

Speech by DCS at National Day of Nepal Reception (English only) (with photos)

Following is the speech by the Deputy Secretary for Administration, Mr Cheuk Wing-hing, at the National Day of Nepal Reception today (September 20):

Consul General Ranamagar (Consul General of Nepal in Hong Kong, Mr Udaya Bahadur Ranamagar), Deputy Commissioner Fang Jianming (Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), representatives of consulates in Hong Kong, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It is great pleasure to be here tonight in celebration of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal's National Day.

More than 31 million people of Nepal and its capital Kathmandu, as well as Nepalese communities in different parts of the world, join hands today in the celebration.

Home to seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Kathmandu is surely among the world's most stunning cities. Nepal is also home to eight of the planet's highest 10 mountains. It may be a little bit late for me to contemplate conquering the eight summits now, but I do hope to see more Hong Kong mountain climbers going up these magnificent Himalayan peaks some day.

With her spectacular natural beauty, Nepal is a popular tourist destination, with tourism being a strong pillar of the country's economic development. I am delightful to note from the International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s recent report in July 2024 that Nepal's economic activity is expected to pick up with growth reaching 4.9 per cent in financial year 2024/25, with "continued increase in tourist arrivals" being one of the factors to boost domestic demand and growth.

This is good news not only for Nepal and Nepalese businesses, but also for investors internationally, including Hong Kong. In this regard, I am pleased to know that the Consulate hosted a well-attended Nepal Investment Seminar in Hong Kong earlier this year to promote investment opportunities in Nepal among the local business community.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government treasures the longstanding ties between Hong Kong and Nepal. Indeed, we are home to nearly 26 000 Nepalese nationals who form one of the largest expat communities in Hong Kong. I also take heart in our country's deep ties with Nepal. Next year marks the 70th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Nepal and China. Special programmes and activities are planned, highlighted by the designation of 2025 as "Visit Nepal Year in China".

In addition to tourism and trade, culture and arts is also a promising

growth area for Hong Kong and Nepal. Last November, the people of Hong Kong were treated to traditional Nepalese dance and arts and crafts at Hong Kong's annual Asian Ethnic Cultural Performances which were supported by Nepal's Consulate-General and the Hong Kong Nepalese Federation.

I take pleasure to add that Nepalese dance and handicrafts, as well as traditional wedding gowns, will be in the spotlight at the Asia+ Festival's "Asian Ethnic Cultural Performances" in November this year. This year's Asia+ Festival, which will commence later this month, features more than 100 performances and activities from nearly 30 countries and regions in Asia, the Middle East and the wide-ranging regions of the Belt and Road. I invite you all to enjoy Nepal's creative arts, as well as the rich and diverse spectrum of culture and entertainment at the Asia+ Festival. Thank you very much.

