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*Joint UK-Nepal communique on the occasion of the visit of the Prime Minister of Nepal to the United Kingdom, 10-12th June 2019.*

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On the occasion of the visit to the United Kingdom of the Prime Minister of Nepal, Rt. Hon. K P Sharma Oli, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, Rt. Hon. Mr. Jeremy Hunt MP, and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal, Hon. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, agreed the following communique.

The United Kingdom and Nepal are long-time partners that have enjoyed diplomatic relations for over 200 years, by far the longest formal relationship Nepal has with any country. Today the relationship is broad, vibrant and diverse. This year we have witnessed progress against our shared objectives, and we commit to continued dialogue on issues of mutual interest.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) of the United Kingdom and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) of Nepal acknowledged the long and distinguished service of Gurkhas in the British Army. The two sides recognised Gurkhas as a vital link in strengthening the bilateral relationship. Going forward, both sides agreed to continue discussion on Gurkha matters.

Both sides discussed the shared objective to strengthen the trade and investment relationship between Britain and Nepal, in line with Nepal's "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali" agenda. The FCO and MFA agreed on the important contribution the UK makes to supporting Nepal's economic development as the country's largest bilateral donor. Looking ahead, Nepal agreed to seek to improve still further the environment for inward investment and the UK will provide support to encourage potential investors to invest in Nepal. To help deliver this, both sides noted the progress made in negotiations on a Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement, and agreed the aim of it entering into force by 2020. Going forward, the UK welcomed Nepal's desire to obtain a sovereign rating working with UK financial institutions.

Both sides acknowledged Nepal's efforts to graduate from least developed country status at an early date and achieve the sustainable development goals by 2030. The FCO agreed to a strong development partnership that continued to support Nepal's development efforts under the new polity. The MFA on behalf of the Government of Nepal appreciated DFID's work to help the Nepali people including after the 2015 earthquakes through the National Reconstruction Authority. Going forward, both governments

recognised each other's strong leadership on climate change issues and agreed to work together, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to tackle this challenge.

The FCO and MFA agreed on the importance of supporting the international rules-based system and multilateralism. They reiterated the commitment of their governments to protecting and promoting human rights in line with international norms and standards, noting both countries were on the UN Human Rights Council. Looking ahead, both sides agreed to focus on tackling human trafficking. Nepal acknowledged the British Prime Minister's leadership of, and commitment to, this agenda. The FCO welcomed Nepal's ambition to ratify the Palermo Protocol in 2019 and the two sides agreed they will work together on this issue, including through DFID's work in Nepal. Both sides expressed their commitment to freedom of expression and media freedom in line with their laws and regulations. The UK side informed that UK and Canada would host Media Freedom conference in London in July 2019 and requested for Nepal's participation.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to building on our strong and enduring partnership. They welcomed efforts to bring Nepali and British young people closer together, welcoming the work of the British Council, which they were pleased was celebrating its 60th anniversary in Nepal. They agreed that other educational initiatives, including the work by UK universities offering degrees in Nepal, the Chevening Scholarship Programme and the British Government's Girls Education projects in Nepal, would support Nepal's development. The UK welcomed Nepal's official recognition of UK A-Level qualifications.

The FCO and the MFA celebrated the strong people-to-people ties between the two countries. They welcomed the Nepal government's work to strengthen its economy by attracting more tourists, including through their VisitNepal2020 Campaign. The FCO also extended its support to make this campaign a success. They were pleased to note the number of visitors to Nepal from the UK had risen to over 60,000. Both sides welcomed the many contributions of the Nepali diaspora to public life in Britain. Both sides appreciated the work of hundreds of civil society organisations and individuals who help keep the relationship between Britain and Nepal vibrant.

The two sides agreed to build on the broad and robust foundation of our past, for an even stronger relationship to tackle the issues that matter to us both in the future.