

**Remarks by the President of Nepali Congress and former Prime Minister of Nepal
Hon. Sher Bahadur Deuba, at the Inaugural Session of the Nepal Investment
Summit 2024, Kathmandu, 28th of April 2024**

- Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister, Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'
- Hon'ble Ministers,
- Excellencies,
- Leaders from the private sector,
- Eminent businesspersons from around the world,
- Ladies and gentlemen

A warm good morning to you all.

Thank you, Prime Minister, for hosting this important Summit and inviting me to speak a few words at this inaugural session this morning.

Let me also extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guests who have travelled all the way to Kathmandu to attend this Summit.

I am confident that the deliberations in the Summit and the various instruments of cooperation and partnership that will be exchanged during the Summit will pave the way for greater flow of investment into Nepal.

Nepal is still a least developed country. We confront huge development challenges. While our country has huge potentials for development, we lack adequate capital and appropriate technology to realize development benefits. In this context, the convening of this high level event assumes a particular significance.

My party initiated economic reform in Nepal. Back in 1990, Nepali Congress government liberalized the economy, invited the private sector and created conducive environment for foreign investment. During that short span of period, our government reoriented the policies, revised old laws and brought new laws, rationalized the public expenditure and initiated the liberal tax regime.

Nepal's investment regime is now liberal in terms of sectors open for foreign investment, tax policies and repatriation of earnings. Almost all sectors are open for foreign investment. Agriculture, tourism, infrastructure development, mines and minerals, manufacturing, tourism, hydropower and IT are some of the key sectors where domestic and foreign investment will have transformative impact.

Foreign investment is protected by domestic law and various international instruments to which our country is party. I have come to know that the Government has expressed its willingness to conclude bilateral investment protection agreement with various countries to promote Nepal as an attractive destination for investment.

Flexible labour law, demographic dividend with a substantial share of young and energetic population, reliable supply of electricity, availability of local raw materials also contribute to make production cost low compared to other high wages countries in the region.

We have established one stop service that includes the- Investment Board of Nepal for large scale projects under Public Private Partnership and Department of Industries for other small and medium sized investment projects.

We have streamlined processes to save time and energy for registration of companies and putting them into operation relatively within a short period of time. Less bureaucracy means faster decision making and quicker approval of proposals.

Moreover, all major political parties remain committed to promote foreign investment in Nepal and come together to foster consensus on key investment related issues.

During my tenure as the Prime Minister, we implemented crucial reforms. They aimed at promoting foreign investment, boosting tourism, harnessing the potential of hydropower, revitalizing industries and agriculture. As the reform was not completed, I believe that the present government will continue the reform initiatives and create more conducive environment for private sector.

Internal market is expanding with increase in income of people and external market is accessible due to geographical proximity and concessional trading facilities that we receive from our neighbours and other partners. Our two neighbours -India and China offer huge market opportunities for Nepal. We also have supportive trading relationship with USA and EU.

As former Prime Minister and President of the largest and oldest democratic Party-the Nepali Congress, I would like to convey the following messages:

- We pursue liberal economic policy where market and the private sectors have an important role to play in advancing economic development under a democratic framework.
- The Government plays a facilitating role and creates an environment that is conducive for investment and business without losing its responsibility to ensure social justice and inclusive representation of all segments of Nepali society.
- We live in an era of intense competition for investment. This means we need to be more attractive and competitive in providing incentives and protecting investment. Money goes where it is treated well.
- We continue pursuing reform in a coherent and practical manner to adjust our investment regime in light of changes in the internal and external economic environment.
- We do not pursue discriminatory policy vis-à-vis foreign investors. They are treated at par with national investors. We welcome foreign investors as our valued guests.

- There are convincing examples to prove that foreign investment in Nepal is profitable. Some of the multinationals working in Nepal have been able to repatriate a good amount of dividend over the years.
- Please come to Nepal and invest in our economy that will be beneficial to you and our people. We will provide you full protection and assure you of our sustained cooperation from start to finish.

We will cherish our partnership for development and prosperity. Your contribution in supporting Nepal in its endeavours to transform economic landscape will be highly valued. The time is of essence. Nepal has huge untapped potentials. I believe that with our common efforts we can make a difference.

I wish our international guests a pleasant stay in Nepal and a productive deliberation.

I also wish all success of the Summit.

Thank you! Jai Nepal !!