



ASSOCIATION OF NEPALIS IN THE AMERICAS (ANA)

ESTD-1983

Press Release

August 7, 2021

The ANA heartily congratulates the newly appointed Prime Minister (PM) of Nepal, Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba, who became the PM for the fifth time. This time it was through a unique process, and with the support of an overwhelming non-partisan vote of confidence in the parliament. This situation makes Mr. Deuba a statesmanlike leader above partisan interests, who is accountable directly to the people of Nepal. The current term of almost one and half years is a golden period available for the PM and his team to uplift the country's democratic, social and economic situation.

We, at ANA, would like to bring to the attention of the Prime Minister, some of current situational facts and suggest strategic priorities to be undertaken by his new government.

Situational Assessment:

- Nepal's parliamentary politics has been marred by political parties' internal wrangling and fights for power and positions. Both the majority or minority governments have faced constant threats for their survival. The current situation is dramatically different as this government is free from the threat of a fall before the next elections. This government can govern the country unhindered, and has an opportunity to achieve political stability and work towards prosperity.
- The COVID-19 pandemic situation of Nepal has remained a major threat, with one of the highest infection rates recorded in the world. This situation was the result of not only the magnitude of the pandemic, but also largely due to the mishandling of the problem by the government.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all aspects of life of the people, communities and the country. Especially, the most vulnerable groups and small-businesses have been hit the hardest.
- Despite all odds of unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic both at home and abroad, the Nepali diaspora groups and migrant workers continue to support their families and the motherland. Nepal received NPR 871 billion (USD 7.39 billion) in remittance in the first 11 months of 2020-21, which is nearly half the Nepal Government's annual budget.
- A letter from Human Rights Watch to the Nepali PM dated July 27, 2021 has pointed to major issues of human rights challenges in Nepal, especially in the areas of COVID-19 emergency response, transitional justice, upholding rule of law, protection of independence of constitutional bodies, full citizenship rights of

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the people, and the rights of children. The letter also pointed out the recent attacks on the Dalits, including killings, showing that caste-based violence and discrimination is rarely investigated or prosecuted. The caste-based discrimination practices are becoming increasingly rife across the country.

- The 2015 constitution of Nepal includes provisions for the non-resident Nepalis (NRNs). However, even in the past six years since the promulgation of the constitution, laws to implement the constitutional provisions has not yet materialized. The diaspora members who were once excited for an opportunity to become non-resident citizens of Nepal have been disappointed and frustrated.

Recommended Priorities for the New Government:

- The new government should emphasize good governance and wipe out corruption in collaboration with all political parties.
- The government must act in the best strategic interests of the country, rather than in the personal interest of the cabinet ministers and the PM, parliamentarians and their cronies as well as the officials in authority and power as has generally happened in the past. The prime minister should specifically protect the interest of the vulnerable groups.
- Initiation of programs towards creating prosperity, such as investments in infrastructure, health, education and the environment should be started urgently and boldly.
- COVID-19 pandemic response must be the top-most priority of the government. In consultation with World Health Organization (WHO) and friendly countries, the government must plan to vaccinate all adults as soon as possible.
- As this pandemic is not going to be the last one, the government must create a strategic plan to tackle future pandemics quickly and effectively.
- The government should make provision for the appointment of a highly qualified medical doctor in charge of solving the Covid pandemic. The top doctor could hold a similar position that the Surgeon General holds in the US.
- The new government should provide a stimulus package in cash to the vulnerable people and unemployed youth and small businesses (e.g., small grocers & food stores, salons, tailors, artisan smiths, garment retailers) that have been forced to close due to Lockdown. The stimulus will help the most vulnerable survive, and help boost the economy.
- The government must quickly work with the parliament to enact laws to grant NRN citizenships to the eligible and interested members of the

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diaspora. As NRN citizens, members of the diaspora will be empowered to more effectively help Nepal in times of need.

- As Nepal is struggling to cope with the very frequent flood/landslides, pandemic and earthquake emergency preparedness plan for which Diaspora experts are ready to help with ANA coordinating.

Human Rights:

- The new government much plan for tangible progress for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP), especially fulfilling conditions to garnering support from the United Nations and the international community.
- The new government should investigate and take actions on “numerous instances of custodial torture and deaths, alleged extra-judicial executions by the police, and deaths resulting from the excessive use of lethal force against protestors” as cited in the July 27 Human Rights Watch’s letter to the Prime Minister Deuba.
- Police refusing to register first information reports (FIRs) is not acceptable in a democratic country with the rule of Law. The government must correct such situations urgently.
- Attacks on Dalits, including killings, rape, refusing entry to temples and public water taps, which are on the rise in recent times showing caste-based violence and discrimination being rife and systemic must be thoroughly investigated and prosecuted under the existing law.
- PM Deuba was credited for establishing National Dalit Commission through his Cabinet’s decision in 2002, as a historic step towards elimination of caste-based discriminations and prejudices. The Commission is now a Constitutional Body, which must be made fully functional.
- If Government of Nepal needs help from diaspora to enact recommended work, ANA is ready to help and coordinate diaspora.

Regards,

Bijay Raj Bhattarai

President, ANA

On behalf of ANA Family

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