

Indo-Nepal Economic Conference

Key Takeaways



December 20, 2024

India International Centre, New Delhi

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Indo-Nepal Economic Conference

December 20, 2024, IIC, New Delhi, India

Program Schedule

9:30 AM – 10:00 AM: Registration and Welcome Coffee/Tea

10:00 AM – 11:45 AM: Session 1: Inaugural Session

Guest of Honour and Chair: Dr. Arvind Virmani, Member, NITI Aayog.

Welcome Address: Dr. Charan Singh, CEO, EGROW Foundation

Context Setting: Dr. Ashok Vishandass, Former Chairman, CACP

Dr. Achyut Wagle, Registrar, Kathmandu University

Chief Guest: Hon'ble Dr. Arzu Rana Debba, Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nepal

Vote of Thanks: Dr. Lok Raj Baral, Honorary Chair of KU-NCCS, Former Ambassador of Nepal to India

11:45 AM– 12:00 PM: Tea Break

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM: Session 2: Regional Cooperation

Chair: Mr. N.K. Singh, President IEG, Chairman 15th Finance Commission

Panellists:

Dr. Lok Raj Baral, Honorary Chair of KU-NCCS, Former Ambassador of Nepal to India

Mr. Manjeev Puri, Former Ambassador

Mr. Chanchal C. Sarkar, Adviser, Ministry of Finance, Govt. of India

Dr. Uddhab Pyakurel, Associate Professor, Kathmandu University, Nepal

1:00 PM –2:00 PM: Session 3: Bilateral Trade and Investment

Chair: Dr. Rakesh Mohan Joshi, Vice Chancellor, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, New Delhi

Panellists:

Dr. Surendra Thapa, Chargé d'affaires a.i., Embassy of Nepal New Delhi

Dr. Mahendra P. Lama, Centre for South Asian Studies, JNU

Mr. Pradyumna Prasad Upadhyay, Joint Secretary, Investment Board, Govt. of Nepal

Ms. Roshee Lamichhane, Assistant Professor, Coordinator, Enterprise and Management Development Center (EMDC), Kathmandu University

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM: Lunch Break

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM: Session 4: Indo-Nepal Tourism and Environment

Chair: Mr. Arvind Singh, Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, GOI.

Panellists:

Mr. Deepak Raj Joshi, Chief Executive Officer, Nepal Tourism Board.

Dr. Surender Kumar, Senior Professor, Delhi School of Economics,
University of Delhi

Ms. Urvashi Prasad, Former Director, Office of Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog

Mr. Geja Sharma Wagle, geopolitical and international relations scholar and
Columnist, Kantipur Daily, Nepal.

4:00 PM – 4:15 PM: Tea Break

4:15 PM – 5:15 PM: Session 5: India's Growth and South Asia

Chair: Dr. A. Panagariya, Chairman 16th Finance Commission.

Panellists:

Dr. Charan Singh, CEO EGROW Foundation.

Dr. Pinaki Chakraborty, NIPFP, Former Advisor to 14th Finance Commission

Mr. Sushil Bhatta, Former CEO, Investment Board Nepal, Former Member of
National Planning Commission

5:15 PM – 5:45 PM: Session 6: Valedictory

Chair: Dr. Lok Raj Baral, Honorary Chairperson of the Kathmandu University

Address by Guest of Honour: Mr. Manjey Puri, Former Ambassador.

Valedictory Address : Dr. Achyut Wagle, Registrar, Kathmandu University

Vote of Thanks : Dr. Rattan Chand, Founder Director, EGROW Foundation.

CONTEXT

The EGROW Foundation, in collaboration with Kathmandu University, conducted the Indo-Nepal Economic Conference on December 20, 2024, at the India International Centre, New Delhi. The conference aimed to foster regional cooperation and strengthen synergies between the two neighbouring nations.

Hon'ble Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba, Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nepal, was the Chief Guest and Dr. Arvind Virmani, Member of NITI Aayog, was the Guest of Honor.

The experts in their respective fields were invited to the conference to foster productive dialogue and collaboration on critical economic, environmental, and structural challenges facing both the nations. The objective of the conference was to identify areas for improvement in key sectors like trade, tourism, environment, investment, infrastructure, and social development, and to chart a path forward for mutual benefit.

SCOPE OF THE CONFERENCE

- ❖ Identify avenues for collaboration between our neighbouring countries to drive mutual growth and shared prosperity.
- ❖ Discuss potential areas for collaboration to boost tourism between our countries.
- ❖ Find existing gaps and propose effective reforms to facilitate smoother trade and enhance connectivity.
- ❖ Explore opportunities for joint research initiatives.



KEY TAKEAWAYS OF THE CONFERENCE

SESSION 1: INAUGURAL SESSION

Guest of Honour and Chair: Dr. Arvind Virmani, Member, NITI Aayog

Welcome Address: Dr. Charan Singh, CEO, EGROW Foundation

Context Setting: Dr. Ashok Vishandass, Former Chairman, CACP
Dr. Achyut Wagle, Registrar, Kathmandu

Chief Guest: Hon. Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba, Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Nepal

Vote of Thanks: Dr. Lok Raj Baral, Honorary Chair of KU-NCCS,
Former Ambassador of Nepal to India

Key Takeaways

- I. Strengthen Indo-Nepal economic ties by reducing Nepal's trade deficit and diversifying exports to India.
- II. Facilitate private-sector investments in Nepal's underdeveloped sectors, including hydropower, transport infrastructure, agriculture, food processing, tourism, and IT.
- III. Address procedural delays and red-tapism to improve trade efficiency and connectivity.
- IV. Leverage India's manufacturing capabilities and Nepal's niche resources to create complementary regional trade strategies.
- V. Create a joint framework to promote religious and cultural tourism, including circuits like the Ramayan and Buddhist trails.
- VI. Collaborate with Indian airlines to operationalize Nepal's new airports in Lumbini and Pokhara to boost tourism and connectivity.
- VII. Use data-driven policymaking to guide sustainable economic strategies for long-term growth.

- VIII. Prioritize skills development to address employment challenges and unlock opportunities in emerging sectors.
- IX. Expand e-services and digitalization to enhance regional trade and create youth employment opportunities.
- X. Position India and Nepal as global manpower suppliers to meet labor demands in sectors that do not require robotics.
- XI. Establish free trade agreements with key global partners such as the EU, UK, and USA to expand manufacturing exports.
- XII. Engage with multinational corporations to develop robust supply chains in both countries.
- XIII. Develop common positions in international forums to address shared concerns on issues like terrorism, human security, human rights, artificial intelligence, and multilateral trade systems.
- XIV. Promote regional cooperation by attracting foreign investments and fostering joint technology development for mutual benefit.



SESSION 2: REGIONAL COOPERATION

Chair: Mr. N. K. Singh, President IEG and Chairman 15th Finance Commission

Panelists: Dr. Lok Raj Baral, Honorary Chair of KU-NCCS

Mr. Manjeev Puri, Former Ambassador of India to Nepal

Mr. Chanchal Sarkar, Adviser, Ministry of Finance, GOI

Dr. Uddhab Pyakurel, Associate Professor, KU-Nepal

Key Takeaways

- I. Address the need for substantial infrastructure development to maximize the benefits of recent agreements, such as the 10,000 MW hydropower initiative between India and Nepal.
- II. Strengthen people-to-people relations by easing trade, cultural exchange, and open-border policies
- III. The entire South Asian region should collaborate for making the Social impact fund successful and for implementing Digital Public Infrastructure.
- IV. India's fintech market is expected to grow rapidly by 2029 and hence provides opportunity for collaboration with Nepal.
- V. Promote cross-border economic integration by encouraging Indian and Nepalese start-ups
- VI. Collaborate on innovative strategies to push the multilateral institutions and development banks to lower cost of capital.
- VII. Develop innovative mechanisms to leverage the ability of Indian private capital.

- VIII. Address the political barriers to regional cooperation, particularly within SAARC and BIMSTEC frameworks.
- IX. Develop strategies to foster bilateralism as a foundation for regionalism.
- X. Agriculture in Nepal has significant untapped potential and could benefit from regional collaboration.
- XI. Collaborate on imparting human skills and upgrading education and health standards.



SESSION 3: BILATERAL TRADE INVESTMENT

Chair: Dr. Rakesh Joshi, Vice Chancellor, IIFT, New Delhi

Panelists: Prof. Mahendra P. Lama, Centre for South Asian Studies, JNU

Mr. Pradyumna Upadhyay, Joint Sec, Nepal Investment Board

Ms. Roshee Lamichhane, Assistant Professor, EMDC-KU

Key Takeaways

- I. Establish trilateral/quadrilateral economic corridors, specifically in terms of roads and highways; for example, Nepal and Bhutan can use the India-Myanmar-Thailand corridor.
- II. Promote cross-border trade by integrating eastern frontier of Nepal (opens up 16 percent of Nepal's districts and population) with India's North-East.
- III. Create exclusive India-Nepal investment agreements to attract sustainable development projects and facilitate long-term partnerships.
- IV. Focus on boosting the IT sector and renewable energy cooperation as transformative opportunities.
- V. Develop robust marketing strategies for Nepali agriculture products, emphasizing organic branding and certification to compete globally.
- VI. Focus on niche agriculture products like olives and hemp by leveraging each other's expertise and technology.
- VII. Enhance cooperative efforts to counteract non-tariff barriers and global challenges like carbon taxation and deforestation policies.

- VIII. Establish cold storage and testing facilities at border checkpoints to resolve infrastructure bottlenecks.
- IX. Prioritize sectors like highways, information technology, and hydropower for collaborative investments under the HEAT framework (Highways, Energy, IT, and Transmission).
- X. Encourage policy dialogues to strengthen FDI inflows as China is overtaking India in terms of largest FDI investor.
- XI. Develop joint mechanisms for regular engagements between Indian and Nepali investors.
- XII. Leverage bilateral trade synergies by addressing trust deficit and protecting MSMEs from cheap import substitutes.
- XIII. Foster policy reforms to balance trade deficits and encourage joint research on sustainable trade.
- XIV. Ease financial transactions and telecommunication to engage in a seamless flow of trade and investment.



SESSION 4: TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENT

Chair: Mr. Arvind Singh, Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, GOI

Panelists: Mr. Deepak Raj Joshi, CEO, Nepal Tourism Board

Dr. Surender Kumar, Senior Professor, University of Delhi

Ms. Urvashi Prasad, Former Director, NITI Aayog

Key Takeaways

- I. Advocate private sector joint tourism promotion between India and Nepal, especially in sectors like spiritual (e.g., Ayodhya and Janakpur) and adventure tourism, leveraging shared cultural and historical ties.
- II. Strengthen the travel protocol between the 2 countries; have common visa framework (similar to the Schengen area) which would allow foreign tourists to seamlessly visit India, Nepal and other countries in the subcontinent with 1 comprehensive visa.
- III. Implement carrying capacity studies in popular destinations to mitigate the impact of over-tourism.
- IV. Promote ecotourism and sustainable practices in the Himalayan region to reduce environmental degradation caused by trekking and other tourism activities.
- V. Strengthen water resource management across Indo-Nepal borders, considering the shared dependence on Himalayan rivers.
- VI. Enhance healthcare facilities in border regions to cater to the needs of tourists and locals alike.
- VII. Leverage digitization, such as shared QR codes and seamless payment systems, to enhance the experience for tourists and small businesses.

VIII. Prioritize e-mobility and reduce carbon footprints in transportation systems to support sustainable tourism.

IX. Encourage technological innovations in climate mitigation strategies to address environmental concerns tied to tourism development.



SESSION 5: INDIA'S GROWTH EXPERIENCE AND SOUTH ASIA

Chair: Dr. A. Panagariya, Chairman 16th Finance Commission

Panelists: Dr. Charan Singh, CEO, EGROW

Dr. Pinaki Chakraborty, Advisor, 14th Finance Commission

Mr. Sushil Bhatta, Former CEO, Investment Board Nepal

Dr. D. Maiti, Professor, Delhi School of Economics

Key Takeaways

- I. Focus on market-oriented reforms while ensuring a balanced approach to subsidies in critical areas such as agriculture and water.
- II. Promote female labour force participation to reach global levels of 55-60%, by creating supportive policies, which could boost India's GDP by over 25%.
- III. Leverage the demographic dividend by intensifying skilling initiatives and supporting MSMEs to drive employment and productivity.
- IV. Foster private sector involvement in strategic projects, such as electricity, hydropower, transport, and industrial corridors, by improving risk-sharing mechanisms and streamlining regulatory processes.
- V. Develop innovative mechanisms to integrate Nepal's comparative advantages, such as hydropower, into India's economic framework, benefiting both countries.
- VI. Promote regional economic cooperation between India and Nepal, addressing shared climate change challenges like floods and river management.

- VII. Encourage both India and Nepal to focus on industries that align with its natural resource base, such as eco-tourism and sustainable agriculture, while avoiding industrial models incompatible with its ecological profile.
- VIII. Facilitate joint research on health, disaster management, and economic planning to address cross-border social sector challenges.
- IX. Conduct studies on complementary linkages between the 2 countries to drive seamless collaboration.
- X. Strengthen fiscal federalism by refining intergovernmental transfer mechanisms, particularly for equitable public service delivery across states.
- XI. Address regional inequalities through targeted public investment and policy frameworks, balancing growth aspirations with fiscal capacity.
- XII. Optimize decentralization by developing scale-specific policies for urban and rural governance, focusing on empowering metropolitan regions as growth engines.
- XIII. Learn from Nepal's natural resource management practices to improve India's response to climate-linked disasters.
- XIV. Prioritize capital expenditure in infrastructure to sustain long-term economic growth.



SESSION 6: VALEDICTORY SESSION

Chair: Dr. Lok Raj Baral, Hon. Chair of KU-NCCS

Guest of Honor: Mr. Manjeev Puri, Former Ambassador of India to
Nepal

Valedictory Address: Dr. Achyut Wagle, Registrar, KU Nepal

Vote of Thanks: Dr. Rattan Chand, Founder Director, EGROW

Key Takeaways

- I. Foster partnerships among experts and institutions to address policies and economic challenges effectively between India and Nepal.
- II. Leverage the interconnectedness of the two economies for mutual growth and development.
- III. Utilize India's governance and development practices as a template for Nepal.
- IV. Institutionalize annual conferences or workshops to sustain momentum and idea exchange, and share conference insights widely to influence policymaking and raise public awareness.
- V. Enhance skills and capabilities in Nepal through India-based training and education programs.
- VI. Advocate for free movement of goods, people, finance, and resources across borders.

- VII. Prepare for digital and climate-related challenges through targeted strategies.
- VIII. Balance public and private sector roles while modernising institutional frameworks.
- IX. Prioritise data-driven and transparent policymaking.



ANNEXURE 1

PROFILES OF THE SPEAKERS



Dr. Arvind Virmani

Member, NITI Aayog

Dr. Arvind Virmani is a Member of NITI Aayog. He was Chairman of the Foundation for Economic Growth and Welfare (EGROW) and President of the Forum for Strategic Initiatives (FSI, Delhi). He was earlier Executive Director, IMF and Chief Economic Advisor, Ministry of Finance and Principal Advisor, Planning Commission. He has also served as Member, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) and as Director & Chief Executive of the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER).



Dr. Charan Singh

CEO and Founder Director, EGROW Foundation

Dr. Charan Singh is the CEO and Founder Director, EGROW Foundation. He was also the Non-Executive Chairman of Punjab & Sind Bank. He was the RBI Chair Professor of Economics at the prestigious Indian Institute of Management Bangalore, India; Senior Economist at the IMF, Washington DC; and Research Director at the RBI. Among other positions, Dr Singh served on the Board of NHB and NABFINS. Dr Singh completed PhD in Economics from the University of New South Wales, Sydney in 1997. He followed it up with post-doctoral studies at the Department of Economics, Harvard University and Stanford University.



Dr. Ashok Vishandass

Former Chairman CACP

Dr. Ashok Vishandass, Professor (Applied Economics) (IIPA) has interest in Sustainable Agriculture, Risk Management, International Trade & Commerce. As ex-Chairman (CACP) in the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare at the level of the Secretary to the Govt. of India, he has rich experience of formulation of Agriculture Price and Non-Price Policies, nuances of fixing MSP of various agriculture commodities. Before joining IIPA, he had also served FAO of United Nations Organisation (UNO) as the Chief Technical Adviser. In his stint with the UNO, he provided high-level technical and economic advice relating to Food Security, SDGs, agricultural Marketing and brought out eight Reports.



Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nepal

Hon'ble Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba, Hon'ble Foreign Minister of Nepal and Member of the House of Representatives, has held notable roles including Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources and Coordinator of the Women Parliamentarians Coordination Committee. A member of Nepal's Constitution Drafting Committee, she also served two terms as Regional Councilor for South and East Asia for IUCN (2008–2016). Dr. Deuba has been a Board Member of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Education on Peace and Sustainable Development, Governing Board Member of Nepal's Poverty Alleviation Fund (2007–2011), and the first elected woman President of the Management Association of Nepal (2002–2006). She also led the White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood as Chairperson (2010–2014).



Dr. Achyut Wagle

Registrar, Kathmandu University

Dr. Achyut Wagle is Professor and Registrar of Kathmandu University (KU). Earlier, he held the positions of Associate Dean of the School of Management and the Head of the Management Science Department at the School of Management, KU, and the Editor of the "Arthik Abhiyan" national daily. He holds a PhD in Economics from the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur; an MSc in Economics from the University of Birmingham, UK; and an MA from Tribhuvan University, Nepal. He has also held several public positions including Advisor to the Prime Minister of Nepal and Advisor to the Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank, the country's Central Bank.



Dr. Lok Raj Baral

Honorary Chair of KU-NCCS, Kathmandu University, Former Ambassador of Nepal to India

Dr. Lok Raj Baral is Professor and Honorary Chairperson of the Kathmandu University - Nepal Centre for Contemporary Studies (KU-NCCS), Kathmandu, Nepal. He has previously served as Ambassador of Nepal to India. He has also served as Professor and Chairman of the Department of Political Science at Tribhuvan University from 1976 to 1989. He was also the President of the Nepal Political Science Association, Nepal Council of World Affairs, and Society for Constitutional and Parliamentary Exercises (SCOPE). Professor Baral was a member of the delegation to the United Nations General Assembly in 1990 and an International Research Committee member of the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS), and also served as Nepal's ambassador to India during 1996 to 1997. He was a Visiting Professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA, and a Fellow at CHR Michelsen Institute, Bergen, Norway.



Mr. N. K. Singh

President IEG, Chairman, 15th Finance Commission, GOI

Mr. N.K. Singh was the Chairman of the 15th Finance Commission of India. Prior to this position, he presided as Chairman of the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Review Committee (FRBM), responsible for setting targets for the government to reduce fiscal deficits. He also served as a member of the Upper House of the Parliament, the Rajya Sabha, from 2008 to 2014. Mr. Singh had a long and distinguished career as a member of the Indian Administrative Services before his entry into politics and fiscal policy leadership. He served as Expenditure Secretary, Revenue Secretary, Secretary to the Prime Minister of India, among other senior leadership roles. He had also served as a member of the erstwhile Planning Commission. On the academic front, he is a Member of the Governing Board of the Nalanda University and Chairperson of its Endowments Committee. Mr. Singh has been a recurring eminent guest lecturer at prestigious academic institutions and Universities like Columbia, Yale, Stanford and the London School of Economics.



Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri

Former Ambassador of India to Nepal

Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri is the Former Ambassador of India to the European Union, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Nepal, as well as the former Ambassador/Deputy Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations. He also headed the UN-Economic & Social Affairs Division at the Ministry of External Affairs of India from 2005 to 2009. During this time, he led the Indian delegation to the inaugural meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development in Brussels in July 2007 and presented various reports on India's behalf at the Human Rights Council. From 2011 to 2012, when India served on the UN Security Council, Mr. Puri was a senior member of its delegation



Mr. Chanchal Chand Sarkar

Adviser, Ministry of Finance, GOI

Mr. Chanchal Chand Sarkar holds an M.Sc. in Public Management and Governance from the London School of Economics, and an M.A. and M.Phil. in Economics from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. Mr. Sarkar joined the SAARC Secretariat as India's Director in Kathmandu on 9th August 2018. He joined the Civil Services in 1999 and has held key roles in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) and the Ministry of Finance. He has worked on international trade policies, WTO negotiations, and investment agreements, including handling investment disputes. He has represented India in various international forums, including WTO, UNCTAD, and regional trade agreements.



Dr. Uddhab Pyakurel

Associate Professor, Kathmandu University

Dr. Uddhab Pyakurel is an Associate Professor of Political Sociology and the Associate Dean of the School of Arts at Kathmandu University. He is also the Member Secretary of Kathmandu University - Nepal Centre for Contemporary Studies. Dr. Pyakurel earned his Ph.D. from the Centre for the Study of Social Systems at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. His research and academic work span many areas, including poverty, development, public participation, social inclusion and exclusion, state restructuring, conflict, identity, democracy, elections, Indo-Nepal relations, and other socio-political issues.



Dr. Rakesh Mohan Joshi

Vice-Chancellor, IIFT, New Delhi

Dr. Rakesh Mohan Joshi is currently serving as the Vice Chancellor of IIFT. He is a respected scholar, author, and expert in management with significant international experience. Professor Joshi has authored popular books published by Oxford University Press and served as Editor of Foreign Trade Review. He has received international awards from the London Business School for his case studies, published by the European Case Clearing House (ECCH). He has also worked with multilateral organizations like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.



Dr. Mahendra P Lama

Professor, Centre for South Asian Studies JNU

Dr. Mahendra P Lama is currently a Professor at the Centre for South Asian Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. He is presently Chief Economic Adviser in the rank of a Cabinet Minister in the Government of Sikkim. He was the Founding Vice Chancellor of the Central University of Sikkim and became the youngest VC of a national University in India. He had also served as a Member, National Security Advisory Board, Government of India; Chief Economic Adviser in the Government of Sikkim with a Cabinet Minister Rank (2002-2007) and the Pro-Vice Chancellor of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi. He is presently Government of India's nominee in the Eminent Persons Group set up by the Prime Ministers of India and Nepal.



Mr. Pradyumna Prasad Upadhyay

Joint Secretary, Investment Board, Govt. of Nepal

Mr. Pradyumna Prasad Upadhyay is a Joint Secretary at Investment Board Nepal. He is a seasoned civil servant with expertise in governance reforms, public policy, and administration with nearly two decades of experience. Mr. Upadhyay holds a Master of Public Policy from the KDI School of Public Policy and Management, Republic of Korea, and a Master of Commerce from Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati University, India. He is also a recipient of the prestigious Global Ambassador Fellowship from KDI School.



Ms. Roshee Lamichhane

Assistant Professor, Coordinator, EMDC, Kathmandu University

Ms. Roshee Lamichhane is an accomplished academic professional. She has an MPhil from KUSOM and is currently a PhD candidate at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Thailand. Her research revolves around entrepreneurship, supply chain management, consumer behaviour, and broader economic themes. She is a columnist at The Kathmandu Post and has published articles on national and international platforms such as New Business Age, Republica, Business World, and Policy Times, among others.



Mr. Arvind Singh

Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, GOI

Mr. Arvind Singh is Additional Director (Non-Executive, Independent) on the Board of KEC International Limited. He has more than 35 years of distinguished service in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). Mr. Singh has held key roles in both the Government of India and the Government of Maharashtra, focusing on policy formulation and execution in sectors like infrastructure (power, energy, airports), finance, tourism, and agriculture. As Secretary of Tourism, Government of India, he led the revival of the tourism sector post-COVID, driving key recovery strategies. He has also served as Chairman of the Airports Authority of India (AAL), Chairman & MD of Maharashtra State Power Generation Company, and Additional Chief Secretary (Energy), Government of Maharashtra. In addition, Mr. Singh represented India as Minister (Economic & Commercial) at the Indian Embassy in Tokyo. He has attended advanced training at Harvard, Duke, and The Graduate Institute, Geneva, and holds an M.A. in Economics from the Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi.



Mr. Deepak Raj Joshi

CEO, Nepal Tourism Board

Mr. Deepak Raj Joshi is the Chief Executive Officer of Nepal Tourism Board (National Tourism Organisation of Nepal) since December 2016. Mr. Joshi has worked with all levels of tourism professionals of Nepal and also has good network with top international partners. Mr. Joshi successfully led the Tourism Recovery Committee (TRC), Nepal Secretariat, in the aftermath of the 2015 Nepal Earthquake, in coordination with the private and public sector, Mr. Joshi also has special interest in the sustainable tourism development sector and was an Executive Council Member of Bird Conservation Nepal from 2009 to 2014 and currently serving the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), being in the Board.



Dr. Surender Kumar

Senior Professor, Delhi School of Economics, DU

Dr. Surender Kumar is a Senior Professor and Head, Department of Economics, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi. He is also a Staff-Advisor to the DUSU. He had been the Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Delhi. His previous stint involves the position of Professor of Economics at the Department of Business Economics, University of Delhi, South Campus, Professor of Economics at the Department of Policy Studies, TERI University, New Delhi and Fellow at NIPFP, New Delhi. He had been a Visiting Fellow at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (USA) and Senior JSPS Fellow at the Yokohama National University Yokohama (Japan). He also served as the Director-in-charge, Agricultural Economics Research Centre, University of Delhi.



Ms. Urvashi Prasad

Former Director, Office of Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog

Ms. Urvashi Prasad was a Director at NITI Aayog, specialising in issues like public health, policy, and community development. She is the only professional who has worked with all 3 Vice Chairpersons at NITI. Urvashi contributed to managing the Covid-19 pandemic, advancing the Sustainable Development Goals, and promoting gender equality. Ms. Prasad has co-authored India's first Voluntary National Review on Sustainable Development and published over 100 articles. She holds an MSc in Public Health from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, an MPhil from the University of Cambridge, and a BSc in Biological Sciences from the University of Birmingham. She has received multiple awards, including the India-UK Achievers Honours and the Healthcare Changemaker Award.



Dr. Arvind Panagariya

Chairman, 16th Finance Commission of India

Dr. Arvind Panagariya is the chairman of 16th Finance Commission of India. He is Professor of Economics and the Jagdish Bhagwati Professor of Indian Political Economy at Columbia University.

Previously, he had served as the first Vice Chairman of the NITI Aayog. During these years, he also served as India's G20 Sherpa and led the Indian teams that negotiated the G20 Communiqués during presidencies of Turkey (2015), China (2016) and Germany (2017).

Professor Panagariya is also a former Chief Economist of the Asian Development Bank and was on the faculty of the Department of Economics at the University of Maryland at College Park from 1978 to 2003. During these years, he also worked with the World Bank, IMF and UNCTAD in various capacities. He holds a Ph.D. degree in Economics from Princeton University. In March 2012, the Government of India honored Professor Panagariya with Padma Bhushan, the third highest civilian honors the country bestows in any field.



Dr. Pinaki Chakraborty

NIPFP, Former Advisor to 14th Finance Commission

Dr. Pinaki Chakraborty is a Visiting Distinguished Professor at NIPFP and the Vice-Chairman of the Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur. Prior to this, he was the Director and Professor, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi, and Economic Advisor to the Fourteenth Finance Commission of India.

He served as Member, Advisory Council to the Fifteenth Finance Commission of India.



Mr. Sushil Bhatta

Former CEO of Investment Board Nepal

Mr. Sushil Bhatta is a seasoned professional and former Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Investment Board of Nepal (IBN), where he played a pivotal role in promoting and facilitating large-scale foreign investments in Nepal. With a strong background in economic development and policy implementation, Mr Bhatta has been instrumental in shaping Nepal's investment landscape and attracting global investors to the country. As a member of the National Planning Commission (NPC), he led the development of the 15th National Periodic Plan and facilitated the establishment of the National Project Bank. He was honoured with the prestigious Prabal Janasewa Shree award by the Government of Nepal in the category of 'Management Expert' for the year 2017/18.



Dr. Surendra Thapa

Chargé d'Affaires, Embassy of Nepal New Delhi

Dr. Surendra Thapa is currently serving as the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. at the Embassy of Nepal in New Delhi. He holds a PhD in Political Science from Jawaharlal Nehru University and combines academic rigor with extensive experience at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to strengthen diplomatic bilateral relationships. With years of experience as a Counselor at the Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations, Dr. Thapa has represented Nepal on both bilateral and multilateral platforms.



Dr. Dibyendu Maiti

Professor, Delhi School of Economics, DU

Dr Dibyendu Maiti is a Professor of Economics at the Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi. He specialises in development macroeconomics and international economics, focusing on labour, technology, and the informal sector. Before this, he worked at the University of the South Pacific, Institute of Economic Growth Delhi, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta as well as held various research positions at the University of Manchester, University of Nottingham, Max Planck Institute of Economics (Jena), Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, University of Oslo. He received the Max-Planck India Fellowship, ICSSR-ESRC exchange and ICSSR-CASS exchange fellowship. He publishes research articles in reputed journals, like Journal of Development Economics, Social Research Indicators, Journal of Productivity Analysis, Labour Economics, Economic Modelling, International Review of Economics and Finance, Cambridge Journal of Economics, American Behavioural Scientists etc. Recently, he published a book named Digitalisation and Development - India and beyond. He is an associate editor of Progress in Development Studies (Sage). He received the IDRC Young India Social Sciences Award, 2010 and Global Development Network Award, 2009.



Dr. Rattan Chand

Founding Director, EGROW Foundation

Dr Rattan Chand is one of the founding Directors, EGROW Foundation. He is a former officer of the Indian Statistical Service and has served the Government of India in various positions for more than 35 years. Till recently, he served as Senior Expert in the World Bank. He worked closely with many Development Partners including World Bank, United Nations, World Health Organization etc. His main contribution has been in the field of monitoring and evaluation. He established online Health Management Information System (HMIS) and steered many surveys including the Annual Health Surveys, District Level Household Surveys and National Family Health Surveys. He obtained M.Phil and Ph.D. in Population Studies from IIPS, Mumbai, PG Diploma in Population and Development from JNU and Master of Statistics from Punjabi University.

ANNEXURE 2

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONVENER OF THE CONFERENCE:

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Head Research & Training,
EGROW Foundation

ORGANISING COMMITTEE:

Mr. Sujit Dhungel,
Kathmandu University

Mr. Vivek Verma
EGROW Foundation

Mr. Rajneesh Yadav
Ph.D Scholar, Gautam Budha University
Greater Noida



ANNEXURE III

ABOUT THE ORGANISERS

**Kathmandu University-Nepal Centre for Contemporary Studies
(KU-NCCS)**

Kathmandu University-Nepal Centre for Contemporary Studies (KU-NCCS) is a Kathmandu-based think tank established in 1995 and was integrated into Kathmandu University School of Arts (KUSoA) in 2020. Renowned for its impactful contributions to social science research and policy development, KU-NCCS provides policy inputs to state organisations through a wide network at local, national, and regional (South Asia) levels. The major objective of KU-NCCS is to initiate and strengthen research-based social science knowledge, assist policy-making, and foster dialogue on contemporary socio-economic and political issues.

Activities by KU-NCCS:

- Residential Workshops – To Academics, Civil Society, Political leaders and foreign scholars
- Policy Dialogues, Policy Research and Policy Inputs – State institutions at Local, Province, and Federal level
- Training Programs – Skill development on Project Management, Academic and Professional Career
- Publications – *Nepali Journal of Contemporary Studies* (biannual), books and quarterly papers
- Seminars and Conferences – Local dialogues, National seminars and International Conferences
- Empowering youths by upgrading academic and professional skills

KU-NCCS Team:

- Prof. Dr. Lok Raj Baral
Professor of Political Science and former ambassador of Nepal to India
Honorary Chairperson
- Ms. Ekku Maya Pun
Dean, School of Arts
Member
- Dr. Meena Poudel
Sociologist, Feminist, and former Program Manager at IOM-UN Migration
Member
- Prof. Dr. Binay Kushiyat
Professor of Economics Education
Member
- Dr. Uddhab Pyakurel
Associate Professor of Political Sociology, and Associate Dean of School of Arts, Kathmandu University
Member Secretary

Research Fellows:

- Dr. Ram Kumar Bhandari
Founder, Network of Families of the Disappeared in Nepal (NEFAD)
- Mr. Chet Narayan Rasaili
Former fellowship and consultant to OHCHR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights)
- Dr. Shiva Shankar Shah
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Research Officer:

- Ms. Sumitra Khadka

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EGROW

Foundation for Economic Growth and Welfare

The Foundation for Economic Growth and Welfare (EGROW Foundation) is a non-profit, multi-disciplinary public policy organization engaged in independent, high-quality research in the areas of macroeconomic policy, public welfare, national security and diplomacy. EGROW Foundation, established on Oct 31, 2018, is a policy-oriented think-tank in NCR, India. The vision of EGROW is to be a premier think tank globally, showcasing India's research while contributing to formation of sound public policies, especially in India and the region. The aim of EGROW is to provide research-based support to policy making.

EGROW Activities:

- Research Studies – for Government of India, Ministries, as well as for other national/international organisations.
- Shadow Monetary Policy – Bimonthly.
- Collaborative Research – Financial Inclusion, MSMEs.
- Academic Research – Working Papers, Public Policy Series.
- Seminars, Conferences and Webinars.
- Trainings – General and Institution based both in offline and online mode.

EGROW Board – Current and Past:

- Dr Arvind Virmani
Former Chief Economic Advisor, GOI;
Former ED, IMF
Founding Chairman (Oct 31, 2018 – Apr 15, 2023) (Now Member, NITI Aayog)
- Dr Charan Singh
Former Senior Officer, RBI; Former Senior Economist, IMF; Former RBI Chair Professor, IIM Bangalore.
Founder, Director and CEO
- Dr Ashok Vishandass
Former Chairman, Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, GOI
Founder Director
- Dr Rattan Chand
Former Senior Officer, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, GOI
Founder Director
- Col M.P. Singh (Retd.), Ph.D.,
Expert on Geopolitics
Founder Director

EGROW Advisers – Current and Past:

- *Dr Surjit Bhalla*
Former ED, IMF; Former Member, EAC-PM.
- *Prof. Ashima Goyal*
Member MPC, RBI; Former Member, EAC-PM.
- *Shri Suman Bery*
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