

# Post - Earthquake : Resurgence of Tourism in Nepal

National Seminar



Nepal Tourism Board



Institute of Foreign Affairs



**National Seminar**  
**Post - Earthquake : Resurgence of Tourism in**  
**Nepal**

**Edited by**  
**Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari**

**Organized by**

**Nepal Tourism Board (NTB)**

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# Acronyms

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| ASTA   | American Society of Travel Agents                              |
| CEO    | Chief Executive Officer  |
| DFID   | Department for International Development                       |
| FNCCI  | Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industries                   |
| GDP    | Gross Domestic Product   |
| GLOF   | Glacial Lake Outburst Flood                                    |
| HAN    | Hotel Association of Nepal                                     |
| ICNR   | International Conference on Nepal's Reconstruction             |
| IFA    | Institute of Foreign Affairs                                   |
| IMM    | International Mountain Museum                                  |
| MoFA   | Ministry of Foreign Affairs                                    |
| MoTCA  | Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation               |
| NMA    | Nepal Mountaineering Association                               |
| NNMGA  | Nepal National Mountain Guide Association                      |
| NPC    | National Planning Commission                                   |
| NRNA   | Non-Resident Nepalese Association                              |
| NTB    | Nepal Tourism Board  |
| NTPC   | National Tourism Promotional Committee                         |
| PATA   | Pacific Asia Travel Association                                |
| RTF    | Recovery Task Force  |
| SEZ    | Special Economic Zone  |
| TAAI   | Travel Agents Association of India                             |
| TAAN   | Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal                         |
| TRC    | Tourism Recovery Committee                                     |
| TURGAN | Tourist Guide Association of Nepal                             |
| UNESCO | United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture |
| UNWFP  | United Nations World Food Programme                            |
| WFP    | World Food Programme   |
| WTTC   | World Travel and Tourism Council                               |

# Preface

Tourism in Nepal is one of the major sectors that contributes major share in GDP and employment. It is heartening to mention that it has highest potential to be explored and developed in future as it has many areas of expansion such as high and majestic Himalayas including 8 out of 10 highest peaks in the world along with the Everest, beautiful scenery, hospitable people, less cost, birth place of lord Buddha etc. World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) states that Nepal's travel and tourism sector is a major job provider with the sector accounting for 3.5 percent of the total employment in the country in 2011.

The recent earthquake has been damaging to tourism sector in general. However Nepalese, known as one of the most hospitable people, in general and the tourism business community in particular, are expressing that Nepal may be shaken but not broken. The tourists are requested that their visit means a lot to us, especially in terms of moral support. They are requested not to believe the over-exaggerated destruction of tourism sector and not to cancel their visits in this coming season as it is safe to visit Nepal. Outdoor Himalayan Treks has outlined as below certain data that manifests the true situation of disaster in the country due to recent earthquake.

The affected tourism items are very few such as only 8 districts out of 75; one out of 10 National Parks; 2 (with about 40% damages) out of 8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites; 90% hotels in Kathmandu Valley and 100% in popular destinations like Pokhara, Chitwan, Lumbini, Bardiya, Annapurna Region, Everest Region are safe; out of 35 popular trekking routes, only 2 (Manaslu and Langtang) are affected with full swing repair works; all the airports are in operation with zero damage; communication (landlines, cellular networks, ATM's, internet) is 100% operational; hospitals and clinics are safe and in operation with no viral diseases or influenza and all the highways and subways are in operation with zero damage.

The Government of Nepal and private sector have come together to rebuild tourism sector. The recently formed Tourism Recovery Committee (TRC) has been tasked with minimizing the repercussions of the earthquake in the tourism sector.

The government is suggested to play active role by widely using electronic media in campaign worldwide in dispelling the negative impression as the

private stakeholders cannot do it alone. Additionally, it is highly suggested that diplomats from various relevant embassies should be taken to tour of mountains and important trails and request them to post positive travel advisory. The government step to assess the damages in Annapurna and Everest region through international experts was a right decision towards campaigning about absence of risk for the tourists to visit Nepal. It will also be appropriate to organize international workshops and seminars on relevant areas such as geologists, world Tourism Organization etc. Arrangements should be made for active participation of international electronic and other media to cover these events.

Realizing the importance of the topic in the present context IFA planned to hold a talk programme on the topic on September 15, 2015.

The information and knowledge presented and articulated in this talk programme is believed to be widely circulated through media and publication country-wide including relevant ministries for policy influencing.

Mahendra Bahadur Pandey, Hon. Minister for Foreign Affairs as the Key Note Speaker said, "Various tourist destinations in the country are safe for visit despite the impact of the April disaster on the tourism sector, country's tourism sector was not devastated by the disaster as reported by some media and many cultural and religious sites here are eagerly waiting to welcome guests." He expressed his hope that domestic tourism sector would be back to a previous status soon.

Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Hon. Kripasur Sherpa said over 80 per cent tourist destinations in the country are safe even after the disaster and this message should be disseminated globally.

Executive Director of the Institute, Dr Rishi Raj Adhikari, expressed the belief that the tourism sector would return to its previous condition gradually if different organizations working in the field of tourism, and media bring the reality of the tourism sector into light.

Similarly, the above views were echoed by Chairman of the Nepal Tourist Guide Association, Hare Ram Baral, IFA Board member Dr Ganesh Gurung; General Secretary of the Nepal Mountaineers Association, Thakur Raj Pandey, Market Section Chief of the Nepal Tourism Board, Ujjwala Dali and and Chief Executive Officer of the Hotel Association Nepal, Prabesh Aryal.

The inaugural session was chaired by Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari, Executive Director IFA. The key Note Speaker and Chief guest was Hon. Mahendra Bahadur Pandey, Foreign Minister. Hon. Mr. Kripasur Sherpa, Minister for Culture

Tourism and Civil aviation was the Special Guest. Guest speaker was HE Ambassador, Dr. Sergey Vasilievich Velichkin, of Russian Federation and Dean of Diplomatic Corps. They are all very appreciated.

The substantive session was again chaired by Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari. To listen from the horse's mouth, the main paper was presented by Mr. Prachand Man Shrestha (TBC), Former CEO of NTB. He is one of the most knowledgeable expert on tourism in the country. Mr. Shrestha is thankful for his contribution.

The paper was commented by Mr. Ang Tshering Sherpa, Chairman NMA and Dr. Ganesh Gurung, Board Member IFA and Former Member, NPC and Mr. Gobinda Bahadur Karkee, Director General. Department of Tourism. I also wish to thank all of them and Mr. Yadav Khanal, resource Person at IFA for his active participation and contribution to the Seminar. Mr. Sanu Raja Puri, Librarian at IFA for his contribution to the Seminar and role of publication.

IFA very much appreciates all the personalities who took active part in the seminar and requests for feedback for better publication in future.

**Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari**  
Executive Director



# 1. Concept of the Seminar

## Post-earthquake: Resurgence of Tourism in Nepal

The series of earthquake and aftershocks starting April 25, 2015 killed over 9,000 people, injured over 22,000, and destroyed hundreds of thousands of homes. A million people were rendered homeless

One of the sectors that suffered heavily by recent earthquake was Tourism, which is one of the major sectors that contributes major share in GDP and employment. It has many areas of expansion as it has high and majestic Himalayas including 8 out of 10 highest peaks in the world along with the Mt. Everest, beautiful scenery, hospitable people, less costly stays and birth place of Lord Buddha etc.

Tourism sector is a major job provider accounting for 3.5 percent of the total employment in the country in 2011. The travel trade sector (hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation services) generated 487,000 direct jobs in 2014. Nepal received a total of 735,965 international visitors in 2011 and earned revenue worth NPR. 28.6 billion.

However, direct job from travel trade sector is decreasing. In 2012, tourism sector had employed 553,500 people. It went down to 504,000 in 2013. Domestic travel spending generated 59 percent of direct travel and tourism GDP in 2014 compared to 41 percent of GDP by the international tourists. Domestic travel spending which was NPR.77.3 billion in 2014 is expected to grow by 8.5 percent to NPR.83.8 billion in 2015.

### **Key Tourism Products**

The earthquake which occurred right in the middle of Nepal's spring trekking season, brought the season to an abrupt halt. Nepal's key tourism products including UNESCO world heritage sites: Basantapur Durbar Square, Patan Durbar Square, Bhaktapur Durbar Square, Swayambhu Nath and Boudha Nath have all seen certain level of damages. Furthermore, trekking regions like Langtang, Manaslu, Ganesh Himal, Ruby Valley and Rowling also faced damages, all of which will require time and money to rebuild and re-establish. Additionally, trekking routes face further damages with the threat of landslides.

However, on a positive note, the Everest trekking and climbing route has been opened and Japanese have decided to undertake the trekking and climbing in the coming season. Many other countries have also registered for the climbing. This shows that the main trekking and climbing routes have recovered. Also it is worth mentioning that there are various other trekking routes and tourist destinations such as Pokhara, Chitwan, and Lumbini, which have not witnessed damages and are fully capable of hosting tourists. The government earns approximately USD 3.5 million in climbing fees from Everest alone, whereas a guide on Everest earns USD 6,000-7,000 during a single season. The tourism sector has substantial backward and forward linkages that directly benefit rural economy, as locals get better access to revenues generated by local tourism. In this case, ensuring that tourism picks up in areas that have been hard hit by the earthquake will help communities get back on their feet. Tourism entrepreneurs have said the devastating earthquake of April 25 will not have long term impact on Nepal's tourism industry and that they will be ready to welcome tourists in the coming autumn season that begins in September.

### **Joint Efforts of Government and Private Sector**

The Government of Nepal and private sector have very less time to prepare for the autumn tourist season which begins in September. The crucial task is of identifying and assessing the damages to the country's tourism products and to strategically reconstruct and rehabilitate the areas as per tourism priority. The recently formed Tourism Recovery Committee (TRC) has been tasked with minimizing the repercussions of the earthquake in the tourism sector. Under the TRC, private sector associations have been tasked with submitting a status paper on their sectors. This is an encouraging initiative to bring together the government and the private sector and jointly work towards reviving the tourism industry. There should be continued collective efforts from these parties to eliminate fear among potential incoming tourists regarding the safety of the country and also availability of tourism products. A strategic communication should be initiated to project the true situation of the country post-earthquake, as the current portrayal through major news portals leaves behind the image of a severely devastated country unfit for tourism.

### **Creative Alternatives**

To temporarily revive the tourism sector during the reconstruction phase, the private sector can look into the prospect of Disaster Tourism wherein packages can be designed with a combination of earthquake hit tourist sites and unharmed tourist destinations. Tour guides can be trained to provide narratives exhibiting the resilience of the people and the country. This will not

only add value to the experience but will also draw a different set of tourists to the country.

Tourism will be hit in the short term, but with a majority of the tourism market comprising of domestic, Chinese and Indian tourists, focus will have to be placed on reviving these as other markets may take time to revive. The drive around social media along with international promotion that Nepal is reviving on tourism will help to counter the absence of concrete revival plans from the government or the private sector. Investment in the tourism sector may be affected with wait and watch mode on large investments. Further, major investments in the hotel sector will have to be reviewed as government will come with more stringent directives on building code and construction.

Tourism is one of the pillars of the economy. As many tourists spend directly in rural areas, we need to work to bring foreign tourists to the country once life becomes normal. The tourism industry will not have to face long-term impact of natural disaster. We should make effective strategy to promote Nepal in the international market. Langtang region has suffered the most in the earthquake. It might take some time for the region to recover. There won't be any problem for other trekking areas.

We must assure the world that Nepalese are competent enough to handle the crisis. At the same time, we can also encourage tourists to come to Nepal and support rebuilding works as tourism is one the major contributors of Nepali economy. According to HAN, star hotels and tourist standard hotels are capable of welcoming tourists as hotels have not suffered major damage.

According to tour operators and hoteliers, bookings made for autumn season have not been cancelled so far. However, most of the bookings for the next three months have been cancelled.

Tourism entrepreneurs say Nepal must assure international tour operators that it is capable of welcoming tourists. They also say Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) should spread this message throughout the world to promote Nepali tourism products and services.

In this back drop, it is expected that the tourism statistical updates will be shared on damages and repairs of tourism products. The travel advisory of different missions will also be shared with the hope of positive changes and a seminar will provide an image of encouraging tourism business post-earthquake.

## **Conclusion**

Tourism business is more sensitive and its demands are more flexible as compared to other sectors of economy as the travel and tour plans can be

changed or postponed to later dates. So, after disasters and other disturbances the tour operators and hotel business remain on edge and jittery. The pre-conceived and over exasperated reporting on the damages of tourism products by media plays negative role on tourism business. The government has to play active role by widely using electronic media in campaign worldwide in dispelling the negative impression as the private stakeholders cannot do it alone. Additionally, diplomats from various relevant embassies should be taken to tour of mountains and important trails and request them to post positive travel advisory. The government step to assess the damages in Annapurna and Everest region through international experts was a right decision towards campaigning about absence of risk for the tourists to visit Nepal. We could also use the services of national experts and feed in the information about the situation to the outside world which could include our attempts to reduce the risk, successful rescue of tourists, and our commitment and determination to go ahead and availability of our national experts and human resources. It will also be appropriate to organize international workshops and seminars on relevant areas such as with geologists, world Tourism Organization etc. Arrangements should be made for active participation of international electronic and other media to cover these events.

As new policy initiatives, prices of goods and services should be kept similar to pre-earthquake period; extend the visa period rather than reducing the visa costs; arrange for rewards and recognition to tour and travel agencies for bringing more number of tourists and for taking them to new destinations etc.; open new peaks as climbing destinations, and recognize tourists as Volunteers.

Realizing the importance of the topic in the present context IFA has planned to hold a talk programme on the topic on September 15, 2015.

There will be one paper presented by Mr. Prachand Man Shrestha, former CEO of NTB on "Post-earthquake: Resurgence of Tourism in Nepal"

The paper will be commented by experts and officials in the relevant areas. The information and knowledge presented and articulated in this talk programme will be widely circulated through media and publication country-wide including relevant ministries and embassies for policy influencing.

## **2. Welcome Remarks**

**by Mr. Yadav Khanal, Resource Person**  
**Institute of Foreign Affairs**



Mr. Chairman,  
Hon'ble Foreign Minister  
Hon'ble Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Minister  
Respected Tourism Secretary  
Acting Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
HE Dr. Sergey Vasilievich Velichkin Ambassador of Russian Federation  
Excellency Ambassadors and representatives from different Embassies  
Representatives from different Government authorities  
Representatives from different Tourism Organizations  
Distinguished Paper presenter and Panelists  
Media representatives  
Distinguished guests  
Ladies and Gentleman,

On behalf of the Institute of Foreign Affairs, I wish to extend sincere welcome to Hon'ble Foreign Ministers, Hon'ble Tourism Minister, respected Secretaries, Dean of Diplomatic Core, His Excellency the Russian Ambassador, Excellencies, and representatives from different Embassies, representatives from different tourism associations, paper presenters, commentators, media representatives and all distinguished Guests for accepting our invitation in this important program.

The earthquake that battered some part of Nepal on 25th of April this year was one of the major natural disasters in Nepal's recent history. Such disasters are unpredictable, and in many circumstances, depending on the level of enormity preventative measures are not always viable. We lost thousands of our fellow citizens and lost physical infrastructure significantly as well. But the loss was far less than the estimation made by experts on the calamity of such range especially in view of the physical strength of our structures.

Only about ten percent of the total land area of Nepal had been affected that holds merely 2% of the total tourist area of Nepal. Rest of the sites was fully operational and functional. But unfortunate exaggeration on the effect of the disaster in the external media created a fully negative image of Nepal's

tourism facilities that left a significant off-putting impact on Nepal tourism which is one of the major pillar of employment and country's economy.

This seminar is aimed at discussing the impact of disaster in the tourism sector, hi-light current state and finding ways and means to revive our tourism. Today, we are pleased to see significant number of Ambassadors and representatives from various embassies. We would like to request them to make a proper assessment and advice their prospective visitors back home on the state of safety and normalcy about touristic environment in Nepal.

We have a good panel of experts and commentators today. We have full representation from Government authorities as well as private entrepreneurs' associations in the tourism sector. I believe that the interaction will be really fruitful and productive. IFA is thankful to everyone for accepting our invitation and I look forward to have an active participation in the substantive session.

Once again, I extend my sincere welcome to Hon'ble Foreign Minister, Hon'ble Tourism Minister, Secretaries from MoTCA and MoFA, Ambassadors and representatives from various Embassies, paper presenters and distinguished panelists, tourism entrepreneurs, media representatives and all distinguished guests ladies and gentlemen for being with us this morning.

Thank you.

### **3. Brief Remarks by**

## **HE Dr. Sergey Vasilievich Velichkin Ambassador of Russian Federation and Dean of Diplomatic Corps**



Mr. Chairman, Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari, Executive Director of IFA  
Chief Guest of this function Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr.  
Mahendra Bahadur Pandey  
Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Honorable Mr. Kripasur Sherpa  
Secretary, Ministry of Culture Tourism and Civil Aviation, Mr. Dinesh Thapalia,  
Mr. Yadav Khanal, Resource person IFA  
Excellencies, colleagues  
Ladies and gentlemen

It gives pleasure to be part of the seminar because I can say this is one of the very timely sought after events. I first of all extend my thanks on the behalf of the diplomatic community here to the Institute of Foreign Affairs with this very timely and commendable effort. I`d like to extend my appreciation to IFA for preparing very good and useful concept paper which was included in this invitation. However, it means also to be supplemented with traditional analyses of the impact of monsoon and certain political events. We should analyze them with the perspective for the purposes. The seminar has been called traditionalism. I believe that the impact of constitution making will be quite encouraging and good mobilization fact for the nation. But still it is detail analysis besides of this the most important part of everything which is going to be attempted will be real activities of the Government, industries, civil society and media. As a major fact recovery started as a fact mostly to be quite positive and the diplomatic community here naturally as an guide and as eager to span to all this initiative locally and I think there is no alternative to immediate promotional activities to be initiated by the government and by the business community. This both I think will be focused for discussion here.

We would like to listen carefully and will shape our responses accordingly. In fact, certain response from the international community has always been there most especially to be challenges with the tourism sector that has been countered. Simply refer to better known as an example of some mission highlighting the tourism in country by personal participation in some kind of

trekking opportunities the advisories were changed playing role to attracting tourists. As Russian concerned I would like to mention that we are together with the colleagues in Nepal in accordance with the memorandum of understanding between the two ministry of culture. We are holding Moscow with this Nepalese culture in many ways which may enable the Russian public to get together. Not just the culture of the country in general but also the state affairs in the country and this is an opportunity for the tourism sector here to highlight those attractions. I'm sure it will be used because of the diplomatic community here. I'd like to ensure the Nepalese friends that the international community will remain sensitive to realize friendly Nepal and we will be taking part in your efforts to reveal the very substantial and the tremendous potential in tourism industry here so may make it great contributions to the restoration and rehabilitation of the country.

Thank you.

## **4. Brief Remarks by**

### **Hon. Mr. Kripasur Sherpa Minister for Culture Tourism and Civil Aviation**



Chairperson of the Seminar  
Chief Guest Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Excellencies  
Heads of Diplomatic Missions  
High Government Officials  
Media personalities  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure for me to get an opportunity to address this august gathering. I do believe that this is the right forum to inform you about the present condition of Nepal's tourism. Nepal is now back to business after 25/04 Earthquake. This is the message that we want to give to international travelers. In a process to bring back the tourism in normalcy, we reopened all monuments in the heritage sites in the Kathmandu valley for tourists on June 15, 2015. So now tourists have access to most monuments in the heritage sites which include Pashupatinath, Swayambhu, Bouddha, Changuarayan and Durbar Square of Bhaktapur, Kathmandu and Patan.

I Would like to emphasize that the earthquake affected only a small portion of the territory and now visitors are no longer at risk. Almost 80 percent of the country and many tourist destinations were not touched by the earthquake. From the 35 trekking routes only two are affected. Two of the most popular trekking areas of Nepal, Annapurna and Mount Everest have been given the green light by US based Earthquake engineering specialists Miyamoto International after the assessment funded by DFID and World Bank.

Tourism is very important for Nepal's economy and for the Nepalese people. There has been a decline in foreign tourists since the earthquake. But we want to make it sure that they can travel to Nepal safely and comfortably. So the government is preparing to repair the damaged trekking trails after the monsoon is over.

Major Western source markets have adapted their travel advice. While Switzerland and Japan never had a negative travel advice, USA, Finland and Italy recently changed their advice and only provide general precocious warnings.

Most Western countries, including Germany, Austria, UK, The Netherlands, Sweden, Australia, Canada, Norway and New Zealand have recently changed the Travel Advisory into a geo-specific advice stating not to visit some of the earthquake affected regions only. I thank them all for their support and request them again to remove the further restriction to Annapurna, Everest and other unaffected areas in their travel advisories. I urge countries to re-evaluate their position in line with other key markets. By that they will comply with the UN-WTO code of conduct for travel advisories, which states that these should be up to date and geo-specific.

Despite earthquake, the roads and air transport links remain intact across the country. The majority of hotels and restaurants are back in operation. Chitwan, Pokhara, Annapurna region and Bardia escaped widespread damage and are thus ready to showcase their abundance of natural life. The birthplace of the Buddha, Lumbini, did not suffer damage and is thankfully set to welcome visitors back to its sacred soil. Pashupatinath, Muktinath and many religious places have been unaffected by the 25/04 Earthquake.

There are many beautiful and captivating cultural and natural sites in the West, Mid-West, Far West and East Nepal unaffected by 25/04 earthquake, that need to be explored by the visitors. Out of 75 districts of Nepal, only 11 districts are damaged. Apart from Langtang, Manaslu and Gaurishankar, other 14 national parks and conservation areas including Everest, Annapurna, Kanchanjunga areas withstood the earthquake with strength and power.

I request international travelers to visit this magnificent and vibrant country, and support her by visiting it as she attempts to stand proudly on her feet once again. Though some of tangible heritage sites are collapsed, the intangible heritage like cultures and traditions remain intact and alive. Nepal is now embarking upon the most fascinating period in all of its modern history and a tourist could be right there to see it happen and his or her contribution will be a part of rebuilding new Nepal.

The Nepal Tourism Promotion Committee formed by the government of Nepal under my chairmanship for addressing post earthquake tourism recovery has recently launched a public campaign to promote traveling to Nepal. The campaign is focused around providing up-to-date information for the potential traveler and professional sectors.

Tourism is one of the mainstays of the Nepalese economy, and the best way to support Nepal is to visit Nepal now. Nepal will certainly need the income that tourism brings in as it attempts to recover from this disaster. Tourism is the way that brings back smiles to the faces of Nepali people.

Thank You !

## **5. Keynote Address by Chief Guest Hon. Mr. Mahendra Bahadur Pandey, Foreign Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs**



Mr. Chairperson

Honorable Minister for Cultural, Tourism and Civil Aviation

Excellencies

High-level Officials from various Organizations

Distinguished Paper Presenters, Commentators

Tourism Entrepreneurs and Businessman

Friends from Media

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It Gives me an immense pleasure to participate at this seminar, which has made the title 'Post-earthquake: Resurgence of Tourism in Nepal' as its subject matter of deliberations. There is no doubt that this topic of deliberation is truly important and relevant, particularly at a time when the tourism sector, a sector which has remained at the centre of Nepalese economy for years, which has offered jobs for hundreds of thousands of Nepalese, which has always supported the tourism business and entrepreneurs both big and small and both in the cities and the villages, and which has encouraged the socio-cultural diversity to further thrive and prosperous, is crippled by the earthquake. I thank the Institute of Foreign Affairs and its team for organizing this seminar. I believe that the deliberations on such an important issue and its outcome will provide us useful inputs for a tangible and practical approach to be taken in the days to come.

It always delights me whenever I have any opportunity to speak about the beauty of Nepal, which is endowed with unparalleled natural beauty and geographical and cultural diversity. This striking beauty, the thrilling variation of elevation of land within such a short geographical span, amazing diversity in flora and fauna and in culture and life certainly possess a definite power to make our land a centre of attraction for the people around the world. In addition, our age-old history and culture, numerous historical sites and monuments crafted with fine architectural precision and the smiling people with unity in diversity have added even more to this natural beauty. It is therefore a

fact that tourism has always remained as one of the major contributors of Nepalese economy with enormous potential. It retains the huge capacity with backward linkages to support businesses, to sustain agro-based and cottage industries and to create economic opportunities for ordinary Nepalese.

Mr. Chairperson,

The destruction caused by the devastating earthquake that struck Nepal nearly four and half months back was definitely unimaginable in scale and multidimensional in nature. It left its adverse impact on various sectors of Nepalese economy, truly speaking almost all sectors of economy to one or another extent. Many houses were destroyed; many schools were tumbled down. Tourism sector, no doubt, was one of the most affected sectors. The damage caused by post-quake rumours and negative publicity or honestly speaking our inexperience and inability to handle the situation in such a scenario was even more serious than the damage caused by quake itself. Now, after more than four and half months, the statistics on tourism reveal how destructive that quake was for this sector. Most of the hotels are operating with far less than one third of occupancy; the trekking routes are empty; many travel agencies are struggling to survive even at the beginning of the tourist season; and, those youths who lost their jobs in this sector are still unsure when they will get that back. I am sure that all of you have gone through the 'Post-Disaster Needs Assessment' report which revealed that "destroyed tourism-related supply of services and decreased tourist spending are likely to lead to loss of NPR 62 billion over the next two years". The trickled-sown loss and the loss that cannot be calculated purely in monetary terms may be even bigger. And now these incessant and unnecessary bandhs and strikes have threatened the remaining prospect. As such to many people, the situation may not seem much convincing and promising.

Mr. Chairman, I look at the things with optimistic and positive attitude. Let's see the other way round. We can see that, even amidst the widespread destruction, our major attractions for tourism are not affected. Many of them are untouched by the devastation of earthquakes. Cultural and religious sites are ready to welcome visitors; Himalayas are there to receive adventurers. White rivers are all set to challenge rafters; all national parks and wild life are there for nature lovers, most of the hotels survived the devastation of earthquakes and ready to offer the comfort and luxury to the guests. Therefore, I see all possibilities of early revival of tourism in Nepal. I am confident that this is the only sector of Nepalese economy which carries the capacity of providing livelihoods to hundreds of people. The only thing we

have to do is to take a few steps to bring back tourism sector in pre-quake status and to take it further ahead. What are those steps?

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentleman

The first important step to be taken to revive tourism, I think, is to communicate and convince the outside world that Nepal is safe, to convince them of the fact that not everything is destroyed, not all the accommodations are damaged, not all the trekking routes are obstructed by the slides, not all the monuments are tumbled down. We have to assure them that there are hotels to accommodate them; most of the historical, cultural and archeological sites are still existing in great numbers; there are mountains, rivers, valleys, bhanjyangs and gorges and much more to see; and more importantly, there are hospitable Nepalese people waiting to welcome them with the same smiling faces and the feeling of Athiti Debo Bhawa.

Organizing international and regional conferences in the different cities of the country, whether it be at the government level or it be at the private level, might be an appropriate strategy to convince the outer world that Nepal is safe and is able to host the guests. In fact, it was one of the reasons that, despite our own challenges and despite the offers from friendly countries, the government decided to host the International Conference on Nepal's Reconstruction (ICNR) in Kathmandu earlier this year. And, you know, this Conference, in addition to ensuring financial support of the international community, was successful also in building confidence about our capacity in hosting guests. The government hosted another regional conference, the SAARC Finance Minister's Meeting, again in Kathmandu last month. With these two references what I would like to mean is that we have capacity in hosting guests and tourists and we have to show it to the outside world. Therefore, I would like to urge all key stakeholders, both government and private-Nepal Tourism Board, Travel Association, Hotel Association, Trekking Agent's Association, aviation sector, and more importantly Media to play proactive role in rebuilding and rebranding the image of tourism in Nepal. We have to rebuild and rebrand the image of tourism.

There is also a need to define the specific roles of concerned authorities of the government sector so that they can perform effectively for tourism. Equally important is to coordinate activities of different sectors for better result. Both the government sector and private sector is required to spend more in promoting and marketing outside the country. Our diplomatic missions abroad, Nepal Tourism Board, Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI), Non-Resident Nepalese Association

(NRNA) and all other stakeholders are supposed to play a dynamic role. It is with the realization of this that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has instructed all our embassies abroad to engage actively in further promoting Nepal, in disseminating the positive image of the country in the global arena. In fact, the big chunk of the budget made available to the embassies for economic diplomacy will be used this year for tourism-related activities. The outlay for tourism promotion and marketing designed for normal time is definitely not enough to meet the post-quake scenario; it should be increased may fold. But I am sure that this increased cost would bring fruitful results.

Mr. Chairperson, Ladies and Gentleman,

Similarly, there is an urgent need to start reconstructing the damaged infrastructure without any delay. There is need of early reconstruction of the damaged infrastructures, especially of the tourism-related infrastructures, and the initiation convincing the tourist but also for assuring the partners, which in turn would also support the tourism promotion in some way. I would like to share with all of you that the Legislature-Parliament is all set to give the Reconstruction Authority Act a final nod. Now it is the time to utilize the opportunity to restructure our tourism sector in total. While reconstructing our infrastructure and rebuilding tourism sector, we have to design them to make more resilient, inclusive, comprehensive and broad based. Tourism is one of the probable areas to revive Nepalese economy with competitive edge. Thus far, we have not been able to utilize culture and tradition together with beauty of nature. Identification of new tourism products need to be diversified geographically, category wise and scale wise. Distribution of the opportunities in tourism has to be taken up to marginalized people and geography. It is the right time and opportunities to explore the ways to exploit the diversity of culture and nature in sustainable ways through diversification of products to be offered to the world.

Nepal qualifies to invite and serve the visitors throughout the year and in all seasons. The geographical, biological and cultural diversities are yet to be reflected and represented in our tourism products. For example, attraction of Mithila culture and art and beauty of Khaptad are yet to be explored. Jungle safari and traditional lifestyles of southern plains and reality of mountain lives are still virgin. We have tremendous potentials in the areas of ecotourism, success stories of our own experiments have to be replicated with further improvements in many other possible areas. Therefore, while rebuilding our devastated villages in remote areas, we have to make them better without losing cultural and ethnic uniqueness in structural arts. That will set a national standard of reconstruction and for further expansion.

Equally important step to be taken to revive Nepalese tourism is to bring all types of bandhs and strikes to a virtual end once and for all. The sector, which is already injured by the devastating earthquake, has been further crippled by these bandhs and strikes in different parts of the country. I am confident that the birth of the new democratic constitution for which our mother nation is struggling for long will ultimately create a peaceful and prosperous society by bringing these conflicts and extreme ways of outing demands to a perpetual end.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the diplomatic community in Nepal for their valuable support for the promotion of tourism in Nepal. While acknowledging their crucial role in this sector, I would like to request them to review their travel advisory and remove the name of Nepal from the negative list, if it exists there.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentleman, I would like to end with my aspirations that, with our determined and combined efforts, the damaged tourism infrastructures will be soon rebuilt and get their strength, the rubbles and remnants will be removed, the historical and cultural monuments will soon appear in their original shape and architectural precision, the bandhs and strikes come to virtual end and the tourism sector will revive soon and return to its important place in Nepalese economy. And finally we will be able to make Nepal as one of the most attractive tourist destination in the world as envisaged by the government.

**I thank you all.**

## **6. Closing remarks**

**Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari, Executive Director  
Institute of Foreign Affairs**



Hon. Foreign Minister, and Chairperson of IFA Board Mr. Mahendra Bahadur Pandey

Hon. Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Minister Mr. Kripasur Sherpa

HE ambassador of Russia, Dean of Diplomatic corps Dr. Sergey Vasilievich Velichkil

Secretary, Dinesh Thapalia, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation

Ambassadors HE Mr. Matthias Meyer from Germany; HE Mr. W.M. Senevirathna from Srilanka, HE Ms. Martine Massereau from France, HE Ms. Maria Teresa Mesquita Pessoa from Brazil and senior diplomats and representatives from other embassies

Paper presenter, Mr. Prachanda Man Shrestha, Former CEO, NTB

Paper Commentators, Dr. Ganesh Gurung, Former member NPC and Board of Directors, IFA and Mr. Ang Tshering Sherpa, President NMA

Other personalities contributing in the field of Tourism, foreign relations, economy, business, academy and political parties and Civil Society

Friends from media

Colleagues from various ministries

All other invited guests, NTB officials and Board members and my co-workers from the Institute of Foreign Affairs

**A very warm welcome and a very good morning to all of you.**

I thank Hon. Minister Pandey for agreeing to be our chief guest and key note speaker I thank Hon. Minister Sherpa for agreeing to be our special guest I appreciate our two Hon. Ministers and HE ambassador of Russia, and the Dean of Diplomatic corps for their eloquent and thought provoking ideas on the theme of the seminar for setting the tone for the following substantive session.

I am thankful to all the distinguished participants that you were able to participate in this important seminar on our request inspite of your busy schedule.

IFA and NTB are pleased to organize this seminar with the objective to spread the fact of intactness of tourism products with the hope of instilling confidence amongst the tourists that visit Nepal for mountaineering, trekking, and visiting cultural heritages and enjoying natural beauty.

Tourism is very important business in Nepal with substantial backward and forward linkages and having multiplier effect on the economy in the form of job creation and rural earnings.

The recent deadly earthquake has to some extent damaged Nepal tourism in multiple ways such as the trekking and trail routes, hotels, cultural heritage etc. However, the resilient people of Nepal seem to have coped with the devastation as they are again welcoming guests with smiling faces as usual and the relevant government bodies and related travel trade entrepreneurs seem to be very optimistic about the future of Nepal's tourism. The scenario of destruction of tourism infrastructures have been exaggerated by national and International media as the following facts reveal:

Out of 75 districts of Nepal, only 8 are affected; out of 10 National Parks, only 1 is affected; All the highways and sub-ways are in operation with zero damage; Out of 8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, only 2 have around 40% damages; 90% hotels in Kathmandu Valley are safe and in operational conditions. 100% Hotels in popular destinations like Pokhara, Chitwan, Lumbini, Bardiya, Annapurna Region, Everest Region etc. are safe and in full operation; Out of 35 popular trekking routes, only 2 (Manaslu and Langtang) are affected. Moreover, repair works are already underway in full swing; All the airports are in operation with zero damage; Communication (landlines, cellular networks, ATM's, internet) is 100% operational; Hospitals and clinics are safe and in operation. No viral diseases or influenza is seen. (Source: Outdoor Himalayan Treks)

Various trekking and expedition routes are being repaired and reopened and many countries have registered for climbing our mountains. Also it is worth mentioning that there are various other trekking routes and tourist destinations such as Pokhara, Chitwan, and Lumbini, which have not witnessed damages and are fully capable of hosting tourists.

The government has established NTPC (NPR 600 million) for tourism related preliminary works and together business community has set up a Recovery Task Force to recommend for faster resurgence of damaged tourism products.

Nepal assures the travelers of safety during their visit to the desired tourism sites including mountain expeditions and trekking.

It is believed the travel advisory of missions will be positive after the seminar and we thank those friendly countries who have recently posted positive travel advisory. It is suggested that the Diplomats from various embassies need to be toured to mountains and important trails and request them to post positive travel advisory.

The government has to play active role by widely using electronic media in campaign worldwide in dispelling the negative impression as the private stakeholders cannot do it alone.

The government step to assess the damages in Annapurna and Everest region through international experts was a right decision towards campaigning about absence of risk for the tourists to visit Nepal. It will also be appropriate to organize international workshops and seminars on relevant areas. Arrangements should be made for active participation of international electronic and other media to cover these events.

It has been suggested to keep the prices of goods and services similar to pre-earthquake period; extend the visa period rather than reducing the visa costs; arrange for rewards and recognition to tour and travel agencies for bringing more number of tourists and for taking them to new destinations etc.; open new peaks as climbing destinations, and recognize tourists as Volunteers. Professionalism and Quality in the tourism sector need to be upgraded.

Lastly, allocating of huge amount of budget for repair and revival of tourism has been appropriately accomplished by the government and the private sector. However, the mechanism of speedy use of the resources for timely implementation of planned activities seems to be utterly delayed which needs to be urgently taken care of.

Thank you again.

## **7. Paper presentation by**

**Mr. Prachanda Man Shrestha, Former Chief Executive Officer, Nepal Tourism Board on "Great Quake Impact and Great Hope Reviving Nepalese Tourism"**



Chairperson of the session

Distinguished fellow speakers

Distinguished industry leaders, and pioneers representing tourism and related industries

Excellencies, and Representatives of international and local agencies

Friends from Media

### **Introduction**

The speakers, here today, have all highlighted the significance of the tourism sector in Nepal's economy, which has severely been hampered by the recent earthquakes and aftershocks. Through various presentations, two distinct views have come through regarding Nepal's post-earthquake situation. One is that of the Russian Ambassador to Nepal, Dr. Sergey Vasilievich Velichkin, who stated that "Nepal has been weakened by the earthquake of April 25, 2015 and subsequent aftershocks." While the other is of Honorable Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Mr. Kripasur Sherpa, who stated that the damages caused by the earthquakes and aftershocks have been nominal and should not be highlighted. This dichotomy of thought has acutely positioned the tourism industry in a confused state particularly in generating market causing massive losses, both financially and morally.

My presentation, here today will focus on the significance of the tourism industry, the impact the earthquakes have had on it and the actions different stakeholders need to take in order to revive the industry in a quickest possible time frame.

### **1. Discussion Framework**

- Focusing on Post Earthquake
- Realizing Nepal's unique tourism system
- Shortening disaster impact

- Recalling Nepal's own past experience
- Referring similar context in other destinations
  - Identifying immediate strategic approach
  - Leading to specific program of actions
  - Adjusting present structure of tourism industry reforming policy framework

## **2. Nepalese Tourism**

- Largest source of foreign exchange
- Directly employs 487,000 persons
- Sustained growth of 18.2% (2010), 22.1% (2011), 12.11% (2012); 803,092 arrivals in 2012; 797,616 arrivals in 2013 plus estimated 1/2 million Indian arrivals by land
- Industry earnings of NPR. 28.6 billion
- Immensely benefitting to the rural economy of the country, through forward and backward linkages

## **3. The Impact of the Earthquake**

The earthquakes have had three distinct impacts on the tourism sector

- The image Nepal had created since the 1950's of a modern day Shangrila, which the industry still depends on to charm visitors has been damaged
- Rural tourist infrastructures, such as trails, lodges and bridges, largely created by local entrepreneurs have been damaged
- Cultural monuments, such as Dharahara and Durbar square have been damaged or destroyed,

## **4. The Aftermath of the Quake**

### **A. What happened on Great Quake?**

- Global Media Coverage over exaggerated
- Media coverage centered on devastation, destruction, and damages
- Nepal on attention of global community
- Nepal became known to all and got exposed as tourism destination
- Tremendous sympathy towards Nepalese people

- Destination Image tarnished by wrong reporting:
  - Cancelling bookings of Nepal visit
  - Perception as no heritage / monuments left to see, no trails left for trekking
  - No Safety / no Food / no facilities existed at the destination
  - Travel Advisory in source Market getting cautious and negative
- Tourism by nation itself recognized as the most affected sector with 90 % drop in arrivals during months of May to July 2015 compared to same months of previous year (NPC, 2015).

The global media attention, in the aftermath of the great-quake, has brought significant attention towards the nation and gathered a great deal of sympathy for its people. Today, Nepal and its image as a tourist hub is known across the world. However, most of the media coverage has been centered on devastation, destruction and damages to Nepal's monuments and infrastructure, which has tarnished Nepal's "Destination Image" because iconic monuments of world heritage sites were visualized through media as all gone. Hence, the amplification of their destruction along with Nepal's standing as a lowly capable to manage such situation has reduced the number of tourist arrivals. According to the National Planning Commission's (NPC) report, the country experienced a 90 percent year-on-year reduction in tourist arrivals post April 25, as travel advisory world over, red-flagged Nepal advising their citizens against travelling to our country in fear of diseases, food shortages, and subsequent quakes.

#### **B. Industry damage caused by the great-quake**

- Tourist casualty: 70 dead, 50 injured, 111 missing
- 29 million workdays expected to be lost in the industry
- Income loss of NPR 6,200 million over the next 24 months (NPC, 2015)
- Hotel sector expected to suffer the most, with NPR 16,295 million in damages.
- Further damages are summarized by the table below:

**Table:1 Damages Summary by National Planning Commission**

| Sector                 | NPR million | NPR million      | NPR million | Share of Damage NPR million | Share of Damage NPR million |
|------------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Subsector              | Damage      | Loss             | Total       | Private sector              | Public sector               |
| Hotels and Others      | 16,295      | -                | 16,295      | 16,295                      | -                           |
| Homestays              | 1,720       | 495 <sup>a</sup> | 1720        | 1720                        |                             |
| Eco-lodges             | 415         | -                | 415         | 415                         |                             |
| Trekking trails        | 426         | 5,711            | 6,137       | -                           | 6,137                       |
| Tour Operators         | 7           | 4,924            | 4,931       | 4,931                       |                             |
| Tourism revenues       | -           | 47,013           | 47,013      | 47,013                      |                             |
| Air transport revenues | -           | 4,720            | 4,720       | 4,720                       |                             |
| Restaurant revenues    | -           | 11               | 11          | 11                          |                             |
| Total                  | 18,863      | 62,379           | 81,242      | 75,105                      | 6,137                       |

## 5. Reviving the Industry

Chart-1: Damage Data

### A. Disseminating information

As tourism is a highly sensitive industry and liable for setbacks, it is the responsibility of stakeholders to disseminate the accurate information in an appropriate way to alleviate the apprehensions of tourists. For example, a lot has been said about Nepal's building codes and the durability of hotels. However, it is important to realize that, of the 20,000 international tourists present in Nepal at the time of the great-quake, 14,000 were residing in hotels across urban areas such as Kathmandu and Pokhara of which only 9 nine died. This means our hotels by and large follow international



Chart-2: Damage Assessment of Annapurna Region



Infographics by:

standards of construction, as directed by the government, and are safe for customers. Similarly, with regard to trekking trails, it is important to realize that of the 35 trails open to tourists; only two were damaged by earthquakes, of which Annapurna and Everest, the most popular trekking trails are now open and in operation. The chart-1 above gives a clearer picture of the impact the quakes have had on popular tourist attractions of the country.

## B. Learning from others

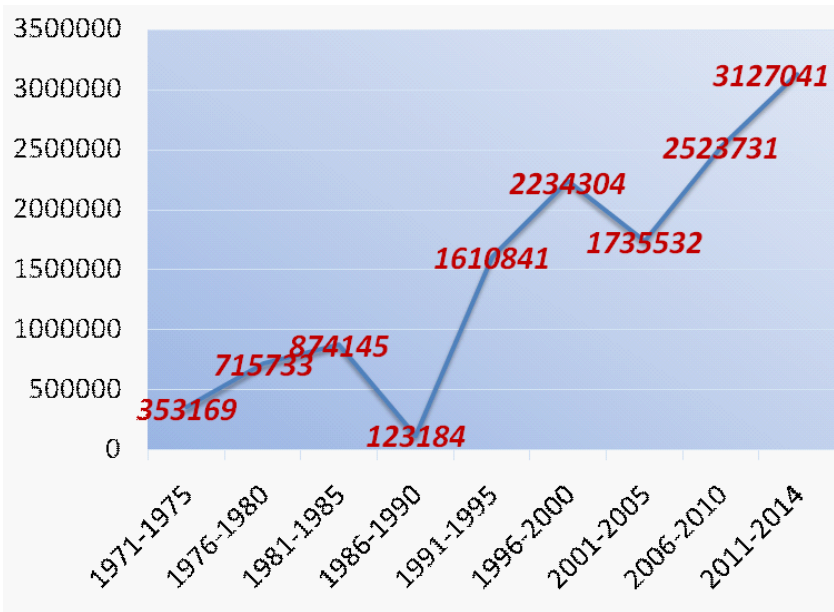
### Brief Strategies for Indonesian tourism recovery

Indonesia, in particular Bali over the past 30 years has managed to become a prime tourist destination, receiving over three million visitors a year. However, as the graph below demonstrates, the country has seen its fair share of fluctuations in tourist numbers. For example, during the Gulf crisis of the early 1990's and in the aftermath of the 2002 Bali bombings, the country experienced dreadful falls in tourist arrivals from highs of 874,145 in 1985 and 2,234,304 in 2000 to lows of 123,184 in 1990 and 1,735,532 in 2005. Through it all, however, the country managed to recover and attract greater number of tourists by taking actions such as:

- Empowering tourism entrepreneurs and cooperatives
- Encouraging private initiatives (with the government steering rather than rowing)

- Creating conducive climate to strengthen private initiative
- Human Resource quality (To serve, not to be served as motto for service personnel, both government and private)
- Concerted Tourism promotion conducted
- Effective Coordination (rewarding rather than blaming)
- Deregulation of licensing and eliminating the "high cost economy"

Graph-1: Number of Tourists in Bali



### Sri Lanka, Thailand and India experience

#### Few Post Tsunami (2004) Interventions

- Emphasizing the normality of the situation in the country (Sri Lanka)
- Campaign of Bounce Back Sri Lanka set up with private sector emphasized that everything is as usual and that hotels are running
- Thailand put an extra \$19.5 million as added to the 2005 marketing and promotion budget

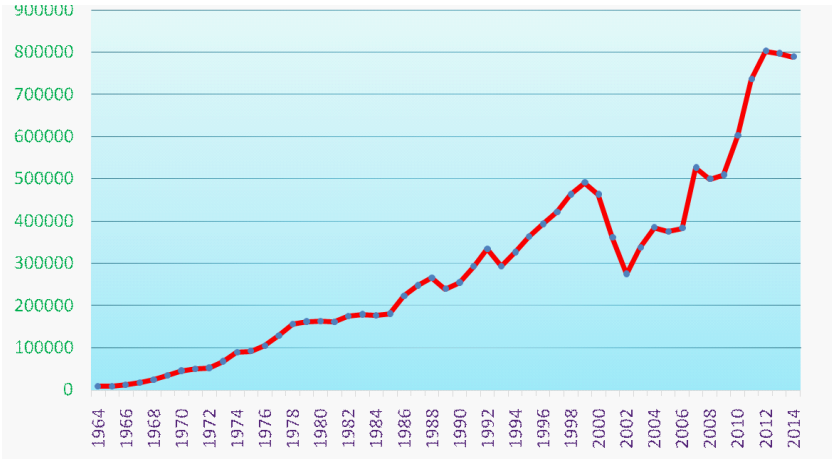
- The Thai government also initiated some high-profile events to attract world media attention
- US\$ 6.5 million spent to stage the Miss Universe pageant in Bangkok in May 2005
- World Vision, in co-operation with the Tourism Authority of Thailand, invited Bethany Hamilton, a 15-year-old 'surfing phenomenon' who returned to competitive surfing after a shark had bitten off her arm
- In India, a seven-point action plan for the growth of tourism was produced in Tamil Nadu, affected by the tsunami- with aggressive and focused marketing and eco-tourism schemes
- After the tsunami of 2004, three countries, Sri Lanka, Thailand and India took certain steps, which helped revive the tourism industry in those countries. They were:

### **Nepal's own past experiences**

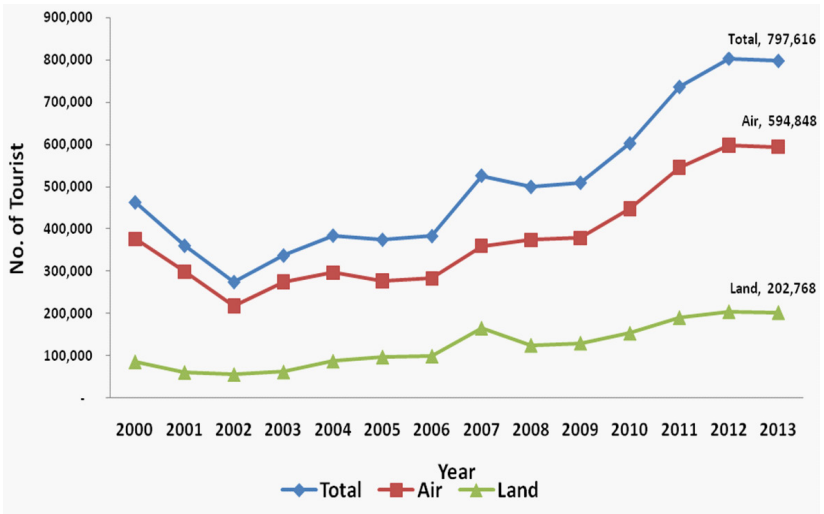
(Proved its resilience during the critical period both national and international)

- Nepal India Trade Transit Impasse with stalemate for 15 months followed by popular movement 1989/1990
  - *PATA Adventure Travel Conference and Mart*
  - *PATA South Asia Chapter meeting*
  - *Post Convention tour to ASTA Governing Council*
  - *TAAI Conference in Nepal*
- Negative International Media on Nepal's Environment
  - *Visit Nepal Year 1998 (Organizing Festivities)*
- Hijacking from Kathmandu and 9/11 incident 1999
  - *Golden Jubilee Celebration of Success of Mt. Everest, 2003*
- Nepal's Domestic State of Emergency and conflict, 2005
  - *Nepal Tourism Year 2011 (Market Confidence / Home stay)*

**Graph 2: Tourist Arrival in Nepal**  
**Past Trend of Tourists Growth and Set back (1964-2014)**



Over the past 50 years, various factors such as India's 1989/90 blockade, Nepal's environmental record and the 2005 declaration of emergency have led to fluctuations in the number of tourist arrivals into the country.



However, at each point be it in 1990 or in 2003, the country has initiated programs that have led to higher tourist arrivals. For example:

First, between 1989-1990, during India's blockade of Nepal, the country staged major events which greatly helped in reviving the tourism industry.

Second, in the mid 1990s various non-governmental organizations started to voice concerns regarding Nepal's environmental practices, which led to reductions in tourist inflows. However, the government reacted by enacting the Environmental Protections Rules of 1997 and declared 1998 as Visit Nepal Year 98 as a campaign in order to enhance the country's image. Such actions led to the increment of tourist inflows, reaching a historic high of 463,000 in 1998.

Third, the government, between June 2002 and May 2003 held various events in commemoration of Edmund Hillary's and Tenzing Norgay's climb to the summit of Mt. Everest, which again led to the rise of tourist inflows, as it came after the hijacking of IC 814 in 1999, 9/11 and domestic issues, such as the royal massacre of 2001.

Fourth in 2008, the government declared 2011 as Tourism Year'11 in order to establish Nepal as a choice of holiday destination; improve and extend tourism related infrastructures; enhance the capacity of service providers; build community capacity in the new areas to cater to the needs of the tourists and promote domestic tourism for sustainability of industry. This initiative came after three years of great upheaval in the country, which saw declaration of emergency by the king in 2005, the end of civil war in 2006, and the abolishment of monarchy in 2008. The initiative was a great success, as tourist inflows jumped 22 percent from 602,855 in 2010 to reach a new high of 736,215 in 2011.

## **6. Initiation Towards Revival**

- Tourism Stakeholders coming together
- Pokhara Declaration by Parliamentary Committee
- High level National Tourism Committee to revive within two years
- PATA Rapid Recovery Task Force -78 actions under Crisis Recovery model till September branding Nepal Back on Top of the World
- Miyamoto Earthquake Structural Engineering prepared Rapid Structural and Geo-technical Earthquake damage assessment in Everest area in July concluding for trekking safety and commercial readiness in the region

- Heritage rebuilding strategy incorporating tourism utility in monuments under Department of Archives with Global community
- Successful completion of International Conference for Nepal's Reconstruction (ICNR) receiving pledge of \$ 4.4 billion
- Nepal Tourism Recovery Media Pack supported by Dutch Government –www.Nepalnow.org
- Travel Advisory adapting to geo-specific. However, France/Spain/South Korea and Poland still to relax

## **7. The Road Ahead**

### **Disseminating about real status**

Nepal has to disseminate the facts and information that the damages as reported by international media are not true as the tourism scenario was not as bad as reported by international media as:

- Only 14 out of 75 Districts of the country were affected by Quake
- Trekking trails mostly walk ways by local communities 2 out of 35 affected but quick in creating diversion
- Only 10 percent of the existing heritage and monuments were affected while 90% were left intact
- Almost 90 % of the hotels and lodges in Kathmandu and major tourism sites except in Lang tang are in operation
- During the quake, 6000 tourists were estimated in rural areas and 14,000 in hotels of urban tourism sites, only 9 are reported dead in urban sites as standard hotels are following International safety standard in construction

### **A. Strategic intervention**

- Destination Image created by external forces
  - *Strategy is to take over internally (Diplomats and Missions)*
  - *Challenge is INGO–NGO–Industry relationship (example WFP and humanitarian support)*
- Post disaster action is Crises Management
  - *PATA Task Force report based on crises*
- Prioritize among two major components of Mainstream and Special Interest tourism

- *Organize as many Events of all category continuously which brings direct contact to potential visitors*
- *New Segment no Market Access*
- Invest to Engage opinion builders - Media and Operators
  - *Role of dispelling negative impression through media*

### **B. Strategic discourse**

- Image Reorientation to enhance yield:
  - *Mobilizing Nepalese missions under economic diplomacy*
  - *Integration of tourism Industry with multi-nationals as Joint Ventures and Strategic Alliance*
- Infrastructure Capacity Enhancement:
  - *Designating few existing Domestic Airports as International with Value Proposition waiving charges on Landing, Parking and Ground Handling*
  - *Surface Network connectivity as an alternative (trekking areas)*
  - *Industry partnership in generating electricity/water supplies*
  - *Tourism Economic Zones under SEZ to prospective sites*
- Management Challenges :
  - Human Resource Capability coordinating with academic agencies
  - Sites management - DMO to partner with local governing bodies
  - High powered Rescue Unit for any unwanted happenings to tourist
- Marketing Approach:
  - *Product packaging with Cross Subsidy as Stunt and Gimmick*
  - *Shift to Social Media as User controlled market*
  - *Mechanism to Protect Tourists Rights (Guarantee/Insurance)*

Although the earthquakes have decimated the tourism sector, it has also given the stakeholders the opportunity to reconsolidate, re-establish and reorient the industrial structures, so as to improve their framework in order to maximize the country's potential. Already, we have the 51-point Pokhara Declaration Paper issued by the Parliamentary Committee to revive the tourism industry; the successful completion of International Conference for Nepal's Reconstruction (ICNR), which promised a pledge of \$4.4 billion; heritage rebuilding strategy incorporating by Department of Archives with support of the global institutions, such as UNESCO; and the opening of

popular trekking trails such as, Everest in July, after extensive assessment have all had a positive impact on the tourism industry. However, more needs to be done. Nepal has to re-establish its image, which can only be done by mobilizing Nepalese missions under Economic Diplomacy and the integration of the tourism industry with multi-nationals through the formation of joint venture agreements and strategic alliances. Domestic infrastructures have to be enhanced by creating additional international airports and waiving off charges on landing, parking and ground handling; surface networks have to be connected as alternatives to trekking; industries need to be brought together to generate electricity and water supplies; and areas need to be given SEZ status to develop local economy. The management process need to be reevaluated in order to increase human resources capability, through coordination with academic agencies, DMO's have to partner with local governing bodies; and high powered rescue units have to be created, so as to assure tourists that the country possess the institutions and personnel to protect them when a calamity strikes. Finally, the country needs to peruse an aggressive marketing strategy to rebrand, re-establish and attract tourists. This can only be done when it shifts to social media as a user controlled market to advertise; create institutions which protect tourists, through the establishment of guarantees and insurances and package products with cross subsidy as stunts and gimmicks.

Thank you.

## **8. 1. Comments by Mr. Ang Tshering Sherpa, Chairman Nepal Mountaineering Association**



Chairperson of this interactive programme  
Paper presenter Mr. Prachanda Man Shrestha  
Excellences, high officials of Government of Nepal  
President and representatives of various tourism related associations, organizations  
Diplomatic partners  
Ladies and gentlemen  
Media friends

First of all I would like to extend my sincere thanks and congratulations to Mr. Prachand Man Shrestha, for such a brilliant and excellent presentation, which has left me with very little to add. However, I would like to mention a few things regarding the potential and prospects of tourism, especially in the mountaineering sector.

Ladies and gentlemen, Nepal, a developing state in the lap of Himalayas, occupies an area of 147181sq km, ranging from the lowest point of 67 meters in Kechana, Jhapa to the highest of 8848 meters, which is Mt. Everest, the ultimate destination for mountaineering enthusiasts world over.

Its geographic diversity means that the country offers unique opportunities for mountaineering, trekking and experiencing nature and culture for visitors all year around. Visitors to Nepal can also pursue a range of adventure sports and recreational activities such as river rafting, kayaking, canoeing, paragliding, bungee jumping, sky diving, rock and ice climbing, mountain biking, bird watching, mountain flights, heli-skiing, mountaineering climbing training, jungle safari etc.

Every mountaineer dreams of scaling the highest and greatest peaks in the world, and without a doubt, Nepal is the that ultimate destination for mountaineering. It is home to the greatest mountain range on earth, the 'Himalayas'. This unparalleled marvel of nature stretches over 1,200 km and includes, third people of the world, Mt. Everest, highest peak in the world.

Rarely does a place offer such remarkable amalgamation of splendid natural beauty, topped with snow capped mountains and opportunity to climb the highest peaks on Earth.

Nepal has been a paradise for climbers and some of the most outstanding achievements in mountaineering have been achieved in this remarkable country. Till date 1792 peaks have been identified by the government for climbing. Their elevations range from 5800m to above 8000m, including 1310 peaks above 6000m. The GoN issues climbing permits for 14 peaks that are higher than 8000m. Of the 1792 peaks, however, only 403 peaks are open, meaning there are 1389 unclimbed peaks in Nepal, which has attracted the attention of people from all walks of lives.

Nepal is a country of contrasts. One would be hard-pressed not to find a landscape or a culture in Nepal that would not remind them of home: from the flat lands where Lord Buddha was born to the highest point on earth where man only set foot in 1953, Nepal has treasures to be discovered for all.

Many know about the mountains that lie in Nepal, but few know about the warmth and loving nature of the people. It is this that makes Nepal a second home to those who have experienced her first hand. Nepal boasts over hundred different ethnic groups, each with their uniquely own language, culture and tradition. This multi-ethnic diversity, living in harmony for centuries has weaved Nepal into one of the richest cultural tapestries in the world.

However, given its geographic location the country is prone to disasters. Nepal is ranked 4th in terms of impact of climate change, ranked 11th in terms of risk from earthquakes and 30th in terms of flood risk according to global report on disaster risk (2003). Earthquake, floods, landslides, lightning, Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF), avalanche, epidemics often occur causing enormous physical damages and loss of human lives.

Even before the great-quake of April 25, 2015, the tourism industry was already suffering due to the events of April 2014, where avalanches hit Mt. Everest, which consumed the lives of 16 sherpas and 542 people had to be rescued off in addition Annapurna, Dhaulagiri and Dolphu region had heavy snow fall and avalanches that occurred on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Oct 2014, causing 41 people to die.

The 7.8 magnitude earthquakes of 25 April 2015, followed by more than 400 aftershocks with magnitudes up to 7.3 have been disproportionately greater in remote mountain regions.

As mentioned by previous speakers, tourism plays a significant role in Nepal's economy by employing a large share of the workforce and providing economic opportunities to those who need them most in rural mountain regions. In the aftermath of the earthquakes, recovery of Nepal's tourism is going to be a vital factor in the country's recovery.

We all know the recent earthquake has hit mainly the tourist areas. Therefore, there is an urgent need to repair and to rebuild the trails, bridges, roads and other basic infrastructures in order to revive the tourism sector and the national economy. At the moment, Nepal Mountaineering Association, Trekking Agency of Nepal, Climate Alliance of Himalayan Communities and other mountain related tourism organizations are assessing infrastructures, in partnership with UNWFP, in order to repair or rebuild bridges and roads, so that tour operators can operate in the coming autumn season. All of us present here know the importance of the tourism industry to the country. Hence, it is the collective responsibility of the private sector, government, diplomatic missions and developmental partners to increase the number of tourists visiting Nepal. The government's primary responsibility at this point of time should be to provide safety and security for visitors. We need to get our people back to work so that they can look after themselves and that means we need tourism up and running. I believe, that for this to happen the government needs to interact with diplomatic corps, developmental partners, private sector representatives to come up with a plan to revive our tourism industry. We need to spread the message that the best way to help Nepal is by visiting us, so that each dollar spent in the country will help to rebuild our lives and infrastructures. With this few notes of my comment on the Mr. Prachand Man Shrestha's presentation I'd like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Institute of Foreign Affairs and Nepal Tourism Board for organizing such an important event and this will certainly help to revive our tourism. With these few words I'd like to conclude my remarks.

Thank you very much.

## **8. 2. Comments by**

### **Dr. Ganesh Gurung, Member IFA and Former Member, National Planning Commission**



Chairperson

Paper presenter, Prachanda Man Shrestha

Commentators

Diplomatic commission representatives and Ambassadors

Gentle ladies and gentle men

Mr. Prachanda Man Shrestha is a man of tourism in my opinion. I have seen him always, talking tourism, eating tourism, sleeping with tourism. Mr. Ang Tshering Sherpa, the earlier commentator is a mountain expert. He was born in mountain and he has been talking and walking with mountain. I will tell you a joke before I start my comment. You may know 21 times climber Appa Sherpa of Nepal, who climbed Mt Everest several times without oxygen. He was asked once 'what is most difficult thing for you? He told, it is more difficult thing to give a speech than climb to Mt. Everest. It is something like this for me to comment on Prachand Man Shrestha's paper. I remember Appa now. Mr. Shrestha has very comprehensively presented so many things in his framework and the issues that he has raised. But I'll highlight more on some of the issues. I will also give you some clues but I will rather not go in detail.

Number one is, I have five six points only. I am just telling points only. We talked so much about natural earthquake but what about political earthquake? That is very important. We aren't going to make Nepal safe for tourists'. Firstly, we need to make safe for Nepalese. Are we safe? Can we go in the different areas? That is an important point. How do we make this political earthquake safer? That is very important for me.

Second point, Mr. Shrestha has slightly talked upon but I'd like to blow up that issue which is globalization of Nepali mission abroad and your diplomatic mission in Nepal. Has this today's seminar organized by Ministry of Foreign affairs? Have we given our diplomats, Nepali diplomats any reward? Have we included tourism promotion as one of the components in their terms of reference? Have we made any type of evaluation on their performance

with reward systems, with punishment system? That's very important for us, without that we can't go every time to CNN or BBC which is very expensive. Our mission has to play larger role to promote tourism in Nepal. Because tourism is lifeline or bloodline of Nepal's economy.

Third I'd like to bring in a discussion and add to Mr. Shrestha's presentation, that there is large difference in understanding of tourism in Nepal. What is very important that tourism is a sector that is most vulnerable sector in the world. Any activities can have larger impact to tourism sector. And very interestingly, let us understand whether Nepal's plan and action geared to address that most vulnerable sector or not. Have we done any type of activities if this happens? Do we have that kind of plan or not? We are talking about very very vulnerable sector but our plans and actions are as normal as other local development. So we need to really gear up to see and understand tourism very differently that is my third point.

Let me give you one example. I counted the days after Baisakh 12 after the earthquake. Today is 143 days after earthquake has occurred. Has our tourism structure, our vulnerable sector addressed accordingly? No ! So even after 143 days, we are not been able to address it properly.

The fourth I'd like to bring in your notice in the discussion is institutions or structures to address tourism in Nepal. I am a person that I strongly argue in south Asia that Nepal has made one best structure or institution in tourism that is Nepal Tourism Board. The interesting part is structure had been planned as institution with the private sector. But what is the practice and reality? In my opinion, I want to disagree with you that in practice there is a divorce between institution that we have made and the reality we are facing now. We know Nepal Tourism Board structure that has not been properly functioning. So, the problem is we have to see this institution and structure very carefully whether these are addressing the immediate disaster's issues or not. As I said earlier even after 143 days we aren't being able to do.

So, our structure and our reality or need does it match or not? I'd like to give you one example, one nurse midwife in the sector of health sociologically, by the Nepali context, wasn't appropriate. So, when we judge after so many years we experience that structure in health sector. Now health sector has jumped towards NCSW. That is a kind of structural problem. We have to revisit that structure. I'd also like to give you an example of Nepal Tourism Promotion Committee, that has been recently formed. Autumn season is very close on our gate. When does this committee get the fund? When will the repairing work start? Can we wait until Asar? Or June, July? Or the last of the fiscal

year? No. but tourism season is next month, So, I am asking you to revisit or review the structure we have and institution we have, whether we are being able to address this kind of vulnerable sector or not? That is my point.

The fifth point, I'd like to give you clue which isn't in shrestha's paper but just like as a token, the earthquake has also given some kind of strength. Number one, we are united, two international sympathy is enhanced, three the donor conference has promised resources. Nepal has become so popular in the global picture. There are three things that we need to do that are rebranding as the foreign minister said, two, new routes, three, new products. So, these are the opportunity for us. The last point we need to say if you want to say Nepal is safe but what have we done? I `d like to give an example Lukla to Namche track for there are few blocks that we need to repair. The last point which Mr. Shrestha hasn't touched upon is I strongly belief NRNA (Non Residential Nepali Association) can be one of the tool for us to promote Nepal tourism. I would like to thank you once again.

## **9.1. Remarks by Mr. Prabesh Aryal, Executive Director Hotel Association Nepal**



Respected chairperson of the session, Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari, E.D. of IFA  
Paper presenter, Mr. Prachanda Man Shrestha, Former, CEO, Nepal Tourism Board.  
Mr. Gobinda Bahadur Karki Director General of Department of Tourism  
Commentator, Dr. Ganesh Gurung, Board Member, IFA  
Mr. Ang Tshering Sherpa, President, Nepal Mountanaring Association  
Excellencies and representative from different diplomatic missions  
High government Officials  
Media friends  
Respected tourism entrepreneur and distinguished personalities

First of all, on behalf of Hotel Association Nepal, I'd like to thank the Institute of Foreign Affairs and Nepal Tourism Board for organizing this very important seminar: Post-Earthquake-Resurgence of Tourism in Nepal and giving us the opportunity to share the true picture of the Nepalese hotel industry at this point of time. We all are aware of the fact that hotels are a major component of the tourism industry, both in terms of investments and its business nature. And although, the earthquakes and aftershocks caused massive destruction across the country and severely impacted many industries, it is important to stress that the hotel industry was fortunate enough to sustain minimal damages. This, however, does not mean that hotels across Kathmandu and other tourist destinations were untouched. However, the immediate response of hoteliers to refurbish their properties means that at this point of time all most all hotels are back in business and awaiting guests with better hospitality and services.

Finally, on behalf of Hotel Association Nepal, I request you all to give us the opportunity to serve you with the assurance that our hotels are safe and capable of meeting the expectations of our guests. Once again, I'd like to thank IFA and NTB for initiating this seminar.

**Thank you.**

## **9.2. Remarks by Mr. Ganga Sagar Pant, CEO Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal**



Respected chairperson, Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari  
Tourism expert Mr. Prachand Man Shrestha  
Director General, Department of Tourism  
Honorable excellences from different countries  
Respected president and officials from different tourism association  
Media persons  
Gentle ladies and gentlemen.

The earthquake of April 25 has had huge repercussions not just for the trekking industry, but for the entire nation. The present situation of the industry is unsustainable and if it persists will cause massive losses, in income and jobs. Hence, it is the responsibility of industry stakeholders to come up with a plan that hopefully will better develop the industry and revive it. In the following presentation, I hope to give a brief background of my institution, its activities and the road ahead.

### **TAAN**

Established on May 29, 1979 with 15 Member Agencies, it has grown to its membership base to around 1500 who primarily operate in the trekking and expedition field.

#### **The vision of TAAN is:**

- Environment- To protect and enhance the environment.
- Employees- To give employees every opportunity to develop and fulfill their potential.
- Customers- To provide quality services along with products that are sustainable.
- Communities- To better and help that we work in and with the community are fully respected and get access to the benefit from all of our operations.
- Infrastructure– To develop infrastructures through partnerships with national and international business and the local community
- Business value- To develop socially and environmentally friendly business practices that ensures sustainable profits.

### **Focus: Trekking Industry and Employment**

Almost 2/3 of the tourists that visit Nepal are the trekkers and mountain adventure enthusiasts. Hence the industry, over the years has grown to become a massive job creator. At present it creates about 200,000 jobs annually in the mountainous regions of the country, in areas such as:

- Advance First Aid Training to the Trekking Guides
- Cannoning Training
- Cooking & Hygiene Training in the Tourism Destination Areas
- Promoting Adventure Sports- TAAN Eco-Challenge 2014

In addition, the barriers to enter the industry are minimal, as trekking is a "Pro-poor industry". Hence, a lot of people have become entrepreneurs, which has immensely benefitted the rural economy activities.

- Identification, exploration and promotion of new trekking destinations and trails.
- Enhancement of quality and safety of the trekking trails.
- Construction of emergency shelters, bridges and view points in the high passes.
- Identification of home-stay tourism areas and their development and promotion.
- Rescue and crises management in mountain areas.
- Training and capacity building of employees.

TAAN has developed tourism infrastructure as following:

#### **Emergency shelters and trail bridge construction**



Supporting Mountain Tourism Promotion Initiatives such as:

- KIMFF
- The Global Inclusive Women group
- Providing Compensations & Insurance to the victims of the mountain disasters
- Leading rescue process



- Providing compensation to the Families of the Everest Avalanche Victims- April 2014
- Product Development
- Identification of Destinations
- Exploration
- Promotion
- Promoting Cultural Tourism- TAAN Lhosar Festival
- Caring for Environment
- Rescue Training to the Rafting Guides
- Leading Anti-corruption Campaign
- Assessment of Disaster Damages

**TAAN says:**

- Welcome to Nepal.
- Natural disasters are accidents from which we learn and better prepare ourselves for the future.
- Nepalese trekking tour operators now have greater knowledge regarding the safety of their clients.
- We want to create responsible business.
- Please Come Back to Nepal everyone.

Thank you.

### **9.3. Remarks by Mr. Hare Ram Baral, President Tourist Guide Association of Nepal**



Honorable Foreign Minister Mr. Mahendra Bahadur Pandey,  
Your Excellency Ambassadors and the representative from different diplomatic Missions  
Presidents, General Secretaries and Representatives of different tourism organizations  
Friends from press  
Ladies and gentlemen

It is My Honour to speak on behalf of Tourists Guide Association of Nepal (TURGAN) on this august gathering of tourism entrepreneurs and other experts in the related field. The current scenario in regard to tourist influx in the country is not, I must say, promising. This is precisely the time when we observe tourist's arrival to a great extent historical sights are full with our guests running up and down, restaurants are packed to capacity and hotels are overbook. But, unfortunately, this year, when the busy tourist season is already on but the total picture is very bleak. In accordance to our rough estimate, there may not even be 10% of what we have experienced last year arrival. Therefore, this is really a matter of concern for all the tourism fraternity and to the overall economy of the country.

Although, the tragidious earthquake occurred on 25th April 2015 and subsequent tremours have left a great setback to the nations's tourism but, this is not the only deterrent to keep the tourist off this country. The media at home and abroad have played a negative role in creating a sense of fear in the mind of incumbent tourist who very much wanted to visit to this country. In actual fact, the so called earthquake has only destroyed a small percentage of our heritage sights, while keeping the bulk of the edifices, temples and palaces in perfect order. Out of 10 world heritage sights declared by UNESCO based in Nepal, only one suffered the wrath of the quake. Mr. Kerk Patrick, a British traveler, who visited Nepal towards the beginning of 19th century had summed up that "Kathmandu valley has as many temples as there are houses and as many idols as there are men". So, with the destruction of few temples and palaces, there is no reason for us to be afraid of.

Similarly, in respect of our jungle safari, trekking areas, river rafting and mountaineering part of tourism spectrum have not been affected by the quake, barring few ruptures here and there which is not creating any hurdle for the tourist to roam around. Hence, our point of argument is that when our tourism related infrastructures are safe and sound, we have seemingly

become victimized by wrong and misplaced information served to the tourist. This is an injustice meted out to a country whose huge income is derived through tourism promotion. Due to the absence of visitors, now, travel agencies are running out of business, hotels are squeezed with only few guests to stay in, losing a potential income to feed their staffs. If such awful situation persists further, it may seem very likely that they will have no other option other than to shut the hotel down. Circumstance has created even more frightening situation to the transporters, this may include both air and overland transporters. Even in the present context vehicular movement across the country have been sharply restricted for want of tourist, resulting in the tremendous slow down in the economy.

Therefore, it is high time that all those who are intimately connected with Nepal tourism as well as all the foreign well-wishers must join hand to vigorously promote Nepal in the international arena that the country is absolutely safe to visit and for that matter, the counterpart agencies of their respective countries together with all insurance companies must also be ensured that Nepal still continues to be a vibrant tourist hub as specified by Lonely Planet.

In the capacity as president of TURGAN, I am obliged to speak and to bring the truth in front of you that we are really hard hit by the recession inflicted to the tourism. Our highly qualified tour guides are totally devoted to their profession, who have been engaged for the past many years serving the need of the tourists and have been instrumental in promoting this industry playing as a role to that of an ambassador, so to speak. But with sudden downfall of tourism, our guides have to face complete job loss resulting in drastic reduction in their regular income. Therefore, our fear is, in the event, our guide decided to switch over to other profession, the industry has to face a great shortage of qualified and experienced guides to fill up the vacuum.

I again like to request you that in order to mitigate such an uncalled for situation is to ensure that the hitherto flow of tourists in Nepal must go undeterred and unobstructed. For that matter your co-operation in convincing the international community that Nepal is, culturally, naturally and from the point of view of adventure, an extremely viable country to visit.

In conclusion, Even though some exaggeration of the destruction caused by Earthquake may have happened we should not forget to convince our valuable guest the importance of our culture. Let us find some key personalities who could positively explain Nepal's glory, and invite them to visit here such as, Journalists, tour operators, key personalities in tourism as well as in other field. Let us also try to show them what we have lost and convince them that their visit helps to restore the damages, help the quake victims etc.

Thank you.

## 9.4. Remarks by Mr. Thakur Raj Pandey, General Secretary Nepal Mountaineering Association



Chairperson, Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari, Executive Director, IFA  
Respected paper presenter Mr. Prachand Man Shrestha, Former CEO, NTB  
Mr. Gobinda Bahadur Karkee, Director General. Department of Tourism  
Excellences, various diplomats  
Higher authorities, officers  
All tourism entrepreneurs

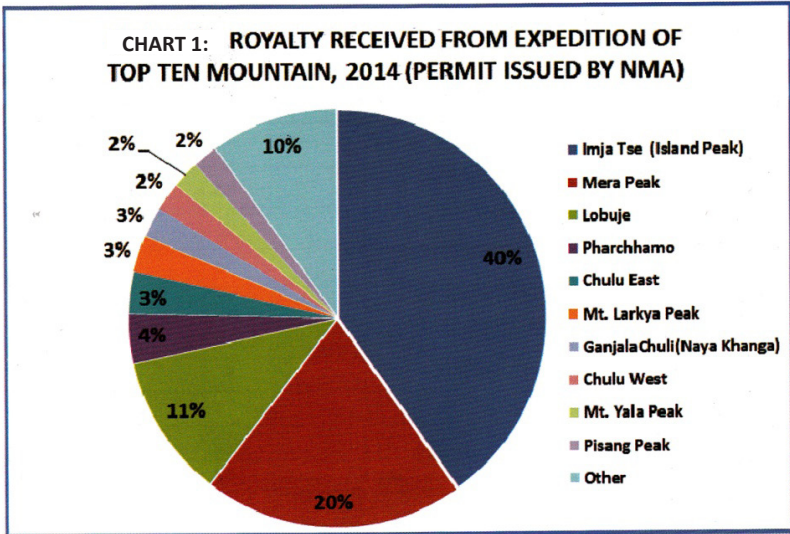
Tourism sector is the largest income source of foreign currency in Nepal. Many tourist visit Nepal for different purposes like business, pilgrimage, adventure and holiday. According to the tourism statistic total numbers of tourist arrival for different purpose in Nepal for last five year is as follow.

Table: 1 Tourist arrival year wise and purpose wise

| Year | Pleasure | Trekkin | Business | Pilgrimage | Official | Con. /<br>conf. | Other  | Not<br>Specified | Total  |
|------|----------|---------|----------|------------|----------|-----------------|--------|------------------|--------|
| 2010 | 263,938  | 70,218  | 21,377   | 101,335    | 26,374   | 9,627           | 52,347 | 57,615           | 602867 |
| 2011 | 425,721  | 86,260  | 17,859   | 63,783     | 24,054   | 10,836          | 37,311 | 70,391           | 736215 |
| 2012 | 379,627  | 105,015 | 24,785   | 109,854    | 30,460   | 13,646          | 48,540 | 97,165           | 803092 |
| 2013 | 437,891  | 97,309  | 30,309   | 40,678     | 39,881   | 15,952          | 62,214 | 73,381           | 797616 |
| 2014 | 395,849  | 97,185  | 54,494   | 98,765     | 32,395   | 13,432          | 53,728 | 74,271           | 790118 |

Mt. Everest, the highest mountain in the world is located in Nepal along with 8 out of 10 highest mountain peaks in the world. Many tourists are attracted here for mountaineering and other adventure activities. Mountaineering refers to the sports of mountain climbing, ski mountaineering etc. It involves scrambling or short stretches of more basic grades of rock climbing. During 2014 out of 790118 tourists 97,185 tourists visited Nepal for trekking and mountaineering. According to the data provided by Ministry of Culture Tourism and Civil Aviation total numbers of tourist who went to expedition on those mountain managed by Nepal Government were 2490 and total number of people employed due to this expedition were 490 and total earning from these expedition was USD \$ 3,576,715. Total number of climbers who went to the expedition on the peaks managed by Nepal Mountaineering Association were 6059 and total revenue earned from these expedition was USD 515,645.

The chart below shows royalty received from expedition of top ten peaks in 2014 A.D.



(Nepal Tourism Statistics 2014)

### **Nepal Mountaineering Association and its Role in Development of Mountaineering Tourism in Nepal.**

Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA) was established on November 1, 1973. It is a non-governmental, non-profit and non-political organization working as a National Alpine Association of Nepal to promote mountain tourism, climbing sports, protect mountain environments and preserve and promote cultural heritage of mountain people.

### **International Mountain Museum (IMM)**

IMM has been established on a six-hectare site in the Lake City of Pokhara that also boasts of an uninterrupted view of the great Himalayan range of western Nepal. The establishment of the International Mountain Museum was made to record, document and chronicle the past and present development of mountaineering activities in the world in general and to preserve the saga of the momentous feats in the history of mountaineering in the Himalayan peaks in particular. The museum exhibits include mountain, people and their culture, world mountain system, their geological formation, flora and fauna and the exhibits related with the mountain activities such as mountaineering,

skiing etc. in addition to mountaineering history and the development of mountaineering techniques and equipment over the years. It also serves as an archive for both Himalayan and international mountain research. The museum was officially opened on 5 February 2004. There were total 1,259,527 visitors and it earned Rs. 96,380,908 till fiscal year 2071/72.



International Mountain Museum, Pokhara

### **Mountaineering Training**

The development of mountaineering profession as a safe profession is one of the major objectives of NMA, therefore, it has trained 2064 mountaineers under different training categories since 1979. NMA in coordination with Nepal National Mountain Guide Association (NNMGA) is also conducting Winter Aspirant Mountain Guide Course. This course is regarded as one of the highest course in the field of mountaineering. NMA hopes that commencement of this course will minimize the necessity of going aboard for mountaineering training.

### **Diamond Jubilee Celebration**

NMA has been playing key role in the celebration of completion of sixty years of the first ascent of the mountains above 8000 M. The peaks include Mt. Everest, Mt. Cho-oyu, Mt. Makalu, Mt. Kanchenjunga, Mt. Lhotse, Mt. Manaslu and Mt. Dhaulagiri. It is worthwhile to mention that Ministry

of Tourism and Civil Aviation deputed NMA as implementing agency for the celebration of the completion of fifty of years of first ascent of all the peaks mentioned above. As per the responsibility shouldered upon, it had also conducted all the Golden Jubilee Celebrations successfully with the active participation of world renowned mountaineers like Sir Edmund Hillary, Reinhold Messner, Peter Habler, Junko Tabei etc. Most of the Golden Jubilees were celebrated during insurgency period and it publicized globally Nepal as one of the most favored mountaineering tourism destination of the world.

### **Peak Profile Preparation**

Peak Profile Sub-Committee was formed with the decision of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil aviation on 10 January 2014 under the Chairmanship of Ang Tshering Sherpa, President of Nepal Mountaineering Association to prepare profile of 430 mountain peaks. The profile will contain all the detail information of mountain in digital format as well as booklets which will make easier to plan for the expedition team.

After the earthquake on 25th April 2015 NMA has been working in partnership with UN World Food Program (WFP) and is assessing the community and trekking trails, bridges, roads and other infrastructure for the safety of tourist from the upcoming autumn season. At the same time with the financial support from UK Aid and SAMARTH NMA is building Mountain huts and shelter in popular mountaineering and trekking region.

**Thank you.**

## **9.5. Remarks by Ms. Ujjwala Dali, Chief Marketing Division Nepal Tourism Board**



Respected Chairman Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari, Executive Director, IFA  
Excellences and councilors from various diplomatic missions  
Government agencies and Ministries as well as the head of various tourism  
associations  
Friends from media and travel agencies  
Gentle ladies and gentlemen  
Very warm good afternoon !

This is really an industrious gathering in the sense that so far used to always interact with the professional from the tourism sector. Today it is mostly foreign ministry and foreign diplomatic missions. My sincere suggestions is that we take this forward and definitely look forward to another seminar where we have a more interactive session rather than getting remarks from every association. Next is obviously my sincere thanks and congratulations to our former CEO key presenter of today Mr. Shrestha for presenting very illustrious paper for drawing a complete picture of present and post earthquake tourism scenario. This was really a gist and highlight of where we are going now and where we need to go so rather than commenting on this paper which answers all of us agree on the strategic vision and the marketing approach as well as the various challenges so presented in the presentation. We must appreciate and agree on the situation and move ahead. I only see after four months such interactive session that our industry is now lacking the force and movement to move ahead rather than discussing about the action and strategic planning and marketing approach.

I'd like to share another thought that NTB after four years of vacant after prachand sir's departure from NTB, we are happy to share what he has presented in the presentation. Definitely we have the similar approach and similar challenges taken and the strategic planning for this as given by PATA as well as certain agencies like CBI and some others. I do like now to say a few words on what NTB has been doing for past two months in line with the presentation of course. Number one, we have already been in touch with government agencies with NOTKA and Department of Tourism, Mr. Gobinda Bahadur Karki, Director General and TV presenter. I'm happy to share that

for last four years, we have been going to such occasion for interacting with the media as well as the tourism professional from world over and we got together in Bangalore last for PATA Travel March and we have followed our vision of having Nepal back on top of the world, so much so that when we ended the tour people have been coming to us and saying that now after four months you should come back and say Nepal is always the top of the world. So such is the overwhelming response that international community is expressing towards us. And that is why we need to walk together with private sector and the association to have proper promotional campaign where we definitely look for return on investment. Marketing isn't only the activities that we go and talk about but we share our information and present the better scenario. We definitely will get the tourist arrival back to the figure of 2014, which we have seen the daily data in past few months. Third and most important, NTB has been acting with various NGOs and INGOs like DFID and many others especially PATA and CBI from outside Nepal, who have come forward to extend their hands and I see definitely we get a very beautiful plan and sketch out strategic plan for marketing which NTB is following with the discussion and mutual consultation with the industry. July onwards, we definitely started our campaign of "Nepal Back to the Top of the world." First initiative was getting recovery committee which got international report and survey and beside, the social web site are used to talk about Nepal now. That was the campaign that has been initiated. The campaign has gone to the second stage now we have had many pictures on social media saying "I am in Nepal Now". We have got very big personalities and celebrities coming to our interaction as well as functions and the exhibition saying, "I wish I was There in Nepal Now". And this picture will be posted in this website. Support has been received from CBI funding agencies from Netherland. We have [www.Nepal now. org](http://www.Nepal now. org) web site where we have slowly sorted our work and putting on blocks and many beautiful stories of visitors visiting Nepal post earthquake. Now after the paper has been presented all of us should agree that team work is essential. Unified approach, strategic marketing and destination management is the need of the hour and we should be coming forward to put our hands together bouncing back for Better Nepal as Better Tourist destination. Learning from the past experiences our infrastructure always have been the weakness to promote Nepal. We need to cash on the opportunity of this post earthquake scenario to make the infrastructure stronger. We keep on talking about certain destination are unaffected, such as about Shukla Phata, Bardia, Ilam, Damodar kunda and so many places. Yes, we have them, we need to promote them why don't we utilize this opportunity to get all the infrastructure rebuilt/up graded such as hotel, lodges, roads etc.

in those destinations with the help of government and ministry. My sincere appeal to the diplomatic missions is to extend hand for our destination promotion events in various countries. We have few programmes in the pipelines. For next two months from July till September we have many destinations such as Australia, Southwest Asia, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and India. Major metro-cities like Mumbai, Kolkata, Banglore and Simla we have visited. In fact, Nepal industry based in Dellhi has been more active. I believe India has already got the message that Nepal is safe to travel and we are back for business. PDF Kolkata may be visited in July. Mumbai may be visited just in two weeks and we again got very good response with Nepal Airlines coming to our help and supporting our promotional campaign with "Buy Two Get One Free" offer. The airfare have been slashed to 50% for this whole month of September and Bombay crowd was very happy to see that. So the national carrier has also been putting extra bit with feeling of risky decisions of "Buying Two and Get Three" and slashed their price. So I request also to the ministry as well as Department of Tourism wherever possible we need to have consultation with the Airlines carrier to have more frequency of flights added considering that the air service agreement have been increased. And lastly but not the least Nepal Tourism Board as Dr. Ganesh Gurung has already said that NTB is structure like a divorcée. I needless to say that NTB employee are experiencing the same feeling like the children of the divorcee. So in this gathering I'd like to request all concerned to first take initiative to try all the best to see NTB in the state of happily married couple, so that our destination marketing agencies which has the role of management situation to get the industry together. First and foremost we need to address these issues which are very critical and hope this seminar today helps get back to these critical issues as seriously as possible and then we can go ahead with all the vision that has been presented in the paper.

Thank you

## **9.6. Remarks by Mr. Gobinda Bahadur Karkee, Director General Dept of Tourism**



Thank you Mr. Chairman

I would like to briefly touch upon some of the issues and questions raised by the participants here. These concern regarding whether we're going to promote domestic tourism and/or foreign tourist. As briefly presented by our today's presenter, of course domestic tourism contributed in national economy in different ways. It creates employment. It mobilizes the local resources and economic activities. But one thing is very crucial that the money goes from one person to another. But we need beyond that. Foreign currency is very important which is only possible from international tourism. We all know we are facing the very big trade deficiencies. Foreign currency through the international tourist is one of the biggest factors to fulfil the trade deficits and it contributes for having favourable balance in economic term. So Nepal's first priority should be international tourism. Of course we can't forget the domestic tourism. Many participants very seriously raised the issue of our political context, Nepal Banda, strikes and things like that. I was one and half years in the Ministry of Home Affair. Just recently one month before I joined this department. Now our country is in the process of making new constitution and we are in the transitional phase and police and administration are not strong enough to implement the rule of law in the country. But as we all know I think you might have heard today morning news that coming Sunday we will have a new constitution, Federal Democratic Constitution in this country. I think after Sunday after new constitution we will have different political scenario in the future. As an administrator I can say that from new constitution we will have different political scenarios and we will have different kind of administrative system. In a sense that we can't escape by shifting the blame. Some political disturbances we can see right now in the mid-terai region. This kind of situation prevails for shorter period of time, it can't go longer in my view. So, this kind of political disturbances; which can directly affect to the tourism industry in Nepal we will solve in medium period of time may be in another six months. So, we should be optimistic in this issue in my view. And of course we can mobilize the NRN and diplomatic missions abroad for having positive perceptions for the international community.

I think we are going that way as our honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs has already mentioned that the economic diplomacy is focusing on tourism revival. I was previously Local Development Officer and Under Secretary of Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development. I think in future even though there is no participation today from the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development. We can implement the local kind of tourism activities, festivals and local infrastructure. We involve and we participate with the local bodies when we implement various tourism related activities in the field level. And of course the selection of CEO is the priority of the government as far as I know and just two weeks ago we have new Secretary in Ministry of Culture Tourism and Civil Aviation and he has also given top priority as far as I know for selection of CEO for NTB so that it will function as before. I think these are some of the issues, I just want to address. NTPC (National Tourism Promotional Committee) members, I think we are here, including all commentators and the people who gave the remarks. They are actually representing the private sector. I am also one of them. I think from the representative point of view there is a private sector representation in this program.

Thank You.

## **10. Floor Discussion of both sessions**

### **Post - Earthquake : Resurgence of Tourism in Nepal**

#### **Mr. Udaya Raj Pandey, Former Ambassador.**

My remark is about Nepal government, Tourism Board and the entrepreneurs related with tourism industry. I'm the former ambassador of Saudi Arabia. Recently an event happened, some tourists whom I have recently met and asked about where they were staying? Among them one answered that he was staying at newly made hotel but the next one opposed him and told that it was not new but just recently decorated. After listening, he decided to leave the hotel immediately. The next day I went to the Minister of Tourism and reported him about the event and gave him some suggestions to remove the fear of tourists. We should ask tourists to visit those areas so that they themselves claim that Nepal is not as dangerous to visit as advertised. Their claim will be more beneficial to remove fear as well as to get support of journalists so that they write positive aspects of tourism these days.

#### **Mr. G.P. Acharya, Student MIRD, TU**

Good morning, Respected chairman, Paper presenter, Excellences, Ladies and gentlemen.

So, within focusing on earthquake, damages and reconstruction, it is not my question rather it is suggestion. Why not focus on like earlier commentator Dela Prasain just giving importance of domestic tourism. We have 1.4billion population to the north and 1.3billion population to the south. Let us mobilize this tentatively 2.7billion population. Also I think we need to look for third country tourist too. So, is not it time to focus on such tourism diplomacy right now?

#### **Mr. Sarad Pradhan, Initiative for the Travel Advisory**

We are unable to see the representative from private sectors. So from now we have to consider private sector. My recent experiences about it is supportive. Better to have in hand with both private and government sector in such events.

**Mr. Antosh Pradhan, Research Manager, Siddharth Connecting.Inc.Pvt.**

The question is about the topic of resurgence. What are the plan and action conducted by private sector, Nepal Tourism Board, Nepal government to revive the tourism industry in our country?

**Mr. Buddhi Narayan Shrestha, Board Member, IFA**

My question is for paper presenter Mr. Prachanda Man Shrestha. My question is short and direct. What is your suggestion to build back to the touristic home stay area like Barpak of Gorkha and Langtang of Rasuwa with the eyes of tourism related agencies and organization? How could you advise international tourists that now its 100 percent safe to visit those areas that service delivery is available as before. And I have one suggestion in your presentation. You have mentioned so many things. I'd suggest you had incorporated the scenario of this Everest base camp after earthquake that are experienced by the Everest expedition. And you should have incorporated how they were affected physically and mentally and what was their feeling at that very moment. And the other point is what major helping points were extended by our mountain tourism related agencies/organization during that great disaster to make consolation to the international expedition, so that they could be assured during future disaster.

**Mr. Mana Rishi Dhital, Janadesh Weekly**

Earthquake hasn't only left us the disaster and sorrows rather it helped to increase the feeling of brotherhood among us. There is some suspicion that media has played negative role. However, Nepali media and its role were praiseworthy which helped a lot to get information and to minimize the fear and horrors of common people. Nepali media will support on the process of rebuilding and reconstruction. It is needed to highlight the talks on the reconstruction process. Even journalist helped police to providing important information about certain incidents in different areas that made them easy to do. Now it is time not to begin construction only rather it is time to begin to discuss on the process of new building as well. Similarly, the investment of newly searched areas is essential to highlight tourism sector.

**Ms. Prapana Maskey, Journalist, Swatantra Sanchar**

In every field we have done more mistakes before. However, in every sector media should play vital role to highlight that Nepal is safe destination for tourism. Media should focus on positive reconstructive activity that helps to increase the tourists as well as discussion of positive sides of our country from

both micro and macro level by getting support from related persons. It is the duty we have to begin now.

**Mr. Chet Nath Kadel, Tourism Professional**

First of all, a lot of thanks for earthquake because it has made possible to be together for NTB and tourism related organization after 15 years. It can help to appoint the CEO in NTB. We are unable to invite the representatives from local development department. They are needed to make plan in such time. I'd like to request to mobilize all the related sectors of tourism as fast as possible so that construction and reconstruction will be easy. It is essential to appoint CEO of NTB. Mobilization of local sectors, implementation of constructive plan is the issue to discuss today.

**Mr. Tika Ram Gurung**

It should give more priority for reconstruction and rebuilding of damaged monuments and buildings only after that the tourists will visit us. Making plan and organizing seminars in 5 star hotels is not the solution of present issue, rather implementation in local area is urgent now.

**Mr. Narendra Dev Bhatta, HRN**

The present earthquake has only got physical damage but in tourism sector, earthquake is frequent. The regular strikes of unsatisfied groups and political instability has been indirectly making tourism weak. This is what we have to realize now. Every sector should be responsible to enhance tourism industry. Unnecessary activities should stop so that we can be able to strengthen the tourism sector. Every sectors should be responsible, either government or private sector, in this critical hour.

**RESPONSES**

**Paper Presenter Mr. Prachand Man Shrestha**

Very interesting and very encouraging to get the responses. They are present from the international community and there are a lot of questions and enthusiasm coming up. Fifteen so suggestions/questions were raised and few are very specific and few related with policy reform. Perhaps we do have Director General present here to policy responses. He will try to handle. In the mean time specific questions are concerned with subsectors presentation and association here. So I'd like to respond couple of things. Yes, number one Baikuntha jee raised very important question. After the disaster incident as earthquake, is there any approach or strategy to have generalised actions and

specific actions for particularly affected areas? Tika Ram jee has mentioned whether there is any specific budget allocation for reconstruction or revival for particular areas so that we have to note down as a suggestion from the seminar coming up. My observation is seminar like this is more intended towards sensitizing the different diverse stakeholders on the issues and the specific tangible response you can not expect now from seminar or from particular agencies. There are so many agencies representing here. After this seminar, you have to follow up what the particular agencies have taken up, as their actions, policies, programs whatever as sensitized in the seminar. Nothing is wrong with that, and then domestic tourism it was time to time raised in different forms. Is it a right time for us to discuss the segment I have just indicated? I mention that until now Nepalese government do not have a position on domestic tourism. It is as default result not the targeted result and particularly from this seminar the title is how we can mobilize international donor communities, international representational frames, international media and representation abroad for the purpose of putting back all the things on track. So domestic tourism yes, but is not the topic of discussion at this point of time. Nepalese people increased travel outside not inside and it is the contractor's risk factor on infrastructures and so many things. This is different chapters we have to deal in the domestic tourism. In the meantime Sarad jee rightly mentioned that there is something going on but still on this point disaster related agencies of the government to what extent they are supposed to be mobilized and who are going to mobilize them is the question. Dr. Gurung has rightly pointed out if he could put in place the terms of reference for appointment in the missions abroad. But every year it has to be evaluated. What they did tangibly? What is the outcome not to say punishment. They can be called back. What is the propositions of NTB that has not been implemented. Mr. Antosh jee has rightly raised, the deviatiaion I mentioned in the position of the government. Two years of reconstruction revival program or six months to one year is a question. I mentioned that PATA recommendation for crisis management interventions is for six months not more than this. In the mean time the agencies are trying to put up different actions for travel and trekking association and Nepal Mountaineering Association. This is extending at least hoping for the next year. And the longer term construction, reconstruction whether you call at punanirman or nawanirman this is nirman which takes time for the physical construction. It can be done within a six months or one year or perhaps it will take two years. So there is need for stratification of the issue, we are supposed to do. Surendra Lohani raised about the local agencies. This is structural problems in Nepal. I asked this question for the floor who is responsible for tourism development in this country? Is the line ministry and private investor or NGO or NTB? There is very clear demarcation in every part of the world. If you are trying local resources local physical assest as tourism

product like monuments, national beauties, national park whatever these belong with the ownership of local governing agencies. But we don't have any strategic plan for developing their part of the area for the purpose of tourism. How they want to use our heritage? What are the elements they want to use for purpose of tourism? No plan. That's why we are in crux in between. Fund is not very clearly used whether it is for the maintenance for the sustainable use, whatever it is not clear. After 50 or 60 years we will be coming back with the same issues. Buddhi Narayan jee asks what is the suggestion on building back all these destroyed site? As per the report of PDNA, 93% destruction is of the private sector, privately owned houses and particularly the lodges, home stays, hotels handled and operated by the private sector, basically small interpreneurs. Major damages happened there. And naturally there should be national policy framework on the discussion with the planning commission with assessment of donor agencies requested to mobilize the reconstruction. I m pretty sure that these local people aren't waiting for longer time for the reconstruction. Because, Nepal has been fighting all the disasters since long. As it started mobilizing the local volunteers whatever local resources with their own technologies within their own capacity. I mention somewhere how the trekking trails were built and how is coming back again. Only some of the things which are beyond their capacities will remain waiting for the support from the central agencies. Anyway from the tourist how do we assure the services? I always used to assure when I was in the tourism sector. The first safety assurance comes to the tourist from communities, we call destination communities. Even any instances, against the visiting foreign tourist in this country, if something goes wrong with the tourist there is volunteer offer from the community and that is the beauty of this country. It is remaining and it will remain as the assets of communities operating of the safety and security, Ang Tshering jee mentioned a lot so normally I'd like to try to focus on the products of this country. We are selling risk, we are making money. Selling the risks in all the mountain we call it adventure. Adventure is not the product without a risk. Now we have to gear it up. Within fifteen minutes, Nepal should have systems to address call of any tourists from anywhere in the country to mobilize the rescue system. Perhaps this is an opportunity for us to create that. Last year even couple of years ago there were a lot of accidents and incidents in base camps which captured the international media and they posted the national geography or whatever you know. They were just focusing on trauma that has caused in Everest base camp which has been taken by the international community as general perception of happening in Nepal. That is what we have to address segregating the things specific and generalization. What NTB is trying to do with all this? Lastly these days websites isn't working very efficiently. If you have the website created even marketing from website is very costly and time taking. But more popular is social media. One is trying

to create a social media. This is the point each individual involves directly or indirectly. Industry has to spin of this social media.

Thank you very much for all energetic participation and very very effective response. I will certainly be educated to improve my presentation. I will call this is not my presentation itself but it is just sharing of my past experiences where we can build for the future. And all these agencies like ministry, department, foreign affairs and different association and at the mean time NTB is all prepared. Somebody has to push, somebody has to coordinate. Thank you very much for your patience to listen to me.

### **Dr. Ganesh Gurung**

Earthquakes, political earthquake are all emergencies keeping in mind the autumn 2015 tourist season. This is emergency but when trying to address through normal system, there is our problem. I was talking with Dinesh Shakya. Dinesh Shakya was dealing with money. Money will be received in some other months, after few months. We are in the emergency systems trying to be addressed by normal system. That is a problem that is why I talked about institutional thing whether there is a divorce with the institution and the reality or not. As Ms. Della said correctly but I want to see not only married couple but I want to see love married, happily married couple not forceful married couple. This is my dream. Lastly, as I told already somebody raised what you guys are doing? I m advisor in Nepal Mountain Association, My question is that we are trying to do without resources, small things like Lukla to Namche. There are eight blocks where trails has to be repaired. We have sent the person there with local tourism committee. We want to think the Sep 31st deadline. This is how we need to address, So what we can do from outside we need to do.

### **Mr. Ang Tshering Sherpa**

We have spent five months after earthquake. NTB has been working in most of the Himalayan regions. You can see me in sindhupalchok, Dolakha and other affected areas frequently. Dr. Gurung has told that we should give priority on the reconstruction and rebuilding, with the consultation of related organizations. After this we ask diplomats to visit these areas where they pronounce that they are here and Nepal is safe. International media will capture the scenes and we can revive the tourism. I found this seminar more effective in this context. Due to the massive earthquake, more than 2 lakhs people are directly or indirectly affected. I request to make an effective plan to address it in an effective way.

## **11. Remarks by Chairperson Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari, Executive Director, Institute of Foreign Affairs**



First of all let me express my thanks to all of the participants in this session to have taken the topic of the seminar seriously and come together to discuss the status and way forward for rescuing the tourism sector in the country after earthquake of April 25, 2015.

Tourism is a natural resource gifted for mobilization for country's prosperity and livelihood of the common masses.

We talked a lot of things. I don't want to go in detail. We talked about the damages that has been caused. We also talked about the significance of the tourism and the implementation of the tourism sector plans. I am not talking about the wrong messages from international as well as national media and over exaggeration of the situation of the damage. I am talking about the roles of different stakeholders because it can have very productive exercise which will change with the co-work of government-private sector-diplomatic missions. I appreciate positive response from the media. When we talk about different roles, I mention when I was in Kuala Lumpur I say that I was also the Chief Labour Attachè. I am also talking about the missions' role and functions to attract investors and create better environment for NRN. I also requested the diplomatic communities to change the travel advisory to positive side. I also talk about need of plan and actions is very good suggestions. The action and the positive approach is requested because sometimes we say we do good things but no quality way and it doesn't lead to good result. So there is the technical need of implementing the plan of the tourism sector. Implementation is the main problem. Talking about political earthquake as another aspect of the earthquake, I don't want to tell that as all of these points have been taken care of.

I once again thank you all for active participation. I appreciate Mr. Prachanda jee, Dr. Ganesh Gurung and Mr. Ang Tshering Sherpa together with all the commentators. I extend my thankfulness to the Excellencies from different embassies for their positive response to our request of posting positive message about the status of tourism in Nepal.

Let us join for the lunch and I close this important session.

## **12. Summary of the Seminar**

### **Mr. Chandra Shekhar Adhikari, Senior Diplomatic Correspondent, Kantipur Daily**



#### **Introduction**

April 25 was a black day for Nepali people, as a 7.8 magnitude earthquake hit the country and caused massive destruction. More than 9000 Nepali lost their lives and made some of them handicapped too. Around, 200,000 Nepali have been displaced. The main quake was followed by number of aftershocks which caused further damage and losses.

Besides the death and destruction, earthquake has dealt the most devastating blow to Nepal's tourism industry as tourism is the major industries in Nepal to promote the nation building. It adversely affected the national economy. Some hotels are damaged, certain trekking routes have been wiped out, and some Kathmandu's World Heritage sites lie in ruins.

International media has been still writing its impact in tourism sector that has given wrong message to international tourists. Despite the negative message to the foreigners, a huge number of international community's came to Nepal for the search and rescue with some relief materials.

Several countries warned their citizens not to visit this country except if they were involved in rescue and relief. However, a social media campaign was initiated to promote tourism. With the friendly behavior and cooperation of our neighboring countries, we resolved ourselves to overcome the devastating quake. Some ambassadors took initiative to spread a positive message of safe destination by visiting some famous destinations.

The government can take serious initiative to actively promote tourism to get the industry back on its feet. Tourists should not be much worried about Nepal, as most of the hotels and infrastructure have been restored in a few months.

Despite this, tourism entrepreneurs, experts and officials believe that the impact of the earthquake will not be long-term. Tourists will start coming back by the autumn season.

Meanwhile, there is no dearth of people to argue that the nationality is in trouble as a result of the collective failure of the parties in writing constitution and their flattery towards the foreign power centers.

Against this backdrop, Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) and Nepal Tourism Board jointly organized a one-day national seminar "**Post-Earthquake: Resurgence of Tourism in Nepal**" on 15th Sep. 2015 with the objective of brainstorming as many ideas as possible on the given topic. Politicians, intellectuals, ambassadors, diplomats, professionals, tourism sectors promoter, interpreneurs, students and cadres of different political parties shared their views in the seminar.

While opening the program, Deputy Executive Director of IFA, Yadav Khanal expressed that Nepalese people got sympathy from the different countries during the earthquake, however, we are loosing to grab the opportunity what is lacking and how to promote our tourism sector as a part of economic diplomacy.

***Hon. Mahendra Bahadur Panday, Minister for Foreign Affairs***

There is no doubt that this topic of deliberation is truly important and relevant, particularly at a time when the tourism sector has remained at the centre of Nepalese economy for years, which has offered jobs for hundreds of thousands of Nepalese, which has always supported the tourism business and entrepreneurs both big and small and both in the cities and the villages, and which has encouraged the socio-cultural diversity to further thrive and prosperous-is crippled by the earthquake. I thank the Institute of Foreign Affairs and its team for organizing this seminar. I believe that the deliberations on such an important issue and its outcome will provide us useful inputs for a tangible and practical approach to be taken in the days to come.

This striking beauty, the thrilling variation of elevation of land within such a short geographical span, amazing diversity in flora and fauna and in culture and life certainly possess a power to make our land a centre of attraction for the people around the world. In addition, our age-old history and culture, numerous historical sites and monuments crafted with fine architectural precision and the smiling people with unity in diversity have added even more to this natural beauty. It is therefore tourism has always remained as one of the major contributors of Nepalese economy with enormous potential. It retains the huge capacity with backward linkages to support businesses, to sustain agro-based and cottage industries and to create economic opportunities for ordinary Nepalese.

The destruction caused by the devastating earthquake that struck Nepal nearly four and half months back was definitely unimaginable in scale and multidimensional in nature. It left its adverse impact on various sectors of Nepalese economy. Truly speaking almost all sectors of economy were impacted. Many houses were destroyed; many schools were tumbled down. Tourism sector, no doubt, was one of the most affected sectors. The damage caused by post-quake rumours and negative publicity or honestly speaking our inexperience and inability to handle the situation in such a scenario was even more serious than the damage caused by quake itself. I am sure that all of you have gone through the 'Post-Disaster Needs Assessment' report which revealed, "Earthquake destroyed tourism-related supply of services and decreased tourist spending are likely to lead to loss of NPR 62 billion over the next two years". The trickled-sown loss and the loss that cannot be calculated purely in monetary terms may be even bigger. And now these incessant and unnecessary bandhs and strikes have threatened the remaining prospect. As such to many people, the situation may not seem much convincing and promising.

Our diplomatic missions abroad, Nepal Tourism Board, Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI), Non-Resident Nepalese Association (NRNA) and all other stakeholders are supposed to play a dynamic role. It is with the realization of this that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has instructed all our embassies abroad to engage actively in further promoting Nepal, in disseminating the positive image of the country in the global arena. In fact, the big chunk of the budget made available to the embassies for economic diplomacy will be used this year for tourism-related activities. The outlay for tourism promotion and marketing designed for normal time is definitely not enough to meet the post-quake scenario. It should be increased may fold. But I am sure that this increased cost would bring fruitful results. Finally we will be able to make Nepal as one of the most attractive tourist destination in the world as envisaged by the government.

***Hon. Kripasur Sherpa Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation***

I do believe that this is the right forum to inform you about the present condition of Nepal's tourism. Nepal is now back to business after 25/04 Earthquake. This is the message that we want to give to international travelers. In a process to bring back the tourism in normalcy, we reopened all monuments in the heritage sites in the Kathmandu valley for tourists on June 15, 2015. So now tourists have access to most monuments in the heritage sites which include Pashupatinath, Swayambhu, Bouddha, Changuarayan and Durbar Square of Bhaktapur, Kathmandu and Patan.

I would like to emphasize that the earthquake affected only a small portion of the territory and now visitors are no longer at risk. Almost 80 percent of the country and many tourist destinations were not touched by the earthquake. From the 35 trekking routes only two are affected. Two of the most popular trekking areas of Nepal, Annapurna and Mount Everest have been given the green light by US based Earthquake engineering specialists Miyamoto International after the assessment funded by DFID and World Bank.

There has been a decline in foreign tourists since the earthquake. Tourism is very important for Nepal's economy and for the Nepalese people. But, we want to make it sure that they travel to Nepal safely and comfortably. So the government is preparing to repair the damaged trekking trails after the monsoon is over.

Most western countries, including Germany, Austria, UK, The Netherlands, Sweden, Australia, Canada, Norway and New Zealand have recently changed the Travel Advisory into a geo specific advice stating not to visit some earthquake affected regions only. I thank them all for their support and request them again to remove the further restriction to Annapurna, Everest and other unaffected areas in their travel advisories.

I request international travelers to visit this magnificent and vibrant country, and support her by visiting it as she attempts to stand proudly on her feet once again. Though some of tangible heritage sites are collapsed, the intangible heritage like cultures and traditions remain intact and alive. Nepal is now embarking upon the most fascinating period in all of its modern history and a tourist could be right there to see it happen and his /her contribution will be a part of rebuilding new Nepal.

Tourism is one of the mainstays of the Nepalese economy, and the best way to support Nepal is to visit Nepal now. Nepal will certainly need the income that tourism brings in as it attempts to recover from this disaster. Tourism is the only way that brings back smiles to the faces of Nepali people.

***HE Dr. Sergey Vasilievich Velichkin, Ambassador of Russian Federation and Dean of Diplomatic Corps***

It gives pleasure to be part of the seminar because I can say this is one of the very timely sought after events. I first of all extend my thanks on the behalf of the diplomatic community here to the Institute of Foreign Affairs with this very timely and commendable effort. I `d like to extend my appreciation to IFA for preparing very good and useful concept paper included in this invitation. However, it means also to be supplemented with traditional analyses of the

impact of monsoon and certain political events. We should analyze them with the perspective for the purposes. The seminar has been called traditionalism. I believe that the impact of constitution making will be quite encouraging and good mobilization fact for the nation. But still its detailed analysis which is going to be attempted will be real activities of the Government, industries, civil society and media. As a major fact recovery started mostly to be quite positive and the diplomatic community here naturally as an guide and as eager to span to all this initiative locally. I think there is no alternative to immediate promotional activities to be initiated by the government and by the business community. This both I think will be focused to be discussion here.

We would like to listen carefully and will shape our responses accordingly. In fact, certain response from the international community has always been there most especially to be challenges with the tourism sector has been countered. Simply refer to better known as an example of some mission highlighting the tourism in country by personal participation in trekking of some kind of trekking opportunities and who changed some of the advisories where they play role to attract tourist. As Russian concerned I would like to mention that we are together with the colleagues in Nepal in accordance with the memorandum of understanding between the two ministry of culture. We are holding in Moscow the Nepalese culture in many ways which may enable in the Russian public to get together. Not just the culture of the country in general but also the state affairs in the country and this is an opportunity for the tourism sector here to highlight those attractions. I'm sure it will be used because of the diplomatic community here. I'd like to ensure the Nepalese friends that the international community will remain sensitive to friendly Nepal and we will be taking part in your efforts to reveal the very substantial and the tremendous potential in tourism industry here to make it great contributions to the restoration and rehabilitation of the country.

***Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari, Executive Director, Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA)***

Dr. Adhikari has given the closing remarks in the opening ceremony appreciating our two Hon. Ministers and HE ambassador of Russia, and the Dean of Diplomatic Corps for their eloquent and thought provoking ideas on the theme of the seminar for setting the tone for the following substantive session. He thanked the distinguished participants who were able to participate in this important seminar on his request in spite of their busy schedule.

Dr. Adhikari said "IFA and NTB are pleased to organize this seminar with the objective to spread the fact of intactness of tourism products with the hope of

instilling confidence amongst the tourists that visit Nepal for mountaineering, trekking, and visiting cultural heritages and enjoying natural beauty. Tourism is very important business in Nepal with substantial backward and forward linkages and having multiplier effect on the economy in the form of job creation and rural earnings. The recent deadly earthquake has to some extent damaged Nepal tourism in multiple ways such as the trekking and trail routes, hotels, cultural heritage etc. However, the resilient people of Nepal seem to have coped with the devastation as they are again welcoming guests with smiling faces as usual and the relevant government bodies and related travel trade entrepreneurs seem to be very optimistic about the future of Nepal's tourism".

He said "It is believed the travel advisory of missions will be positive after the seminar and we thank those friendly countries who have recently posted positive travel advisory. The government has to play active role by widely using electronic media in campaign worldwide in dispelling the negative impression as the private stakeholders cannot do it alone. It is suggested that the diplomats from various embassies need to be toured to mountains and important trails and request them to post positive travel advisory".

**Mr. Prachanda Man Shrestha, Paper Presenter with the title "*Great Quake Impact and Great Hope Reviving Nepalese Tourism*"**

From the very beginning of this morning today the inauguration session, has clearly indicated the significance of the sector tourism for the economy of this country. The galaxy of speaker that lined up today view of situations comparing the immediate and future course of action appropriate for us to do. And I could see to pick up the two words from the morning distinguished speaker. Excellency ambassador of Russian Federation mentioned that Nepal has weakened by disaster of the April 25th and aftershocks. In the meantime we heard from the Honorable Minister from Tourism "damage is nominal and not to be highlighted." At this point of time, Nepalese tourism industries squeeze between these two distinct poles.

Are we going to highlight the damage or are we going to dilute the damage? This is what the international community, international media want to know the position from our side. In this context, my presentation has directed how to manage the time. The concept given to all of us just focuses on four things. Yes there has been suffering beginning April 25th incident and we know very well economic significance of the tourism sectors. And the next is, it has gone out of this country globally which has preference highlighted the perception of the international community about us. And last one is now what we are

supposed to do; the role of government, role of industries, role of the press international community, diplomats and other different players.

So, these four are the basic given for this morning to us and within that frame work I am not going to go in details. The discussion should be very much focused on post earth quake situations and the unique features of tourism industries of this country which is something different from others.

Tourism is the most sensitive sector. It is always vulnerable. Similarly the most sensitive sectors are always exposed to the different setbacks, different incidents, accidents events or disaster, whether economic recession or health or bird flu or earthquake or tsunami or whatever. Tourism is manifestation of the best human psychology. Human being is very popular about forgetting the things. Let's take two example from the neighboring countries with similar type of disaster, Indonesia as the Asian Continent and gulf crisis in the middle east.

Post disaster intervention came at the immediate time span to at least six months to one year. What are the situations of Nepal? What the state can generate? Assure at this point of time for their safety and providing facility is very important. I don't need to highlight and mention others so these are some of the things initiated and are working very well. Now with "I am visiting Nepal, I am already in Nepal, Nothing is wrong" social media mobilization is to mobilize to back our position again. Now the question is whether we bring back the same position or we want to change for second position. Whether we all are trying to orient the same image of Himalaya's Shangrila or national beauties or we are trying to diversify for the people oriented tourism activities is a million dollar question for all of us.

### **Comments by**

#### ***Mr. Ang Tshering Sherpa, Chairman, Nepal Mountaineering Association***

Thank you, Mr. Prachanda Man for such a brilliant and excellent presentation. I don't have much more comments because his presentation was excellent mind glorifying and brilliant. Even though, I'd like to mention few things here about potentiality and prospects of tourism, especially the mountaineering and mountain tourism.

Nepal is developing state in the lap of Himalaya with wide snow peaked vallies, rivers that is ancient with towering temples, a cordially friendly people with fascinating culture. Nepal has a total area of land 147,181 sq km and it is country with the extreme range of altitude with lowest point 67 M to the highest 8848 M known as "summit of World" the tallest Mt. Everest. Mt. Everest is the

top of the world and the ultimate adventure tourism destination in the world. Nepal has got unique and tremendous opportunities for mountaineering, trekking and experiencing the culture and nature all year around by visiting Nepal and also to experience adventurous sports and recreational activities such as rafting, paragliding, bungee jumping, ice climbing, mountain biking, birds watching, jungle safari etc. Every mountaineer dreams of climbing the highest and the greatest mountain on the earth. Nepal has without doubt the highest and the greatest mountain. Nepal is the ultimate destination for mountaineering and adventure. First and foremost, Nepal is a mountainous country and the home of the greatest mountains ranges on earth. The Himalayas is over 12,000 km series of the great ranges of mountains. We Nepalese are proud of sagarmatha, mother of the universe. Sherpas call Jhamolungma that is mother of the universe one of the few places on remarkable imagination of splendid natural beauty with wild snow Cap and an unparallel opportunity of climbing most of the highest mountains in the world. Nepal has been paradise for climbers which some of the most outstanding achievements has been making of history of world's mountaineering. Mountaineering is considered the key scholars activities that Nepal has total climbers more than any country in the world. Nepal on identified 1792 climbing peaks and their elevation ranges from 5800 M to above 8000 M including 1310 peaks that are higher than six thousand metre. Nepal government issues climbing permits for fourteen peaks which are higher than 8000 M.

Nepal provides one of the richest cultural experience in the world. Due to its stiff rock and frozen geometric conditions with high peaks and slopes, tectonic process, variable climatic pattern, very rural topography and other aspects are increasing population, poor economic condition unplanned settlement, low literacy rate etc. Earthquake, floods, landslides, lightning, cause enormous physical damages and losses of lives. The impact of recent earthquake has reat impact to the remote mountain region of Nepal.

A number of meetings and seminars are held, however, no activities are taken in a proper way. I myself have visited some earthquake affected areas like Sindhupalchowk and Dolakha and suggested government to provide a chance to arrange visit of diplomats from MoFA to different mountainous areas like Namche from where they could see the Mount Everest directly. Their voice could be heard directly if they could advertise from the base camp that Nepal is safe to visit. The most affected areas from earthquake is Himalayan areas, where around 2 lakhs mountainous people are displaced.

**Comments by**

***Dr. Ganesh Gurung, Board Member, IFA and Former Member, National Planning Commission***

Prachanda Man Shrestha is a man of tourism in my opinion. I have seen him always, talking tourism, eating tourism, sleeping with tourism. Ang Tshering Sherpa, the earlier commentator, he is a mountain expert. He was born in mountain and he has been talking and walking with mountain. I will tell you a joke before I start my comment. You may know 21 times climber Appa Sherpa of Nepal, who climbed Mt Everest several times without oxygen. He was asked once` what is most difficult thing for you? He told, "More difficult thing is to give a speech than climb Mt. Everest. It is something like this for me to comment on Prachanda Man Shrestha`s paper. I remember Appa now. Mr. Shrestha has very comprehensively presented so many things in his framework and issues that he has raised I`ll highlight more on some of the issues enriching your discussion. I will also give you some clues but I will rather not go in detail. We talked so much about natural earthquake but what about political earthquake, which is very important. We aren`t going to make Nepal safe for tourists. Firstly we need to make safe for Nepalese. Are we safe? Can we go in the different areas? These are important points to be raised. How do we make this political earthquake safer? That is very important for me.

Second point, Mr. Shrestha has slightly touched upon but I`d like to blow up that issue that is globalization of Nepali mission abroad and diplomatic mission in Nepal. Have we organized this seminar by Ministry of Foreign Affairs? Have we given our diplomats, Nepali diplomats with the reward? Have we included tourism promotion as one of the components in their terms of reference? Have we made any type of evaluation on their performance with reward punishment system? that`s very important for us without that we can`t go every time in CNN or BBC which is very expensive. Our mission has to play larger role to promote tourism in Nepal. Because tourism is lifeline or bloodline of Nepal`s economy. In third, I`d like to bring in a discussion and add on Mr. Shrestha`s presentation is understanding of tourism whereas large difference in understanding of tourism exist in Nepal.

Let me give you one example. I counted the days after Baisakh 12 after the earthquake. Today is 143 days that earthquake has occurred. Did our tourism our vulnerable sector has been addressed accordingly? So, even after 143 days, we are not been able to address it properly. I`d like to bring in your notice in the discussion that it is institutions or structures to address tourism in Nepal. I am a person that strongly argue in south Asia that Nepal has made

one best structure or institution in tourism that is Nepal Tourism Board. We hear Nepal Tourism Board has not been properly functioning. I disagree with the point.

### **Remarks**

#### **Mr. Prabesh Aryal, Executive Director, Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN)**

We all are well aware of the fact that Hotel industry is the major component and space of the tourism industry in terms of its investment and by its business nature. It is appropriate to share the fact that we the Hotel Industry prove to be fortunate enough to survive of earthquake with minimum damages. That doesn't mean that no hotels in Kathmandu and touristic destination across the country have been untouched by the quake. Yes of course three star hotels and tourist standard hotels were particularly damaged by the shocks and aftershocks. However, we immediately engaged ourselves in renovation and the retrofitting the damages while engaging our human resources in various human resources training. At this state almost all the hotels are back to business with their new looks and we are ready to provide better hospitality to our valuable guests with enhanced services.

Lastly on behalf of hotels Association Nepal, we request you all to give us the opportunity to serve you with commitment and assurance that our hotels are safe for accommodation and capable to respond to the guests' expectation in terms of infrastructure and services. Once again, I'd like to thank IFA and NTB for initiative this seminar.

#### **Mr. Ganga Sagar Pant, CEO, Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal (TAAN)**

After the earthquake, individual and nation everyone is in confusion which one to promote donors or the entrepreneurs. We want not only business rather responsible business. We need product. How we develop product? Some hardcore activities of TAAN are identification, exploration and promotion of new trekking destinations and trails, enhancement of quality and safety of the trekking trails; construction of emergency shelters, bridges, and view points in the High Passes. Additionally home Stay tourism areas identification, development and promotion rescue and crises management in the mountain tourism; training and capacity building, awareness, education to the employees, training for employment etc. are its core activities. Almost 200,000 youths from remote mountain regions get jobs in the trekking & mountaineering industry with advance first aid training to the trekking guides cannoneering training, cooking & hygiene training in the tourism destination areas.

**Mr. Hare Ram Baral, President, Tourist Guide Association of Nepal (TURGAN)**

This is precisely the time when we observe tourist's arrival to a great extent. Historical sites were full with our guests running up and down, restaurants packed to capacity and hotels overbooked. But, unfortunately, this year, when the busy tourist season is already on but the total picture is very bleak. In accordance to our rough estimate, there may not even 10% of what we have experienced last year. Therefore, this is really a matter of concern for all the tourism fraternity and to the overall economy of the country.

The devastating earthquake occurred on 25th April 2015 and subsequent tremors have left a great setback to the nation's tourism, But, this is not the only deterrent to keep the tourist of this country. The media at home and abroad have played a negative role in creating a sense of fear in the mind of incumbent tourist who very much wanted to visit to this country. In fact, the earthquake has only destroyed a small percentage of our heritage sights, while keeping the bulk of the edifices, temples and palaces in perfect order. Out of 10 world heritage sights declared by UNESCO based in Nepal, only one suffered the wrath of the quake. Mr. Kirk Patrick, a British traveler, who visited Nepal towards the beginning of 19th century had summed up that "Kathmandu valley has as many temples as there are houses and as many idols as there are men". So, with the destruction of few temples and palaces, there is no reason for us to be afraid of.

Similarly, our jungle safari, trekking areas, river rafting and mountaineering part of tourism spectrum have not been affected by the quake, barring few ruptures here and there which is not creating any hurdle for the tourist to roam around. Hence, our point of argument is this that when our tourism related infrastructures are safe and sound, we have seemingly become victimized by wrong and misplaced information served to the tourist.

I again like to request you that in order to mitigate such an uncalled for situation is to ensure that the hitherto flow of tourists in Nepal must go undeterred and unobstructed. For that matter your co-operation in convincing the international community that Nepal is, culturally, naturally and from the point of view of adventure, an extremely viable country to visit.

**Mr. Thakur Raj Pandey, General Secretary, Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA)**

The state of mountaineering tourism in Nepal is interesting. Tourism is the largest industry in Nepal and the largest source of foreign currency, exchange. Nepal is main destination for mountaineering and adventure tourism.

Mountaineering refers to the sports of mountain climbing, ski mountaineering. It involves scrambling or short stretches of more basic grades of rock climbing. Nepal Mountaineering Association has data that there are peaks like lland peak, Tharpuche loguche, Rambo jaljala peak, Loguthe peak etc. We have to highlight these peaks. There is substantial royalty from expedition of the top ten mountains. Nepal Mountaineering Association is promoting international mountain museum.

### **Ms Ujjwala Dali, Chief Marketing Division**

#### **Nepal Tourism Board**

This is really an industrious gathering in the sense that so far always interaction used to be with the professional from the tourism sector. Today, it is mostly foreign ministry and foreign diplomatic missions. My sincere suggestions that we take this forward and definitely look forward to another seminar on this line.

We should have a more interactive session rather than getting remarks from every association. Next is obviously my sincere thanks and congratulations to our former CEO, key presenter of today Mr. Shrestha for presenting very illustrious paper for drawing a complete picture of present and post earthquake tourism scenario. This was really a gist and highlight of where we are going now and where we need to go. I only see after four months of such interactive session that our industry is now lacking the force and movement to move ahead rather than discussing about the action and strategic planning and marketing approach.

I would like to share another thought that NTB after four years of vacant CEO after Prachand sir's departure from NTB, we are happy to share what he has presented in the presentation. Definitely we have similar approach and similar challenges taken and the strategic planning for this as given by PATA as well as certain agencies like CBI and some others. I do like now to say a few words on what NTB has been doing for past two months in line with the presentation of course.

We have been interacting with the media as well as the tourism professional from world over and we had together in Bangalore for PATA Travel March and we have followed vision of having Nepal back on top of the world. So much so that when we ended the tour people have been coming to us and saying that now after four months you should come back and say Nepal is always the top of the world. So is the overwhelming response that international community is expressing towards us.

**Mr. Gobinda Bahadur Karkee, Director General, Department of Tourism**

Economic activities will be enhanced through domestic tourism. However, foreign currency is possible only from international tourists as we are facing trade deficit. In the context of Nepal, first priority should go to international tourists. Nevertheless, political disturbances directly hamper the tourism industry in Nepal.

We must be optimistic in this scenario. We can mobilize Non-Resident Nepalese, Diplomatic community and many others for having true perception. As Minister of Foreign Affairs has said that the economic diplomacy is focusing on tourism revival, we can implement local activities from Local Development Ministry and related sector.

**FLOOR DISCUSSIONS**

***Mr. Udaya Raj Panday, Former Ambassador***

Popular Journalists from different newspapers, NTV, Radio, other TVs including local newspapers and electronic media must have been asked to visit different touristic places like Pokhara, mountainous areas, mountain flights and if possible Bardiya to make them sure that Nepal is safe for tourists. There are no tourism activities yet to promote the tourism after post earthquake where we used to receive numbers of tourists in those places. There is lack of tourism activities in front of Great Wall, Potula Palace, and many other places where we advertise tourism of Nepal. And, the discussion can take place to follow the effective measures to promote tourism after post earthquake.

My remark is about Nepal government, Tourism Board and the entrepreneurs related with tourism industry. I'm the former ambassador in Saudi Arabia. Recently an event happened, some tourists whom I have recently met and asked about where they were staying? Among them one answered that he was staying at newly made hotel but the next one opposed him and told that it was not new but just recently renovated. After listening, he decided to leave hotel immediately. The next day I went to the Minister of Tourism and requested him to review the event and gave him some suggestions to remove the fear of tourists. We should ask tourists to visit those areas so that they themselves can claim that Nepal is not as dangerous to visit as advertised. Their claim will be more beneficial to remove fear as well as to get support of journalists so that they write true aspect of tourism these days.

***Mr. Sarad Pradhan, Initiative for the Travel Advisory, NTB***

We are unable to see the representative from private sectors. So from now we have to consider private sector. My recent experiences about it, is supportive.

Better to be hand in hand in both private and government sector in such events.

As I am associated with Nepal Tourism Board, there is no significant presence of the representatives from Private Sectors. What are the plan of action? We have not seen noteworthy participation of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Post Earthquake. They found no response at all from one Under Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs while he wrote email to him rather he himself and his organization got full cooperation from Private Sectors and they also used MPs of United Kingdom.

***Ms. Dela Prasain, Studen MIRD, TU***

What sort of strategical approach can be implemented in private sectors to promote domestic tourism as most of us have only highlighted international tourism? And, not only the earthquake has slump the tourism, it might be a strategical approach and the policy that cause failure in addressing this issue? Domestic tourism must be prioritized.

***Mr. G.P. Acharya, Student MIRD, TU***

It's not my question rather it is suggestion. Why not focus on like earlier commentator Dela Prasain on giving importance to domestic tourism. We have 1.4 billion populations to the north and 1.3 billion populations to the south if we could make. 2.7 billion population awarenes tourism, I think we need to look for third country tourist so, is not it time to focus on such matter in tourism diplomacy right now.

***Mr. Aantosh Pradhan, Research manager, Siddharth connecting.INC (Pvt. Ltd.)***

The question is about the topic of resurgence. What are the plan and action conducted by private sector, Nepal Tourism Board, Nepal government to revive the tourism industry in our country?

***Mr. Buddhi Narayan Shrestha, Board Member, IFA***

What is your suggestion to build back to the touristic home stay area like Barpak of Gorkha and Langtang of Rasuwa with the eyes of tourism related agencies and organization? How could you advise international tourists that now its 100 percent safe to visit those areas that service delivery is available as before. You have mentioned so many things. I'd suggest you to incorporate the scenario of Everest base camp where earthquake was experienced by the Everest expedition. I suggest you to incorporate how they were affected physically and mentally and what was their feeling at that very moment.

The other point were what major helping points were extended by our mountain tourism related agencies, organization during that great disaster to facilitate the international expedition, so that they could be assured during future disaster.

***Mr. Mana Rishi Dhital, Journalist Janadesh Weekly***

Earthquake hasn't only left us the disaster and sorrows rather it helped to increase the feeling of brotherhood among us. There is some suspicion that media has played negative role. However, Nepali media and its role were praiseworthy which helped a lot to get information and to minimize the fear and horrors of common people. Nepali media will support on the process of rebuilding and reconstruction. It is needed to highlight the talks on the reconstruction process. Even journalist helped police to providing important information about certain incidents in different areas that made them easy to go ahead. Now it is time not to begin construction only rather it is time to begin to discuss on the process of new building as well. Similarly, the investment of newly searched areas is essential to highlight tourism sector.

***Ms. Prapana Maskey, Journalist, Swatantra Sanchar***

In every field we have done more mistakes before. However in every sector media should play vital role to highlight that Nepal is safe destination for tourism. Media should focus of positive reconstructive activity that helps to increase the tourists as well as discussion of positive sides of our country from both micro and macro level by getting support from related persons.

***Mr. Chet Nath Kadel, Tourism Professional***

First of all, a lot of thanks for earthquake because it has made possible to be together for NTB and tourism related organizations after 15 years. It can also help to appoint the CEO in NTB. We are unable to invite the representatives from local development department. They are needed to make plan in such time. I'd like to request to mobilize all the related sectors of tourism as fast as possible. It is essential to appoint CEO of NTB for mobilization of local sectors and implementation of constructive plans.

***Mr. Tika Ram Gurung, Treasurer, Nepal Mountaineering Association***

It should give more priority for reconstruction and rebuilding of damaged monuments and buildings only after that the tourists will visit us. Making plan and organizing seminars in 5 star hotels is not the solution of present issue rather implementation in local area is urgent now.

**Mr. Narendra Dev Bhatta, HRN**

The present earthquake has only got physical damage but in tourism sector, earthquake is frequent. The regular strikes of unsatisfied groups and political instability has been indirectly making tourism weak. This is what we have to realize now. Every sector should be responsible to enhance tourism industry. Unnecessary activities should stop so that we can be able to strengthen the tourism sector. Every sectors either government or private sector in this critical hour, need to act responsibly.

**RESPONSES**

**Mr. Prachand Man Shrestha**

It is very encouraging and interesting to get the responses. Fifteen questions and suggestions are raised and out of that few are very specific. Mr. Baikuntha has raised very important questions; after the incident of disaster of earthquake, is there any approach to strategy to have generalized actions or specific actions for particularly affected areas? Is there any specific budgets allocated for nonstructural revival for certain area?

My observation is seminars like this are more intended towards sensitizing the different diverse stakeholders on the issues and the specific tangible answer can't be expected from the seminar in particular areas or field. So many agencies are representing here. I am concerned that after this seminar what the particular agencies have taken as their policies, actions, programme as sensitized in the seminar.

Domestic tourism was time to time raised in different forums. It is not the specific topic to be discussed particularly this time. Nepalese people are encouraged to travel outside not inside and its the lost factor. How we can mobilize, international donor communities, international representation, international media and Nepalese mission abroad for the purpose of putting back all the things on track is the issue today.

Reconstruction and new construction takes time as it is physical construction. It can't be done within six months or one or two year rather takes more than that. Structural problem with Nepal is who is responsible person for the tourism development in Nepal. Line Ministries, private investors or the NGOs? In every part of the world we use local resources, local physical assets such as tourism products. We don't have any strategic plan for developing part of the area for purpose of tourism. How they want to use their heritage? What are the elements they use for the purpose of tourism? No plan yet.

As Mr. Buddhi Naryan has raised the question, what is the suggestion on building back all these destroyed road elements as per the report of PDNA? The raised fund for the reconstruction has not been used for repair and maintenance. It takes 50 years to 60 years to welcome back in the same line if it continues.

There was 93% destruction of private sectors, private old houses, districts, homestays, hotels which are handled by private sectors basically small entrepreneurs. National policy framework is under discussions. Planning commission, donor agencies and resources are mobilised for construction. As I am pretty sure that local people are no longer waiting for the reconstruction. Nepal has been fighting for this disaster since long. They have mobilized local volunteers, local resources, own technology within their own capacity. Alternatively, diversion are already created.

How do we assure the services? I always used to assure when I was in tourism sector. The first, safety assurance comes to tourist from community we call destination community. Is there any instance against visiting foreign tourist in our country?

All the industries have to be institutionalised for safety and security of the tourism. We have to address suggesting the things. Social media is the fastest movement to advertise. Nepal television is ready but somebody has to push and coordinate.

***Session concluded by Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari, Executive Director of the IFA***

We talked much about the damages caused by devastating earthquake. We also talked about the significance of the tourism and the implementation of the tourism sector plan. I am also talking about the roles of different stakeholders. I appreciate the role of the local media who send positive messages. I am also talking about the missions' role and functions. I also request the diplomatic community here to change the travel advisory to positive side. I think there is need of implementation of plans and actions. Sometimes we do many things but non quality way and it doesn't mean good result. So there is the technical need of implementing the plan of the tourism sector. Implementation is the main problem. Talking about political earthquake on the positive aspect of the earthquake, I don't want to tell that all of these points have been take care of. I once again thank you all for active participation and we come to the conclusion of the seminar.

**Conclusion**

Tourism is the backbone to boost a country's economy. Nepal is a country of highly diverse and rich geography, cultures, and religions with a huge diversity

within such a limited land mass, a truly diverse world in itself. Besides the death and destruction, April earthquake has resulted the most devastating blow to Nepal's tourism industry.

There is need to assure tourists that reconstruction and rehabilitation will be completed as soon as possible. The PDNA report has urged the government to announce 2017 and 2018 as Visit Nepal Year. NTB and the private sector have been spending a total of NPR 2.20 billion annually on tourism marketing and promotion during normal times. The outlay has to be increased multiple-fold to revive the market, as the report has said that initially there was a need to re-build and re-brand the image of tourism, and significant efforts and resources would be required to do this.

As compared to other sectors of economy, tourism business is more sensitive and its demands are more flexible. After disasters and other disturbances the tour operators and hotel business remain on edge. The increased exaggerated on the destruction and damages of tourism products by media may play negative role on tourism business. Therefore, the government has to play active role by widely using electronic media in campaign worldwide in dispelling the negative impression. In the meantime, diplomats from various relevant embassies may be taken to tour of mountains and important trails and request them to post positive travel advisory. The government's step to assess the damages in Annapurna and Everest region through international experts was a right decision towards campaigning about absence of risk for the tourists to visit Nepal. It will also be appropriate to organize international workshops and seminars on relevant areas including geologists, world Tourism Organization to provide the positive message to the tourists. Further arrangements of active participation of international electronic and other media to cover these events may spread the positive message worldwide.

As a long-term strategy, the government has implemented Vision 2020 setting a goal to increase annual international tourist arrivals to Nepal to 2 million and boost economic opportunities and increase employment in the tourism sector to 1 million. It is focused on increasing government spending in the tourism sector by developing infrastructures like airports, trails, tourism attractions and facilities. Similarly, the Tourism Ministry has developed a new National Tourism Strategy and Action Plan (2015-2024). The proposed strategy will be implemented in two stages.

Phase 1 will last from 2014 to 2018 and the strategy has given emphasis to diversification of tourism products and improvement of livelihoods.

Phase 2 will last from 2019 to 2023 and its emphasis will be on consolidating the new products and locations developed during Phase 1, opening new areas, expanding the product range and targeting new high-yield markets. Tourism has a capacity to heal itself; however, the matter remains on how Nepal Tourism Board and the government deal with the necessary international promotion to bring visitors back in 2015.

## **13. List of Participants in the Talk Programme**

1. Hon'ble Mr. Mahendra Bahadur Pandey  
Minister for Foreign Affairs
2. Hon'ble Kripasur Sherpa  
Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation
3. Mr. Dinesh Kumar Thapaliya  
Secretary  
Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation
4. Mr. Prachanda Man Shrestha  
Former CEO  
Nepal Tourism Board
5. Mr. Gobinda B. Karkee  
Director General  
Department of Tourism
6. Mr. Buddhi Narayan Shrestha  
Board Member, IFA and Border Expert
7. Associate Prof. Dr. Khadga K.C.  
Board Member, IFA  
Coordinator, Master's in International  
Relation and Diplomacy (MIRD), TU
8. Dr. Ganesh Gurung  
Board Member, IFA
9. Mr. Madhu Raman Acharya  
Board Member, IFA and Former Ambassador and Foreign Secretary

- 10 Mr. Arjun Kanta Mainali  
Chief of Protocol  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 11 Mr. Prakash Suvedi  
Joint Secretary  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 12 Mr. Ramesh Prasad Khanal  
Joint Secretary  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 13 Mr. Bharat Regmi  
Under Secretary  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 14 Mr. Ashbin Pudasaini  
Public Relation Adviser  
Minister of Foreign Affairs
- 15 Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa  
Director General  
Department of Passport  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 16 Mr. Rajaram Bartaula  
Under Secretary  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 17 H.E. Dr. Sergey Vasilievich Velichkin  
Ambassador  
Russian Federation and Dean of Diplomatic Corps
- 18 Her Excellency Ms. Martine Bassereau  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
Embassy of the French Republic
- 19 H.E. Maria Teresa Mesquita Pêssoa  
Ambassador Extraordinary Plenipotentiary  
Embassy of the Federative Republic of Brazil

- 20 H.E. Mr. Wijekoon Mudiyansele Senevirathna  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
Embassy of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
- 21 Mr. Kevin Price  
US Embassy
- 22 Mr. Ji Young Park  
Korean Embassy
- 23 Mr. Tomohiro Koyama  
Japan Embassy
- 24 Mr. Fadli Adilah  
Charge d'Affaires a.i./Counsellor  
Malaysian Embassy
- 25 Mr. Migma Sherpa  
Embassy of the French Republic
- 26 Ms. Beatrice Cuénod-Mueller  
Embassy of Switzerland
- 27 Ms. Sanjeeta Pant  
British Embassy
- 28 Mr. Jukka Pekka Ilomaki  
Counsellor (Development)  
Embassy of Finland
- 29 Mr. Kumudh Gurung  
Australian Embassy
- 30 Mr. Stephen Peter Rowe  
First Secretary and Consul  
Australian Embassy
- 31 Mr. Mohammad Barikul Islam  
Second Secretary & Head of Chancery  
Embassy of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

- 32 Mr. Ram Prasad Sapkota  
Under Secretary  
Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation
- 33 Mr. Krishna Lamsal  
Under Secretary  
Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation
- 34 Mr. Rajendra Prasad Sapkota  
Member, Executive Committee  
Nepal Tourism Board
- 35 Mr. Ghanendra Bahadur Shrestha  
Member, Executive Committee  
Nepal Tourism Board
- 36 Mr. Sunil Sharma  
Officiating Director  
Nepal Tourism Board
- 37 Ms. Ujjwala Dali  
Chief, Marketing Division  
Nepal Tourism Board
- 38 Mr. Sharad Pradhan  
Media Consultant  
Nepal Tourism Board
- 39 Mr. Ang Tshering Therpa  
Chairman  
Nepal Mountaineering Association
- 40 Mr. R.M. Duwadi  
Ministry of Finance
- 41 Mr. Hare Ram Baral  
President  
Tourist Guide Association of Nepal

- 42 Mr. Prabesh Aryal  
Executive Director  
Hotel Association of Nepal
- 43 Mr. Thakur Raj Pandey  
General Secretary  
Nepal Mountaineering Association
- 44 Mr. Pramod Ram Misra  
Member, Foreign Relation Department  
Madhesi Janaadhikar Forum (Nepal)
- 45 Mr. Chauyen Lai Shrestha  
Foreign Relation Department  
Nepali Congress
- 46 Mr. Anjan Lama  
Foreign Relation Department  
Nepali Congress
- 47 Dr. Lhamo Sherpa  
Social Activist
- 48 Brig. Gen. Dr. Prem Singh Basnet  
Nepal Army
- 49 Mr. Tulsi Thapa  
President  
Human Rights Council of Nepal
- 50 Mr. Rabindra Khatri  
UNWFP
- 51 Mrs. Mihika Dhakhwa  
Managing Director  
Zenith Experiences Travels Services (P) Ltd.
- 52 Mr. Ramesh Thapa  
Secretary  
Nepal Association of Tour and Travel Agents

- 53 Mr. Chandra Shekhar Adhikari  
Senior Journalist  
Kantipur National Daily
- 54 Mr. Lekhnath Pandey  
Journalist  
The Himalayan Times
- 55 Mr. Kosh Raj Koirala  
Journalist  
Republica
- 56 Mr. Parshuram Kaphle  
Journalist  
Naya Patrika
- 57 Mr. Tika Bandan  
Journalist  
Nepal Samachar Patra
- 58 Mr. Santosh Ghimire  
Journalist  
Annapurna Post
- 59 Mr. Keshab Paudel  
Journalist  
Spotlight Magazine
- 60 Mr. Sunil Sharma  
Nepal Television
- 61 Mr. Purushottam Ghimire  
Nepal Television
- 62 Mr. Badri Gurung  
Nepal Television
- 63 Mr. Santosh Adhikari  
Avenues Television

- 64 Mr. Kush Maharjan  
New 24 Television
- 65 Mr. Yogesh Pokharel  
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- 70 Prof. Dr. Shreedhar Gautam  
Secretary General  
Nepal Council of World Affairs
- 71 Mr. Udaya Raj Pandey  
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- 74 Mr. Vinay Shakya  
Secretary, NTPC

- 75 Mr. Ujjwal Satyal  
Principal  
Nepal Academy of Tourism & Hotel Management (NATHM)
- 76 Mr. Ganga Sagar Pant  
Chief Executive Officer  
Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal
- 77 Mr. Cheban Devkota  
General Secretary, Nepal Paryatan Byabasaee Manch
- 78 Mr. Keshav Shrestha  
Avenues Television
- 79 Mr. Basu Dev Pant  
Journalist  
National News Agency (RSS)
- 80 Ms. Radha Chalise  
Journalist  
Gorkhapatra National daily
- 81 Mr. Suresh Ghimire  
Himalayan Television
- 82 Mr. Sambeg Basnet  
Reporter  
Himalayan Television
- 83 Mr. Ramesh Lamsal  
Journalist  
National News Agency (RSS)
- 84 Ms. Sharmila Gurung  
Journalist  
Mountain Television
- 85 Mr. Shirish B. Pradhan  
Reporter  
Press Trust of India (PTI)

- 86 Mr. Ghanendra Bahdur Shrestha  
Member  
Nepal Tourism Board
- 87 Mr. Rajendra Man Shrestha  
Secretary  
Nepal Mountaineering Association
- 88 Mr. Tika Ram Gurung  
Treasurer  
Nepal Mountaineering Association
- 89 Dr. Hari Prasad Shrestha  
Executive Board Member  
Nepal Mountaineering Association
- 90 Ms. Sama Shrestha  
Nepal Mountaineering Association
- 91 Mr. Chet Nath Kadel  
National Development Center
- 92 Mr. Chandra Bahadur Dahal  
President  
Nepal Association of Rafting Agents
- 93 Mr. Ramesh Prasad Dhamala  
President  
Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal
- 94 Mr. Keshab Pandey  
Senior Vice President  
Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal
- 95 Mr. Kami Rinji Sherpa  
First Vice President  
Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal
- 96 Mr. Sagar Pandey  
General Secretary  
Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal

- 97 Mr. Prakash Khadka  
Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal
- 98 Mr. Manoj Kumar Shrestha  
Second Vice President  
Trek Tourist Guide Association of Nepal
- 99 Mr. Surendra Lohani  
Tourist Guide Association of Nepal
- 100 Mr. Shiva Thapaliya  
General Secretary  
Trek Tourist Guide Association of Nepal
- 101 Mr. Chudamani Sharma Kattel  
Executive Director  
Nepal Academy of Tourism & Hotel Management (NATHM)
- 102 Mr. G.P. Acharya  
Student, Master's in International  
Relation and Diplomacy (MIRD), TU
103. Ms. Dela Parsain  
English News Anchor  
Nepal Television
- 104 Mr. Suman Giri  
Journalist  
Avenues Television
- 105 Mr. Rajendra Sigdel  
Head of the Department Corporate Services  
Nepal Tourism Board
- 106 Mr. Mani Raj Lamichhane  
Officiating Director  
Nepal Tourism Board
- 107 Prof. Dr. Deo Kumari Gurung  
TU

- 108 Mr. Narendra Bhatta  
HRA
- 109 Mr. Damber Parajuli  
EOA Nepal
- 110 Ms. Praparna Maskey  
Journalist  
Swatantra Sanchar
- 111 Mr. Antosh Pradhan  
Manager  
Siddharth Connecting Inc. Pvt.
- 112 Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari  
Executive Director, IFA
- 113 Mr. Yadav Khanal  
Resource Person, IFA
- 114 Mr. Mahendra Joshi  
IFA
- 115 Mr. Sanu Raja Puri  
IFA
- 116 Mr. Subhash Lohani  
IFA
- 117 Ms. Binita Shrestha  
IFA
- 118 Mr. Rajendra Magar  
IFA
- 119 Mr. Nish Magar  
IFA
- 120 Ms. Mina Magar  
IFA

## 14. Photos



*Mr. Dinesh Thapaliya, Secretary, MOCTCA, Minister Hon. Mr. Kripasur Sherpa, MOCTCA, Minister Hon. Mr. Mahendra Bahadur Pandey, MoFA, Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari, Executive Director, IFA, HE Dr. Sergey Vasillievich Velichkin, Ambassador of Russian Federation, Mr. Yadav Khanal, Resource Person, IFA (L to R)*



*Inauguration of Seminar by Hon. Mahendra Bahadur Pandey, Minister, MoFA assisted by Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari, Executive Director, IFA & Mr. Yadav Khanal Resource Person, IFA*



*HE Dr. Sergey Vasillievich Velichkin, Ambassador of Russian Federation and Dean of Diplomatic Corps, delivering brief remarks.*



*Hon'able Kripasur Sherpa, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Ministry delivering brief remarks.*



*Hon. Mahendra Bahadur Pandey, Minister of Foreign Affairs delivering keynote speech.*



*Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari, Executive Director, IFA, delivering closing remarks at inagural session.*



*Mr. Gobinda Bahadur Karkee, Director General, Department of Tourism, Dr. Ganesh Gurung, Board Member of IFA, Mr. Prachanda Man Shrestha, Former CEO, NTB, Dr. Rishi Raj Adhikari, Executive Director, IFA and Mr. Ang Tshering Sherpa, Chairman NMA (L to R)*



*Participants*