Dear Readers

The European Union Delegation to Nepal takes pride in the fact that it has delivered on its promises of giving momentum to the development projects covering the key areas directly linked to the wellbeing of the Nepalese people. We have been doing our best to overcome all the difficulties and ensure the smooth running of the projects under the three prioritised areas of cooperation—Education, Stability and Peace Building, Trade Facilitation and Economic Capacity Building outlined in the Country Strategy Paper 2007-2013. Other significant projects, which have been able to leave a mark in the history of EU-Nepal cooperation, include the Conflict Mitigation Package CMP (I) & (II), the Renewable Energy Project, and the Vulnerable Communities Package. The CMP (I) has already been completed. These projects were designed through mutual consultations with the Nepal Government based on the new political developments in the country following the popular movement of 2006.

A total commitment of 26 million Euros set aside to boost the education sector in line with achieving the Millennium Development Goals has been instrumental to bring about some positive changes that will have a far reaching impact on Nepal’s development. Over the last two years the European Union has provided 18.5 million Euros to support the government of Nepal’s Education for All Programme. The assistance has helped to boost the Government of Nepal’s own efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All targets.

The Education for All Programme has succeeded to bring about some visible and positive changes in the education sector. Improvements have been both qualitative and quantitative with increased number of schools and classrooms together with better trained teachers compared to the year 2004. The number of women teachers has gone up while there has been more participation of teachers representing the janjati and other previously marginalised groups in the education sector. One other prominent improvement that has come about is the increased supply of books and teaching and learning materials.

The Delegation of the European Union plans to continue its funding and support to the new School Sector Reform Programme with the primary goal of improving the overall quality of education. A broad based approach of improving the overall quality of education will be made by ensuring congenial environment for students to learn in and achieve good results. Teachers will be encouraged to perform better with more opportunities for professional development. Appropriate steps will be taken to put into place other pre-requisites such as availability of textbooks and teaching learning materials, strong school buildings and adequate water and sanitation facilities to ensure high quality of education.

Human Rights, gender equality, good governance and conflict prevention are some of the cross cutting issues linked with education, which the European Union has been putting due focus on while disbursing funds. Other sectors of bilateral cooperation could learn from the education sector’s success story so far, however the success achieved by the cooperation between EU and the Nepal Government in the education sector depends on continuing improvements in governance and accountability, particularly in strengthening financial management and accountability at all levels in the system.

The successes will, however, not be meaningful unless timely steps are initiated to guarantee peace and stability together with a democratically elected government at the helm. The European Union has heartily welcomed the extension of the tenure of the Constituent Assembly and is hopeful that the political parties will complete the constitution drafting process within the next year. The European Union Delegation to Nepal reaffirms its commitment to assist the Government and the people of Nepal in their efforts to achieve a better quality of life for all its citizens.

Alexander Spachis
Ambassador
European Union Delegation to Nepal
European parliamentary delegation reaffirms support to Nepal's peace and constitution drafting process

A six-member working group from the European Parliament's delegation for relations with South Asia visited Nepal from 23-29 May. The visit was primarily focused on interacting with the Constituent Assembly (CA) members and taking stock of the progress achieved in the peace and constitution drafting process.

The visit accorded top priority to the issue of climate change besides proceeding ahead with its core agenda of interacting with the CA members, the President, Prime Minister, important ministers, journalists, and civil society members among others. The inter-parliamentary meeting was the eighth in a series with EU parliamentarians responsible for South Asian Relations.

The delegation led by Jean Lambert (Greens / UK) held extensive interactions with senior journalists, researchers and government representatives, including the Environment Minister, on the overall impact of global warming in Nepal. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) appreciated Nepal's potential in the field of renewable energy, which should be further exploited in the context of adaptation and mitigation challenges the country faces. The delegation members took a helicopter flight to the Himalayan region (Limja glacier) in order to observe the negative effects of climate change.

The other members of the delegation were John Attard-Montalto (Socialists and Democrats, Malta), Thomas Mann (European Popular Party, German), Salvi Binev (Non Attached, Bulgaria), Nicolo Rinaldi (Liberals and Democrats, Italy) and Nirj Deva (European Conservatives and Reformists, UK).

Jean Lambert (Greens/UK), Chair of the Delegation, observed that, “the retreat of some glaciers and the growing glacial lakes show some of the ecological pressures, which will increase existing socio-economic pressures”.

The news that the Lisbon treaty, which came into force starting 1st December 2009, features an Article devoted to promoting overall harmonious development, while paying special attention
to mountainous regions, might come as a surprise to many people around the world.

Nicolo Rinaldi, member of the European Parliamentary delegation, shed light on this fact during an interaction with some senior journalists from Nepal on how the government of Nepal has been looking at climate change and its possible impacts on the fragile Himalayas.

The European Union has emerged as a forerunner in lobbying for a comprehensive and binding international treaty on climate change after the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012. It has fared well in upholding its pledge to cut down carbon emissions by 20 percent by 2020. The grouping of 27 nations is seriously weighing the adverse impacts that climate change could have around the world if timely steps are not initiated to tackle the issue.

Participants representing the Non-State Actors drew the attention of the European lawmakers to the rapidly retreating glaciers in the high mountains of Nepal. Although no concrete scientific studies have been carried out so far, the impacts of climate change are being observed in the natural environment, they claimed.

The members were curious to know whether the political parties and the civil society in Nepal had a common opinion on the impending adversities of climate change. Civil society representatives informed the members that there has been a broad understanding on the indispensability of minimising the impact of climate change. The political parties seem to be determined to explicitly state the need to conserve the environment in the constitution which is being drafted.

The visit of the European Parliament was held during a crucial phase in Nepal’s peace and constitution drafting process. The political parties in Nepal showed praiseworthy efforts in putting the three point deal into place and extend the tenure of the CA on May 28; MEPs welcomed this gesture of the political parties in Nepal and assured full support to Nepal’s ongoing efforts in drafting a new constitution and taking the peace process to a logical conclusion.

Pledge to award 7 Million Euros under the Global Climate Change Alliance: There is high likelihood that Nepal will receive the said amount from the European Commission to carry out projects related to climate change. Although the commitment has been made, identification of relevant climate related activities and projects is being carried out at the moment.

European Parliament adopts resolution on Nepal: In the aftermath of the visit to Nepal by the MEPs to Nepal the European Parliament adopted a resolution on Nepal stressing the need for the political parties to forge consensus for political stability.

The resolution adopted on 17 June 2010 stated that the long-running political instability in Nepal is a source of serious concern to the EU Parliament. Recalling the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Seven-Party Alliance and the UCPN (Maoist), which had paved the way for a CA and an interim government including the Maoists, the resolution further stated that, “Unfortunately, many of the terms of the peace agreement remain ‘unfulfilled’ and ‘the political instability’ is having a crucial impact on the social, economic and touristic development of Nepal.”

The Parliament’s resolution expresses “deep concern about the non-existence of a permanent constitution based on democratic values and human rights”. It “urges the CA and all the political actors involved to negotiate without preconditions, to show flexibility, to avoid any provocative actions and to work together for national unity in order to find a clear structure for the new constitution” and “to establish a functioning federal democracy”.

Members of the European Parliament interacting with NGO and INGO partners working together with the European Union.
EU co-funded water projects better the lives of villagers in three western districts of Nepal

Bima Devi Saud, a resident of Ramarooshan Village Development Committee in Achham District wears a contented look on her face. The reason for her contentment is that her life underwent a massive transformation after the Sustainable Agriculture with bazaar for advancing livelihoods of conflict-affected poor people (SABAL) project launched by Practical Action in January 2008 co-funded by the European Union addressed her water woes.

The EU assistance was given under its policy to assist vulnerable groups and communities most affected by the internal conflict (VCP). The 30-month long project focussed on increasing the socioeconomic conditions of three conflict affected districts in far west Nepal.

The project with a total budget of €865,052.44.00 will run until the end of June 2010 and aims to improve the socioeconomic conditions of the conflict affected people in the three western districts of Nepal.

“We had to walk for at least two to three hours to fetch water and life for us used to be quite complicated,” Saud recalls her days of hardship in the video case study prepared by Practical Action.

Following the intervention by the SABAL project, Saud now has access to piped drinking water and does not have to walk for long tedious hours to fetch water.

“I and my family had never tasted vegetables like cauliflower, cabbage and brinjal as we never grew them because of the scarcity of water,” Saud says adding today the story is a lot different.

“I sold onions worth Rs 3000 and my family is happy to have additional varieties of vegetables,” she says with a lot of euphoria.

Prior to our encounter with the Sabal project, our staple diet was limited to maize only, but today we are able to afford rice from time to time.

The Multi Use Water System, also known as MUS, a system of efficiently utilizing the available source of water has increased the access to water for rural and mountainous communities through low cost technology.

Today Bima Devi has access to sprinkles for irrigating vegetables being grown near her home. It is evident that there are many others like Bima Devi in the western hills of Nepal who could benefit through MUS.

Under the SABAL project, young women and men have been trained in skills such as veterinary (paravets), agriculture & fishery, enterprise development so that such skills will be available locally as well as to help them to engage in income generating activities. Those trained will, in return, train others to multiply the acquired skills.

The project has been aiming at rebuilding the confidence of the conflict affected people to engage in livelihood development activities. Some of its objectives include creation and diversification of livelihood opportunities, improved access to extension and business services and inputs apart from building improved market chain linkages and coordination.

A total number of 61,203 people from 9,257 households from 26 Village Development Committees (VDCs) in Achham, Doti and Kailali districts of western Nepal are the targeted benefits of the project.
European Commission co-funded media project seeks to bring positive changes among the young Nepali population

Unlike stories based on fiction, which are happily accepted by the consumers of media products, the task of disseminating the hard facts of life is always a daunting one.

It is more so when the topic is related to maternal and child health. But the journalists at the BBC World Service Trust have succeeded to win the hearts and minds of the common Nepalis living across the length and breadth of the country through their popular programme 'Ghar Aagain,' a radio magazine programme being co-funded by the European Commission.

The programme which contains social messages related to maternal and child health can be listened to in 31 radio stations across the country. The project's overall goal is to improve maternal and child health, thereby realising MDG 4 and MDG 5, which are linked to reducing child mortality and improving maternal health.

In addition, the project has specific objectives of bringing about behavioural changes in women of child bearing age through the dissemination of information on maternal and child health issues. The other two goals of the project are to provide information and messages aiming to create an environment for positive behavioural changes, particularly among family members, community leaders and others who may have an influence on, or role in, raising awareness of maternal child health and use of health services.

It also aims at advocating for increased investment by government in health services, for greater government accountability to the public and for better utilization of health service resources in Nepal.

‘Pooja’, a pitiful story of a young girl, who becomes pregnant at tender age, and later dies during delivery draws parallels to similar incidents taking place in many Nepalese households across the country.

The movie directed by Deepak Rauniyar under the banner of the BBC World Service Trust with support from the European Commission is a telling tale of caste and gender based discrimination in the Nepalese society.

Pooja, a young school girl falls in love with Romi, a boy belonging to another caste and eventually gets married despite resistance from family members. Romi leaves for Hongkong leaving Pooja behind at home. Since the girl is young and inexperienced and does not have family support fails to seek the needed medical advice during pregnancy and faces a tragic destiny.

Rauniyar has succeeded to pass the messages related to risks of early pregnancy, gender and caste discrimination together with negative impact of superstitious beliefs in a very touching manner with the help of a storyline that builds on the affectionate relationship between a girl and a boy.

The above citations are only the tip of the iceberg, the BBC World Service Trust and its “Ghar Aagain Programme” have carved a long journey with the help of the donors to bring positive changes in the lives of the Nepalese men and women.
Conflict victims in 11 districts witness positive changes with the closing of the VCP programme run by BNMT with support from European Union

The Britain Nepal Medical Trust (BNMT) – the project partner for Vulnerable Community Package (VCP) Programme organized an event to disseminate the findings of the evaluation of the two year long project “Fostering Health and Livelihoods of Conflict Affected People in Nepal” funded by the European Union. An independent team of evaluators carried out the evaluation of the impacts of the projects in five districts (Morang, Kavre, Nawalparasi, Kapilvastu, and Kalikot) from among the 11 districts (Panchthar, Morang, Dhankuta, Khotang, Chitwan, Kavre, Nawalparasi, Kapilvastu, Arghakhanchi, Kalikot and Achham) covered by the project.

According to the conclusions of the evaluators, the project aimed at increasing access to essential health care services and generate livelihood opportunities for vulnerable communities and thereby contribute to improve the socio-economic conditions of the vulnerable population resulting in reduced conflict potential in Nepal. The project has been successful in achieving the said objectives, according to the evaluators.

The observations clearly showed that the projects were successfully executed within the stipulated time and they were able to directly address one of the health objectives of the three year interim plan of the Nepal Government.

Besides, the project managed to reach the targeted group and was gender friendly and inclusive in its approach. The involvement of government staff in the project turned out to be a good approach to sustain the project interventions.

The Incorporation of integrated aspects of the health-livelihood and capacity building components also showed a positive impact towards achieving the overall objective of the project.

The renovation of health facilities damaged during the time of conflict was perceived to be one of the most effective interventions. In addition, the project according to the evaluators has contributed in maximizing the mobilisation of local resources and opportunities enhancing the effectiveness of the intervention.

Strengthening mental health and psycho-social counselling component at the primary health care services level was duly effective. Transparency and good governance was well practiced during the project execution process.

Secretary at the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) spoke highly about the project and said it has contributed to promote the Health facilities in rural Nepal. She however, asked the NSAs to focus more on capacity building of the local health facilities for enhancing effectiveness of the service delivery at the local level.

Speaking on the occasion Dr. Alexander Spachis, Ambassador, Head of European Union Delegation to Nepal lauded the painstaking efforts
of the project implementing partners to deliver their best. Referring to the Vulnerable Community Package Programme, which has 8 projects for supporting directly the conflict affected communities, Dr. Spacius acknowledged that the project has contributed significantly to the peace building process by supporting and boosting the morale of conflict affected communities in Nepal.

Dr. Spacius also recalled briefly the EU commitments made for developing the country including support provided in education sector, peace building, economic development and trade in addition to the environmental protection, food facility, other development aspects, promoting human rights and consolidating democracy etc carried out through the NSAs.

He expressed the hope that Nepal will be able to present valuable practices, experiences, and lessons learned especially in the context of social inclusion. He however, highlighted that political stability is a must for materialising the impacts of all the received support.

Around fifty participants representing 11 local partner organizations and other concerned stakeholders attended the programme.

Europe Day... Meaningful in many ways

On 9 May 1950, Robert Schuman, French foreign minister, called the press together for a major announcement. He called on France, Germany and other European countries still recovering from the Second World War to pool their production of coal and steel. This was a major step on the road towards lasting peace in Europe and the first step towards later economic integration.

Today, this announcement – the Schuman declaration – is seen as the birth certificate of the European Union and, every year, 9 May is celebrated as Europe Day.

The 60th anniversary of the declaration was marked amidst a lot of fanfare in Brussels and European Union Delegations in different parts of the world. In keeping with the proud tradition of marking the Europe Day every year on the 9th of May, the European Union Delegation to Nepal organized a reception. Foreign Minister Sujata Koirala, leaders of different political parties, high ranking government officials representing the Nepal Government, diplomats, journalists, project partners and academicians attended the reception.

"We think that this message is particularly important for Nepal because Nepal has all the potentials and all the possibilities for a great future provided you can get over the present animosity," Dr. Spacius said.

Wishing Nepal a good future for peace and prosperity, he further observed that the differences among the political parties could only be minimized through consensus and mutual sacrifices.

"Reaching a compromise means that no one will get all what the person asks, and will have to accept some discomfort, in a spirit of mutual concession with trust. We need the consensus among the political parties representing the people now. So my best wishes to the people of Nepal," Dr. Spacius said.

"It is sixty years of peace and prosperity in Europe and this peace and prosperity was based on consensus among old enemies in Europe. Europeans had been killing each other sixty years ago with 40 M dead in the Second World War. The old enemies managed to turn into partners and today they are even more than partners, they are friends; they are one family," Dr. Alexander Spacius, Ambassador, Head of European Union Delegation to Nepal told the press while presenting a brief outline of the initial years of European integration.
Funding Opportunities

The European Commission is seeking proposals for Non-State Actors in Development Programme in Nepal with financial assistance from the Instrument for Non-State Actors in Development. The proposals should be in the area of vocational training or good governance (peace building, justice and public finance management). The full Guidelines for Applicants are available for consultation at https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publ.welcome and in the website of the European Union Delegation to Nepal www.delnpl.ec.europa.eu

The deadline for submission of proposals is 10 September 2010 at 12:00 hrs (Nepal Time).

An information session on this Call for Proposals will be held on 30 July 2010. The place and the time for this session will be announced on the website of the delegation http://www.delnpl.ec.europa.eu/

Published by Dr. Alexander Spachis, Ambassador, Head of Delegation Delegation of the European Union to Nepal

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With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December, 2009, we are now the:
Delegation of the European Union to Nepal
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