

[Inaugural address by Rt. Honorable Madhav Kumar Nepal, Prime Minister of Nepal at the Opening of the Kathmandu Global Tiger Workshop 2009 \(Kathmandu, 27 October, 2009\)](#)

**Chairperson Honorable Minister for Forests and Soil Conservation Mr. Deepak Bohara,
Honorable Ministers, and Vice Minister Pimuk Simaroj, of Thailand
Honorable country delegates representing the global tiger range,
Distinguished guests,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,
Media friends,
Ladies and gentlemen**

It is indeed a pleasure this morning to be amidst the prominent and dedicated personalities of the world who are gathered here with the common objectives to assess the present level of conservation and devise new strategies and urgent actions to stop the alarming range wide downward trend of tiger population. It is appalling that an iconic animal of great significance both culturally and religiously across Asia is in such a precarious situation. I would like to extend a warm welcome to you all in Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal.

All of you are aware that we are in the transitional political stage and moving ahead keeping the spirit of people's movement in mind and quest for peace expressed by every Nepalese citizen. The Government of Nepal is seriously engaged in taking the on-going peace process to a positive conclusion, writing a new democratic constitution within the stipulated time-frame, and meeting the rising aspirations of the Nepali people by building political consensus among the political parties through the democratic process of consultations and dialogue.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Nepal is one of the very few countries endowed with multifarious biological resources. I am delighted to note that the Government of Nepal has taken many important steps to conserve its rich biological diversity. Organized efforts began in early 1970s with a focus on endangered species and establishment of protected area network to conserve and manage representative ecosystems and their elements. Since then, Nepal Government has brought timely transformation in its policies and laws to strengthen our conservation initiatives together with the local communities.

Nepal shares with other tiger range states many of the challenges and opportunities in biodiversity conservation. We have spearheaded community management of certain forests and buffer zones around protected areas to ensure their long term management, sustenance and the protection of biodiversity that are in there. However, Nepal shares many concerns with you in securing our natural heritage. In our periodic national plans, we have outlaid importance on conservation of rare and endangered species. In view of these challenges, we have to reinforce our actions. With support from the national and international community, we seek to intensify conservation measures. This Government is committed to the conservation of Nepal's biological resources and to strengthen trans-boundary cooperation with neighboring countries.

But, Ladies and Gentleman,

Despite our solemn pledge, let us acknowledge the stark reality the tiger, its prey base and habitat is facing. For example, we are only beginning to learn about the consequences of global threats from climate change on our fragile environment. The dwindling tiger populations and, high rate of loss of historic habitat range warrant immediate strategic and bold actions at landscape level. Despite our efforts in last three decades or so, tigers still face many threats. The primary threat in tiger conservation is poaching and habitat loss. Our efforts in environmental conservation have further been challenged by extreme poverty.

The solutions will be area specific, but the future of conservation will depend upon how we act now and how we make tiger conservation and overall biodiversity much more valuable to the livelihoods of local communities. For the recovery of endangered species like tigers and to maintain a healthy ecosystem for the welfare of human society, there is no better alternative than to initiate joint efforts. Global and regional solidarity and collective strategies armed with actions are more necessary now than ever before to address these daunting challenges. We need to take quick measures to protect these species from extinction. The challenges before this workshop are therefore to devise workable solutions that benefit both nature and people.

Ladies and Gentleman,

I would like to reiterate here that Nepal is committed to the cause of conservation and dedicated, to the extent possible, to conserve this species and the habitats. We need your good wishes and international support to make our efforts fruitful. This gathering, indeed, provides us an opportunity

to assemble Governmental, Inter Governmental, Non Governmental, Development/partner organizations and this will certainly add one more impetus in the course of conservation journey for which we are in the forefront.

At this juncture, I would like to share with you all our on-going initiatives for establishing effective trans-boundary cooperation with our neighboring countries to address trans-boundary conservation issues and effective law enforcement. Moreover, we are in the process of establishing a High-level National Tiger Conservation Authority and High-level Wildlife Crime Control Coordination Committee. These legal bodies will be instrumental to halt trafficking of wild animals and their body parts.

I would like to assure you that we are determined to conserve our rare and endangered species of flora and fauna. We have taken many initiatives, both at central, regional and at the field levels. I strongly believe that international solidarity will be crucial in this venture. We need wide range of actions for successful outcomes, including increase in investments in conservation from respective Governments and the donor community.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Working together, we are confident that we will reach our common destination. This eminent gathering will provide a suitable platform to share our concerns and we must use this august forum to draw attention of the world community to guarantee a better future for the tigers and other species. On behalf of the Government of Nepal, the Nepali people and myself, I wish to thank everyone who has helped us in the past in this endeavor and request your continued support in the days ahead.

I am confident that the Kathmandu Global Tiger Workshop-2009 should mark a turning point in tiger conservation leading to the Tiger Summit in the upcoming Year of the Tiger. Finally, I would like to affirm our strong commitment to conservation of tigers and other endangered species and request for concerted efforts in implementation.

I would like to thank the organizers, co-sponsors, and conservation partners for making this gathering possible and I am sure that this gathering will bring out realistic ground level actions for the long term conservation of the pride of Asia, the tiger.

Let us all be together to make the planet a better and safe place for the tigers.

Thank you.