

# **Democracy, Development and Peace in Asia**

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Prime Minister**

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**Honorable Chairperson,  
Distinguished guests, delegates, keynote speaker Prof. Samir Amin,  
and ladies and gentlemen**

It is a great pleasure and privilege for me to address this very important gathering and share some of my views and experiences and also listen to other eminent personalities' views on '**Democracy, Development and Peace in Asia**' from countries across the Asia Pacific region. The conference has been organised at a time when Nepal is fully engaged in consolidating new federal democratic republic through institutionalising democracy for lasting peace, and inclusive and participatory democratic system. For this particular matter, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the organisers for putting together at this important conference at this crucial moment in Nepal's history.

As you all know, we Nepali people have made a great political change after a decade long people's war and a historic popular movements of 2006. This change has become possible after forging alliance among the three political forces of CPN (Maoists), the Seven Party Alliance and the Civil Society. In this august gathering, I would like to stress that we need to continue this alliance until a new constitution is drafted and New Nepal is built.

Basically, the issue of development, democracy and peace, that is, the theme of this conference, are intricately linked. In the absence of one, the other two cannot be realized. Without democracy we cannot dream of development and peace. Democracy must include participation, representation, accountability, transparency, responsiveness and unity of

the people. In fact, these are the pillars for democracy to institutionalize and sustain. Likewise, development ensures prosperity and people's progress, which eventually contribute to strengthening democracy as well as sustainable peace.

But unfortunately the ongoing formal parliamentary Democracy market-led neo-liberal economic policies under the disguise of globalisation have further marginalized the poor and the helpless. The developed countries are now realising the drawbacks of complete deregulation of the financial sector and free market economy. Also the issues of financial, food, and energy crises and the natural devastation and catastrophe of global warming and climate changes are directly related to the market led capitalist globalisation system. The recent financial meltdown in the United States and the chain reactions causing market wreckage all over the world has had a tremendous negative effect on our countries in the south.

Dear delegates,

We are here today at a time when Nepal is on a turning point in its socio-political history. I am sure, you all might have heard about the political transformation of Nepal over the past couple of years. This has not been a cosmetic change but a complete metamorphosis that has swept away the tyrannical regime of entrenched feudalism and aristocracy. After this, the people of Nepal now have become "citizens", in the true sense of the word; they are now the deciders, and no more mere spectators. The Nepalese people, both the toiling masses from the rural and rugged terrains and those from the urban centres, waged a relentless struggle for a long time against the bondage of feudalism and an age-old system of suppression, deprivation, marginalization and negligence. The great struggles and sacrifices of the Nepalese people so far in different forms and intensities during the last decade have brought about the fruits of change.

The constituent assembly election was held in April 2008. Then after, Nepal has been declared a Federal Democratic Republic, ending the monarchical regime, thus creating a new opportunity to transform the old feudalistic state into an inclusive and federal 'New Nepal'.

I would like to highlight here that through this election process the people have graciously given the CPN (Maoists) a mandate to lead the government. The composition of the Constituent Assembly we now have is probably the most inclusive in terms of representation of women, minority communities and the oppressed castes one in the world. The total number of women representatives accounts for one-third of the members of the Constituent Assembly. Similarly, the representation of ethnic minorities and dalits in the Constituent Assembly is almost at par with their size in terms of percentage in the population. I would also like to mention that the ethnic minorities and the most deprived communities, who are gradually losing their identity, are now members of the Constituent Assembly giving new hopes to their kind.

On the international arena, we lament the failure of Doha round and the lack of commitment towards fulfilling the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries and the Almaty Programme of Action for the Landlocked Developing Countries. We are still awaiting the allocation of at least one percent of the GNP from developed countries including 'aid for trade' and cancellation of international debts in favour of the poor countries. We seriously urge the bringing about of a duty and quota free market access for our tradable products together with more favourable rules of origin and the support for enhancing their supply side capacity.

A careful analysis of the genesis of our past struggles indicates that we, Nepali people have the ability to bring about change for the better. I strongly believe that the peace process exercised in Nepal has been a unique example and may be a reference model for the rest of the world. The UN, international community and other friendly countries have supported this home-grown processes, which we plan to base on

multiparty democracy, inclusiveness, and equity based social system. It is thus, very imperative at this historical juncture that we must pause and ponder about our next move.

There are many threats and challenges against the realization of the opportunities and the potential created so far. The oligarchy, the remnants of the defeated feudalists, and the people who want to maintain status- quo will try to thwart the gains made possible by the heroic struggles of the people. The people have suffered a lot in the past and now they cannot afford to see the spoils of the achievements. Any deviation from fulfilling the reasonable aspirations of the people is sure to breed frustrations among the masses which will detriment democracy, development and peace in the country.

I believe that such a conference of the eminent personalities from academia, civil society, and political arena across the Asia Pacific region would make a meaningful contribution towards strengthening democracy, achieving sustainable development and lasting peace as well as provide better alternatives to speed up the development process in the region.

In the end, I urge all the delegates and participants to reflect, discuss and debate and come up with an alternative model of sustainable democracy, development and peace that is based on human rights and that narrows down the widening gap between the nations and its people significantly. I wish all of you a very successful deliberation during the conference.

Thank you very much!