Just after the fall of Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) led Government (on May 03, 2009), everyone had guessed that coming days will not be so easy. This was proven by the events of last quarter of the Year 2009. We witnessed series of disturbances and street protest in capital and major cities. Main opposition in the legislature parliament - the Unified CPN (Maoist) declared 'stern' agitation; what they called it was for Civilian Supremacy against the UML led government. They termed 22 parties coalition government “the puppet” and further declared they will no way recognise this government.

First attempt they made by boycotting the sessions of legislature parliament, then they started disturbing the house by picketing. This drama continued for 5 months. In between Nepali people saw a series of general strikes, one of them lasting for three days.

There were many "twists and turns" in Maoist agitation, however all were directed to replace existing coalition by a government which would be led by them. Worst case was forest encroachment by the herd of “land-less squatters”, thousands in number at western Nepal. To remove them from the area, half dozen people lost their life during the process in police shoot-out.

Amidst such anomalies dialogue-discussion and interaction within major political actors was continued. A High Level Political Mechanism was established by the major parties known as the BIG-Three - the UCPN (M), Nepali Congress (NC) and Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) or CPN (UML). It was expected that this mechanism would sort-out all differences among the key players in Nepali politics, which ultimately conclude peace process in logical end. Initially with all odds, the HLPM tried to assure Nepali people that the new constitution to be declared on time and law and order which is fragile would come to a control. The disturbed Parliament was on, and the routine work began in track. A milestone in this regard was, making further progress in process of integration-rehabilitation-management and supervision of Maoist combatant. A proposal in this regard presented by the Prime minister, who is also the chief of Special Committee set as per the
Comprehensive Peace Accord was principally agreed by all party. Even a date-line to complete the process was set. The discharge process of minors known as disqualified Maoist Combatant from the various cantonments was successfully completed. All of the 11 thematic committee of Constituent Assembly completed their preliminary draft report, which have paved a way to complete the drafting-up of the new constitution.

However, the political gambling didn’t stop here. Once more the UCPN (M) tried again to pull down the government. The constitution making process somehow overshadowed; they continued demonstrate their Demagogic character.

March 20, the giant personality of Nepali politics, late Prime Minister Mr. G P Koirala passed away. He was coordinator of among three leaders of Big Three. Despite leaders claim to provide Statesmanship during memorial meeting of Mr. Koirala, it didn’t help to narrow down gaps among three parties. Though Six points proposal for Consensus1 was charted out, the Maoist unilaterally declared protest programme according to them “Three-Blows or Teen-dhakka” against government laying down a demand of resignation of PM as the minimum bottom line.

Collecting large number of party cadres in Kathmandu on May 1st of this year the UCPNM organised huge rally and mass meeting in Kathmandu. On that very Day Maoist Chairman Prachanda declared- “if there is no resignation of PM, there will be no consensus; if there is no consensus, from May 2nd on ward there will be indefinite general strike throughout the country”.

A show-off between UCPN (M) and ruling coalition began, general public were frightened of possible violence and anarchy. Thanks to the government and the main opposition, both sides largely shown restrain. The security agencies exercised considerable restraint and the Maoist leadership kept its activists under control. The protest programme largely remained peaceful.

However, as the strike entered into sixth day, general public in the capital city started to feel some sorts of suffocation! They started to argue spontaneously asking- either reach to an agreement or we will defy strike. On May 7, huge crowd equalling to Maoists protesters in number gather at capital city in order to press both side for consensus and to end the indefinite general strike. Such moves throughout the country matter- Maoist withdrew their protest programme and asked the ruling coalition to sing the tune what they were expecting.

Post May 1st scenario is not encouraging either. Former rebel is camping with some fringe parties on one side demanding resignation of PM and other the ruling coalition are seeking package-deal with main opposition. The debate has been concentrated on- whether PM quit first and parties would make government of national unity or the Maoist sign first in a package which would spell out number of combatants to be integrated in security agencies including other point which Maoist already agreed but it never had implemented.

Pitifully to say, the CA could not complete drafting the constitution at scheduled time-frame due to such anomalies among the actors.

At midnight of 28th May, just 15 minutes before the expiry of tenure of the CA, the Legislature-Parliament passed by two-thirds majority the Eighth Amendment Bill to the Interim Constitution extending the tenure of the CA by one year. The Amendment proposal was passed after the leaders of the three main parties—UCPN (Maoist), NC and CPN-UML—agreed to sort out differences, including contending issues delaying the conclusion of the ongoing peace process, in a spirit of consensus and cooperation. The looming danger of constitutional and political crisis was averted at the eleventh hour through the following three-point agreement.

- We are committed to moving ahead with consensus and cooperation to take the peace process to a meaningful conclusion, to carry out all the remaining works related to the peace process, and to

1 Reviewing past agreements; making conducive atmosphere for mutual trust, preparing common position on President’s move to reinstate the then COAS, reaching a specific agreement on ongoing peace process, building agreement of contentious issues of constitution drafting and preparing specific proposal for power sharing.
accomplish the historic responsibility of completing the task for writing the new constitution.

- Though a significant progress has been made in the constitution-writing process, it has not been completed yet. Therefore, we have agreed to extend the tenure of the Constituent Assembly by one year.
- Based on the agreement to fulfill these responsibilities and works as soon as possible, we are ready to form a national consensus government and for that, the prime minister of the incumbent coalition government is ready to resign without delay.

Better late than never! GEFONT, its constituents and members welcome the parties’ coming to this long-awaited agreement at the eleventh hour.

**2010**

**GEFONT Priority Campaigns of the Year**

GEFONT’s Top Priority Campaigns of the year have focused on freedom of Association, Social Security System and Labour Agenda in the New Constitution. Inaugurated by the Chairman of the Constituent Assembly on July 20, 2009, the campaigns have continued to date, both singly, by GEFONT alone, as well as jointly with JTUCC.

Marking the repressive Day of February 1st, when the freedom of association was derogated by the erstwhile royal regime in 2005, GEFONT mobilised its constituents at all levels, members, activists and leaders nationwide, throughout the country, covering 55 of 75 districts, in distribution of pamphlets and launching of other publicity events, including corner speeches and miking. The GEFONT members came to the streets, reached factories, schools, hospitals and other public places to make aware the working people of Nepal about the freedom of association accorded by the ILO Convention No 87, both in formal and informal sectors of employment. Another issue was focused on establishment of Social Security Fund in Nepal.
The beginning of the comprehensive campaign was announced by GEFONT President Bishnu Rimal in the presence of journalists and workers at Kathmandu city. President Rimal called on all to participate in the campaign which aimed to establish a social security fund and ensure that the right to assembly and association would never again be denied in any pretext. “It is imperative to establish a welfare state to bring about a real change in the life of the workers” said President Rimal. “It will be a state that guarantees workers a package of rights with social security involving the right to education, health and unemployment benefits as the minimum.”

As an immediate outcome of the campaign, President Rimal informed, the state would be forced to initiate two interrelated measures: (a) ratification of ILO Convention No 87, which protects the freedom of association of workers, and, (b) establishment of a social security fund from the amount collected as the social security tax from all salaried workers.

Likewise, in collaboration with JTUCC partners, various lobbying and advocacy activities were launched to ensure inclusion of labour agendas in the new constitution. In 8 major cities of the country joint interaction programmes were organised in all seven national centres. Separate interaction programmes were organised amongst public sector, private formal sector and informal economy federations in the capital city. The campaigns have been successful in building public opinion, raising workers’ awareness and attracting the attention of lawmakers, policy makers and top political leaders of the country. The issue of class based vision against economic and social inequality has now gained momentum through these campaigns.

GEFONT’s Initiative towards Social Security System

The world is passing through financial, economic and employment crisis. Workers worldwide are trapped in unemployment and labour exploitation is on the rise. In such a situation, social security (as mentioned at ILO Convention No.102) of the working class has been a must.

The Fifth Congress of GEFONT has addressed this worldwide concern. It had emphasized publicity campaigns on all aspects of society security, campaign on establishment and operationalisation of an integrated social security fund, consolidation of micro health insurance, awareness programmes on professional health and safety, constructive campaigns pressurizing the National Welfare Fund to address workers’ needs and concerns, and a comprehensive campaign for further consolidation of the Women Social Support Fund established by GEFONT to protect health of its woman members.

To operationalise the social security directive of the Congress, GEFONT developed the concept of Social Security Fund to match the changing context developed with the government’s proposal for social security tax.

Social Security Fund, a foundation stone for Social Security System

The government of Nepal, through the budget statement of 2009/10, initiated a concrete step towards establishment of the Social Security Fund with 1% tax levied on employee’s salary. Initially, some trade union federations were hesitant to support the move, some even protested. GEFONT followed the course of cautious engagement. To its assessment, the introduction of the social security tax was a new step and would have long-term implications for the workers. As such, it initiated discussions with member federations aligned to the Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre (JTUCC) to see if any opportunities friendly to the working class could be found. Then, a memorandum was submitted to the Finance Minister asking him to implement the new measure in a way that puts the workers in the centre. The memorandum also discussed a number of practical and theoretical issues to be addressed by the social security system being developed.
“The concept of social security tax is a new one in the context of Nepal”, read the memorandum, “a new concept with far-reaching implications.” The memorandum added, “Since the government has announced that a separate mechanism will be set-up to operationalise the scheme, we propose to name the new mechanism as “comprehensive social security fund”, which should operate through a tri-partite board comprising the government, employers and trade unions. The board should be governed by a separate legislation.”

Other recommendations included in the memorandum involved:

- The Fund Management Board should be composed by mid-January of this financial year, with its administrative management and joint-conference completed.
- The tripartite Board is advised to propose in the joint-conference social security measures to be covered by scope of the Fund. The measures should compulsorily include provisions of ILO Convention 102 as well as others that are relevant to our context.
- The conference should discuss proposals and take decisions as to how contributions are guaranteed of employers in the cooperative, public and private sectors.
- Make a public call on all wage workers and employees of all sectors – formal or informal, public or private – to pay the tax.
- Make an easy arrangement in which the employers (taxpayers) in the formal sector deposit the tax in the central fund through local tax offices, including VDCs and municipalities, and those in the informal sector through their respective offices.
- The state should issue a separate social security card to all taxpayers starting from mid-January.

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Social Security: From Where to Start and Where to Reach? A JTUCC Proposal

1. As the social security tax has aimed to cover those who draw regular salaries, the system should initially start amongst them. Efforts should then be made to bring in all workers within a specified timeframe. (Note: According to Nepal Labour Force Survey, the total workforce of Nepal is 11.78 million. Of it, some 2 million are engaged in paid work of various kinds, and 9.79 are in self-employment.)

2. The money that will be collected immediately should be deposited in a separate account following a necessary directive from the government of Nepal. The fund should be managed by a team that comprises tripartite representatives.

3. The contribution of workers-employers-government should be in the ratio of 1:2.5:2.5. The law necessary for this should be enacted immediately.

4. Social security system should be divided into two components, namely (a) “social assistance” to cover the needs of the elderly, indigent and disabled, and (b) “social protection” covering such universally practiced services as pension, provident fund, medicare, education, health insurance and unemployment benefits. The first category of service should be provided from the income tax collected from state treasury. The second one should be covered under the Social Security Fund.

5. A national conference on Social Security System should be organised within mid-January to discuss all these issues, develop a uniform opinion on the system and lay groundwork for a new Social Security Act.

6. Scope and Services: An institution (such as Social Security Admin/Social Security Organisation) should be established to implement various projects for Social Security Fund. The operation of schemes should be administered in such a way that should a scheme fail others will not be affected.

7. All workers depositing 1% contribution should be brought within the scope of the Fund. The employers of the workers should add 2.5% to every contribution.

8. The proposed Social Security Act will be enacted in line with ILO Convention 102 thus creating obligations for the immediate implementation of some three schemes of the nine categories of social security services.

9. To start with, it is advised to cover these three schemes: health benefit, unemployment benefit and invalidity benefit. Workers of all levels and sectors – formal or informal; organised or unorganised; local or multinational companies; and, wage workers or self-employed – should be covered gradually.
As the discussion on – and drafting of – social security law is being held with the technical assistance of ILO, the Fund may also use as reference the discussion notes/draft to prepare its proposal.

The amount of social security tax should not be used for other mundane social and financial assistance purposes. Such assistances should be managed through other funds and sources of the state.

**GEFONT in Tripartite Task Force**

As per the recommendation of GEFONT and JTUCC, the government constituted a tripartite “Social Security Planning Study Taskforce” coordinated by Revenue Secretary of the Ministry of Finance. The Taskforce had 3 representatives from trade unions and another 3 from the employers. Government representatives were drawn from Ministries of Finance, Labour and Transport management; Local Development; and Law and Justice. Of the 3 JTUCC representatives, GEFONT was one.

The Taskforce developed its concept paper and plan of action. All the constituents of the Taskforce – trade unions, employers and government representatives – had agreed to develop their own concept papers. However, a structured concept note was developed only through JTUCC; the suggestions put forwarded by us. The Taskforce is also mandated to work out a procedure and strategy for operationalisation of the Social Security Fund, organise a joint social security conference and also to initiate measures related to technical management, including drafting of social security law.

Recently, the Taskforce has submitted a preliminary report to the government with a proposal for insurance to be operated through the proposed Social Security Fund. The report proposes to form an administrative unit of experts to work out a financial plan on the basis of which to start implementation of unemployment, medical, sickness and maternity benefit insurance schemes starting from the coming fiscal year. The aim of the Fund is to cover 600,000 workers in the first phase. In the next five years, the number is expected to rise to 2 million.

**Workers’ Issues in Draft Constitution**

Seven different trade unions including GEFONT submitted a memorandum to the Chairperson of the Constituent Assembly (CA) Subas C. Nemwang and presented the issues of trade union sector demanding to incorporate them in the new constitution. To further emphasize the issues and make them own by the members of the CA so as to include them in the constitution, the trade unions organised interaction workshops and lobby meetings with the CA members. As a result, many of the issues were already incorporated in the drafts prepared by the thematic committees of the CA. The drafts would be the basis for the new constitution. The trade union sector issues submitted to the Chairperson and discussed with the members of CA were as follows:

**GEFONT organises An Interaction with CA members**

On 4 Jan 2010, GEFONT organised an interaction between trade unions and CA members in order to sensitise the later to pressing labour agendas. In addition to contemporary trade union issues, the interaction was an opportunity to critique trade union issues included in the preliminary draft tabled in the CA. The CA members were apprised why they should support trade union agendas and how labour agendas were related to social transformation. And, the CA members were asked to support trade unions in their agendas, especially in relation to the following three concerns.

- Ensure inclusion in the constitution of all the trade union issues and agendas that have been included in the draft.
- Help us remove all anti-worker references and provisions from the draft, and
- Help us in our campaign to include issues and concerns that are for some reasons left to be included in the draft.
Every person will have the right against exploitation. Exploitation against workers on the basis of custom, tradition and practice is prohibited.

Every worker will be entitled to the standard wages as provided for in the Labour Laws. No agreement will be made with the workers contravening to the provisions in Labour Laws.

Every worker will have the right to fair labour practice & to organise themselves for the protection of rights and interests.

Every trade union will have the right to protest and strike provided that no alternatives are available.

Every worker will be entitled to the standard wages as provided for in the Labour Laws. No agreement will be made with the workers contravening to the provisions in Labour Laws.

Every worker will have the right to fair labour practice & to organise themselves for the protection of rights and interests.

Every trade union will have the right to protest and strike provided that no alternatives are available.

Traffic in human beings, slavery or serfdom is prohibited.

Forced labour in any form is prohibited.

No child under the age of 15 will be employed in income generating activities.

No child will be employed in factories, mines or in any other such hazardous work.

No child will be used in police, army and other security forces or in conflicts or used them as spy.

No discrimination in regard to remuneration will be made between men and women for the same value of work.

No discrimination will be made among the Nepalese workers. The government will uphold the Right to Equality as proposed by the CA Committee for the Protection of Rights of the Minorities and Marginalized Community.

Every worker will have the right to enjoy the provisions as provided for in the labour laws and perform collective bargaining.

Every worker who loses employment will have the right to protection under the Unemployment Insurance Provision.

Labour Market Reform

Democratisation of the World of Work
Where Is Our Agenda?

The trade unions of the world have made ‘decent work’ as their key demand. They have made ‘work’, ‘rights’, ‘dialogue’ and ‘protection’ the four pillars of the demand. In Nepal, all these pillars are getting recognition and being improved through tripartite agreements. Major progress made to this end are: amendments to the existing labour laws to increasing productivity; provision of social security law to protect workers from the exploitation and unfair labour practices; amendment to the existing trade union act for meaningful dialogue; and establishment of National Labour Commission for timely settlements of labour disputes. The preliminary drafts of laws of all these four sectors have been drafted now and all the trade unions of the JTUCC including the employers’ organisations are in discussion with the government to finalise these laws. The main proposals regarding the amendments of the labour laws are summarised below yet to be reached into consensus with the tripartite social partners.

Coverage: The draft law tries to cover all workers formal to informal, no matter how many workers are employed; whereas existing law is applied to the enterprises having 10 plus workers except Government’s venture.

Appointment: The draft law prescribes work into four categories; “Regular, Task-based, Time-based, and Casual employment.” In case of disputes, onus of proof lies on employer.

Termination of employment: This provision is entirely linked with the provision of social security system. The draft law increases the retirement age from 55 to 60. The service of workers may come to end, in case of casual employment - when the work is over; in case of time-based employment - after completion of time and in case of task-based employment - when the task is over.
According to existing law retrenchment can happen if government permits. The draft law has made compulsory consultation with the union. The compensation may be provided by the unemployment insurance scheme.

Besides the termination would be applicable in case of invalidity due to accident or absent for 6 months due to poor health; misconduct; low performance of work—though an opportunity would be granted for hearing; and due to the death of the employer or insolvency.

Provident fund: It is applicable to all workers from the day of joining instead of existing provision applicable to regular employees only

Gratuity: Existing practice of gratuity limited only to permanent worker who completes 3 years of service has been replaced to cover all workers to be benefitted by this provision from the day 1st on job at the rate of 8.33%.

Medical and Accidental Insurance: The draft law proposes a compulsory insurance scheme to cover medical insurance not less than NPR 100,000 and accidental insurance equivalent to NPR 500,000. Existing practice covers only ‘medical treatment cost’ in ‘accident at work.’

Leaves: There is no substantial change in paid leave except maternity. The draft law internalise provision enshrined in ILO convention 183 and added paternity leave up to 7 days for working father.

Minimum Wage: No significant change in fixation of minimum wage.

Pay for Lay off period: Existing practice of half payment during the lay-off period is continued, by removing existing provision of requirement of permission by labour office prior to lay-off of the staffs.

Collective Bargaining: There is no change in submission of charter of demands conciliation process. However, the draft law proposes Industry wise CBA and multi employer bargaining. Existing “conciliation through labour office” is replaced by “conciliation by National Labour Commission.”

Compulsory arbitration would be applied if parties voluntarily agreed and particularly in the essential services. In other cases, conciliation will be optional; if conciliation fails or non binding arbitration is rejected by any party, the strike may take place after 15 days.

Pay during strike and lock out: The draft law proposes full pay during illegal lock outs; no pay in “illegal” strikes; and half pay in “legal” lock out or strikes.

Good Faith Bargaining: The draft law proposes provision of “Good-faith bargaining”; where NLC has given right to direct parties for ‘bargain with good faith.’

Agreement: The draft law proposes validity period of CBA from 2 to 3 years.

Labour commission: A provision of Labour Commission constituted by Labour Commission Act has been proposed in order to make prompt resolution of the collective and other forms of disputes.

Fundamental rights and Fair labour practice. The draft law recognises fundamental right of workers conferred by ILO core conventions. It has proposed a provision of Prohibition of bonded labour; child labour; all kinds of discrimination except based on interconnected necessities; and right to organise for both the worker and the employer. Any agreement contain the anti-union provision shall be null and void. A provision of prohibition of unfair labour practice is pegged with compensation through Court’s order.

Labour Inspection system: The draft law proposes labour inspection system along with existing factory inspection. The Labour Commission may assign accredited inspectors to the members of trade union and employer’s organisation.
Foreign worker: Foreign workers may work in Nepal without discrimination after obtaining work permit.

Out Sourced workers: The draft law proposes outsourced job on recommendation by the Central Labour Advisory Committee, which would be published in the Gazette by the government. No one can be outsourced in the principle work and without permission if any employee accepts outsourced job, s/he will be converted as the employee of principle employer. The responsibility of principle employer will be to monitor payment, social security contribution, and other provisions and for that purpose deposit or bank guarantee may be asked from outsourcing company.

OHS: OSH policy and the Safety committee are compulsory to all company as proposed by draft law. Work may be stopped in case of immediate danger and this cannot be punishable.

Code of good Practices: Code of good practices can be made; which can be locally amended in common consensus of employer and the Union.

Bonus: Ceiling on bonus amount is removed; and it is applicable to outsourced worker too.

GEFONT Condemns Industrial Policy

GEFONT condemned the Industrial Policy 2010 endorsed recently by the Government of Nepal. GEFONT said that the policy is completely bluster against labour and holds no water in its claim to be a milestone to promote industrial relations. Brought to implementation without consultation with the trade unions, considered to be one of the key allies of labour relations, the policy is against the national labour policies and Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standard) Convention No 144 of International Labour Organisation to which Nepal is a party. Though the policy has mentioned that it will facilitate to develop cordial relations between the employers and the workers based on labour flexibility and thereby creating additional employment opportunities, it has completely ignored the need to ensure social security in the process of enacting and amending labour laws.

The ministry has pushed the ‘no work no pay' slogan completely transgressing its jurisdiction which is sure to dishearten industrial environment. It has brought it with bad intension and has leeway to limit the workers rights in the future. No policy will come into implementation unless it is altered to law. Therefore, GEFONT has strongly urged the government to immediately withdraw the policy and not to enact any laws that curtails workers rights in future.

SEZ Bill: Revoke the provisions to contravene the workers' rights

Massively engraving the workers' rights, the government has registered a Special Economic Zone Bill in the Legislature-Parliament recently. Though the Bill has a provision to establish the Special Financial Sector Corporation, there was no consultation with the workers in process of drafting it. Likewise, the Bill is silent about the participation of workers in the process of fixing wages and has left all rights at the will of industrialists to make decision about the workers facilities such as insurance, leave, bonus and gratuity.

Protesting against such flaws of the Bill, GEFONT has strongly urged the government to revoke the provisions in the Bill that contravene with the workers' rights and insisted to include the written suggestions made by different eight federations to the draft Bill.
Transformation is possible!
It has been our conviction for generations. And it is this conviction that has engaged us in struggles over generations. One hundred and twenty-four years ago, workers in the street of Chicago had declared, "we labour selling people are not the machine to earn property for the capitalists… To protect our labour power, refresh it and keep it creative, a whole day should be divided into three components of 'work', 'rest' and 'recreation'". They raised these voices for the working class people of generations to come.

The historic day today is being observed as 121st May Day to pay respect to the workers, such as August Spice, who sacrificed and offered their blood.

On behalf of all the workers of Nepal, a glorified land in the pal of Everest, I would like to pay tributes to all those martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the welfare of the working class people. My salute to them all! I would also like to take this opportunity to offer my hearty greetings to all working people of Nepal who have been struggling over the last 6 decades to jettison the autocratic monarchy and establish democratic republic.

Nepali trade union movement has embraced "the right to work", "right to wage", "right to equality" and "right to liberty" as "four rights" central to social transformation.

Why is social transformation crucial? It is for every worker to
- earn property sufficient to live with dignity
- get an employment that does not discriminate and provides equal opportunity to grow and develop professionally
• have a safe and appropriate workplace
• get an opportunity in which unions can be formed and opinions can be expressed freely
• establish a state that provides a social security system for protection and care of the sick, indigent, elderly and those in need

These agendas of transformation are clubbed together as “decent work” today. And the right to “Decent work” has been the summary of all demands of all trade unionists of all countries.

Has our movement been able to address these demands?

The year 2009/10 has fallen short of hope in terms of resolving political crisis and addressing rising expectations of the people. However, the efforts made and initiatives taken by trade unions have not gone in vain. We rated number one the task of peace building and constitution making. We submitted trade union recommendations to various thematic committees in the Constituent Assembly (CA), and shared them with CA Chairman, Prime Minister and major political parties. We succeeded in influencing them – our recommendations have been included in the drafts prepared by the CA committees.

What are the challenges facing us?

The first challenge is to include issues, not covered by initial drafts, in the final draft constitution and also to ensure those already included in the draft will not be removed from the final draft. Another challenge is to prepare the society as a whole to stand against exploitative and illegal labour practices.

There are employers and employees in each component of would-be-states proposed to be inclusive in terms of ethnicity, gender and regionalism. The existing system stands in favour of the employers, and not of employees. This scenario throws up a challenge to ensure participation of workers in each forum represented by industrialist-entrepreneurs as well as in elected bodies.

The ratification of ILO No. 87, establishment of social security fund, amendment to the Labour Act and enactment of a new law are central to our campaign. I would like to recall the grand mobilisation of workers on 1st February 2010. It was the day GEFONT distributed some 10.5 million pamphlets across the country. The pamphlets aimed to inform people of the social security system and ILO Convention No 87, and mobilise public opinion in favour of these instruments.

Year 2010: May Day in Peril

This year’s May Day was eclipsed by the heightened political turmoil. The call of General Strike by the Unified Communist Party of Nepal – Maoist (UCPN-M) cast shadow on the importance of May Day. Instead of dwelling on the workers’ agenda, this year’s May Day hovered around the calculation of the Maoists’ mobilisation of their cadres for blockades and attacks. Not only the workers but also the people at large were terrified due to Maoist’s actions aiming at creating prohibitory situation for others in the capital city and district/regional centres. Donation drive further crippled the public life.

Amidst such chaotic situation, GEFONT celebrated the May Day with the slogan of “Promulgate New Constitution by the deadline” Rallies and mass meetings was organised to mark the May Day in various strategic locations including Jhapa, Biratnagar, Janakpur, Bara, Hetauda, Butwal, Pokhara, Nepalgunj and Dhangadhi of the country. In Kathmandu, GEFONT together with CoNEP organised a grand programme, where Chairperson of Communist Party of Nepal (UML) Comrade Jhalanath Khanal was invited as Chief Guest. Major agendas of the programme were, among others, the ratification of ILO Convention No. 87, mobilization of social security funds, and timely promulgation of a new constitution. The programme was live broadcast by the state-owned Nepal Television (NTV) and various FM Radio Network to disseminate the message of the programme within and out of the country.

Prior to it, the Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre (JTUCC), organised a press conference to convey the message of the May Day and the programme.
It has been a year since the team under my leadership has taken charge of GEFONT. I would like to recall what we said when we were taking charge a year ago: GEFONT would reach most of the districts should the situation allow us at least to move; where there were workers, there would be GEFONT. I am proud to declare now – we have reached 65 districts from 35 a year ago. And, we have built a new structure to organise 50,000 rural woman health volunteers.

Is it enough? What do statistics say?

- Some 11.18 million people are in employment in Nepal. Around 17% of them (around 2 million) are in paid-employment. Of those in paid employment, more than 79% are in the private sector.
- Of those in employment, only 46% receive regular/monthly payment. The rest are piece-rate, weekly and daily wage workers.
- Every 24 in 100 workers are paid in kind. Except permanent workers, others do not get paid leave, provident fund, gratuity and other benefits related to education, health and housing. Most of the issues of labour contention are thus around whether or not issue appointment letter, whether to hire on a permanent or temporary basis, no work-no pay, hire and fire.
- Although the average monthly income of workers has doubled in 10 years (from NPR 2143 to 5117), majority of workers are still deprived of the national minimum wage (NPR 190 daily).
- The percent of those unemployed is 36.7 of the total workforce. Some 81,000 of them have never been employed, and 172,000 have lost their previous employment.
- More than 8% of those in 20-29 age group are under-unemployed, and men outnumber women in the case on under-unemployment.

This statistical picture of our economy is not encouraging. The stagnating global economy has brought about the downward trend in remittance. Our current economy is in a more critical state than it was during the armed conflict, like the unstable politics that we are confronting.

We tried our best to keep the labour market from the hazardous of armed conflict. We organised a “Nepal Forum” in Geneva in the presence of trade union leaders from a number of countries to implement the Comprehensive Peace Accord between the then rebel and the state. The Forum coincided with the International Labour Conference and was organised jointly by GEFONT and 3 other trade union confederation, the first of its kind.
Unfortunately, the labour relations expected to improve after the establishment of democratic republic took an opposite turn. The community of entrepreneurs submitted themselves to those strong in anarchic forces while flouting the “rule of law” to deal with labour disputes. The world of work was held hostage to a series of wild-cat strikes called by such elements, but the workers were made to pay the price coining a deceptive slogan of “no work- no pay”.

I would like to call on all industrialists/ entrepreneurs and their leaders and organisations to play by the rule. We are ready to be flexible to amend the Labour Act. Are you ready to implement the social security system for the protection of the workers? Are you ready to support the proposal to establish the social security fund with the scheme of benefits involving unemployment allowance, health benefits, accident insurance, and survival’s benefits, among others? We have started contributing 1% from our salaries. Are you ready to contribute your part of 25% as you do in the case of permanent workers? We are ready to amend the existing Trade Union Act for social dialogue. Are you ready to establish a tripartite National Labour Commission to give instance justice to the labour sector?

Finally,

The constitution should have been written by now. Issues not covered in initial drafts prepared by the CA committees but recommended to include in the constitution by the workers should have been presented in the CA by now. As representative of the workers, I, together with other members, on behalf of the GEFONT, to the CA should have cast our votes for the right and against the wrong provisions of each article of the constitution. But it is a shame that we are observing the great May Day in the open air due to the negative consequence of dilapidated politics. Even the May Day has been the prey of the largest party’s obstinacy. Again the kettledrum of conflict is being heard. And the sign to replace the tool of invention in our workplace by the weapon of destruction is proximately high.

On the occasion of the May Day, I urge the main opposition party UCPN-M to ditch its obstinacy “to capture the state power from the street” and adhere to the consensual politics. I call upon all the main political parties to prudently act for the consensus, and not for the conflict.

And, once again, I would like to express my best wishes of the May Day to all the guests here for solidarity, and thousands of our listeners and well wishers watching us and listening to us through the television and radios!
"The overthrow of mother right was the world historic defeat of the female sex. The man took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude; she becomes the slave of his lust & a mere instrument for the production of children."

I would like to put my thoughts with these feelings of famous philisopher Frederick Angies. In this auspicious occasion of International Worker Women’s Day, I would sincerely denounce all forms of anarchies imposed for whatever reasons upon women by men.

In the initial days of GEFONT, presence of women in the policy making structures was almost zero. Realising the importance of women’s representation, we have ardently raised the agenda of women’s presence in all committees. We reviewed the history of union movement in other countries, studied their experiences and practices and discerned that women’s entry in the union was prohibited in some countries where in some others there were only women’s unions rather than both of men and women. The KWWU of Korea, KAD & practice of Denmark, SEWA of India etc are some examples in point.

Then we questioned ourselves: what are these all for? For the number? And, what are the numbers for? Is it for equal rights, decent work and dignified life?

Then we developed our opinion: men-women partnership. But what is this partnership for?

Then we said equality as we mean is not that men and women are same. What we mean is the women remain like women and the men like men.

8 March International Working Women’s Day

Foster mothers in the past are now compelled to work as surrogate mums
The role inherited in men be exercised by men and here the women should support them to exercise the right; likewise the role inherited in women be of the women and there the men should support the women to exercise the right.

We thought that the place we are working in is the tool for capital development where the workers are exploited using all means available, foul or fair: class-based exploitation and gender based social oppression!

Then we reached to the conclusion that socially constructed such custom and practice brought division between women as oppressed and men as oppressor, and we called it patriarchy. Those who say ‘the patriarchy rains the society’ be they men or women; we called them ‘feminists’!

The notion “we are male, you are female” creates division between men and women in workplace and it weakens them to fight against economic exploitation. So we accentuate patriarchy as common enemy of men and women.

And, we accepted: as the capitalism propagates class based society through reinvention of production so does the patriarchy in male dominated society. This kind of power relations exist at home, in family, society and the state, and the result is discriminatory and repulsive society.

Admitting the fact, we for the first time formed Central Women Workers Department (CWWD) in 1992 aiming at breaking the “culture of silence” of the women who have been enduring the oppression for century.

Paulo Freire has said, change is not possible without sitting the oppressed and the oppressor together and listening to each other. As said by Freire, we drafted a policy with a provision that there would be 25 percent of women’s participation in each men related programme and vice versa. We prioritised as number one the physical presence of women in decision making level of the organisation and provisioned in the policy to invest in capacity building of women members.

We reemphasised each men and women member should, not only present in the committee but also actively participate in it. Then, we coined a slogan: Not only representation, but equal participation!

With the passing of days, we could materialise the slogan and the result is this conference. Today as I stand before you, I proudly admit that GEFONT is one of the organisations to ensure 33 percent of women’s representation in its structures. And this is the provision as set by the reinstated House of Representatives to ensure women’s participation in all state structures.

We assertively claim that whatever we have achieved in the last two decades for women in general and women workers in particular, the contribution of our joint struggle has always remained significant. At a time when we were voicing the women’s issues, our labour market was completely atrocious in terms of gender equality. On the one hand, the income generating activities supposed to be under the control of women in developing and developed countries was completely controlled by men workers in our country and on the other hand, informal sector works which was not recognised as income generating activities was like a sole responsibility of women. There was an incomparable gap between the men and women workers in terms of wage, opportunity and facility.

There was a gulf of discrimination between son and daughter even in access to basic facilities like health and education. The sons were granted with opportunities including right to inheritance and clan where the daughters deprived of it. Even the participation of women in politics was zilch.

All the above incidents may sound like a parable for us now. But these were reality some 20 years ago. At this moment, as I am speaking here in this conference, I recall Swasti Bajracharya, the first Coordinator of CWWD, and would like to thank her. ‘Comrade, the future generation will always bear in mind your contribution to our movement!’

I would like to express my gratitude to Honourable Defence Minister Bidhya Bhandari, for her leading role as Coordinator of CWWD even in such critical situation when the whole nation was mourning at
the demise of People’s Leader Madan Bhadari. ‘Comrade, we owe you for your leadership role and mobilisation of women keeping hope alive in such crucial period.’

As I am giving a brief introduction about this conference, I must reemphasise that the National Women Workers’ Conference is aimed at changing unequal and inhuman behaviour persistant in society, workplace and at home within the ‘realm of GEFONT’. We have already organised three such conferences in the past aiming at addressing the labour issues, development and revision of labour policies, programmes and activities. These conferences have given abundance input and suggestions to the development of GEFONT Gender Policy in implementation now.

Our struggle was not easy and smooth in retrospect. I feel that the fight against inherent wrongs is more challenging than the fight against visible enemy. This is the essence of our struggle for about three decades now. In our understanding, those who hold power, be it political or community, never give it up easily and at their will. Change in power relations has never come through a smooth road. We must travel through a murky road to achieve change, and we must understand the fight between the groups of men women for their rights in this context.

As the President of GEFONT, I must make it clear that the wrongs yet to transform within us are the hurdles to equitable workplace and society. On this ground, we have said that our struggle continues.

If so, what are the focused agenda of our movement? First, we must internalise the changing context and patterns of employment owing the globalisation –

- Women have no control over their body even today. The women who used to care the children of aristocrats as foster mothers in the past are now compelled to work as surrogate mums. They are compelled to bear the brunt of rearing child even of those unknown but aligned to provide them love and affection. As Karl Marx said; this is the example of alienation of the century. We must also link the domestic violence to this context and continue our struggle against the inhuman crime against women.
- Our homes and villages are going to be ‘no men’ places. All men are immigrating to earn in foreign land. As a result the women are overburdened by double works both as bread winners and as carers of the family. This way they are double victimised and are pushed to further deteriorating condition.
- Our society is gradually deconstructing the conventional social structures. The joint family is changing into nuclear one. The women of this generation and culture are entering in the labour markets. They are making their presence in the unconventional jobs. To dump the existing discriminations, we have to think from a new height - how we can bring balance between works and life!
- The representation of women has reached to 33 percent from zero. This is time to think how to sustain it and how to contribute to increase their capacity. If the women are more in the committees and less as members in the organisational structures, it may create a risk of imbalance within the organisation. So how can we organise the women in the world of work under the union movement?

Our conference will dwell upon and discuss these pertinent issues until the next day. It will also revisit the existing Gender Policy of GEFONT to fit it with the context.

The conference will seriously discuss how to institutionalise the achievements made to date, thereby making the slogan of equal right, decent work and dignified life a reality. It will widely discuss agenda to make the new constitution friendly to women workers.

As the President, I wish a grand success of the conference and best wishes on the occasion of 100th International Worker Women Day to all those present here!

(Keynote speech delivered in the inaugural session of the Fourth National Worker Women Conference organised by GEFONT in the context of 100th International Women Workers Day.)
March 8
GEFONT organises 4th National Woman Workers Conference

To mark the 100th anniversary of the International Women Workers Day, a national conference was organized in Kathmandu on 8 March 2010 with a theme of “Equal Rights, Decent Work and Dignified Life.” The Conference was inaugurated by Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal at a special ceremony. Premier Nepal called upon women workers to get organised in trade unions and confidently fight injustice, exploitation and discriminations against women.

He said, “Women have to constantly raise strong voices to ensure their rights in the new constitution; to put an end to injustice, exploitation and social discrimination; and to make the slogan ‘equal rights, decent work and dignified life’ a reality.”

GEFONT President Bishnu Rimal shared rationale of the Conference. On the occasion, delivering a greeting-message, Defense Minister and ANWA Chairperson Bidhya Devi Bhandari said, “Let’s unite to empower the women and to build a society characterised by equal rights to women.”

GEFONT’s Central Planning Commission member and Chairperson of the CA Committee for Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles, Binda Pandey stressed the need for exerting pressure by women until the promulgation of the constitution to ensure trade union rights.

The programme was participated in by the representatives of various trade union federations; International Trade Union Solidarity support organisations; GEFONT leaders; representatives from GEFONT affiliates; the ANWA; representatives of various NGOs; media professionals; and representatives to the Conference from across the country.

On the occasion, a documentary film entitled "Forgotten Women" was screened. The organisers also shared solidarity messages received from a number of national and international organisations to the conference.

In the closed session of the Conference GEFONT’s women policy was reviewed taking into account the changing context. During the session GEFONT Central Planning Commission members Binda Pandey and Dr. Bimala Rai presented discussion paper on ‘Women’s Issues in the New Constitution’ and ‘GEFONT’s Gender Policy in the Changed Context’ respectively. The closed session was also addressed by Umesh Upadhyaya, Secretary General of GEFONT.

GEFONT Vice-president and Chairperson of Women Committee Bina Shrestha and Secretary Belimaya Ghale presented the Regulation of Women’s Committee and Organisational Report respectively. About 370 representatives from across the country took part in the Conference.
NEPALI WOMEN: STEP BY STEP TAKING OVER POWER

1 The Dark Era of Nepali Women
Until more than a hundred years back, Nepali women had no recognition as a citizen. They used to be abused, misused and enslaved, and used to face extreme social oppression.

2 First Recorded Rebellion
Sati Pratha, one of the cruelest and most inhumane social practices, faced a serious challenge when a group of women led by Yog Maya committed mass suicide in protest of the practice. This was the point of departure towards protection of women as rightful beings.

3 Attainment of Civil and Political Rights
Women's participation in state and social processes was something unusual as far back as just 60 years. They used to be the victims of child marriage, polygamy and myriad forms of domestic violence. They were deprived of adult franchise, let alone other rights.

This discrimination could no longer linger on as a few daring women stood against it valiantly. Gradually, they attained limited rights, including the right to vote and be voted as candidates and participate in state-bureaucracy, and started participating in political as well as civil society organisations.

4 Life Threatening Challenge Accepted!
Challenging autocracy was life threatening. But we were not deterred by the challenge. As we moved on, we forced women's issues and causes into the centre of political debates. Progressive parties took up our issues as part of their political programme. Our participation started to grow in politics of all persuasions.

We are thankful to international democratic and liberation movements, which contributed to strengthening us and our movement.

5 We Became Part of State Power
The 1990s became a major breakthrough in our movement. Our issues and concerns became part of state as well as political and social processes. We had a woman (Com. Sahana Pradhan) to lead a United Left Front that led the 1990 people's movement ending a direct rule by the absolute monarchy and establishing multi-party democracy. The society was compelled to share 'power' with us.

- Now, women make up 33% in the Constituent Assembly, which also acts as the Legislature-Parliament;
- It has become mandatory that 20% representation of women is ensured in local bodies
- At least a woman is represented in various level of state mechanisms
- They are also in various structures of political parties and civil society organisations
- Issues of gender equality are high on political agenda. So are debates on reservation versus participation, and physical representation versus issue representation.
- The end of patriarchal worldview, equality in the right to property, both parental and others, right to recognition by mothers’ name, women's health etc have been central to socio-political processes at all levels.

6 Then Came the Golden Age!
Our participation in the April uprising of 2006 remained historical. We became part of reinstatement of dissolved parliament which made landmark declarations vis-à-vis gender equality. The Citizenship Act ensured the rights denied to us for long. The Interim Constitution constitutionally guaranteed the right to equality. The CA election Act guaranteed 50% representation of women in the Proportional Representation system of election, if not in the First Past the Post system. Both combined, we make up roughly 33% in the parliament.

7 Yet, Challenges Remain!
Despite achievements, there is no room for full satisfaction. The challenges facing us are plenty. Political declarations often fail to match up with actual implementation. The national psyche still clings to status quo, and there is little will to go beyond lip-service. The hesitation to give up confrontational approach and adopt cooperative one is equally palpable.

But, these are challenges we are able to overcome!

1 A cultural practice mandating a wife to immolate in the funeral pyre of a deceased husband.
GEFONT’s first National Youth Worker Conference was held on 1 February 2010. GEFONT President and CA member Bishnu Rimal inaugurated the Conference at a special ceremony in Kathmandu.

In the inauguration, President Rimal stated that youths have led all political and social movements and they should play a leadership role in GEFONT too. He said, "Martyr Ganga Lal Shrestha, who fought against the Rana rule, was 22 year old at the time of martyrdom. Similarly, Puspa Lal Shrestha, the founder of the Communist Party of Nepal, was a youth politician when he established the party in 1949. The young generation was at the forefront of all political movements of 1979, 1990 and 2006. Youths should not only dream of becoming doctors and engineers, they should also take leadership in the political front and drive the country towards a right direction."

Prior to the inaugural session, a procession marched through major parts of the city and assembled at the City Hall in Kathmandu.

The Conference elected a 12-member National Youth Committee under the leadership of Bal Gopal Thapa.

Fifth National Congress of GEFONT, in 2009, had decided for the first time, to form a youth Committee with special focus to youth workers and their role and importance in trade union movement.
Trade unions debate around climate change

On 9 September, two Nepali affiliates of ITUC, GEFONT and NTUC-I, hosted a joint programme with the help of Danish trade unions LO-Denmark and SustainLabour. Entitled "Trade Union Debate around Climate Change", the programme had the aim of sensitising trade union to the aspects and effects of climate change.

Addressing the seminar GEFONT president Bishnu Rimal said: "Climate change represents one of the greatest environmental, social and economic threats facing the planet now. Although we Nepalis are the least responsible to cause the damage, we are among the most vulnerable to pay the costs." He further quoted a special resolution which reflects GEFONT’s position adopted by its 5th National Congress held in year 2009:

“Different forms of pollution and the natural imbalance caused by high population growth and climate change are serious problems of the world community. Trade union movements and trade union organisations cannot be indifferent to these problems which affect adversely the lives of the working population. Deforestation, lack of drinking water, flood, global warming, climate change and various epidemics first victimise the working people.”

Immediately after the programme, GEFONT and NTUC-I Presidents had an opportunity to participate in the "Conference of Parties (COP-15)" organised at Copenhagen, in Denmark. Both the Presidents were there as trade union representatives on behalf of ITUC. While in Denmark, GEFONT distributed related posters and presented a small documentary entitled "Save Himalayas, Save Climate" to the ‘World of Work Pavilion’ held at the central office of Lo-Denmark.
Sorrowful Story of a Domestic Worker

For the last 16 years, Sushila Chaulagain has been working as a domestic worker. She gets a nominal wage for all hard and untidy work, NPR 1,100 (nearly US$16) per month. To earn a living, she should work in at least three houses. Her husband is also a domestic worker. His earning is as low as hers, with their combined earning crossing NPR 8,000 (about US$ 113) a month. It is not difficult to imagine how they maintain their family, pay rentals, education costs of their children and health expenses.

The Chaulagains feel that their working energy is decreasing day by day. They do not have a saving as the earning is not even sufficient to maintain them. They do not have immovable property. They are already scared of their upcoming elderly - the day they are unable to earn, they will go to starvation.

Most of the domestic workers in Nepal share the same fate as the Chaulagains. They toil in hard labour from dawn to dusk. Their employment is hidden, and is untouched of laws made to protect the rights of workers. The constitutionally protected right to dignified work is not applicable to them.

Domestic labour is both a matter of prestige of those who hire the domestics, as well as an obligation created by unbridled urbanisation in which the middle class do not find time to engage in domestic chores. As a result, the number of those entering into this hidden labour is on the rise, and also the plight associated with it. Poverty, migration and lack of education are the factors that create the pull of unemployed available to fall prey to such labour practices.

In a sign of a positive development, the domestics have started recently to be organized for their recognition as workers and entitlement to the rights. To make their profession secure and dignified, they have formed a union – Nepal Independent Domestic Workers Union. This is the first union of its kind in South Asia.

The Union is formed at a time when the ILO is preparing for a separate convention addressing domestic workers. The government of Nepal has also recognised household labour while implementing its Tenth Development Plan. Even legislation, Domestic Violence (Crime and Punishment) Act, 2009 has come into enforcement criminalising domestic violence. Yet, there is no law protecting the rights and benefits of domestic workers.

The Union has been advocating for a new law regulating domestic labour and protecting rights of the domestics as any other dignified worker.

Demands of Domestic Workers

- Register domestic workers at municipalities/VDCs and issue them identity cards
- Bring domestic labour in the scope of the Labour Act and regulate it
- Guarantee an appropriate minimum wage, and provide for health check-up and treatment
- Guarantee minimum facilities accorded by the Labour Act, such as family reunion, weekly/public holidays, and maternity leave
- Introduce the practice of written contract between employers and workers regulating the nature, time and facilities related to the work
- Bring the domestics within the network of social security

(Script written by Binod for GEFONT TV show Sram ra sirjana aired by Nepal TV, a State-owned TV channel)
The year (May 2009–April 2010) saw a number of labour disputes, some of them turning to complexity. Major disputes of the year were related to the issues of collective bargaining, retrenchment of workers, padlocking, registration of trade union, compensation, and implementation of labour laws and collective agreements.

The government's decision for closure of hotels operating inside Chitwan National Park incited a huge hue and cry. The attacks against workers by the managements of Susma Koirala Memorial Hospital and Beijing China Hotel, and the workers' unity to protest them were in the highlights of the year. Disputes over the minimum wage in Jute mills, problems related to the pay-off of Butwal Spinning Mills, the dispute at Himal Power Company, and the longstanding row at Indian Airlines were some of the complex cases.

In the year, more than 3,000 workers were retrenched from job in about a dozen of renowned factories including Janakpur Cigarette Factory, Biratnagar Jute Mills, Butwal Spinning Mills, Rajkamal Spinning Mills, and Jyoti Spinning Mills. About 300 workers were retrenched from their jobs in around half a dozen industrial enterprises including National Medical College, Beijing China Hotel, and Biratnagar Jute Mills while fighting for their rights. However, the workers won CBA due to their dedicated struggle at Susma Koirala Memorial Hospital, National College Birgunj, Swabalambarikasank Bank (SBB), Women Welfare Centre and hotels and restaurants in Biratnagar. Similarly, some half a dozen industrial enterprises, including Nepal Polymer Industries, and Gorkha Brewery, faced up to illegal lockout. A tribunal was established to resolve the longstanding dispute at Himal Power Company. In the initiation of CUPEC Nepal, an important achievement was made to fix minimum wages for workers involved in non-formal sectors in Kathmandu, Baglung, Miyagdi, Makawanpur and Nawalparasi.

On 28 October 2009 alone, at least five construction workers lost their lives on the spot in sand-quarry wreckage in Baktapur. Bringing some achievements and losses, the year 2009/10 remained a mixture of happiness and grief for Nepal's trade union movement.

Collective Bargaining at Central Level
As per Nepal’s labour law, enterprise level and local unions have rights to collective bargaining with concerned managements. However, the workers’ concerns in the non-formal sectors and some of the industrial enterprises remain unaccounted. In this backdrop, GEFONT-affiliated unions have taken up these issues and started to expedite collective bargaining at the central level in 2009/10 so that a consistent response from the centre could spread out to the local level. Normally, such demands and bargainings are made with the government and respective sectoral associations and industrial enterprises.

UNITRAV 16 point Agreement: Major highlights
- Ensures health insurance of NRs. 250,000 and accident insurance of 500,000 for each worker.
- The workers involved in trekking sector will be provided with NRs. 5,300 each as festival (Dashain) allowances;
- 50% increment in the wage of trekking workers; a bank of 1,000 set clothes will be established for porters based at Lukla; and the trekking sector porters will be provided with residence facilities.
- Establishment of a welfare fund;
- Implementation of the labour act; dissemination of information about Nepali mountainers as equal to that of foreigners; providing identity cards to the workers with detailed information; and forming a task force to fix wages for the workers.
In this run, UNITRAV has been successful to reach a 16-point deal (See Box) with Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal (TAAN), the sectoral association of tourism entrepreneurs. The agreement has contributed to increase the wages and other facilities of trekking workers. Similarly, there has been an agreement to implement 10% increment in the service charge in line with the demands put forth by NIHWU in Eastern Region. It has benefitted workers from dozens of hotels in the region. A number of bargaining has been on going to fulfil the demands of GEFONT-affiliated Federations. Some of the Federations have been launching their programme to pressurise the concerned authorities to listen to the workers. Barber Trade Union has organised a sit-in at the entrance of Singh Durbar, the Central secretariat of the Government of Nepal. Similarly, CUPPEC has launched several programmes to pressurise the government and draw its attention to the workers’ demands. Other unions have also been launching mass-mobilisation programmes and equally giving priority to dialogues with the stakeholders. For example, ITWAN, NIFBWU, and ITOGWUN have submitted 22-point & 19-point demands respectively. NICWU has submitted a 20-point demand whereas NEBTU and NTAU have put forth 28-point and 16-point demands respectively. Other Federations raising their concerns and furnishing written demands with the concerned actors include NDWU (8-point), CUPPEC (16-point), UNITRAV (21-point), and IGCUN (15-point).

Butwal Spinning Factory Pay-off workers

Some 600 workers of Butwal Spinning Factory, who were deprived of their salary for long, were able to get their payment in December 2009 through a long process of protest and bargaining. The sick industry had stopped paying the workers, and the matter had to be taken to the Finance Minister, which finally made the payment.

Trekkers’ Family compensated finally

Jan 20, 2010, trekking worker Ngarinji Sherpa died of high altitude at the Mount Everest Base Camp. He was at the Base Camp serving as an assistant to a Korean tourists’ team. On the death, the Jiyang Treks and Expeditions Union, to which the deceased belonged, initiated a series of protest programmes asking for compensation to the bereaved family. The pressure resulted in the trekking company...
paying 330,000 (NPR) to the wife of the deceased. What the case shows is the lack of basic health and safety measures even in such a hazardous work as high altitude trekking and expeditions.

Closed Resorts Came into Operation
Seven forest resorts of Chitwan National Park, which were closed by the government decision from July 16, 2009, came into operation for another 3 years as a result of concerted pressure by trade union and local workers. However, 2 of them, Machan Wildlife Resort and Rhino Wildlife Camp, have not started their business for delaying to pay government tariffs.

Understandings Resulting in Fulfilment of Workers’ Demands
The agitating workers of the Development Forum, who wanted their 52-point demands fulfilled, reached a 28-point understanding on Feb 25, 2010. The understanding included provisions for permanent appointment, pay rise by 28 percent and holidays as per the law.

Swabalamban Bikas Bank reaches in agreement
Also the workers of Swabalamban Bikas Bank or Self-Reliant Development Bank got their demands for permanent appointment and rise in salary and regional allowance through an understanding, dated Feb 4, 2010, between the workers’ union and Bank management.

Workers won at Mishra Printing Press
The workers of Mishra Printing Press, Kailali got a minimum wage, as demanded, as a result of joint efforts of a local Labour Office and GEFONT Labour Relations Council & Zonal Committee. As per the understanding reached on Oct 22, 2009, the workers now get NPR 3050 as minimum wage and NPR 1550 as dearness allowance.

Understanding reached between CUPPEC and Kulekhani III Project builders
A 10-point understanding was reached between the contracting company (Chino Hydro Corporation) of Kulekhani III Project and the workers of the Project at a project site in Makwanpur. The understanding, facilitated by CUPPEC Nepal, addressed demands involving reinstatement of laid-off workers, provision of identity card, tunnel allowance, efficiency/skill-based payment, etc. It also involved payment of NPR 1.5 million to the family of Ram Sharan Moktan who perished while digging the tunnel.

Some more remarkable Achievements
In other noted achievements resulted in by GEFONT involvement, the workers of the Biratnagar Jute Mills got their payment overdue in August 2009; the demands forwarded by NICIWU of Nepal Poly-pack Pvt. Ltd. were fulfilled through an understanding of May 29, 2009, the demands included permanent appointment as per the Labour Act, 15% rise in rental allowances, and payment of annual bonus equivalent to two months’ salary, among others; a 5-day strike called by Nepal Petroleum Workers Union ended in an understanding on Aug 18, 2009 fulfilling the demands for permanent appointment, payment of minimum wages (NPR 4,600), insurance provisions (accident insurance of NPR 200,000 and health insurance of NPR 50,000), festival allowance equivalent to a month’s salary, etc; the conclusion of a strike at Gorakhpur Rubber Industry triggered by the delay in payment of the salary amount raised last year; reinstatement of 22 workers expelled (for operating a union) by Sushma Memorial Hospital; and reinstatement of the seven workers fired by Mahila Uththan Kendra or Women Upliftment Centre.
Pity! You are not transformed sufficiently Comrades!

Attack on GEFONT goes Continue

There was a fairy-tale. The tale goes this way:

There was a thief in a village. The thief used to steal a chicken in a day. Bothered by the theft, the villagers, one day, arrested him and handed him over to the Society in the village. The Society interrogated him and induced him not to repeat the larceny. Finally the thief confessed his mistake and apologised with the Society. He also signed a paper of confession to assure the Society that he would not repeat such wrongdoing again.

Some days passed by. But the trend of missing the chicken from the village did not stop. Villagers knew the thief was he who used to pilfer the chicken daily in the past. So all the villagers came together, arrested him and handed over him to the Society again. The Society together with the villagers made inquires with him and bashed him why he was still pilfering the chicken. Annoyed by the interrogation, the thief asked the villagers, "How many chickens were missing a day in the past?"

"One in a day", reacted the villagers.

"How many chickens are missing these days?" asked he again.

The villagers replied: "It's like one in a week or in ten days."

Then he asked the villagers: "Gentlemen, instead of stealing the chicken daily, I am stealing a chicken in a week or in ten days. This is what the villagers themselves are saying! Isn't it my honesty? Still, why the assault and reproach of larceny on me?"

The tale ends here. And, the attack being made on GEFONT and its affiliates by All Nepal Trade Union Federation (ANTUF) and Unified Communist Party of Nepal – Maoist (UCPN-M) may be analogous to the aforementioned parable. Following are some representative incidents of anarchy by the ANTUF and CPN-M in the last year.

Attack with Bottle of Hot Ketchup

A group of Maoists entered into the Food Industry Rijal Tassi on 29 March 2010 and ordered without any reason the workers to stop their work. But the workers defied the order and continued their work. Infuriated by it, the group attacked the workers with bottle filled with hot ketchup leaving some injured.

Tourist Guide attacked on Trekking route

Pasang Sherpa, an employee and president of UNITRAV Exodus Trekking, was mercilessly attacked in the last week of April 2010 by the district level activists of ANTUF affiliates in Solukhumbu. The victim was in duty-guiding tourists in Lukla of Solukhumbu district when he was attacked. The perpetrators fled after the attack.

Union Office Vandalised

The ANTUF affiliates vandalised the office of NICIWU-GEFONT in Nawalparasi on 21 April 2010. They also pulled out the signboard of the office, in the premises of Bhrikutip Pulp and Paper Industry, and threw it away.

An ANTUF member working at Bhrikutip pulp and Paper Industry, Nawalparasi, was killed in a clash between the locals and supporters of UCPN (M) on 19 April 2010. Though there was no involvement of the union affiliated to GEFONT, the activists of ANTUF thrashed and threatened the members GEFONT-affiliates to death. They obstructed the members of GEFONT-affiliates to enter in the industry and filed false cases against them in the police administration.

Attempted Abduction

Singh Lama, President of ITGWU, Bhaktapur, was manhandled and attempted to abduct by the ANTUF in the second week of April 2010 on the ground that the union rejected to participate in the programme organised by Maoist party and defied to join their union. The attempt of abduction was subverted due to the intervention by the locals.
Attacked at Pokhara
NIFBWU’s then Central Secretary Bihaspasi Parajuli, an employee of Pokhara Noodles, Kaski and District Committee Member Bishnu Shrestha were attacked by the members of ANTUF Pokhara Noodles Area Committee on 6 May 2010. The attack was made on the ground that they had a dialogue with the Management without consent of the ANTUF affiliates.

Obstruction at Work
The ANTUF resorted to create obstruction against the GEFONT-affiliated unions by not allowing the latter to enter in the hotels and work there in Kathmandu. The obstruction was created as the activists of the NIFBWU-GEFONT defied participating in the General Strike called by the Maoists.

Office burnt, Workers Threatened
The activists of ANTUF vandalised the office of NICIWU stationed in the premises of Gorakhkali Rubber Industry, Gorkha, and set fire on its signboard. They also threatened not to make the incident public and write and speak against it, else face physical attack. They also collected forced donation from the workers who did not side the Maoists. As the members of trade unions other than the Maoist’s declined to donate them, the Maoists forcefully charged 10-35 percent amount as donation from the workers monthly salary.

ITWAN Office Set on Fire
A group of Maoists hurled into the office of ITWAN-GEFONT Prithvi Highway Area Committee in Dhading and vandalised the garage, furniture, tips collection centre and ambulance. They also took the important documents out of the office and set fire on it completely turning it to cinder. Protesting against the attack, the Area Committee filed a case in the District Administration Office, Dhading, demanding compensation of the damage and action against the perpetrators.

Similarly, another group of Maoists vandalised the Office of ITWAN in Gorkha on 6 May 2010 blaming the workers that they did not participate in the general strike called by the Maoists. Gandaki Zonal Office of the ITWAN condemned the incident issuing a press statement,

Attack on Construction Workers
Activists of Young Communist League, of UCPN(M) attacked 33 construction workers in Pokhara on 2 May 2010 alleging them that they refused to show up in the general strike called by the Maoists. The attack left two workers seriously injured. Similarly, a Maoist group attacked Dal Bahadur Tamang, member of CUPPEC, the GEFONT-affiliates in Rasuwa District, in the third week of April 2010 and injured him seriously. He was taken to Monamohan Memorial Hospital, Kathmandu for treatment.

A shameful Incident: Attack on GEFONT after Elections Result
Infuriated by the defeat in elections of authentic union in Eastern Sugar Mill, Sunsari, a group of activists of the Nepal Trade Union Congress– Independent attacked Binod Chaudhari and Upendra Pratihasta, the leaders of local trade union affiliated to GEFONT, on 27 February 2010. They also vandalised the union office and chanted slogans against the election results.

The NTUC-I condemns this unfortunate incident and informed GEFONT that the incident was against democratic norms. The NTUC-I further inform, it will investigate the incident and will take necessary action against those involved.

GEFONT welcomes NTUC-I move. The election was won by NIFBWU-GEFONT.

Industrial Accident
Gopal BK, an employee of Hulas Steel Industries Limited, Simara, lost his left arm as he fell in the Corrugation Machine on 27 April 2010. The injured worker was taken to the Alka Hospital, Lalitpur, for treatment. Similarly, Ram Kumari Rai, an employee of Domestic Oil Mill in Satungal, Kathmandu, sustained injuries as the mill cut off her hand while she was working. The injured victim was taken to TU Teaching Hospital, Maharajgun, Kathmandu. All her treatment expenditures were born by the management of the mill.
GEFONT intervened in cases of manipulation relating to safe migration for employment.

1. Dil Bahadur Darji of Dhanrouta was rescued by GEFONT as the company employing him in Malaysia expelled him from there and made the recruiting agency pay NRs 42,500 as compensation. All the three workers get back home within 9 days of his arrival to Malaysia as he was lowly paid for heavy works. GEFONT rescued them from Malaysia and compelled the recruiting agency to pay 30% compensation to each worker.

2. Five workers including Seteman Banda of Dhading were sent to Malaysia for security guards by three recruiting agencies - Destiny Placement Service, Classic Overseas, and R. P. International. But the workers did not find the said employer there and had to stay in jail. After returning Nepal by paying fine, it was found that all the documents including the government stamp processed for their employment were fake. GEFONT intervened the case and the companies paid NRs 787,436 as compensation.

3. Seven workers including Jeevan Garti of Baglung did not get the jobs in Malaysia as agreed with Dip Gateway Overseas Private Limited, a recruiting agency in Nepal. The employing company was also different than the said one and they were poorly paid for heavy works. GEFONT rescued them from Malaysia and compelled the recruiting agency to pay 30% compensation to each worker.

4. Robin Lama and Ganga Bahadur Thapa of Pyuthan were deprived of the salary by the company and sent them back home. GEFONT rescued them from Malaysia and made the recruiting agency pay NRs 42,500 for each worker as compensation.

5. Despite poor eyesight, Khadga Bahadur Phuyal of Rautahat was sent to Malaysia by Signal International and Tiger Overseas Private Limited. The employing company in Malaysia did not accept him as a worker. GEFONT rescued him from there and made the recruiting agency pay NRs 60,000 as compensation.

6. Prem Bahadur Khadka of Udayapur was compelled to return Nepal within 9 days of his arrival to Malaysia as he failed medical test for employment. GEFONT rescued him and made the recruiting agency Trans World Manpower Company pay NRs 85,000 as compensation.

7. GEFONT also rescued the dead body of Dip Bahadur Thapa in Malaysia and the compensation was made available to the bereaved family.

8. GEFONT is investigating and rescuing eight workers including Raj Kumar Ranabhat of Kaski illegally sent to Saudi Arabia by one of the recruiting agencies in Nepal.

9. GEFONT is also involved in rescuing the dead bodies of Ramesh Giri, Morang and Madan Tamang, Kavre. The deceased were in Saudi Arabia.

10. GEFONT is involved in rescuing and assuring compensation for the workers Badri Ram and Devulal Bishwokarma now jailed in Saudi Arabia. The victims were there for employment.

11. Krishna Neupane was expelled by the employing company in Malaysia on the charge of mental disorder. The whereabouts of Mr Neupane is unknown. GEFONT is involved in searching and rescuing him.

12. Of the 2000 workers in Gon & Dom Enterprises, a company in Malaysia, 500 are Nepali workers involved in loading and unloading at harbour. According to the company’s rule, the workers are not entitled to get medical allowance for any injuries due to hazardous works in the company. But the workers raised the issue and about 130 workers applied to the GEFONT Support Group on 7 September 2009 for facilitating in this regard. The GEFONT Support Group coordinated with the Malaysian Trade Union and the union demanded the medical expenses for the workers. The Company, taking this positively, provided the health allowance to the workers.

13. Digendra Giri of Jhalal VDC, Jhapa reached Afghanistan on 31 Aug 2009 hoping to find a foreign job. He worked for 4 months there. Upon returning to Nepal on 6 January 2009, his documents were seized by the airport authorities at Afghananistan Airport. Giri then ran away and reached Pakistan. He was arrested by police and sent to the central jail. This case was also registered to GEFONT Office. GEFONT made contact with the diplomatic mission in Pakistan and made possible Giri to return Nepal in April 2010.

14. Friendship Manpower Company stationed in Maharajgunj, Kathmandu replaced the passport photograph of Padam B. Parkoti of Sunsari with Bal Ram Dangi of Dang and sent Bal Ram to Malaysia to work in a bakery company. The company identified the passport as fake after two months and forced Bal Ram to return to Nepal. Finding no way Bal Bahadur returned to Nepal and approached to GEFONT migrant desk. The GEFONT succeeded to return him all the money from the recruiting agency.

15. Three workers including Amar Lama deputed to Dubai through S. R. S. Overseas recruiting agency were denied with facilities by the employing agency citing their illegal entry to Dubai. The victims came into contact of GEFONT migrant desk, which eventually dealt with the recruiting agency for compensation. All the three workers get back compensation.

GEFONT in solidarity with TEUIMP-MTUC in Malaysia, KCTU in South Korea, and HKCTU in Hong Kong. In addition to the cases above, GEFONT is involved in rescuing and providing compensation to the workers who are fallen prey of fake documents, wrong and illegal process, and forced work and so on.

June 2010 / TRADE UNION RIGHTS
Peeping inside MNCs: Verdict favours the workers

Expelled workers at Coca Cola and Pepsi Cola reinstated by the Supreme Court

The Supreme Court has set a new precedence on disputes over companies and workers. The Court gave a verdict in favour of the workers at Barun Beverage, a multinational which bottles the Pepsi Cola. In a case filed against the Company on expel of Sales Executive Ramesh Bhakta Shrestha on 3 July 2007, the Supreme Court reinstated Mr. Shrestha through a verdict on 16 February 2008. Similarly, the Supreme Court issued another verdict reinstating three workers including Basanta Ghimire in their employment at Bottlers Nepal – the Coca Cola company. The workers were illegally expelled by the management.

New Recognition for ‘Constructive Dismissal’

The Supreme Court has decided a number of cases recognising the principle of ‘constructive dismissal’, a situation in which the employer/company forces a worker to resign from the post through an unjust behaviour. In Laxmi Wood Craft, there was a case pending for 8 years concerning forced resignation of some workers including Kush Hari KC who were intentionally denied to sign on the register for some days and later on of charge being absent for days in December 2001. The case was filed in the labour office and the office reinstated them in their jobs. Challenging the labour office decision, the company filed a case in the Supreme Court claiming that the workers were the trainees and in that case the Labour Act would not be effective for them. The Court denied it and gave verdict in favour of the workers.

Victory in Unilever

The Labour Court repealed the decision of the Unilever Company’s decision to distribute 9.10% bonus to the workers against the labour law provision of 10%. The court also defined bonus as the profit amount to be distributed among the workers.

The legal battle: Few successful story of the Year

1. The Supreme Court also reinstated Mita Khadka, Guest Relation Officer of Everest Hotel, Baneshwor who was expelled by not allowing her sign in the attendance register for 30 days. The case was filed in the Supreme Court and the Court gave verdict in favour of the employee.

2. The Shanghai Plastic’s decision to curtail the allowance and adjust NRs 2,500 as the total wage of a worker in 2000 has been proved to be illegal by the decision of the Supreme Court. The Court has clearly mentioned that the basic salary and the allowance cannot be adjusted. Allowances and other facilities should be provided to the worker on the basis of the basic salary.

3. The Supreme Court has reinstated 13 leaders of GEFONT affiliated union Swavalamban Bikash Kendra (Self Reliant Development Centre) with full wage who were expelled from the office 10 years before on the charge of being affiliated with the union. Similarly, the Supreme Court has also reinstated Hom Khadka and Rabri Sharma of Hotel Grand on 2 March 2010 who were also expelled by the hotel 9 years back.

4. The Labour Court reinstated 8 staff nurses working with the Life Guard Hospital, Biratnagar. All them were forced to resign from the post. The Hospital claimed their resignation a ‘constructive dismissal’ but the court’s verdict read it as a form of termination and issued order to reinstate.

5. All permanent staff working in Butwal Technical Institute (BTI) established by United Mission to Nepal were transferred to as contract staff after the BTI was handed over to the Government of Nepal. Protesting the decision the staff filed a case in the Labour Court and the court issued a prohibition order against the BTI decision.

6. The Labour Court prohibited the decision of the Nepal Bio Electric to take action against Samjhana Nakarmi who was in compassionate leave. Similarly, the case of Padma KC of Bhrikuti Paper Craft has also been prohibited by the court.

7. The Labour Court issuing a verdict reinstated 6 workers of Harisiddhi Tile Factory on 15 December 2009 who were retrenched by the Factory charging a false case.
Major Time Line of Nepali Politics

2009; April 14
Incumbent Prime Minister Prachanda resigns on Chief of Army Staff row

May 25
Madhav Kumar Nepal take oath as Prime Minister; 3 members Council of Minister formed

May 27
New Government decided to continue Katwal as Chief of Army Staff

May 31
Maoist protest all over the country against decision of President

June 15
Madhesi Janaadhkikar Forum divided, Bijaya Kumar Gachchhadhar with 30 CA members in MKN government side.

Aug 9
Katwal retire due to age bar. Chhatraman Singh assign as Acting Chief of Army Staff

Sep 4
Bhutta of Pasupatinath manhandled.

Sep 4
Army and National flag taken away from Vice President’s residence after Suspension of his position by SC

Nov 4
Nepali Congress Committee Meeting reduced the right of Chair

2010; Jan 3
A fighter of People’s Movement Mr. Bishnulal Marharjan passed away

Jan 8
High level Political Mechanism established including Maoist President Prachanda and CPN-UML President Jhalanath Khanal and Mr. G.P Koirala, NC President as Coordinator

Jan 22:
Maoist withdraw indefinite strike called from Jan 24

Feb 25
Mr. Ram Chandra Kuswaha, Minister for Education kicked out due to corruption

March 20
Nepali Congress President Girja Prasad Koirala passed away at age of 86.

March 20
Nation paid state honour to G.P Koirala, last rite perform

March 31
Maoist, CPN-UML & NC signed written commitment to declare constitution on May 28, 2010

Major Time Line of labour and economy

2009; April 21
Load shedding removes from 6 Industrial Area

April 22
Israel permits 32 Nepali workers

May 1
Supreme Court order to recruit married women in Army

May 4
Workers get facility to checkup their health within country before proceeding to Foreign Employment

May 18
Lebanon opens market for Nepali women workers

May 28
Biratnagar Surya Garment locked out

June 25
Transport blockade in Mechi highway demanding security to driver and transport workers

July
Government decided to pay-off all workers of Butwal Spinning Mill

July 2
Gorakhkali Rubber Industry locked out due to workers protest

July 16
Hotel inside National Park close after completion of 15 years agreement, GEFONT affiliates asked government to reopen the hotels to save employment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 18</td>
<td>Transport Workers call Mechi Highway bandh, demanding 1 million compensation to Taxi Driver Deepak Pandey who was killed</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 19</td>
<td>Government declare loan to youth who goes for foreign employment</td>
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<td>July 31</td>
<td>Nepal Government implement third Party Insurance scheme on road transport accident</td>
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<td>Aug 4</td>
<td>38 Nepali workers left to Korea</td>
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<td>Aug 13</td>
<td>NRB report reveals price hike by 13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 16</td>
<td>Second National Labour force published; 74% workforce in Agriculture sector</td>
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<td>Aug 16</td>
<td>Workers strike at entire Petrol Pump across the country demanding implementation of Labour Law</td>
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<td>Aug 30</td>
<td>Doctors' of Bir Hospital go on protest</td>
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<td>Sep 2</td>
<td>Health Service across the Country disrupted by Hospital Workers' strike</td>
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<td>Sep 12</td>
<td>11 hundred workers of Biratnagar Jute Mill paid off after closure of Mill</td>
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<td>Sept 23</td>
<td>Mauritius opens as new destination for workers employment</td>
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<td>Oct 4</td>
<td>Human Development Index published, Nepal's position as it is</td>
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<td>Oct 16</td>
<td>NRN fourth world Conference concludes; adopted 18 points declaration</td>
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<td>Oct 29</td>
<td>Five workers died in sand quarry in Dukakot Bhaktapur</td>
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<td>Nov 4</td>
<td>Hetauda Textile Industry closed</td>
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<td>Nov 5</td>
<td>10 points declaration made to aware on global warming from Mt. Everest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 11</td>
<td>Minister of State Karima Begam manhandle CDO of Parsa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 12</td>
<td>Case file against Karima and civil servant protest against Karima</td>
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<td>Nov 15</td>
<td>3 points accord signed between government &amp; workers</td>
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<td>Nov 26</td>
<td>Year 2010 declare as “Year against Domestic Violence”</td>
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<td>Dec 3</td>
<td>Wage increase to workers working in five star hotels of Kathmandu</td>
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<td>Dec 4</td>
<td>Prime Minister with 22 Ministers hold meeting of Council of Minister in kalapathar, a base camp of Mt. Everest stating “Save Himalayas” climate change issue</td>
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<td>Dec 8</td>
<td>Maoist assault 25 years old Journalist Ms. Tika Bista in Rukum</td>
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<td>2010; Jan 15</td>
<td>45 Nepali workers return back from Saudi Arab after not having work and payment as agreement</td>
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<td>Jan 17</td>
<td>Nepal and South Korea renew EPS agreement for 2 years to send workers</td>
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<td>Jan 20</td>
<td>Ambassador of Nepal to Kuwait urged to stop sending domestic workers in Kuwait</td>
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<td>Jan 25</td>
<td>Banke Sitapur VDC Secretary Indra Bahadur Shreestha killed</td>
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<td>Jan 28</td>
<td>Prohibit sending Nepali workers from India territory without obtaining permission from Department of Foreign Employment or Nepali Embassy of India</td>
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<td>Feb 15</td>
<td>Gokarna Forest Resort disrupt by workers’ strike</td>
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<td>Mar 15</td>
<td>Chandramaya &amp; her children in Banke, Mahadevpur suicide due to poverty</td>
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Abbreviation

ANTUF  All Nepal Trade Union Federation
ANWA  All Nepal Women Association
BIT  Butwal Technical Institute
CA  Constituent Assembly
CBA  Collective Bargaining Agreement
CDO  Chief District Officer
COP-15  Conference of Parties-15
CoNREP  Confederation of Nepalese Professionals
CPN (UML)  Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist)
CUPPEC-Nepal  Central Union of Painter, Plumber, Electro & Construction Workers-Nepal
CWWD  Central Women Workers Department
EPS  Employment Permit System
FENEPT  Federation of Nepalese Progressive Trade Unions
GEFONT  General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions
GPK  Girija Prasad Koirala
HKCTU  Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions
IGCUN  Independent Garbage Cleaners’ Union of Nepal
ILO  International Labour Organisation
ITGWUN  Independent Garment Workers’ Union of Nepal
ITUC  International Trade Union Confederation
ITWAN  Independent Transport Workers Association of Nepal
JTUCC  Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre
KAD  Women Workers Union in Denmark
KCTU  Korean Confederation of Trade Unions
KWU  Korean Women Workers United
MKN  Madhav Kumar Nepal
MNC  Multinational Companies
MTUC  Malaysian Trades Union Congress
NATU  Nepal Auto-mechanics Trade Union
NC  Nepali Congress
NIFBWU  Nepal Independent Food and Beverage Workers’ Union
NICWU  Nepal Independent Carpet Workers’ Union
NIDWU  Nepal Independent Domestic Workers’ Union
NICWU  Nepal Independent Chemical & Iron Workers’ Union
NPR  Nepali Rupee
NDCONT-I  National Democratic Confederation of Nepal-Independent
NRB  Nepal Rastra Bank
NRN  Non Residential Nepali
NIHWWU  Nepal Independent Hotel Workers’ Union
SEWA  Self Employed Women Association, India
TU  Tribhuvan University
TEUMP  Timber Employees Union of Malaysian Peninsular
UCPN (M)  Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
UNTRARAV  Union of Trekking–Travels–Rafting and Airline Workers, Nepal
VDCs  Village Development Committees
WDDW  World Day for Decent Work

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Bal Krishna Kattel
Prakash Gyawali
Deepa Dwadi
Jeni Jain
Mahendra Shrestha
Kiran Mali
The Mighty Himalayas-
The glaciers & lakes
That maintain our climate;
That keep bio-diversity and green hills alive

The Climate is changing-
The Himalayas are melting
Creating glacial lakes;
Inviting environmental degradation,

The Himalayas care your climate, would you care the Himalayas?
GEFONT campaign for global trade union initiatives for green jobs and just transition!