NEPAL’S KILLER QUAKE ‘15

POST QUAKE REVIEW: DESTRUCTION & POSSIBILITIES
Unexpected and unwanted, but unavoidable - Earthquake like an Invisible Monster came with violent jolts and shocks after shocks. The 57 seconds of the Saturday of April 25, at the last moments, turned the good morning into the worst one at 11.56. The always-memorable 57 seconds of the devastating Quake, terrible and horrifying, changed everything in our lives creating extreme chaos and disorders through unforeseen damages & destruction. It was like a horrible dream, which proved itself the reality. The killer Quake of 7.8 Richter Scale in magnitude snatched life, happiness, peace, food, shelter, grains in the field, livestock and many more and much more. Then aftershocks have been dominant in our lives - series of jolts and shocks in April 25. Peoples outside in the open places, which are rare in capital valley cities. Continued shocks in irregular intervals have terrorised men, women and children to the maximum possible extent. Collapse of Houses and hundreds and hundreds injured on April 25 caused people horrified to enter their own houses. Shelterless people with kids remained in the streets and grounds - urban people with tents and rural people under open sky. People naturally thought that it was the end of the quake, but next morning again the monster came with heavy force. Just after sad morning, at 12.55 the ‘Killer’ came again with heavy force less than that of the Saturday but with high strength equivalent to 6.8 Richter scale of 22 seconds shaking the hopes of the people much more to go down.
Actually the epicentre of the first jolt shocks at 11.56 was at Barpak a remote village of the district of Gorkha, which is almost destroyed, not a single house standing on the surface. The rupture line of the quake moved towards east and eastern south from Barpak in its campaign to ruin us both in urban and rural areas. The 130 km Area of length with roughly 30 km width witnessed heavy adverse effects covering Gorkha, Lamjung, Rasuwa, Dhading, Nuwakot, Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Makwanpur, Kabhre, Sindulpalchok, Dolakha, Ramechhap and Okhaldhunga altogether 14 districts at first attack. April 26 quake was more fatal and damaging to these districts and the effects extended to eastern districts covering altogether 34 districts. The third violent attack was on May 12, which was comparable to the full fledged force of April 25 quake, though it is also being explained as aftershock of the April 25 earthquake. The most suffering and highly damaged district was

**The Damage: Facts and figure**
(as of May 26, 2015)

- Total Deaths 8,676
- Female 4781
- Male 3895
- Injured 21,952
- House destroyed 500,717
- Affected Pregnant women 126,000
- Loss in Educational institution NRs 8 billion
- Destroyed heritage 590 plus
- Thousand of animals perished in the devastating Earthquake. At least 15,850 cattle such as cows and buffaloes perished in the two quakes. The number for smaller animals such as goats and pigs is 36,000 while a staggering 450,000 poultry died. Direct loss from the death of livestock amounts to 1.35 billion rupees.
- An estimated 200 Buddhist nuns and monks died after more than 1,000 monasteries collapsed in the 14 districts hit hardest by the earthquakes, according to the Buddhist Philosophy Promotion and Monastery Development Committee (BPPMDC).
- Thousands of other people whose houses were destroyed by the jolt have similar worries. Some 8 million people are believed to have been affected by the tremors and around 2.8 million are displaced.
- As many as 150 pregnant and about 46 post-partum women, all residents of Tistung VDC, are currently living in tents with little food and clothes to keep them healthy and warm. Tistung is among the worst quake-affected VDCs in Makwanpur.
- Chalise Phant is a tiny village scattered on a beautiful lush hill a few hour’s drive from Sankhu, in Sindhupalchok district. There are around 50 families living there, 43 of whom have lost their homes in the earthquake. In the village, which overlooks the river valley below, now there is nothing more than a few prayers flags fluttering in the wind and swathes of ruin.
- The government has faced a lot of flak for its inefficiency in carrying out relief operations, the general public—particularly the youth—have been praised for taking matters in their own hands and fanning out across the country to help the quake-affected victims.

(Source: ekantipur.com)
Sindhupalchok where every village suffered to the maximum extent. After May 12 aftershocks, district of Dolkha became equally suffering district. The western part of the country up to Kashi district faced losses. The earlier reading of the geologist that the epicentre may shift towards western parts proved to be wrong, so the effects were less in mid western and far western Nepal.

In addition to damages caused by quake shocks, dry landslide as well as wet landslide caused by rainfall has resulted into more fatalities and casualties. Shocks after shocks in irregular and uncertain series, rainfall on the people under open sky, landslides, delayed relief in remote areas, health problems with hunger and lack of drinking water, no dresses and bed and blanket; one can imagine how people, the mothers with new-born babies and small kids, the senior citizens of above 70/80, the disabled ones and the injured persons without medical aids, how they have survived!

Destruction, Losses, Rescue and Relief

The losses are incomparable in our history of natural disasters. The preliminary estimates indicate towards a loss of NRs. 1000 billions. Based on the report of housing company federation, loss of houses is approximately of NRs 15 billions. The government has declared a fund of NRs 200 billions for national reconstruction.

Human loss is 8670 in number in April 25 and May 12 quakes. The number of disappearance is 362 including 106 foreign nationals. Total persons under injuries are recorded to be 21843, but definitely there are out of record injuries also in rural and remote areas. Altogether 500,000 houses are totally damaged and the number of partially damaged houses is estimated to be 260,000. In the high hill districts of Sindhupalchok and Dolkha, 80 per cent houses are collapsed. Even in Kathmandu valley, which consists of three districts - Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur - only 40 per cent houses are safe, 20 per cent are collapsed and 40 per cent need renovations. In number, nearly 150,000 houses are collapsed in these three districts. More than 12,000 schools have collapsed in these highly affected districts. In totality almost one third of the population has suffered, the number is more than 8.5 million people out of the population of 27 millions, where the number of affected children is estimated to be 1.3 millions.

Rescue the most difficult to manage effectively have been successful to the larger extent in spite of poor experiences. Altogether 65016 Nepal Army, 41776 Nepal Police, 24775 Armed Police Force and 4178 Arm-force from 18 countries were mobilised. Assistance from outside forces and trained groups in association with Nepal Army, Armed police Force, Nepal Police, political party activists and citizen groups has been highly significant. Rescue work is almost finished and foreign technical groups including army have started to return home. However in remote upper mountain areas human dead bodies and those of livestock & pets are still not rescued completely due to aftershocks & landslides resulting into high

Global Quake statistics and Nepal

Natural Disasters come and go with adverse and fatal effects in life and the achievements of human civilization. If we look at the statistics concerning earthquakes all over the globe, the picture seems awful. Based on loss of human lives, if we overview the quakes, an alarming picture comes in the forefront (Table 1 and 2)

Table 1: Biggest Quakes since 1900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Magnitude</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>May 1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>Alaska, USA</td>
<td>March 1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Dec 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Dec 1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>March 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Feb 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>Jan 1906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>Alaska, USA</td>
<td>Feb 1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>March 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>Tibet China</td>
<td>Aug 1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>Alaska, USA</td>
<td>Mar 1957</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source Wikipedia)

Table 2: Human loss in Biggest Quakes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Magnitude</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Loss of human life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>1556</td>
<td>830,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>273,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>255,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>Alaska, USA</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>230,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>15,891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>230,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>India (Gujarat)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>87,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>8,532</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source Kantipur Daily, April 28, 2015)
risk of epidemics. In Rescue work, GEFONT activists particularly from construction sector, health sector and street vendors have been much effective.

Rescue and relief works have been launched parallel, but naturally relief will be longer and continue for months even after completion of rescue. Rescue and relief works have been successful due to involvement of trade unions particularly GEFONT activists, civil society organizations, Non Residential Nepali association, NGOs, employers organizations, religious organizations, community based organizations in addition to political party activists. Highly appreciable are the prompt operation of the Nepal Army, Armed Police Force, Nepal Police and health professionals along with various government/ non government groups from friendly nations. Major actor in rescue and relief works is the young generation mainly from urban areas. Their spirit and fast delivery to the maximum possible extent is surprising and highly appreciable. Younger ones from students, workers/unionists, media persons and NGOs have proved themselves capable to respond emergencies. The relief and rescue work witnessed the dedicated presence of 34 countries as a whole.

The tents & tarpaulin and food materials have been provided by several organizations both within the country and abroad in addition to the supplies by governments. As Home Ministry has informed, a total 735,000 tarpaulin have been distributed as the preliminary shelter management.

Now Rescue is at the end point and relief is associated with construction of temporary shelter homes in the form of tunnel houses and alike in order to save the homeless people from fast coming rainy season.

**Post Disaster Action: R5 strategy suggested**

It needs parallel and in combinations of R5 (Rescue-Relief-Rehabilitation-Resettlement-Reconstruction) strategy to bring back the country in new height.

Rehabilitation is in primary stage through transitional shelter. It is expected that temporary corrugated roofing sheet /bamboo shades and in the form of tunnel/tahara & alike houses, which may last up to 2 years to the maximum ranging from the starting of this rainy season of June-July-August to the completion of another rainy season. Moreover, rehabilitation for a number of households and families needs new settlement due to most risky land position of their dwellings in various villages of the districts of Rasuwa, Gorkha, Sindhupalchok and Dolkha. Resettlement action plan of Government is also an urgent need at present.

Reconstruction will be the last and most important phase from long run development point of view. Thus reconstruction needs to be based & designed on development strategy of the nation. The development
strategy itself should be reshaped and redesigned considering the disaster risks following the lessons from this earthquake. Employment generation and absorption of the active labour force should be one of the major agenda in reconstruction and development of the nation. Reconstruction and development strategy must be focused on the maximum utilization of young labour force and hence the declined remittances as an outcome should be compensated through focus to expand tourism industry more and more and also other economic activities. Here comes the new emphasis to social security and decent wages in our reconstruction and development strategy. Similarly as the single largest contributor to GDP, Agriculture should be pushed up through higher agricultural wages. Thus only through a broad-based vision we can lead our nation in a track different from Haiti, which gives us a negative lesson in post-quake time zone.

**Society, politics, economy and labour force in the aftermath**

Though the suffering of the society and particularly the poor segments is at peak imposed by the quake, attitudinal change in the society towards construction may be one of the major outcomes in days to come. Collectivism seems to flourish in future days in order to overcome the adverse impacts of the crisis.

The issue of Government of national consensus has come to the surface, but does not seem possible. Consensus in constitution drafting may result as there is high probability of Political parties coming
forward gradually for hand in hand for reconstruction of the country in spite of rivalry seems more realistic.

Flow of foreign assistance may not be sufficient and dependency on foreign sources is not the answer to the crisis. Therefore, voluntary financial and labour contribution mainly from flourishing middle class and expanding working class is essential factor with a national sentiment, but high-income class should be pressurized to contribute in every step of the way forward. In addition, Flow of foreign direct investment through NRN mobility needs to be raised up.

Increase in remittance in the short run and decrease in the long run High Increase in employment through construction sector dynamism Collectivism in boost up Demand for reconstruction work in heavy scale creating demand for more n more labour resulting into higher wages, fringe benefits n more incentive earnings to the workers.

As a considerable number of migrant workers will return with emotions and family needs, Returnee migrant Nepali workers should be absorbed by the economy in various sectors. But currently in the short run period, workers are sending more and more remittance in order to support their needy families; Inflationary pressure in prices may be the ultimate result, which may be pushed up by heavy expansion in govt expenditure. Therefore deduction in administrative costs of the government and careful & cautious use of fiscal & monetary measures to control prices will be inevitable. Due to increased remittance in
We were on our way back to Dhunche from the border of Nepal and the Tibetan Autonomous Region Kerung. We were five in the car. On the way, we heard a big bang on our car. First we thought it was flattened tyre and one of our friends got out to see what happened. Straightaway a huge boulder fell from the right side of the mountain hitting him to the death at the scene. While I was rushing towards him, another rock hit me on my head and blood started to flow like a stream in mountain.

Com. Gunaram tells his horrible story how he survived the devastating earthquake of 25 April 2015. “A friend was killed in front of us and we remaining four were dispersed here and there. Entire rocky mountain with huge boulders was falling down. The earth was shaking. I tied up my injured head with my socks and pressed it by hand. I thought, this is my last breath and there is no chance to survive. I remembered my family, my wife and children. Luckily, I managed to call my wife and cried. I asked her to inform others to rescue me if it is possible. I and another friend were leaning against a big rock. I didn’t see two other friends around me. So, I thought they had also been killed. Fortunately, they were on the other side of the landslide in the same situation like us and also thought the same. They came to search us when rock falling took some brief pause. One of them was badly injured in his backbone and shoulder. Among remaining four, two were relatively in good condition and two of us were badly injured. We spent entire night under open sky and the earth was still shaking with huge sound of land-slide and fallen rock. The cloud of dust made the atmosphere more frightening.

Thanks to all friends, they managed to rescue us from Dhunche to Kathmandu by helicopter. I was happy to see my family and friends in Kathmandu hospital and my head surgery went well. The wound has gradually been healing.
I did not jumped out, thrown all of sudden

Bajra Rai, member GEFONT migrant committee

I was at home when suddenly earthquake hit on April 25. The quake shook me and I was thrown from one end of my room to other. Then I was thrown out of window. I was stuck on the wire outside the window then I fell to ground on my head. Earthquake was still shaking the ground and I was bleeding from head. My brother scolded me saying what was the need to jump. I did not jump I was thrown out by the quake.

My brothers took me to Bir hospital in a taxi after the quake stopped. Hospital was crowded. They thought it will take long time before doctors could attend me. So, they took me to Model hospital. The wall of red cross building had fallen and disrupted the road so I had to walk from there till emergency ward. When I reached hospital I got even more scared. When I saw other victims some without limbs some heavily injured, I felt bad. A lady was so scared that she was shouting in the ward. They needed urgent care before me. After a while doctor attended me and applied medicine on my head and hand. I got 12 stiches on head and six stiches on hand. When my brothers asked if I needed CT scan doctor said no. I was scared out of my wits; I was almost senseless each time the tremors occurred. The next day my brothers took me to Trauma centre for CT scan. Then occurred the next big aftershock and I was scared out of my wits. Now my injury is slowly healing and I have started walking little bit. There are few cracks in my house and it is not suitable to live. I do not have fix place to stay at moment. The recurring tremors still scare me.

I may have left Nepal, but the earthquake has not left me

Stina Mortensen, a Swedish citizen and journalist

“It was with mixed emotions that I left Nepal, a little more than two weeks after the earthquake. Going back to Sweden, where the earth keeps nice and still, was a relief after living with the constant aftershocks and the fear of a new, even bigger one. But it also increased the feelings of ‘survivors guilt’ that I had experienced since April 25. Why had I been so lucky? Our house was still standing, our family and friends were alive, and we were unharmed. With so much devastation around me, I wanted to help those less fortunate. But I felt useless, facing the problems of reaching those who were most in need of support, and realising my own lack of useful skills. I wished that I could rebuild every house and feed every victim – but all I could do was to raise some money for the relief efforts. It felt good to do something, but it seemed like a drop in a vast ocean.

I may have left Nepal, but the earthquake has not left me. A few days ago, the street outside our house was getting a new layer of asphalt. The machines were huge, and as they passed outside, the whole house shook. In my emotional state, that was an earthquake to me. When my friend accidentally kicked the leg of the table, making it shake, that was an earthquake. And when we experienced turbulence on my flight back to Sweden that was an earthquake to me. I also interpret things that I see as being earthquake related. Things that have fallen over, things that have broken, evoke memories of the piles of rubble on the streets of Kathmandu. If I feel like that here, in Sweden, I can’t imagine what it’s like back in Nepal where the earth still hasn’t stopped shaking.”

How did I feel 11.56, 25.04.15 in Kathmandu?

I was just in my office at the 3rd floor of a building, which is un-proportionately taller in small area of its foundation. Though it was day off, I reached office at 11 am to finish some pending. All of sudden, table started shaking; I thought it is printer, which was running and is attached to my computer on the table. So, unfortunately I had already missed the alarming shake that I could use to escape out. Then the main shock started, I thought to hide myself under the table but immediately heavy files, books and other things from the cabinet started falling down hitting my table, good that I didn’t use table as my safety. I ran down but it was also not safe to proceed down when the big quake is on with its full speed, I couldn’t step in properly as stairs also moving, so I fall down but anyhow I could manage to come down on the ground, where I could still see houses around, street light polls and trees swinging.

First, I wanted to call my family but left my cell phone in office, there were many aftershocks in almost every 5 minutes, and frankly, I had no courage to go up again to get my phone. Family at home were worried, they were calling me with no answers. After 15 minute, I requested someone in the crowd to use his phone but unfortunately it was prepaid phone out of service for nearly half an hour. Finally I manage to talk to my wife and thank god everyone at home is safe. The news immediately spread to national and international, many people started calling but with no answer, I can understand, that was panicking situation to my well-wishers. May be after an hour, I could manage to go up get my phone. The moment I entered saw the mess in my office and thank god I decided running down rather than hiding under the table.

But now the problem is I can’t see my phone on the table, neither my note book and bag, people from ground outside were telling me to come down fast as the tremors were still on but I can not get things in this dismantled office, everything moved, I saw completely sweating. I don’t know how come I got strength to stay until I find my basics to bring down, switched off the power supply, lock my room and office properly and come down. Then I saw 65 missed calls, 32 sms from relatives, friends, colleagues locally and abroad, before I could reply them, my phone was keep on ringing with new caller to know about me, my family and friends. Their single sentence of saying “Stay strong, you are on our thoughts” has really strengthened me in this difficult situation.

- Rajendra Kumar Acharya- Director UNI Apro, Trade Union Development Activities

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short run period, deposits in banks will be increased significantly, but demand for investible funds is less, which may result into lower interest rate, but no significant impact on rate of investment.

Adverse effects on tourism industry are already witnessed by heavy reduction of tourist flow in the country. Therefore, it needs to be addressed by the concerned government agencies and stakeholders of tourism industry.

Not only in hotels and allied parts of tourism industry, but also in manufacturing and other industrial activities, slackness has paved ways for Layoffs and pay offs in labour market. Adequate government policies and will power of the investors & employers should be matched to address the issue.

In construction and various other sectors of informal economy, the immediate effect is the loss of employment and the livelihood. The result is the outflow of working people from Kathmandu valley to their villages in Terai.

Increase in imports creating more adversity in balance of trade is the outcome of the crisis. Of the total volume of international trade 11 % was the share of exports and 89 % of the imports, now the situation has further deteriorated and export is sharing less than 9 % of the total volume of foreign trade. The impact is the increase in deficits in the balance of trade, which naturally should be compensated through other sources in the very short run period at present.

Inevitability of drastic changes in construction of houses n other structures; heavy attitudinal change of the entire society concerning construction works High degree of awareness on earthquake n natural disasters and sensitivity boost up

Targets in economic indicators have to be reviewed and naturally it will have greater impacts on short run as well as long run objectives, policies, programmes and periodic plans of the country. The long run target of to shift the country from the present status of LDC to Developing country in 2022 needs to be changed.

Resource mobilization through diverse and all possible sources has become the priority of the nation in order to finance relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Thus annual programmes, policies and Budget must have a new paradigm shift. The paradigm shift will also be necessary in periodic plans which are in the jurisdiction of National Planning Commission of the Government.
In the short run, slackness in overall business both trade and industry has resulted into declined tax and non tax revenues including customs as economic activities have come to a setback. Agriculture, the major sector of Nepali economy contributing GDP at nearly 32% has been estimated to have a loss equivalent to NRs. 10 billions. The ultimate outcome of the quake added with the attacks of landslides and potential floods may be much reduced volume of agri-products in next fiscal year creating more pressure on subsistence livelihood of the people.

Now the time has come to mobilize surplus labour and human resource effectively in optimum combination with technology and capital. Policy makers, bureaucracy and politicians/parties should be pressurized to dig way-outs in a frame of class vision and not in the artificial division of caste/ethnicity/region based approach dominated by vested interests of upper middle class. Only a class-based vision can lead towards a real unity required for victory against this national crisis and for journey towards nation building & prosperity. Class First and then Gender-Caste/Ethnicity-regional Balance, as complementary social agenda is the need of contemporary time zone. Hence rehabilitation, resettlement and reconstruction should now become the components of long-run growth strategy where special space and role should be ensured to labour and human resource.

Cover Story by: Umesh Upadhyaya

Earthquake Time-Line in Nepal: From 13th Century to the present days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Information available</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The 13th century in 1253</td>
<td>Palaces, temples and dwellings badly damaged casualty of 1/3 population. Death of King Abhaya Malla 6 days later due to injuries, aftershocks continued for 3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1259</td>
<td>Heavy loss of temples and houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June -September, 1408</td>
<td>Continued up to August/September. Magnitude unknown, significant damage. The temple of Rato Machindranath completely destroyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January-June, 1681</td>
<td>During the reign of King Sri NiwasMalla. Heavy loss of lives and collapse of buildings and temples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June-July, 1767</td>
<td>Twenty-one shocks and aftershocks in a span of twenty-four hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1808 and 1823</td>
<td>Violent one with heavy damage to Bhaktapur and Kathmandu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 23, 1833</td>
<td>7.0 R S in magnitude with epicentre at north of Kathmandu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 15, 1934</td>
<td>Great Quake of 8.0 R S magnitude with epicentre in Bihar-Nepal border. Aftershocks for more than 4 months. Nearly 8519 people killed, 4,500 in Kathmandu Valley. Tremors felt as far away as Mumbai.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Far western Nepal mainly three districts - Baitadi, Bajura and Bajhang have suffered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 21, 1988 –</td>
<td>The ‘Udaypur’ Earthquake Near Nepal-India border, 6.9 on the Richter Scale, casualty of 700+ and collapse of houses 50,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2013</td>
<td>6.0 Richter Scale in Magnitude, Eastern Nepal affected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 25, 26 &amp; May 12 2015</td>
<td>A strong earthquake of 7.9 in magnitude. Epicentre at Barpak, followed by several powerful aftershocks with 6.7 and 6.8 magnitude. More than 230 aftershocks, ongoing. Casualties and damages still under calculation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: www.ekantipur.com & Haakahaaki, Monthly, Quake special issue – May 2015)
The monitor near the bed is ticking. A lady with shaved head is lying on the bed. Monitor is displaying her vital status like blood pressure and heartbeat. A pipe is inserted in her nose; another one on her throat through a hole made on the throat. She tries to speak if there is somebody standing before her but voice fails her. Her lip movement is her only way to communicate.

Krishna Kumari is in ICU of Israeli Defence Force’s field hospital placed in the Chhauni Army barrack. She was rescued from rubble of Jana-sewa Lodge in Gongabu of Kathmandu, 128 hours (April 30) after the massive earthquake of April 25, 2015.

At the time of rescue the 24 years old Krishna Kumari was able to mumble words but she was seriously injured. She was taken out of ventilator only on Tuesday, May 5.

A mother of two children, she is among lucky survivors who were rescued alive from the rubble. Doctors say she is recovering and out of danger.

As she was buried for long time and could not stretch her muscles, her muscles have weakened- a condition, which is called severe myopathy in medical term. Her head to is affected and some portion of it had to be removed. Israeli doctors have decided to cover that portion with help of plastic surgery. Her brain is not affected though.

Krishna Kumari had called her uncle, Durga Bahadur on April 24, Friday to tell him that she is coming to Bardiya, her home, on the next day. On April 25 at 11:56 a huge earthquake of magnitude 7.6 Richter scale shook Kathmandu and other 11 districts. Thousands lost their lives. Gongabu area was badly affected where many lost their houses. Some of the big buildings came down. And many were buried in that rubble including Krishna Kumari.

According to her uncle he tried to call her many times but could not get through. Mobile did ring a few times but she did not answer.

He said he was not worried on the first day when she did not answer or call back; he thought since she must be in chaos it would be difficult. He had hoped that she would call him by evening but she did not. He heard there was no electricity supply in the whole of Kathmandu. He consoled himself saying this could be the reason why his niece’s phone was switched off. That night he could not sleep. He tried calling her the next day- the phone would always say, “cannot reach the desired number”

On Tuesday morning Krishna Kumari’s aunt Heera Hamal called him from Kathmandu and gave him the bad news, “Krishna was victim of earthquake; the lodge she used to work for is destroyed and buried. You have to come to here.”
He almost lost his senses. He came to Kathmandu immediately. By then everyone in the family had got the news. Even her two children began to comprehend the situation.

He reached Kathmandu on Wednesday morning. He did not know where to go in Gongabu. The only address he got was “under the sky bridge”. He asked people and reached the lodge where his niece used to work. The crowd had gathered around. There were Nepal police rescue team and armed police force. Lodge owner said, “lot of people are buried including my brother. There is no chance of survival. We have to at least take out corpses— I have no hope.”

On Thursday morning at around 11 am police rescue team dug out one corpse. Durga Bahadur was shocked. He was there the whole time with Heera Hamal and Krishna Kumari’s brother in law.

At around 5 PM on the same day DSP of Nepal Police and part of recue team, Abhusan Timisina heard a voice screaming from under the rubble. Then Israeli, French and Norwegian team came to assist the police force.

“A team of foreigner experts came along with a dog. The dog whined after sniffing around the place where my niece was buried. Apparently it gave indication of her being alive under rubble”, he said.

The experts began the search using hi tech machinery. Durga Bahadur started praying to gods to make his niece that one lucky alive.

While digging out, first he saw her hair and then face. Then he recognized his niece. The rescue team kept digging. Krishna Kumari was under a corpse- a co-worker in the lodge, Narayan Prasad Timilsina.

“What do I do? I love her like my own daughter. After her mother passed away I helped to raise her. She started living with us after her dad married again; her mother and my wife were sisters.”

According to Durga Bahadur, Krishna Kumari is married with two children but her husband has left her and married someone else. So, she had come to Kathmandu to earn living and was working in the lodge as cook. She was working in Kathmandu leaving her two children in Bardiya with him.

Her daughter, Anjali, is 11 years old and her son, Jivan, is 7 years old. They both are studying in a private school in Bardiya. Anjali studies in class 7 and Jivan studies in 1. “The little one is very clever even if he is just 7, he understood that his mother was buried when he heard me talking over phone. He stopped eating after that”, he said.

He was devastated after his grandson stopped eating. So, he asked a stranger woman in Gongabu to talk to his grandson as Krishna Kumari. She told Jivan on phone that she was fine and will meet him after recovering. Only then he started eating again. Now Durga Bahadur’s only worry is Krishna Kumari’s health. “We could feed her high protein food after they remove all those pipes from her body. Israelis have done a lot for my child. They gave her new life, bringing her back from rubble. They said they will take her to Israel for further treatment is necessary and not to worry”, he said.

Israeli doctor involved in her treatment informed that by Thursday evening or Friday morning pipes will be removed from her body. After that she will start recovering.

“She will take few weeks to recover completely. Her brain is not affected so she is out of danger”, said Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Abhi Ijahak, the Coordinator of Israeli Defence Force.

(Krishna Kumari originally from Bardiya is a member of GEFONT affiliate- Federation of Agriculture and Plantation Workers’ Union Nepal (FAPWUN). She took membership on March 2012 from Magara Gadi Village Development Committee (VDC) –ward 6. She lived with her uncle and two children in Bardiya. About two months back she had come to Kathmandu to earn living. Her uncle, Durga Bahadur is Vice President of same union, FAPWUN Bardiya district committee.

GEFONT leaders visited her in hospital on May 26 and GEFONT Deputy Secretary General, Janak Chaudhary handed over amount of Nr 15000 to Durga Bahadur as relief fund on behalf of GEFONT. Government of Nepal has taken the responsibility of her treatment.

(English interpretation of Sworup Acharya’s report Published in Kantipur on May 8, 2015)
I do hope that the situation is a little more stable for you though I know the grief and sadness will take a long time to ease. My condolences on another tragic quake. You have my support as always. Huge hugs in this awful time.

Sharan Burrow; General Secretary- International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

So many lives lost and so much to be done. We would like to express our deepest solidarity and our sadness to see brothers and sisters in such situation.

João Antonio Felício; President- ITUC

In this difficult time let me send condolences and a solidarity message from me and the Trade Unions in Sweden.

I assure you that LO also will provide assistance. I believe that assistance from LO will be most effective and beneficial for Nepal when it is directed towards strengthening Trade Union organizational capacity in the many faceted task of rebuilding Nepal, physical constructions as well as society rebuilding. LO would propose that ITUC together with the Nepal affiliates would take the lead in coordinating such support. We are immediately ready offering our support through such a network as soon as it is established.

Karl-Petter Thorwaldsson; President- LO - Sweden and Deputy President- ITUC

I just saw the news about the terrible earthquake in Nepal; I hope you and your family and friends are ok! Really shocking news, so many people killed and injured! Wish you all possible strength!

Jaap Wienen, Deputy General Secretary-ITUC

We are shocked to hear news about the earthquake. Please let us know whatever we can of help to you. Our office will be in touch with your offices.

Noriyuki Suzuki; General Secretary- ITUC AP

Please accept our deep condolences for the tragic loss of life and devastation caused by the terrible Nepal earthquake last Saturday. All of us at TUAC are shocked and our hearts go out to the victims and their families. We will cooperate with the ITUC to give support in any way that we can to both the immediate humanitarian efforts and in the reconstruction process.

John Evans; General Secretary-TUAC, OECD

On behalf of the twelve and a half million members of American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organization (AFL-CIO), I would like to express our deepest condolences and sympathy to all those affected by the earthquake… We stand strongly with all the working families of Nepal who are wrestling with the devastation of this catastrophic event. We will continue to monitor the progress and will work with the global labour movement to ensure that working families impacted by this tragedy receive the support needed to rebuild their communities.

Richard L. Trumka; President-AFL-CIO, USA

Both of the organizations (ACV and WSM) decided that we wanted to do more than only encouraging you in this difficult situation. We started a small solidarity campaign towards the members, workers and their families, linked to our organizations in Belgium (ACV-CSC, WSM, MOC, B.net, Mutualiteisect)

Marc Leemans; President- ACV and André Kiekens; General Secretary- WSM

We are shocked and deeply saddened. We want to express our deepest solidarity and friendship. Our thoughts are with you. Know that ACV BIE will stand by you in these darkest hours and afterwards. We wish you strength!

Stefaan Vanthourenhout; President, ACV-CSC BIE

I hope you are safe after the earthquake yesterday. Let me send you first our full support in greetings...

Dr. Bianca Kühl, DGB

It was with huge sadness and great concern that we learnt of the tragic events resulting from the severe earthquake that hit your country this weekend. Please convey our deepest condolences and our solidarity to any of your members who have lost lives or lost family members and our hopes for positive news of any members or their family members that currently remain missing.

Our thoughts are with you all and on behalf of the entire IUF I am sending you our solidarity and our support as you try to rebuild following these terribly difficult and traumatic times.

Ron Oswald, General Secretary, IUF

The World Federation of Trade Unions expresses its deep sorrow and complete class solidarity with the working class and the people of Nepal for the national calamity caused by the catastrophic earthquake of a 7.8 magnitude that left thousands of people dead and caused great disasters. Our thoughts go to the families of the victims. We express our moral support for the workers and the trade union movement of Nepal.

WFTU Secretariat

Please accept the solidarity message from the ACFTU on the sad and hard time after the major earthquake. We are keeping a close watch of the developments of the relief efforts in Kathmandu.

Yao Li, ACFTU

On behalf of CGT, its leaders, activists and members, please transmit our support and all our solidarity to the Nepalese workers and populations confronted with a very difficult time. The CGT will quickly organise material and financial support in the framework of our cooperation.

Philippe Martinez; General Secretary- CGT (France)

On behalf of the 800,000 members of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), I would like to extend our warmest solidarity with the all GEFONT members who affected by the devastating earthquake and our strong wish for a quick recovery and reconstruction of the society. In support of all the effort for urgent relief and a mid and long term reconstruction being done by the GEFONT, we are running a fundraising campaign among our members. Please remember we always stand with you.

Han, Sang Gyun; President, KCTU

CUT-Brasil expresses its unrestricted solidarity with the people of Nepal. We express our condolences to comrades of the Nepalese unions and share the pain of loss.
On behalf of the 6 million members of the TUC’s affiliated unions, we have been horrified to see the reports of the earthquake in Nepal, and we send our condolences to members affected by the disaster. In particular, we hope that your colleague Gunaram Acharya is rescued soon. We also send our solidarity to your union and all of your members in the difficult circumstances that you face. If there is anything that the TUC can do to assist, in particular in pressing the UK Department for International Development to provide material assistance, do let us know.

**Owen Tudor; TUC, UK**

What an overwhelming tragedy to strike the people of Nepal. We will all want to help in anyway we can. It is hard to comprehend the scale of loss and devastation. Thinking of you all,

**Carol Beaumont, NZ CTU**

We would like humbly ask you to convey our deepest condolences to your members who suffered in this earthquake, and wish a full and quick recovery. Please rest assured RENGO will be contributing to your recovery work through the leadership of the ITUC-AP.

**Nobuaki Koga; President, JTUC-RENGO**

This is awful, shocking news. Hoping desperately that you and yours are ok. With love and best wishes

**Grant Belchamber; International Officer, ACTU**

Please accept our solidarity and condolences for all those who have perished in the horrific earthquake in Nepal. I am afraid that many members of GEFONT or family members will have perished. I have only seen television pictures today and they show utter devastation. Please extend our solidarity to all in GEFONT at this time. I am sure that you will let us know in due course of any practical assistance that we can make.

**Robert Reid; General Secretary- FIRST Union**

We would like to express our solidarity and condolences in this difficult moment, please accept our condolences. Let us know how we can assist!

**Kristina Hensch; Director- LO-TCO Secretariat**

We regret this tragedy and find ourselves beside you in this sorrowful calamity. Our sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims, as well as to the people and workers of Nepal, we also wish the injured people rapid recovery. We assure you here of our human solidarity.

**Salman Almahfood; General Secretary-GFBTU, Bahrain**

On behalf of the workers of Singapore, I send our deepest sympathy and condolences to the families directly affected by this tragedy, and to the people of Nepal.

**Diana Chia, President, NTUC- Singapore**

On behalf of one million members of the Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU), I extend my deepest condolences to your union members and the victims in the aftermath of the recent devastating earthquakes. I have no doubt that you will soon make a strong and speedy recovery with your great leadership and courage. FKTU’s thoughts are always with you and all the workers in Nepal during this difficult time.

**Dong-Man Kim; President- FKTU**

...We sincerely hope that the devastating situation will soon improve...

**Lone Ilum Christiansen; LO/FTF Council (Denmark)**

On behalf of the Street Vendors across the world through our affiliate NEST-NEPAL we extend our most sincere condolences to the families of the victims and our solidarity to all those affected, in the name of STREETNET INTERNATIONAL… We raise our claim –no doubt a fair one- that public policies should be deepened in terms of preserving and taking care of the environment, which is equal to taking care of “the house” we live in. Regardless of nationalities and of where we are, today street workers are Nepali.

**Oscar Roberto Silva; President- StreetNet International (South Africa)**

We have been deeply touch to heard about the terrible earthquakes in Nepal. Thereby on behalf of FNCSBA CGT we would like to express our entire solidarity with all our GEFONT and CUPPEC comrades and their families/friends. All our condolences to all who lost life of their loved ones or lost house. We really hope for your safety and soon recover

**Serge PLECHOT; General Secretary FNCSBA CGT**

We are saddened by the consequences this natural disaster will have for Nepal’s people and consequently your organization. We know that you have a huge task ahead of you to rebuild the areas that have been hit. But we also know that the proud Nepalese have the strength to cope with a calamity.

**Gerd Kristiansen; President- LO Norway**

On behalf of president, MTUC General Council members, staff and all our affiliates are deeply saddened by this unexpected tragedy on earthquake. We would like to convey our condolence message to the victims and our heartfelt sympathies for the respective families at this difficult moment.

**Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC), Malaysia**

- Abdul Mazid, Secretary General, BAFLF
- Akio Gono; OA ZENKSEN (Japan)
- Amita Chahi
- Andrews Tagoe, Sregiita Global March
- Apolinario Tolentino BWI AP
- AVI Nissenkorn; Chairman- Histadrut and
- Avital Shapiro-Shahinow; Histadrut (Israel)
- Bruno Deceukelier, Bismo Sanyato, WSM
- Chidi King, Director Equality Dept ITUC
- Dev Nicolas- Australia
- Dir. Boho, LD-Norway
- Dr. Hidayat Greenfield- General Secretary (IUF)
- Emily Long
- Evelin, Ariel, Kuba, Jesus, Martha, Clelia, Dana, Daniela, The staff in the Programme for Workers’ Activities in Turin
- Felix Anthony, FTUC
- Fish IP ADW
- Flor Francisco, LD-Norway
- Gautam Modi-65 NTU, India
- H.Mahadeva; Deputy General Secretary, WFTU APR
- Jamal Kadi; President- GFTU Syria
- Jef Van Hecken
- Jeffrey Vogt; Legal Unit-ITUC
- Josua Mata, SENTRO
- Karim Radhi-GFBTU
- Kathleen Ao ITUC
- Kutaruddin Ahmed, General Secretary, BWF
- Lee, HICTU
- Mamadou Diallo-ITUC
- Maria Ribe, Korea
- Marina Mesure, , FNSCBA- CGT
- McCabe Karen, WESO
- Hungyean Bhattachari-ILO/ACTRAV
- Haseer Mansoor NTUF Pakistan
- Naxim Sultan, President, NWFHA Bangladesh
- Nasvi, Nidan & Street Inter Aionalional
- National Union of Afghanistan Workers and Employees
- NGOI, Bangladesh
- Pong-Sul Ahn- CTA, ILO Bangkok
- Rafeal Mapalo-TUCP
- Rajiv Dimri, Secretary General AICCTU
- Raquel Gonzalez, ITUC
- Raymond Torres Director, Research Department of ILO
- Reksan Shohan, KSBSI
- Rita Olivia Tambunan, Programme Director
- Ruu Mikyong, KCTU
- Sam Huggard, Nactu
- Sapana Joshi- Hamenet Satuh Asia
- Sean Sweany; TUED
- Seppe Koppinen; SASK, Finland
- ShakerSaud; General Secretary- PGFTU
- Shirin Akhter and Sunzida, Karmojibi Nari, Bangladesh
- Silvana Capucio
- Stijn Sintubin; ACV
- Sudarsan Ray; IndustriALL- SRO (India)
- Usurarin Kaewapradap (Rin), SERC, Thailand
- Yong-dae Lee; President-KCFTU
“On May Day, we will be mourning”

Less than two days after the powerful earthquake and subsequent aftershocks that hit Nepal, leaving at least 3,700 people dead and thousands more injured, *Equal Times* spoke with Bishnu Rimal, President of the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT).

**How is the situation on the ground in Nepal?**

The capital Kathmandu is devastated. Many buildings, temples and World Heritage sites have collapsed. We are still pulling people out of the rubble.

Many neighbourhoods have no more electricity. There is a lack of food. Thousands of people are living in the streets and on public places – in tents or with just a few blankets.

We are very worried about the situation in the villages of Nepal. Some of them are hard to reach and we fear that the death toll could be much higher, especially because most of the population in these remote areas is made of elderly people, women and children.

It is a consequence of the lack of jobs here and the use of Nepali workforce for construction projects abroad, especially in the Middle East.*

[*Editor’s note: In a letter to the governments of Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has called for an emergency suspension of the kafala sponsorship system to allow Nepalese migrant workers to return home. Under this system, hundreds of thousands of Nepalese migrant workers in the Gulf can only leave the country if their employer grants them authorisation.*]

**What are the most urgent issues to tackle at the moment?**

Rescue workers are working around the clock and foreign help is starting to arrive. We need to continue searching for survivors and helping the ones staying outside by providing food, medication and any other kind of relief.

Fortunately, the earthquake hit on a Saturday, which was a public holiday. If it had happened during the week, a lot more people would have died in the office buildings and workplaces that were damaged.

**What is the labour movement of Nepal doing to help?**

We are asking all our affiliates to encourage their members to donate blood and to help the people affected by any way they can. We need to mobilise as many volunteers as possible.

We have also decided not to celebrate May Day this year. Instead we will mourn and pray together for those who died and those who are injured.

Finally, we are pushing the government to increase the search and rescue efforts and to provide help to the people who have lost everything.

**What can the international labour movement provide?**

We need solidarity. At the moment it is still too early to determine exactly how. We are still collecting information before asking for international help.

But one thing is for sure: a lot of reconstruction efforts will be necessary. We will need help and expertise to rebuild the infrastructures and buildings that have collapsed.

But we have to be careful not to repeat the scenario of Haiti, where aid was not properly allocated and foreign companies took advantage of the disaster to push their own interests.

To prevent this, we will need to keep pressure on the government both locally and on the international stage.

We are hopeful. We believe we can work together with the authorities to turn this tragedy into an opportunity by creating jobs, social benefits and reducing inequality in Nepal.

*(Courtesy: #equal times, ITUC website at April 2015)*
Addressing to the media persons during media-debriefing programme organised in capital on May 14, President Bishnu Rimal underlined GEFONT post-disaster programme and declared the end of its first phase relief operations.

“GEFONT had immediately linked itself with people’s pain after devastating quake which hit Nepal terribly in April 25, with a strategy prioritising works as rescue, relief, recovery, rehab and reconstruction.”

GEFONT president explained the 4-phased strategy. According to him, in Phase -I, work related to solid waste management, cleaning and providing health and hygiene service in the camps where victims were camped. In Phase- II, GEFONT directed to its member to assist experts and security personals who were in rescue operation.

“We directed our members to distribute emergency relief materials to the needy persons in Phase-III” said Cde Rimal.

Now GEFONT is entering into Phase- IV. In this phase, GEFONT will assist people to make their transitional shelters. GEFONT is expecting mobilisation of over 500 volunteers in 17 dangerously effected districts by the devastating quake.

“We expect to provide at lease 2 bundle corrugated roofing sheets each family to save them form the coming monsoon. Following this a lobbying work will be necessary for urgently construct permanent house,” GEFONT president explained.

With this strategy, GEFONT mobilised its members with various activities to rescue, relief distribution and post disaster management; the Press-note reads.
Hooliganism even in grief and sorrow

Ram Bahadur Shrestha, Treasurer, UNITRAV

“It is hard to believe that hooliganism occurs even in humanitarian works. I could not imagine all relief materials for victims would be looted and relief workers would be attacked physically. Unfortunately it happened to me”, said Ram Bahadur Shrestha, the treasurer of Union of Trekking - Travel - Rafting and Airline Workers of Nepal (UNITRAV) who was badly beaten by local hooligans of Kshetrapa, Dolkha. Ram Bahadur along with some other friends was on his way to Kshetrapa village with relief materials, which was collected in Kathmandu with the help of union activists and well-wishers. Kshetrapa was severely affected by the quake. None of the houses was fit to live in and school also has several cracks.

“It was the night of 3 May”; Com. Ram Bahadur elaborates the incident, “there were other three vehicles with emergency relief materials for victims of different places besides our truck. Once, we got clearance and green signal from Charikot police we moved forward. After a brief nap, we continued moving ahead. In the Jungle nearby Namdu town around 2 am dark morning, an ambulance was on the middle of the way blocking the road traffic. Even before the vehicle fully stop, a group of people around 25 to 30 climbed up in the truck and started to download relief materials. We requested them not to do that as the relief materials was intended for victims of another village, but they didn’t listen us. We were only 5 people, however, we tried to resist them. They were with iron rods, knife and sticks. Because of my continued resistance, I became the main target and many people just poured into me. They punched and kicked me more than 200 times and later they locked us inside the ambulance and looted all our relief materials. We begged them to free us but they did not listen. We were forced to go Kshetrapa not return back to Kathmandu. Later, some other villagers helped us to find a jeep to go to Charikot from Maina Pokhari and next morning we were rescued by helicopter from Charikot.”

“I have already filed a case in a police station but none of the culprits is arrested. Instead the main person who led the group is threatening of another attack against my police case. Kshetrapa is also my birthplace and I am also a chairperson of the board of a community school in Kshetrapa. Such a threat is hindering me to go back my home place even to plan for school operation. My house is grounded but I afraid to go alone because of the security reason. It would be much easier for me if police arrest those culprits and finds amicable solution between two parties.”

“In April 28 we launched a drive to clean the quake victim camps of Kathmandu and Lalitpur. The garbage were collected, burnt and buried. Some 300 GEFONT volunteers were mobilised for this,” GEFONT Secretary General Bishnu Lamsal said presenting the press-note.

In association with affiliates of CoNEP in health sector, GEFONT affiliates of Health sectors council organised Health camp at 6 places in Kathmandu valley. Some 3,000 victims got service from these health camps. Blood donation camp was one of the regular services during the month May in GEFONT calendar.

Under the banner of joint platform of Nepali trade unions- JTUCC (Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre) a memorial service was organised in the evening of May 1st. Thousands of candles were lit to pay tribute to deceased people, speedy recovery of injured persons, and condolences to the bereaved family and solidarity to the entire victims. It was one of the first and special programme dedicated to general public after the shock.

GEFONT president, who is the president of JTUCC as well, urged unions to link themselves with the pain of people. He asked all JTUCC affiliated confederations to mobilise their members massively based on the expertise and the practicability. He further asked to help rescue experts and general public in their best capacity.

Following this urge, GEFONT affiliates rushed to the field. CUPPEC and NEST helped various needy people to evacuate food items, property and other materials from the collapsed buildings. CUPPEC launched “20-motorbike” programme, where some 40 volunteers in 20 bikes in a team were involved in the rescue work. CUPPEC even cooperated with Armed Police Force to evacuate materials from damaged Building of ruling coalition party- the CPN (UML). Since May 1st GEFONT began a massive operation of emergency relief materials distribution. Since May 1 to 12, over 180 tonnes rice excluding lentils and salt were distributed to 10 thousands families roughly serving 50,000 persons. This work was mainly concentrated on most effected districts Dhading, Nuwakot, Rasuwa, Kathmandu Valley, Kavre and Sindupalchowk.

The package was standardised as for 5-member family, 30 kg rice-3 kg lentil- and 1 kg salt.

The solidarity work got a start by a donation collected personally through a Swedish national, Stina Mortensen. The campaign further got moral and/or financial solidarity by ITUC, ITUC-AP, WSM (Belgium), APHEDA (Australia), LO-Norway, including various international trade union bodies and individual well-wisher.

In facilitation of NTUF (National Trade Union Federation), Pakistan; Edhi Foundation joined GEFONT with big
Karthali: Karthali is a village in Sindhupalchok District which is badly affected by the earthquake. Even though the village is connected to Arniko Highway by gravelled road, relief materials had not been reached prior GEFONT’s support apart from some noodles and biscuits. Around 1800 families including, two other adjoining villages with majority of women and old people were assembled to have relief materials.

(Excerpt from conversation with Com. Nara Nath Luintel, prez-CUPPEC)

Bekhsimle: A tiny village located in between fairly well being two villages of Kavre district was forgotten for relief distribution after quake. Old age people, women and children are only in village as entire working age population is migrated to Kathmandu. The devastating earthquake wiped out all houses pushing villagers into open air giving no chance to take out their belongings and food.

Ferrying relief materials without any disturbances on the way to Bekhsimle is the main challenge. Different groups on the way mainly from those well-being villages bother relief volunteers and lootings are mostly rife in the highways of Kavre district. With the help of security personal, relief materials were ferried to Bekhsimle in late evening. Villagers were very cooperative and helped themselves to destitute relief materials equally. Handing over relief materials to the needy population by crossing troublesome areas is something special in Bekhsimle relief distribution.

(Excerpt from conversation with Com. Balram Khatri, member GEFONT Veteran Network)

Likhu: Likhu is a remote village located in eastern part of Nuwakot with no access of road. Villagers of Likhu walk 4 hours to reach mountain motor-road. The road that we travelled with relief materials was very scary and it was even more dangerous because of ongoing landslides, rocks and huge boulders at the middle of the road. Because of such troublesome road, we reached the last point of motor road some hours late than expected time; however 300 families from Likhu village were patiently waiting for relief materials. GEFONT support was the first relief that reached to them. They were the genuine needy victims who walked all the way down to collect the food. It was already late afternoon when we finished distribution. I was just thinking how those old age villagers walk back 4 hours with that load in dark.

(Excerpt from conversation with Com. Bhairab Pathak, Veep-FAPUN)

Bhulbhukatirpakha: Bhulbhukatirpakha is about one and half hour from Sankhu market. Of 270 houses only 2 were standing rest were all destroyed; all the people there were now forced to live under the sky. The beautiful village that I had seen a few months ago was now just pile of rubbles. I narrated the deploring condition of village and our people. GEFONT office informed me to distribute the emergency relief materials containing – 30 Kg of rice, 3 Kg lentils and salt per family as a part of on-going campaign. It was like blessing without even asking. I reached my village with the loaded truck. We distributed the food to 260 families of the village, calling out their names from list and handing them the food supplies. They were all teary when they received the food supplies. We asked them what kind of help they further require and they said “The food can help us get through the present crisis.”

(Excerpt from conversation with Cde Gyanu K.C., Secretary, HUN)

Sindhukot: This village has 700 households; 85% of the houses are destroyed by earthquake. The village was spread to the slopes and hilltops, which are now destroyed. Most of the houses located near Kathmandu – Melamchi road are
completely destroyed and unable to reside. We had gone to the village on May 3 to collect information about the status of the village. The villagers were clearing the rubbles, taking out food from ruins and building temporary shelters. At the end of the village when asked about the situation Dhane Sarki said, “We do not know what to do. The house I built by saving the wages is destroyed completely, we are staying in the slopes – our farmlands. We do not have food; all our beddings are buried under rubble. Our children are scared and troubled; some were saying that relief team will come to village today, nobody has come till now.” I was on May 9 with relief supplies – where villagers were awaiting our arrival…

(Excerpt from conversation with Cde Bidur Karki, Vice prez, GEFONT)

Jhangajhiti village is in one-hour walking distance from Thankot. This village adjacent to Dhading is resided only by ethnic Tamang. 90% of the houses were destroyed by the quake of April 25. All villagers are staying in the tent. The villagers survived on leftover foods and took shelter under umbrella for few days after the quake. The Government had provided few kg of rice for sometime and few organisations distributed noodles, beaten rice and tents. GEFONT distributed food materials to 154 families of the villages on May 7. Each family was given 30 kg of rice along with lentils and salt. This has been a huge relief for the villagers and they thanked GEFONT.

(Excerpt from conversation with Cde Belinaya Ghale, Secretary, GEFONT CWC)

Bhorle, Rasuwa: We went to Rasuwa with the relief materials from GEFONT. Our truck left the highway after Betrawati and started towards gravel road. After 20 – 25 minutes we reached Bhorle VDC. Not only houses the sheds too were destroyed in this village. School too was destroyed. People were staying in fields, farmland, cornfields and so on. They had built temporary shelter from bamboo sticks and plastic. We distributed relief material to 1200 families, all these places we were first to reach in need families, where we could able to provide emergency relief almost 3,700 families. Their satisfied face was enough to me to forget every difficulties during operation.

(Excerpt from conversation with Cde Hari Datt Joshi, Vice-prez, GEFONT)

Jhangajhiti

Bhattedanda is a VDC of Lalitpur district. After the earthquake of April 25 Mountain TV had conducted field survey of the village. I met the journalist that day, he informed that all the houses were destroyed and all essentials like food were buried under house. Therefore the village needed food supply. A day after that UNITRAV visited the village with 103 sacks of rice provided by Travels Agency Highland Excursion Pvt. Ltd. The village is pile of ruins as all the houses and sheds were destroyed by the quake. None of the organisations or Government representatives had reached the village till then. The people were staying in fields and farmlands taking shelter under plastic. Few had tents. It was not possible for them to dig out food from their ruined houses. Their animals were not fed. We distributed each family 30 kg of rice, lentils and salt.

While distributing food we asked them about their problems. They said “we are not able to take our essentials from the rubble, you have provided us a huge relief. Now we need roofing sheets to protect our crops and food.”

(Excerpt from conversation with Cde Suman Parajuli, General Secretary, UNITRAV)

Kerabari: On May 12 we went to Kerabari village of VDC of Sindhupalchok district to distribute GEFONT Relief materials. That day another high magnitude earthquake hit and we could not carry out the distribution. Kerabari village is two hours far from Chautara (headquarter of Sindhupalchok district). The quake of April 25 had induced huge flood in the area; three people were injured and 10 people lost their lives in flood. There is no sign of house because of flood. All the food, clothes and beddings are buried. For three days after the quake the residents of the village were forced live under the open sky. The flood had blocked the road leading up to village and they were waiting for relief and rescue team to come. When I heard this news I informed our President Bishnu Rimal. President Rimal tried to arrange for the rescue operation. After nine days the injured people were rescued. A pregnant lady was brought to Kathmandu in Helicopter.

While we were distributing relief materials a resident of the village Ram Bahadur Khatri said crying- “This quake took our shelter and our family. We cannot even cremate and mourn for our dead relatives – we neither have shelter nor food, we do not know where we will rehabilitate. …”

(Excerpt from conversation with Cde Khadga Giri, GEFONT)
promise. With direct involvement of three volunteers of Edhi Foundation, a plan was made to provide relief materials for those victims who were out of access, or the victims in remote places, extremely lacking emergency food items.

“We are proud to be a partner with most respect and efficient trade union GEFONT, in the service of victim Nepali people”, said Assistant President Mr. Faisal Edhi of Edhi Foundation Pakistan.

“We are thankful to GEFONT, we could able to share pains of almost 10,000 families in remote Nepal due their skillful and dedicated team.”

Mr. Naseer Mansoor of NTUF, Pakistan was one of the international union leader during the media briefing.

Besides centrally coordinated relief programme, GEFONT regional/local structures and the affiliates mobilised their members to collect & distribute relief materials. GEFONT distributed materials in various district in notice of local authority.

Received information till date suggests, 38 GEFONT member have been killed by devastating quake, whereas 179 members reported seriously injured including its finance secretary Cde Gunaram Acharya, UNITRAV’s leader Surendra Gurung, and Migrant Committee member Bajra Rai. Above 1,000 committee-member lost their house. Information is still in collection how many of our members among 387,418 lost houses, lost property and family members.

GEFONT ends its first phase of operation today and will preparing for next phase. GEFONT president says- “we will definitely link ourselves to rescue/relief for recovery and rehab & reconstruction.”

He further expressed gratitude and paid sincere thanks to all well-wisher, at home and aboard, specially Edhi Foundation-Pakistan, the International Trade Union family including ITUC, ITUC-AP, GUFs, TUSSOs, national trade union centres of various countries including LO-Norway and individuals for their generous support to the people of Nepal.

“We announce here our campaign is continued! Your solidarity is most welcome! Your single penny matters in this period of pain!” GEFONT president said.
Nepali Trade Unions didn’t celebrate May Day 2015, this year; they organised a memorial service in evening of May 1st in memory of those killed by devastating earthquake. President of GEFONT and the Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre (JTUCC) Cde Bishnu Rimal issued a message of tribute, condolence and solidarity during the memorial service of the devastating earthquake victim.

“The fury of nature has not only destroyed weak and old huts of poor but modern buildings of privileged class are also destroyed. The nature did not differentiate class. From Dharahara, known as Eiffel Tower of Nepal to all the heritage and historical monuments since Second Century (Lichhavi and Malla Periods) are destroyed. As told by Nepali media 10 hydropower projects are disturbed. Shocked by the hit and fearing more disaster from President of Nepal to the general public, all are forced to sleep outside their houses under the sky for a week.”

The president underlined human damaged caused by the quake. JTUCC has converted May Day celebration into mourning day paying memorial service to the victim in the May Day evening in Kathmandu.

“As your President, I call upon all the member confederations of the JTUCC to mobilise all their members in the sectors of their expertise based on practicability.”

In memorial service all of the leaders of JTUCC family were attended. President of CoNEP Cde Biswonath Pyakurel had declared beginning of memorial service, whereas President of NTUC Khilanath Dahal and ANTUF president Cde Salikram Jamkattel briefly addressed the mass.

This May Day came with destruction and pain; May this never happen in coming May Days!
There were huge gatherings on the occasion including trade unionists, lawmakers, politicians, media persons and the general public. Some 6,000 candles were lighted in the memory of the dead persons. There was similar memorial service organised throughout the country. Following is the full text of Prez Rimal message of May Day 2015; with tribute, condolence and solidarity!

Comrades,
Members of Constituent Assembly
Leaders of political parties
Sisters and Brothers and media persons!

May Day, the glorious day for us – the working class, this year is surrounded by inconsolable grief. The devastating earthquake that hit Nepal on April 25 has left Nepalis in immeasurable anguish and heartbreak. A usual Saturday turned out to be an unusual and furious attack for destruction. The symbols of sweat, labour, art and skill all were demolished. Everything was destroyed and with them lives and shelters was devastated. That fearful earthquake shook us again and again. The people-symbols of dreams, hopes, dynamism and energy, turned lifeless in matter of seconds. Aftermath there are thousands of injured survivors helplessly facing the pain of losing their loved ones amidst the grave disaster. The whole nation is now in the whirlpool of death, grief, pain and uncertainties.

According to UNDP in Nepal the earthquake has affected 39 districts and 8 million people. Among which 11 districts and 2 million people are the most affected. The epicentre of the devastating earthquake, Barpak village of Gorkha district has now hardly 50 houses standing of total one thousand and four hundred and seventy houses. The captain of Shimrik Air involved in rescue operation informs the whole touristic village – Langtang of Rasuwa district is wiped-out. According to the latest data Sindhupalchok district has highest death toll followed by Kathmandu valley and Nuwakot. As per data provided by Government, up to the morning of May 1 the death toll has reached Six thousand 198 and 13 thousand 568 people are injured. The number is definitely increasing as the new information keeps coming.

The fury of nature has not only destroyed weak and old huts of poor but modern buildings of privileged class are also destroyed. The nature did not differentiate class. From Dharahara, known as Eiffel Tower of Nepal to all the heritage and historical monuments since Second Century (Lichhavi and Malla Periods) are destroyed. As told by Nepali media 10 hydropower projects are disturbed. Shocked by the hit and fearing more disaster from President of Nepal to the general public, all are forced to sleep outside their houses under the sky for a week. But in this disaster, the maximum numbers of victim were from working class; the darkness has deepened in their lives. Thousands of children are now forced to face uncertain future, insecurity and fear.

GEFONT/JTUCC family too, is facing fearsome aftermath of the devastating hit. Many construction sector workers affiliated to CUPPEC (GEFONT) along with others have lost their lives while working in several hydropower projects. Many UNITRAV (GEFONT) comrades lost their lives buried in avalanche of Mt. Everest while climbing. Some transport sector workers lost their lives on road. GEFONT Finance Secretary Gunaram Acharya has suffered severe head injury and had undergone surgery; he is at the ICU in hospital at the moment. GEFONT Migrant Committee member Bajra Rai is heavily injured. We have got news of sad demise of PAN (CONEP) General Secretary Chandra Bahadur Shrestha and his wife. The Confederations affiliated with JTUCC are still getting information about the whereabouts and safety of their members. Among the dead are teachers of several schools at villages; we can definitely say the death toll is rising. In general, our member working in every sectors of employment have lost lives, they have lost their relatives or shelter. Just one week before the May Day, Nepali Working Class is burdened with unbearable load of tears, injuries, fear and uncertainty.

Rescue operation is on going to retrieve lives buried under the rubble. With help of international recue experts, Nepali security agencies have rescued more than thousand lives. Ms Krishna Kumari Khadka rescued in Balaju, Kathmandu after 128 hours of the hit is the latest example. We appreciate the patience and bravery of our rescue teams. We thank and pay deep gratitude to the Governments of different countries, International Trade Union family, domestic and international organisations and individuals who offered help and expressed solidarity with Nepal at this time.
This is not the time to be destructive, depressed or irritated; nor is this time to be involved in blame game. We must realise this is the time to demonstrate mutual compassion and patience; and mobilise to help each other. Standing on the rubble now we are entering the phase of new construction overcoming the grief. Afore us are three tasks at present - 1) speed up the on going rescue operation to save as many lives as possible and garbage management to avoid epidemics and outbreaks of various kinds of illness; 2) the water loses its value after quenching thirst, the relief materials like food, medicine, water and tent, which is dire need of now of the victims, should be made available and state should take special care to make the distribution process rise above the petty political interests and 3) guarantee of shelter for citizens left without any shelter.

At a time where villages after villages have been wiped-out, the best option will be to have an integrated approach of all the projects of reconstruction. As more than 3 million Nepali labour force is in foreign lands, it is certain that we will face labour deficit in Nepal. Therefore, we suggest that the State should revisit migration policy and take policy to consume the Nepali workforce in Nepal.

GEFONT has decided to mobilize all of its members. Based on the expertise of its affiliates, GEFONT will mobilise them nation wide. To pacify the negative opinions about the transport sector and to promote the feeling of “Companion of citizens the transport workers” the transport sector union council will be mobilized. Construction sector workers will be useful to clear the rubbles and reliable for reconstruction. Health sector union councils is mobilising in hospitals and villages. As your President, I call upon all the member confederations of the JTUCC to mobilise all their members in the sectors of their expertise based on practicability.

The value of a life of a citizen can be understood when people gave the title “Hero” to the APF rescue team who save life of a teenager Pemba Lama after 120 hours. We direct all our member – Please be in touch with the security agencies & expert or citizens involved in rescue operation as per your capacity and contribute as much as possible. May Day has come carrying grief, trauma, tears and uncertainties. We do not have alternative to convert our tears into energy and move forward with new vigour and hope. Therefore this May Day is not for celebration and agitation for rights but for tribute, condolence and re-construction campaign.

Today, with heavy heart, I pay tribute to all who lost their lives in the devastating earthquake. My deepest condolences to all the victim families; and I wish speedy health recovery to all injured.

This year May Day came with destruction and pain; May this never happen in coming May Days – I, on behalf of Nepali trade union movement and its 2 million members express best wishes to you all!
GEFONT organised a two days sixth National Working Women Conference with the slogan “Make it Happen … 33% women representation, + 5% Women membership, End of gender based discrimination, Work– life balance and Zero tolerance on violence against women.” The conference organized on the occasion of 105th International women’s day was inaugurated by Communist Party of Nepal (UML) Vice President and All Nepal Women’s Association (ANWA) President Bidya Bhandari.

Addressing the conference in inaugural session Cde Bhandari said women of Nepal are at forefront in South Asia in achieving rights; but there is still a lot of work to be done to implement these rights in practice. There is need to pressurize the political parties and state to put these rights in practice. She further said another factor important in women movement is continuity of good practice. Citing examples of India and Sri Lanka she said theses nations were successful in producing first and strong
women Prime Minister at one point of history but there has been no significant presence of women in decision making and policy level after and beyond that. She stressed on the need to groom women to be leaders from local level structures of state, political parties and such people’s organizations; she said this would strengthen and enhance performance of women.

Addressing the conference, GEFONT President Bishnu Rimal said a country can progress only when it will respect women and provide equal opportunity for women. Citing international examples he said gender equality is possible if political leadership is willing. GEFONT has always been consciously working to attain gender parity he said. Even before the state adopted 33% reservation for women representation GEFONT had started 25% reservation for women workers representation in GEFONT activities and as soon as the then Parliament declaration 1/3rd women participation in 2006, GEFONT adopted 33% policy and has been implementing ever since, he said. He urged the GEFONT delegates, gathered from all over Nepal representing all GEFONT affiliates, to elect a strong leadership for coming term who will drive the “Count Us In” program of GEFONT and aid in achieving its aim of 5% increment in women membership of the confederation.

Addressing the conference ILO programme officer Saloman Rajbanshi said a lot has been achieved from Beijing conference but there is still a lot of work to be done in terms of gender equality. He said Nepal too should have a woman Prime Minister as its counterparts in South Asia. He said now the focus should be in enhancing the capacity of women to make them competitive. He further said the playing field is not levelled and with gender based discriminations persisting and existing social prejudice against a woman it is difficult for her to compete with a man who has no such baggage. Therefore, he said, there is need to transform attitude from home itself.

WSM representative Bruno commended the work done by GEFONT for gender equality. He added- “the GEFONT trade union school recently established can provide a good platform to build capacity of women workers and members of GEFONT.”

The inaugural session was chaired by Central Women Committee President and GEFONT Vice President Bina Shrestha and facilitated by GEFONT General Secretary Bishnu Lamsal. Similarly, Vice President of GEFONT Central Women Committee Goma Acharya welcomed the guests and delegates of the conference. In the program Chief Guest Bhandari launched book “Initial days of Movement” by Cde Mukunda Neupane

Marking the International worker women’s day a rally was conducted before the conference, which started from Sundhara and converged into conference. The conference marked a beginning of the
new democratic practice of GEFONT where as per the participatory gender audit conducted during 5th conference and its recommendation adopted by 6th National Congress of GEFONT the GEFONT Central Women Committee to be elected from the national women conference. 535 delegates including 1/3rd male participation representing all the affiliates and GEFONT geographical structures attended the conference.

In the first session of the closed session speakers – GEFONT leaders, elaborated on the slogan and the theme of the conference. GEFONT President Bishnu Rimal highlighted the importance of achieving balance between work and life for quality life and GEFONT initiatives to demystify gender prejudices.

Similarly, GEFONT General Secretary Bishnu Lamsal underscored the need for increasing trade union membership and especially women membership to strengthen the trade union movement and effectively address issues related specifically to women workers.

Core Session of the Conference

Core session of the conference was conducted on March 9th. In the morning session, General Secretary of International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Asia Pacific Noriyuki Suzuki addressed the conference and commended the efforts made by GEFONT for gender parity in trade union movement. He concluded his remarks saying that change should begin from home and union members can play vital role in this regards.

Then, Executive Director of GEFONT – TUPI, Umesh Upadhyaya speculated on the history of women participation in trade union movement, focusing on GEFONT effort. He said moving from the initial phase where there was only about 2% women participation in trade union activities and trade union movement being relatively oblivious to gender issues to forming of a separate women department to the present day of women delegates electing women committee leadership, GEFONT has come a long way with significant achievements.

Like wise focusing on the theme of the conference GEFONT governing council and ILO governing body member Binda Pandey elaborated on the history of movement for women's right in Nepal and said women today should draw strength from figures like Yogmaya who dared to speak for rights of women during Rana rule despite adverse situation. Talking about the burning issues of women's movement she gave brief analysis of the ongoing debate of issuing citizenship from father's name or mother's name vis-a-vis father's and mother's name. She further stressed that major issues of the women's movement in Nepali context are right to descent, inheritance of property, proportionate participation and ending violence against women at home, society, organisation and state.

In the open discussion session, the delegates provided written feedback and suggestions to drive GEFONT campaigns in the five issues identified for conference under Make It Happen.

Electing New Team of Central Women Committee and Handover ceremony

The conference was successfully concluded with electing 17 membered GEFONT-Central Women Committee covering all of GEFONT geographical structures and affiliates' councils. The committee has elected Goma Acharya as president, whereas Manju Thapa Magar and Belimaiya Ghale elected as Vice President and the Secretary.

The conference was closed with adoption of 12 points resolution.

On April 8, 2015, a Handover ceremony was organised. Immediate past President, Bina Shrestha handed over her responsibilities to the President of newly elected committee, Goma Acharya.

Cde Bina Shrestha had taken up the responsibility of the Committee since 1993. Sharing her experience she credited GEFONT for its tireless effort to develop women leadership, which helped her to progress and gain success; GEFONT's relentless pressure also contributed countable portion of pressure to the Government to implement 33% reservation quota for women.

GEFONT President Bishnu Rimal awarded certificate to members of the new Women's Committee and wished the committee a successful term.
What is opposite of Patriarchy?

Matriarchy!

Today in this inaugural programme of International Working Women’s Day, I would like to begin by commemorating pioneer leaders of women movement Sahan Pradhan, Sadhana Adhikari, Mangaladevi and Sneha Lata and so on.

I salute all the living senior woman leaders and unfortunately those who have departed, I would like to pay tribute to them on behalf of GEFONT and it’s members.

I would also like to commemorate those undocumented women activists who took part in the first ever organised labour movement in 1947 to those women activists of all Nepali working class movement; who had actively involved but always were forgotten in the pages of history.

I express solidarity with the girls; victims of recent acid attack and wish them speedy recovery. I loathe perpetrators of such inhuman violence and express solidarity with victim women of all age.

I would like to begin my address by referring to a particular episode of a popular Indian TV talk show, “Satya meba jayate”. The host was Bollywood actor Aamir Khan and the guest Kamala Bhasin, International campaigner for Gender Equality!

“Kamala asks Aamir- “Aamir, what is opposite of Patriarchy?”

Aamir quickly answers- Matriarchy! “Wrong”, she says- ‘you get zero point for this. Everybody makes this mistake. We do not want to overthrow patriarchy to establish matriarchy. Matriarchy is as wrongful.’ Everyone in the show is quiet with anticipation.

Aamir asks- ‘what is the correct answer then?

‘Equality! Opposite of patriarchy is not matriarchy but equality!’ she replies.”

Instead of engaging in futile debate of how many men and how many women participated in a programme, while celebrating the international working women’s day we should try to understand the difference between patriarchy, matriarchy and equality. We need to understand we are not upholders of any sort of domination but equality.

“I can compete with anyone based on capacity, I can’t on the basis of gender.”

I had read the comment of a Chinese woman on “Capacity and Gender Equality” published in International New York Times. Like she said when we talk about equality we are not saying to make women like men or men like women. If anyone is then we are again making a mistake. Equality refers to equal behaviour not similar physical outlook.

Therefore, now in GEFONT we are talking about the Theme prepared by International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) for Gender Equality Campaign – “Count Us In”.

- Count Us In the economy
- Count Us Into the labour force
- Count Us In decision making
- Count Us In leadership

This is the crux of “Count Us In”. Are our daughters/sisters counted? Facts indicate otherwise. Lets look at corporate world, where is equal participation of women? Women usually small and medium scale business, in an average around 30% is either owned or managed. At global level, women presence is only 19% in corporate board. If we look at big companies of the world, women CEO are only about 5% or less. If we look at data of any country specific the situation is similar- according to data of 2014 women presence in corporate board in Norway is 35.5%, France- 29.7% UK – 22.8%, Australia – 19.2% Germany – 18.5%, EU – 17.8%. Our two neighbours, China has 9.6% and India has 9.5%. Developed country Japan has even more disheartening situation, women presence is only about 3.1% of corporate board.

This means we are facing the same challenge in world of work since decades.

- Women’s trade union membership stands on average at 40 per cent, yet women occupy only 15 per cent of the top decision-making positions in their organisations.
- Women’s labour force participation rates are stagnating at 26 percentage points lower than those of men.
- Women continue to predominate in informal, low quality, precarious and undervalued jobs.
- Women’s average wages are between 4 and 36 per cent less than those of men.
- Gender-based violence remains an all-too-tolerated feature of the workplace, with no comprehensive international legal standard to outlaw it.

Famous Trade Union leader of our time and former President of Brazil Lula da Silva once said- “I will never tire from repeating my commitment to ensuring that every Brazilian can have breakfast, lunch, and super every day.” He was so committed to launch his popular dream- “Zero Hunger” and was successful to free about 40 million Brazilian from hunger in his 8 years term.
Learning from Lula can we express commitment for gender equality?

Recently, ILO General Director, founder General Secretary of ITUC, Guy Ryder addressing a program asked, “Are Working Women better of today than 20 years ago?” Everyone in hall answered “Yes!”

He again asked, “Has progress met our expectation?” And everyone answered “No!”

He, then said- We can not accept that current rates of change, it may take more than 70 years for women to achieve equal pay status with men.

What can we learn from this?

While saying “Count Us In” we can also say “it is being counted”. Question is- “if women are counted, if they are taken seriously then why can’t we feel the result?” Therefore, this question is for me and everyone present here today. Especially for those who are always calculating! “How are we calculating? What is our goal and timeframe to reach the target? Women are counted – why can’t we achieve results?”

Therefore, it is not sufficient to say, “Count Us In”. We need commitment. For example UN had a theme two years ago- “A promise is a promise: Time for Action to end violence against women!”

So has it been eliminated?

We all know violence against women is getting all the more rampant and violent in nature. Look back at the news articles of past one month; the incidents reported is spine chilling. Remember the incident where a teacher, reasoning not completing homework, pulled out hair of a 7-year-old girl! Just think if that little girl were yours – how would you feel? How do we feel when we hear that a father/grandfather who is epitome of love and compassion for a child rapes his daughter/grand daughter?! How can we express emotions? If a girl is studying with hope and enthusiasm for future is suddenly attacked with acid by a random frivolous boy then how do we feel, how should we feel?

Today I think it is appropriate for me to stress that it is late for us to fight against ugly violence marching towards us and rekindle the slowly dying empathetic society. Fact says – Generally all women are victim of violence and gender-based discrimination. Approximately 35% women – of all age group- are victim of violence against women or sexual harassment. Even if we consider just cases filed in police everyday in an average 3 women or girls are being raped. We can imagine many more limitless are supressed without filing case! And, the perpetrators of such heinous crime are suddenly attacked with acid by a random frivolous boy then how do we feel, how should we feel?

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Today I think it is appropriate for me to stress that it is late for us to fight against ugly violence marching towards us and rekindle the slowly dying empathetic society. Fact says – Generally all women are victim of violence and gender-based discrimination. Approximately 35% women – of all age group- are victim of violence against women or sexual harassment. Even if we consider just cases filed in police everyday in an average 3 women or girls are being rap...
The three Nepali Trade Union confederations GEFONT, NTUC and ANTUF organized a Wider National Conference of workers on October 27 and 28, and issued a 9 points Declaration Letter. State Minister for Labour and Employment Hon. Tek Bahadur Gurung attended the program as chief guest and addressed the participants-1200 workers, members of the three National Centres.

On the conference, participants discussed the Agendas of Labour Law Bill, Social Security Fund Act and Safe Foreign Employment and submitted around 2000 suggestions to the Presidents of the three confederations. The leaders have committed to pressurize the state to form new law and ensure labour rights based on the suggestions provided in the conference and after discussion with other JTUCC affiliates.

The Declaration adopted by the conference read out by GEFONT President Bishnu Rimal requests the state to promulgate Federal, Republic, Democratic, Worker friendly and Pro Socialist Constitution on time and end the political transition; and forge cooperation among the political parties to make economic transformation of the society possible. He added the state to establish National Labour Commission to enact Social Security Fund Act and propose the agreed bill of National Labour Law in Parliament. It further demands the state to initiate steps to promote decent work by creating job opportunities in the country and manage the existing work sectors. The conference also highlighted the importance of forming Trade Union Council of South Asian Trade Unions which would run campaigns in the regions on the agendas of national minimum wage, social security, problems faced by migrant workers and Gender Equality.

The conference urged to adopt the policy on ratification of ILO Conventions specially #87.
Today, on 28 December 2014; we 725 delegates including leaders of members national centres of Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre (JTUCC) converged in Third National Trade Union Conference. Like our plural society, multiplicity of political parties based on diverse ideologies-philosophies and political systems; 18,16,790 of us the dues paying members are also of different political orientations and believe in different philosophies. Some take this diversity as difference. And, we the JTUCC affiliated confederations believe, this is Unity in Diversity.

We have taken this platform to participate based on our own policy and decision, come to common understanding on the issues through dialogues; continue dialogue in dis-agreed issues and take decision from consensus. Our formula of unity is to form united opinion regarding issues of labour movement and take this common stand vis-a'-vis our partners with opposite interest, and to think and carry creative campaigns independently on the disagreed issues without hampering the unity of the centre.

From this Third National Trade Union Conference and based on our slogan “Unity in Diversity” we the member confederations declare the following:

1 Provision in New Statute
With objective to further institutionalise Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre, JTUCC Code of Conduct – 2012 will be replaced with the following provisions under the new statute approved by this conference

- Hold National Conference in every three years and review policy, programme and statute
- The highest policy making body of the Centre for the Labour Parliament will hold annual meeting in December every year and review, monitor, appraise Centre’s activities and prepare plan of action.
- Carry out regular activities from Cabinet, the Executive Committee of the Centre which will have President, General Secretary and one woman leader form all the member confederations based on the equal representation
- The Centre will be further institutionalised through a process of electing President and General Secretary for fixed term. President of the Centre will be named for one year term from the member Confederations, which have dues paying members over 250 thousand; the process will be conducted on rotational basis based on the registration number of the Confederations. The General Secretary of the Centre will be named in similar manner from the rest of the Confederations.
- Presidium (the management committee) of the Centre under the leadership of President and the Secretariat under the leadership of the General Secretary will be responsible for running the day-to-day activities of the Centre effectively.
- JTUCC Women Committee including the president and one leader of the women committees of all the member confederations and through this committee promote Gender Equality in Trade Union movement.
- Form 10 industrial councils to coordinate the activities of the affiliated federations of the member Confederations

2 New Constitution and Workers’ Agenda
This Conference reiterate agreement on the Agendas of workers to be incorporated in the new constitution which was handed over on 27 August 2014 to the Chairperson of the Constitutional Political Dialogue and Consensus Committee, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai. The Conference appeals the political parties to promulgate the constitution within timeframe set by the parties themselves. The Conference further stresses on following issues-

- Ensure the Right to Employment, Unemployment benefits, Right to decent work, wage and Social Security, Right to form and participate in Trade Union, and right to collective bargaining and strike as Fundamental Rights
- Ensure universal social security to all citizens including Equal right to health and quality education; Ensure social security in old-age, in case of maternity, disability and death of breadwinner of the family
- Ensure at least 10% representation of workers in elected representative- bodies of the state; and equal representation of trade unions in the various state mechanisms as par to the employers’ organisation
- Establish National Labour Commission in order to make labour relation decent, responsible and effective
- And, to resolve unprecedented conflicts and labour disputes through dialogue and to hold dialogues with stakeholders on labour agenda decided by labour-parliament; establish new structure alike Economic & Social Multi stakeholder Committee (Eco-Soc) in the legislature-parliament
3 Labour Legislations
Since past one decade Nepali labour movement is involved to reform labour legislation based on the policy “More Social Security- the more Labour flexibility”. With commitment to basic policy on revision of labor legislation, this conference calls for-

- Promulgate labour law as per the agreement of October 10 2014. The conference cautions the Cabinet of JTUCC to pay careful attention during adoption of the bills in parliament by intervening through the CA members for further strengthening workers position in the law
- Immediately promulgate the Social Security Fund Act as per the agreement between JTUCC and Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) & Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI). Initiate for the Social Security scheme based on collection made by workers’ contribution as 1% social security tax. The calls to the JTUCC Cabinet to formulate plan of action and activate further initiation

4 Minimum wage revision and collective bargaining
From the coming fiscal year (2014/15) a revised minimum wage should be implemented. It is necessary to increase wage & benefits across the board along with revision of minimum wage. In past, there was imbalance increment of wage & benefits among the agriculture-industry and the service sectors.

Therefore, the Conference demands the following-

- Immediately form minimum wage determination committee. Establish the norm of ipso facto increase of minimum wage based on consumer price index and inflation of past 2 years and projected, inflation of coming 2 years.
- Along with fixation of minimum wage start, the process of conducting collective bargaining through out the country at one time. And, to start this process, hold election of authentic union (the CBA agent).

5 On the issue of Rights of Migrant Workers
Like other countries of South Asia, Nepal is country of origin supplying labours. This conference admits to the fact that foreign employment is the integral part of Nepali world of work as the current situation in Nepal is unfavourable for job creation. Every citizen going for foreign employment should have safe migration and his or her employment should be fruitful. Therefore, this conference stresses on,

- It is not necessary to pay any sort of fees for those going for employment under free- visa quota to Gulf Countries. However, till today fees ranging from NRs 70 thousand to hundred thousands & more are extorted, referring the government decision, from Nepalis going for foreign employment in these countries. This trend should end now.
- Establish coordination among the trade union, recruiting agency and government body within the country before departure and in destination countries after departure.
- Initiate dialogue with concerned bodies for the implementation of workers’ agenda including migrant workers recently declared by the SAARC summit held in Kathmandu

6 Violence and crime against women
This conference is sensitive towards the violence and crime against women, which has become very frequent these days. Thus the conference calls the government for action-

- To end all kinds of gender-based discrimination, domestic violence against women, sexual harassment at workplace and other crimes against women
- Take stern action against the culprits of the violence against women

7 Acknowledgement and gratitude
This conference pays gratitude to

- Chief Guest Rt Hon. Prime Minister Mr. Sushil Koirala for his graceful presence and inauguration of the conference despite the busy schedule;
- Hon. State Minister for Labour and Employment Mr. Tek Bahadur Gurung for his encouraging address to the conference
- General Secretary of International Trade Union Confederation- Asia Pacific (ITUC-AP), Bro. Noriyuki Suzuki for his graceful presence
- Deputy General Secretary of World Trade Union Confederation (WFTU) Cde H. Mahadevan for accepting our invitation and addressing the conference;
- GEFONT National Congress Delegates’ Council Chief and immediate past President of GEFONT Cde Mukunda Neupane and General Secretary of SARTUC and immediate past President of NTUC Bro Laxman Bahadur Basnet for accepting our honour collectively,
- Representatives from Trade Union Solidarity Organisations (TUSSO) who have always lend their solidarity support to Nepali trade union movement
- LO- FTF council, Denmark
- ILO Nepal
- FES Nepal
- Media persons, media houses and other institutions for helping us in several ways
Bilateral Agreement on Labour Law Bill

The Labour Law bill, which was under discussion since a decade between employer’s organization and trade unions, has reached in to an agreement. On October 14, 2014 both parties made an agreement and submitted before the government for further enactment of Law. Despite few drawbacks, the bill is based on socialism concept says GEFONT Secretary and advocate Ramesh Badal. The bill, signed by representatives for Nepali trade unions and employers is expected to end the exploitation of workers and provide workers with protection under law and social security.

The main agenda of the bill is that Labour law will be effective even in workplace with single worker and it will cover all sectors including informal economy like domestic workers. The bill provides minimum standard on workers facilities and benefits and employers cannot give less than the minimum standard.

Similarly, the bill states that the employment contract and terms and condition of appointments against the provisions of law will be nullified and the provision of law will be automatically activated. Bonded labour, child labour is prohibited and the agreements based on discriminations and against the freedom of association will be nullified. The permanent, temporary, contract or wage forms of employment will be replaced by casual, time bound, task bound and regular employment contract system where all types of workers are entitled the social security benefit from the very day of employment. The bill also provides that there will be no discrimination of any form in providing benefits and rights based on types of employment.

The law encourages the use of arbitration and assures unemployment insurance, accidental insurance and compensation in case of retrenchment.

The trade unions have been demanding for the legal recognition of collective bargaining as Nepal has already ratified the International Labour Organization Convention 98. Most of the provision of ILO convention on freedom of association and collective bargaining has been incorporated in the draft. However, employers are still dilemma on the issue of sectorial collective bargaining.

The agreement between employer and JTUCC mentions that the provident fund, gratuity, accident insurance and unemployment insurance shall be paid to workers from the day of appointment.

The bill also covers outsourced workers including part time workers. Existing discriminatory provision between native and foreign workers has been removed. Similarly, the age of retirement has been changed to 58 years from 55. The bill also states that women employees with working hour before sunrise or after sunset should be provided with transport facility. There are few changes made in existing provision in leave like women workers are given public holiday on March 8 and workers on sick leave will get paid leave equivalent of salary of 12 days. Existing law on maternity leave provides 45 days leave for women workers in tea estates and 52 days in other sectors. This has been amended to 98 days maternity leave including 60 days as paid leave. The law also applies for women undergone miscarriage post 7 months of pregnancy.

Action @February 18

Without the Right to Strike We are all Slaves

In the leadership of International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) the trade unions of the world organized programs worldwide – Global Action Day- protesting against the move of employers to remove the “Right to Strike” from ILO convention.

General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT), Nepal Trade Union Congress (NTUC) and All Nepal Trade Union Federation (ANTUF) affiliated to the ITUC Nepal Council organized an interaction program with Constituent Assembly members and media personalities as a part of this Global Action Day to safeguard the fundamental right of the workers and pressurize the Government and employers from removing the right to strike from ILO Convention. In the program the translated logo of Global Action Day (18 February) was unveiled and ITUC newsletter adopted in Nepali language was distributed.

GEFONT President Bishnu Rimal said the ILO advocates the need of the right to strike, the employers are trying to curtail the right; therefore, ITUC Nepal Affiliates Council has united against the move of employers. “The employers are even trying to deny the process of taking the disputes to International Court of Justice (ICJ)”, he said.

He further added if workers are denied the right to strike they will be slowly reduced to slaves; sometimes strikes become a necessity therefore trade union will not allow the implementation of prohibition of strike.

The news letter titled “Without the right to strike we are all slaves” states “Throughout history, when employers and governments have refused dialogue and negotiation and instead imposed their will, workers have still taken the step and faced the risks of withdrawing their labour rights. That will not change. Workers will continue to take strike action when they have to – but the employer agenda would make them criminals.”

If ILO conventions are weakened then workers’ hope will diminish. The right to strike is most necessary for the workers, working in most precarious conditions and appalling workplaces.
GEFONT organized a national conference of Workers’ Cooperatives, cooperatives run by GEFONT affiliated unions and members on March 31 in Bagbazar, Kathmandu.

Inaugurating the conference Chief Guest and President of Nepal Cooperatives Federation, Keshab Badal referring to the history of cooperative said workers first conducted it; and the cooperative conducted by GEFONT members can play an important role in promoting economic growth in the country. He said this step reflects the sentiment 'one for all and all for one."

Highlighting the importance of the gathering GEFONT President Bishnu Rimal said to achieve sustainable goal by strategic planning, GEFONT from its 6th National Congress formed workers cooperative central promotion committee. He further said to change the current socio economic system economic transformation is necessary which can be facilitated by cooperatives; and GEFONT workers cooperative central promotion committee will do necessary groundwork to promote GEFONT affiliated cooperatives.

Coordinator of the committee Binod Shrestha chaired the conference and, in his address, highlighted the GEFONT inventive steps to work for the betterment of the worker class. He further said from its 6th National Congress GEFONT adopted the policy to promote cooperatives conducted by GEFONT affiliated unions and members which ultimately promotes the feeling of brotherhood and helps uplift lifestyle of workers at the same time.

GEFONT General Secretary Bishnu Lamsal facilitated the conference where GEFONT Vice Presidents, members of Secretariat and Governing council, and representatives from approximately 25 workers cooperatives were present.
Marking October 7 World Day for Decent Work, GEFONT organized an Ideological/Philosophical Discourse on working class and future economy. The program titled “Working Class and Future Economy: Interactive Discussion on Ideological/Philosophical Discourse” was held in Nagarkot, Kathmandu on October 12. The theme of the discourse was to understand the present working class and how we can relate it to national policy.

GEFONT President Cde Bishnu Rimal chaired the opening Session of the program where a book entitled Milestones of Economy was launched on the occasion. The book was written by Cde Umesh Upadhyaya- the Executive Director of GEFONT Trade Union Policy Institute (GEFONT-TUPI) and Bro Dev Raj Dahal, Head of FES- Nepal made brief remark on book.

In second session, panellists were invited to review the analytical writings published in the Journal “Workers of the World” of International Journal on Strikes and Social Conflicts, which carried a dossier on “who is working class?” In the interactive session the participants debated the issue like characteristics of capitalism, scope of Nepali working class. Participants also pointed out that the role and focus of trade union should change along with the changing context and stratification of the working class.

CPN- UML Secretary Cde Pradip Gyawali highlighted the concept of productive labour and unproductive labour as basis for defining working class saying ‘Productive labour links the living labour with dead labour’. He was reviewing the article “The Working Class Today: The New Forms of Being of the Class who lives from its Labour” by Ricardo Antunes in the discourse. Contextualizing the article in case of Nepal he said- “It should be debated whether stable working class or precarious working class is more decisive.”
Dr. Shiva Sharma, president of NLA said “In order to understand and define the working class we should start by defining who does not belong to working class”. Presenting the data of Nepali Labour force, he said, “in order to understand the context we need to have knowledge of Characteristics of Nepali labour.

Reviewing the article “Marx’s Concept of The Working Class and Some Trends in the Development Of Capitalism” by Nicolas Inigo Carrera in the discourse, CPN- UML Deputy General Secretary Cde Ghanashyam Bhusal said- Marx’s conclusion to understand and define working class through profit, rent and wage is best basis to define working class so far. He said, “Nepal has broadly three classes– Capitalist (Profit seeking class), Labour (wage earners) and Middle class who has bit of both character. He further said, “Analyzing Nepali society we found Nepal has two sets of working class- a working class and marginalized working class. And, focus of the movement should be to uplift the marginalized working class.”

Another panellist CPN- UML Leader Shankar Pokharel reviewed Marcel Van der Linden’s the article- “Who are the Workers of the World? Marx and Beyond” he agreed with the author’s conclusion that present situation should be analysed in new light rather than just Marx’s time. Refuting the author’s criticism that Marx ‘neglected studying the working class in favour of studying capital’ he said- “this was not the drawback of Marx as these were the new situations developed after his time. “Working class of that time was product of the industrial capitalism but working class now is of the financial capitalism,” he said- “so the perspective “will change and should change.”

Contextualizing the changing concept he argued- in case of Nepali worker force, along with Industrial worker; the workers in service industries all daily wage earners together with indirect labour in entire informal sector, should be included in the new definition of working class. Prof Dr Bharat Raj Pahari said the intention of the author in this article was to stress on the need to define the role of working class and Marxism is insufficient to understand the present context.

Dr. Saroj Dhital, surgeon turned thinker said “Nepal’s Trade Union Movement needs to broaden the understanding and definition of working class”. The quote Proletariat has “nothing to lose but chains, a world to win” may not be relevant anymore, he said reviewing the writing “The Working Class: Contemporary Approach In the Light of Historical Materialism” authored by Marcelo Bardos Mattos. He said emancipation of the marginalized is possible through socialism.

Reflecting on the issue, Cde Mukunda Neupane, the leader of UML as well as former President of GEFONT shared his experience in the process of understanding the working class. He explained how he realised the notion of ‘Proletariat’ when he first associated with the movement for freedom and democracy.

In his concluding remarks GEFONT President, Bishnu Rimal said the programme reinforced the need to hold such discussions regularly and debate on these complex agendas. He said, “GEFONT always makes effort to link political theory with labour” and underline the importance of such discourse for Trade Union movement and campaigners. He also stressed on the need to establish a think tank wing within CPN-UML, which could provide insights on such complex social issues. Sharing about GEFONT’s initiatives to understand the labour issues and social issues of Nepal he spoke briefly about the GEFONT policy program for coming decade and GEFONT initiatives.

The participants in the program also included GEFONT secretariat members, and Dr Rajan Bhattarai, Bro Chandra Dev Bhatta of FES and Dr Jiva Nath Prasain.
Twenty-five years ago (of July 20, 2014), when GEFONT was formed, we had our office in a bag with a few sheets of paper and some files. Our total fund was personal savings accumulated together about 1,250 rupees. Those of us who were working full-time in the union had no fixed place to stay or time to eat. But we had limitless passion to work for the working class. In crisis, we asked our comrades to contribute a day’s salary to the union. The well-equipped GEFONT office today and its property of about 120 million rupees is the earning of those hardships. Delivering the keynote, GEFONT President Cde. Bishnu Rimal said, I respect and salute to all those who played a vital role to strengthen Nepali trade union movement.

Addressing the ceremony as the Chief Guest Constituent Assembly (CA) Chairperson Rt. Hon’ble Subhash C. Nembang congratulated GEFONT on its achievements over 25 years. Rt. Hon’ble further Stated- “In spite of many challenges, GEFONT has been succeeding because GEFONT linked its movement with the main movement of the country.” On the occasion, taking the Memorandum, Hon’ble Subhash Nembang expressed his commitment to give priority on the issue of Social security and ratification of ILO convention 87.

ILO DG Mr Guy Ryder sent video message on the occasion and said, “in the current critical transition, I have no doubt, that you continue as always have, to play important and constructive role to ensure the fundamental rights of working women and working men are enshrined in the new constitution.”

“For workers in Nepal and beyond, GEFONT has grown from small spark to a big, lightening the way for lasting peace for prosperity, and for progress for working people. Looking to the future, I am confident
to the GEFONT sanctions to serve to make real difference, a positive difference to the course of the history in your country and social justice in the world. The ILO stands with you, striving towards that common goal—the Social Justice.” ILO DG further added in his message.

In his address, ITUC Asia Pacific Regional General Secretary Bro Noriyuki Suzuki said—“Nine years ago, we had our regional conference in Kathmandu where we witnessed first-hand democracy being taken away from the people in a palace coup. Next year, precisely after ten years, we will be holding our regional conference in Kathmandu and I am happy this is being held at an atmosphere of freedom and democracy.”

On the occasion, Cde Christopher NG, Regional Secretary of UNI-APRO presented about contemporary trade unionism and GEFONT. Bro Christopher NG said, “Despite all difficulties, trade union movement must move forward. It must upgrade.” He underlined seven points as an instrument to promote the growth and influence of the trade union movement to protect and advance human and democratic rights for all people, defend workers rights and their dignity, eliminate poverty and inequality, insure social and economic justice for all within and among nations, enhance equal opportunity for all people, preserve and create jobs; and build peace and prosperity within a nation and the interdependent world. He further said “We look forward to work closely with GEFONT to build the new global economic order” and said “together, we can formulate and fight for the new rules that must govern the global economic order for the 21st century where income, wealth and opportunity are equitably distributed.”

Sending the email message to the president of GEFONT, General Secretary of one of the largest Global Union Federation BWI, Mr. Ambet Yuson said he was proud to be supporter of the GEFONT and further said—“I would have wanted to attend your anniversary. I have been a witness of the rise and growth of GEFONT in the past 15 years. The first time I meet you in 2003, you shared with me GEFONT vision and plans:”

On the occasion, GEFONT felicitated GEFONT President Cde. Mukunda Neupane, UML Leader Cde Pradeep Nepal, founding vice President Cde Hari Prasad Sharma for their contribution in strengthen the trade union movement in Nepal. GEFONT also felicitated Dr Shiva Sharma, Cde Som Rai, Cde Kiran Mali and Cde Mahendra Shrestha.
GEFONT Regular Trade Union School – an important structure of the Organizing Academy envisioned and declared from 6th National Congress of GEFONT was inaugurated on December 29. The inauguration marks the historical step in the Nepali Trade Union movement.

Elaborating the concept of Organizing Academy, GEFONT Prez Bishnu Rimal highlighted its four objectives – Policy Analysis, Research, Education and Mobilization. GEFONT, he said, believes the Regular trade Union school and Organizing Academy will contribute significantly to bring about positive transformation in the society and workers life by helping the trade union movement to realize its goal of dignified and decent work for all.

Addressing the program Deputy General Secretary of World Federation of Trade Union (WFTU) – Asia, H. Mahadevan and General Secretary of International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) – Asia Pacific Noriyuki Suzuki applauded the GEFONT effort and said the school is inspirational step for the international trade union movement.

GEFONT has travelled long journey, experimenting with different methods and tools. It is summerised as 11-Steps in GEFONT trade union education system.

1. Widely used lecture method, encourage to open mouth to the target groups, in a time of tyranny under absolute monarchy. It was lasted till late 1990.
2. Next step was internalising Q/A method, encourage team to be bit participatory. It began in mid-1990
3. First ever education technique is introduced thru international expert. The programme was residential and weeklong. Use of Flip chart and other participatory skills was introduced. It was in 1994
4. Regular course of trade union/workers education was introduced, which was piloting to 12 groups, each containing 20 union activists with 9 month fixed course. The name was given TRUE-Campaign aiming to prepare some 240 hard-core future leaders supported by Danish Embassy
5. Necessity of a mass-scale education programme was felt; mobile trade union school was introduced. Buying a vehicle and packing up all of the prepared materials and teachers into it we began to travel different workplace to make aware working people both in formal and informal sectors. This initiative push us to establish NLA-National Labour Academy, an institution launched by unions, individual expert and the NGO active in world of work.

6. Enter into new phase, to address necessity of team of trainers, TOT- training of Trainers started. Formal child education, Informal adult education, literacy class, and technical know how (such as internet, computer and English language classes) also insert in the education activities. Thanks to the various TUSSOs, who became Samaritan for our work. Top-hundred cadres programme was launched.

7. To address necessity of Course in various levels, comprising with all learned methods, Basic, Advanced and Special course was designed. The team was given skills to prepare Lesson plan, Session plan and writing of text as well. GEFONT tried to bring together other mass organisations of students, youths, woman and peasants together to build social movement here.

8. Enter into Strategic planning phase. GEFONT involved in DANIDA/ILO funded 9 months long course, where a process of

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**The Context**

It has been 35 years since the commencement of the second phase of Nepali trade union movement. Twenty-four years have elapsed since the establishment of GEFONT. During the period of more than two decades, various methods have been used to organize workers in the formal and informal sectors of employment. From 1979 to 1989, we practiced the “organizing model” to organize the factory and service sector workers in the formal set up of work and employment. Professional union organizers, too, were dedicated to follow the philosophy of organizing model to “form union for us at our own expense”. After establishing GEFONT in 1989, along with “organizing model” several other methods and techniques have been used for building and expansion of workers’ power.

While reviewing and evaluating the past, there are three generations of unionists in GEFONT movement. Large number of youths and workers with high mobility are active in grassroots and adults; the stable but active cadres are in decisive positions in the organizational structures. Moreover, within GEFONT periphery, there is a considerable number also of the retired and retiring veteran unionists.

Only after 1990, our movement has taken this height based on 10 years planning in every decade. Now we are in the juncture to form new 10 years plan for the coming decade. The planning for coming decade means formulating necessary policies, methods, structures and committed leadership for trade union movement. Undoubtedly for GEFONT family, this would mean intensive homework for regular but concrete education and training.

**Target Group**

Building leadership is not an ordinary task. It is built by a team of persons with diverse knowledge and skills in diverse issues. There are more than 2000 local committees of GEFONT, which are being led by district, zonal and central structures. The senior generation will gradually hand over responsibilities to the comrades currently working in these structures.

In the earlier two decades, ‘learning’ was done through an impromptu lecture method and later on we developed a curriculum covering a 9-month period, which was delivered through lecture method. A more revised new initiative named as The Trade Union Education Campaign (TRUE Campaign) was the next one, which brought forward the concept of Mobile Trade Union School with a long run idea of Labour University. Not all but some of our plans produced encouraging results. This process developed many structures ranging from GEFONT Resource Centre to National Labour Academy (NLA).

But at the moment we need to educate our leaders and activists on ideology, principles, political economy and labour relations to prepare them for updated leadership. Each country has developed different kinds of structures to build the workers’ power. Looking from their experiences, structures like Trade Union Education Department, Central Planning Commission, and National Labour Academy seemed insufficient to address the expected demands of our movement. If we look at international practices, we see that many countries have built several structures within trade unions to facilitate the process of building workers’ power. By observing the international practice and based on assessment of our own exercise, GEFONT has put forward the concept of ‘Organizing Academy’.

**Organising Academy**

The policy document of GEFONT adopted by the 6th National Congress has defined the concept of “Organizing Academy” with its four indispensible aspects - 1) Policy Analysis 2) Research 3) Training and 4) Mobilization.

- **Policy Analysis:** GEFONT - Trade Union Policy Institute (GEFONT-TUPI) for policy analysis will be established.
GEFONT-TUPI will be a reliable “Think Tank Wing” of GEFONT and will function under GEFONT–NEC ‘Directives’. It will involve high-level professionals from labor and political arena to formulate materials for contemporary policy matters and give feedback to National Executive Committee.

9. **Research:** National Labor Academy (NLA) will be strengthened for research on labour & allied matters. Its conclusion will be reference for TUPI to develop policy conclusions and relevant document. GEFONT Resource Centre and NLA Library will be combined and National Labor Resource Centre will be located in NLA building.

10. **Training:** Regular trade union school to train large number of trade unionists will be set up. The school will conduct classes ranging from few hours or a day to a weeklong residential training.

11. **Mobilisation:** Implement the concept of “Organising Academy” as a periodic campaign to increase union membership in practice. Mobilize the trained organizers by the school as campaigners. This will be coordinated by Union Councils and by Central Labour Relation Council with the help of zonal and district level GEFONT committees. Mobilization should include GEFONT youth and women committee.

**Functioning of Academy:**

Academy will conduct following activities for the time being:

1. **Regular Classes:** The Academy will conduct classes ranging from few hours a day to weeklong residential arrangement. The weeklong classes will be given to trade unionists from formal and informal sectors in fixed batches. Each batch will have 30 students. The school has 26 pairs of core trainers and a pair will conduct weeklong classes for two months that is – in a year a pair of trainers will teach four batches. The Academy will be managed by GEFONT Trade Union Education Department. Department will be responsible for the management and coordination of the trainers and the regular trade union classes.

2. **Preparing the Core-Trainees:** Core trainers of the school are the experienced trainers developed by GEFONT in the past and who had participated in the last Educators Conference. These trainers have been given residential refresher training and have been made thorough with GEFONT policies along with effective teaching and learning techniques.

3. **Targeted Trainees:** The school will give training to the young trade unionists of 370 enterprises of formal and 260 unit committees of informal sectors in the beginning. And, it will expand its target group to all the enterprises and units with time.

4. **Development of Training Manual and Curriculum:** Education Department will develop necessary curriculum from the policy conclusions and documents prepared by GEFONT-TUPI

**Long term Expectation from the Academy:**

GEFONT believes aforementioned activities of educating the leaders and members at grassroots will develop the capacity of workers to understand the labour market, political economy and labour relations, which will empower the trade unions and their members to

1) Effectively participate in the movement at workplace level and society level for bringing about positive change for dignified and decent work; and

2) Intervene at policy level to formulate worker friendly and progressive state policies

GEFONT firmly believes the empowered workers are the real agents of positive change and this approach- through Organizing Academy will build workers’ power and help the Nepali society to be transformed into a just society.

Broadly, the Academy, as its name suggests, is expected to mobilize the trade unionists as campaigners for union membership expansion and build workers’ power.
We are not demanding air-conditioned worksite, 
Just asking minimum standard be met!

GEFONT Delegates Tell to European Parliament

A delegation led by GEFONT President Bishnu Rimal together with DFA secretary Ramesh Badal and CUPPEC-GEFONT Secretary Smritee Lama held a meeting with European Parliament on March 19 in Brussels. Representative of all groups of European Parliament welcomed the delegation, administered by Mr Ivo Belet (Europarlament slid), which includes Mr Richard Corbett (Labour member) together with the representatives of Greens and liberals.

Mr Ivo Belet opened the meeting with mentioning his understanding on migrant workers situation. “We are also not happy the way World Cup in 2022 is proposing to organise”, he said- “I my self is football fan but it should not in the price of human life.”

“We are so glad to hear from you & your thinking on this issue”, Mr. Richard Corbett adds what the unions are doing and what do they want change in Arab Peninsula vis-à-vis Qatar.

Mr. Tom Deleu of ACV-CSC Belgium briefs about OCED guidelines, and mention TUAC submission on Qatar. He also brief position of BWI and ITUC submission of different occasions.

“This is really good opportunity for us to be here” Mr. Tom Said- there is a Social responsibilities of EU since big numbers of European companies are operating their business there in Qatar. We have simple request, EU should respect ILO Convention.”

“It wouldn’t be comfortable to watch the tournament in the stadium which has been erected in the cost of life of thousands of our brothers and sisters of the world” he said.

GEFONT president Bishnu Rimal gave overview on the migration issue in Nepal, Nepali politics and economy. “It is not our choice to send nearly 3 million young energy in the foreign land, but compulsion”, GEFONT president said-“here every regime of Destination country should understand- they are not offering mercy for our people; migration is mutual agreement of two necessities!”

He highlighted issues in bullet:

- Use of dual contract
- Kafala (sponsorship) system
- Confiscation of passports
- Residence permits
- Delay pay and low wages despite Qatars claim of electronic payment system
- Absence of a minimum wage
- Applying systematic exploitative measures
- Inadequate living conditions in the labour camps
- Exploitative Recruitment process including high charge of fee
- Denial of trade union rights
- Inadequate judicial system to protect workers grievances

When asked by other participants and the media persons in the meeting about commitment of change in Qatar, GEFONT President said, “there is going some interesting discussion in Qatar. Previously the authority was ignoring stakeholders, now they are in mood of Engage not Include! It was reflected in missions of stakeholders like GEFONT, BWI and ITUC.”

“Some changes are seen but it is less than sufficient”; Cde Rimal said- they were saying increasing of labour inspector, however it is still in sufficient. The Exploitation through local agencies is continued. Change in labour law, which commits end of Kafala system on wait!”

“What do we expect with EU?” GEFONT President said- “the authority is saying, they are going to make air-conditioned stadium for players and audience. We are however not demanding air-conditioned worksite! We are asking let parties meet minimum standards committed through the international standards.”

“Respected Mr. Ivo and the member of European parliament, you have huge fans of European football teams in Nepal, let don’t disappoint your fan!

Let EU helps us to implement at least minimum standard in the land of GCC countries to address above-mentioned difficulties!” GEFONT president concluded his point.

Followed by the presentation there was question- answer session, all together the meeting with European parliament lasted 1 hour.

The media in side-line interviewed GEFONT Secretary of DFA.

In afternoon, GEFONT Delegation joined ACV BIE and FGTB protest in Belgian Football Association.
“Red Card to FIFA” the protestors said- “Yellow Card to KBVB!”

Followed by the protest, delegation held meeting with the President of KBVB (Belgian Football Association) and de brief the situation. The presidents of both Belgians unions and GEFONT delegation hold discussion with the KBVB president.

**In the year 2014, we celebrate International Migrant Day beyond the border**

On December 18, 2014 GEFONT grandly celebrated International Migrant Day by organizing various programs on the occasion within and outside the country.

On the same day, Qatar GEFONT Support Group organised International Migrant workers day in Doha. GEFONT Secretary General Cde. Bishnu Lamsal addressed the program and said, “Our union is working for betterment of workers working within and outside the country. As a part of international solidarity, workers of Qatar will achieve its goal of decent work.”

Likewise, on December 19, 2014 GEFONT Support Group- UAE organised a programme on the occasion of International Migrant Day in Dubai. GSG concluded the programme in the presence of GEFONT General Secretary Bishnu Lamsal, GEFONT Governing council and Deputy member of ILO Governing body Bindra Pandey and Nepali Ambassador to UAE Dhananjaya Jha.

There was significant presence of Nepali migrant workers from different parts of UAE. This programme formed 14-member GSG committee in UAE under the Presidency of Rameshwor Bhetwal. An advisory committee was formed in the coordination of Nabaraj Basnet.

On December 21, Nepali Migrant Workers’ Association - GEFONT Support Group (GSG) Malaysia organised a programme marking the IWD in meeting hall of MTUC. GEFONT Secretary Kamal Gautam was Chief Guest in programme. Labour Attaché Buddhath Bhattarai, MTUC General Secretary Gopal Krishnam, and other dignitaries attended the programme. Coordinator of GEFONT Malaysia and in charge of Migrant Helpline Desk, Bed Kumar Khatiwada highlighted the GEFONT programmes.

GEFONT Support Groups of various destination countries including Lebanon and Korea organised similar programmes.

On September 26, 2014; GEFONT, Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC) & Building and Wood Workers International (BWI) jointly signed MOU to Promote and Protect Migrant Workers in Malaysia.

As a part of policy intervention GEFONT Support Group (GSG) Malaysia participated in an interaction program on March 16 - with the parliamentary delegation led by CA member Parabhu Sah, who is Chairperson of the International affairs and Labour relations committee of the legislature-parliament, Dr. Niranjan Man Singh Basnyat, Ambassador of Nepal, Nepali Journalists and representatives of Nepali agencies at the Nepali Embassy, Kuala Lumpur. During the program, GSG raised various issues that needed to be addressed by Government of Nepal.

**Dy member of ILO GB Binda Pandey meets Qatari minister**

Visiting Qatari minister for labour and social welfare H.E Abdulla S.M Khulaifi met on April 7, with Dy member of ILO GB and GEFONT Governing Council member Cde Binda Pandey. H.E Khulaifi inquired about Nepal’s hesitation in sending workers in the domestic sector to which she replied lack of law in that sector will make workers vulnerable to abuse.

Apart from this, there were number of issues touched upon during brief meeting like Labour rights, coverage of law including agriculture and domestic sectors, much-talked “cost-free hiring to Nepali including agriculture and domestic sectors”, banking payment which includes workers in supply agencies and so on.

Implementation status of ILO recommendation under Article 24 made last year was another issue of bilateral discussion. Cde Pandey made a query on effectiveness of introduction of ‘complain machine’ as well as other improvements in the Qatari world of work.

The minister was in defence of all of the talked-improvements in their labour markets. In a question of accessibility of information to the working migrant was one of the discussion points.

GEFONT DFA member Cde Surya Bdr Kunwar was accompanying member in the meeting. Minister H.E Khulaifi was leading 5-member delegation including Qatari Ambassador to Nepal.
GEFONT Prez addresses the International Forum on Economic Globalization and Trade Union

On September 23, 2014, GEFONT President Bishnu Rimal attended the 10th International Forum on Economic Globalization and Trade Unions, organised by All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) with a theme Reform Development Dream in Beijing.

GEFONT President addressed the second day’s panel- South-South cooperation and trade union. Addressing the panel he underlined footsteps of decade long journey of forum.

Referring to the 2004 Forum’s conclusion, Trade Unions launch Beijing Consensus. He said trade unions should introspect the efforts they have made so far to materialize the Beijing Consensus. He congratulated ACFTU for giving importance to the issue and raising it at the union, party, national and international level through this forum. He also shared the efforts made by Nepali Trade Unions, from the time of inception of the forum till date, to understand Globalization and what it means for Trade Unions.

Speaking on the issue of BRICS and Trade Union, he applauded the efforts made to set up BRICS trade union and asked about the implication of BRICS Development Bank for working people. He said Nepali Trade union movement is keen to learn in what way the BRICS unions will contribute to the Global trade union movement and asked how Nepali Trade Union movement can engage with BRICS Union.

The International Forum on Economic Globalization and Trade Unions was launched since 2004 with the aim to promote mutual understanding and cooperation between the Trade Unions in the context of Globalization.

ITUC 3rd World Congress launches an International Award in memory of late Cde. Dorje

The 3rd ITUC World Congress in Berlin established an International Award in memory of UNITRAV-GEFONT’s former vice President late Cde. Dorje Khatri. The Award will be dedicated to Union Action for Climate Justice.

“Dorje Khatri, a great climate warrior, died in a tragic accident, at work on Mount Everest. He was alarmed at the impact of climate change on his beloved mountain and he planted the ITUC flag on the top of Mount Everest to mark his pride in our fight for the climate. His memory will live on with unions who continue to act for climate justice,” said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

“We are thankful to ITUC for recognizing tireless effort of Nepali Sherpas, in campaigning to save climate and our beautiful planet! Establishing award in the name of a fallen Nepali comrade- Dorjee Khatri, who was killed just 1 month back by an avalanche in Mt Everest”, said GEFONT President Cde. Bishnu Rimal.

“It is an honour to our heros and their sacrifices for the common cause! ” Cde Rimal extended heartfelt thanks to ITUC for establishing an award in the name of a fallen Nepali Cde. Dorje Khatri.
Labour Dispute on 2014-2015

This year the number of labour dispute was lesser than previous years. In every two years interval, the government of Nepal fixes Minimum wage on the recommendation of tripartite committee. Trade union of various industries signed collective agreement in the year 2014. A collective bargaining agreement signed in Puja Soap and Household Products Pvt. Ltd. of Bara district on November 2014, increased workers salary and some of the workers got permanent appointment with immediate effect.

Collective agreement signed in Dabur Nepal Ltd. of Bara district on August 2014 agreed to increase house-rent allowances, education allowances, transport allowances of the workers and improve in the situation of occupational health and safety within the company. In Dabur Nepal Green House Pvt. Ltd, Check-off system to collect the member-ship dues from union member was introduced by the collective agreement. Under the agreement, workers’ educational allowance along with other was increased.

A charter of demand was submitted by Nepal Health Volunteer Association (NEVA), an organization of 52 thousand health volunteers, before the Government of Nepal. The Ministry of Health invited NEVA representative in the task force to review the benefits of the volunteers. The task force recommends that after completion of 20-year volunteers service the volunteers shall receive Rs. 3,000 per service year and dress allowances to be increased by Rs. 1,000. Similarly, the recommendation by the task force requires the medical and accidental insurance to be introduced to cover all health volunteers.

Agreement signed in Yeti Airlines on June 2014, after 7 months long negotiation was able to increase monthly salary and introduced maternity care expenses and funeral expenses. The agreement signed in Hotel Hyatt Regency helped to increase transportation allowance, medical insurance and hospitalization amount including, accidental insurance amount.

Basic salary has been increased in Hulas Steel Industries Ltd through CBA between management and Whole Industry Trade Union (WHIN) on September 2014. Basic salary, dress allowances and employee loan was increased in the Unique Pharmaceutical Pvt Bara after the collective agreement signed on February 2015. In Gokarna Golf Resort, Dashain allowance and salary of the workers has been increased. Ruminini Chemical Industries Pvt. Ltd. introduced the gratuity fund, accidental insurance and medical benefit to the workers on August 2014. The agreement with the management of Nepal Poly Pipe Pvt. Ltd. doubled tiffin allowance and also increased transport allowance.

Nepal Wire and Cables Private Limited of Bara management signed CBA with WHIN on February 2015, which introduced life insurance, and paid leave for union work and also increased basic salary. Insurance amount was increased and promotion policy was also introduced by CBA in Bhagawati Steel Industries.

CUPPEC Bardia District committee and Manjhandi Forest Consumer Group signed an agreement on February 2015, which increased wage of forest workers and workers became permanent.

Collective charter of demands was submitted in some of the industries and where negotiations are going on. Unions of Kusum Oil Pvt. Ltd, CG Agro Pvt. Ltd, Nepal Gas Pvt. Ltd, Minaxi Product, and District Community Forest Committee of Nawalparasi have submitted the demand to increase wage, introduce Personal safety equipment in the work place and accident compensation etc.

Chronic Labour disputes which are not settled yet

Workers of Highland Distillery Industries Pvt. Ltd are still suffering from the illegal lockout declared by the management since February 2012. Denying the order of the court, employer is still continuing illegal practices. The employer also terminated 33 workers with fake allegation and the case is still under consideration of Labour Court. The management of the Nepal Boards Limited retrenched the workers without complying with the legal provision since July 2013. Workers also filed the case before labour court, which is still pending. The management of the Bhrikut Pulp and Paper Nepal Ltd. also did not provide salary and benefit under the agreement signed on March 2011 between union and management.

Gorkha Brewery Pvt. Ltd.; a producer of Carlsberg and Tuborg beer, denied the basic rights and social security to the workers since 2000. GEFONT affiliate Whole Industry Trade Union of Nepal (WHIN) with the support of GEFONT filed a case before labour office seeking a letter of permanent appointment, provident fund, gratuity leaves and other social security benefits under the law for 28 workers in 2012. After an enquiry, labour office gave the verdict against the management. The management filed an appeal before the labour court, which was set-aside on February 2013. The employer again filed a writ petition against the judgment made by labour office and court. However, employer petition has been quashed on March 2014 and Court ordered employer to execute the judgment made by labour office and court.

Even after three years they are not executing the court decision yet. The employers with the malicious intention
prevented these 28 workers to enter the company from 3 May 2015, just after the earthquake. However, employer is playing divide-and-rule game by permitting those workers who are member of ANTUF affiliates in the company. With such discriminatory practice, employer also denied to bargain collectively with the WHIN till May 24, 2015.

Other problems settled by agreement

Family member of Ramkaji Pariyar, who died on 4 November 2014 because of accident at workplace in Upper Marsyangdi A-Syno Hydropower, received 1.5 Million Rupees as compensation including employment in the same hydropower for one of the family member. In the same hydropower, another worker Khagendra Ghimire also died on October 28, 2014 while on duty and his family member also received 1.3 Million Rupees as compensation and employment for one family member in the hydropower. This was possible because of the agreement signed between management and CUPPEC.

As per the agreement between management of Himalayan Guide and UNITRAV, the families of all victim of Everest avalanche of April 2014 received 1.5 million per family including Cde Dorjee Khatri. However, families of victims of another avalanche in Annapurna range in September 2014 received only NRs 300,000 compensation from Destination Nepal, remaining compensation is yet to be provided. UNITRAV has urged to provide compensation to families of the victims as soon as possible.

The family member of a security guard Kishor Ghising who was working in Everest Momo centre received Nr 250,000.

Altogether 1575 news related to World of Work has been found published during the period of May 2014 to April 2015. Out of the total coverage, 38 % (596) are associated with sufferings, problems and unfair behaviour against workers, whereas 32% (505) are focused on positive efforts for resolution and cases of achievements. On the other hand, a total of 18% (279) coverage is of cases & events not responded or ignored by the concerned authorities including government, employers and trade unions. Miscellaneous coverage of diverse events and cases comes to be 12% in the totality. Among the cases of sufferings, the women workers have been 6%. However considering the current situation of gender based discrimination, it can be concluded that less cases of suffering of women workers have been recorded in print media, same may apply to other forms of mass media as a trend.

Space in media for labour market events and issues is widening, but not to the required level. Problems are being highlighted and cases not solved are focused, but positive achievements are less considered as valuable news. A trend of picking up problems faced by workers in foreign employment is increasing which shows sensitivity of media towards migrant workers. Case-based highlighting is heavy in media compared to poor space to the policy issues of the labour market.

The strikes and labour disputes in the formal sector are very few during the period whereas the closing of small establishments is considerable.

News Analysis: Trend in World of Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News headline published in May 2014-April 2015</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Injustice and exploitation against workers</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactive action</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not addressed</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1575</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
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By Dr JN Prasai
### Major Timeline of World of Work

#### 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28-31 Mar</td>
<td>GEFONT Sixth Congress held</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 April</td>
<td>Avalanche at Mt Everest killed 12 Climbing Sherpa’s along with UNITRAV’s Vice prez Dorge Khatri</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 April</td>
<td>Parliament adopted Ordinance on Investigation of Disappeared Persons; Truth and Reconciliation Commission formation</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 April</td>
<td>Landslide at Upper Madikhola Hydropower trapped 16 workers in Tunnel</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 April</td>
<td>Handover of Responsibility to the New NEC elected from GEFONT Sixth Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>01 May</td>
<td>GEFONT Celebrated May Day with slogan Transformation: By Building Workers’ Power</td>
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<td>03 July</td>
<td>9th Congress elected Cde. K.P Oli as the President of ruling CPN (UML)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 July</td>
<td>Govt. unveils Nr 618 billion budget for the Year 2014/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 July</td>
<td>GEFONT celebrated its silver jubilee of establishment</td>
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<tr>
<td>02 Aug</td>
<td>GEFONT established Solidarity Fund worth Nr 10 Million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02 Aug</td>
<td>126 people killed by massive landslide of Mankha and Ramchebesi in Sindulpalchowk; 67 MW electricity generated by 7 Hydropower’s including Bhotekoshi was erupted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05 Aug</td>
<td>Legislature-Parliament adopted Commitment of Resolution on Social Security Fund for the workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09 Aug</td>
<td>Landslide killed 4 people in Jiri, Dolakha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Aug</td>
<td>Flood and Landslide due to heavy Rainfall in different Districts killed 42 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 August</td>
<td>Nepal Government nominates 17 CA Members out of 26 Vacant Seats; 17 CA Members includes-8 from Congress, 8 from CPN-UML and 1 from RPP</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 Sep</td>
<td>Avalanche at Base Camp of Mt Manaslu killed 9 Tourists and 12 injure</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 Oct</td>
<td>Avalanche in Manag and Mustang killed 43 Tourists, 50 dispaareaed and 175 seriously injure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Oct</td>
<td>India and Nepal sign an agreement on electricity trading pact. The agreement commits Nepal to sell electricity legally</td>
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<tr>
<td>27-28 Oct</td>
<td>ITUC Nepal Affiliates Council (NAC) organised Second Wider Workers’ Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>04 Nov</td>
<td>Nepali Congress and CPN (UML) agreed to have a common road map on disputed issues of Federalism, Forms of governance, electoral system and judiciary</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 Nov</td>
<td>Council of Ministers decides to operate Public Service Offices 12 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-27 Nov</td>
<td>18th SAARC Summit held in Kathmandu; adopted 36 points declaration</td>
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<tr>
<td>02 Dec</td>
<td>Government of Nepal declares additional 61 municipalities</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 Dec</td>
<td>JTUCC organised Third National Trade Union Conference with a slogan Unity in Diversity. Conference elected GEFONT Prez Bishnu Rimal as the President of JTUCC</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 Dec</td>
<td>GEFONT launched Regular Trade Union School Launch</td>
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#### 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19 Jan</td>
<td>Fighting broke out in parliament, immediately after CA chairperson tabled the proposal to decide the disputed issues through majority voting system. Lawmakers of the UCPN (M)-led alliance of 30 opposition parties broke chairs and hurled micro phones to bar the Constituent Assembly (CA) Chair Subash Nembang &amp; UML president K. P Oli also targeted</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 Jan</td>
<td>Constitution Assembly Fail to declare New Constitution according targetted date January 22; due to disruption of the house by the opposition parties</td>
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<tr>
<td>8-9 March</td>
<td>GEFONT organised Sixth National Woman Conference; conference elected new leadershi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 April</td>
<td>Govt. Celebrated 100 Weeks of Bagmati Cleaning Mega Campaign; human chain created from both banks of Bagmati River in Kathmandu valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 April</td>
<td>7.9 magnitude strong earthquake hits Nepal, killed over 8 thousand of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01 May</td>
<td>JTUCC organised memorial service to the victim of earthquake; with a message of tribute, condolence and solidarity. JTUCC president urged all trade union member to engage in recue, relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Together we will stand…

I can hear your cry
I can see your tear
I can feel the pain
I can sense your fear
But there some thing you should know
That’s not all alone
Standing right there by your side
I’m your friend; I’m your own

So let’s hold on, let’s hold on
Let’s hold each other’s hand
Let’s hold on, let’s hold on
Together we will stand...

Even the darkest night will end
And The Sun will rise again
Even the darkest night will end
And The Sun will rise again....

The walls all crumbled down
Broken homes, broken towns
Innocent lives snatched away
Sounds sorrow all around
But the hope will never die
And spirit will survive
Brick by brick will build there all
We keep the faith alive

So let’s hold on, let’s hold on
Let’s hold each other’s hand
Let’s hold on, let’s hold on
Together we will stand...

Even the darkest night will end
And The Sun will rise again
Even the darkest night will end
And Sun will rise again....

- In solidarity with Nepali Earthquake Victim,
  Song by Gaurav Dagaonkar, India
  https://t.co/lM10ylADK