

**Statement by Foreign Secretary and the Leader of Nepali Delegation  
Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal at the General Debate of the 77<sup>th</sup> Session of  
United Nations General Assembly  
New York, 26 September 2022**

**Theme- A Watershed Moment: Transformative Solutions to  
Interlocking Challenges**

**Words to Read: 2425**

**Mr. President,  
Mr. Secretary General,  
Excellencies, and  
Distinguished delegates,**

I begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your unanimous election to preside over the 77<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly.

I also express appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, for successfully steering the 76th session.

My deep appreciation goes to UN Secretary-General, Mr. Antonio Guterres, for his commendable efforts to promote global peace, security, human rights, and development.

There could have been no better time to deliberate on ‘*A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges*’, the theme of this year’s General Debate.

**Mr. President,**

We are living indeed in a watershed moment.

- A moment when the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions, inequalities, and climate crisis threaten our pursuit of peace and prosperity;
- A moment when the values of solidarity and cooperation are put to test, with trust and confidence in short supply;
- A moment when humanity is caught between hope and despair, unity and division, and harmony and dissension; and
- A moment, when the world is striving to forge a new consensus amid competing interests, priorities and challenges.

For the third year in a row, COVID-19 continues to add strain to our lives, livelihoods, and economies.

But there is a hope. The production and availability of COVID-19 vaccines has minimized the risk and severity of the disease and enhanced our ability to save lives.

In Nepal, we have been able to fully vaccinate 96 percent of the target population, with almost everyone receiving at least one dose.

We thank our immediate neighbours - India and China, our development partners, and the United Nations System for their valuable support.

But this is not the case everywhere. Poor and vulnerable people in many parts of world have still been kept away from the ‘dose of hope,’.

The pandemic will not end unless it ends for all people in all countries.

We must ensure vaccine equity so that no one is left behind.

## **Excellencies,**

The 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals are at risk.

The pandemic has hit hard on our march into the decade of action.

This has been followed by cascading crises marked by geopolitical divides, disruption of supply chain, and climate emergency.

The resulting high food and fuel price, massive inflation, and debt burden severely hit the limited fiscal capacity of the poorer countries especially the least developed ones.

All these crises have cumulative negative impact on financing of the SDGs. It is more acute in the countries in special situations like LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS.

As per the pre-pandemic estimate, Nepal would require an average annual investment of 19 billion US dollars to achieve the SDGs. With the shortfall of financing, our hard-earned development gains are at risk at a time we are preparing to graduate from the LDC status by 2026.

However, graduation is our long-held aspiration, and we remain committed to using this opportunity to bring a structural transformation to the national economy. We will do everything possible to make our graduation process smooth, sustainable, and irreversible.

For this, we need additional international support in the form of investment, technology transfer, aid for trade, and technical assistance. This is critical for us to recover from the pandemic, rescue the SDGs, and turn global partnership into a reality.

**Mr. President,**

No country can thrive without integration into the global market. The rising tide of protectionism and stalled trade negotiation are delaying the much-needed reform in international trading system, which is tipped in favour of some. The poorer countries are yet to benefit from it. We must ensure open, fair, and transparent trade rules so that all countries can benefit from it.

Similarly, the current global financial system has seriously failed the developing world. It is unfair to continue this undemocratic and unresponsive system. We call for the much-needed reform of international financial architecture, for making it inclusive, fair, and equally beneficial to all.

The countries under debt stress need urgent debt relief, restructuring, and cancellation. The international community must swiftly help them come out of their debt crises.

**Mr. President,**

In Nepal, we are bearing the disproportionate burden of climate change and facing climate shocks such as frequent landslides, storms, floods, and wildfires.

The melting of glaciers and the drying-up of snow-fed rivers have been adversely affecting the lives and livelihoods of people downstream and rendering us one of the most vulnerable countries.

Our region recently experienced the heartbreaking loss of lives and properties due to unusually heavy downpours, melting of the glaciers and resulting floods.

To combat the climate crisis and address vulnerabilities, we have localized the adaptation plans in Nepal.

While remaining fully committed to the Paris Agreement, we have set ambitious target of reaching a net-zero scenario by 2045 as announced by the Prime Minister of Nepal Rt. Hon. Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba during the COP 26.

However, climate change is a global problem, and it needs global action. For this, the large emitters – which account for over 80 percent of all global emissions, must take bold steps to keep the 1.5° Celsius climate goal alive.

The commitment of 100 billion US dollars of climate financing must turn into a reality.

The COP 27 needs to move from pledges into action.

### **Distinguished Delegates,**

Geopolitics and polarization have pushed global peace and security into peril. The world is becoming more complex with rising transnational challenges such as terrorism, radicalism, extremism, and mass migration.

Today, the world faces the highest number of violent conflicts since 1945, within and between countries, divided by the fault lines of race, religion, ethnicity and origin.

The question that keeps us haunting today is whether enough is being done to protect the people from the scourge of wars, preventing them from happening in the first place. Investment in the prevention of conflicts is more effective than addressing their consequences.

The technological advancement today has the capacity to inflict devastating physical action instantly. And yet, it is appalling to see how our world body gets crippled when it comes to the interplay of interests of the major powers at the Security Council.

As our dependence on new technology deepens, the issue of cyber security emerges as one of the greatest challenges that demands our collective resolve to setting norms and building capacity to prevent the threat it poses. We must also put in place the necessary safeguards to curb the malicious use of new technologies.

**Mr. President,**

In 2021, global military spending surpassed two trillion US dollars. Countries are chasing an elusive notion of security by leaving behind billions of people hungry, sick, and destitute. Genuine security depends on the ability to address the underlying causes of conflict - poverty, hunger, and unemployment.

Stockpile of nuclear arsenals constitutes perpetual threat to humanity. Therefore, elimination of them is the only guarantee of the non-use of these weapons in the future.

Nepal reiterates its call for general and complete disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction, including biological, chemical, nuclear and radiological weapons in a time-bound manner.

Nepal opposes the arms race in outer space and emphasize on the peaceful use of it for the benefit of humankind.

As the host of the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Nepal continues to support regional disarmament initiatives as building blocks of global disarmament. We remain

committed to reviving the Kathmandu Process, which we believe complements global arms control and disarmament efforts.

Nepal condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and calls for an early conclusion of a comprehensive convention against terrorism.

**Mr. President,**

We are deeply concerned about the deaths and suffering of civilians in the war in Ukraine. We call for an urgent cessation of hostilities and violence and urge all concerned parties to exercise maximum restraint and return to the path of dialogue.

Nepal opposes any threat or use of force against the territorial integrity, political independence, and sovereignty of a country under any pretext and circumstance.

Afghanistan has remained on the precipice of uncertainties and violence. The Afghan people are exposed to a shocking level of poverty and humanitarian sufferings.

We call that unhindered humanitarian aid and public services including health and education for all sections of the Afghan society must be ensured.

We urge all parties concerned in Myanmar to respect the will of the people to elect their representatives, paving the way to restore the democratic process.

The people in Libya, Syria, and Yemen have been facing hardships and sufferings for a long. The concerned parties need to resort to peaceful means of conflict resolution to end the violence and return to peace.

Protracted violence and conflicts continue to inflict pain and suffering on Palestinian and Israeli civilians. Nepal reiterates its long-standing view for a two-state solution, whereby Palestine and Israel live side by side in peace and security within the recognized international borders.

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

Nepal pursues path of democratic system with people's welfare at the centre. Our democratic process is characterized by people's struggle, sacrifice, dialogue, and resilience.

In May this year, we successfully held democratic elections to the local governments in peaceful, free, and fair manner. We are now set to hold periodic elections for federal parliament and provincial assemblies in November.

For a democracy like Nepal, these are much more than just periodic elections. They are the testament to our ability of ensuring peaceful transfer of power. They are the means to enhance people's trust in democracy, promote legitimacy and accountability, and strengthen the rule of law.

The principles of inclusion and participation constitute the core of Nepal's governance system. The Constitution of Nepal guarantees the proportional representation and participation of all sections of our society in national life. It guarantees at least 33 percent representation of women in federal and provincial parliaments and 40 percent at the local level.

As a result, the participation of women, youth, and disadvantaged groups has increased significantly in politics and other spheres of national life. It has not only ensured their rightful place but also injected dynamism, justice, and fairness into society.



**Mr. President,**

Nepal's commitment to human rights is unequivocal. The Constitution of Nepal incorporates universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. As a member of the Human Rights Council for the second consecutive term, Nepal continues to add value to the work of the Council.

Our approach to human rights is firmly grounded in the principles of universality, indivisibility, objectivity, and non-selectivity.

We are committed to concluding the transitional justice process by addressing the concerns of the victims, complying with the directive of the Supreme Court, abiding by the spirit of Comprehensive Peace Accord and our relevant international commitments. Taking this in earnest, the Government of Nepal presented an amendment Bill to the Parliament to reform the related laws.

We uphold the rights of the child as the most sacred obligation of the State with their protection, wellbeing, health, education, and development at the centre.

We attach high importance to the safety, security, dignity, and well-being of migrant workers and emphasize on the effective implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

We also attach high importance on quality education, skills, entrepreneurship and employment to the youth to unleash their potentials for sustained economic development, peace, and prosperity in society.

We recognize the significant role that diaspora can play to bring capital, technology and skills to the country of origin.

Though we are not a party to the Refugee Convention and its Protocol, we have been hosting thousands of refugees on humanitarian grounds.

We believe that forced eviction of citizens, anywhere and under any circumstances, is a grave crime. Refugees' right to return to their homeland in safety, honour, and dignity must always be ensured.

## **Excellencies,**

The cardinal principle of 'seeing the world as one family' shapes our worldview in external relations.

Our foreign policy dwells on the notions of peace, non-violence, and non-aggression, which find their eloquent expression in the teachings of Gautam Buddha, the enlightened son of Nepal.

Nepal enjoys cordial relations with all countries around the world. This is a result of both my country's historical evolution and the friendly nature of our people. Given the goodwill Nepal receives from our friends, we feel it to contribute more for international peace, progress and social justice.

We engage with our neighbours and friends in the international community based on the principles of the UN Charter, non-alignment, *Panchsheel*, international law, and the norms of world peace. We play active roles in SAARC, BIMSTEC and ACD to promote regional cooperation.

Our partnership with the UN has been built on the foundation of trust and cooperation.

We firmly believe in multilateralism with the United Nations at its centre. With its unmatched coverage, legitimacy and convening power, the United Nations is the most appropriate forum for promoting global cooperation based on sovereign equality and mutual respect.

Currently the second-largest troops and police contributing country, Nepal has been a consistent contributor to UN peacekeeping for the last six and a half decades. We have deployed our peacekeepers at every call and without caveat, even in difficult situations.

Nepal supports all major initiatives aimed at reforming UN peace operations. We have endorsed the Kigali principles, the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P), and A4P+ initiatives, among others. We have zero-case policy against sexual exploitation and abuse in peace operations.

We condemn the targeted attacks against the blue helmets. Perpetrators of such crimes should be brought to justice.

We believe that countries should have fair share of leadership positions at the headquarters and in the field according to the level and history of their contribution to UN peacekeeping.

Nepal supports UN reform initiatives, including revitalizing the General Assembly and reforming the Security Council, to make it more representative, inclusive, and transparent.

We also support reform initiatives based on the Secretary-General's report 'Our Common Agenda'.

These endeavours will not produce results unless the Member States take bold and transformative steps to make our organization fit for the future.

We must enable the UN to deliver on the needs of the furthest behind first.

To conclude, **Mr. President**, the decisions we make today will determine what our future will look like. Our choice to act or not to act will have a huge impact on generations to come.

Let us look at what opportunities lie ahead of us.

Let us give solidarity and cooperation a chance.

As a peace-loving country, Nepal remains committed to contributing to our collective efforts of making this world peaceful, prosperous, and equitable.

I thank you for your attention.