



Ministry of Commerce and Supplies
Government of Nepal

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EIF NEPAL

Newsletter

Nepal Enhanced Capacities for Trade and Development (NECTRADE)

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PM Khanal Chairs LDC Meeting in Istanbul

“The international community should reduce volatility and ensure peace, equity and prosperity around the world.”

Prime Minister Jhala Nath Khanal addressed the Fourth LDCs' Conference, held in Istanbul, Turkey, from May 9 to 13, 2011. In his address, he said the compound impact of global crises, ranging from economic and financial to fuel and food, has made the life of poor people living in the least developed countries (LDCs) untenable. Highlighting the problems faced by the 48 LDCs, PM Khanal called on the international community to provide more assistance to meet their challenges.

In his address, PM Khanal said, 'Many LDCs are food importers. The consistent rise in food prices is already making food insecurity a major concern for us all. So is the spiralling price of fuel, with its

widespread effects on the general price level.'

Referring to the global economic and financial crises, he said, 'they are still having delayed impacts on us, affecting resource flow into the LDCs... Impact of climate change is disproportionately affecting the livelihood of our people because of our over-dependence on natural resources and the least adaptive capacity.'

'Timely restructuring and reforming of some of the global institutions, including the UN, in order to make them more effective in meeting the present and future needs and expectations of the most needy and vulnerable segments of the international community is a must,' he added.



Prime Minister Khanal addressing the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs

He called upon the conference to chart out an ambitious, yet realistic and forward-looking vision with a result-oriented programme of action. He said, 'It is not only important from a moral imperative, it is also in the enlightened self-interest of the international community to reduce volatility and ensure peace, equity and prosperity around the world through inclusive uplifting of us all.'

PM Khanal called for urgent and comprehensive action to build resilience and address vulnerabilities. He said, 'From our point of view, this conference offers us an opportunity to focus our minds on these complex issues in a coherent manner.' ■

MESSAGE



I am delighted to know about the publishing of the second issue of *EIF Nepal Newsletter*. This newsletter is aimed to apprise all stakeholders of the happenings of EIF Nepal over the last six months.

As EIF Nepal Focal Point, I am excited to share the activities being undertaken at the National Implementation Unit (NIU) and NECTRADE Project, under close coordination with the Ministry of Commerce and Supplies, Government of Nepal. I am equally glad and thankful for all the support bestowed upon by WTO and EIF Executive Secretariat, partner agencies, UNOPS, local donor partners and other stakeholders towards development and execution of Nepal Trade Integration Strategy 2010.

I am certain this newsletter will be an enriched reading for you.

Sushil Jungbahadur Rana
*Secretary, MoCS, and
EIF Nepal Focal Point*

MESSAGE



As NIU Chief, responsible for coordinating EIF activities and implementation at the national level, nothing would have made me more joyous than the present *EIF Nepal Newsletter*. Not just because it highlights our activities in place and plans for the future, but also because it acts as one of the means of our accountability towards our stakeholders.

Nepal is among the 14 EIF support recipient LDCs and the progress we have made in putting EIF in place has widely been acknowledged. We have already succeeded with Tier 1 projects and are now on our way towards Tier 2 project proposal development. In short, these are all aimed at implementation of NTIS 2010.

While I assure you of keeping you abreast of all our activities at the NIU, let me thank the entire team for making this wonderful issue of *EIF Nepal Newsletter* possible.

Chandra Kumar Ghimire
*Joint Secretary, MoCS, and
NIU Chief, EIF Nepal*

EDITORIAL



Welcome to the second issue of *EIF Nepal Newsletter*!

If you have had a chance to read our first newsletter (June-December 2010), you must have already noticed the difference. Yes, we have tried to make the present newsletter, vibrant and appealing. Efforts have also been made in branding the EIF and EIF Nepal through layout and design, whilst not losing sight of our main agenda—informing you of our activities here at the NIU and NECTRADE.

Next, we plan to publish the *EIF Nepal Newsletter*, quarterly basis, with additional features. Likewise, we are working on to completely revamp the EIF Nepal's existing website. In our pursuit of making both the newsletter and the website better and richer, may I request you to provide us your feedback and inputs.

Until the next issue!

Dhiraj Karki
*Project and Policy Analyst
NECTRADE, EIF Nepal*

Bhutanese Delegation on Study of EIF Project

A high-level Bhutanese delegation visited Nepal, February 24-25, 2011, to learn Nepal's experience of the implementation of the EIF and accession to the WTO. The 16-member Bhutanese delegation also visited the small-scale industrial estate, facilitated by the Handicrafts Association of Nepal, on February 24, 2011.

Mr Shiv Raj Bhatt, Project Manager, NECTRADE, shared his experience of Nepal's implementation of the EIF with the Bhutanese delegation. At an interaction programme, he informed the visitors that Nepal constituted

National Steering Committee (NSC) under the chairperson of Chief Secretary of the Government of Nepal (GoN) and with secretaries of the GoN, high-level officials from the agencies concerned and representatives from the private sector as members. The Secretary of MoCS is the EIF Focal Point. Furthermore, a National Implementation Unit (NIU), headed by Joint Secretary, was established at the MoCS to facilitate the EIF process and establish effective coordination between the GoN and donors. Furthermore, he said that Nepal launched Nepal Trade Integration Strategy (NTIS) in June 2010.



Bhutanese delegation at the interaction programme

On the occasion, Mr Jib Raj Koirala, Under Secretary of MoCS, made a presentation, 'Nepal's Experience on Accession to the WTO'. The visiting delegates also met high-level officials from the MoCS and exchanged ideas. ■

Donor-Partners' Meeting

In November 2010, GoN and other development partners officially appointed the Government of Germany as EIF Donor Facilitator (DF) in Nepal. At political level, this role was assigned to the German Embassy in Kathmandu, while at technical level the role was handed over to GIZ. The principal role of the DF is to work closely with the Nepalese EIF Focal Point and the NIU at the MoCS to facilitate donor coordination and donor-partner dialogue on trade and Aid for Trade (AFT) issues.

It was agreed that all international development partners working in the area of trade promotion in Nepal will be invited to join the group and the

MoCS will be invited to all meetings. It was also agreed that the group would meet at least on a quarterly basis and more frequent meetings may be called for on a need basis. Three meetings were held between January and June 2011, with diverse participation and unique agendas.

The first donor meeting was held on February 7, 2011 at the Embassy of Germany in Kathmandu. The German Ambassador HE v. Roedern chaired the meeting and pledged support for the group and implementation of the NTIS. Presentations on NTIS 2010 implementation and German DF role were made by MoCS and GIZ respectively.

The second meeting was held, on March 31, in Kathmandu where some new members also participated. At that meeting, the MoCS presented 'Updated NTIS Action Matrix' and GIZ elaborated on the 'WTO/EIF Support'. This was followed by updates from the GoN and the donor partners, and then endorsement of donor group 'agreed arrangements'.

The third meeting was held on June 13 where updates on NTIS action matrix and its analysis were presented by the MoCS, followed by GIZ's presentation on WTO/EIF-SP and then updates by both the GoN and development partners.

The fourth meeting is scheduled for August last week. ■

UNCTAD Regional Workshop held in Kathmandu

UNCTAD regional workshop 'Productive Capacities, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction in Asian and the Pacific LDCs: on route to the UN LDCIV Conference', was held in Kathmandu, on March 22-24, 2011.

National and international experts and high-level officers of GoN participated in the three-day workshop.

The workshop centred on the state and development governance, nature and impact of the crisis, aid effectiveness, trade mainstreaming and EIF, technology, trade policy, agriculture and commodities, climate change, South-South cooperation and implications for UN-LDC IV.

On the first day of the workshop, experts presented papers on the development challenges of the LDCs and UNCTAD's approach for the UN LDC IV conference. Mr Charles Gore of UNCTAD described the outline of the programme. Discussions were also held on the nature and impact of the recent crisis on LDCs, the state, development governance and productive capacities in LDCs, etc.

On the second day, Mr Gore and Ms Claudia Roethlisberger of UNCTAD discussed finance, trade and development strategies. Similarly, Technology, Commodities and Development strategies and on route to UN-LDC IV-NIDA were the topics of presentation.

On the last day, UNCTAD's Junior Davis gave an address on the agriculture and food policy challenges facing LDCs and financing climate change adaptation and mitigation. Similarly, Gore made a presentation on South-South cooperation. ■

A workshop, 'Capacity Building and Participation of Private Sector', was conducted in Kathmandu, on April 5, 2011. The workshop was jointly organized by the MoCS and FNCCI.

At the workshop, experts urged the private sector to provide feedback to policymakers on the development of the Nepal Trade Integration Strategy (NTIS).

Mr Jib Raj Koirala, Under Secretary at MoCS, said, 'Flow of information from the private sector regarding NTIS can push the government to implement its plans.' He added that the private sector should work on quality improvement and also complement government initiatives. He added that there should be competition in products, the government should create a favourable business environment and involve stakeholders more deeply in the process.

He also said that further mainstreaming of trade in national as well as sector development is yet to be done. A trade expert, Mr Dileep Adhikari, talked about the role of business community in NTIS implementation.



Capacity Building and Participation of Private Sector

Participants at the 'Role of Private Sector in EIF/NTIS Implementation' workshop

Flow of information from the private sector regarding NTIS can push the government to implement its plans

Biplav Man Singh, co-chair of ICT Development Committee, FNCCI, focused on capacity-building in the service sector. NTIS identifies tourism, labour, IT, BPO, health, education, engineering and hydro as service sector.

According to Singh, service sector needs human resources, financial resources, country branding, improvement in physical infrastructure and government incentives in taxation, visa fee and licence fee.

In the second session of the workshop, participants were divided into groups, and each group prepared its work and presented at the programme.

On the occasion, Mr Purushottam Ojha, Secretary of MoCS, Mr Shiv Raj Bhatt, National Programme Manager of NECTRADE, Mr Kush Kumar Joshi, President of FNCCI, and Mr Rajendra Shrestha, moderator of the programme, gave their remarks. ■

STDF/EIF Training in Project Design

The EIF and STDF organized a workshop on project design (logical framework) in Kathmandu, from March 7 to 10, 2011, in collaboration with the Centre for International Development and Training (CIDT) at the University of Wolverhampton, UK. A total of 26 participants, including representatives of the MoCS, ginger and honey producers and exporters and the Agro Enterprise Centre of the FNCCI, the EIF Donor Facilitator in Nepal, GIZ, and Food and Agriculture Organization, attended the workshop.

During the training, participants developed logical frameworks for selected project concepts, which will form the basis of project applications to be submitted to the EIF, STDF and/or other donors. The participants, as well as senior officials from the two ministries involved, expressed appreciation for the practical skills imparted and underlined the value of the workshop in enhancing capacity for project formulation.

This workshop was the first in a series of pilot workshops which are being organized as part of the EIF Capacity-Building Programme for EIF NIUs. ■



A participant sharing his views at the workshop

Enhancing Capacity of Economic Journalists

NECTRADE, in association with the Society of Economic Journalists-Nepal (SEJON), organized a training programme on May 20, 2011 in Kathmandu.

The objective of the training was capacity-building of economic journalists for promotion of Nepal's Trade Mainstreaming Achievements. More than 20 journalists from various news media from both electronic and print media who have been reporting on trade and economic issues participated in the one-day training.

Mr Shiv Raj Bhatt, National Programme Manager of NECTRADE, presented a paper on multilateral/regional trade integration, trade strategy and the role

of media in trade promotion. He said, 'Media must play an active role to raise awareness and promote trade and other related issues.'

Bhatt pointed out that, by increasing trade and product-specific knowledge, mediapersons could highlight the need for economic and trade agenda. Describing bilateral trade agreements as building blocks for multilateral trade agreements, he said that increasing trade can transform the national economy into an inclusive and poverty-free economy.

Dr Posh Raj Pandey, executive chairperson of South Asia Watch on Trade, Economic & Environment (SAWTEE), described the major provisions of Nepal-India

Trade Agreements, Nepal-China Trade and Payments Agreements and Nepal-US Trade and Investment Framework Agreements. According to the Dr Pandey, Nepal-US Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) failed to include key issues like technology transfer, which could have served national interests.

Mr Prateek Pradhan, a senior economic journalist, said, 'Involvement of media does not only widen discussion of the subject but also helps the government negotiate more firmly in excuse of public pressure.' He stressed that media persons should acquire specific knowledge in their beat.

Mr Narayan Sapkota, President of SEJON, discussed economic and trade reporting. Sapkota said, 'Recently journalists are becoming more aware of trade and economic issues.' He also said the programme had helped build journalists' capacity. ■

USAID to invest \$30m in Nepal

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) on March 29, 2011 launched Nepal Economic, Agriculture and Trade (NEAT) project for improving business competitiveness, food security and microfinance to foster economic growth in the country.

The project will help the private sector in improving the country's foundations for rapid, sustained and inclusive private sector-led economic growth. NEAT will invest US\$30 million to strengthen Nepal's trade competitiveness, expand exports and make the agriculture sector more efficient.

Among the various 19 products identified by NTIS, USAID/NEAT is working on lentils, ginger and orthodox tea. The ministry plans to get support for these products from the USAID, which is also working for the development of the customs.

Interaction Programme on NTIS 2010

An interaction programme, 'Exploring Region's Export Potentials and Implementation of NTIS 2010', was organized by MoCS, NECTRADE in close collaboration with RCCI and TEPC Regional Office in Bhairahawa on April 20, 2011.

The Chief District Officer of Rupandehi District was the chief guest and the chairperson of RCCI, Rupandehi, chaired the session. At the programme, Mr Shiv Raj Bhatt, National Programme Manager of NECTRADE, discussed recommended actions, Mr Jib Raj Koirala, Under Secretary, MoCS, shared major initiatives from the Ministry and assured future support. The programme was followed by floor discussions and concluding remarks by the chief guest and chair.

Similar programme was also organized in Gulmi on April 18, 2011. ■



Participants sharing their views at the interaction programme

NEPAL AND USA SIGN TIFA

A new chapter began in the Nepal-USA trade relationship with the signing of the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), on April 15, 2011. After a long homework, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Bharat Mohan Adhikari and United States Trade Representative (USTR), Mr Ron Kirk, signed the agreement in Washington, DC, thus opening the possibility of preferential entry of Nepalese products to the USA, the world's largest market.

The agreement has provided an institutional framework for bilateral talks to enhance trade and investment, discuss trade issues and promote more comprehensive trade agreement between the two countries. TIFA will replace the Bilateral Economic and Trade Agreement between Nepal and the USA, reached in 1947. Nepal is the fourth South Asian country to enter into TIFA with the USA, after Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The USA has so far signed TIFA with 42 countries

After sealing the deal, both governments announced the establishment of Nepal-United States Council on Trade and Investment (TIFA Council). The Council, chaired by Commerce Secretary of Nepal, and the Office of USTR will monitor trade and investment relations; identify opportunities for expanding trade and investment, along with capacity building and technical assistance. It has been agreed that the meeting of the Council will be held once a year in Washington, DC and Kathmandu on rotational basis.

The first meeting of TIFA Council reviewed the Nepal-USA economic and trade relations. The USTR side made a presentation of the best practices of TIFA regimes in some of the successful countries which could be replicated in Nepal. The Nepalese side underlined the need for market access for Nepalese products in the US markets, effective utilization of GSP facilities and US investment promotion in Nepal. The Council has decided to hold its second



Finance Minister Bharat Mohan Adhikari and United States Trade Representative, Mr Ron Kirk, signing the agreement

meeting in Kathmandu in the second half of 2011. Mr Purushottam Ojha, immediate past Commerce Secretary, led the Nepalese delegation, while the US side was led by United States Deputy Trade Representative Demetrios Marantis.

After signing the agreement, Finance Minister Adhikari expressed his hope that TIFA would come in handy in expanding bilateral trade and attracting US investments in Nepal.

Kirk said, 'We [Nepal and the USA] now have an institutional framework for discussing trade and investment issues and learning more about each other's legal, regulatory and trading regimes.' ■

GlZ supports Nepal's WTO implementation

In November 2010, GoN and development partners had officially appointed Germany as the EIF Donor Facilitator (DF), with principal role to work closely with the Nepalese EIF Focal Point and the NIU at MoCS, to facilitate donor coordination and donor-partner dialogue on trade and AFT issues. The project was re-structured in early 2011 from its original objective of 'Supporting Nepal's accession to the WTO' (WTO/SP) to include the support to EIF as well.

The WTO/SP project, with duration April 2010–December 2010 and funding of Euro 950,000, thus has an overall objective to improve the capacities of GoN, private sector and service providing organizations to strategically use and implement WTO commitments to enhance the business environment. ■

EC to Support Trade Promotion

European Commission (EC) is providing assistance of Euro 9 million to the MoCS for the implementation of the NTIS.

The Ministry and EC are holding internal discussions on the financial support for the NTIS activities for the next three years. The aid will be used for quarantine and check-post-related work, which are the key elements for trade facilitation and need huge donors.

The Commission is planning for a three-year programme (2012–15) with the Ministry to implement the NTIS, which has recently attracted a number of donors to conduct study of particular products for their development. ■

How Nepal Can Benefit from Multilateral Trading System

The multilateral trading system and the Doha Round are important factors which enhance the possibility of Nepal to meet its multiple opportunities and better achieve its potential

On February 16, 2011, a high-level dialogue, 'How Nepal can benefit from the multilateral trading system and Doha Round', was held in Kathmandu. The programme was jointly organized by MoCS, NECTRADE, in association with the FNCCI.

During the programme, the guest speaker, Mr Harsha V Singh, Deputy Director-General, WTO, delivered a keynote speech on the theme. Former finance ministers, parliamentarians, representatives of different political parties, technocrats, senior bureaucrats, business leaders, media, representatives from private sector, senior economists and other eminent figures participated in the programme and discussed trade-related issues in Nepal.

Mr Madhav P Ghimire, Chief Secretary, GoN, chaired and moderated the programme. Secretary of MoCS, Mr Purushottam Ojha, delivered welcome remarks.

At the programme, Guest Speaker Singh stated that, despite having tremendous export potentials, Nepal faced a number of difficulties linked to its logistical, financial and stability-

related concerns. Dr Singh said, 'The multilateral trading system and the Doha Round are important factors which enhance the possibility of Nepal to meet its multiple opportunities and better achieve its potential.' He added, 'Nepal can gain trade-related aspiration by diversifying trade and production bases into dynamic new products and services, diversifying export products and market to non-traditional destinations, integrating trade and trade capacity building policies into national development strategies, maximizing the benefits through development of effective labour market standards and institution, etc.' On the AIT initiative of the WTO, Singh said it had provided a platform for developing countries with trade-related projects to approach development funding agencies for assistance, as well as for donors and beneficiaries to exchange experiences, address concerns and move forward with positive efforts to make trade more of an integral part of both development planning and funding mechanisms.

Dr Ram Sharan Mahat, former Finance Minister, argued that despite the removal of market and tariff barriers after joining the WTO, Nepal witnessed bitter and dismal trade performance.

Mr Dipendra Bahadur Chhetri, former Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank, said the knowledge transferred to human resources through various technical initiatives has not been fruitful as it is not reflected well in Nepal's export performance.

Dr Posh Raj Pandey, Chairperson at SAWTEE, said that a host of factors in both domestic and external fronts have eroded our export competitiveness.'

Dr Tilak Rawal, former Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank, stated that climate change will have an adverse impact on countries like Nepal and might alter its comparative advantage and competitiveness. ■

Pre-budget Interaction Programme

An interaction programme, 'Mainstreaming of Trade into Sectoral Plans and Programmes', with focus on NTIS implementation and forthcoming Budget, was organized by MoCS and NECTRADE, on April 28, 2011. Around 40 participants, including senior government officials, chiefs of Planning Section of various ministries and departments and representatives of the private sector participated in the programme.

The programme was chaired by Mr Purushottam Ojha, Secretary of MoCS. Mr Chandra K Ghimire, Joint Secretary and Chief of EIF NIU, presented a paper, 'Mainstreaming of Trade into Sectoral Plans and Programmes with a focus on NTIS Implementation and Next Budget'. Mr Pushpa Lal Shakya, Joint Secretary, National Planning Commission, and Mr Toya Narayan Gyawali, Joint Secretary, MoCS, commented on the paper. ■



Mr Madhav P. Ghimire speaking at the programme

NEPAL TRADE INTEGRATION STRATEGY 2010

PRODUCT WATCH: [1] CARDAMOM

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- ▶ World's largest exporter of large cardamom
- ▶ Geo-climatic advantage in cardamom cultivation
- ▶ Typically planted in areas where nothing else grows; thus does not compete for land with other crops
- ▶ Major source of cash income for farmers despite price fluctuations
- ▶ Unlike many other agricultural products, dried cardamom keeps well; thus, minimal risks associated with physical loss during trade
- ▶ Nominal or zero tariff rates in most markets

Opportunities

- ▶ Large scope for expanding production area and increasing productivity and quality
- ▶ Availability of new technologies like CO₂ extraction for extracting essential oil
- ▶ Increasing adoption of improved processing technology; shift from traditional *bhatti* to improved *bhatti* drying system
- ▶ Potential for market development for large cardamom in markets where small green cardamom is consumed
- ▶ Branding in niche markets

Weaknesses

- ▶ Lack of knowledge and adoption of best practice cultivation, quality improvement, and post-harvest handling
- ▶ Low quality of product
- ▶ Little or no incentive to boost quality
- ▶ High transportation costs
- ▶ Lack of collection centres at farm level
- ▶ Lack of storage facility at farm and trader level
- ▶ Illegal taxes and fees collected in districts

Threats

- ▶ Farmers' indifference towards large cardamom because of *Chhirke*, *Phurke*, and *Jurjure* diseases and market volatility
- ▶ Farmers not organized for farming of and trading in cardamom
- ▶ Dominance by a single export market (India)
- ▶ Deteriorating transport infrastructures

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- ▶ Strengthen the Cardamom Association to address the interest of all stakeholders involved in the value chain.
- ▶ Examine/implement programmes for aggregation and consolidation of the industry (cooperatives, marketing associations) so as to improve marketing efficiency and obtain third party certification (TPC).
- ▶ Work with traders/exporters to increase value addition activities within the country and reduce dependence on Siliguri (India) market.
- ▶ Promote large cardamom in markets that traditionally purchase small cardamom. Create a brand image for Nepal's large cardamom.
- ▶ Investigate possibility of creating a collective mark or a Geographical Indication (GI) for Nepal's large cardamom.
- ▶ Introduce improved farming and post-harvest practices in cardamom-growing areas.
- ▶ Widely introduce the *bhatti* drying technology to improve quality.
- ▶ Improve extension services and focus on eradication of crop diseases such as *Chhirke*, *Phurke*, and *Jurjure*.
- ▶ Ensure proper testing equipment in central and regional laboratories.
- ▶ Strengthen research and development (R&D) work and produce and distribute seed-based (opposed to sucker-based) quality planting materials on a large scale.
- ▶ Explore avenues for product diversification, catering to spice, essential oil, cardamom paper, incense, colour extraction industries.

ABOUT EIF NEPAL AND NECTRADE

The Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) is a global commitment for trade-related capacity building of LDCs, which the Ministry of Commerce and Supplies, Government of Nepal (GoN), has initiated for over a year now. Accordingly, NTIS was launched in June 2010 to support EIF implementation process. The NTIS identifies 19 products and services as having comparative advantage for exports.

National Implementation Arrangement, which comprises a National Steering Committee, a Focal Point, a National Implementation Unit (NIU) and other entities are constituted by the GoN as per the guidelines of EIF Executive Secretariat, Geneva. The NIU is responsible for coordinating EIF activities and implementation at national level.

The Nepal Enhanced Capacities for Trade and Development (NECTRADE) Project is further designed to strengthen national arrangements of the EIF to enhance Nepal's ownership of trade-related technical assistance and maximize the benefits that the country can derive from participation in international trade.

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