A famous American community organizer and writer Saul Alinsky classifies humankind into three tiers: the Haves, the Haves-Not and the Have-a-Little, Wants more. The Haves are always atop the social pyramid with the control over power, wealth, protection and luxury. Whilst they suffocate always in the limitless property, the Haves-Not are often in the clutch of starvation. The Haves account minority of the population in the society but wants to keep things as they are and are opposed to change. Thermopolitically, they are cold and committed to freeze the status quo.

Underneath the Haves is the world of the Haves-Not. The Haves-Not are largest in number. They are threaded together by the common misery of poverty, scarcity, ignorance, malady, political impotence, despair and poverty-wage if they are employed. Needless to say, of these two classes, the strong always exploits the weak. The conflict based on ethnicity, race, caste and gender do not directly fall in the sanctuary of class struggle; these simply are the manifestation of discriminations and exploitations rampant in the society. The class supremacy is the economic discrimination not in the colour of people, place of their origin and gender. An individual with ethnic, gender and regional identity may be an oppressor and s/he may fuel violence among the people with such identity. In such situation supporting either of the poor or the rich is positioning oneself against each other. When the time comes to take a side, the oppressed stands against oppressor, poor against rich and a class against another.

Today, we are observing the May Day. We observe the Day in festive mood. But question may arise, why this commendation of struggle even in the day of festivity?

Because, the flag of our May Day is pierced in the blood of world’s working class who chose martyrdom against tyranny for the sake of dignity. The glory of May Day is grounded on the glorious struggle of working class against a handful the Haves who belligerently freight oppression on many the Haves-Not. The history of May Day is the grandeur history of labour leaders in Chicago who were crucified by the brutal regime.
some 125 years back for a simple reason that the leaders dreamt of dignified, prosperous and creative life for their generations. In this way, the history of the Day is closely linked with the struggle against repressive past. On the top of it, the history of May Day is sprinkled by the blood of Nepali workers who waged struggle for democracy, equality and prosperity against all sorts of tyrannies imposed by 104-year Ran oligarchy, despotic regime of absolute monarchy in various forms including so-called partyless Panchayat system. The May Day is stood firm on the strong citadel of workers who chose death to despotism but did not give up their hope to prevail over oppression.

So we cannot help underscoring the glorious history of the workers when we talk about the May Day. Even last year, we bore in mind the Rhododendron Revolution scaled in 2006 by the Nepali people, which shook the fortress of feudalism in Nepali society. With the change of 2006, we voiced with high expectation that the transformation is possible! But one year down the road since last year, the Nepali politics could not paint a rosy picture in its mandate to write a new constitution. Instead, it has been lost in the vortex of power struggle. While observing the May Day last year, we called the right opposition party to relinquish its obstinacy to capture state power from the street protest. As we foretold, their attempt to capture the state power could not yield result in their favour. Instead they got public opposition that obliged them to pull off their struggle. Now the characters in the power have been changed, method of stubbornness has been altered. Nonetheless, the lust of power among the political parties is still there by the same gravity as it was in the last year. There is no breakthrough in the status quo of Nepali politics over the year.

If this is the case, is the current political leadership irrelevant?

We were firmly while celebrating the May Day last year that the drafting of a new constitution should have been accomplished by then. Article wise discussion of the compiled constitution-bill should have been accomplished by then. But progress to that direction has not been made by this time too. We are still in the same line of fall as we were before a year. Of the total members in Constituent Assembly (CA), the remaining task for 336 members now is to cast vote for or against the draft of new constitution to be tabled in the Full House of CA after the draft is prepared by the 65 members of the Constitutional Committee. But sadly, the discussion has not been started yet among the top leadership on how the remaining tasks of writing constitution can be accomplished within the remaining time of CA and how to manage the prolonged transition after May 28. The leadership instead has fallen in the gorge of irresponsible debate whether or
It is said that the deal between three major political parties to extend the CA term is the foundation to consolidate democratic achievements of the country. The extended timeframe of three months this time is a preparation for the next three months.

A five-point deal was signed among three major political parties – Nepali Congress, CPN-UML and UCPN (Maoist) - to extend the CA term by three months to accomplish fundamental works related to peace and constitution.

The deal was officially approved by the May 28 Full House of legislature parliament. The House session scheduled for 8 a.m. in the morning was delayed for over 15 hours after the parties couldn’t forge consensus on tenure-extension. Speaker Subas Nembang convened the House at 11:14 pm midnight amid continuation of differences between the ruling coalition and the main opposition over the CA should see a phase wise or a straight six-month extension.

Earlier, the government’s plan to forge consensus within Saturday midnight failed after the Front of Terai based political parties wanted to trade off the extension with incumbent Prime ministers’ immediate resignation.

The three major parties were close to extend the term of the CA for six months through a deal including time bound commitment to conclude the peace and constitution making process during intra party discussion held on May 28 afternoon.

During discussion with leaders of NC, UML and the Terai based parties, UCPN (Maoists) had committed that they were ready to end the dual security arrangement for their party leaders immediately and lock the weapons used by the body guards in the containers, in a “symbolic” move to suggest that the arms were under the Special Committee. They had expressed to declare in written that the weapons storage containers installed at the seven main cantonment sites belonged to the Special Committee.

This deal is said as “gentle- men agreement”, where the Maoists had also pledged to finalised the regrouping procedures within June 4, complete the regrouping process by July 5 and complete the integration and rehabilitation by September. They had proposed that the first draft of the constitution would be prepared within one month of extension.

It is said that the deal between three major political parties to extend the CA tenure. The debate simply is nothing more than a trick to escape the responsibility by shifting the blames onto others.

Why to extend the CA tenure? This is the question even workers want to load on to the leaders who have belief in and respect for democracy. We need firm and convincing answer: have we achieved the mission of drafting and enacting the new constitution through elected CA? Or was the demand of Nepali people to enact new constitution through CA for 65 years now wrong? What is the alternative to the CA if it is dissolved as per the rumour on the surface? Is it the revival of interim constitution of 2006, or the revival of Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990 or the presidential rule as a testimony to the failure of current political leadership?

On this historical occasion of the Day, this question is not only directed to the major political parties, same question goes to all parties in CA, the intellectual and the civil society who project themselves as 'opinion makers.' We are never tired of blaming and commenting on 'failures' and 'inactions' of others. But what do you think the right alternative to CA? This is the question to the 'intellectuals' and the civil society answer of which is in pending on their part!

Obviously, all the faces in Nepali society are not new for the Nepali people. At a time when the highly acclaimed inclusive CA elected through exceptional momentum and elevated expectation could not yield results as per people's wish, how can we anticipate that the alternative institution of CA will hold water? How can we be convinced ourselves that the rumour of fresh elections is the right alternative? Can the elected body like CA be dissolved simply on the ground that it could not serve the purpose of a few leaders who are defamed by their wrongdoings in the past? Or, can the political vacuum like before 2001 serve the purpose of CA?

It is definite that CA cannot be a ‘writing team’ of a group of people to draft a constitution. Neither can it dish up the interest of certain group of people or individual.

If so, a question may arise, was it the waste of time of CA over the past year?

Obviously, there are some complications in the political spectrum. However, we succeed to mellow some fruits in the world of work. Workers thrive in materialising the Social Security System, the demand of workers
that was pending for 20 years. The Social Security System is based on Social Security Fund collected through one percent tax on the workers who are entitled to regular-permanent jobs. We also succeeded to strike Collective Agreement between the employers and trade unions and thereby agree on the contribution ratio on the both sides; 1.1:2. The incumbent government has guaranteed the Tripartite Social Security Fund Management Board in coordination of Labour Ministry and agreed for operational guidelines of the Board.

These definitely are the major achievements in favour of working class. Unlike the past agreements, the new agreement of the year is a landmark step to take our society forward to equality and welfare direction.

As a part of the social development process, the politics at present in Nepal is in the transition. As is the politics, so is the economy. As we are in transition, we are leaving the old legacy back but still to form a new but firm foundation. In other words, we are no more in the phase of destruction nor already entered in the era of construction. We are passing through the phase of deconstruction. Deconstruction per se is to leave out the useless things of the past and take those useful to create a new.

In the unequal society like ours, we do not put a hook on the rich people in their campaign for gaining wealth. Instead we opine to tax them and use it for the support of low income people. Through the contributory Social Security Fund, provide social protection to workers in employment with the benefits of education, health, pension and unemployment benefit. In the name of class struggle, instead intimidation, violence and maiming, we feel it as the practical method to address class struggle of Nepali society. We do not call them anymore the forms of class struggle. We have firm belief that we can develop labour force through this process. That’s why we have applauded the Collective Agreement reached between the employers and the trade unions as ‘historic’. Hence we have thanked the immediate past leadership of FNCCI who demonstrated adequate flexibility in recent agreement. And, it is on this ground we have hailed a slogan- ‘world of work would get liberal policy; if the workers would enjoy employment and social security!’

Down the road to this May Day, a new leadership of the FNCCI has been elected. Last year, we urged the employers and their organisation to respect the rules of the gamesin letter and spirit and be abided by it. We feel the call that we made last year is still relevant this year too and we further ask them to implement the collective agreement in letter and spirit, and do not try to revoke the Social Security System in any pretext. We strongly support the businesspersons in their call to allow them work without hindrances and stop the goons to enter the workplace and let them live in looting. Once again we reiterate our position: ‘worker-employer relations do it as is the labour legislations! Oppose the highhandedness in our workplace!’

Last year we raised such important issues that have enduring effect in our world of work. After the present team of GEFONT ascended to the leadership, it has insistently brought to implementation the slogan “where workers there GEFONT”. In a bid to put the slogan into practice, we have convened National Convention of different affiliates including 12 Zonal Committees. No matter on what terms of condition are the workers in workplace, we succeeded to reach out to them all and made the slogan “Rights to Union all, social protection to all” of theirs too.

Despite the achievements of last year, we still have to do more to achieve the following:

- Ratification of ILO Convention No 87
- Formation of constitutional and powerful National Labour Commission based on tripartite agreement and as per the spirit of ‘Labour Commission’ as enshrined in the Interim Constitution.
- Timely amendment to the existing labour laws and development of new and necessary labour laws like Social Security Bill
- Schemes design of Social Security System and management of Fund
- Guarantee of labour friendly new constitution with the inclusion of workers’ issues in the draft prepared by the Thematic Committees of the Constituent Assembly
- Organizing the workers against the exploitative and inhuman labour practice and mobilizing them for dignified, prosperous and ingenious life.

These are the priority agenda of workers in the coming year too. However, many of them rely on the action of the Government of Nepal. We the hardworking class people have the right to ask with the Right Honourable Prime Minister:

- Which force is impeding the Government to ratify the ILO Convention No 87?
- Who is the force to thwart the democratic reorganization of world of work?
- Who is that to hinder the introduction of labour friendly policy and programmes in the country like ours where nearly 50 percent of the population is below the poverty line?
- Who is that to put a spoke in you leaders’ wheel to move forward to bring about transformational change in Nepali society?

We expect strong commitment of the government. If the government is ready to address the agenda raised above, we on behalf of Nepali trade union movement with no hesitantly say that the world of work will be transformed into the “peace zone” in the days to come.

Finally, I on behalf of all Nepali workers would like to welcome you all guests and the invitees present here for your solidarity to the Nepali workers. I wish you all a happy May Day!

(Keynote Address on May 1, 2011 by GEFONT-President Bishnu Rimal)
"Ask not my name
Nor if you knew me
The dreams I have had
Will grow without me
Alive no more
I will go where my dreams have shown me.
Those who carry on the fight
Will plant other roses
All will remember me."

- Poem by and found in the pocket of dead body of an unknown El Salvadorian freedom fighter guerrilla

His life always took sudden changes; time and again his life came across many unexpected phases. But this year, the incident of October 29 was not only unexpected but it was shocking and painful as well. That day not only GEFONT, the whole Nepali Trade Union Movement was shocked. GEFONT lost one of its founders and the Nepali trade union lost a tireless fighter. He is no other than our very own Comrade Madhav Neupane; who took his last breath on October 29, 7:30 am at Bluecross Hospital, Tripureshor and left us for ever.

While I was talking to Dr. Shilpakar on October 28, I remembered the sudden decision of October 25. I along with our ex-chair Comrade Mukunda, Comrade Umesh, Comrade Uddhav and Comrade Lamsal had visited Neupane’s home that day. He was in rest and was obviously happy with our presence.

“How are you now, comrade?” we asked.

“Yes!!” he replied. It seemed he didn’t get our question. We get to know it later on; due to his illness he was unable to understand most of the things.

We decided not to have tea but he told his daughter to serve us with the cold drink. He again said something to her. This time she came up with medical records and test reports and gave it to me.

I was touched. Most of my colleagues in GEFONT think that I know ‘everything’ due to their “over-confidence” on me. I guess, Neupane, too, did think like that.
“How can I check this?” I am zero on medical knowledge but still I picked up the reports and checked it out. ‘Tuber Coloma........ Brain... second stage....... fair condition at discharge.’ It was written something like that. Comrade Umesh looked at it and we said to him, “Everything will be fine, don’t worry. Tb is nothing in this 21st century? This is not even communicable.”

Poor us! We didn’t know that meeting would be our last meeting with him. Comrade Mukunda who is bit knowledgeable about health, medication, yoga etc, shared a lot of things. We too added our experiences on it- things we had seen and felt around us.

We returned but we didn’t even guess in our wildest dream that Neupane was in his last stage. We had even told him that within three months he will be healthy enough to go back to work. Same day we talked with UML Health Department Chief Comrade Krishna Gopal on various aspects like possible medication and financial help. We decided to help Neupane with the government fund that is provided to the victims of selected diseases such as tuberculosis, cancer, heart and kidney; Comrade Umesh even assigned the responsibility to NIHWU President. But the process couldn’t even get started. The same night his condition turned worse. In the situation of fully packed emergency services in most of the Hospitals and Nursing Homes, his family members with lot of difficulties took him to Hames hospital and the treatment started. After one day, he was taken back to his first hospital, Bluecross.

But all this was of no use. His daughter remembers, “On the 10th dad was very serious, at around 8 pm he told mom to go home. Before he was taken to the ventilator, he told me, ‘Dad is going now!’”. After that he was taken to the ventilator and never returned back.”

The start of a veteran unionist

He used to say –“I came into labour movement without any plans. In the mid year of 1979, vacancy was opened for trainees in different posts in Hotel Soaltee. As soon as I came to know it, I decided to join the hotel. After series of interviews, I got the job of ‘Steward’ for rupees two hundred per month.”

The training was not at all easy. He remembers, “we were given heavy trays to carry on our left hand and had to walk through the ground for more than 20 minutes. In the initial days I felt I didn’t want to take this job.”

Even his co-workers were not much supportive in those days. In deep memories of Comrade Neupane lied the bitter experiences of the initial phase of his career. “This boy won’t survive in this job” they kept on saying and even stopped him from approaching the guests. So, he sometimes felt like running from the Garden Terrace Restaurant, his first job ever.

But Soaltee hotel was in the wait for the veteran unionist, this might be the reason comrade Neupane decided to stay and survive the job handling all the difficulties. After that not only hotel Soaltee was blessed with an honest staff, but Trade Union movement of Nepal also got its one of the finest leader.

Spontaneous involvement in the movement

The same year, the workers of hotel Soaltee started a labour-action. The then general manager D.S. Dilli had misbehaved with the trainee manager Dharmaraj Kafle and the case was taken seriously by the workers. Comrade Neupane remembers “We all gathered in the premises of the hotel and leaving off our duty. Madan Amatya led the action, who was trainee along with me but as Captain. The news was all over the hotel and all the workers even those who were off-duty joined in our movement. And a struggle committee was established then & there, which was led by the then student leader Jaganath Thapaliya working at the hotel.
The movement continued for five days and then Police interrupted in. Many of the leaders were arrested and they were kept at Mahendra Police Club, Baggikhana and Tripureshor police club. This was the first time he ever went to ‘experience’ the lock-up.

“After that incident I knew that unity is the biggest strength. If we are united we will never lose, says comrade Neupane."The day after management and government decided to take charge upon the case. Guilty general manager was promised to be punished and other demands of the workers, including the 10% service charge was also taken seriously. This was the first movement in the history where all the workers participated actively and was a historically successful event.”

Live witness of all the ups and downs of union building

It is so obvious that the ups and down comes with the life of the leaders in the process of establishing a union. Some of them are bribed & sold-out in the hand of bosses, and many of them dedicated themselves in the movement without caring even bread & butter of their family members. Comrade Neupane has seen and experienced in the movement several such ups & downs in his life-time.

In October 1980, all leaders with different ideology from hotel Yak & Yeti, hotel Crystal, hotel Soaltee and hotel Everest got together to form Nepal National Independent Hotel Workers Union and it formed the first national conference organizing committee. But before it started working, co-coordinator of the committee Narayan Kafle was sold-out and he became inactive. Another member Dinesh Jha was sent to Delhi on the training for the post of manager. Neupane says, “As I have heard, they had promised to be dedicated to the workers’ cause. But they turned into renegade. Then the committee was reorganised under the leadership of Hari Prasad Sharma.”

Continuing with the movement

He used to remember this incident a lot which he has shared in many places and even written in his own way.

“That incident had taken place in November 27, 1981. Many labourers were called in Baneshwor in 10-11am. I reached on time. We were taken to Minbhawan Campus. Then, I got to know that I had already become the delegate of the national conference. We raised fund and got ready to start the conference. And the next day the first national conference of NIHWU was inaugurated. A nine member central committee was announced under the leadership of Hari Prasad Sharma. The conference was in a threatened environment due to the presence of police but it was largely successful.”

Comrade Neupane says, “After the conference I felt if we move on collectively we can be stronger and more active. I entered the union movement unexpectedly.”

Memory of Madhav Neupane

On October 29, 2010, we lost Com. Madhav Neupane, one of the nine founding leaders of GEFONT. He was active in the trade union movement from 1979 and contributed to establish GEFONT in 1989. His untimely demise has been a shock to entire GEFONT family and is the incompensatory loss of the Nepali trade union movement. In the funeral place at Aaryaghat, GEFONT organized a short meeting, where GEFONT President Bishnu Rimal Honoured Late Madhav by GEFONT flag to the dead body. He addressed the mournful gathering and expressed sentiments of tribute. The General Secretary of CPN-UML Party was also at present at Aaryaghat and he honoured late madhav by the flag of the party.

After Funeral programme, emergency meeting of GEFON-NEC took place at HQs which passed a special resolution with high evaluation of his contributions. In the NEC meeting, invitees were also the leaders of the various affiliate federations. The meeting decided to Bent half GEFONT flag for three days in honour of late Madhav and to organize mass meetings for paying tributes nationwide on 13th day in his memories.
And their efforts began to show the results. Comrade Neupane then didn’t look back. He got higher posts and of course his responsibilities multiplied. In 1984, he was elected as the central treasurer of NIHWU by its Second National Conference.

After being involved in union activities, he was punished by management in 1983. That day, Soaltee got into action when Mohan Aryal, a house-keeping worker at airport restaurant was accused of stealing some dollars and was kidnapped. Workers went into strike; management finally compromised but Hari Prasad Sharma and Madan Amatya were fired from the job and Neupane was given the last warning.

Troubled Union, troubled Neupane

Even after the second national conference, NIHWU didn’t get the proper leadership. Many of the members went abroad; some of them left the job. Some changed their profession and some stayed out of contact. Soon, many important posts of the Union were vacant. Just Neupane and his ‘senior’- Sharma were left in the central committee.

But the trade union movement took a bright change. Workers at Hotel Everest, Yak & Yeti and Hotel Blue Star staged weeklong strikes under NIHWU leadership. Again hotel Soaltee got into controversies. The management of the hotel decided to increase the cost of cafeteria without any increment on the food allowance. Against this unjust decision, none of the workers stepped into the cafeteria and for this management blamed Neupane and honoured him with the expel letter.

It was a great shock in his life. “I was against the injustice that management had done with the workers. Their salary was just Rs.400 and the food cost was more than Rs.240. I wasn’t wrong anywhere but my fight was of no use. I lost my job in return”, he says.

Then he started the job of searching the job. After a long process of three months, he got the job at Van Van restaurant. Even though the place was not comparable, the salary and other facilities were as good as Hotel Soaltee. He was again jobless after one year and in 1987, he joined Hotel Kathmandu. It was his final workplace Hotel d’ la Annapurna where he worked till the last stage of his life.

Even in this difficult situation, comrade Neupane was given the major responsibility of handling NIHWU. He didn’t turn back and from the third national conference he was elected as the President of NIHWU. He continued to be in the leadership until he himself decided to quit. If he had not done so, no other wanted to take his place.

GEFONT and its co-founder Neupane

After a decade of establishment of central union in manufacturing industries-NIWU, total of four central Unions including manufacturing & general industries (NIWU), hotel (NIHWU), tourism (TWAN) and transport (ITWAN) were active. The industrial unions had gained sufficient ground, which could make visible impact to the then political movement. To get all the unions together, the need of a new ‘umbrella’ organisation was visualised. Thus, in 20th July 1989, General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) was established- Com. Neupane with the responsibility of coordinating hotel sector’s union as a founder member.

Comrade Neupane was involved in different activities of GEFONT, from its establishment to his last date. He spent total 21 years in the service of the Confederation. He was one of the nine GEFONT

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Declaration of Memorial Award

GEFONT has declared Madhav Neupane Memorial Award to provide to active unionist of the year, who will contribute significantly in the organizational work and mobilization of working people. The decision has been taken in the 74th Meeting of National Executive committee in January 25-26, 2011. From May Day 2012, every year the award will be given to the distinguished trade unionist in GEFONT family of geographical structures and affiliates.
founders and one of the twelve selected union educators. He represented GEFONT in different forums both at national and international level. He was one of the four leaders of newly launched “GEFONT Veteran Network” and has contributed total 31 years of his life to cultivate Nepali Union movement.

How can we remember him?

“Neither any grievances; Nor any comments; Let you be all right, I pray always!”

After his death, when we look back to him; these lines perhaps mirror his image. He was the gentle and humble character where he never thought about himself. His way of living had a simple policy; don’t care what other think about you and don’t think wrong about anyone. He never used to share his problems with anyone. It makes us feel it is one of the reasons that a minor disease like Tb took him away so easily!

But it doesn’t mean that he was an introvert. He was a straightforward man and was always optimistic. He was not at all ambitious; didn’t have the lust of position and monetary-wealth. He never thought of achieving “big” and was very strong to his determinations. He was happy in what he earned and was highly satisfied. Many of his competitors envy him with this habit.

Life was not easy to him. On December 3, 2006, he was humiliated by a gang of hooligans who identified themselves as “the leaders” of the then Maoist party. They accused him for some baseless and false allegations. They showed how can an honest and dedicated leader is envied by those who never can do something good by themselves. GEFONT stood up against the incident. All of the major trade unions including NTUC took the charge against the incident. The next day, a public forum was organised in the same place by the national trade union centres. The perpetrators apologised for the crime they had done there; and the people who were involved in it, were promised to be punished.

But comrade Neupane didn’t make it a personal issue. He never hit the topic in the internal meeting of the Union. Rather he took the incident against the pride of entire unionism and the Nepali working class. He, without any unnecessary aggressiveness, asked for punishment to the accused and published it through Hotel’s notice board.

His contribution to the Nepali Trade Union movement is always worth memorable. He was equally active in the popular movement of 1979, 1990 and 2006.

Born at Thokarpa VDC-7, Sindhupalchok in 21 June 1959, Neupane had completed his graduation in humanities. He was now residing in Imadol, Lalitpur and was highly appreciated by CPN (UML) with party membership from 1988. He always followed the ethics of the party and always loved NIHWU as his next home.

We pay my heartfelt tribute to the tireless GEFONT-Veteran Comrade Madhav Neupane. We deeply express our condolence to heartily mourn his wife Sharada, daughter Manisha, son Manish, father Bhuminda, mother Sudha and entire family members. Let me clarify here your contribution to make Madhav, comrade Madhav is incomparable! Nepali union movement is indebted by your great contribution!! We are equally aware about the vacuum & difficulties of the family after the sudden demise of comrade Neupane; we will remain always with your family.

Long Live Comrade Madhav Neupane!

(Tribute conferred by President Rimal during Memorial Day)
GEFONT has celebrated 122nd International Labour Day with the slogan “Social Security for All” by organising workers rally, mass meetings and various programmes throughout the country.

GEFONT rally in Kathmandu was started at 11 am from various points of capital city and converged into Mass Meeting at Open Air Theater. Marking the occasion, the rally participants equipped with placards chanted slogans and demanded for the guarantee of social security, decent work for decent life, trade union rights, ratification of ILO convention No.87. The programme was live telecast by various television channels.

Prime Minister and the President of CPN UML, Jhalanath Khanal was the honorable chief guest of the programme. Other guests of honour were Eric Nelson and Teene from LO-FTF Council Denmark, Business leaders - Bhaskar Raj Karnikar, the first vice president of FNCCI, Rajkumar Agrawal vice-president CNI and Lata Pyakurel, President of FNCSI. The programmes was chaired by Bishnu Rimal, President of GEFONT.
Prime Minister Khanal inaugurated the banner which mentioned the slogan of the May Day this year, ‘Social Security for All’. Also the T-shirt mentioning the slogan was handed to him by President Rimal. Rimal also distributed the T-shirts to other guests of the programme including former minister and CPN UML Polit-Bureau member Surendra Pandey.

During the mass meet, Rimal talked about the Historical Agreement on social security and wage increase on March 25. He also mentioned the major demands of the workers including Decent Work for Decent life, trade union rights, ratifying ILO Convention No.87, New constitution with the workers’ rights, Labour Law reforms and so on.

Addressing the mass meet, Prime Minister Khanal congratulated the Trade Unions and Employers organization for their historical agreement which is also helpful for industrial Peace. He also assured the ratification of ILO convention No.87 “We will work for the ratification of the Convention No. 87 and also initiate strongly for the social security of the workers,” he
said. Finally he urged that the workers should work for stable peace, constitution making and economic
development with respect to the sentiments of the historical people's movement.

Other guests of the programme, Particularly all three business leaders also emphasized the
implementation of the historical agreement between employers' organizations and the trade unions.
Various political personalities and the Constituent Assembly members also participated in the
programme.

In Biratnagar, the May Day celebration was attended by Deputy PM & Finance Minister Bharat Mohan
Adhikari and GEFONT Vice Presient Chudamani Jangali. The May Day celebration in Dhangadhi was
addressed by Binod Shrestha, senior Vice president of GEFONT and at Butwal by Haridatta Joshi Vice
president of GEFONT. Similarly, the May Day celebration in Major Industrial corridor of Bara-Simara
was addressed by Umesh Upadhyaya GEFONT Secretary General as chief guest. Likewise Bishnu
Lamsal Deputy Secretary General attended the programme in Pokhara.

Mukunda Neupane, Chief of the GEFONT Congress Delegate Council, was the chief guest in May
Day Ceremony of Chitwan and Lalit Basnet the Deputy Chief of Council addressed the ceremony
in Hetauda, where General Secretary of CPN UML Com. Ishwar Pokhrel was the chief guest of the
programme.

Signatures of Domestic workers to PM

Nepal independent Domestic workers Union (NIDWU) has been in campaign to collect signatures of domestic
workers to demand the implementation of Labour laws also to domestic workers. As the Year 2011 in International
Labour Conference is going to adopt a new ILO Convention and Recommendation on the rights of Domestic workers
both working within their home country & abroad, Demand of the GEFONT and NIDWU is that the government
should support the ILO Process and vote in favour. during ILC in June 2011. President Rimal handed over the
collection of signatures to Premier Khanal with demand to ensure Legal protection for domestic workers and to
consider it as very important issue in the 101st International Labour Conference in Geneva.

NIDWU has been in signature campaign since last year to build up the support for the ILO convention on DW. More
than 2500 Domestic workers have signed the petition and express their solidarity to the campaign.

Before this, on April 14, 2010 GEFONT along with other partner of MFA including representatives from Lebnan and
Behrain led by GEFONT Secretary general Umesh Upadhaya visited to then Honourable Prime Minister Madhav
Kumar Nepal and briefed about the situation of domestic workers /migrant workers and ILO convention as well.
May Day Declaration, 2011

1. How did they fight? The way they chose was right or wrong? The question is irrelevant. The main thing is that, they established the values that workers are not the machines of flesh & bones, but are the living source of work force. They , putting forth as demand, divided the 24 hours into 8 hours of work, 8 hours of rest and 8 hours of entertainment and show the incomparable courage to establish the norm. They didn't care about their own lives and sacrificed themselves in order to make the dreams of happiness true in the lives of the working people. In this world of work, they drew a new route-map to set new method of calculation to share the outputs & harvests of our sweets.

2. On the occasion of 122nd May Day, we promise bowing our head to the brave warriors of Chicago that we will always move ahead in the campaign for the rights of the Working class. And for the cause, General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions - GEFONT is always in the struggle for a Dignified, prosperous and creative life to the workers and for the purpose entire GEFONT Family is in stance.

3. Nepali workers consider every May Day as the day of multiplying energy in their long term struggle. But the environment around us is not inspiring. Unstable Politics, Slow economy, sick labour market and difficult transition in the process of transformation, where entire society is in confusions – are the basic realities of the present days. Peace has become the first & foremost priority combined with peace is the constitution – drafting, finalising and issuing.

   • Compulsory responsibility of Institutionalisation of democratic republic by safeguarding the achievements of the People's movement.
   • Transferring the rights to the people
   • Transfer of politics from the control of the upper & aristocrat class to the regime of general people & Working Class.
   • Basic rights of the workers to be inserted into Fundamental rights in the constitution and guarantee of uninterrupted exercise
   • Displacing the status quo of social suppression and economic exploitation by a dynamic welfare system in a class-based frame with balance of Gender, caste/ethnicity and region.

   These are the issues to be addressed by the new constitution.

Past one year period and we workers

4. Last year, when we were celebrating the May Day, we were inspired as our Agenda were included in the first draft even though there were confusions about the exension of Constitution Assembly. But the progress in the constitution process is at standstill even today. May 28 the dateline is is very close but the political leadership is still in confusion & uncertainties, due to this, the constitution assembly expected to make our dreams true seems helpless. During the May Day Last year, the conflict between Government and opposition was at climax, the situation is same today just actos have changed. The outdated system is at the verge of colapse, but the highway of new system is not started to dig.

5. Even in the phase of uncertainties, the past year proved to be a milestone in Organizational work of GEFONT. Now we have reached 66 districts and zonal conferences have been conducted in all zones. National conferences of affiliates, effective workers education programmes have given new height to the confidence and energy of the leaders and activists.

6. We have moved two steps forward on the issue of social security. The government has already formed triparitte board and issued regulation for the Social Security Fund. Employers have
All Districts – Every workplace
Let us celebrate our May Day

It is the symbol of the historical May Day Movement - demand for 8 hours work, 8 hours rest and 8 hours entertainment. Is the demand for 8 hours working day still relevant?

- According to the Labour Act, the workers of the private enterprise have to toil compulsorily 8 hours per day;
- Whereas the workers of civil service only have to ‘serve’ for 6 hours and 40 minutes; and
- In the financial institutions such as Nepal Bank, daily working hour is limited to 6 hours and 25 minutes only!

It demonstrates existing discrimination between the working places. The discrimination between regular-permanent staffers and casual-temporary workers is still prevalent. Isn’t it necessary to abolish such differences? Shouldn’t the workers demand for additional pay for the over time work? It’s time to think and act now!

The new constitution has to be promulgated on schedule and to include the basic rights of the workers as fundamental rights. The fundamental rights of the workers to be included in the upcoming constitution are:

- Right to freedom of association and collective bargaining, right to employment, right to social security and right to strike,
- Compulsory representation of workers in state and the society.

The New Constitution has to guarantee a worker friendly, pro-socialist State.

This time the collective agreement has been signed between the trade unions and the employers to increase the salary across-the-board together with implementation of the social security. And these benefits are, to be applied equally for the irregular casual-temporary workers as of regular & permanents.

But the conspiracy has already been started against the social security system, which would assure the future of the workers. During this May Day, we have demonstrated our strong solidarity against all types of conspiracy in order to communicate our message that the benefits of social security do not limit to the workers in organised-formal economy, it will cover all sectors of informal economy. The regulation for Social security fund has been made public by the government due to our pressure and Tripartite Social Security Board has also been declared.

While celebrating May Day with revolutionary spirit and high enthusiasm, Let’s keep in mind,

- Workers are forced to migrate abroad due to unemployment and lack of gainful employment. Thus, let’s pressurise the concerned authority for the employment with safe migration and gainful income.
- Domestic work is easily available both in home and abroad. Thus let’s urge the government to support the ILO Convention on Domestic Work to be adopted by the International Labour Conference. 2011

To meet our vision Dignified, Prosperous and Creative Life of working class, Let us demonstrate strong solidarity of the working class as an example.

- Let us make our voices strong to ratify the ILO Convention No 87!
- Let us establish and operate the Social Security Fund now!! To ensure safe life to the workers,
- Let us exert the united pressure to ensure a workers-friendly contribution.!!!
already decided to contribute 20% for the Fund. We have crossed first step to bring all categories of workers in the frame of social security – regular, casual, piece-rate, contract etc..

7. We have succeeded to increase the salary of the workers by NRs.1,500. Some political groupings in the name of unions working against the social security system created some disturbances in the industrial corridors of Morang- Sunsari and Bara-Parsa. They also tried to misguide the workers but our organization could impressively chased out the illusions. The conspiracy of some employers to attack social security through workers themselves has now failed.

8. Despite our continuous efforts, we could not push forward the agenda of Trade union unity. The major stakeholders of JTUCC fell into their own internal conflicts. As a result, Annual national trade union conference could not be organized even in the third attempt in March 2011. Thus the bitter aspect of the campaign of unity should not be taken as abnormal in this transitional phase.

9. Some important tasks this year to be conducted by the government could not be concluded. The ILO Convention No 87 is not ratified in spite of the frequent commitment of the government. The demand for the establishment of powerful & Constitutional National Labour Commission to ensure justice to the workers could not be addressed by the government. The amendment process for labour legislations continued to be hot agenda of bipartite/tripartite discussion but could not reached any conclusion.

10. In spite of all difficulties, instability and Transitional phase, we have achievements of long-term significance:

- Success in Wage increases
- Team mobilisation for the strengthening of organisation, conventions of various structures and Expansion of Union in new sectors.
- Environment creation for the Industrial Collective Bargaining, effective intervention for the improvement of labour market.
- Memorial Award established in the name of late Com. Madhav Neupane and Com. Nuru Wangchhe Sherpa.
- Effective campaign in enterprise/work places on Labour inspection and OSH
- Expansion of International role and responsibility.
Forthcoming challenges

11. ‘Restructuring for Transformation’ is our continued demand. Work, wages, freedom and equality are our rights. In order to ensure these rights, we launched campaign to influence the new constitution process for the inclusion of right to Freedom of Association & collective bargaining, right to work & fair labour practices, Right to social security and right to strike as the last option, however for concrete outcome, still we have to wait.

12. The current period of time we are living is perhaps the most difficult one. There are numerous challenges. We have to move towards socialism by replacing a capital-tilt state by a pro-worker state. Employers are still not out of the old feudal master mentality. The business class has the expectation of high productivity, but always reluctant to provide higher wages, social security and incentives to the workers. Thus, always there are extreme problems in the implementation of collective bargaining agreements, negotiation of labour market and legal provisions. The dishonest attitude of considering minimum wage as the maximum and paying the workers less than minimum is still prevalent in many enterprises which is definitely fatal for economy and industries.

13. Poverty has extremely suppressed almost one fourth of the population and more than half of the population is poverty stricken in one way or another. Looking from whatever angle, poverty is in the fold of working people. In order to ensure a Dignified, Prosperous and Creative life for the workers, we should continue our fight against poverty, unemployment and underemployment. Most of the young workers are forced to go abroad in foreign employment of unsafe and difficult circumstances. Daily in average 7 dead bodies return back in the country. In addition we are hard hit by the rape and sexual harassment of female workers in foreign territories.

14. The state is not serious to create opportunity for working masses and not serious to control those who only exploit. Insecurity and situation of no-punishment ruined the national life. Thus, peace, effective law & order, employment creation and fair wages are the demands of every worker and working family. It is also the giant challenge for workers, trade unions, political parties, government, policy-makers and entire society.

Our Commitments

15. To complete task of operation of Social security fund- The March-24 Agreement between Trade unions and Employers organisation is the milestone for social security system from a long-term perspective. It is necessary to build public opinion and clarify the policy-makers, administrators, employers and workers. We should create strong awareness on the concept of Social security, various potential schemes, coverage and financial management among the workers and move ahead for enactment of effective law as soon as possible.

16. Create strong pressure for a Pro-workers Constitution – There is an urgent need to launch various campaigns to ensure pro-workers constitution and to include workers’ rights, workers’ representation and worker-oriented welfare program in the Constitution.

17. Formation & operation of National Labour commission – In spite of provision of National Labour Commission in Interim Constitution, it has not been formed yet. We will give continuity to our campaign for the formation & operation of NLC as a quasi-judicial constitutional body for prompt justice to the workers.

Facing these challenges in practice, we will concentrate this year on mobilisation of entire labour force for the guarantee of Dignified, Prosperous and Creative life to the workers. For this significant work, we expect full support from all Nepali workers both in and abroad, international community, government, political parties and the Employers.

HAPPY MAY DAY 2011 TO ALL!
The 74th National Committee Meeting largely focused on mobilisation of organisation. The meeting came up with some far-reaching decisions regarding organisation and mobilisation of leaders, members and activists, and strongly pushed the agenda of labour-politics, labour market and social transformation to yield better results.

A. Organisational part of mobilisation

GEFONT decided to organise activities at a time in 22 districts to instill new strength and energy among the workers at local level Enterprises and workplaces. Eight different central teams coordinated by the GEFONT NoB and Secretariat leaders were deputed to lead a 10-Days campaign throughout the country with particular focus on 22 districts. The teams were mobilised between 8 and 17 February and tasked to solve the workers’ problems at local level, activate the members and committees, explain and clarify policy, programmes and work-plans to the workers & activists and expedite membership campaign. Also special orientation meetings were organised for the GEFONT Local delegates and presidents of enterprises/workplaces during 19-21 January. Whilst the orientations for Unit Chairs and local representatives of formal sector were organised in Itahari, Simara, Kathmandu and Butwal, the same for informal sector representatives were held in Itahari, Lahan, Pokhara, Kathmandu and Dhangadhi.

B. Labour market aspects of campaign

A one-day nationwide campaign to pressurise for across-the-board wage increases was organised on 10 February throughout the country. Rallies, corner speeches and dissemination of 100,000 pamphlets at enterprises and workplaces, submission of memorandum to Ministry of Labour, Labour Offices, District Administration Offices and FNCCI with demand for the increment of wages were the key events of the campaign. The campaign was deepened to the corporate sector and workplaces at the local level through the Zonal Committees, District Committees and affiliate union structures mobilizing masses of
the workers. Where the campaign has rejuvenated and inspired the working class people, the whole organisation and activists were mobilised for the dialogue and struggle to achieve the demand. The campaign also contributed to strengthen collaboration with other trade unions.

Collective bargaining

The National Executive Committee Meeting endorsed the idea of collective bargaining based on team spirit and the Labour Relation Council capable and active. The essence of the meeting was to develop the LRC in every level as the negotiation-team and make them specially capable and enhance their efficiency. GEFONT has already started training and orientations for the faction-union members to develop them as negotiation-team and initiate team-practice in the long run. It will also work for introducing the industrial collective bargaining system at national level in future.

Social Security

The 74th National Executive Committee Meeting agreed a special resolution regarding social security of the workers. Thanks to our pressure, continued efforts and lobbying, the government through its Budget Speech in 2010 has decided to start a separate bank accounts for Social Security Fund. A tripartite board has already been formed and regulation issued to operate and manage the Fund. Also a decision to task the Fund with the responsibility to run four plans concerning unemployment allowance, medical treatment, compensation to the victims of industrial accidents and maternity protection during delivery period has been made. However, we are still to achieve social security laws and directives. At a time when the country and the labour sector are debating on the social security issues, we have pushed forward the two major demands:

- Start immediately by introducing the guidelines to implement Social Security Fund and Package as declared by the government.
- Formulate the social security law immediately.

Labour force has been mobilized based on these two demands to make them a reality.

C. Political-ideological aspect of mobilisation

GEFONT has scheduled to organize a National Cadres' Assembly of its mother party in June to orient the leaders and cadres on political and ideological issues. The Assembly will bring about 300 leaders and cadres from district and higher committees together and impart knowledge in them about the capitalist nature of the state and the pro-workers nature of the state. The Assembly is expected to set a foundation for the leaders and workers to gradually move towards the pro-workers nature of the state from the capitalist nature of the state and prioritize labour agenda in the process of designing Party as well as the State Policy. The Assembly will take up the following questions in its deliberation:

- What and how should be the labour agenda of the party?
- What should be the relation between labour and politics, and party and trade union?
- What is necessary for the leaders to make them sensitive to the workers' issues?
- How can we link each party committee and leader with the workers' agenda?
- What should be done to make each party member the member of GEFONT and each GEFONT member the member of the mother party?
- What are the behavioural aspects of the class struggle in the present context? What should be done for a rapid social and political development by bringing balance in class plus three (gender, ethnicity and regional) issues?

The 74th National Committee Meeting also endorsed the special resolution on new constitution. We workers are saddened by the inability of the Constituent Assembly to promulgate a new constitution within the tenure of two years. The additional period of one year has also been elapsed without any rosy progress. Therefore we have urged the political leadership of all parties to immediately reach in consensus, develop confidence and promulgate a new constitution incorporating the worker rights issues that we have been raising for a long past.
Pressure for wage increment: call for a movement

General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) launched a nation-wide mass campaign on 10 February 2011 to exert pressure for increment in wages. At the beginning, GEFONT targeted enterprises and areas such as industries, construction sector, hotels, trekking sectors, schools and hospitals; organised assemblies; and disseminated IEC materials.

GEFONT led the submission of memorandum to the Ministry of Labour, the ten labour offices of the country, and District Administration Offices in the districts. Similarly, GEFONT organised rallies and submitted memorandum to the offices of Federation of Nepalese Chambers and Commerce Industries (FNCCI) offices demanding increment in wages of workers.

Prior to handing over a memorandum at the FNCCI central office in Kathmandu, GEFONT General Secretary Umesh Upadhyaya highlighted the demands for increment in wages and the objectives of the campaign in a press meet. Following the press meet, rallies of workers organised in different trade union affiliates reached the central offices of FNCCI, Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI) and Nepal Chambers of Commerce as well as the Kathmandu Metro Politian City Office and District Administration Office in Kathmandu to submit the memorandum.

Finally on March 25, 2011, the workers’ wage rate increment reached at the highest point as compared to previous years. With this increment, each worker got an additional amount of NRs 1,500/- in his/her monthly salary, and an agreement has been made for social security for all. In the name of trade unions, a few political groups protested this move and created obstructions in two industrial corridors. Because of vested interest of political groupings and anti-union employers, Still there are controversies in the process of implementation.

During the last 45 years, money wage of the workers has increased by more than 39 times but which is below than the inflation rate prevailing in the country. Consequently, the real wage has declined by more than 40 percent within 30 years from 1965, reflecting deteriorating living standard of the workers which directly affect the economic development of the country. Still real wage is below than that of 1965 however it is in positive direction after 1995 only because of the pressure by trade unions.

Even if Nepal Government has declared the minimum wage but implementation part is very weak because of the anti-worker, anti-union mentality of various employers. Mechanism of supervision and monitoring is virtually absent.

Real Wage of Workers in Nepal, 1965-2011

(Base year 1965=100)

Note: *Wage rate including dearness allowance. While calculating average wage weight is given as:
Unskilled = 4, semi-skilled = 3, skilled = 2 and highly skilled = 1.
(Prepared by Dr. Rudra Prasad Gautam)
The share of remittance in GDP of Nepali economy is at 23% and out of Nepal’s total annual remittance at least 11-15% is contributed by women migrant workers. However, the support the migrant workers get from the state is very scant. Women migrant workers’ situation is more depressing.

The government has to focus especially on women migrant workers’ concerns, prepare a new action plan and implement effectively. By considering the importance and urgency of the issue, GEFONT gave emphasis to the issue of women migrant workers while celebrating the international migrant workers day.

The Day celebration was a coordinated effort in the involvement of the Ministry of Labour and Transportation Management. Various organisations working on migrant issue came together with other stakeholders, including media, disseminated IEC materials and organised rallies and other awareness raising campaigns. Such programmes were organised by GEFONT in many districts also outside Kathmandu, including Jhapa, Kapilvastu, Dolakha, Nuwakot, Baglung, Sarlahi and Morang. People from various walks of social life participated the programmes including leaders and cadres of GEFONT and affiliate unions, representatives of political parties, various organisations, journalists, teachers and representatives of security and judiciary.

The participants put emphasis on the need for making women’s involvement in foreign employment more secure, dignified and systematic by raising awareness and strengthening understanding on various aspects of employment and by increasing the efficiency of regulatory mechanisms. Another issue highlighted was on the training for the prospective migrant workers in matters such as security, working skills and knowledge on socio-cultural aspects of the host countries. Public awareness programmes should be launched to start up.

Nepalese both women and men migrant workers face various difficulties and challenges in receiving countries as most of them do not have proper educational backgrounds and lack skills required for the works they involve. Many of them are cheated by agents while in Nepal as well as outside. The government, sending organisation and the workers themselves need to be aware of difficulties and collectively try to address them beforehand. The Day encouraged the trade unions to be more proactive in organising the migrant workers and raising awareness on their rights and duties.
A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed on September 28 between General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) and Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) aiming to manage labour migration in Korean labour Market. A signing ceremony was organised in the GEFONT Hall in Man Mohan Labour Building where a joint press release was also made public.

This MOU between our two Confederations is highly sensitive towards promotion of employment of Nepali workers in Korean labour market. We pay equal emphasis to duty and responsibility of the workers concerned.

The Joint Press Release doubts- “Are the governments equally committed to regulate the concerned labour recruiting agencies and employers to stop the exploitative labour practices and violation of contracts?”

In the joint press release GEFONT & KCTU has demonstrated their dissatisfaction over the role of both Governments- of countries of origin and destination; claimed trade unions’ grave concern and their activities to minimise the inhumane exploitation and abuses imposed to migrant workers while at work.

“They are less sensitive on the issues and sufferings of some 250 millions migrant workers scattered all over the world.”

In the context of Nepali migrant workers the joint press release expresses strong disagreement on the behaviour of policy makers & the state just counting the amount of remittances without being sensitive towards the protection of those whose life and self-respect is always at risk in foreign land.

“We are aware that every worker enters labour markets in destination-countries for the sale of labour-power; but not to auction their freedom, self-respect and human dignity.”

The release underlines the behaviour of the government of countries of destination, which equally ignore significant contribution of migrant workers in their production, services and growth.

“It is reflected in the use of migrant workers in precarious jobs where the employers of countries concerned deny the minimum labour standards for the migrant workers”; the release reads.

Many governments without paying serious attention to generate employment compel working population to remain under poverty wages. In the absence of gainful employment in the country-concerned, the unemployed persons enter into international labour market.

GEFONT and KCTU express their feeling as- “Dispute is not a choice of workers.”

They further argued- “If there are any disputes, it is the responsibility of the governments, policy makers, recruiting agencies and the employers to dig-out root cause and work for elimination.”

“We hereby recall the message of the Asian-Pacific Conference of ILO, which took place at Bussan, Korea with its commitment towards “Asian Decent Work Decade” (2006-2015) and agree to exchange cooperation creatively in order to assure dignity and self-respect to the migrant workers. And hence, this MOU has been signed and issued”

The MOU signing ceremony was a part of activity to mark World Day for Decent Work as well. The release has reaffirmed sentiment reflected in the objective of the day.

As the affiliates of ITUC- the umbrella of national centres of over 151 countries & territories, are marking the World Day for Decent Work every year on October 7, we hereby reaffirm the sentiment reflected in the objective of the day: “Decent work must be at the centre of government actions to bring back economic growth and build a new global economy that puts people first. This is a day for mobilisation all over the world: one day when all the trade unions in the world stand up for decent work, at home and abroad.”

The two confederations believe that this MOU will serve the purpose of effective implementation of the labour contract between Nepali and Korean governments and will give new dimension to the solidarity & cooperation between the workers of our two countries. The MOU has been signed by GEFONT president Comrade Bishnu Rimal and KCTU First Vice-President comrade Joung, Ui-Hun representing respective Confederations.
Gathering of Nepali Migrant Workers in Malaysia

A grand gathering of Nepali Migrant Workers has been organised in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia by GEFONT Support Group (Nepali Migrant Workers’ Association, Malaysia) on October 2, 2010. Altogether 133 Nepali migrant workers participated in the program held in the Meeting Hall of Malaysian Trade Union Congress.

Com. Ramesh Badal, Secretary Department of Foreign Affairs of GEFONT, highlighted the Campaign of GEFONT for the right of the Migrant Workers. Bro. Soma Sundram, Education Officer of Malaysian Trade Union Congress informed the gathering about the Provisions for the Protection of Migrant workers in Laws of Malaysia.

Similarly, Mr. Sunil Bhandari, Labour Attaché of Nepal in Malaysia, highlighted the role played by Nepali Embassy to solve the problems of Migrant Workers. He said that due to long working hours and over exhaustion, death rate of the workers is increasing and requested to be aware on OSH. He informed Nepali Migrant Workers to contact Nepali Embassy via GEFONT support Group in case of any problem during their stay in Malaysia and that Nepali Embassy is always ready to extend necessary support.

Mr. Bed Kumar Khatiwada, Coordinator of GEFONT support Group Malaysia explained the problems being faced by Nepali Migrant workers and submitted report of activities by GEFONT support Group in recent years.

GEFONT, KCTU and NCC organise orientation program on Labour Laws in South Korea

March 6 – on General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT), Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) and Nepal Coordination Committee (NCC) organised one day orientation program on Labour Laws in the premises of Migrant Trade Union (MTU), South Korea on March 6, 2011. The aim was to inform about Korean Labour Laws for Migrant Workers working in South Korea under the New EPS system.

Addressing the program, Advocate Yun Sun highlighted on Korean labour laws, practices and its enforceability for the Migrant workers. He informed about the legal provisions applicable to Migrant workers in case to change the factory in Korea.

Mr. Chung Kumar Gurung, President-IFK, Krishna Hari Acharya, Secretary EPS committee and Dabit Rai, President-NCC explained the situation of Nepali migrant workers and also condemned Korean Government for the arrest of 200 Nepali migrant workers. President of MTU also extended solidarity to the Nepali Migrant Workers.

The MC of the Program was Uday Rai, GEFONT/KCTU representative. During the Program Booklets on Migrant workers Rights were distributed.

Women Migrant workers: Memorandum to the Government concerning GFMD

GEFONT submitted a memorandum to the Ministry of Labour and Transport Management on 4 November 2010. The Memorandum mainly highlighted the points to be raised in the Global Forum on Migration and Development held in Mexico. A team of women leaders of GEFONT visited the Ministry and handed over the Memorandum with emphasis on equal access of women to foreign employment ensuring a safe migration in the labour receiving countries. The government delegation assured that the issues raised by GEFONT will be properly addressed during the discussions in global forum and that the Ministry will join hand with trade unions in favour of migrant workers. The memorandum includes:
• Formation of Women section in Foreign Employment Department
• Government to government contract to send women safely in Domestic work
• Proper mobilization of diplomatic units equipped with skilled officials to deal with migrant workers’ issues
• Registration of Informal economy workers and domestic workers
• Promotion of safe foreign employment by coordination among line ministries and government organizations

GEFONT Campaign for Safe Migration & Case Handled
Synopsis of Cases handled by GEFONT Migrant Desk- 2011

Finally the dead body was brought to Nepal - On behalf of late Ramesh Giri; dead at work place in Saudi Arab. He was died in a road accident. The company is ready to pay the money to send back the dead body to Nepal, Government of Nepal was also serious in the case but the deceased could not be rescued for long 22 months. They said that the person was illegally working there, so it was very difficult to rescue the dead body. The family of victim said that the embassy is asking for more money but they cannot pay. GEFONT in addition to continuous efforts, finally requested to the Foreign Employment Promotion Board (FEPB) to bear the amount and it proceed for rescuing the dead body. At last after 22 months from the date of expiry, the Dead body of Ramesh Giri was brought to Nepal. And compensation claim is filed to FEPB but still not decided. It is to be noted that mother of Ramesh also died during the long waiting for the body of her dead son.

Bijay Tamang was sent by Sunera Manpower Company to Saudi Arabia but he had the problem in the factory. Salary and other facilities were much less than the Agreement, so he tried to come back to Nepal, but was kept at work as a prisoner. His relatives came in contact with us and we tried our best. Finally he was rescued to Nepal with the plane ticket provided by Manpower on our request. Case of Sumit Gurung is also the same sent to Malaysia by Kapil Manpower of Kupandol. He was even Tortured at workplace when he asked for salary based on the agreement. He was rescued and the case settled with rescue and compensation. Karna Bahadur Thakuri sent to Malaysia by Laldhanush Manpower was also forced to different work and low paid position than agreement. He returned to Nepal and the case settled with rescue and compensation.

Krishna Neupane was sent by Topaz International. He was blamed by the company as mentally disturbed person and the company irresponsibly left him on the street at unknown place. He was missed and whereabouts became unknown. Gefont forwarded the documents to all related authorities in Malaysia through our colleagues, public notice was published in Newspapers and finally found in a Jail of Malaysia from where he has been rescued back to Nepal.

Maya Sarki a resident of Belbari Morang was sent to Kuwait via India by an unregistered agent Sanu Kumari Pariyar. Her entry was naturally illegal entry. there was no work available to her. She faced incomparable hardship and finally through our efforts she has been rescued to Nepal from Kuwait Jail.

Badri Ram in Saudi Arabia was in Jail for 2 years blamed of theft by a Pakistani Worker. Even after completion of jail punishment, he had no one to accept him as Nepali and so he was staying in Jail. We requested to the Embassy, initially they didn’t take the case seriously, however after continued pressure, he is now rescued.

Ramchandra Nagarkoti sent to Malaysia by Peace Nepal Overseas lost the life. Foreign Employment Promotion Board provided 99,000/- as relief on our request, and compensation claim is in process at the concerned company of Malaysia.

Chinimaya Rai was sent in Lebanon with Personal Work Permit by agent. considered as Illegally working she was Jailed. Finally we could Rescue her.

Narayan Kumar Shrestha and Lava Rai were taken to India on November 11, 2008 and then to Turkey with a promise to send to England. However, once they were said to have reached Turkey, the agents turned into blackmail...
racketeers and started extorting money from their families, which had already paid out more than Rs 1.3 million each. Narayan’s father had had frequent calls from Turkey from the first week of December, 2009 urging him to transfer 3,000 euros to save his son.

Metropolitan Police Range Kathmandu (MPRK) had registered a case against local point man of the racket Bal Krishna Shrestha for human trafficking and four others involved and arrested him after three youths including Gyanendra Kumar Shrestha, a cousin of Narayan, who escaped from the clutches of the racket and returned home in October, 2009, lodged a complaint against him.

Gyanendra was taken to India on February 11, 2009 with two others, Ram Kumar Rai and Ananda Shrestha. After loitering in New Delhi for a month, he was flown to Georgia via Ukraine but immigration authorities there deported him within hours. After landing back in New Delhi, he hung around till November and returned home upon learning about the plight of his cousin in Turkey. Now the cases are running at Kathmandu District Court.

Late Gokul Nepali, who used to work in German Bakery India, died in a bomb blast. The Government of Maharashtra announced certain compensation to his dependants. But the victims have not received anything, they are very poor and in shock. We have forwarded all the documents through Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Embassy and GEFONT Support Group in India is following the case.

Manoj Tamang was sent to Qatar by Paradise International, but was fired from job complaining that the Driving license is fraud. In this case, the victim’s license was made in Saudi Arabia where he had worked for 3 years, the same license was rejected by working company not the government, So has returned from Qatar and in process for compensation.

Suman Bhujel was sent to Malaysia through Greater Vision Overseas. He was low paid and afterwards kept in private custody for 1 month without salary by the employers. He returned back with the help of GEFONT support Group, Malaysia. The case was solved by a compensation of Rs. 40,000/- by manpower agency.

Basu Kumari Khartri sent Lebanon through Sigma Overseas as a domestic worker. Her salary was not given for 21 months, suddenly lost from workplace. Police tempted her to rescue but forced to work at the same home and then she ran away. She was found in jail after 2/3 months in the case of theft. The case is in process.

Late Khadga Bahadur Shrestha sent through Sitara Overseas to Saudi Arabia found Dead in workplace. His dead body is returned back by our efforts and process for compensation is started.

Tek Bahadur B.K and Sher Bahadur Sunar sent to Saudi Arabia, but were given less salary and were forced to sign on fake salary statement. Money equivalent to Rs. 170,000 was taken by agent saying that the salary will be 800, later they get only only 500. So they needed help to get back their money. they returned back and the case we solved with 1,40,000/- to provide them as compensation from the concerned manpower agency.

Dhulagiri Manpower Company sent 102 people to Libya to work at a branch of CKG Contractors’ Company which was claimed as registered. The Manpower Company charged the workers in range of 120 to 250 thousands before sending them, but the CKG company closed while working. All the workers were kept in private custody even without food. GEFONT requested to the Government of Nepal and the Foreign Employment Promotion Board to rescue the workers. So they returned to Nepal and filed the case against Manpower Company claiming the sum of Rs. 28.56 millions. The director Tej Prakash Pun ran away from Nepal but the case is running in the Department to provide the compensation to the workers. The sum of NRs. 28,96,940.00 has been released and distributed from the Department from the Deposits of Manpower Company as compensation in our presence. The Department is proceeding for further compensation.

Late Lila Acharya worked as domestic worker in Lebanon. But suddenly she was found dead at the home where she used to work. She was sent by Destiny Placement Service. As reported by the family, she had faced mental and physical torture at the work-place and finally hanged up. But the agent and houseowner claim that she committed suicide which is not true as per her police report but the case was closed. We raised voice against it and the case is forwarded to Anti Slavery UK.
Balance between work and life was the campaign theme in Nepal to observe the International Workers Women Day this year. While observing the Workers Women Day in previous years, we primarily focused on the membership expansion campaign, leadership development and awareness raising of the women workers, and sensitising them on equal representation and wages issues. Issues of discrimination against women and domestic violence were also the priority agenda of our past programmes. Now we have widened the area of our agenda to the gender discriminations including all the aforesaid issues within it and primarily focused ourselves to bring a balance between works and life of women who are victims of multiple responsibilities within and outside home.

GEFONT, ANWA and various organizations organized rallies, assemblies, quiz contexts and other creative activities on the occasion of international women workers’ day throughout the country on 8 March 2011.

“No Life outside the work” was the main slogan of the day for GEFONT’s National, Zonal and local women committees.

Other slogans for the day highlighted the rights of women workers. While marching the rallies in various parts of the country, workers chanted slogans such as, “Ensure equal wages for women for their equal work”, “ Guarantee social security”, “Decent work for dignified life”, “Trade union rights are our rights”, “Stop violence against women”, “Stop domestic violence”, “Long live the unity of women workers”.

In Kathmandu, GEFONT-organised rally of more than 2,000 workers who marched in major parts of the city. Participated by various organizations and women committees, the concluding ceremony of the rally was chaired by ANWA Chairperson and the then Defense Minister Bidhya Devi Bhandari.
Speakers of the programme demanded equal rights of women in the new constitution and guarantee of parental property rights for women. They also demanded for state policies to ensure equal wages for women, guarantee of equal participation of women in working areas, ensuring greater social and political participation of women through balance in their work and responsibilities.

Speakers of the programme included GEFONT Women Committee Chairperson Beena Shrestha, Nepal Oppressed Dalits Upliftment Society Vice Chairperson Teku Nepali, Youth Federation Nepal’s Treasurer Dilu Pant, ANNFSU Chairperson Madhav Dhungel, People’s Cultural Federation Central Committee Member Madhav Pradhan, Democratic Janjati Federation Vice Chairperson Tham Maya Thapa, among others. The programme was moderated by GEFONT Women Committee Secretary Belimaiya Ghale.

It is to be noted that Trade Union Congress of Great Britain invited GEFONT-Nepal this year on the occasion of March 8 celebration, where Pemba Lama Deputy Secretary General represented us. She participated in various programmes and shared our views. TUC has been in cooperation with us on the issue of Domestic workers and as the number of women domestic workers is significantly high, sharing of views on conditions of domestic workers was given high importance. The programmes she participated were Gender, Globalization & poverty Reduction Training Course, TUC Women’s Conference and Justice for Domestic Workers.

April 28 The International Commemorial Day

International Workers Commemorial Day was observed at a time in more than 200 different places on 28 April. The Day brought the Unions and Employers together and oriented them on Labour Inspection System, Occupational safety and health issues and industrial accidents and protective equipments. The International slogan “Unions Make Work Safe” coined for the Commemorial Day for this year was widely highlighted and carried the message “Safe and dignified work as the basic union agenda” as campaign to the workers at local level. On the campaign day, separate and special pamphlet designed for the occasion has been distributed nationwide jointly by GEFONT and NTUC-I through ITUC-Nepal Affiliate Council which is working on common issues of trade union movement in Nepal. Altogether 100 enterprises in the formal sector and 100 workplaces of informal sector were taken as focus of the mobilization by the two organizations. Activists were mobilised from the centre in different parts of the country in order to lead the campaign.
Nepali Domestic Workers & Domestic Work Convention

GEFONT had established an organization of domestic workers – Nepal Independent Domestic Workers Union (NIDWU) as the first union of domestic workers in Nepal which later proved to be the first in South Asia.

Since then, the Federation has been trying its best to organizing the domestic workers, who are one of the most vulnerable workers in the informal sectors, and strengthening their capacity to establish identity and recognition. In this run, the first convention of NIDWU was held in Kathmandu on September 9, 2009. Currently, the Union is actively involved in expanding its organizational reach and bringing large number of domestic workers on board of the organization. Various studies have shown that there are about 160,000 domestic workers across the country.

The Union has been providing trainings to its committee members and other domestic members on issues of their rights, and taking up issues and concerns of the workers in advocacy and campaigns.

GEFONT and NIDWU have been exerting pressure to the Government of Nepal for the protection of the rights of domestic workers in home and abroad by bringing the domestic workers’ issues into legal recognition and creating environment conducive to migrant domestic workers through possible ways in various stages of their move abroad. It was a good opportunity for GEFONT to push this issue forward when it was raised at the international level in 2009. There was a strong voice for recognizing the labour value of domestic workers and ensuring their rights as that of other workers.

The Federation launched campaigns for policy influence in collaboration with other organizations working in the field of domestic work. The British Trade Union Congress was one of them to support the campaign. At the national level, the Federation engaged government policy makers, trade unions, professional groups and organizations, and launched activities such as policy interactions, awareness raising workshops and meetings to clarify on the issues pertaining to domestic works and the need for national policy assurance.

Due the efforts by all of us, for the first time in Nepalese legal history, the Domestic Violence (Crime and Punishment) Act and Regulation have incorporated the issue of domestic workers.

For the protection of domestic workers in and outside Nepal, GEFONT has submitted signatures of domestic workers to Nepal’s Prime Minister, Ministry of Labour and Transportation Management, Ministry of Local Development and other agencies. A study has been conducted on the situation of domestic workers. Similarly, various information and education materials have been published and disseminated to increase understanding amongst domestic workers and concerned stakeholders.

Some of the publications are as follows:

- Posters on ILO Convention and domestic works
- Booklet on domestic violence (crime and punishment)
- NIDWU brochures in Nepali and English
- Leaflet on the occasion of international human rights day

Domestic Worker Receives Compensation

Domestic worker Sita Sinjali, who was working in the house of Durga Devi, was under heavy pressure. Sinjali was not interested to the work but was forced. She was trying to get rid of Durga’s house but could not leave due to various threats. Based on Sinjali’s application to the Labour Office and NIDWU, they mediated the two parties to reach an agreement. As per the agreement, Sinjali has been provided with the compensation of NRs. 5,000/- by Durga Devi.
Findings of GEFONT quick research on DW

- The incidence of domestic workers differs greatly in urban and rural areas and within the urban centers it also varies. Its incidence in the selected nine urban areas (which are considered highly concentrated areas) is found 17.3 percent, other municipalities (8.5%) and rural areas including semi-urban (1.7). On the basis of the incidence of domestic workers in the surveyed municipalities and estimation of such workers in the past by other institutions domestic workers in Nepal are estimated 162,302.
- Supplied mainly from the rural areas and absorbed mainly by Brahmin, Chhetri, Newar and Janajati while large number of people from these groups are also working as domestic workers showing domestic work is not caste based but it is class based.
- More than three-fifths domestic workers are children.
- More than 70 percent on live-in basis. Three-fourth full timer and one-fourth part timer.
- Poverty is the major cause to be engaged as domestic workers followed by hope of study.
- More than half domestic workers are working without any agreement with their employer where written agreement is nil
- Only 63 % are receiving wage for their work and around 15% have got chances of schooling in exchange of their daily 6-12 hours of work.
- Vast difference in the wage paid to the worker (Rs. 500 to 3000). Wage rate differs by gender on the one hand and on the other hand it also varies greatly in and outside Kathmandu valley. The mean monthly wage is Rs.1940 for male & Rs.1583 for female. Wage rate in Katmandu Valley is Rs. 2065 and in outside valley Rs. 1109.

GEFONT Interaction on ILO convention on DW

Preparations for adopting an ILO Convention on Domestic work are at final stage everywhere. Discussions are centered around the issues pertaining to contracts with employers, working hours, live in domestic labour, stand by time, social security, labour supervision system and the agent agencies. European Union seems to be very progressive in this connection as EU has adopted a resolution by requesting its 27 member countries to adopt the convention as soon as possible and implement it.

GEFONT organised an interaction program on “ILO convention on DW” in Kathmandu on April 26 . The aim was to inform and share the Domestic workers Agendas in order to seek solidarity of Policy makers & Employers to bring ILO convention on DW.

During the programme, GEFONT Secretary General Com. Umesh Upadhyaya highlighted current status of Nepali Domestic workers, Nepali Workers in Foreign employment and GEFONT campaign on ILO convention on DW. He made an appeal to all to play the role form their side to bring the convention.

Mr Saloman Rajbansi from ILO said that we hope, we will able to bring the ILO convention on DW but the challenge is in implementation.

Mr Chandra Prasad Joshi Under secretary, department of Foreign Employment said that Nepali Migrant workers are being victimized due to the lack of awareness about their rights. We can help to change their life by bringing the ILO convention on DW.

During the program Ramesh Badal, Secretary of Foreign Affairs department –GEFONT and Advocate presented paper on provisions of ILO convention on DW, its process and the developments.

In his presidential address Mr. Binod shrestha,Senior Vice President of GEFONT said Domestic workers are facing a lot of problem, to address these problems we have to work jointly. We are involved in the process of ILO convention on DW.

Various personalities including –Sthaneswor Devkota, executive director of foreign employment promotion board, SP of Nepal Police Mr. Gobinda Ram Pariyar, Sonu Danuwar, President of NIDWU, representative from UN- Women, representative form Appeal Court and representatives from JTUCC highlighted situation of DW and made commitment to play the role to bring ILO convention on DW and decent work for domestic workers.

Altogether 92 participants representing from Ministry of Labour and Transport Management, Department of Foreign employment, Foreign Employment Promotion Board, District Administration office,Trade unions, Employers organization, Advocates, Women and Student leaders and Media persons participated at the program.

The program was chaired by Senior Vice President of GEFONT and conducted by Com. Pemba Lama Deputy Secretary-General.
ITUC- Asia Pacific Conference Concludes

Unity – The Way Forward

A Four-Member delegation of GEFONT led by President Bishnu Rimal including Umesh Upadhyaya, Secretary General and Ramesh Badal, Secretary of Department of Foreign Affairs participated in the Conference in May 11-13, 2011. Fortunately, Binda Pandey, Central Planning Commission Member of GEFONT and First Substitute Member of the ITUC International Council was also a member of the delegation.

The Asia-Pacific Conference was inaugurated in the presence of the Human Resource Minister of Singapore in an enthusiastic musical environment. With the main theme of Unity – The Way Forward, in the core sessions, the Conference reviewed the activities & policies of the previous period of four years and adopted Action Programme as well as Resolution for next four year period of 2011-15. The conference was also addressed by the ITUC President Ms Sharran Borow. Altogether 103 delegates covering all 5 sub regions East Asia, South East Asia, South Asia, Middle east and Pacific gathered together for a new go-ahead. In addition, the presence of Global Union federations and various unionists from outside Asia pacific particularly from Europe to support the trade union movement of Asia pacific region is also important.

GEFONT assists working people of Japan

During the Asia pacific Conference in Singapore, both President and Secretary General in the address to the conference expressed GEFONT’s deepest sentiments of solidarity to the working people victimised by the natural disaster of Tsunami in Japan. President Rimal handed over A token amount of assistance, $ 1000, to ITUC-AP General Secretary Noriuki Suzuki to provide for the relief of Japanese working people and a letter of Solidarity to President Koga and the leaders of JTUC-RENGO.

GEFONT President Rimal addressed the conference on second day during in-depth discussion on Action Programme 2011-15, whereas Secretary General Umesh Upadhyaya addressed the conference on first day to comment on the report of activities presented by ITUC-AP General Secretary. On the final day at the last moments of discussion on Action Programme, Com Binda Pandey put forth views focussed on gender quality.

The Resolutions covering the basic priority points of the Action Programme were also adopted on the third and final day of the Conference. The election procedure for the new tenure of 2011-2015 was conducted as the final responsibility of the conference, where Regional Council with Titular members, 1st and 2nd substitute members were elected in an environment of good understanding and consultations. Bro Noriuki Suzuki is reelected as General Secretary. In the Regional Council from Nepal, GEFONT President Com Bishnu Rimal and NTUC-I President Com. Laxman Basnet have been elected to share the tenure as Titular & 1st substitute members turn by turn, similarly for women representative from Nepal, the position of 2nd substitute member is vacant to be fulfilled later by GEFONT and NTUC-I in consultation. In Women’s Committee of Asia Pacific Region, 2nd substitute member will be from GEFONT.

The Singapore National Trade Union Congress after the conclusion of the conference invited the delegates in the celebration of 50th Anniversary on the occasion of completion of fifty years of trade union movement in S’pore, where the former Prime Minister and the founding leader of Singapore as a nation addressed the ceremony.
There should be pain in everyone’s heart if any colleague fell-down in difficulties

(Address by President Bishnu Rimal at 2nd Regional Congress of ITUC-AP, May 12, 2011, Singapore)

Bro. President, General Secretary, Director-ILO ACTRAV
Representative from GUFs, other friendly organizations
Comrades, friends, sisters and brothers!

This week we are also engaged in an important event in UN system at Istanbul, Turkey - designated to uplift the least developed countries. Pity to note that in past three decades, the number of LDCs didn’t decrease; rather increased from 24 to 48. Information prevailed in the Nepali media claims -

• A child born in a LDC is 26th times more likely to die before in his/her 5th birthday than a child from developed world
• Women in LDCs have a 1 in 16 chances of dying in child-birth compared to 1 in 3,500 in North America
• 850 million people live in LDCs have access to a fraction of the amenities that developed countries enjoyed whether it is drinking water, electricity, or roads
• Three crises impacting to LDCs- financial system, climate system and food system
• LDCs spend over US$6 billion every year on debt servicing than essential services of drinking water, health and energy

Why am mentioning these statistics? Because, Nepal is one of the 48 LDCs, and our region has total 15 LDCs comprising with 5 from pacific region.

Colleagues! As “LDCs need opportunity, not charity; need rights, not handouts and urgently need support from the international community, not exploitation”; we the National centres in this region want solidarity, not subsidies. We expect there should be pain in everyone’s heart if some of the working comrades of this region fell-down in any sorts of difficulties.

Bro. Suzuki!

You have mentioned many things in the thematic paper classified as action program entitled Unity- the way forward; congratulation for this! As we discussed at Regional General Council couples of time, we need to adopt resolutions, which eventually help to chart specific action in our workplace. I hope your able leadership would much bother on it! If you ask me, as a national centre, what GEFONT can do and from the struggle, what we do expect? I have few points in my menu:

1 GEFONT will, together with major national centres in Nepal, concentrate to introduce new social protection system to all workers within this tenure. This point, my Secretary General Cde Umesh and president of NTUCI Bro. Laxman, have already mentioned. Let me second it! Nepal, as you know, is passing through a specific juncture of our history. Drafting of new constitution with agendas to transform our entire society politically, economically and socio-culturally are our issues. Our labour agenda are not limited to mere wage increment and workplace democracy, further we are trying our best to expand historic comprehensive peace accord made between the then Nepali state and the then rebel- the CPN (Maoist). For this we need tiny help by the international trade union movement.

2 Let me recall here our meeting (Cebu-Philippines) with incumbent President and General Secretary of AP together with former General Secretary of ITUC and three national centers of Nepal- GEFONT, NTUC-I and the ANTUF. We asked to invite ANTUF in ITUC family if they wish and we concluded our discussion with positive note. I think Suzuki-san you are aware on it and I do not want to explain further. However, I would like to encourage all GUFs to invite the ANTUF to affiliate its affiliates in the GUFs family.

3 Bro Suzuki! You have touched on the terrified working condition of Migrant workers in the thematic report. Such pathetic situation, to some extent, can be addressed if the unions in countries of destination are aware. The experience teaches us that a union-to-union formal cooperation could be much more effective in order to translate this action into reality. To check human trafficking and control unwanted-inhuman practices, the unions should encourage their respective governments for the work-agreement.

LDCs, as the country of origin, are facing negative consequences of skill-drain and the resources. Educated workforce is prepared after year-long investment of the country concerned, which is consumed by the country of destination. Do we think, the union movement should ask with the countries of destination to pay for investment made

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1 Extracts from the article published in Republica on May 11, 2011 by Dr. Arjun Karki
2 Ibid
by the country of origin over skilled working persons, whom they are employing? If you ask me what do we think? My answer is - the time has come to raise our voice unitedly!

In Vancouver-Canada, we had tried to draw attention of the World Congress on climate change, demanding - if the congress entrusts, the GEFONT will hoist ITUC flag at the top of Mt. Everest!

Thanks to the Congress! Thanks to the former and present ITUC General Secretaries - you entrusted us!! And, let me thank you Bro. Suzuki you encouraged us handing over ITUC flag participating in a programme at Kathmandu, amidst the presence of all of the JTUCC family. I am now in position to declare, our union activist and climber Cde Dorje is already in base camp of Mt. Everest! He will conquer the Everest with ITUC flag any time between 18-30 of this month. Colleagues! The introductory brochure of expedition is perhaps in your hand. Let me demonstrate here the poster-promo for your kind information!!!

I expect the Congress is aware that this region is the home of world-renowned Himalayas and the peaks. World highest peak and the country sinking to Ocean both lay on our region. The greenery and the biodiversity of this region are the global resources for humankind. The Congress shall understand that the protection of the ecology, the Himalayas, glacial lakes and rivers is the protection of future. It is also an act of creation of green and sustainable jobs!

Finally, let me salute you all with our very slogan, an injury to one is an injury to all! To show our commitment on this notion of solidarity, brother president, the GEFONT has decided to handover SN $1000- our token contribution as the symbol of solidarity to the brothers and sister of Japan who are the recent victim of disastrous earth quake, tsunami and the nuclear explosion!

I join with some of the previous speakers on their call for smart programme and plan of action, an action to the alternate of inhuman regime of financial capitalism- often we curse it as the Casino Capitalism and programme for organising-educating-agitating as the mantra to workers mobilization!

Bro. President, definitely we have been committing some mistakes in this regard. The expenditure which we are making is not producing enough result. I have read somewhere the weakness lies in the model of our unionism; we are opting Servicing Mode and altering most effective Organizing Model!!

If it is the case, Bro Suzuki how could you help the affiliates in our region to transform their mindset accordingly?

Let me wish the best success of our Regional Congress! Long live our solidarity.

Thank you!!

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**Global Solidarity**

Thailand is in a tough process of political transformation based on conflict between the forces of autocracy and democracy. Forces of autocracy are naturally relying on heavy crackdown and suppression. Forces of democracy are going on with sacrifice and dedication.

Based on the law named Lese Majeste, freedom activists are being arrested, warranteed and suppressed through various forms of anti-democratic actions and prosecutions. Lèse majesté is defined as: “anyone who defames, insults or threatens the king, the queen, the crown prince or the regent” (Article 112 of the Thai penal code). The law is being misused by the ruling party to sue everyone disliked by them. Activists, trade unionists, workers, writers and intellectuals are the priortiy of attack as far as we have witnessed. Very recently, Somyot Pruksakasemsuk is under attack of the ruling party and is arrested. GEFONT has sent the protest letter to the prime Minister and demanded for immediate release. Somyot Pruksakasemsuk is under attack of the ruling party and is arrested. GEFONT has sent the protest letter to the prime Minister and demanded for immediate release. The protest letter sent to Thai Prime Minister signed by GEFONT Secretary General Umesh Upadhyaya puts forth; It is a shocking news for entire trade union movement and right-activists that Somyot is under detention. I would like to request you for the immediate release of Somyot Pruksakasemsuk who was arrested on the 30th April 2011 and is currently being held at Klong Prem Central Prison, in Bangkok.

 FreeBSDm

Somyot Pruksakasemsuk

"I shall fight for freedom until my last breath. I'm willing to give up my freedom, but not my humanity"

Somyot Pruksakasemsuk

Holding Cell, Crime Suppression Division, Bangkok, 8.30 am, May 2, 2011
GEFONT, SAAPE and PILER:

Setting Labour Agenda for South Asia

GEFONT, South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE) and Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and research jointly organised a Workshop on “Setting Labour Agenda for South Asia” in Kathmandu on March 30-31, 2011. The aim was to identify and consolidate labour issues in South Asia.

The workshop was inaugurated by Ganga Lal Tuladhar, honourable Minister for Education and spokesperson of Government of Nepal and Bishnu Rimal, honourable member of CA/President of GEFONT presided over the inaugural session.

Addressing the inaugural session of the workshop, Hon’ble Minister said in 19th and 20th century Europe was the centre of trade union movements, now in the 21st century, considering the large number and increased awareness South Asia should play a leading role in trade union and democratic movements.

In his presidential address, Mr. Bishnu Rimal extend warm welcome to the guests. He said that South Asia is the centre of labour movement, but irony is that organisations in South Asia are ideologically divided, some are apolitical and some are too political, where as some are following one party. We can find out solutions through unity. The wide spread in formalization of the jobs, job insecurity, outsourcing through contractors. Lower wages and delayed payments are other major problems. Employers are using hire and fire policy frequently. Capital is influencing political movements. Labour migration is the biggest issue in Nepal as well as other South Asian countries.

During this two days workshop representation from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal presented country presentation on contemporary labour issues followed by open interaction.

From Nepal, Comrade Umesh Upadhyay, Secretary General of GEFONT highlighted the contemporary labour issues of Nepal. In his presentation he said we are passing through a transition. Labour market is also in transition. Issues of rights, representation and welfare are in difficult situation. Our best focus is in the formation of new Constitution to make it labour inclusive – from the present capitalist-tilt position, it should be a pro-worker constitution.

In the workshop, participants share experiences and views on contemporary labour issues of the SA region and focussed attention to explore appropriate actions in order to reduce suffering of working class.
The discussion was on the issues of insufficiency of minimum wages for a decent living and on need to introduce and redesign social security system in each of the SA country in the context of international economic crisis and IFI-led globalization. The meeting emphasized need for practical measures for greater solidarity within the labour movements of South Asia. The participants urged governments of South Asian countries to liberalise the visa restrictions to facilitate people-to-people contact.

The participants expressed serious concern over growing militarization and nuclearization in SA and demanded the governments of SA countries to enter into no-war pact and reduce military expenditures and transfer these resources on provision for social protection to all workers. Expressing the commitment to coordinate actions throughout South Asia by developing a sound coordination mechanism among the potential organizations, the workshop has adopted “Kathmandu Declaration”.

Altogether 36 participants from various trade union and Civil Society organizations from Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka participated in the programme.

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**Street Net international organises Council meeting, thematic workshop**

StreetNet international council meeting and thematic workshop on Street Vendors and Informal Traders living with disability has been concluded in grandeur way with meet-the-press-Program.

GEFONT together with its affiliate NEST hosted 2 Day programme on April 18-21 2011, Kathmandu.

The workshop developed the first basic elements of streetNet policy on the theme. StreetNet affiliates which have made advances in the organisation of street vendors and informal traders with disability shared their experiences. During the workshop it was agreed that all StreetNet’s 41 affiliates in 35 countries mainly in Africa, Asia and Latin America all now be encouraged to focus more attention on the organisation of Street vendors and informal traders with disabilities focused on the Women.

Meeting also passed resolutions concerning the following issues:

1. Climate Change, its effect on workers in the informal economy, and the contribution of the informal waste recycling sector to amelioration of climate change.
2. Inclusive cities and inclusion of informal economy workers in urban policy development and participatory budgeting.
5. Class and employment relation in informal economy workplaces.
7. Universal health insurance and access to quality health services.

Addressing in the opening ceremony of the thematic workshop Com.Umesh Upadhyaya Secretary General of GEFONT said that the goal of international trade unions network is to develop an alternative world with dignity and creativity to ensure better life for all. Previously the Trade Union movement was led by the European continent, but now workers from Africa, Asia and Latin America have to take lead, as there is no possibility of better world without organising workers in informal economy.

Altogether 42 delegates from various trade union organizations from 27 countries participated in the Congress.
GEFONT BRIEFS

Zonal Conventions

From Sep 3 to Dec 17, 2010, Zonal Conventions of GEFONT in all 12 zones have been concluded and the structures have been refreshed with new leadership and programme.

The campaign to expand GEFONT in all 75 districts of Nepal has produced successful results. The expansion of the membership, organisation, and its composition has reached to 65 districts so far. In the 12 zonal committees, a total of 174 leaders including 58 women have been elected as office bearers and executive members, based on our policy 33.3% are women leaders.

In the zonal convention, 2105 GEFONT local representatives had participated of which 715 (33.98%) were the women members. GEFONT has stood in the frontline in terms of labour participation, democratic procedure, and composition.

In order to materialise the main objective of GEFONT to expand women leadership, Zonal women committees in all 12 zones and district women committees in 42 districts have been formed so far. The Zonal Conventions have been fruitful in mobilising the workers, committee expansion and membership campaign.

Nepal Health Workers Union Registered

The organisation of Nepal Health Workers Union has been registered as Union and has an established foundation to expand it into all 75 districts. This Union has been registered in mid September 2010 to the Department of Labour with 5350 signatures and the registration number is 278.

This Union has prepared a 21 point collective demands and is going to submit them in the concerned sector in the near future. The Union has been formed to represent the voices of the health workers from the public as well as private sector hospitals who have been on duty from the rural to the urban areas with tremendous contributions for the people's lives.

Women Health Volunteers organise 1st Conference

Almost all health volunteers in every ward of the 4 thousand Village Development committees are women devoting their lives to immunization, distributing vitamins, injections, and medicines against diseases like pneumonia and others. This campaign was initiated in 1989 under Ministry of Health and in 1995 this responsibility was given to the Ministry of Local Development. Now there are at least 30-35 women volunteers in the wards of municipalities in urban areas whereas in the VDC wards, they are 2-3 members. In total there nearly 50,000 women volunteers covering every part of the country. Nepal has been proud of the fulfillment of Millennium Development goals on health related targets, which is actually the outcome of the dedicated work of these women health volunteers. The government has not sought any permanent solution for the livelihood problems of these volunteers. The facilities have not been distributed equally in all areas. Therefore, the health workers are in agitation.

The first national conference of NEVA was organized on March 5, 2011 in Kathmandu, which was inaugurated by Com Bishnu Rimal as the chief guest. The 31 Member Central Committee has been elected under president Total Dahal. Struggling, enthusiastic and fully service oriented women Health Volunteers are now moving ahead under trade union movement as the national affiliate federation of GEFONT.

Now out of 75 districts, the structure of organization of NEVA is expanded to 52 districts. It is registered with the signature of 5500 members in mid September 2010 and the registration number is 278.

The Drivers’ Custody House inaugurated in the Police Station premises

A separate drivers’ Cell in Dharam police premises is built for the drivers who come into custody due to road accidents. On 11 April 2011, GEFONT President Bishnu Rimal inaugurated the building built by the Nepal Independent Transport Workers Association (ITWN). Inside the premises of the Area Police Post, the building has been one of its kind in Nepal. The One storey building with concrete foundation have the capacity for three drivers at a time with basic facilities including TV and fan.
As in the past years, some labour disputes were settled on time this year too. However, disputes related mainly to collective demand, retrenchment, termination, appointment letter, enforcement of order, and harassment to the workers took much time to settle.

The movement of the tea estate workers in Jhapa and Ilam demanding the increase in salary, the Biratnagar hotel workers’ moment demanding the implementation of the 10% service charge, the Auto Mechanics Trade Union’s moment demanding trainings and service charge on motorbikes were the nationally renowned events of disputes. Agreements have been reached with achievements in these sectors.

Another renowned movement launched jointly by the three trade unions including GEFONT was the demand for across-the-board wage increases. Various protests such as sit-ins with black stripes became the effective ones.

Workers were demanding for the appointment letter in several past years. The Supreme Court has given verdict in favour of this demand. As a result, the workers of Indian Airlines have received permanent appointment letter who were working with this company for more than two decades.

The issue of demands of Khimti Hydropower workers has remained remarkable this year too. The Ministry of Labour has tried to address this problem by forming a tribunal. The workers at the Bhruki Pulp & Paper Factory have not been paid their wages since six months and they are in protest. The employer is reluctant to run the factory as the interest is to sell the land and earn money. The debate between the workers and the anti-worker management of the Swabalamban Bikas Kendra and of FORWARD a micro finance enterprise has been chronic from past two years.

Apart from these complicated cases, more than 100 cases have been identified - reduction of workers in five factories, strikes and harassments in 10 enterprises and police attacks on the workers in peaceful sit-ins. Some 14 cases relating to formal enterprises have been won by the workers whereas agreements have been signed in 25 out of 30 enterprises. Compared to the past this year, the Maoists’ atrocities have decreased, but not stopped completely. They have attacked the GEFONT activists and transport workers in Bara. The workers in the three enterprises have been terminated without adequate reasons. Five executives of local committee in N.P.L. Pvt. Limited have been suspended. Despite these incidents, the trade union movement has been effective in collective bargaining and in solving the problems.

Dispute Settlements in Different Sectors

Nepal Pharmachetics Lab

Agreement has been signed with the Nepal Pharmaceuticals Lab on April 28, 2011. The GEFONT affiliate Nepal Independent Chemical and Iron Workers Union had launched the strikes when their demands were not fulfilled. The GEFONT Central Office called the Management Body for a dialogue and the mediation was possible by increasing the workers’ wages by NRs 2000. Other agreements made were reducing the actions taken against the workers by the management, the grades to be increased by 5% per annum, provisions of advance up to four months, 12 days on duty leave for the union related works, and furnitures and strike days wages for the union workers.

Partial Agreement in the Tea Estate

A 28-point charter of demand was submitted to the Tea Producers Association jointly by the three trade unions on January 2011. The demands are related to wage increase, increment in gratuity amount, provision of medical facilities, housing and bonus. Since the management did not show interest to fulfill these demands, the workers launched protest from the first week of April 2011. As a pressure of the trade unions, an agreement has been signed with assurance of social security to tea plantation workers and to form a task force consisting of the representatives of all parties to address the demands within one month.

Agreement in Syakar Company

The Syakar, a motor bike selling Agency of Big Business house the Jyoti Groups has signed an agreement on mid-August 2010 with GEFONT affiliate Nepal Auto mechanics Trade Union after they picketed for 2 days demanding trainings to the workers, discounts to the workers for the purchase of auto-parts of the Syakar Company. The agreement also includes the provision of NRs 2000 for the union workers for every sale of the motorbike.

Agreement in Carpet sector

On 25 April 2011, Negotiation has been reached between trade unions including GEFONT affiliate Nepal Independent Carpet Workers Union and the employers organisations. The agreement has fixed the wage of the 60 knot carpet as NRs 1180/- per square meter - NRs 690 as the wage and NRs 490 dearness allowance. The agreement has also ensured the social security contribution based on agreement of trade unions with FNCCI. The agreement has further declared
the wage of the Super 60 Knot Carpet as NRs 1350. Code of conduct is another point of agreement.

**Termination of Workers by Advocacy Forum**

Eight workers in Advocacy Forum were terminated from their job from April 1, 2011 without any justifiable cause. The workers have processed for their legal remedy against this action of the Forum’s management body.

**Attack on the Self employed Workers**

The street vendors at Koteshwor have been attacked by police in November 20, 2010. The women workers were assaulted by the police and other four workers were injured in this incident. The GEFONT affiliate Nepal Street Vendors Trade Union (NEST) organized protest rally and government and Kathmanudu Municipality came to dialogue. An agreement has been made with the police, the local organisations and the union to search for the alternative place for the workers.

**The Maoist Trade Union Attacks on GEFONT Activists**

Dharma Prasad Pakwal, GEFONT affiliated trade union member of Bara District Committee was manhandled by the Maoist trade union activists on March 7, 2011. Pakwal’s hand was fractured with serious head injury and was admitted in Arthpaedic hospital. The Pakwal family supported by the local union have filed a case against the perpetrator at Bara DSP Office.

**Warning against the closure of the Bhrikuti Paper Factory**

The trade unions of Bhrikuti Pulp and Paper Nepal Limited have launched protest against management’s decision to shut down the factory since from January 2011. A memorandum has been submitted to the management jointly by three trade unions including GEFONT affiliate Nepal Independent Chemical & Iron Workers’ Union demanding not to close the industry. Copy of the Memorandum has also been submitted to the Prime Minister and other stakeholders. It is to be noted that this factory was public enterprise privatised 14 years back. More than 500 factory workers in this industry are not given salaries since last six months and the management body is trying to sell the 52 ropani of factory-land instead of running the smoothly. It is to be noted that the owner Dibakar Golchha is the member of the Constituent Assembly and his image is that of anti-union/anti-worker.

**Movements in the four factories of Bara and Parsa**

The workers along the side of Bara Parsa Corridor have been launching movements as they have not got wages since past four months by the Nepal Bottlers operated by Golchha Group. The workers at Tribeni Textile have closed their work as seven workers in this factory were not made permanent. Workers are at movement in Tribeni Fabarix by demanding increase in the wage. The workers with Genetica Pharmaceutical Lab are also in the agitation as they have not been made permanent.

**Nepali Workers Have Won**

GEFONT affiliated Indian Airlines Union has won the case by the order of Labour Court and this decision has given the full salary, gratituity, provident fund and other facilities for 28 workers on 10 January 2011. The nepali workers in the Indian Airlines were compelled to work with a few wage, and the trade union was formed in this office in the 2003. The union had submitted a one point demand to the Airlines for demanding a permanent appointment on 2006. The Airline Management had filed a writ petition in the labour Court which gave a verdict in favour of the workers in 2007. The Air India again filed a case to the Supreme Court which also gave verdict in favour of the Workers on last week of June 2010.

**Negotiation in seven jungle resorsrs**

The Government decided to reoperate the seven jungle resorts of Chitwan in last December 2009. Among them the Gainda Wildlife Camp’s Operator Bharat Basnet showed reluctance to operate the camp and by which the workers in this camp had not got wage since last two years. Basnet did not legally close the hotel, neither he gave wages to the workers and this has frustrated them. Finally after a long exercise from GEFONT top leadership, negotiations have been reached.

**Woman Teacher at Budhanilakantha School was abused**

The Union Vice-President Priya Poudel of Budhanilakantha School has been threatened by the school management to terminate her from the job. Victim Poudel has complained to GEFONT Central Office. The teachers and the workers of the School had established a Union of the School one year back. In the meantime, the Union made public a case of Scout Teacher Badri Gautam who reportedly involved in sexual abuse with the school children and demanded action against the culprit Gautam. He was terminated from the job
as a pressure by the Union but the School Administration began to harass the union leaders based on prejudices and began to deduct the facilities and other unfair activities.

**Workers Harrassed**

The managers of the different labour foundations within Sagarmatha zone have harassed the workers. The operators of Gramin Bikas Mahila Utthan Manch have been found harassing the GEFONT affiliated union workers. In severe incidences, they have beaten the union activists, forced to resign and deducted the salary amount without any cause, and other unfair activities. In Swabalamban Micro Finance Development Bank, where more than 200 workers are at work, the bank operators have harassed the union leaders. The demands submitted by the union workers have been neglected. The workers at Triyuga Distillery in Saptari district have been mentally tortured by the management. These workers have not been provided the minimum wages indicated by the government and have been obstructed in forming the union in their respective offices. GEFONT zones and labour relation councils are dealing with the cases.

**Revisiting GEFONT’s Television and Radio Programme**

A joint Wider National Workers Conference was held in Kathmandu in September 10-12, 2005 when the political environment was unfavourable for trade union movement. The organizers were GEFONT, NTUC, DECONT and Teachers Union by bringing unions & federations of all sectors with more than 1800 delegates. From the same day, GEFONT launched a weekly programme on Radio named ‘Shram Ra Sirjana’ [Labour and Creation]. Initiated by GEFONT’s own resources, the radio programme was decided to broadcast from local FM radio stations. It was mainly focused to highlight labour to be respected and recognized by the society.

Previously, GEFONT in 2001 had also launched a radio programme on Women Empowerment with support from ILO. This radio programme was GEFONT’s first experience. Though unknown, GEFONT team carefully tried its best to maintain the qualities and thus the radio programmes became successful in creating a conducive environment between the listeners and the radio team to produce quality radio programmes based on the given context and time.

Within one year of the Radio programme GEFONT radio team was tired of hard work. The listeners of the programme pressing for the continuity. People had achieved Loktantra and we GEFONT people were highly ambitious to produce a quality media programmes. As a result, GEFONT made a plan to make the media persons as partners of the programme. A joint programme of GEFONT and Communication Corner became one of the popular radio programme broadcast initially from 8 FM stations in 2006 September and reached to 16 stations later on.

The cost share of the programme for Communication Corner was 20% and 80% was shared by GEFONT. It was successful as it also could give impetus to other stakeholders to run their own labour programmes. The radio programme successfully shared the messages about trade union movements and workers rights. Later on, we could get support from the FNV - the Netherlands’s Trade Union Confederation.

From September 2007, the Shram Ra Sirjana could be telecasted from National Television NTV. It was the first programme of its type prepared by the workers for the workers themselves. The major base of the programme was the experience gained from the radio programme. Initially

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**GEFONT against the use of Child labour**

- Action research and awareness raising campaign in the tea estates of eastern Nepal under ILO-IPEC support
- A new affiliate of GEFONT Kamaiya Liberation Forum to organize and develop the movement of bonded agricultural laborers.
- GEFONT started action programme in 1997 against bonded and non-bonded child labour.
- Awareness building, organizing the workers, Non-formal Education, Formal education support, piggery and goat-farming, vocational training, health camps, lobbying with other stakeholders and minimum wage campaign were also the part of action programme against use of child labour. More than 2300 children were covered by the programmes.
- In 2003 under Time Bound Programme of ILO, GEFONT launched child labour education programme in eleven district.
- Under Korean Solidarity with the support of Samsung Equality Fund from 2007-Child enrollment in school, providing School dress, Shoes, school bags to 273 children is continued. In addition, schooling is continued for 42 children of leprosy victims in a separate school in Dhanusha district.
- GEFONT is supporting 600 children in school admission, tuition fee, books and stationary and other education-aids under the support of FNV.
the TV programmes were focused to the labour news, weekly news, talk programmes, and labour-songs. Later on the agreement was made with Media Plus and more innovative ideas were devised to make TV programmes more relevant to meet the interest of the workers. The American Solidarity Centre expressed solidarity with the TV programme. As an influential TV programme, it is still going on as one of the most interesting programme for Nepal Television's audience.

The specific programmes developed later on phases have been turned out as the remarkable ones and they have been able to broadcast quality programmes. The former programmes were more movement oriented whereas the later ones were focused to develop the qualities of the workers.

Currently Avenues Television telecasts Labour News in the Main News every day twice and Communication Corner broadcasts Labour News everyday from all network FM stations. GEFONT efforts have come up with real fruits now as other television channels and radio stations have also started to telecast/broadcast labour programmes and news.

**Info on GEFONT publications**

**Publication on contemporary Nepal: From Conflict to Transformation GEFONT Interaction Debate on Social Economy as Workers Agenda**

The people's movement of 2006 was just over; there was a growing curiosity as to how the restructuring of the state look like and the modality of federalism determined; concerns were spreading over the slogans of democratic republic and the people's democracy of 21st century. This book is an output of a 3-day interaction programme organised by GEFONT to discuss foundational ingredients of the above topics amongst trade unionists, political leaders and experts. Edited by Bishnu Rimal and Umesh Upadhyaya, the 448-page book collates all papers presented and discussions held amongst participants of the interaction.

**GEFONT for Equality**

**Basic of rights – citizen's identity: Basis of constitution – equality**

“You are male – they are female” is a misconception that has roots of discrimination, division and exploitation of workers. Patriarchy is a common enemy of both the male and female that obstructs them to collectively fight economic exploitation. This is the backdrop of why GEFONT has taken up the issue of patriarchy to be collectively targeted to fight against by all workers.

Our struggle for gender equality is on-going. This struggle from home, family, society and work place has now emerged as an agenda of “citizenship” rights at the Constituent Assembly level. Birth of a person is not determined by his/her wish. To be a man or woman does not depend on the interest of the person. Major issue of contention at the Constituent Assembly includes the issue of citizenship and hence the notion of equality and non-discrimination amongst people regardless of their birth, gender, marriage, and identity has been paramount to our emphasis.

Whom to give citizenship by ancestry and whom the naturalised citizenship is a question. What should be the citizenship status of a Nepali son or daughter who get married with a foreigner? How to maintain equality in their children's identity? How to see these issues in the backdrop of our geopolitical complexities?

GEFONT central planning commission member Binda Pandey has set forth an analytical view on these topics of the book. GEFONT hopes that the book written by Honourable Pandey, who is also President of a committee on Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of the State at the Constituent Assembly, will be instrumental in strengthening the movement for gender equality in Nepal.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 1, 2010</td>
<td>CPN Maoists called nationwide general strike from 3 days prior demanding National consensus government under Maoist lead.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 5, 2010</td>
<td>Maoist called off the strike after the huge public pressure and peoples peace rallies against them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 7, 2010</td>
<td>Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal called Maoist for dialogue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 17, 2010</td>
<td>Government proposed for the eighth amendment to the Interim Constitution to extend the tenure of Constituent Assembly for one more year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 28, 2010</td>
<td>Decision was taken to extend the time of CA for May 28, 2011.</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 6, 2010</td>
<td>Government decided to extend the period of UNMIN.</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 30, 2010</td>
<td>Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal resigned.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 5, 2010</td>
<td>Beginning of the eighth session of the legislative Parliament.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 14, 2010</td>
<td>The three Major Parties UML, Maoist and NC agreed for the formation of State Reconstruction Commission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 20, 2010</td>
<td>Registered candidacy for new Prime Minister election by Jhalanath Khanal from CPN UML, Prachanda from Maoist and Ram Chandra Poudel from Congress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 21, 2010</td>
<td>Jhalanath Khanal withdrew his candidacy from the election race with declaration that for national consensus, the election held between Poudel and Prachanda, both candidates failed to get majority.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 13, 2010</td>
<td>The agreement between Maoist and Government to extend the time period of UNMIN for four months more.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 17, 2010</td>
<td>Nepali Congress National Convention starts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 22, 2010</td>
<td>Sushil Koirala elected as new President of Nepali Congress.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 13, 2010</td>
<td>Prachanda nominated as coordinator of sub-committee of Constitutional Committee for minimizing the differences among the parties.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 15, 2010</td>
<td>Three major parties agree to bring budget on Nov. 20.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 20, 2010</td>
<td>Finance Minister Surendra Pandey was attacked by the Maoist CA members while he was trying to present the budget. The briefcase was also torn apart.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 22, 2010</td>
<td>6th Extended national meeting of Maoist started.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 19, 2010</td>
<td>The special session of the parliament started.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 27, 2011</td>
<td>President calls for the winter session of the parliament.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 12, 2011</td>
<td>Ram Chandra Poudel withdraws his candidacy in the prime minister election.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 17, 2011</td>
<td>Decision among 20 political parties not to change the national flag.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 23, 2011</td>
<td>The decision to bring the Maoist combatants under the Special Committee of the Nepal government, Agreement signed by Madhav Kumar Nepal PM and Maoist Supremo Prachanda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 25, 2011</td>
<td>Amendment of the parliamentary rules for PM election.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 2, 2011</td>
<td>Prachanda, Jhalanath Khanal, Ramchandra Poudel and Bijay Gachhadar registered their name for the PM election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 3, 2011</td>
<td>Jhalanath Khanal elected as the new PM.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 10, 2011</td>
<td>New PM took oath of office and secrecy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 12, 2011</td>
<td>3 ministers added in the cabinet from UML.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 15, 2011</td>
<td>Khanal and Prachanda hold on the seven point agreement which became highly debated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 1, 2011</td>
<td>Debate solved and decided for two houses of parliament in New constitution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 4, 2011</td>
<td>Former PM Krishna Prasad Bhattarai died.</td>
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<td>Mar 4, 2011</td>
<td>The cabinet extension adding with 4 ministers from the Maoist party.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 17, 2011</td>
<td>Supreme Court sentenced Former Minister Chiranji Wagle for one and half years of imprisonment and 40 millions fine on corruption.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 18, 2011</td>
<td>Wagle was sent to jail.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 08, 2010</td>
<td>Hotel workers of Biratnagar in strike demanding 10% service charge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 30, 2010</td>
<td>Supreme court directed Indian Airlines to make permanent to the workers after 7 years of continued legal fight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 25, 2010</td>
<td>GEFONT wage card campaign for wage increase launched.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 03, 2010</td>
<td>Retrenchment of all workers from Chocolate factory Jay ma Confectionary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 10, 2010</td>
<td>GEFONT successful to bring back 102 workers in trouble in Libya and able to provide compensation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 07, 2010</td>
<td>Picketing of Syakar Company by Nepal Automechanics Trade Union of GEFONT with various genuine demands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 28, 2010</td>
<td>MoU signed between GEFONT and KCTU for the protection of Nepali migrant workers working in Korea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 21, 2010</td>
<td>Conference of Nepalese Domestic workers in Honkong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 10, 2011</td>
<td>ITUC-AP General Secretary Noriyuki Suzuki handed over the ITUC flag to Com. Dorje Khatri for Everest expedition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 20, 2011</td>
<td>Interim order by supreme court to stop the process of wage fixation committee based on the petition of a paper union.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 23, 2011</td>
<td>The management of Hayat Hotel had decided earlier to fire 2 permanent workers for not being the members of Maoist - case was filled in court supported by GEFONT. They are reinstated after the verdict of Court.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 01, 2011</td>
<td>Picketing by workers in Shanti Sewa Griha against the management who kicked out 172 workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 02, 2011</td>
<td>Voluntary retirement of 86 workers in Mahashakti shop after negotiation as factory came to closure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 05, 2011</td>
<td>ANTFU of UCPN-Maoist divided into three factions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 11, 2011</td>
<td>A group from ANFTU closed the Hetauda industrial corridor for 10 days.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 15, 2011</td>
<td>Protest Program of GEFONT launched along with other two Trade unions demanding immediate wage increases.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 15, 2011</td>
<td>Tripartite decision to provide bonus to all workers equally putting an end to discrimination in Himal Power Limited hydel project under Norwegian construction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 24, 2011</td>
<td>Agreement signed between GEFONT-NTUC-ANTUF and FNCCI-CNI on across-the-board wage increase of NRS. 1500 per month and contribution of 20% by employers in Social security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 25, 2011</td>
<td>Political union groups backed up by employers against social security started general strike and destructions in Industrial corridors of Pathliyai and Morang-Sunsari.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 03, 2011</td>
<td>Labour minister talks and receives the recommendations of political union groups to put an end to week-long anarchy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 06, 2011</td>
<td>Maoist Party dissolves all three factions of ANTFU and nominates Chief Whip of the Party Mr. Post Bahadur Bogati as Coordinator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 17, 2011</td>
<td>National strike by the all three trade unions of GEFONT, NTUC-I and ANTFU in Tea Plantations &amp; Estates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 28, 2011</td>
<td>Involvement of Prime Minister in the dialogue between Tea Plantation unions and Employers, negotiation reached to introduce social security system in Tea industry. Joint mobilization of activists of GEFONT and NTUC-I on OSH and Labour Inspection system in more than 200 enterprises/workplaces.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Various people have conquered Mt. Everest. They have hoisted their county’s flag; some have made their expedition carrying miniature of “Buddha”; and some have attempted it ridiculous way aiming to book their name in world record. Most of the climbers have been supported by the group of wage-workers like me of this adventurous profession, whose number is huge; larger than the numbers within 50 years climbing history since May 29, 1953; pity to note that they are not even mentioned. Their heroic efforts are overshadowed!

To challenge this, I decided to carry flag of our confederation! I hoisted it in the highest peak of the world! There are record holder climbers in our country; however, it is my pride that I am the only one who hoisted trade union flag first time in the Mt. Everest!”

The day was 24 May 2007! Comrade Dorje Khatri, the Central Committee member of GEFONT affiliates, UNITRAV- Union of Trekking Travel Rafting and Airline workers in Nepal, was jubilantly explaining to the media- why he decided to hoist GEFONT flag in the top of the world!
Today—after 4 years plus 2 days, Cde Dorje might has several points to communicate with the world, he has set another record by hoisting flag of International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the flag of 175 million workers of 151 countries and territories representing 305 national affiliates. This time he was with this mission to demonstrate trade unions worry on climate change; the mission to draw attention of international community that our planate is melting down, which possibly resulting ramification to our future generation.

“The mission is over!” GEFONT central office mentioned—“the mission is accomplished!”

It was May 29, 1953—The New Zealander Edmund Hillary, and the Nepali Sherpa Tenzing Norgay, have become the first to reach the summit of Mt Everest on the Nepal-Tibet border. The world was thrilled by this news.

The BBC has mentioned in its website—“They reached the top of the world at 1130 local time after a grueling climb up the southern face. The two men hugged each other with relief and joy but only stayed on the summit for 15 minutes because they were low on oxygen. Mr. Hillary took several photographs of the scenery and of Sherpa Tenzing waving flags representing Britain, Nepal, the United Nations and India. Tenzing Sherpa buried some sweets and biscuits in the snow as a Buddhist offering to the gods.”

“A symmetrical, beautiful snow cone summit” Sir Edmund Hillary exclaimed in a question how was the Mt. Everest, what he saw there?

“In 2004, first time I had conquered the Sagarmatha. At that moment, it was sunny day, I felt Mt. Everest was warm, there was warm wind blowing. But this time I felt just opposite! The Everest was extremely cold, very fierce wind was blowing. The cold even froze our camera. I together with my comrade Jam Chang could be able to take couples of snapshot…” Dorje had shared his reflection on 2007 when he conquered the Everest with GEFONT Flag.

News of the conquest of Mount Everest did not reach the outside world until 2 June, 1953.

However, this time, we got his news just 2 hours after the conquest. Dorje and team are descending from the top and with few days they will be in Kathmandu.

How is his feeling this time? Just wait few days!!! At the moment we have only an offer—Congratulation Cde Dorje!! We are proud ion you. Thank you all supporting team and agencies, together we could accomplish our historic mission!!!

Mount Everest is known as Sagarmatha in Nepal. Everest was named after Sir George Everest, the surveyor-general of India who was the first to produce detailed maps of the Indian subcontinent including the Himalayas. The body of George Mallory who had attempted the ascent in 1924 was found on Mount Everest in 1999. By the 50th anniversary of the ascent in May 2003 over 1,300 people had reached the summit of the roof of the world.

Heart-felt congratulations to you Comrade Dorje Khatri!
Abbreviation

ANTUF All Nepal Trade Union Federation
ANWA All Nepal Women Association
CA Constituent Assembly
CBA Collective Bargaining Agreement
CDO Chief District Officer
CNI Chamber of Nepalese Industry
COP-15 Conference of Parties-15
CoNEP Confederation of Nepalese Professionals
CPN (UML) Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist)
CUPPEC-Nepal Central Union of Painter, Plumber, Electro & Construction Workers-Nepal
DW Domestic Work
EPS Employment Permit System
FENEPT Federation of Nepalese Progressive Trade Unions
FEPB Foreign Employment Promotion Board
FNCCI Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry
FNV Federation of Dutch Labour Movement
GEFONT General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions
GFMD Global Forum on Migration Development
GUF Global Union Federations
HKCTU Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions
IFK Indigenous Federation of Korea
IGCUN Independent Garbage Cleaners’ Union of Nepal
ILC International Labour Conference
ILO International Labour Organisation
ITGWUN Independent Garment Workers’ Union of Nepal
ITUC International Trade Union Confederation
ITUC/AP International Trade Union Confederation Asia Pacific
ITWAN Independent Transport Workers Association of Nepal
JTUC Japanese Trade Union Congress
JTUCC Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre
KCTU Korean Confederation of Trade Unions
LDC Least Developed Country
MFA Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MKN Madhav Kumar Nepal
MNC Multinational Companies
MPRK Metropolitan Police Range Kathmandu
MTU Migrant Trade Union
MTUC Malaysian Trades Union Congress
NATU Nepal Auto-mechanics Trade Union
NC Nepali Congress
NCC Nepal Coordination Committee
NEC National Executive Committee
NEST Nepal Street Vendors Union
NEVA Nepal Health Volunteer Association
NIFBWU Nepal Independent Food and Beverage Workers’ Union
NICWU Nepal Independent Carpet Workers’ Union
NIDWU Nepal Independent Domestic Workers’ Union
NICIWU Nepal Independent Chemical & Iron Workers’ Union
NLC National Labour Commission
NPL Nepal Pharmaceutical Lab
NPR Nepali Rupee
NDCONT-I National Democratic Confederation of Nepal-Independent
NRB Nepal Rastra Bank
NRN Non Residential Nepali
NIHWU Nepal Independent Hotel Workers’ Union
NTUC Nepal Trade Union Congress
NTUC-I Nepal Trade Union Congress Independent
OSH Occupational Safety and Health
PM Prime Minister
SAAPE South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication
TB Tuberculoma
TEUMP Timber Employees Union of Malaysian Peninsular
TUC Trade Union Congress of Great Britain
UCPN (M) Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
UN United Nations
UNITRAV Union of Trekking–Travels–Rafting and Airline Workers, Nepal
UPCN United Communist Party of Maoist
VDCs Village Development Committees
WDDW World Day for Decent Work

Contributing Team

Bishnu Rimal
Kabinda S. Rimal
Deepa Dawadi
Umesh Upadhyaya
Jitendra Shrestha
Jeni Jain
Hari Datt Joshi
M. Kattel
Mahendra Shrestha
Bishnu Lamsal
Dr. Padam Khatiwada
Kiran Mali
Pemba Lama
Balkrishna Kattel
Gopal Ghimire
Ramesh Badal
Prakash Gyawali
Manisha Neupane

June 2011 / TRADE UNION RIGHTS
"Dorje Khatri’s union protects Sherpas from exploitation. It is also helping to protect the planet from catastrophic climate change. We salute the amazing courage and commitment of Dorje and his colleagues!"

- Sharan Burrow, General Secretary - ITUC

“We congratulate you for your 7th glorious conquest on the highest peak of the world! This time you have successfully hoisted ITUC flag on the Mt. Everest fulfilling our mission! Comrade Dorje, we are proud on you!”

- Bishnu Rimal, President and GEFONT Family