

## Securing a future for Nepal's rich natural heritage

As peace dawns over the nation, we call upon all stakeholders from the Government of Nepal to the political parties, from grassroots organizations to donor agencies, from international well wishers to the citizens of Nepal to secure a future for Nepal's rich natural heritage that will in turn, pave the way for truly sustainable and equitable socio-economic development and biodiversity conservation of the nation.

In the past, periods of political transition in Nepal brought about severe losses to biodiversity and the environment. We must take action now to prevent history from repeating itself. We call upon the government, in consultation with all political parties, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders, to make a strong commitment to this urgent task.

Biodiversity and environment conservation is inextricably linked with sustainable development. The people of Nepal stand to gain immensely if the new constitutional changes ensure the safety, security, environmental justice, and equitable distribution of Nepal's natural resources.

Nepal is recognized globally for some of the best practices and policies that put people centre-stage in biodiversity and environment conservation. Community-based natural resource management, community forestry, and benefit sharing earned from protected areas with people living in the buffer zones are a few examples. More efforts are clearly needed to further empower Nepalis, particularly those who are most reliant upon natural resources, like women and the socially marginalized, to use natural resources sustainably, and ensure environmental governance and justice.

The people of Nepal have worked hard and sacrificed much to see the benefits of good governance. We have seen how working together can yield unimaginable results and in this spirit of unity we need to work jointly to ensure the safety of this great nation's natural wealth.

We are committed to this goal and appeal to all to do the same.

This day, the present, is when we must start building for a better future, for a living planet.



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