

**Closing Remarks by the Honourable Minister for Forests and Soil Conservation, Mr. Deepak Bohara  
at the inaugural session of Kathmandu Global Tiger Workshop (27 October, 2009)**

Chief Guest Rt. Hon'l Prime Minister Mr Madhav Kumar Nepal,  
Hon. Ministers  
Hon. Vice Minister Mr. Pimuk Simkarj,  
Hon. Mr. Vladir Kirillov. Russia  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates and participants,  
Media friends from home and abroad,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me immense pleasure to say a few words in this august gathering here in this historic capital city of Nepal. Please join me in thanking today's keynote speakers and performers for their quality of presentations and for doing such a good job of articulating the main ideas of tiger conservation. They all did a fine job of delivering material. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank **Right Honourable Prime Minister** for his thought provoking speech.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I also have a great pleasure in welcoming all of you particularly those who have travelled here from a long distance. Unlike the usual conservation and professional gathering, this Workshop is primarily concerned with a single species, the tigers, which are one of the most threatened species and deserve a high priority for conservation. Nepal feels honoured to host this important Workshop.

I feel pride to pronounce that Nepal is committed to the conservation of its rich biodiversity and the protection of endangered species such as Tigers and Rhinos. Nepal has successfully established and managed 16 protected areas in three ecological zones covering about 20% of the total area of Nepal. We are also aiming to add at least one new protected area in the near future. This is a vivid indicator that Nepal is successfully developing an effective network of protected areas by timely amending the National Park and Wildlife Conservation Act. In the protected areas development process, we have also sought a careful balance between ecological integrity of the protected area with the social and economic needs of the local communities. To achieve this, Nepal has innovated and adopted participatory biodiversity conservation. You all are aware that Nepal has also initiated landscape level conservation.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Right Honourable Prime Minister's gracious presence here today gives ample evidence of the importance given to tiger conservation by the present Government of Nepal. In an exemplary step, the Government of Nepal has already endorsed Tiger Conservation Action Plan (2008-2012) and now it is in the implementation phase. I am delighted to share that the recent tiger monitoring results demonstrate a stable tiger population of 121 adult breeding individuals in Nepal. We strongly believe that this is the outcome of constructive partnership with national and international conservation organizations in the past and we would like to strengthen the partnership in the days ahead. As directed by the Rt. Honourable Prime Minister, we have moved ahead to establish a high level National Tiger Conservation Authority and Wildlife Crime Control Coordination Committee to combat wildlife crime and illegal trade.

As you all are aware that in the past, various efforts have been implemented for the conservation of this elusive endangered species by the Government in collaboration with local communities, conservation organizations, yet many endangered species, particularly the Tiger is still facing many challenges. Habitat loss, poaching and illegal trade still are being a serious threats where Tigers are found. These challenges have been deepened with the political instability in the country. In this workshop, we must make a serious pledge to fight against poaching and illegal trade of wildlife parts. The Government of Nepal is ready to revisit the policies and legislations. I believe that the Kathmandu Global Tiger Workshop will discuss common issues and seek the strategic, decisive and bold actions to address such problems in conservation of tiger in their historic range. I am confident that this Workshop will certainly be able to come up with innovative, important and practical guidelines for the effective conservation in the days ahead.

I agree with the Rt. Honourable Prime Minister that we have numerous challenges to address both from national and global point of view. Nevertheless, we also have enormous opportunities. At present, the Government of Nepal has given high priority to biodiversity conservation and climate change concern. Distinguished guests and veteran conservationist, climate change has become a major issue in the Himalayas because Himalayas are melting. On the other hand, the rhino and tiger habitats are slowly degrading due to invasive species such as *Mikania micrantha* (Bitter Vine). Therefore, I would like to call for further synergies and reinforced collaboration to face new global challenges in conservation and to make present conservation efforts fruitful and sustainable.

At this juncture, I would also like to share our recent initiative to extend and augment additional tiger habitat of about 900 square kilometres into the Bardia National Park. This will help to establish viable linkages between trans-boundary protected areas of Nepal and India. The Government of Nepal is working together with conservation partners, scientific communities and local people to effectively and practically upgrade the tiger habitats.

I take privileged to be part of this Workshop and request you all to participate and share ideas to orchestrate new innovative conservation plans, policies, strategies and programmes for effective tiger conservation. Your expertise and knowledge will certainly enlighten us and eventually lead us to brighter future Tiger that our future generation will inherit from us. I am convinced that this august gathering will prepare recommendations to call for actions and commitments to be endorsed by the forthcoming Asian Ministerial level meeting to be held in the Kingdom of Thailand.

#### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the organisers and sponsors of this workshop, namely, the CITES, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Department of Forest, Global Tiger Forum, Global Tiger Initiative, National Trust for Nature Conservation, Save the Tiger Fund, the World Bank and WWF, for their relentless works.

On behalf of Government of Nepal, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation and in my own, I would like to extend my warmest greetings to all the distinguished guests, veteran conservationists and friends, and wish you all a pleasant stay in Nepal.

I would also like to extend my best wishes for the success of Kathmandu Global Tiger Workshop 2009.

Thank you very much.