

Country Statement Delivered by Mr. Rajib Gautam,
Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers
At the Seventh Session of the Conference of the State Parties,
United Nations Convention Against Corruption

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Madame President,

Let me express my sincere felicitations to you, Madame President, on your election as President of the Seventh session of the Conference of the State Parties. I have full confidence that under your able leadership the Conference will be guided smoothly towards a successful conclusion. I would like to assure you of my delegation's full support. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate other elected members of the Bureau as well.

I also commend the UNCAC Secretariat as well as to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for excellent preparation, and for the quality and the timely distribution of the conference documents.

Nepal aligns itself with the statement delivered by H. E. Ambassador Reza Najafi, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We also fully align ourselves with the statement the representative of Thailand as in the capacity of the Chair of the Asia Pacific Group. I would like to add the following on my national capacity.

Madam President,

Corruption is a global phenomenon. It poses a major challenge for stability and security and continues to be one of the key elements hindering the attainment of sustainable socioeconomic development of our societies.

Nepal recognizes prevention, criminalization and law enforcement, and asset recovery as vital aspects of anti-Corruption efforts, including at the international level. Nepal's strategies to fight corruption are, therefore, fully in line with its international commitments, the Convention, as well as with

“Doha Declaration” adopted by the UN Crime Congress in April 2015, and Marrakech Declaration on Prevention of Corruption.

In Nepal, we view corruption as one of the worst impediments to development and good governance. We believe that even an individual and isolated case of corruption is enough to erode the integrity and dignity of our entire society. It is prevalent in various forms like bribery, fake and falsified documents, breaching of laws, leakage of revenues, procurement related irregularities, losses to public property, illicit amassing of property and so on.

As the global community is striving to attain the sustainable development goals by 2030, corruption, with its deep and pervasive ill-effects would negatively impact our resolution to attain those goals. In line with the 2030 agenda in particular Goal 16, Nepal underscores the need of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Government of Nepal pursues a policy of zero tolerance on matters of corruption and has adopted several policy measures for its prevention. They include public awareness-raising against corrupt behaviors and promoting good governance; enhancing transparency and accountability in decision-making processes as well as in its national criminal justice system; requiring sectoral entities to adopt respective codes of conduct and so on. The Government has equally been implementing the National Strategies and Plan of Actions on the Implementation of the UNCAC since 2011. Accordingly, it has, on the one hand, amended to a number of laws aimed at enhancing the corporate sector good governance, and on the other, enacted some new laws especially aimed at the prevention of transnational organized crimes; promotion of mutual legal assistance and extradition; prevention of assets laundering and assets recovery. In order to enhance probity at the political level, several electoral laws have been enacted requiring political parties to comply with provisions aimed at bringing financial transparency in elections. Enactment of some more laws for protection of whistleblowers; protection of witnesses and victims of crimes; and special law for avoidance of conflict of interests is underway.

Bearing in mind the critical roles of corruption prevention, our Constitution, law, and regulations have empowered the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) as an apex constitutional body to investigate and prosecute corruption offences by public officials and their associates.

In addition to the CIAA, Nepal has established several anti-corruption agencies like, the National Vigilance Centre, Department of Money Laundering Investigation, the Judicial Council. For speedy trial with expert hearing process, Nepal has established special court with special procedure for adjudication of corruption cases. The Government of Nepal is fully committed to extend close cooperation and support to all such Constitutional, and statutory bodies as well as to oversight authorities like the Auditor General of Nepal and the relevant Parliamentary Committees so as to create synergy in the fight against corruption. The Government's commitment in supporting the smooth functioning of all such agencies is also amply manifested on several national legislations it has enacted in this connection. Those include Prevention of Corruption Act, 2002, Anti-Money Laundering Act, 2007 and Asset(Money) Laundering Preventing Act, 2011. Nepal has regularly enacted and updated several laws that aim at strengthening good governance and reducing corruption. Good Governance Act, Public Procurement Act, etc. are the foremost examples here.

Some practices, that are part of our anti-corruption efforts in Nepal may be cited here as best practices, Radio Program for public awareness, Online Grievance Registration, etc. In Nepal, we accord high importance to the civil society for its advocacy and promotional roles in raising awareness and creating a vibrant civil society that stands against corrupt behavior at all levels and in all manifestations. They are equally valued for their feedbacks and inputs. May I stress here that media too has been crucially important for us in this context.

Madam President,

Combating corruption is a long journey which can only be achieved with the continued commitment, strong support and close cooperation of all stakeholders at all levels. Nepal, therefore, highly values the principle of international cooperation in overall aspects of the fight against corruption, including in prevention, investigation, and the prosecution of offenders. Taking this reality into consideration, our efforts have been driven towards building and nurturing anti-corruption initiatives not only at the domestic

level but also in international arena. It is in line with this principle that we enacted the Mutual Legal Assistance Act, 2013 as well as Extradition Act, 2013. These laws deal with the process and requirements of providing and obtaining legal assistance between Nepal and any other foreign country. Nepal is ready to offer mutual legal assistance to other countries on the basis of reciprocity, even in absence of bilateral treaty, as mandated by the Mutual Legal Assistance Act.

Here, I would like to underscore the special significance of Technical Assistance in the context of the international cooperation.

In accordance with the second cycle of Review Mechanism launched in St. Petersburg, Russia, Nepal, together with Burundi, has been nominated to review Nauru. On the other hand, review of Nepal is being undertaken by El Salvador and Lebanon. Nepal appreciates the cooperation it is getting from the governments of those countries as well as from the UNODC. Nepal pledges its full support and cooperation in the successful conclusion of this review cycle.

Finally, I reiterate that Nepal is fully committed to implement the Convention as appropriate to its national legislation and international cooperation framework to fight against corruption in all its forms.

I look forward to having enriching deliberations and exchange of views during this Session.

Thank you.

