to project an image of the country totally committed to political freedom,” he said.

While presenting his paper, **Mr. Shrestha** said that the ambassadors' personality and prestige would play an important role in making others understand the views of their governments. "The first-hand knowledge of the country which the ambassadors were accredited might enable them to influence their government's policy decisively."

He added that ambassadors would play a key role in enhancing national image in international arena.

"The diplomatic missions must represent and safeguard the sending state's interest abroad in various areas, disseminate information and provide services for their citizens in legal, consular and commercial matters", he said.

He also said that it was important for an ambassador to assist his or her government to define interests to promote and protect potentially harmful consequences of some alternative lines of action or inaction. In addition, he was of the opinion that an apt handling of foreign policy by ambassadors would help in safeguarding national sovereignty, integrity and ensuring people's interest.

Calling ambassadors a golden bridge, he said that they would bring the government and people of friendly countries closer in promoting mutual understanding, friendship and cooperation.

He called upon the ambassadors to win the confidence of the receiving state and international communities and make them dependable development partners.

"Ambassadors must be able to advise their government with sound analysis and efficiently execute their government's foreign policy. It requires in-depth knowledge and deep understanding about the receiving country, its history, politics, culture, policies, international relations and economic affairs," he said.

He added, "It is equally important for the ambassadors to know who the prominent personalities and decision-influencing or decision-making actors in the receiving state and maintain close cordial relations with them. Knowledge of this kind needs to be shared with one's government."

Highlighting the importance of modern information technology, he asked the envoys to be always well-informed of and acquainted with the latest events and affairs of the receiving and the sending states and needed to communicate with the concerned persons promptly.

In case of abnormal circumstances, he suggested that the ambassadors should be able to handle the situation with utmost care and cautiousness and communicate the measure one wished another country to take or an agreement one wished to negotiate with it.

"Usually, development assistance recipient country should ensure the potential for successful results to raise the standard of living of the poorer groups of people through economic growth, economic and political independence, economic and social equality,

gender equality, democratic and human rights development in society, environment protection, etc. The ambassadors should use their negotiating skills to obtain optimum development assistance,” he suggested.

Mr. Shrestha said that bilateral trade, promotion of tourism, development cooperation, FDI and employment opportunities were important elements of economic diplomacy contributing to peace, prosperity and political stability.

He further said that promoting people-to-people relations and exchange of high level visits would support very much to further strengthen the existing cordial diplomatic ties.

Concluding his remarks, Mr. Shrestha suggested, “Ambassadors should be keenly interested, enthusiastic, curious and self motivated at all times. Ambassadors should be cultured, flexible and easily accessible. Maintaining utmost diplomatic decorum, the ambassadors should refrain from derogatory remarks and in case of necessity, one should be able to do and say the nastiest thing in a nicest way. A sense of good humour with skills of culture, sports, linguistic, literature, art and music will be added advantages to the ambassadors. Ambassadors should lead by example and create history so that they could look back with pride on their admirable accomplishments to be cherished by generations to come”.

Floor Discussion

Following their presentations, the participants from the floor made the following queries and suggestions:

Mr. Bala Bahadur Kunwar, Nepalese Ambassador to Pakistan (designate), observed that the world was turning unipolar instead of multipolar with the increased domination of the United States.

Mr. Bijay Kant Lal Karna, Nepalese Ambassador to Denmark (designate), showing his objection to Prof. Lohani’s presentation, said that Nepal had never been a sovereign state. He also opined that Nepal had been guided by colonial power since 1863.

He suggested that the Nepalese foreign policy should be directed by inclusive norms.

Mr. Tanka Karki, Nepalese Ambassador to China (designate), was of the opinion that the Nepalese foreign policy should be based on the people’s aspirations and geo-strategic position of the country.

Mr. Karki said that the foreign policy should be strengthened by maintaining friendly relations with the friendly nations, especially with India and China.

Mr. Nirmal Kafle, Consular at the Nepalese Embassy in Beijing (deputed), opined that the Nepalese foreign policy had many lapses, as it failed to address the Bhutanese refugee issue and could not rectify the 1950 Treaty between Nepal and India.

Responding to the queries, **Prof. Lohani** said that the world had started becoming unipolar immediately after the Cold War. He further said that the US was trying to play a dominant role globally. However, the US has only 25 percent share in the formation of the United Nations.

Regarding Mr. Karna's objection, he made it clear that he respected the former's view and said that he just tried to give an overview of the Nepalese foreign policy in his paper.

Prof. Sharma and **Mr. Shrestha** also addressed the questions raised from the floor.

Third Session (October 13, 2007)

Mr. Shankar Pokharel, the Central Committee Member of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), was the only resource person in this session.

Mr. Pokharel made his presentation on the theme of peace and constitutional process in Nepal.

At the outset, he extended his hearty congratulations to the newly appointed Nepalese ambassadors and said that the appointment of such a large number of envoys was a historic one.

He hoped that the envoys would work in their assigned countries as per the aspirations of the Nepalese people, as they were representing the spirit of the *Janaandolan II*.

Emphasising the need for the seven-party unity in Nepal's present context, he said that the Nepal was heading to a republican setup.

He further stated that the political parties should accord top priority to promoting the matters of national interest.

Focussing on the present political instability, he accused the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) of being too rigid in their stances.

He said that his party was trying to seek a reliable basis of consensus among the seven political parties to give a durable outlet to the country. "The UML has played an important role in bringing the CPN (Maoist) to the mainstream politics and going parallel with the Nepali Congress," he added.

He said that the current rifts between the Maoists and the NC were the consequences of the gap between the previous agreements and their implementations.

Talking about the ongoing peace process in Nepal, he called for the responsible political parties to come up with their firm commitments to fulfilling the rising expectations of the people.

“If we are to bring permanent peace in the country, we need to work on political settlement and management of arms simultaneously,” he said.

Referring to the suspension of the Constituent Assembly polls, he blamed the CPN (Maoist) for shying away from it. “The Maoists have feared that they would be unable to win the elections,” he observed.

He also said that the Maoists’ demand for declaring Nepal a republican state from the Parliament and holding elections based on a full proportional system could not be fulfilled before the CA polls.

He stressed the need for fixing a new date for the CA polls as soon as possible in order to free the country from the ongoing political turmoil.

Floor Discussion

After Mr. Pokharel’s analytical presentation on Nepal’s present peace and constitutional process, some of the participants posed their queries and observations.

Dr. Rishi Adhikari, Nepalese Ambassador to Malaysia (designate), opined that the author failed to address the reasons for the CPN (Maoist) to forward the 22-point demands.

Mr. Bijay Kant Lal Karna, Nepalese Ambassador to Denmark (designate), observed that the people were in favour of complete change, but the leaders were in favour of just reformatations.

Mr. Karna also blamed the political leaders of Nepal for being unable to visualise the nation’s vision.

Mrs. Gunalaxmi Sharma B.K., Nepalese Ambassador to Myanmar (designate), asked all the political parties to start working together for the country’s welfare.

She also stressed the necessity of unity among the Communist Parties.

Mr. Surya Nath Mishra, Nepalese Ambassador to Saudi Arabia (designate), asked the author how the CPN (UML) could contribute in the peace process by being indifferent.

Ms. Phampha Bhusal, Nepalese Ambassador to France (designate), asked Mr. Pokharel if there was any secret agreement between the then seven political parties and King Gyanendra, who made two proclamations within four days (on 8th and 11th Baisakh, 2063 B.S.

Answering the queries posed by the participants, **Mr. Pokharel** said that the Maoist movement had raised new norms and values forcibly.

Addressing Mrs. Gunalaxmi's suggestion, he hoped that the unification among the Left parties would be possible, as the gap between the CPN (UML) and the CPN (Maoist) was nearing.

He said that it was not the seven political parties, who pressurised the king to declare a new government as per their roadmap.

Dwelling on Mr. Mishra's query, he claimed that the role of the CPN (UML) was not indifferent in the peace process. "Our party seeks to have its own position. We always look for consensus whenever there are differences," he said.

First Session (October 14, 2007)

This session was concentrated on foreign employment and labour-related issues. **Mr. Shyam Prasad Mainali, Secretary at the Ministry of Labour and Transport Management**, presented his paper on **Nepal Government's Policies on Labour Issues**, while **Mr. Bishnu Rimal, Vice-President of GEFONT**, and **Mr. L.P. Sanwa Limbu, President of Foreign Employment Federation**, made their presentations on the government's labour policies (labour perspective) and the government's policies on labour issues (private perspective) respectively. **Dr. Shankar Prasad Sharma, former Vice-Chairman of NPC**, focused his presentations on the World Trade Organisation (Multilateral Trading System and the Uruguay Round) and Agreement on South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA).

Presenting his paper, **Mr. Mainali** said that the government had adopted the policy of promoting foreign employment, making foreign employment sector a more secure, managed and dignified and protecting the interest of the Nepalese workers going abroad.

He informed that about 500 Nepali workers were currently receiving approval from the government to work in foreign countries daily. "In the fiscal year 2063/064, more than 200,000 Nepali workers went to different countries for employment," he disclosed.

According to him, the contribution of remittance to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was increasing significantly over the years. At present, the contribution of remittance to GDP stands at about 25 percent.

He said that the Government of Nepal could sign a bilateral labour agreement with the countries where Nepalese workers were working or likely to go for work. "The Government of Nepal can sign labour agreements with the countries with which Nepal has established diplomatic ties and send Nepali workers there," he said.

He further said that the only workers above 18 years were eligible for foreign employment and there would be no gender discrimination while sending workers for foreign employment.

According to him, labourers are required to use the national airport while going abroad for employment.

Disclosing Nepal's agreements with the labour receiving countries in regards to salary of Nepali workers, he informed that they would get US\$ 125 per month.

He also said that the government was planning to establish a labour desk at the Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) to facilitate the labourers. "The government is effortful to ensure that the workers get salary and allowance as mentioned in the agreement documents and provide necessary orientation to them," he said.

He revealed that the Government of Nepal allowed the Nepalese workers to work in 107 different countries.

Speaking about the provision of the Welfare Fund, he said that it would help protect the interests of workers. "The Labour Act is also having the provisions of foreign employment judiciary and labour attaché," he said.

He said that the MoU signed between Nepal and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was being implemented. "We have signed an agreement with Qatar as well, but it has yet to come into force," he said.

In his paper, **Mr. Rimal** viewed that skilled labourers should not be sent to foreign countries, as Nepal required them.

Presenting a pathetic condition of the Nepalese workers in India, he said that they were highly exploited there. "They are even unable to send their hard-earned money to Nepal through the Indian banks," he said.

He also said that there were no data regarding the number of Nepalese workers working in Iraq.

According to him, a large number of educated labourers are found in Japan, Korea and Singapore.

He said that most of the Nepalese workers were exploited even in Malaysia. "They do not get the amount of salary as mentioned in their agreement papers," he said.

Disclosing the problem in the Gulf countries, he said that many Nepalese workers were in jails there. "Rescuing the workers and bringing in dead bodies is another serious problem," he added.

Emphasising the need for establishing a labour desk at the airports in Nepal and abroad, he said that many labourers were harassed there.

He asked the Nepalese envoys to work for the welfare of Nepali workers by developing an effective coordination with different agencies and organisations.

Making his presentation, **Mr. Limbu** informed that the Nepalese workers had started going to the Gulf countries for employment since 1985.

He estimated that about 1.4 million Nepalese workers were working in various countries of the world.

According to him, about 600 workers from Nepal are flying to different countries from Nepal daily. “Most of our workers are engaged in construction, manufacturing, security services, agriculture and cleaning sectors,” he said.

He highlighted employment opportunity, remittance, social transformation and contribution in interlinking business sectors as some of the major achievements of the foreign employment for Nepal.

“Remittance has played a vital role in reducing poverty from 42 percent to 31 percent during the period of the armed conflict,” he said.

He further said that remittance had become a significant part of the national economy, as it contributed about 17 percent to GDP.

He listed lack of access to information, voiceless migrants, lack of diplomatic missions and resources of the government agencies, undocumented migration, lack of proper management of remittance, orientation programme prior to departure and promotional programmes of the government, and tarnished image of Nepal Airlines as the main challenges facing the Nepalese foreign employment sector.

Pointing out the roles and responsibilities of the Nepalese ambassadors, he suggested that they should initiate proceedings for safer foreign employment, enhance bilateral relations and networking, promote Nepalese workers in foreign labour markets, and take initiative for signing MoU between Nepal and the destination countries.

“The diplomatic mission should have a sense of responsibility towards Nepalese workers in foreign labour markets,” he said.

Offering a brief introduction to WTO agreements, **Dr. Sharma** shed light on the objectives of the global trade body: helping trade flow as freely as possible, facilitating trade negotiations, and settling trade disputes.

The WTO, which was created on January 1, 1995, was the outcome of the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations.

Delving on the Uruguay Round, he said that it had lasted for seven and a half years and covered almost all aspects of trade. It was the largest trade negotiation ever of any kind in the world’s trade history.

He expressed the view that the Uruguay Round had also brought about the biggest reform of the world’s trading system.

“Despite the importance of GATT, the trading arrangement was ad hoc and provisional. Agreements under it were never ratified by members,” he said.

He added that the WTO, on the other hand, had a sound legal basis because members had ratified the WTO agreements.

Distinguishing between GATT and WTO, he said that the former dealt with trade in goods, while the latter covered services and intellectual property rights as well. “The WTO dispute settlement system is faster and more automatic than the GATT systems and its rulings cannot be blocked,” he revealed.

He explained the five fundamental principles of Multilateral Trading System—non-discriminatory, free, predictable, and more competitive and time for adjustment.

He highlighted the three-fold objectives of the Agriculture Agreement associated with the Uruguay Round of GATT: market access, domestic support and export subsidies.

He also touched upon other aspects such as textile, trade-related investment measures, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, import licensing, customs classification, valuation and pre-shipment inspection, safeguards, trade in services, Intellectual Property Rights and provisions for developing countries. He explained them in a comprehensive manner.

The developing countries are being dealt in WTO by introducing special provisions and providing technical assistance.

He expressed his hope that the WTO agreements would help strengthen the world economy and lead to more trade, investment, employment and income growth throughout the worlds.

Similarly, commenting on SAFTA, Dr. Sharma opined that it was a failure economic trade because of its poor performance.

Considering the Nepal’s trade situation, he asked the newly appointed Nepalese envoys to establish personal relationship with the trade organisation in the assigned countries.

“We have low tariff barrier (9%), which is the lowest in South Asia,” he said.

He said that since Nepal could export goods on duty free quota to India and China, it would be cheaper for the two close neighbours to import goods from the small Himalayan country.

He stressed the necessity for Nepal to concentrate her efforts on tourism and hydropower sectors for the country’s economic development.

Floor Discussion

After the resource persons completed their presentations, the floor was declared open for discussion. Some of the participants raised their queries and observations.

Mr. Tanka Karki, Nepalese Ambassador to China (designate), opined that labour desk at the airports must be made prompt, accountable and reliable.

Mr. Bijay Kant Lal Karna, Nepalese Ambassador to Denmark (designate), wanted to know about the share of income from the remittance being used for the management and protection of Nepalese labourers.

He further inquired about the measures being taken by the government to settle the labour issues.

He also suggested that coordination between and among different ministries should be strengthened.

Mr. Ganesh Yonjan, Nepalese Ambassador to Japan (designate), called for taking some measures to keep records of the Nepalese living abroad illegally.

He also asked the resource persons whether the Nepalese embassies could use trade unions to help resolve labour issues.

Mr. Bala Bahadur Kunwar, Nepalese Ambassador to Pakistan (designate), said that both short-term and long-term training programmes should be conducted for the Nepalese workers, who were going abroad for employment.

He also wanted to know what the government was doing for the Nepalese labourers who were going abroad, especially the Gulf countries.

He stressed the need for the government to do something concrete for improving the condition of the Nepalese embassies.

Mr. Surya Nath Mishra, Nepalese Ambassador to Qatar (designated), asked the government whether it had completed MoU with Qatar in terms of sending labour.

Mr. N. P. Upadhyaya, Consul General of Nepal in Lhasa, inquired about the initiative on the part of the Government of Nepal to start processes for operating the Lhasa-Kathmandu bus services.

Dr. Rishi Adhikari, Nepalese Ambassador to Malaysia (designate), suggested that the MoFA and the Ministry of Labour (MoL) should cooperate with the Nepalese embassies to settle all sorts of labour issue.

Mr. Pramesh Hamal, Nepalese Ambassador to Belgium (designate), asked Dr. Sharma how the least developed countries like Nepal would benefit from the limited facilities offered to them by the WTO.

Responding the queries raised by the participants, **MoL Secretary Mr. Mainali** said that it was essential to make the labour desk at the airports smooth, accountable and reliable.

He said that it was a very difficult task to keep the records of the Nepalese living in different foreign countries illegally.

He also called for increasing the fund of the Nepalese embassies to improve their capacity.

Responding the query raised by Mr. Mishra, he said that the labour agreement between Nepal and Qatar had not materialised hitherto.

In terms of starting Lhasa-Kathmandu bus service, he said that some technical problems associated with it needed to be resolved.

Mr. Mainali, however, accepted the fact that it was essential for the government to impart both short-term and long-term training to the workers going abroad.

Similarly, clarifying the queries raised from the floor, **Mr. Rimal** asked the envoys to pay due attention towards protecting the Nepalese workers from Nepalese agents and brokers.

He disclosed that his association (GEFONT) had signed MoUs with some of the trade unions abroad for protecting the interest of Nepalese workers there. “GEFONT has been working together with friends of Nepal in various countries for the welfare of Nepali workers,” added.

Praising the trade unions in Bahrain for their cooperation, he said that it was easier for GEFONT to work for the Nepalese labourers there.

Citing a pathetic condition of the Nepalese workers in India, he asked the Nepalese ambassador to India to talk to the Indian government to ensure safety and security of Nepalese workers. “Many of the Nepalese workers are looted on Nepal-India border while returning home,” he said.

He was of the opinion that the problems faced by the Nepalese workers would be resolved if all the Nepalese embassies abroad coordinated with the trade unions there.

Answering a query, **Mr. Sanwa** asked the government to take initiative to establish the embassy of Saudi Arabia in Nepal.

He also stressed the need for the Nepalese envoys working in different diplomatic missions abroad to help address labour-related issues by coordinating with the concerned governments.

Addressing Mr. Hamal’s question, **Dr. Sharma** expressed the view that Nepal could reap benefits from WTO by maintaining quality of her products.

He also stressed the need for Nepal to minimise information gap and ensuring institutional development.

Second Session (October 14, 2007)

In this session, two resource persons—**Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba and former Minister Mrs. Vidya Devi Bhandari**---made their deliberations on the theme of ‘gender perspective on constitution and peace process.’

Presenting her paper on the Constituent Assembly and Nepali women, **Dr. Deuba** said that since women in Nepal made up 50.5% of the total population, their issues had to be incorporated in the national policy and responded them effectively.

Emphasising women’s participation in all the socio-economic and political spheres, she demanded that their participation be meaningful and inclusive. “In such a situation alone, women could feel comfortable and free, and are welcome to actively voice their opinions in an equal manner to that of their male counterparts as opposed to representing as a silent quota partner.”

Citing the Article 21 (5) of the Interim Constitution of Nepal— women shall have the rights to participate in every structure of the state at a minimum of numerically one-third on the basis of principle of proportionate inclusion, she sought at least 33% women’s representation in the upcoming CA polls.

Putting blames on the party leadership for not being serious about women’s political participation, she called for revising party lists to ensure one-third participation as provisioned by the Interim Constitution.

Pinpointing lapses in the Interim Statute, she said that there was no clarity in actions to be taken against those not abiding by the constitutional provisions.

She complained that there was no quota for women in the 17 seats set aside for nomination.

In her presentation, **Mrs. Bhandari** expressed the view that no stable society could be established through bypassing 50% of the population.

She stressed on equity for women instead of equality. “Discrimination against women creates imbalance in the society. So, if there are any illogical legal provisions and cultural practices in the society, they must be clarified and changed,” she added.

She said that women were compelled to accept ill social practices due to lack of awareness and the patriarchal social setup.

She also disclosed the fact that the proposal of 33% reservation for women was not supported fully even within her party—the CPN (UML).

Saying that the provision of 33% reservation could just be a ploy, she said that the political parties would encourage female candidates to file their candidacies for the elections only from those constituencies where male candidates of other parties were more influential.

Citing an example of discrimination between sons and daughters in a family, she said that the state had never given protection to women. “Planned efforts need to be initiated to reduce the existing gender gap in the country,” she suggested.

She expressed the view that discrimination, hunger, malnutrition, frustration and dissatisfaction could not be eradicated from the society without a real and meaningful representation of women.

Looking at the ongoing peace process in Nepal from a gender perspective, she called for equal representation of both male and female in political, social and economic spheres.

“Let new Nepal be just so that it would be prosperous and peaceful,” she said.

Floor Discussion

Following the presentations, the floor was declared open for discussion. Some of the participants raised their queries and observations.

Mrs. Gunalaxmi Sharma B.K., Nepalese Ambassador to Myanmar (designate), observed that men were more forward-looking than women, and asked the government to create a more favourable environment for the Nepalese women to move ahead.

Dr. Suresh Chandra Chalise, Nepalese Ambassador to the United States of America (designate), was of the opinion that IFA had to invite more women resource persons to speak on tourism and women’s role in solving the problem of women labourers.

Mr. Bijay Kant Lal Karna, Nepalese Ambassador to Denmark (designate), asked Mrs. Bhandari how many women there were in the decision-making process of the CPN-UML.

He asked Mrs. Bhandari to pressurise her party leadership to increase the influence of women in the decision-making process.

Mr. Bala Bahadur Kunwar, Nepalese Ambassador to Pakistan (designate), asked the government as well as all the political parties of Nepal to provide long-term training and orientation programmes to women for empowering them and minimising all sorts of discrimination against women.

Mr. Ganesh Yonjan, Nepalese Ambassador to Japan (designate), called for women’s political participation in peace process and checking bad governance.

Mr. Tanka Karki, Nepalese Ambassador to China (designate), suggested that the government should prioritise the areas of women's role in all-round development of the country.

Responding the queries raised from the floor, **Mrs. Bhandari** said that her party had already allocated 33% reservation seats for women at all levels.

Emphasising the importance of women's role in peace process, she urged the government to increase the number of female negotiators in the peace process in order to achieve complete peace across the country.

Reminding the unprecedented role played by women in making the *Janaandolan-II* a success, she blamed all the parties for being irresponsible for fulfilling their commitments towards increasing women's participation in decision-making process.

Underlining the importance of women's participation in socio-economic and political spheres, she said that if a woman would be appointed just the mayor of a municipality, she would feel that she was socially, culturally and politically honoured.

She further said that it would help in reducing the level of discrimination against women in the society as a whole.

According to her, all-round development of women was necessary for the nation's overall development.

Third Session (October 14, 2007)

In this session, three resource persons—**Mr. Madhav P. Khanal, former Chief of Protocol, MoFA, Mr. Keshav Raj Jha, former ambassador and Foreign Secretary Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya---** made their deliberations. **Mr. Khanal and Mr. Jha spoke on the theme of 'A Critical Appraisal of Protocol and Consular Practices of Nepalese Diplomacy in the Present Context'**, while **Mr. Acharya** made his presentation on the subject matter of the **Nepalese foreign policy in the changed context**.

Addressing the session, **Mr. Khanal** asked the new envoys to prioritise the country's interest while presenting the credentials in their assigned countries.

“The role of the newly appointed envoys is quite challenging, as you are entrusted with the responsibility after about one and a half years of diplomatic blackout,” he said.

He suggested that they should abide by the local laws fully upon their arrivals because different countries had their own unique laws and customs.

He urged them to pay attention to the cultural sentiments of the people in the assigned countries. “Follow the dress code and table manner of the locals,” he recommended.

He also asked them to take austerity measures while organising get-togethers and gatherings considering the budgetary constraints of the embassy.

Drawing the participants' attention towards poor and ineffective media relations of the Nepalese diplomatic missions abroad, he requested them to maintain close rapport with the local journalists.

He also suggested that IFA should have invited some media resource persons at the programme so that the envoys would be familiar with some public relations and media mobilisation techniques.

His another feedback/suggestion for IFA was that the organisation should have called to conflict management experts rather than political persons and civil society members.

Finally, he asked IFA to make available a copy of the Vienna Convention 1961 to each of the envoys.

Making his deliberations, **Mr. Jha** said that the ambassadors must be competent enough to understand the protocol-related matters and abide by them from the beginning to the end of their tenure. "Protocol holds great importance in maintaining international relations," he said.

He advised the envoys to keep them updated regarding the protocol matter since it went on changing.

He, however, said that the protocol matters of the Russian Federation and the United States were easy. "But the protocol of the United Kingdom is very strict," he said.

According to him, the Prime Minister of the UK is ranked at the 16th, while the envoys hold the 46th position. In the past, the ambassadors were ranked at the 108th.

He asked the envoys to maintain official protocol, and not try to misinterpret any information. "Do not accept any doubtful invitation. Maintain dress and punctuality," he suggested.

Underlining the significance of the protocol system, he said that its objective was to bring the disorder system into order.

In his presentation, **Foreign Secretary Mr. Acharya** said that the concept of international relations was not new; rather it evolved with the passage of time.

Terming trade as an engine of growth, Mr. Acharya asked the newly appointed envoys to focus their efforts on promoting Nepal's tourism, trade and hydropower to materialise the concept of economic diplomacy.

"We have to promote and utilise our export potential to expand our foreign trade," he said.

He called for the envoys to work in close coordination with MoFA to promote Nepal's foreign policy abroad in a more effective manner.

“As the representatives of the *Janaandolan II*, the new envoys should remain effortful to work as per the aspirations of the people,” he suggested.

Citing Nepal's current transitional phase, he urged the envoys to contribute from their respective fields in restoring peace and gearing up economic development in the country.

“We should be more effortful to articulate our foreign policy by seeking supportive cooperation from the international community,” he said.

He was of the opinion that Nepal's signing of labour-related MoUs with the Republic of Korea and the UAE had opened the door for promoting economic diplomacy.

“Keeping in view the important contribution of remittance in the national economy, the interests of Nepali workers should be protected and their issues need to be addressed on time,” he said.

Talking about attracting foreign investment to Nepal, he said that a more liberal policy needed to be adopted. “We must first prioritise our areas of interest to attract foreign investment,” he said.

He further said that the foreign relations should be diversified and consolidated as per the concept of development partners within the international framework.

Concluding Session

Hon'ble Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Sahana Pradhan graced the concluding session of the Briefing-Cum-Interaction Programme as the chief guest on October 14, 2007. **Foreign Secretary, Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya** was the guest of honour at the session. The session was chaired by **Prof. Dr. Gopal Pokharel, Executive Director of IFA**.

Presenting her concluding remarks, Minister Madame Pradhan said that Nepal's current foreign policy was based on the political change brought about by the *Janaandolan-II*. “With the success of the political movement, we are committed to developing Nepal into a peaceful, prosperous, inclusive and democratic nation.”

Highlighting the present action plans of the country, she said that Nepal had adopted the policies of orienting the international community towards mustering their wider support and cooperation to materialise the country's vision.

She asked the new Nepalese envoys to be conscious about enhancing the country's bilateral relations with the neighbouring countries, South Asian and other nations, donors and those who had been extending their support to Nepal on various international forums.

She also pointed out the need for Nepal to diversify her political and economic ties at the present phase of globalisation.

“With the technological development, rapid flow of information and the present situation of mutual interdependence, issues such as democracy, human rights, world peace and development are matters of concern internationally. In such a situation, no country in the world can remain unaffected by any incidence taking place in any country,” she said.

She said that Nepal’s foreign policy was based on the UN Charter, the principles of Panchasheel and the ideals of non-alignment. “We are committed to protecting our sovereignty, regional integrity and national unity as enshrined by the Interim Constitution,” she said.

She said that Nepal believed in peaceful resolution of all the bilateral, regional and international problems through dialogues,” she said.

Stressing the various commission reports regarding revamping operation of the foreign policy, restructuring of MoFA, enhancement of efficiency of MoFA staff members, and establishment of embassies in prospective countries, she said that the recommendations would be implemented gradually. “We have opened embassies in Australia, Denmark, Israel and the Republic of Korea (RoK) as per the recommendations of the commission reports,” she added.

She disclosed that MoFA had plans to increase the number of training programmes for its staff in order to enhance their professional efficiency.

Dwelling on the topic of economic diplomacy, she said that the issue needed to be accorded high priority.

“All the foreign diplomatic missions of Nepal will be encouraged to explore new avenues of economic cooperation, tourism, trade, foreign employment and foreign investment and promote them,” she said.

Shedding light on the government’s plans for promoting economic diplomacy, she said that IFA was entrusted with the responsibility of preparing a handbook on economic diplomacy by collecting inputs from different experts. “The handbook, which will be made available to all Nepal’s diplomatic missions abroad, will include every aspect of economic diplomacy,” she said.

According to her, MoFA will conduct various activities related to economic diplomacy from the current fiscal year through Nepal’s diplomacy missions to make it more result-oriented. “The ministry will assess and follow up the activities and chart out programmes after consulting with the concerned stakeholders,” she said.

Talking about the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on labour between Nepal and the Republic of Korea, she said that it opened Nepal’s door to the Korean labour market.

She informed that Nepal signed similar agreement with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) by ensuring the welfare of the Nepalese workers. “Efforts are underway to sign labour agreements with Malaysia and other Gulf countries.”

She urged the envoys to actively work for the welfare of Nepali workers working in different countries.

She also asked them to project Nepal’s new political and economic situations in the countries where they were assigned to work. “The country has pinned much hope on you that you will be able to maximise the benefits for the country from the respective countries,” she said.

“In this context, it would be exaggeration if I repeat the economic crisis that the country is facing at the moment. Currently, Nepal has many challenges, equally there are opportunities too,” she said.

She said that many countries were wishing to see the prosperous and peaceful Nepal and they were doing their best to help the country. “Therefore, your Herculean effort, dedication and initiative would help the country to transform its social system and economy.”

She called upon them as the representatives of Nepal to be aware of the country’s economic, social, political and cultural aspects. “There is no denying the fact that Nepal is lagging behind as compared with other countries. So, you must be playing a pivotal role to bring our nation to their level.”

She hoped that they must have gained much knowledge about several fields, including Nepal’s diplomatic relations.

She also thanked IFA for organising such a useful programme.

Earlier, she launched two publications of IFA—*Issue Brief VI* (news bulletin) and *Different Dimensions of Bhutanese Refugee Problem: Its Implications and Lasting Solutions*.

Speaking at the programme, **Foreign Secretary Mr. Acharya** suggested that the ambassadors should closely coordinate with MoFA to further promote the Nepalese foreign policy abroad.

“The envoys have a greater role to play to garner international assistance and support for the ongoing peace process and development efforts of Nepal,” he said.

He asked them to adopt a new approach to promote the national interest in a more efficient manner in the changed present context. “Considering the current political, social and economic situations of the country, the envoys have to work like a good salesman,” he said.

He also called upon the envoys to project Nepal's overall situation abroad in order to harbour more cooperation from them.

Highlighting the areas of concentration, he said that the envoys should focus their efforts on economic matters like trade, tourism and foreign investment.

He further said that Nepal could not remain isolated from any country of the world in the age of globalisation. "We have to be more proactive and robust to adjust ourselves with the changing world."

He believed that Nepal would be a prosperous, peaceful and inclusive country in future. "So, we need to remain effortful in this regard," he said.

On behalf of the participant guests, **Mr. Kamal Koirala, who is the Nepalese Ambassador to RoK**, shared his experiences acquired from the three-day programme.

Lauding MoFA and IFA for organising the briefing-cum-interaction programme for the newly appointed ambassadors, Mr. Koirala said that it was unprecedented in the sense that they acquired knowledge and information on different fields.

"We have found the programme very useful," he added.

Calling the gathering 'historic', he said that the 21 ambassadors were appointed at a time in the history of Nepal.

"It was a matter of dismay that Nepal had no representatives in various countries for a long time. We now have a vital responsibility to shoulder," he said.

Highlighting the development prospects of Nepal, he said that the country lies between two bigger democratic countries— India and China.

Shedding light on the importance of remittance for Nepal's economy, he stressed the need to reform the system of sending labourers abroad.

"We need to explore high paying countries for sending our labourers," he said.

He also said that MoFA was an important body to extend the country's political as well as economic ties.

He requested his fellow participants to forward suggestions regarding diversifying the areas of cooperation to the Government of Nepal.

In his welcome speech, **Prof. Pokharel** shed light on the rationale of organising the programme.

He said that IFA was very much privileged to organise the three-day briefing-cum-interaction to orient the newly appointed ambassadors on a wide range of issues of national interest.

He said that ambassadors should have perceptual clarity. “They should realise the situation of the country, prioritise the national needs and proceed ahead with zeal and enthusiasm to achieve their targets,” he suggested.

He hoped that the participants had immensely benefitted from the programme in understanding various issues of national interest. “As the representatives of Nepal, the envoys must have national interest high on agenda,” he added.

He was of the opinion that the environment of trust and cooperation was necessary to exchange views on any sector. He suggested that the new ambassadors should cooperate with the Foreign Ministry while tackling various challenges and problems.

Emphasising the importance of foreign diplomatic missions of Nepal, he said, “The newly appointed envoys will explore new avenues of economic cooperation, tourism, trade, foreign employment and foreign investment to contribute to Nepal’s development endeavours.”

He asked them to focus their attention on economic diplomacy for the national development while having discussions with the foreign countries.

He expressed his deep appreciation and gratefulness to Foreign Minister Madame Pradhan and Foreign Secretary, Mr. Acharya for their graceful presence in the concluding programme despite their busy schedules.

He also thanked all the participants for attending the program with keen interests.

Earlier, the Executive Director had greeted both the chief guest and the guest of honour by offering floral bouquets.

At the end of the concluding session, **Ms. Anjan Shakya, Deputy Executive Director of IFA**, extended a vote of thanks to the chief guest, the guest of honour, resource persons and participant guests.

She expressed the belief that the programme was useful to the participants.

She also read out the names of participants and resource persons and titles of the papers the latter had presented in different sessions of the three-day programme.

She hoped that the extensive discussions held on a wide range of issues at the three-day programme would be helpful for the newly appointed Nepalese ambassadors to carry out their duties in their assigned countries in a more effective manner.

Calling upon them to focus their efforts on promoting Nepal's trade and tourism, she said that Nepal had a lot of prospects for tourism development.

Finally, she assured that IFA would take the suggestions and feedback from the participant guests in a positive light and try to make the similar future programmes more relevant and effective.

ANNEX-I

List of the Resource Persons:

1. Mr. Purusottam Ojha, Secretary, MOICAS
2. Mr. Pradeep K. Shrestha, Former President, FNCCI
3. Mr. Jagdish Prasad Agrawal, Officiating President, CNI
4. Mr. Surendra Bir Malakar, President, NCC
5. Mr. Rajendra K. Khetan, President, YEC
6. Mr. Madhav Prasad Ghimire, Secretary, MoCTCA
7. Mr. Subash Niraula, Officiating CEO, Nepal Tourism Board
8. Ms. Ambika Shrestha, Senior Tourism Export
9. Hon'ble Gyanendra Bahadur Karki, Minister of State for Water Resources
10. Dr. Damber Nepali, Managing Director, Chilime Hydropower Company Ltd.
11. Dr. Jagdish Chandra Pokharel, Vice-Chairman, National Planning Commission
12. Prof. Dr. Madan Kumar Dahal, President, Economic Association of Nepal
13. Dr. Mohan Man Sainju, Former Vice-Chairman, National Planning Commission
14. Mr. Bimal Wagle, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Finance
15. Mr. C. P. Gajurel, Head, Foreign Relation Department, NCP (Maoist)
16. Prof. Dr. Mohan Prasad Lohani, Former Executive Director, IFA
17. Prof. Lila Prasad Sharma, Former Ambassador
18. Mr. Gajendra Bahadur Shrestha, Honorary Consul General of Sweden to Nepal
19. Mr. Shanker Pokharel, Central Committee Member, NCP (UML)
20. Mr. Shyam Prasad Mainali, Secretary, Ministry of Labour
21. Mr. Bishnu Rimal, Vice-President, GEFONT
22. Mr. L P Sawa Limbu, President, Foreign Employment Federation
23. Dr. Shankar Prasad Sharma, Former Vice-Chairman, National Planning Commission
24. Dr. Arju Rana Deuba, Former President, Management Association of Nepal
25. Ms. Bidya Devi Bhandari, Former Minister and Central Committee Member, NCP (UML)
26. Mr. Madhav Khanal, Former Chief of Protocol, MoFA
27. Mr. Keshav Raj Jha, Former Ambassador
28. Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Foreign Secretary, MoFA

List of the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) Members:

1. Prof. Dr. Gopal Pokharel, Executive Director, IFA
2. Ms. Anjan Shakya, Deputy Executive Director, IFA

Helping Hands:

1. Mr. Mahendra Prasad Joshi
2. Mr. Subhash Lohani
3. Ms. Binita Nepal
4. Ms. Binita Shrestha

ANNEX-II

Name List of Nepalese Ambassadors (Designate) to different missions abroad

1	Mr. Yogendra Dhakal	Australia
2.	Mr. Pradip Khatiwada	Bangladesh
3.	Mr. Pramesh Hamal	Belgium
4.	Mr. Tanka Karki	China
5.	Mr. Bijaya Kanta Lal Karna	Denmark
6.	Ms. Pampha Bhusal	France
7.	Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai	Geneva
8.	Ms. Sailaja Acharya	India
9.	Mr. Vaidya Nath Thapaliya	Israel
10.	Mr. Ganesh Yonjan	Japan
11.	Ms. Guna Laxmi Sharma BK	Myanmar
12.	Dr. Rishi Adhikari	Malaysia
13.	Mr. Bal Bahadur Kunwar	Pakistan2
14.	Mr. Surya Nath Misra	Qatar
15.	Mr. Surya Kiran Gurung	Russia
16.	Mr. Hamid Ansari	Saudi Arabia
17.	Mr. Kamal Koirala	South Korea
18.	Mr. Navin Prakash Jung Shah	Thailand
19.	Mr. Murari Raj Sharma	United Kingdom
20.	Dr. Suresh Chalise	United States
21.	Mr. Arjun Thapa	United Arab Emirates

Name list of other Participants

22.	Mr. Naindra Pd. Upadhaya (Consul General)	Lhasa
23	Mr. Durga Bd. Subedi Chettri (Deputy Chief of mission)	Tokyo, Japan
24.	Mr. Hari P. Bashyal (Deputy Consul General)	Kolkata
25.	Mr. Nirmal Kafle (Councillor)	China

Category I

Mr. Surya Kiran Gurung	Russia
Mr. Pramesh Hamal	Belgium
Mr. Bijaya Kanta Lal Karna	Denmark
Ms. Pampha Bhusal	France
Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai	Geneva
Mr. Murari Raj Sharma	United Kingdom
Dr. Suresh Chalise	United States

Category II

Mr. Yogendra Dhakal	Australia
Mr. Ganesh Yonjan	Japan
Ms. Guna Laxmi Sharma BK	Myanmar
Mr. Bal Bahadur Kunwar	Pakistan
Mr. Pradip Khatiwada	Bangladesh
Mr. Tanka Karki	China
Ms. Sailaja Acharya	India
Mr. Navin Prakash Jung Shah	Thailand

Category III

Dr. Rishi Adhikari	Malaysia
Mr. Kamal Koirala	South Korea
Mr. Surya Nath Misra	Qatar
Mr. Bijaya Nath Thapaliya	Israel
Mr. Hamid Ansari	Saudi Arabia
Mr. Arjun Thapa	United Arab Emirates

ANNEX-III
Programme Schedule

Orientation Cum Briefing Programme for the Nepalese Ambassadors (Designate) to different missions abroad

Date	Time	Orientation Programme	Experts
Oct. 12, 2007	11:30 - 12:00 pm 12: 00 pm 12:10 - 12:30 pm 12:30 - 12:50 pm 12:50 - 1:10 pm 1:10 1:30 pm 1:30 1:50 pm 1:50 - 2:15 pm 2:15 pm 3:00 - 3:20 pm 3:20 – 3:40 pm 3:40 - 4:00 pm 4:00-4:20 pm 4:20 - 5:00 pm 5:00pm 5:20 - 5:40pm 5:40 - 6:00pm 6:00 - 6:30 pm 7:00pm	Inaugural Programme Hi-Tea Nepal Government's Policies on Industry and Commerce Private Perspectives Discussions Lunch a. Nepal Government's Policies on Tourism and Culture Marketing & Promotion of Nepal as a Tourist Destination Private Perspectives on Nepal Government's Policies on Tourism and Culture Discussions Tea Break b. Hydro Power Diplomacy Discussions Dinner	Chief Guest, Hon'ble Education, Sports and Officiating Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Pradip Nepal by Mr. Purusottam Ojha, Secretary, MOICAS by Mr. Pradeep K. Shrestha, Former President, FNCCI by Mr. Jagadish Prasad Agrawal, Officiating President, CNI by Mr. Surendra Bir Malakar, President, NCC by Mr. Rajendra Khetan, President, YEC and Vice Dean of Honourary Consul Generals Corp of Nepal by Mr. Madhav Prasad Ghimire, Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation by Mr. Subhash Niraula, Officiating Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Board. by Ms. Ambika Shrestha, Senior Tourism Expert by Minister for Water Resources Hon'ble Gyanendra B. Karki by Dr. Damber Nepali, Senior Engineer, NEA
Oct. 13, 2007	9:00 - 9:20 am 9:20 - 9:40 am 9:40 - 10:00 am 10:00 - 10:20 am 10:20 - 10:40am 10:40 - 1:00 pm 2:00 pm 2:30 - 2:50 pm 2:50 - 3:10 pm 3:10 - 3:30 pm 3:30 - 3:50 pm 3:50 - 4:30 pm	Three years Plan Perspective An Overview of Economic Situation of Nepal with Particular focus on Economic Diplomacy Discussions Lunch An Overview of Foreign Policy of Nepal in the Changed Context Policies and practices related to consul's office Discussion	by Dr. Jagadish Chandra Pokarel, Vice Chairman, NPC by Prof. Dr. Madan Kumar Dahal, Central Department of Economics, T.U. by Mr. Bimal Wagle, Joint-Secretary, Ministry of Finance by Dr. Mohan Man Sainju, Former Ambassador by Dr. Shankar P. Sharma, Former Vice-Chairman, NPC by Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Secretary, MoFA by Prof. Dr. Mohan P. Lohani, Former Ambassador by Prof. Lila Sharma, Former Ambassador by Mr. Gajendra Bd. Shrestha, Consul General of Sweden & Dean, Honourary Consular Corps in Nepal

Oct. 13, 2007	4:30 pm 4:50 - 5:10 pm 5:10 - 5:30 pm 5:30 - 5:50 pm 5:50 - 6:30 pm 7:00 pm	<p style="text-align: center;">Tea Break</p> Peace and Constitutional Process <p style="text-align: center;">Discussions</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dinner</p>	by Mr. Shankar Pokharel, Central Committee Member, NCP (UML) by Mr. C.P. Gajurel, Head, Foreign Relations Department, NCP (Maoist)
Oct. 14, 2007	9:00 - 9:20 am 9:20 - 9:40 am 9:40 - 10:00 am 10:00 - 10:20 am 10:20 - 11:00 am 11:00 - 11:20 am 11:20 - 11:40 am 11:40 - 12:10 pm 12:10 - pm 12:20 - 12:40 pm 12:40 - 1:00 pm 1:00 - 1:30 pm 2:00 pm 3:00 pm 4:00 pm	Nepal Government's Policies on Labour Issues Labour Perspective Private Perspective on Nepal Government's Policies on Labour Issues Foreign Employment, Remittance and Banking perspective <p style="text-align: center;">Discussions</p> Gender perspective on Constitutional & Peace Process <p style="text-align: center;">Discussions</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tea Break</p> Protocol Related Discussion A Critical appraisal of Protocol and Consular Practices of Nepalese Diplomacy in the Present Context <p style="text-align: center;">Discussions</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lunch</p> Concluding Programme <p style="text-align: center;">Departure</p>	by Mr. Shyam Prasad Mainali, Secretary, Ministry of Labour by Mr. Bishnu Rimal, Vice President, GEFONT by Mr. L.P. Sawa, President, Foreign Employment Federation by Former Minister, Ms. Vidya Devi Bhandari by Dr. Arju Deuba, Former President, Management Association of Nepal by Mr. Madhav P. Khanal, Former Chief of Protocol, MoFA by Mr. Keshav Raj Jha, Former Ambassador Chief Guest, Hon'ble Foreign Minister Ms. Sahana Pradhan