

# Departure towards Consolidated Democracy

(Resolutions and Future Programmes)



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## About the Publication

Seventh National Congress of GEFONT has been concluded during 28-31 March 2018 with the theme "Prosperous Working Class in Consolidated Democracy". The congress was held in a positive situation in changed context in the presence of 417 delegates and 49 international guests as the historical moment of trade union history.

The congress adopted resolutions of 11-point including new labour law and its implementation, 10% workers representation in every elected body of the state, revision of minimum wages, implementation of social security for all etc. Beside these, the congress has passed the 4-year programme for days to come.

From the turning point of Seventh National Congress, we are heading towards a new era to struggle within democracy instead of fighting for democracy. It is a new departure of working class in Nepal towards consolidated democracy. Publication and dissemination is inevitable to share the policy and programme adopted by this historical congress among workers, partners and other concerned stakeholders. Hence we have included here in annexes and we also include speech of outgoing and newly elected president as reference.

We hope it will help not only working class, but also those interest to know about the policy and programme adopted by the Congress. I would like to thank Cde. Bishnu Rimal - GEFONT Patron and Umesh Upadhyaya - Chief of GEFONT Organizing Academy for their invaluable inputs to prepare this publication. I would also like to extend thanks to all involved in this process.

**Binod Shrestha**

President

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International Congress  
**National Congress**  
28 - 31 March 2018

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*Chief Guest, Rt. Honourable Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli  
delivering inaugural speech at 7th National Congress of GEFONT*



*Cde. Bishnu Rimal - outgoing President of GEFONT at Leadership Handover Programme*



# Dear GEFONT: Goodbye!

Bishnu Rimal

Comrades,

At a time when I am bidding you all my goodbye from the leadership of GEFONT, I had expected a different feeling than what I am showering with now. But expectations cannot be comprehended always. While I was leading you and the trade union movement, I might have sounded vocal and demanding. My words might have been shrill for someone, and at the same time, they might have sounded pleasant for some others. But all I did this was not for me to please my palate. It rather was for the interest and benefit of all us, and, more than that, it was for the trade union movement that we have been part of.

I have never disillusioned anyone. Neither have I falsified to someone. I do not grease anyone, nor do I oil someone. Whatever I say, warm or cold, I do say it directly and face to face, and for a cause. Even when I was in the helm of GEFONT, I upheld it. I never treated my comrades discriminately, nor did I favour them clandestinely. I maintained equal respect to all and poured them with equal affection.

However, 'strictness' was the working-style that I applied in the institutional governance of GEFONT and in leading the trade union movement. I did not distract from it. I was guided by the belief that fellow comrades would follow the agreed norms and procedures only when the leadership follows them in letter and spirit. I never let my tenacity falter. So, I persistently followed what was agreed and procedurally correct. While doing so, I might have chocked for myself to lead the team in the regulated milieu, while, other comrades might have suffocated to fit themselves in the given environment and discharge their duties. Nevertheless, if we had not done so, we

would not have been where we are now. And, we would not be as organized and consolidated as we are today.

From the very onset of my association with GEFONT, I gave a message — Rights must come with duties, Distribution must be based on production and Consumption must be backed by entrepreneurship. ‘Capital organises therefore labour must organise’ is what I learned and understood while leading and consolidating the trade union movement.

I am seeing Hari Sharma, one of the founder leaders of GEFONT, sitting in front of me in this gathering. I have cordial relationship with him. He always sends warmth and wishes to me. Like Comrade Mukunda (our former chairperson), he thinks I know more than what I deserve. I am always influenced by the success Comrade Hari has earned through hard work, and, sometimes his accomplishments make me jealous too, but in a manner, they always inspire me! I recall an incident — After the inauguration of Seventh National Congress (of GEFONT) at Yak and Yeti, I asked him — Comrade, how did you feel about the Congress? He replied — ‘you have brought GEFONT long way to the five-star hotel upright from the heap of dust.’

I smiled in response. And, in the mean time, I remembered you all because it was possible to bring GEFONT to this stature because of the dream we cherished together. I recalled the pains and difficulties we endured; and, the hard work we accomplished. The moment reminded me of not only the robust GEFONT of the day which is standing tall on the fortress of solid physical facility, capable human resource and noticeable financial graph, but also the sorry condition of GEFONT in the past when it was deprived of even basic financial and physical facilities. I remembered our comrades who willfully donated their salary to GEFONT for six months to salvage it from scarcity, and readied themselves to work empty stomach. I recalled the incident when I provoked comrades to quit their job and join trade union movement as full-timers. I was reminded with the days

when I fortified comrades to spend nights in playing deusi-bhailoin Tihar to generate fund for trade union rather than celebrating festivals together with their families at home. I evoked the days when I asked colleagues to go for wage-works and deposit the earning to GEFONT. I remembered the days when I asked colleagues to excavate black sand and utilize the wages they receive for trade union activities. I was reminded with the colleagues who toiled hard for GEFONT's publications and spent winter nights rolling back in their own jacket to fight cold. One of them was Cde Som Rai who is in front of us here today. We sometimes cracked jokes to each other — nature has wisely made us 'short' so that we can fit our whole body inside our jacket; otherwise what a misfortune it would be for us in such cold nights if we were made as tall as Buddhi Acharya! We each had nothing more than a jacket to bout the freezing cold of those winter nights.

Therefore, if anyone says GEFONT has got this tallness by the mystic power of a single individual, it will be a blunder. GEFONT is built by the sweat and tears that we all have paid. The achievements we have made are the results of our collective efforts. So, I feel proud of it and would like to duly appreciate and acknowledge your brave dedication and invaluable contribution.

I am grateful to my comrades. I have spent my three decades in different positions of GEFONT. Of the days I have lived so far, I have spent two thirds with you, and it is exceptionally more time than what I have spent with my family. Work was my only focus and priority; therefore, I kept on chasing you for it every moment. I know, I have given long speeches focusing on the importance of eight-hour work, eight-hour rest and eight-hour recreation in the life of workers. I am also mindful that I have preached innumerable times before you about the importance of right balance between work and life, and advised you to always maintain it in your work and family life too. But in reality, I always dragged you to the work in such a manner that you often forgot whether the day was working day or off day. I myself, Comrade Som and Comrade Umesh are the living witness of it.

We have not had our progress and achievements overnight. It has a long history. Colleagues associated with us after 1979 have offered their toil and sweat to create the towering figure of GEFONT.

When I unfold the pages of history I turn nostalgic. I sometimes ask myself if I did right being so workaholic and making all comrades work like round the clock. But when I listen to my heart, it says — yes, nothing has gone wrong in toiling so hard! If we had taken a break in the time of construction, we would not have had these many achievements in the time of celebration.

And, I feel my heart is telling me absolutely right.

Spartacus is a historical character of slave uprising against Roman Republic. He is one of the characters I like. Though he was young by his age, he was respected like 'father figure' by the Gladiators. Listen, I am not comparing myself with Spartacus here. I never think myself as great as him. But what I am meaning to say here is I always received 'father-like' respect from my fellow comrades throughout the time I was with GEFONT.

Thank you, Comrades – I feel proud of you. I owe you and extend my gratitude to you and all members through you.

My experience has taught me that challenges are always associated with the tasks we shoulder. A leader who is not ready to face and digest the challenge cannot withstand in leadership.

It is human nature that the wound of own pains harder than the wound of others. And, normally, human feeling undermines the pain of others. But If a leadership fails to make a balance between own and others, such leadership cannot survive long.

If I reflect on my own, I cannot fail to recall three key incidents in my life to date. They are the incidents of July 23, 1993, April 01, 2010; June 23, 2010.

The incident of July 23, 1993, brought an unusual turning point in my life. We were protesting the murder of people's leader Madan Bhandari. We had called nationwide general strike for three conspicuous days (July 16-18) and called off it on July 19. Days were extremely busy, also to work out the protest plan next. I participated in the leadership training programme for Central Women Workers Department (of GEFONT) on 19th and 20th of the month. It had been quite many days since I spoke to my mother last. There were limited landline phones then and means of communication were not as easy as they are now. We were not armed with mobile phones as we are today. I somehow managed to speak to my mother in one fine morning of the training days. She asked me to go home once. I gladdened her saying that I would go home to see her soon.

Trishuli, my home village, is well-known for rice, lentils and mango though these produces are yielding less these days. My son was small. Over phone, my mother told me that she had prepared all necessary things for her grandson (my son). She was waiting for me to see and send the things to Kathmandu for my boy. The condition of road to my home was wretched then. I had to spend more than four hours to make it through. I reached home in the afternoon – the next day of the training. As soon as I got off the bus, I saw my younger brother coming to bazaar. He was sobbing. I asked him where was he going and if everything was fine. His answer broke me down. He was going to a shop to buy a shroud to bury my mother's dead body who died a while ago. My wish to see her alive remained unfulfilled.

I reached home carrying the shroud. Her dead body was lying in the front yard. I looked at my relatives. Everyone was crying. I looked at my younger sister who was almost unconscious because of the loss of mother. My father was sulking next to my mother's corpse. I

forcefully controlled myself and tried to console others. I gave my last but tender touch to the face of my dead mother; controlled myself and prepared for her last-rite.

This incident was one of the turning points in my life.

May I reveal the truth before you, comrades? I never got a chance and time to spend a month continuously with my parents from the age when I was five. My mother used to say — ‘you never know the affection of parents to their progenies. But you will understand it when you become a father.’ These motherly words still buzz in my ears. I spent 17 days at home for the last-rite of my mother. And, perhaps, this was the longest time I spent at home ever.

I am the only son of my parents. After the death of my mother, I sold everything, except land, I inherited from parents. I took my younger sister together with me to Kathmandu. My father wished to live some more days in home village. I could not go against his will. So, leaving him there for some time, I together with my family and sister started to live in Katmandu. Life started to move in its own routine. Never mind, though, I am not accenting this incident here as my ‘huge sacrifice’ to the trade union movement.

Another incident took place in April 01, 2010. I was in a party of holy-thread wearing ceremony of the son of Comrade Bidur Karki, the incumbent vice-president of GEFONT, who then was the vice-president of the Independent Transport Workers Association of Nepal. After a while I reached the party, I got a call from my home village. The call was to ask me to go home as soon as possible because my father was seriously ill. It worried me. I came out of the party hall and called my brother-in-law (husband of my elder sister) to crosscheck whether the case was that critical. He tried to hide me something but gave a message that I had to bring my spouse together to home. He added whatever busy I was I should run immediately. It sent chills down my spine. Message was clear if I ‘read’ between the lines. My

father was no more. I rushed to home. When I reached there, I saw my father's body lying in the front yard like my mother's corpse 16 years back. The difference this time was that my political stature was elevated and all my relatives, the villagers and well-wishers were waiting for me.

The third incident took place in June 23, 2010 when I was in Vancouver, Canada to participate the Second International Congress of ITUC. When I was preparing to take floor in the Congress, I got a text message from my spouse. The message read — don't worry, daughter Smriti has undergone a successful appendicitis operation. It was really a sorry moment for me for not being with her in such needed time. I turned pale and helpless, but somehow gathered myself, picked-up the microphone and addressed the Congress. All that happened after my speech was that most of the known persons present in the Congress thanked me and appreciated the issues I highlighted in my deliberation. But you all can imagine how I addressed the Congress and what was the state of my mind in the aftermath of the message I read from home.

It is not only me who have gone through such pains in life. Many comrades have frequented such situations in their life. The latest incident I am sharing with you now is about our driver Dinesh Magar. It was 15 days back when I together with the Prime Minister was in the Division Head Quarter of Nepal Army in Surkhet. Dinesh received a call from home and that said — his father slipped and fell down; he was seriously injured so Dinesh had to go home soon possible. Immediately, Dinesh came to me and asked if he could go home. It was a serious matter and he could go without asking me. I told him to go instantly but he was worried about who would pick me from the airport to the office if he went home.

I was moved by his generosity and honesty towards his duty. His decency touched me deep. His father wanted to meet and see the faces of his children in the last minute of his life. But he could not

survive until Dinesh reached home. Father died untimely at the age of 53. It was really a sorry moment for Dinesh and all us.

This is us, Comrade! Every one of us has witnessed and faced similar painful situation. However, we have endured every pain we faced and we have risen up every time we fell. In every difficult situation, we have stood together and we have stood tall. This grand institution, GEFONT, is the result of our collective sacrifice, devotion and martyrdom. This is the institution we have made!

My experience says, a whole generation sacrifices to build an institution. Therefore, fellow generation must be open to acknowledge and adore the sacrifice, dedication and martyrdom of the foregoing generation.

Competition in the time of National Congress of any organisation like GEFONT for the leadership position is a normal process. Competition takes place normally among those who think themselves are qualified and competent. Whoever wins will be the leader. And, those who do not win should wait for the next time. This is the established norm. It does not sound logical if those who cannot make this time start making discounted comments and feeling depressed. Such attitude does not look healthy even for those who display it. It is said — "If you want something you've never had, you have to do something you've never done." Therefore, whether you do not go for a competition, else, be ready to accept the result whatever it comes to you.

Having said this, I remind you all that the trade union movement cannot make a stride carrying the baggage of jealousy, envy, criticism, despair and abnormal personality traits. Us trade unionists, who have been part of the movement that is directly related to the life of working class, must be concerned about the future of working class. Therefore, before we think of our management and respectful position in the rank and file, we must think of their situation and their



confidence on us. Our minor mistake should not wane our struggle; it should not shatter the hope of working class.

Even in my context, I am not more than a simple citizen — Bishnu Rimal. I am not a magical person. If I have been able to make some contribution to build and raise profile of GEFONT in the last 30 years, I feel proud of it. And, I always feel thankful to you all for your support and generosity. But, if you feel my three decades in GEFONT have gone unnoticed and without making headway, forgive me. The days to come are waiting for your decent leadership. Lead the days ahead. Do good. My wishes are with you.

Comrades,

Never mind if my emotions are mixed with my deliberations today. My entry to GEFONT was not pre-planned. It was a sudden entrance. Two of the comrades who encouraged me to jump into the helm of trade union movement, Comrade Ishwar Pokhrel and Comrade Mukunda Neupane are with us today. Along with them was Comrade Pradip Nepal, leader of then CPN (ML). Though he is not here in this hall now, he was one of them who brought me to this movement.

It was in 1987.

I was teaching at Institute of Engineering, Pulchowk-Lalitpur. I had submitted my time and income to my political party. I had to do nothing to my parents to manage their living. There was no problem for livelihood. Sometimes I have heard irritating word of some comrades worrying about the hand-to-mouth problems. I have told them — I have not joined politics for two meals of the day. I, instead, have joined politics giving up my all-comfortable meals of the day. I am not boasting about it. This is my reality.

It was the year when Tribhuvan University was planning elections of Free Student Union. Those days election of free students' union was

considered as of general election. I was associated with the Valley Committee of then underground political party and was pursuing my Master's Degree in economics. I was asked if I were interested to contest the election for the president of Free Students Union in TU Central Campus, Kirtipur. I said no to join the student politics.

Comrade Pradip Nepal said — if you are not interested in student politics, join the trade union (Nepal Independent Workers Union) and work in this sector.

I did not say no! I accepted the new responsibility and started to work accordingly. Comrade Shankar Pokharel, the Chief Minister of Province – 5 now, contested the election in TU and established himself as the popular president of student union.

This way, I have changed track in my political carrier. I wanted to do something new and devoted myself to establish GEFONT. But some comrades did not digest my entrance to this sector. It was because of the schooling they belonged to. They used to think trade union is the organization of coolies and garbage collectors, and 'white-collar workers cannot fit to this sector. It was completely a wrong viewpoint of the comrades. We were mobilised by the party. And, whatever direction used to come to us, we would follow it. We started to visit communities and reached to the workplace carrying bags in our shoulders. Some comrades nicknamed us 'bag bearers' – might be to insult us or to recognize us by our profession! Whatever was the motif; we took it easy and devoted ourselves to nurture GEFONT. The result is — the organisation has been the leading institution of the trade union movement in Nepal.

There are some simple but important practices we have introduced for our integrity. I feel it will be a good even for the upcoming leadership if they continue to follow it. For example, it was like a dream for many of us to fly abroad in the airplane and participate in international events. But it has been common for us to travel by

airplane now. It may not sound soothing to take names here, but I feel proud to share here that it was us who made possible the dream of many senior comrades today to fly abroad in the airplane. Meantime, I also started to prepare the list for a record. I think the number of comrades who have travelled abroad for the first time via GEFONT crosses thousand now.

It was like a regular practice to go to the airport to see off those who were going abroad. There was nothing wrong in doing so. But the unusual part of it was that such 'see off' decorated with flowers and garlands were offered only those who were in senior portfolio. Those who were 'junior' and needed support on 'check in' procedures and other airport protocols were left alone. Therefore, we broke the tradition and introduced a new practice to farewell all at the GEFONT's executive hall. We also started to orient them on the procedures and protocols to be followed in the airport and brief them about the programmes they were attending abroad. It continues even today. At the end of the farewell event, Secretary General of GEFONT extends felicitations and wishes a safe journey to the travellers. Upon return, the comrades bring chocolate as 'gift' and share experience of the event they attended among the colleagues at office. Another practice we have brought to implementation is that the comrades have to give certain amount of the savings of their DSA to the organisation. And, probably, it must be the GEFONT where the comrades deposit 70% of the savings of their DSA in its accounts. They take 30% of it to buy gifts for their children and families. It is the practice started in my tenure.

It has been normal for us now to go to the star hotel and dine there. But it was like folklore 20/25 years back. In 1993, a team of brick-kilns workers were taken to Hotel Soaltee for a study tour as part of their nine-month basic training programme. While coming out of the hotel, I asked them about their feeling. They replied they would work free of cost if they got a chance to work in such a nice hotel. Startled as I was, I thought they saw only the flamboyant decoration of the

hotel but did not understand the troubles of workers there where the hotel management terminated them from their job for the reason that they did not shave their beard clean.

GEFONT is credited for a symbol of competition and mutual respect. Competition at GEFONT is not a drama to perform for others, nor is it to get appreciation from others. 'Competition' has been an inbuilt culture of GEFONT life. We have established that we believe in collective decisions and zero hierarchy in positions. There is no one superior and nobody is inferior in the organisation. No one thinks where I would be (in the position) but everyone thinks what would be our collective mission!

If we establish a system to govern the organisation, the system creates space for all to accommodate. No one will be out of the ring if things are guided by it. I feel we have established the system to guide us to course the organisation, and, I think, no comrades have any dissent against it. We all have confidence at GEFONT that — if we stand in a queue, we reach to the top. And, it is in the queue where we can screen 'right person for right place to get impressive results! I wish you could continue the practice in the days to come too that the queue begins from the point where GEFONT stands.

We need to be creative too. I do not take much time to elaborate what we mean by creativity. We all know about our priority and the modality to accomplish it. But I add, the struggle that we have to wage now is the 'struggle in democracy' — in past, we were waging 'struggle for democracy'.

The context has changed and so must we. Please be mindful of it.

There are some dimensions of our tasks ahead.

We have recurrently said that if someone wants to understand us, they have to see us through our eyes. They have to do so to understand

our world of work at the least. Otherwise, their worldview creates misleading impression of reality of us. We have had a good success on our call in this. I request the new leadership to stand firm on it.

Publicity of our work is not only to show up ourselves on TV or listen in the radio. It is also to communicate our publicity materials or publications with the thematic experts. However, the experts do not listen to us easily. So, to sell our idea to them, we have followed a formula — that is to tell them ‘this is what we have come up with or published; but we are not sure how it looks like in terms of knowledge and information to the audience in it. We would be grateful if you could comment on it.’ This formula has worked well and the result is — even those who thought they were exceptional and above the rank have started to come to us. One day, Engineer Baburam Bhattarai, my Professor and then Dean of The Institute of Engineering, Central Campus Pulchok, came to GEFONT office and asked me what I was busy in. In response to his question, I gave him a set of our publications. He gently caressed the book “Trade Union and Labour Theory of Value”, which I co-authored, and said — ‘it looks like a book of Progress Publications, Moscow.’ I thought he said so in appreciation of our good work, and letting no minutes go, I told him — we have published many such good books of quality, sir! He smiled at me and said — ‘I hope you know where the Soviet Union and the Progress Publications are today! No?!!’

I turned speechless and quietly spoke to myself — wisdom never grows old, what we see even in the age is how ingeniously the wisdom is used!

As the context of the Soviet Union has come to my deliberation, let me share with you a hearsay about Stalin and Khrushchev. Both leaders were very popular in the country. While Stalin was a leader with strong personality, Khrushchev was liberal. Khrushchev never went against Stalin. He always agreed with what Stalin came up with. He was like ‘yes man’. But after Stalin’s death, it was Khrushchev who

criticized him sharply. In a meeting of the party, Khrushchev said Stalin was a dictator and he never let anyone in the Party Committee to speak. After listening the sharp comment of Khrushchev, one of the participants in the meeting asked – Comrade, you were like a ‘yes-man’ of Stalin until the day he died. You were in his team. But we never heard you saying anything against Stalin when he was alive. If you had these many issues and complains to attach him, why did you stay mum in the committee? Why did not you oppose him if he was doing wrong. Why did not you advise him measures to right the wrong?

Khrushchev furiously asked, ‘Who is this asking the question? Raise your hand!’ The hall turned silent. The one who asked the question did not dare to raise his hand. And, Khrushchev said, ‘Alike you are afraid of raising your hand before me, I was also scared to speak against Stalin!’

Just a while ago, in front of us, the immediate past Secretary General of our confederation heavily came down on the outgoing leadership. He was supposed to welcome the newly elected leadership but dwelling less on his task, he spent more time in criticism. I have nothing more to say than this — ‘Was I, Bishnu Rimal, like Stalin who kept everything under his control?’ The good gesture Khrushchev showed at least was he opened his mouth against Stalin only after his death. But my mate, junior to me, has come down on me so heavily even when I am alive and still with you. My humble request — If I imposed dictatorship while working with you and if I oppressed you or banned you to speak out, please speak now, you are free. Or, if removing my photo from the wall of GEFONT pacify you, please do that. Even if you do so, I will be close to you. I will be with you and I will be living in Nepal among you. This is my commitment to you. However, I opt for a free advice to you — if you wish to spit, please do not do that looking at the sky. It falls down on your face and makes your own face dirty!

Just a while ago, Binod Shrestha, the newly elected president of GEFONT, spoke a lot about me. He highlighted the good works I led, presented me with an invaluable souvenir, and gave his deliberations that touched my heart. Thank you Comrade Binod!

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to —

The leaders,  
My mother party,  
All comrades of the trade union movement,  
Experts who provided their expertise to us,  
International community,  
And, my family!

My unbounding love to my daughter Smriti who has gone through severe difficulties because of my absence in the time she needed — I am so sorry darling!

I am confident that my successor in GEFONT is very strong. I am very happy that I have been able to handover the leadership to a strong team. I am hopeful this team will be able to make a more quality achievement than what my team has achieved.

You gave me your respect. You regarded me as your leader. Now you have made me the patron of this organization — my gratitude is with you all. I am with you and I will together with you always. If I have made any mistakes unknowingly, forgive me.

Thank you!

*(Speech delivered out going president Bishnu Rimal on the occasion of GEFONT's leadership handover ceremony. 1 May 2018, Hotel Annapurna, Kathmandu)*



*Cde. Binod Shrestha - newly elected President from 7th National Congress of GEFONT*



# The predecessors' vision and youths' dynamism will always be coordinated

Binod Shrestha

Dear Comrade Bishnu Rimal!

I don't know how I should start! Where you were born, how you grew up, how you entered politics are trivial to us. However, the tears you shed, the zeal and courage you demonstrated, the sacrifice you made and the endeavor you put to create a river collecting drop by drop for the establishment of GEFONT are invaluable for us.

Comrade! this organization has grown like this today. It has a big building. It has a well-managed office. It has a big library. Even before many people heard its name, GEFONT's website had kicked off. We made hundreds of documentaries to mainstream the issues of labour. We ran our own radio and TV Program. We published our own publication ***Shramik Khabar*** [Workers' News]. Though accused of working as a NGO, we sent our members to seminars and trainings. We enhanced their capacity.

Within a dream project of establishing a distinct labour university, we established National Labour Academy. We built infrastructures for a Regular Trade Union School. We have published more than two hundred books on our own, we ourselves have become like a publication house. Many things researched by us are taught at different universities. Well, Bishnu Comrade! Sometimes I wonder what we don't have. But Comrade! Whether you forgot or not, we didn't have money when we started

GEFONT. When we ran out of money, we ran GEFONT by selling a bed of your house. I feel overjoyed and saddened at once when I remember this. Joy in the sense that the journey had started from there. GEFONT has come to this point as you are leaving the post of Chairperson today. I feel saddened in the sense that you shed too much of your sweats.

Comrade Rimal!

When the then CPM (ML) decided to establish the Labour *Section* in 1989 AD, you quit the well-paid job at Pulchowk Engineering College and joined the labour organization. At that time, there were only four unions including Nepal Independent Workers Union, Nepal Independent Hotel Workers Union, Independent Transport workers Association of Nepal and Trekking Workers Association, Nepal. Having integrated all these unions, GEFONT was established as an umbrella organization. At that time, Cde. Lalit Basnet took the organizational leadership. You had the leadership in policy.

Do I need to explain? Comrade! you know it very well. GEFONT was formed on 20 July 1989. Right after the formation of GEFONT, multiparty had been established in Nepal. At that time, GEFONT had to do three things simultaneously. First, industrial unrest broke out all over the country. The workers had been oppressed during the Autocratic Panchayat Regime. After the restoration of the multiparty system, they expected that all of their demands would be fulfilled, they spontaneously broke into movement throughout the country. Till that moment, there was no other organization except GEFONT in the labour market. Therefore, the tasks like uniting the agitated workers from all over the country and advocating for them were conducted under the leadership of GEFONT. Under your leadership, GEFONT negotiated with the employers from all over the country. I was also a part of that negotiating task. At that time, Director General of GEFONT Comrade Mukunda Neupane had supported us fully.

During the period, the challenge was to address the movement on the one hand, and to maintain the industrial peace in the factories on the

other. In order to overcome the tough moments, two significant initiatives were taken. First, a trend of fixing the minimum wage and revise every two years. Second, the Labour Act 1992 had brought into force with an aim of replacing the previous Factory & Factory Workers' Act 1957.

Surely, you didn't have legal background. But you, had led all the talks with the employers and the government in relation to drafting of Labour Act. Meanwhile, GEFONT extended itself all over the country. The number of workers reached from 25000 to 100000 within one year of its establishment. As the General Secretary, you shouldered the responsibility of organizational expansion.

After 1991 AD, Trade Union Congress emerged. There was tension in the labour market. Even amidst such tension, GEFONT's Second Congress held in 2000 decided to move for uniting union movement and gave **"One Union One Voice"** slogan. After that joint Board was formed in 2004. Now all the trade unions are under the single umbrella of JTUCC. You rendered it policy leadership.

There was no labour policy. Labour Act and policy had been regarded as the same. I vividly remember the hard work you put to organize labour conference and formulate labour policy at such time. When you got elected the President first time, you developed a slogan, **"Wherever worker, there is GEFONT"**. Under that slogan, we formed support groups in different foreign countries including Qatar. After you became the President, GEFONT got an opportunity to represent in the governing body of ILO for the first time. GEFONT got an opportunity to be established at the leadership level of several global union federations. The dignitaries including ITUC's General Secretary Sharan Burrow refer to your name. Our chest swells with pride. It will be too long if I start unfolding the pouch of the works you have done and the struggles you have faced. So, now I would like to put forth only two things.

The seventh Congress has chosen me the President. From now onwards, the responsibility of leading GEFONT has transferred from you to me and my team. Comrade! I have learnt many things about how to run an

organization from you. There is contribution of other predecessors in it. I won't move even an inch from the culture of adjustment you have introduced in the organization so as to retain the friends holding the leadership and the tradition you have set to extend respect and gratitude to one's predecessor and to give an appropriate space to my comrades.

Comrade, the Committee under my leadership will not forget the history of the GEFONT. It will always coordinate the predecessors' vision and youths' dynamism, and lead the Trade Union Movement to a new height. It will forever devote itself to the cause of working class in consolidated democracy

*(Formal Expression Focusing the outgoing President of GEFONT Bishnu Rimal, by Binod Shrestha, the new President elected from the 7<sup>th</sup> National Congress, during the oath taking ceremony on May 1, 2018.)*



*Chief Guest, Rt. Honourable Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli  
at Inauguration Programme of 7th National Congress of GEFONT*



*Inauguration Programme of 7th National Congress of GEFONT*



# Resolutions

Adopted by 7th National Congress of GEFONT (28-31 March 2018)

## Resolution - 1

### Present Situation of Political Power Balance in Nepal

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#### **We recall**

The People's Movement in 1990 restored the multi-party democracy and brought the monarchy within the constitutional boundary in Nepal. But the new king ushered to power following the royal massacre in 2001 took the state power and began his absolute regime after a year he was enthroned. Protesting it, thousands of political leaders, members and cadres took to the street. GEFONT played a lead role in bringing all trade union confederations together and mobilising working class people against the King's move. Seven Party Alliance called for the people's movement against monarchy in 2006. The movement succeeded to overturn the King's regime, restore the House of Representatives, dethrone the King and establish republican system in Nepal.

The restored House of Representative institutionalised the Comprehensive Peace Agreement reached between then Seven Party Alliance and the then rebel- CPN (Maoist), completed the major tasks of peace process and held the elections of Constituent Assembly (CA). The CA successfully wrote a new constitution, promulgated it in September 20, 2015 and ended the protracted political transition.



## **We are glad**

The year 2017 has been a milestone in Nepali political history. Politics took a new turn with the successful completion of local elections in 753 municipalities and rural municipalities. In October 2017, after nearly two years of the promulgation of the Constitution, the Communist Party of Nepal (UML) and Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) signed a six-point agreement to forge electoral alliance of democratic-left for the provincial assembly and federal parliamentary elections with a target to form a single communist party after the elections. This agreement was a watershed moment in favour of Nepal's progressive movement. As a result of it, the alliance of democratic-left was able to win nearly a two-third majority seats in the provincial assemblies and federal parliament elections.

The Alliance got 46.61% popular votes in these elections, which was 8.04% higher than the popular votes received by Nepali Congress (NC) and Sanghiya Samajbadi Forum, Nepal (SSF-N) – non-left parties combined. The Alliance of democratic-left secured 62.09% seats in Federal Parliament and in provincial assemblies - it was nearly 64%. The Alliance has formed governments in 6 out of the total 7 provinces with two-third majority support. It supported to form the coalition government of SSF-N and Rastriya Janata Party (RJP) in Province 2. Nepali Congress, which at times was known as the largest political party suffered setback in these elections that deflated the party to less than one-fourth seats in parliaments.

## **We agree**

A new positive political power balance has been established in the country. The seven-point agreement on unification of the two communist parties reached between the CPN UML and CPN (Maoist Centre) has rescued the state power from the muddy political hodgepodge. The power balance now has been divided between the left-democratic progressive front led by CPN UML and the

status quoist rightist front led by Nepali Congress. Undoubtedly it is most favourable political environment for the working class and Nepali people in the political history of Nepal. The movements for political rights have been fundamentally completed now. With this, Nepali society has reached to the stage of 'movement in democracy' from the stage of 'movement for democracy'. A new era of hope and inspiration has begun and Nepali society is gradually moving towards the socio-economic transformation based on the solid foundation of political achievements.

### **We propose**

We are the resolute supporter of 'movement in democracy'. And it is our foremost responsibility now to defend democracy resolutely. We do not accept to make the constitutional provisions and its Articles obsolete in any pretext or through its misinterpretation. We say no to ditch the system without putting it to the test. Democracy cannot be consolidated without building it on a strong citadel. We cannot achieve 'dignified and creative life for working class' without consolidating democracy to serve for them too. Therefore, we have chosen 'prosperous working class in consolidated democracy' as the theme of this Congress because it is only when the working class is able to live prosperous life then they comprehend 'consolidated democracy' in real sense.

GEFONT aims for 'dignified, prosperous and creative life of working class.' 'Happy Nepali and Prosperous Nepal' is the national goal now. To realise it, we have to consolidate and institutionalise democracy, and move towards prosperity.

### **We call**

The UN has set the sustainable development goals to achieve them by 2030. Of the 17 development goals, 6 are directly related to the world of work. The first goal is about ending poverty in all its forms

everywhere. Even today 836 millions people live with extreme poverty around the globe; one out of every five lives on less than US\$1.5 a day. The poverty situation in Nepal is more palpable. So, we call the National Executive Committee of GEFONT to link the sustainable development goals with the national agenda of prosperity and poverty reduction.

The second is about gender equality, which is the fifth goal of sustainable development. In our context, we are making good stride towards representation and participation in political front. We have been able to elect nearly 41% women in recently held local elections; on an average the woman representation in all levels of peoples' representative bodies has reached to above 39%. Representation in number is quite encouraging. However, we have to do more to bring it to the level of equal participation. So we call the National Executive Committee (NEC) to design and roll out programmes to consolidate women's equal participation at all levels.

The third is about decent work for all, which is the eighth sustainable development goal. It is the most concerned goal for all us. Half of the world population lives on less than US\$2 a day even today. We are also living the same condition. Therefore, we call to link this goal with the agenda of prosperity.

Reduction of inequality is another goal that we have to prioritize in our agenda. Statistics show that inequality has increased by 11% between 1990 and now in the world. The increasing inequality has marred us as well. So, we have to design our programme in such a manner that it contributes to reduce growing inequality; and, we call the NEC for this as well.

For all this to achieve, we have to invest in institutional strengthening, and we remind NEC the importance of it as well.

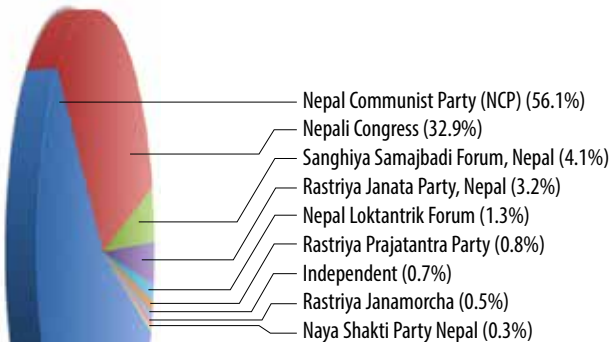
### Annex 1

#### Status of Elected Candidates by Political Parties

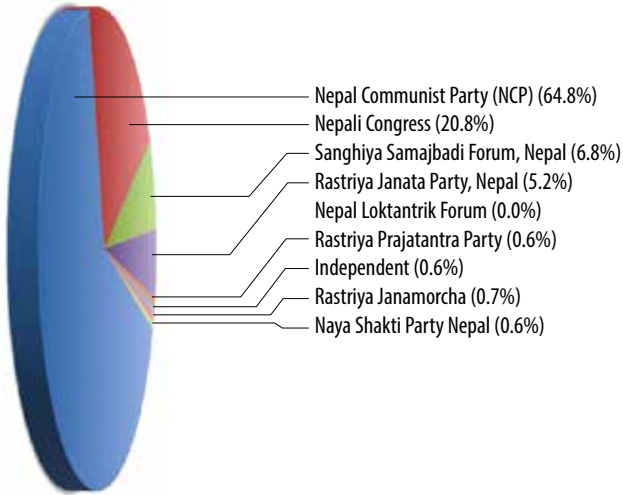
Political Parties	Local Level	Province Level		House of Representative		National Assembly	Total	%
		First Past Post	Proportional	First Past Post	Proportional			
1 Nepal Communist Party (NCP)	19540	241	110	116	58	39	20104	55.97
2 Nepali Congress	11456	41	72	23	40	13	11645	32.42
4 Sanghiya Samajbadi Forum, Nepal	1439	24	13	10	6	2	1494	4.16
5 Rastriya Janata Party, Nepal	1111	16	12	11	6	2	1158	3.22
6 Nepal Loktantrik Forum	461	0	0	0	0	0	461	1.28
7 Rastriya Prajatantra Party	285	0	3	1	0	0	289	0.8
8 Independent	233	3	0	1	0	0	237	0.66
9 Rastriya Janamorcha	186	2	2	1	0	0	191	0.53
10 Naya Shakti Party Nepal	110	2	1	1	0	0	114	0.32

Source: Office of Election Commission

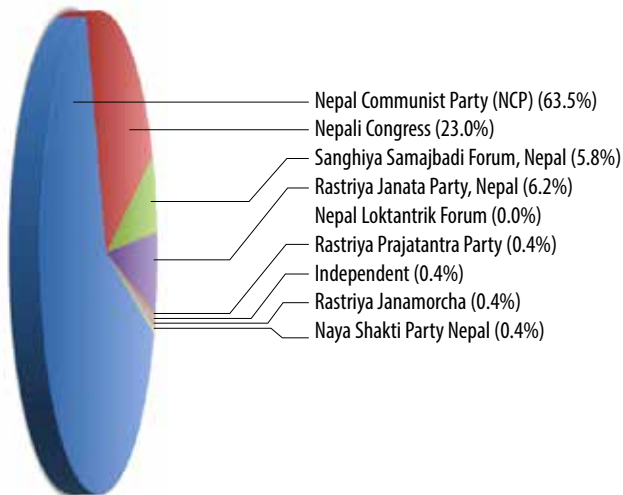
#### Status of Elected Candidates in Local Level Elections by Political Parties



**Status of Elected Candidates in Province Level Elections by Political Parties**



**Status of Elected Candidates in House of Representative by Political Parties**







*Showing the logo of congress with solidarity  
at Inauguration Programme of 7th National Congress of GEFONT*

**Resolution - 2**

## Workers' Space in Parliament

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### **Where is our space?**

GEFONT asked this question to political leadership on May First Day 2010. Then the question was translated into common slogan of Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre (JTUCC) and all trade union centres affiliated to it. Workers representation is crucial in all representative structures of the State to strengthen labour politics and to effectively implement workers' rights and welfare. The involvement and active participation of trade unions in policy making and implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and in the entire process is to be ensured.

GEFONT internalised the need of ensuring workers space from the very onset of the political change in 1990 and succeeded to elect its leaders including Chairperson and members in the House of Representatives in 1991. It also secured its representation in other elected bodies and made strong presence in policy deliberations.

### **We feel proud of our achievements**

GEFONT vigorously involved itself in drafting and endorsement of Labour Act 1992 and Trade Union Act 1992. GEFONT representatives elected to succeeding parliaments and other elected bodies played crucial role to exert pressure in a constructive way to draft/revise the Foreign Employment Act, Labour Act 2017, Contributory Social Security Act, and other labour legislations. It was through these representatives that GEFONT defended debate on the importance of labour policy, voiced for the policy and programmes friendly to the workers and catalysed amendments to such legal provisions that were highly significant to workers' rights and welfare. GEFONT's effective and result oriented involvement in declaring Nepal a republic state and in the process of constitution drafting was possible because of



strong presence and active, creative, effective and pressurising role of its representatives who were in the parliament.

**We agree that -**

Not only in policy agenda, but also the recognition of existing Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre (JTUCC) as designed by GEFONT was possible because of GEFONT's initiation. We took up the baton to develop common viewpoint of all trade unions with regard to the mobilisation of JTUCC, labour agenda and effective policy intervention. As a result we achieved the provision of single minimum wage instead of minimum wage in four-categories, contributory social security system including amendment to existing labour legislations, introduction of new Labour Act and Contributory Social Security Act.

**We direct that -**

More than 250 representatives of trade unions affiliated to GEFONT have been elected in local level, many of them as Mayors and Deputies of municipalities and rural municipalities. About a dozen of trade union leaders are parliamentarians now following the recent general elections of Province and Centre. All these have provided us with opportunity to render influence for the transformation of state economy benefiting the working class, and to claim adequate and sustainable space at all level. To seize this opportunity and capitalize on it, Congress directs the National Executive Committee to continue campaign to achieve 10% representation of working class in all structures of the State and consolidate the strength of working class.

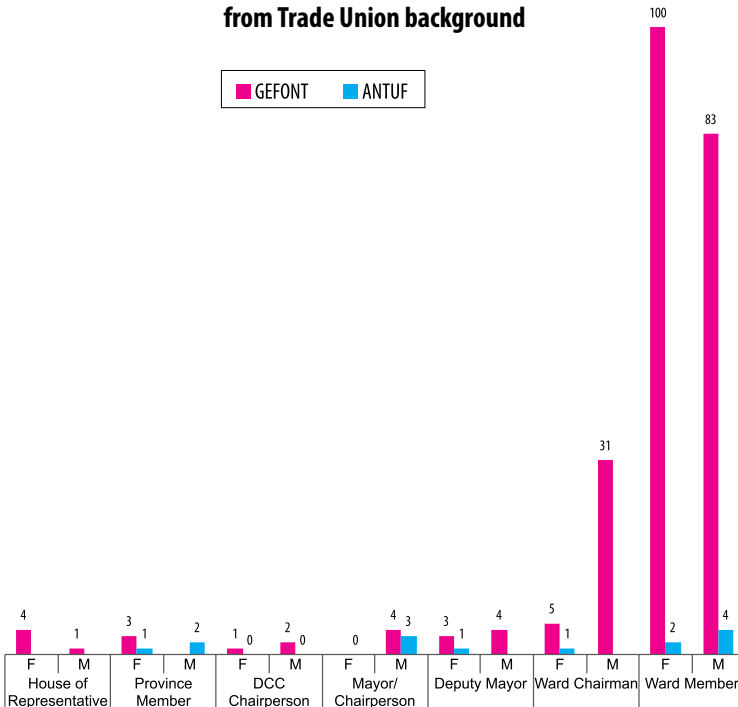
## Annex 2

### Elected Candidates in Parliament and Local Elections from Trade Union background

Confederation	House of Representative		Province Member		DCC Chairperson		Mayor/ Chairperson		Deputy Mayor		Ward Chairman		Ward Member	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
GEFONT	4	1	3		1	2		4	3	4	5	31	100	83
ANTUF			1	2				3	1		1		2	4
Total	4	1	4	2	1	2		7	4	4	6	31	102	87
<b>Grand Total</b>														<b>189</b>

### Elected Candidates in Parliament and Local Elections from Trade Union background

■ GEFONT ■ ANTUF





*Video Message from Special Guest - Ms. Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC at Inauguration Programme of 7th National Congress of GEFONT*





*Guests from various National and International Organizations and Delegates  
at Inauguration Programme of 7th National Congress of GEFONT*

**Resolution - 3**

## Formation of Socialism Oriented State

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### **Our opportunities in present-day realities**

Different forces and conspiracies are at play to maneuver the country into the exploitative path of liberalism. The present-day challenge is to protect the country from it and form the nation of pro-worker character. We representing the working people are committed to fight against all sorts of obstacles and difficulties to transform the state from capital-tilt position into pro-labour position and taking the country to a path of equality and socialism with no room for exploitation and oppression.

Capital-led Globalization is another major challenge for us. We are dependent on import of goods and services rather than our own production. Fast growth of employment opportunities can be seen in the service sector but services have been inaccessible for working class. Due to deficiency of capital, we are trapped into debts and conditionalities. Both within and outside the country, we are in high exploitation of labour in all Four Dimensions – Goods, Services, Flow of Capital and Labour. The Corporate Business is striving to capture the natural resources everywhere, but workers are deprived of minimum wages as prescribed in the laws, however they are forced to pay high costs even for the free gift of nature. In addition, climate change and environmental deterioration have also victimized the working masses by creating extreme difficulties in livelihood. Development priorities and strategies set by the international financial institutions and powerful countries have obsessed us and the growing consumerism have hijacked the workers' freedom.

Though industrial capitalism is in slow motion, financial capitalism and corporatism have been autocratic and dominating. Asian Financial Crisis at the end of 20<sup>th</sup> Century and Depression with economic crisis

in the first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> Century have given shocks to the dictatorial character of liberalism, but it is still offensive. However contrary to the previous depressed position, now, the socialism has come up with enthusiasm.

The effort to lead South Asia in the frame of neoliberal model and to avoid the influence of Chinese socialism is going on, however the efforts are not successful as South Asia is the world of overwhelming majority of poor, where capitalist model does not function effectively. These neoliberal efforts have given yield in the form of instability and terrorism. Peace and stability, progress and prosperity are what the people mainly the working masses in the region aspire for. And, this aspiration can be addressed through public welfare programmes, social security and socialist remedies, which no government in South Asia can deny whether they are pro-west or anti-socialist.

### **We are proud**

We have mixed opportunity of challenge and hope. GEFONT has to start journey from this departure point of National Congress with clear ideological stand and programmatic direction and with practical programmes built on present-day reality and feasible to translate into actions. GEFONT should go ahead with large number of leaders-cadres-members and the working mass together on the path of socialism. The advantage of GEFONT is its celebrated experience of four generations and tested power in numerous ups and downs.

### **We are Consciousness and sensitive**

We are clear that the class condition of Nepali society is in a gradual transformation to middle class. Feudal class through heavy erosion in power and money has come down to settle itself in the middle class. Naturally overwhelming majority of business class in Nepal is in middle class. Likewise, major portion of the working people is slowly transitioning to a zone of middle class. Mainstream Nepali society

has entered in the wider circle of consumerism and middle income mentality. The middle class has become the most influential group with elites in the forefront having significant role in public policies, politics, economy, culture, institutional relations and international relations of the nation now.

### **We believe**

GEFONT and the Nepali trade union movement must move ahead with the strategy to transform working class to middle class establishing them as the major mainstream force of society. Protection of rights and prosperous life cannot be ensured for working class, and their conditions cannot be uplifted without upgrading them to middle class. If we could not transform working class into middle class, the leading role and representation in state and society will not be possible and workers will be ignored where they will have to quarrel and create pressure even for small and insignificant demands.

Transformation and management of conflict between classes is important to enhance peace, stability and prosperity. It should be taken to positive and equitable path to make the class transformation process easy and progressive.

### **Congress directs**

Therefore, the Congress directs the National Executive Committee

- To lead the entire working class and its leaders, cadres and members to implement the constitution and march towards socialism of working class character
- To transform and manage conflict between classes for stability, peace and prosperity of the society
- To continue with full determination the path for transforming working class to middle class, and
- To lead our state to pro-worker stream from pro-capital stream



### Annex 3

## Labour Rights under Constitution of Nepal

On 26<sup>th</sup> September 2015, the Constituent Assembly of Nepal promulgated new constitution and which was come in to force with imitate effect. The Constitution granted various fundamental rights to the peoples of Nepal. First time in the history of Nepal, there are numbers of fundamental right relating to the workers has been granted. The provision of the constitution and its position of enforcement are mentioned below:

#### **Right to employment:**

The constitution mentioned that every citizen shall have right to choose the employment. Similarly, every citizen has right to employment. The terms and condition of employment and unemployment assistance shall be determined by federal law.

To implement the provision of the constitution, the parliament has already adopted the Employments Act and which determined minimum guarantee of the 100 days of employment. In case,

#### **Right relating to fair labour practice:**

The constitution granted that every worker has right to be protected by fare labour practice. To implement the provision, the parliament already passed Labour Act 2017, which categorically prohibit the unfair labour practice and made it punishable under the law.

**Defining Workers:** First time in the history, the definition of workers has been made in the constitution. The workers word denote the person who is work intellectually or physically for employer in lieu of salary. It made it clear that entire workers including mental, intellectual and physical, are covered by the right conferred to the workers.

#### **Right to fair wage and benefit:**

The constitution mentioned that every workers has right to be protected under fare wage and benefit. To implement this provision, there are numbers of provision has been mentioned in the Labour Act 2017. There

are no employment contract may be made contradicting the minimum wage declared by the government. Workers have right to bargaining collectively to determine the higher wage as fixed by the government.

**Right to be protected by Social Security:**

Every worker has right to be protected under contributory social security. To implement the provision of the constitution, the parliament has passed the Contributory Social Security Act 2017. From this year, employer and workers registration will be initiated. The Social security board already decided that the all workers contributed in the Social security system shall have right to get Medicare benefit, Maternity benefit, Accidental Benefit, Disability benefit, Dependents benefit and old age benefits. This provision is applicable to all workers irrespective of nationality

In addition to that, the parliament also adopted the Social Security Act 2018, which will provide revenue based universal social security to old aged people, single women, disable person, freedom fighter, marginalized people and others.

**Right to join union and bargaining collectively:**

The constitution granted that every worker has right to establish and involve in trade union and bargain collectively in accordance to law.

To implement this provision, the Labour Act 2017 and Labour Rule 2018 have mentioned numbers of provisions. The Act provided the right to bargain collectively to the enterprise level union and trade union federation as well. There is separate Trade Union Act 1991 which administer the registration and function of the unions.

**Right against exploitation:**

The constitution guaranteed that every person has right against exploitation. No person shall be subjected to any kinds of exploitation on the basis of religion, custom, tradition, culture, practices or any other base. No person shall be subjected to human trafficking or bonded labour and such and act shall punishable by law. No person shall be subjected to force labour. The compensation shall be granted to the

victim of force labour and trafficking and punishment imposed against the perpetrator.

To implement the right against exploitation, numbers of provision has been mentioned in the Labour Act 2017 and Muluki Civil and Criminal Code Act 2017. In addition to that, there are Human Trafficking (Offence and Punishment) Act 2007 and Kamaiya Act 2000.

### **Right against child labour:**

The constitution granted the some right relating to the children. Constitution says that no child shall be employed to work in any factory, mines or engaged in similar other hazardous work. Similarly no child shall be recruited or used in army, police or any armed group or be subjected in the name of culture or religious tradition to abuse, exclusion or physical or mental or sexual or other forms of exploitation or improper use by any means or in any manner. The constitution also granted that any act which is contradictory to above mentioned clause shall be punishable by law and a child who is the victim of such act shall have right to obtain compensation from perpetrator, in accordance with law.

To implement this provision, the parliament adopted the Children Act 2018. There are number of provision mentioned in the Muluki Civil Code Act 2018 and Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act 2001.

### **Right to Equality:**

The constitution clearly stated that there shall not be discrimination regarding remuneration for equal value of work and social security.

The constitution says that the state shall not discriminate among citizens on grounds of origin, religion, race, caste, tribe, sex, physical condition, disability, health condition, matrimonial status, pregnancy, economic condition, language, or geographical region or ideology or any other such grounds. However, there is some provision which provides room for positive discrimination. It says that, nothing shall be deemed to bar the making of special provisions by law for the protection empowerment or advancement of different social groups including labour.

To implement Fundamental right conferred by the Constitution of Nepal, the parliament Passed following laws on September 2018

1. Social Security Act 2018
2. Compulsory and Free Education Act 2018
3. Individual Privacy Act 2018
4. Racial Discrimination and Untouchability (offence and punishment, First amendment) Act, 2018
5. Housing Right Act 2018
6. Employment Act, 2018
7. Food Right and Food Sovereignty Act 2018
8. Public Health Service Act 2018
9. Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Rights Act 2018
10. Protection of Consumer Act 2018
11. Protection of the Victims of Crime Act 2018
12. Children Act 2018
13. Environment Protection (First Amendment) Act 2018
14. Protection of Disabled People (First Amendment) Act 2018
15. Land (Seventh Amendment) Act 2018
16. Public Offence (Third Amendment) 2018

Some of the Legislation adopted by Parliament after enforcement of Constitution 2015

1. Labour Act 2017
2. Contributory Social Security Act 2017



*Special Guest, Ms. Catelene Passchier - President, Workers Group, ILO  
at Inauguration Programme of 7th National Congress of GEFONT*



संघ संसद  
समृद्ध श्रमजीवी वर्ग  
संघ संसद



Panel Discussion

Prosperous Working Class in Consolidated Democracy

समृद्ध लोकतन्त्र र समृद्ध

२०७४/२८

*Panel Discussion on "Prosperous Working Class in Consolidated Democracy" during 7th National Congress of GEFONT*

Progress without loss of conditional integrity  
**National Congress**  
28 - 31 March 2018  
Pune, Maharashtra

Session on

**Consolidated Democracy**

**सुदृढ श्रमजीवी वर्ग**

March 2018



**Resolution - 4**

## Labour Market Reform

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### **We Compare - Distribution, Consumption and Luxury**

Production, consumption and happiness cannot go hand in hand unless we make the distribution system fair and just. Autocracy in Politics and monopoly in economy will increase crossing every limit if we emphasize only production and ignore the disparity in distribution. As a result, production will stand on the foundation of labour exploitation. If production ignores human element and depends more and more mechanically on technology, Inequality will be widened more and more. On the contrary, if production takes the path of fair division of labour and fair distribution of returns instead of dependence on labour exploitation, consumption will move to right track and to the access of all. Otherwise, consumption will be limited to few groups and to the luxury of upper classes of the society. Consumption if trapped into the luxury of few, distribution will be highly unfair and exploitation will cross every limit. Hence, to ensure distribution within the frame of collectivism, equality and sacrifice, Inclusion of classes is inevitable. Only the class inclusion can provide working people the real political space, active participation and ownership in state system and in governance.

But the irony of the day is that we, in Nepal, are living in the economy which is unstable and based on uncertain income structure on erratic and ambiguous base. Current Per capita consumption is a glaring picture of it which shows how upper income class is living luxurious life as compared to low income class. Statistics offer us that the per capita consumption of 10% families of highest income decile is 11 times higher than 10% families of lowest income decile. More than 15% households are living their life in inadequate food and hunger.



## **We Stress**

Therefore, this Congress strongly laid stress on the goal of prosperity and emphasizes that the goal can be achieved only when the lowest class population are graduated to middle class. Indicators of productivity, individual capacity and household happiness are highest in Kathmandu valley. It means all opportunities are centralized to the capital city. The time has called us to set the goal of fast availability of such opportunities for all workers without delay who are toiling hard out of Kathmandu valley too.

Wages to be tied up with rate of inflation and price-hike to be visible through wage-indexation is another issue to be paid emphasis. It has become extremely relevant if we consider global wage report.

According to the ILO Global Wage Report, the real wage rate in developed countries is in increasing trend while in developing countries it is dropping down. As can be seen in the Report, global real wage growth dropped sharply from 2.5% in 2012 to 1.7% in 2015. If calculated by excluding fast growth of China, It comes down to 0.9% in 2015 from 1.6% in 2012. If we fail to strike a balance between wages and price-hike, it will land in exploitation of labour and widening inequality.

## **We Realize**

The Congress attracts attention to realize that the maximum number of workers are victimized due to declining rate of real wage growth. To address this reality, workers all over the world including Nepali workers demand for an economy sensitive towards high wages and decent employment. Working masses naturally ask for an economy which ensures fair labour market with socialist perspective. Hence the Congress urges the concerned stakeholders to establish the Economic and Social Council both at Federal Parliament and

Provincial Assemblies and introduce the system to directly address the workers' agenda through parliament.

### **Not only at home, but also ...**

GEFONT started to organize migrant Nepali workers from the beginning of its work. It established GEFONT Support Groups in destination countries, helped the workers to link with trade unions and provided them with necessary support to address their problems and issues. It is because of the dedicated works of GEFONT, it is globally recognized and appreciated. The initiative started from Korea and Hongkong also helped GEFONT to build up international relations. The Congress highly appraises the campaign and achievements in favour of migrant Nepali workers and of entire migrant workers of the globe.

### **We feel Proud**

The Congress feels proud of the achievements made by GEFONT so far. Epoch-making changes have not only happened in the political front, Labour market has also undergone incomparable accomplishments over the period of time because of our hard efforts and sacrifices. However we need more analytical approach and dedicated works in order to institutionalize it. We have been successful to include the rights of workers as fundamental rights in the constitution of the country including various items of welfare. We have marched successfully to transform the informal sector into formal sector through the new Labour Act. We have created foundation to lead the labour market to the path of pro-worker destination and socialism. But this is not the all we aspire for. We need to continue mobilising the full capacity of GEFONT to effectively implement and institutionalize the provisions guaranteed in the constitution and labour legislations.

## **We Express Our Confidence**

The path of dignified work is the path of Workers' power and the path for prosperity of working class. We can construct the road of dignified and decent work from the departure point of ensured space and rights of working masses. What we mean by the decent and dignified work in the context of Nepal is the guarantee of fairly high wages, humanitarian working condition and social security for all.

The Congress directs the National Executive Committee to move ahead with full confidence to enhance the access of working class to social security, fair wages, and humanitarian working conditions through effective implementation of policy, programmes and organizational structures.

## **We Reaffirm**

The Congress reaffirms that Growth in wages is the major tool of workers to fight inequality. Therefore, the Congress directs the NEC to focus on the following:

- Implementation of labour legislation for decent employment
- Collective bargaining at provincial and industrial level
- Policy focused social dialogue at the national level
- Joint campaign for additional NRs 5,000 wage increase monthly and NRs 600 per day for workers
- Strong and effective role of GEFONT and union movement for policy development at national level
- Incessant pressure for the expansion of coverage of social security and upliftment of living standard of workers
- Registration system of workers at local level and operation of labour desk

- Strengthening result oriented and dynamic system of collective bargaining at work place
- Establishing single bargaining panel of unions at local level
- Introducing labour Audit and functioning of active labour inspection system at local level

The inter-relationship between labour and capital has been the endless series of struggle and collaboration in contemporary world. On the face of it, the Congress pays strong emphasis on dynamic collective bargaining system based on facts and logic instead of anarchy in the name of struggle and sickness in the name of negotiation. It accentuates the economic system based on three pillars of public, private and cooperatives and socialism oriented state system where following characteristics of labour market are to be guaranteed:

- Public welfare programme and expanded coverage of social security
- The Higher the wages - The higher the productivity
- Market regulation in a socialist perspective
- Wage-led and employment-led Development strategy
- Industrial collective bargaining
- Long-term vision for workers to ensure ownership of means of production
- Transformation of working class to middle class through the improved quality of employment, income and living standard
- Protection of migrant workers through embassy and trade union movement

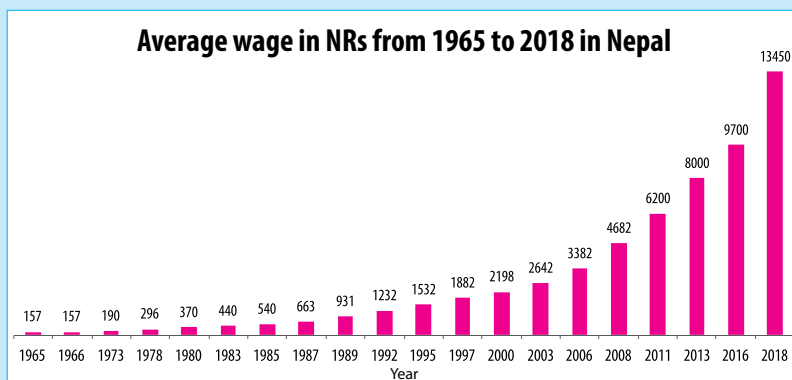
## Annex 4

### Real wage increase 1965 to 1992 Before recognition of union and 1992, after recognition of union in Nepal

Year	Average wage NRS	National CPI	Real wage Index
1965	157	100	100
1966	157	102	98
1973	190	157	77.1
1978	296	222	85.1
1980	370	378	62.4
1983	440	507	55.2
1985	540	611	56.3
1987	663	769	54.9
1989	931	912	65.0
1992	1232	1320	59.5

Year	Average Wage NRS	National CPI	Real wage Index
1992	1232	100	100.0
1995	1532	127	97.6
1997	1882	149	103.0
2000	2198	175	101.4
2003	2642	197	108.8
2006	3382	235	117.1
2008	4682	283	134.5
2011	6200	367	137.1
2013	8000	440	147.5
2016	9700	542	145.3
2018	13450	562	194.3

Monthly expenses (Per-person) 2017



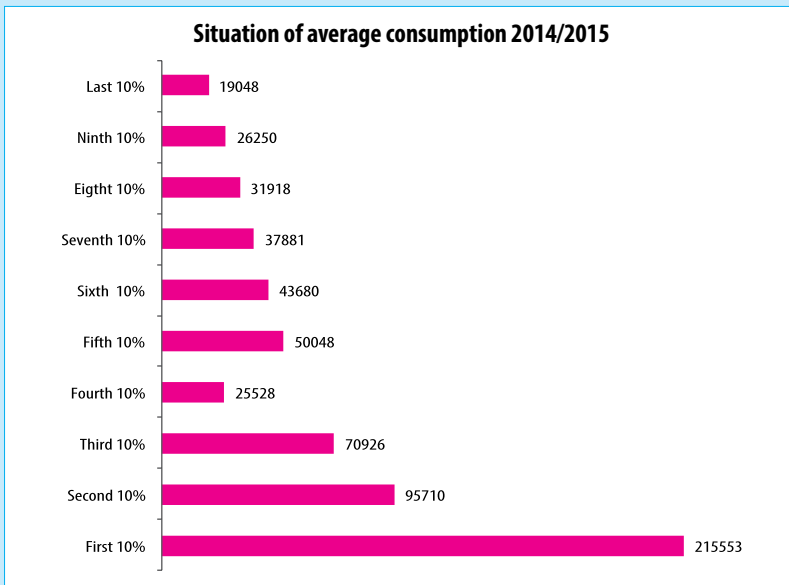
## Annex 5

**Income inequality reflected in consumption expenditure**

The table below reveals the fact that 10% highest-income households consume 11 times higher than that of 10% lowest income households.

**Situation of average consumption 2014/2015**

	Average perperson consumption expenditure
First 10%	Rs 215553
Second 10%	Rs 95710
Third 10%	Rs 70926
Fourth 10%	Rs 25528
Fifth 10%	Rs 50048
sixth 10%	Rs 43680
Seventh 10%	Rs 37881
Eighth 10%	Rs 31918
Ninth 10%	Rs 26250
Last 10%	Rs 19048





7th National Congress  
28 - 31 March 2018



के कारण म स्वयं महाधिवेसनमा उपस्थित हुन



*Video Message of Special Guest, Mr. Luc Cortebeek, Chairperson of the ILO GB at Inauguration Programme of 7th National Congress of GEFONT*



*Closing Session of 7th National Congress of GEFONT*





**Resolution - 5**

## Formalising Informal Workers

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**Congress recalls that-**

The Labour Act 1991 came into implementation after the People's Movement in 1990. It guaranteed the protection of permanent workers at enterprises where 10 or more are hired for work. The Act legally pushed large number of workers to 'informal status' who were employed in small enterprises, companies and professional firms. Similarly, the Act could not cover the domestic workers and employees at private shops. Some provisions in the Act were discriminatory against workers on contract, daily wages and casual works. It was too narrow to provide protection to the large mass of workers in informal economy. To challenge the discriminatory provisions and expose limitations of the Act, trade unions started their pro-active role and discussions with employers' organisations from 2002. They together with employers and government organised the Second National Labour Conference in 2005 and pushed the agenda to formalise the informal workforce. Similarly, on 2014, the JTUCC and employers' organisations provided recommendations to the government through the Draft Labour Bill that the State should guarantee basic protection to all workers irrespective of terms and conditions of their work.

**The Congress is Glad to note that-**

The year 2017 was a historical year for Nepali world of work. The Labour Act 2017 and Contributory Social Security Act 2017 came into implementation addressing the basic demands of working class. The Regulations are in the due process accordingly. Based on the provisions of the new Act, employers should, regardless of number of workers employed by them, provide remuneration and benefits

to the workers as prescribed in the law. All workers are entitled to provident fund (contributing 10% each by employer and the employee) and gratuity (contributing 8.33% by employer) from the very first day of employment. If the employer by any reason cannot provide provident fund and gratuity, in that case the employer should add 18.33% amount in the monthly remuneration of the concerned employee and provide it on monthly basis. Every worker is entitled to an accident insurance equivalent to at least NPR 700,000 and medical insurance amounting to NPR 100,000 per annum. All informal workers can enjoy leave facility equal to the formal workers.

The Act prohibits deploying a worker in duty more than 8 hours a day and 48 hours a week. Overtime work can be assigned 4 hours a day and 24 hours per week at the maximum, and every worker is entitled to get facility of overtime equivalent to 1.5 times the normal wages as per the law. Every worker should be provided with festival allowance equivalent to one-month pay. All workers are entitled to these and other facilities as prescribed in the Act without any discrimination. In addition to it the workers or self-employed person can also participate in the social security scheme as per the Contributory Social Security Act 2017. These achievements make us all feel proud and persuade us to win more.

### **Congress determines**

To adhere to the laws and policies endorsed by the parliament. We are committed to implement the constitutional provisions that envisage to establish prosperous Nepal based on socialism-oriented state character of Nepal, and protect workers by guaranteeing them fair wage and contributory social security to all.

### **Congress proposes that**

No system embarks on result unless the provisions written in paper are put into practice. It is vital that the Labour Inspection System must

be strengthened to achieve result out of the provisions guaranteed in the Constitution and the Labour Legislations. Thus, the congress proposes to make programme for effective implementation of the labour audit system.

### **Congress directs that**

The National Executive Committee should launch joint campaign to implement the labour laws effectively, evaluate regularly and analyse the condition of the implementation of laws, bring all workers under the protection of social security, and mobilise the union members in their full capacity for the implementation of laws and policies.



*Closing Session of 7th National Congress of GEFONT*



**Resolution - 6**

## Implementation of New Labour Laws

---

### **We Recall—**

In January 2002, active national centres of that time—GEFONT, NTUC and DECONT—rejected the declaration made by the then Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba to push forward second amendment to the Labour Act, 1992, which was primarily based on hire-and-fire policy promise. The trade union stand led to the formation of an 8-Member Labour Law Reform Taskforce to take steps toward reforms and conduct social dialogue with the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI).

On 3 January 2003, FNCCI and the three trade unions—GEFONT, NTUC and DECONT reached a 7-Point agreement for improvement of Nepali world of work and to revise labour laws with clear provisions of social security. Agreed points between the two parties included: i) Social security; ii) Labour market flexibility; 3) Gender issues at work places; 4) Informal sector; 5) Labour administration; 6) Trade unions and collective bargaining; and 7) Exit policy. On 9 January 2005, FNCCI and the trade unions agreed on a 19-points policy guideline for the labour law reform process. The guideline was subsequently adopted by the Second National Labour Conference organized by the Government of Nepal on 12-14 January 2005.

On 1 February 2005, the then King took over the state powers and tried to curtail labour rights through new ordinance. In protest of this unconstitutional royal move, trade unions organized a mega conference with participation of tens of thousands of workers in Kathmandu on 10-12 September 2005. The conference passed a declaration against Royal Ordinance by rejecting the proposed

second amendment to the Labour Act 1992. The royal government, however, did not pay attention to the demands of the trade union movement and released the ordinance on 9 March 2006 amidst protests. Nevertheless, the ordinance did not come to effect due to heightened pressure from trade union movement. After the success of the people's movement against the royal coup, the reinstated parliament dismissed the ordinance on 15 May 2006.

The changed context opened doors for tripartite dialogues for forming and reforming labour laws. After a series of article-wise serious discussions, employers' associations and trade unions signed a draft version of the Labour Act along with their points of reservation attached to the Act and handed over a consolidated draft to the Labour Ministry on 10 October 2014. The draft was fundamentally accepted by the Government and tabled in the parliament and passed by the Legislature-Parliament on 11 August 2017. The passed law was named as Labour Act, 2017, which came to force after certification by the President of Nepal on 4 September 2017. Similarly, the Contributory Social Security Act, 2017 was passed by the parliament on 24 July and came to force on 13 August 2017.

### **We express our gratitude**

The year 2017 remained an important year in the field of labour relations. Among various demands of the workers, fundamental demands have been addressed through the Labour Act 2017 that has been passed by the parliament and implementation already begun. This fundamental law comprises of larger scopes ranging from domestic workers to all sorts. Hence, no one can make an agreement against or beyond this law in regards of pay and perk to workers.

Employment pattern has been categorised as casual, part-time, time-bound, task-based, and regular. There should not be any

discrimination in terms of pay and perks to workers whatever may be the terms and conditions.

Right from the first day of the service, the basic social security provisions like provident fund, gratuity, accident and medicinal expenses should be provided to workers whether they are natives or outsiders, trainee or part-time workers. Depositing amounts for provident fund, gratuity and insurance in the Social Security Fund is mandatory after the implementation of the Social Security Act, 2017.

No one should be fired from their work without proper reasons and due process. If one is fired illegally, provisions exist to file case against managers and reinstate the worker in the job.

Age of retirement from regular employment has been increased from 55-year to 58-year. In various other types of employment, one can work for more than that age bar.

Trade unions should be consulted prior to retrenchment of workers and not without paying compensation. Those in Union portfolios cannot be expelled from the job in the initial round of “right-sizing”.

Workers in all types of employment receive annual salary increment (grade) and festival expenditure as equivalent to basic salary of one month.

Workers in all types of employment receive 1 day weekly rest. Public holidays of 13 days including the May-Day for men and 14 days including 8 March for women, home-leave of 1 day for each 20 working days, and 12 days of sick leave annually are other provisions. Similarly the law provides 13 days of mourning leave, altogether 98 days of maternity leave including paid 60 days for women and 15 days of paid paternity leave for men. If one had to work on a public holiday, he/she must be provided with compensatory leave within 21



days. One can accumulate home-leave up to 90 days and sick leave up to 45 days. Payments are received for these types of accumulated leave.

Employers should formulate occupational safety and health policy at workplace and act accordingly to ensure working environment. They should also develop performance evaluation tools and procedures in consultation with the union and maintain transparency so that workers can access results of the evaluation.

Submission of charter of demands, collective bargaining and agreements can be done even more than those mentioned in the Act, laws and agreements. On the issues related to workers' rights, remedies should be sought through the labour office or the court. Strikes cannot be prohibited without putting in place an alternative mechanism to resolve collective disputes. Collective agreement will be for 2 years, but will function before substitution by next agreement.

Labour Relation Committee should be formulated to prevent labour disputes and increase production in enterprises with more than ten workers.

No one should be involved in misconducts. If involved, one can be warned, his/her salary of one day equivalent can be deducted, grades or promotions can be withheld, and the worker concerned can be expelled. However, one should not be punished without opportunities for hearing. Employment of workers who are in time-bound and work-contract comes to and end when the contract period is over. But, whatever has been mentioned in the contract, the contract period remains automatically extended if the task is still ongoing. In case the payment is not made within 15 days of

the completion of the task, s/he deserves right to be paid as a still working employee.

All enterprises should every year perform self assessment through labour audit and submit report to labour office. Outsourcing have been made more responsive. If the workers are outsourced through any company without license, all the facilities should be provided by the employer itself.

Similarly, the Contributory Social Security Act has provisions for ensuring participation of every worker in all types of social security schemes.

### **We Agree**

We agree upon laws which are not granted by someone else but are fundamentally brought on through mutual agreements between workers and employers for implementation. We stress on their effective implementation.

### **We Propose–**

In the context of state restructuring and federal structures in Nepal, workers' issues should not be threatened by the competition among provinces. We are committed that any kind of development which compromises rights of the workers and is based on primacy of labour exploitation is not possible at all. That is why it will be the responsibility of the federal, provincial and local governments to ensure effective enforcement of the Labour Act and the Contributory Social Security Act.

We are always ready to join hands and work together for these ends. Labour laws must be implemented to prohibit labour disputes and to create conducive environment wherein workers can contribute

from their side with high spirit in the journey for development and prosperity of the country.

### **We Direct**

This Congress directs the new leadership to develop mechanisms for effective implementation of labour laws in collaboration with the federal, provincial and local governments, to increase the effectiveness of labour audits, to bring forward bilateral and tripartite dialogues for creating enabling environment to mitigate disputes by strengthening labour inspection system.

## Annex 6

### New provision in labour Law 2074

1. This law has been agreed as the basic law; all employees will get wage and benefits not less than this law proposes. Nobody shall make agreement breaching this law
2. The Labour Act covers entire world of work including domestic worker. We are able to bring all informal sector workers who are not covered under previous Act.
3. All forms of exploitative labour practices including child and forced labour is banned. Employers are restricted to make any agreement banning person to joining the union.
4. Employment structure is categorised as **casual work, time-bound work, task-based work, part-time and regular** work. Whatever structure is made in employment contract- there will be no discrimination in wage and benefits
5. Basic Social protection measures such as gratuity, accidental benefits, sickness benefits, Medicare including workers saving- the provident funds is payable from the day one of employment. Trainee and part time workers also covered.
6. Outsource job is made more responsible, if the non-licensee recruiting agencies supply labour to any workplace; principle employer is responsible to meet all benefits.
7. There is a provision for make work appraisal transparent.
8. Without valid reasons and fulfilling lawful obligation, no one would be fired by the employment. In case of unlawful firing, it is provisioned of case against such employer. Union leaders are protected during retrenchment
9. Retiring age is increased to 58 years from 55
10. Women workers are protected better compare to previous law-
  - a. There will be transport facilities if women are working in night shift

- b. There will 98 days of maternity protection leave, 60 days paid
  - c. In case of miscarriage of 7 months and above pregnancy, benefit is provided as of maternity
  - d. There will be no discrimination based on gender
  - e. A strong disciplinary action proposed against harassment
11. Social dialogue
- a. Every 2 two years of interval, minimum wage is reviewed
  - b. A provision of common bargaining committee in agreement of multi union in the enterprises is added besides right to take part in CBA by the authentic union
  - c. 21 days given for bilateral negotiation and 30 days given for labour office to conciliate the collective dispute. In case, the agreement is not signed during that time, union may call for strike by giving 30 days notice except essential service or state of emergency or dispute in EPZ or parties agreed for arbitration or government refer the case to arbitration. It is given much emphasis on arbitration in labour dispute by providing right to government to refer the case to arbitration. However, such arbitration award may be challenge within 5 working days from the date of award.
  - d. The collective agreement is valid as equivalent to law till 2 year and remain valid if it is not changed by next CBA.
  - e. Strike action should not be prohibited without making alternative mechanism for collective dispute settlement mechanism.
  - f. There is no agreement on sectorial central bargaining though Nepal already ratified ILO convention 98.
12. Leave facilities and Paid public holidays are increased and May Day and 8 March included.
13. Existing factory inspection system is changed in widen to labour inspection system. System of labour Audit has been introduced to enforce the Labour Laws.
14. Mechanism such as enforcement of agreement and judgement is included
15. Few flexible provisions of the Act may invite negative consequences if union became less smart:

- a. Contractual, time-bound categories of employment may escalate, though workers of all categories are entitled to enjoy all benefits and social protection stuffs
- b. Period of trainees may extend to 1 years, however there will be no difference in entitlement
- c. Retrenchment can be done in consultation of union, here union need to be more responsible
- d. Everyone entitle to get minimum facilities enshrine in the law, but more than minimum can be reduced through CBA- here union needs to be more smart
- e. There is fixed list for termination of the workers, however, it can be added through collective CBA. If union plays foul, there will negative consequences

### **Contribution Based Social Security Act: Salient Features**

1. Worker and in some cases, family members' dependent on the worker shall benefit from the Contribution Based Social Security. Only the contributors shall be entitled to benefits of the Social Security Plan.
2. Contributions to the Social Security shall be deducted from the basic remuneration amount, before tax deduction, payable on a daily, weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis as a result of direct or indirect employment.
3. The Act has specified an employer covered under this Act. The term employer denotes a manager in case of an enterprise, the engaging employee in the case an employee is engaged by another employee, the recruitment agency in the case that the employee is a supplied employee, and the Government of Nepal, provincial government or local level government for a person under employment in Government Service or person entitled to receive remuneration from the Government's Fund.
4. As per the agreement with employers association reached 6 years ago, it is understood that the contribution rates for the employees and the employers shall be 11% and 20% respectively.

5. The Act has provisioned for recovery of contribution amount in the case an enlisted employer does not deposit contribution amount in the Fund. This Section has provided authority to the Fund to collect the 10% interest in addition to the contribution amount from the concerned employer. For an enlisted employer who does not submit contribution amount shall be punished with fine or even may send to jail.
6. Section 10 of the Act has provisioned for 8 types of Social Security Plans, which are, as follows:
  - (a) Medicare and Sickness Benefit,
  - (b) Maternity Protection Benefit,
  - (c) Accidental Benefit
  - (d) Disability Benefit
  - (e) Old Age Benefit
  - (f) Dependent Benefit
  - (g) Unemployment Benefit,
  - (h) Other social protection schemes specified by the Fund.
7. If an employer is not enlisted at the Fund within the timeframe prescribed by the Act, then the Fund may issue the following orders against such Employer: (a) to enlist at the Fund immediately and to enlist the appointed employees, (b) from the date of contract with the employer, to deposit the total contribution amount as prescribed by the Act including interest accrued or (c) in the case that the employment has been terminated, then to direct the employer to make payments to the employee of accumulated amount equivalent for facilities provisioned during the employment period, within a prescribed timeframe.
8. The Act has defined the Fund as inalienable, autonomous and organized entity with a successor. and shall be managed by tripartite board.

**Annex 7****Labour Audit Report****Information related to Enterprises:**

Name of the enterprise:

Address:

Main work performed by the enterprise:

**Information related to Enterprises:**

Number of workers and their terms of employment:

Number of workers hired via labour provider:

**Information related to employment contract**

1. Whether employment contracts or appointment letters have been issued to the workers? If not, why?
2. Whether work permits have been acquired or not for foreign workers?
3. Whether children who have not completed the age of 18 are employed or not? If yes, how and what type of work they are engaged in need to be disclosed.
4. Whether wage and facility has been provided or not if interns are engaged in the work?
5. Whether trainees are employed or not? Whether the trainees, when engaged in the work, are being paid remuneration or benefits as per Law ?
6. Whether workers are employed on part time employment or not? If yes, whether they are being provided benefits including social security contribution?
7. Whether workers are made to work more than eight hours a day and forty eight hours a week?
8. Whether half an hour rest is provided for every five hours of work or not? Whether overtime payment or benefits are being paid?



9. Whether female workers are being provided the transportation facility and security or not while engaging in the work before sunrise and after sunset?
10. Whether any worker being paid wage lesser than minimum wage or not?
11. What is the rate of average remuneration of the enterprise?
12. Whether annual salary increment (grade) is being provided or not?
13. Whether the period of payment for remuneration has exceeded one month or not? ( If yes, give reasons).
14. Whether festival allowance is being paid to the workers or not?
15. Whether the following leave and holidays are being provided to workers or not (State the number of holidays and leave)
  - Weekly holiday
  - Public holiday
  - Home leave
  - Sick leave
  - Maternity leave
  - Maternity care leave
  - Mourning leave
  - Substitute leave
16. Whether provident fund or contribution in the social security fund for every worker (regular, task based, time based, casual and part time employment) pursuant to Labour Law is being made or not? If it is not deposited in the social security fund, then state where is it being used?
17. Whether gratuity or contribution in the social security fund for every worker (regular, task based, time based, casual and part time employment) pursuant to Labour Law is being made or not? If it is not deposited in the social security fund, then state where is it being used?
18. Whether medical insurance is being provided or not?
19. Whether insurance to cover all kinds of accidents as per law is made or not?

20. Are there workers supplied by labour provider or not? Whether the labour provider company has acquired license pursuant to Law or not?
21. Whether safety and health policy pursuant to Labour Laws is formulated and executed or not?
22. Whether safety and health committee pursuant to section 74 is formed and regularly holding the meeting and taking decisions or not?
23. Whether the enterprise, for its internal management, has made by-law or not?
24. Whether the by-law has been registered in the Office and distributed to the workers or not? If registered at the Office, mention the date of registration and number?
25. Whether labour relation committee is formed and meetings are regularly held or not? The date of the last meeting held in the financial year needs to be mentioned.
26. Whether the work performance evaluation system is implemented or not?
27. Whether individual claim is submitted or not? If yes, how many such claims have been settled through negotiation with the management? (State the number).
28. Whether collective claims have been made in this financial year or not?
29. If claims have been submitted, when were they submitted? (State the date)
30. Whether agreement or decisions or judgment as per this Act are pending to be enforced or not? If yes, when will it be enforced?

### **Contribution Based Social Security Act, 2074 and Contribution Based Social Security Rules, 2074**

1. Whether listed in the social security fund or not?
2. Whether contribution is being deposited in the Social Security Fund or not?

**Bonus Act, 2030 and Bonus Rules, 2039**

1. Whether the enterprise is required to distribute bonus as per Bonus Act, 2030 or not?
2. Whether the bonus is being distributed as per the Act or not if it required to be distributed?
3. Whether the distribution of bonus for the last financial year is still pending or not?

**Trade Union Act, 2049 and Trade Union Rules, 2050**

1. Whether an enterprise level trade union has been formed in the enterprise or not?
2. Whether the election for authorized trade union has taken place or not?

**Other matters: Enterprise may add necessary matters**

1. Whether a separate provision for the audit of implementation of OSH policy or not?



*Guests from various international organizations  
at Closing Session of 7th National Congress of GEFONT*



**Resolution - 7**

## Unity, Solidarity and JTUCC

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### **The Congress overviews the past efforts**

Considering the history of trade union movement of Nepal from 1946 to 2017, the 71 years, remained a mixed experience of unstable, fragmented, long-time suppressed and chaotic time period, which passed through anarchy but marched forward to unity and solidarity.

The workers are exploited due to weaknesses caused by divisions not only on the basis of ideology but also on political grounds. Observing from the other angle, our trade union movement has been capable to take common stand and position on labour issues and labour politics staying in spite of divisions and factions.

Series of past joint works and solidarity are significant. It took seven years to develop the Joint Trade Union Coordination Committee (JTUCC) with the start from the Trade Union Committee for Gender Equality and Promotion (TUC-GEP), GEFONT-NTUC Task Force, Joint Board and Secretariat, common mechanisms and joint actions among affiliates, many joint policy conferences and collective campaigns.

After NTUC's positive response to the unity appeal of GEFONT in the Third National Congress in the year 2000, the era of unity and solidarity started in labour market and politics along with the advent of the new millennium. It was possible to give stability to JTUCC through common campaigns in regards to make common concepts and understanding about concerns related to labour politics and labour market after the All Nepal Trade Union Federation discarded violent-underground direction and marched towards the peaceful one in 2007.

## **Towards the path of solidarity**

Our generation had marched forward to fast changes since the last decade of 20th century when even the era of socialism became defensive. New achievements have been possible by continued struggle against increased corporatism in the name of liberalisation and autocracy of financial capitalism. The attacks on the rights and achievements of workers are still ongoing, though socialist forces have re-emerged in a new environment. Hence the role of international solidarity has become more relevant. In this era of globalisation our GEFONT pays high emphasis to international role in order to strengthen the workers' power within the country.

## **Towards A Single Confederation**

With the success of the campaign to form Left Alliance and a single Communist Party, the socialist force has taken charge of leading the country. Even in trade union movement, in addition to JTUCC, new possibility has come up to form one single and large organisation.

- Unity between General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions and All Nepal Trade Union Federation
- Unity between Confederation of Nepalese Professionals and National Federation of Employees
- Unity among aforementioned all four confederations

These three scenarios are not contrasting alternatives but supplement each other. How long will be the time range, it cannot be ensured, but this is the new course of the movement where JTUCC, too, has been moving forward with advanced rejuvenation. Obligation for running JTUCC even at the provincial level is felt necessary.

## **We Conclude**

Unity among four federations and wide horizon of solidarity in the form of JUTCC are the next structures of trade union in days to come. These structures have to play crucial role for socialism-oriented labour-centric character to the state system.

## **Hence this Congress -**

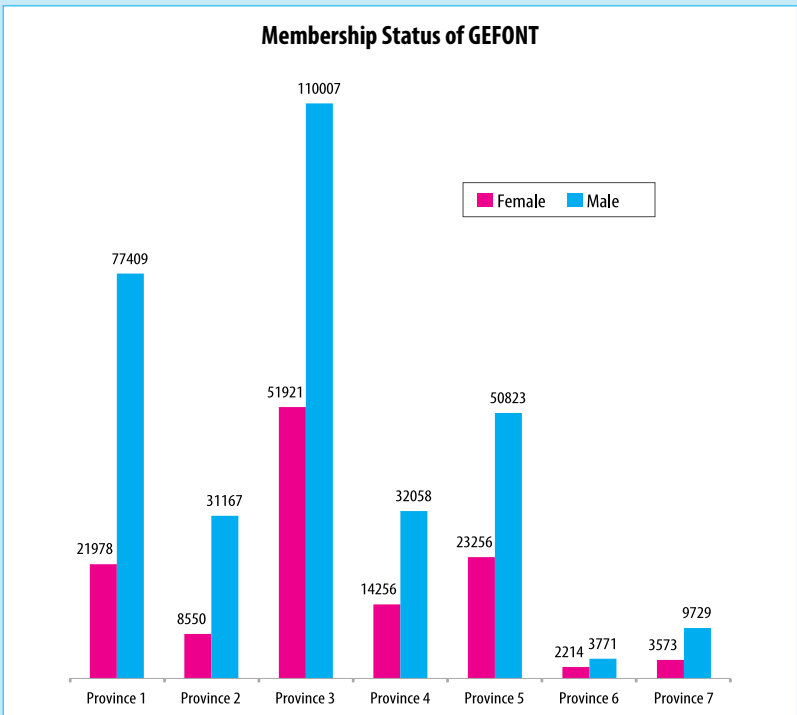
- Announces a joint task force and appeals for organizing a 'unity congress' within two years of time-frame
- Emphasises on the need for strengthening the Joint Trade Union Coordination Committee and making it more effective and efficient



## Annex 8 Membership Status

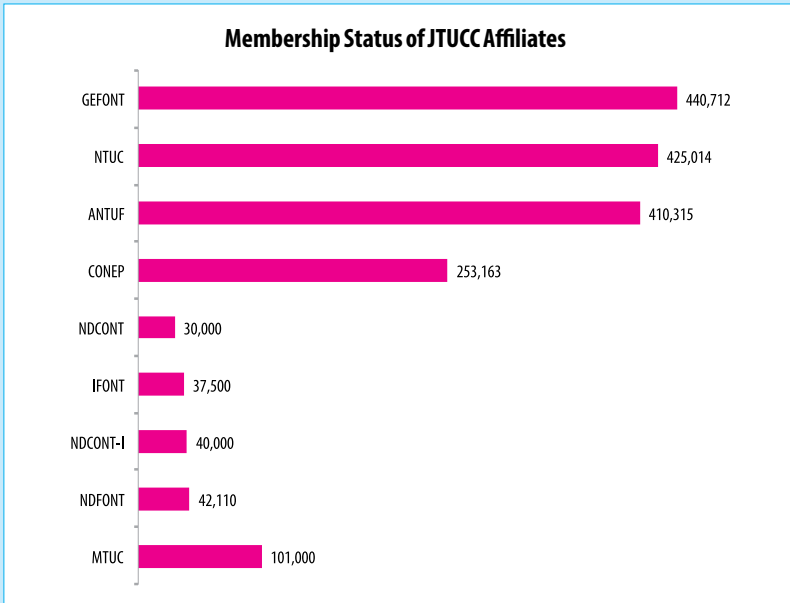
### Membership Status of GEFONT

Province	Female	Male	Total
Province 1	21978	77409	99387
Province 2	8550	31167	39717
Province 3	51921	110007	161928
Province 4	14256	32058	46314
Province 5	23256	50823	74079
Province 6	2214	3771	5985
Province 7	3573	9729	13302
<b>Total</b>	<b>125748</b>	<b>314964</b>	<b>440712</b>



### Membership Status of JTUCC Affiliates

Confederation	Members
1 General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT)	4,40,712
2 Nepal Trade Union Congress (NTUC)	4,25,014
3 All Nepal Federation of Trade Unions (ANTUF)	4,10,315
4 Confederation of Nepalese Professionals (CONEP)	2,53,163
5 National Democratic Confederation of Nepalese Trade Unions (NDCONT)	30,000
6 Inclusive Nepal Trade Union Confederation (IFONT) and Independent Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions	37,500
7 National Democratic Confederation of Nepalese Trade Unions-Independent (NDCONT-I)	40,000
8 National Democratic Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (NDFONT)	42,110
9 Madheshi Trade Union (MTUC)	101,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,779,814</b>





*Counting the ballot papers of various positions at 7th National Congress of GEFONT*

**Resolution - 8**

## Women Workers and Gender Equality

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### **The Congress Recalls-**

28-31 March 1992 was the historic day for GEFONT as a First National Congress where 150 were the total representatives, out of them only three were women. The First Central Committee sat immediately afterwards decided to form a Woman Department within the GEFONT structure aiming to increase awareness and leadership among working women in Nepal. On 5<sup>th</sup> May 1992, Central Women Workers Department (CWWD) was formed. The Second National Congress of GEFONT held in 1996 adopted Women Policy for the first time and the CWWD was recognised as of GEFONT Affiliate in status with the following programmes:

- To continue the campaign on all kinds of discrimination, oppression, and harassments against women workers
- To include social discrimination (gender) as an issue of the union movement and to launch campaign
- To clarify within the union movement about the 'class based feminist movement' compared to the 'ornamental feminist movement'.

Since the Third National Congress of GEFONT in 2000 with the slogan, "Participation: Not only in Number but the Quality", the issue of quality participation within GEFONT structure entered. The concept of gender was internalised by adopting the principle of 25% participation of women in every programme and 25% male in every programme on woman. GEFONT also made it mandatory for the representation of at least 15% women in every level. This policy adopted by GEFONT contributed visibly to women participation in trade union movement of Nepal.

The policy decisions on gender adopted by the Third National Congress were continued in the Fourth National Congress held in 2004, which stressed mainly on implementation. This Congress decided to adopt policy of progressive increment of woman within GEFONT leadership; adding 5% on existing 15% woman in GEFONT NEC.

Considering the importance of GEFONT's gender policy, the Fifth National Congress held in 2009 adopted the policy of 33% women participation in every structure of GEFONT. The Central Women Workers' Department was renamed as the National Women Committee. This Congress also decided 50% man and woman to be elected as GEFONT local representatives from the workplace.

The Sixth National Congress held in 28-31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, subscribed the ITUC program "Count Us In", with a target to increase women members by 5% within 4 years' tenure. In addition, the Congress put forward the programme of 33% women representation, zero tolerance campaign on violence against women, balance between work and life and awareness building on gender based violence.

By implementation of these programmes, the total number of women within GEFONT structure increased by 10.5% - from 18% women members in 2014 to 28.5% now in 2018. This is the great achievement during this tenure. The National Executive Committee of GEFONT is represented by 33% women before this and this has now been translated to 80% of the affiliates.

### **Thus the Congress is Proud of:**

- 28.5% women members in GEFONT
- 33% representation of women in the Congress which was 3 members in its first Congress
- 33% women representation in majority of the affiliates

- Reduced incidents of GBV in the workplace compared to past, and
- Quantitative and qualitative increment of women workers in policy-decision level.

Despite these achievements, women workers have been facing many challenges and are struggling for the new policies and plans to overcome them.

### **The Congress Directs:**

- To consolidate and forward the three programmes out of five set earlier and not fulfilled yet
- Modify the earlier theme: “Make it happen” to “Let it consolidate through action”.
- 33% women representation at all level
- End gender based discrimination
- Continue and materialize the campaign on increasing the women members.

### **The Congress Gives Emphasis on:**

1. Varying strategies for women leadership campaign in women dominated sectors and the sectors represented by less number of women. This envisages different strategies and plans within the whole structure of GEFONT with coordination and mobilization of Women Committee and Affiliate Unions
2. Constitutionally, discrimination between men and women has decreased, however, in practice, women are still treated as the “subordinate” community. This shows the discriminatory attitude towards women justifying the prevalence of gender-

based discrimination in the society. Coordination and joint movement is proposed here to reduce this bitter reality.

3. Interaction and exchange of experiences of the role models on the work and changing role of family members so as to enhance co-work culture in the domestic works.
4. Awareness raising and implementation of the code of conduct adopted by the Fifth National Working Women's Conference so as to promote the campaign of zero tolerance on violence against women.
5. Campaign on 33 representation of women at every structure and level.

## Annex 9

### Women in Elections

#### Elected women in Parliamentary Election

Year	Parliament			National Assembly		
	Women MP	Total MP	Percentage of Women MP	Women MP	Total MP	Percentage of Women MP
2015	1	109	0.92	1	36	2.77
2048	7	205	3.41	3	60	5
2052	7	205	3.41	5	60	8.33
2056	12	205	5.85	9	60	15
2058				9	60	15
<b>Constituent Assembly</b>						
2065	197	601	32.8			
2070	179	601				

Source: Jagaran Nepal website

#### Local Level Elections

Election Year	District Coordination Committee	Municipal	Villagecepal
2049	0.75%	0.38%	0.58%
2054	1.5 %	20 %	20 %
2074	33 %	40 %	40 %









*Elected National Executive Committee from 7th National Congress of GEFONT*

**Resolution - 9**

## Youth Leadership and Mobilisation

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### **Existing Reality**

Internationally, population aged 18-35 years are the youth workers. However in Nepal, according to the law, persons aged 16-40 years are defined as youth. This age group consists of 40.35% population according to the Population Census of Nepal 2011. This age group is further classified into those aged 15-24 and those at 25-40. The latter one is involved mostly in the economic activity. Their employment rate is 2.3%.

According to the Youth Vision 2025 set by the Government of Nepal, 450 thousand workers every year enter the labour market of Nepal. However, more than the number, around 538 thousand of workers go abroad annually for employment.

### **Congress Feels**

Youth are not only important as productive and powerful human resource but also the potential force for economic and social development. Youth are the frontiers and agents for change in economic, social and cultural transformation. Youth, being the backbone in terms of courage, creativity with learning attitude and high confidence, it is essential to mainstream them for national development through capacity building and all-round development.

### **Congress affirms**

It is essential to address the concerns and expectation of youth for their bright future by affiliating them in the trade union movement. Only the Youth empowerment and participation within the movement can determine the future of the trade union movement.

### **Congress concludes**

It is essential to unionize youths and encourage by promoting and recognizing their active involvement, skill development and capacity enhancement.

### **Congress gives directives**

- a. Set strategies for youth participation within the union. Implement work-place activities, identify new youth dominant areas and launch campaign by organizing them.
- b. Ensure youth participation in every structure of trade unions, keeping in mind the gender balance and documentation of youth within the union.
- c. Conduct creative youth focused activities so as to entrust responsibilities and attract them towards union work ensuring their capacity building.
- d. Organise interactions and expand partnership among youths keeping in mind that today's youth- students are the future trade union leaders.
- e. Conduct special education campaign for youth workers on special issues related to fundamental rights and role of trade union.

## Annex 10

### Present Status of Youth

Some selected areas	Number and percentage
Youth Literacy	71%
Literacy	Men 82% Women 63%
Fully Unemployed youth seeking Job	19.20%
Underemployed youth	28.30%
Number of youth entering every year in Labour market	More then 450 thousands
Young women in domestic chores	36%
Average age of marriage	20.6 Women & 23.8 years Men
Youth involved in agriculture	50.5%
Percentage of self-employed youth (15-29 age group)	58.8%
Unemployment ration of marginalised, minority and physically challenged youth	23%
Skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled respectively in foreign employment	2%, 24% and 74%
Percentage of unemployed graduated youth	26.1%



*Press Meet after successfully concluded 7th National Congress of GEFONT*

**Resolution - 10**

## Concerns on Environment, Climate Change, Livelihood and Workplace

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### **Congress Reviews the reality**

The environmental problem has come to a fearful situation and the climate change problem has turned to an adverse situation. The main reason is the extreme exploitation of natural resources. Exploitation of both the nature and labour has crossed limits due to the corporate greed of accumulating acute profits. Deforestation, deteriorate water resources, daily increment of global warming have caused the human life in acute problems. The climate change and environmental degradation have added challenges to the working class. The corporate companies are in unfair competition for occupying/capturing the natural resources. The working class people have to pay high prices even for the free gifts of nature because of these companies, who do not bother about their minimum wage.

Sustainable Development Goals and COP21 Agreement of Paris have addressed the issue of decent work and just transition of working class from climate change, however, the result has not been in favour of the workers. The malnutrition of children in the working families is continued. The occupational diseases and work-based ill-health situations are victimising the workers and their families. Ultimate resulting is the ill-health, pesticide effects and degrading environment of the workplace that we are going to hand over to the future generations.

However, the Union Movement not in Idle Situation. The Union Network "Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED)" has launched the campaign on labour, climate change, and environment. The



environment and climate change issues are not of only the slogan-based themes of the non-governmental sectors, these are the priorities of the trade union movement, too.

### **We feel proud**

GEFONT's campaign on the livelihood of the working class to face the effects of degrading environment and climate change has been quite significant. GEFONT has participated in the world conferences and has mobilised workers in the campaigns including cleaning Himalayas, waving flags of the trade union movement on the top of the Mount Everest and thus has been able to draw the attention of the international community. GEFONT has also been able to involve the issues of work-based security and health in the new Labour Act of Nepal. However, its implementation is yet to materialize.

### **In this context, this Congress:**

- Expresses solidarity on the spirit of the "Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED)"
- is deeply worried on the negative impacts of environmental problem and climate change on humankind and on health, employment and livelihood of working people.
- Health being the prime concern of the workers, gives directives to involve in the collective bargaining with high priority for safe workplace, occupational security and health, and elimination of the occupational diseases.
- Appeals the entire members and all workers to be serious on the emerging crisis in livelihood, employment, and health.
- Urges the state and political parties for immediate action against work-based hazards due to climate change, pollution, occupational diseases, cleanliness of the work-place and for decent work.

**Resolution - 11**

## GEFONT's Effectiveness and Structure in New Context

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### **Congress recalls -**

Principle, thought, policy and programmes are incomplete and raw without proper organisational structure for their implementation and mobilisation. Principles and thoughts are not the ones to serve as a discourse within the door; they need to transfer from the paper to the surface of the lives. The thoughts need to go for action, the discourse needs to get achievement and thus through gradual change overtime; qualitative reforms are to be enhanced through regular movement. In this context, our structure and organogram are to be revisited and revised based on the context and time.

### **Congress realises -**

Relevance of some of the structures created in the past have come to an end now and some new structures need seen on the floor. Some structures could not work properly due to weakness of their operational modality. In the context of the elections held in all three levels of federal system, formation of executive committees in local, provincial and federal level is the need of the day now. In the present context, relevance of **Geographical Coordination Committee** and **Central Union Council** looks to be ended. Now, we need to consolidate Labour Relation Council at a time we are talking about Industrial Collective Bargaining.

The Governing Council established during transitional period needs further revision. A new structure, in the context of new trend developed during unification process is seen on the ground to handover the institutional memory of the organisation and to make the leadership role effective through monitoring, counselling and in some context direction.

It is relevant to give continuity to **Trade Union Veteran's network** working out of the structure. The **Community Workers' Club**, its concept and relevance is still valid even though they have got importance as expected.

The separate structure established for *disaster management* is still valid. The **Central Cooperative Promotion Committee** could not become active as expected.

### **Congress proposes -**

Formation of committees in all 753 local levels, seven provinces and in the federal level.

Ex-officio representation from the affiliates in the national executive committee instead of representation through **Central Union Council** for the coordination of the affiliated union federations.

Provision of vice-presidents with specific roles by reforming the existing roles of the National Office Bearers.

The Secretariat being led by the Secretary General will be redefined together with position of secretaries.

The Presidents of Provincial Committee will be made ex-officio member in the National Executive Committee.

The Organising Academy will be further consolidated and mobilised as 'Team of organisers and mobilisers'.

The Labour Inspectors and Occupational Health Safety Inspectors will be mobilised for making the labour audit more effective.

Instead of Governing Council, new provision will be added with additional role of the Chief and deputy of the Congress Delegates' Council for check and balance of operation.

Action on Disaster Management will be further consolidated formalising **Central Disaster Response Unit**.

## Annex 11

### **Main points of ANTUF/GEFONT Central Unity Coordination Committee's Plan of Action**

#### **Goal:**

Respect for working class, socialism with prosperous and creative life

#### **Objective:**

To move ahead in the mega campaign to establish society free of all types of human exploitation.

- To remain fully active for the rights and well-being of the working class.
- To end all types of social discriminations by placing the class at the centre

#### **Programme**

- To sensitize the common working class about their rights and duties and strengthen an integrated movement.
- To conduct trade union and worker education programme to enhance the intellectual level of the workers.
- To end feudal production relation and fight against the capitalist exploitation.
- To remain active for the national as well as international solidarity of the working class.
- To remain active against class, ethnic, gender, and regional social discrimination and evil practices.
- To establish working class' access to policy formulation, representation of the workers in all the levels of the state.

- To arrange a provision of 33 percent of the female representation in all the committees of the Federation.
- To build a capable movement by strengthening the unity among the workers.
- To make an effort to have 10 percent representation of the working class in all the elected agencies of the state.

**Leadership:**

Through the strengthened unity and reinforced organization of the working class.

**Character:**

Independent, persistent, and member based.

**Future name of the Federation:**

It will remain Akhil Nepal Trade Union Mahasangh in Nepali and GENERAL FEDERATION OF NEPALESE TRADE UNIONS in English.

**Structure:**

National committee, regional committee, and local committee will remain. As per need departments and other structures will remain.

**Membership fee:**

The current fees of both the federations will remain the same but the integrated fees will be fixed after the unification. However, the unified union will verify the membership by charging NRs. 100.00 per annum.

**Auditing:**

Auditing to be done per year compulsorily during and after the unification of both the federations and member unions.

**Building unified training materials:**

To give regular training and build curriculum to run regular educational programmes about the working class movement and political movement to empower the members of both federations and member unions through trade union education.

**Running daily affairs:**

For the time being, the office of Central Unity Coordination Committee will be kept in the building of National Labour Academy.

**International affiliation:**

The unified federation will be affiliated to the International Trade Union Federation.

**Regional Unity Coordination Committee:**

In general, 11 members to remain in Regional Unity Coordination Committee. After the verification of number of member of Academies, it, at the local level, will select the leadership in accordance to that.

**Number of the member unions:**

After the unification of the current member unions of the Federation, the number of the member unions will remain 22. Even in the Unity Coordination Committee of the member unions, 11 members each will remain.

# हस्तांतरण समारोह

## LEADERSHIP HANDOVER PROGRAM

१८ मई २०१५ / 1<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2018



*Newly elected President - Binod Shrestha and candidate of President - Bishnu Lamsal  
at Leadership Handover Programme*

# Future Programme

Adopted by 7th National Congress of GEFONT (28-31 March 2018)

The country has reached to the doorstep of political stability now. With this, the struggle of trade unions and the achievements they made have elevated to a new phase. If we look at our glorious past, we can treasure many achievements to celebrate, and a lot of learning to embrace. The achievements and learning provide us a solid foundation based on which we can develop future programmes of trade union movement.

- 1. New labour law and union's viewpoint:** With the political change in 1990, GEFONT demanded replacement of the existing labour legislation by a new legislation to address the labour issues. As a result, the Factory and Factory Workers Act 1959 was repealed and Labour Act 1992 and Trade Union Act 1992 were promulgated. Based on this legislative foundation, the trade union movement received a legal recognition in 1993.

In 2017, the parliament revoked the Labour Act 1992 and promulgated a new Labour Act that legally recognised the informal sector as formal sector. The trade union movement also achieved the Contributory Social Security Act 2017 which guaranteed that the employers, regardless of the number of workers employed and terms and conditions, should



provide minimum remuneration and benefits to the workers as prescribed in the law. A system of Labour inspection and occupational safety and health inspection is coming into operation soon for the first time. This is the new achievement for us not only in Nepal but also in South Asia .

2. **Bonded labour freedom movement:** GEFONT started working from 1995 on the issue of Kamaiya system, the bonded labour practice in western Nepal. It launched a campaign for over a decade calling for an end to exploitative bonded and forced labour practices. The campaign succeeded to achieve Bonded Labour (Prohibition) Act in 2001 with declaration of freedom to the Kamaiya workers and their rehabilitation.
3. **Beyond borders campaign:** South Korea was the major destination for foreign employment in 1993. Number of workers paying high price for foreign employment, were facing numerous problems in the country of destination and sustaining sever injuries. Those who could save money out of their hard labour had no legal channel to send it to their homeland. Words like remittance were not common then.

GEFONT stepped in to take up this issue and demanded the government to set up a mechanism to send workers abroad only through government channel. It also asked the government to take strong action against manpower companies operating illegally; put in place a non-discriminatory system to support the migrant workers as natives in the country of destination, and to facilitate them to bring their savings to home through financial/banking channel. These demands were taken as 'irrelevant' during those days. But within a decade of the campaign we launched, the government of both the countries (Nepal and Korea) initiated a new system to export labour based on agreement between the two governments. With this system

in practice, remittance started to come home through financial/banking channel; fee of migrant workers came down drastically and income of the workers increased noticeably. Migrant Trade Union came into existence as a result of organizing efforts through GEFONT Support Group facilitated by GEFONT. This practice was expanded to Hong Kong, Malaysia, Qatar and other countries. Positive changes in labour practices have taken long strides based on context and applicability of concerned destination countries. The latest achievement is the end of Kafala system in Qatar with respect to labour right which has been celebrated by Nepali workers in the presence of organizations of international trade union movement.

4. **10% service charge:** One of the demands put forth by the workers when they announced protest programme at Soaltee Hotel, Kathmandu in 1981 was to bring into implementation the 10% service charge for workers. GEFONT cautiously pushed this demand with those concerned and sensitised the workers about the pros and cons of 'tips' and 'service charge'. If practice of 'tips' is to continue, it will provide high handedness of those who collect it and divide it because it will be at the will of the 'collectors' and would not be fair for the workers because such tips are not accounted and recorded. If 'service charge' is included in the invoice and accounted, it would maintain fairness to the workers and contributes to double their cash-in-hand along with wages. This was the stand of GEFONT, but it was not easy to convince the employers. It took 25 years to convince employers to accept the 10% service charge provision and bring it to practice. Also, the government agreed to it and implementation started from 2006.
5. **Minimum wage campaign:** Though the declaration to implement minimum wage was made in 1965, area of its

coverage was quite limited. Provision to revise minimum wage in every 2 years was included in the Labour Act 1991. The provision comparatively made the minimum wage systematic but failed to make the minimum wages uniform in thematic and national sectors. The Act instead classified the minimum wage in different 4 categories based on skills. It gave a pretext for the employers to understand the minimum wage as the ceiling of maximum wage in many cases. Some sectors remained indifferent to adhere to the minimum wage provision.

To address the confusion, GEFONT pushed the slogan of 'equal minimum wage for all'. With the continued struggle over years, the workers are entitled to get equal minimum wages now. Some from international community were sceptical to our call for 'minimum wages for workers' stating that minimum wage provision might risk the minimum living standard of workers. But in recent days launching the 'living minimum wage floor' campaign has become common phenomena. It has given us more confidence to continue our wage movement to better the living standard of workers.

- 6. Labour policy:** In the initial days of multi-party system, policy makers and bureaucrats had confused understanding about labour legislation and labour policy. To tear the confusion, GEFONT drafted a framework of labour policy in its second National Congress and took initiative to organise National Labour Conference in a tripartite frame. The debated and agreed issues and points provided basis for the government, employers and trade unions to build common understanding on labour policy and labour legislation. The initiative of building common understanding was started in 1994 and the result in the form of labour policy discussion was fruitful in 1998.

7. **Gender equality:** Central Women Workers Department established at GEFONT was a new initiative to mainstream gender in organisation's life. Its spirit was to persuade the women to break the 'culture of silence' and speak up against oppression they had been enduring for centuries. It is only by sitting the oppressed and oppressor together and listening to each other that justice is possible. GEFONT affirmed this notion strongly. Therefore, it made mandatory at least 25 percent women's participation in each programme and 25% men's participation in Women's programme. It promoted the culture of listening to each other and sorting out differences if any. GEFONT re-emphasised the issue through a new slogan 'not mere representation, but equal participation'. We identified discriminatory laws against women and amended them. Some laws were repealed. We could materialise the slogan of equal participation and proudly admit that GEFONT is one of the organisations to ensure at least 33 percent women's representation in its structures.

We formed a Trade Union Committee for Equality & Promotion bringing different trade union centres together and worked to promote gender justice in our movement. The Committee identified 10 common gender issues to be addressed at workplace and it was negotiated by tripartite partners in Nepal.

8. **Social security:** At times, the topic of social security was like the title of a fairy-tale – interesting to listen but difficult to realise in reality. But now it has been the hot agenda. The campaign on social security that started in 2000 is yielding result through new constitution and Contributory Social Security Fund based on social security Act. The two-decade long campaign has now moved ahead with successful results.

**9. Nepali trade union movement – model of Unity in Diversity:**

In early '90s, Nepali trade unions were like an arc enemy of each other. The environment was like chopping off each other for non-issue things. To rescue the unions from such quagmire and protect them from peril, concept of Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre (JTUCC) was developed and efforts were made to start harmonise each other. Nobody believed that the trade unions would come together and work on issues of common concerns. But the trade unions made that possible what once was beyond mind of many. We started a new practice of organising Labour Parliament every year where Prime Ministers and Presidents of Nepal have participated as guest of honour and also Director General of ILO for deliberations on trade union agenda. This practice has been a model for trade unions in different countries.

However, we still have a long way to go. We have to continue our campaign to guarantee 10% representation of workers in representative bodies of the state. We have to continue the pressure for formation of multilateral Socio-Economic Council for policy dialogue and National Labour Commission for justice.

Forthcoming days are also full of challenges. GEFONT has to move ahead with its entire committed leaders-cadres-members and working masses towards the long-run path of socialism through clear ideological stance, practical and implementable programmes and periodic plans. Our movement is on the solid ground of the experiences of 4-generations experiences and ups and downs though developed within a short span of time. On top of it, we have put all our efforts to establish socialism oriented State to bring an end to all forms of inequalities and exploitations. Socialism is not only our long-term goal, but also our future. Hence, following programmes

are proposed for the upcoming tenure of the National Executive Committee:

## **1. Consolidated Democracy and Socialism for Workers**

The goal of GEFONT 'dignified and creative life for the working class ...' cannot be realised without consolidated democracy. Democracy will be consolidated for the working class when prosperity comes to their life. Therefore, we have designed the theme of this Congress – 'Prosperous working class in consolidated democracy' to keep the agenda of working class at the heart of the Congress.

Of the 17 SDGs to be achieved by 2030, six are directly related to the world of work. To achieve them by the stipulated time, particularly for elimination of poverty, decent work agenda and minimisation of inequalities, the entire GEFONT will be mobilised with due focus on socio-economic transformation for faster development of the country and consolidation of democracy. For this, efforts will be focussed to strengthen GEFONT's institutional and structural capacity.

Campaign will be continued to guarantee 10% representation of working class in all people's representative bodies and to transform the capita-tilt character of State to pro-worker character.

Campaign focusing on class and social inclusion will be taken forward to ensure Class plus Three balance and to end discriminations based on class, gender, ethnicity and geography in our journey to socialism.

Entire labour force will be mobilised in all three regimes of politics, labour market and economy for social stability, peace and prosperity, and to transform and manage conflicts between classes, and elevate working class to middle class.

## 2. Organizational Development and Mobilisation

There will be three key objectives to strengthen the capacity of organisational structure of GEFONT at all levels:

- To expand the union power both in the parliament and the street
- To achieve efficiency in lobbying, creating pressure and leading movement
- To secure notable presence of GEFONT in international structures and movement

Therefore, we will prioritise the following activities to expand the effectiveness of labour force, union movement and GEFONT:

- To make the union strong based on members at local workplace and enterprises, and develop strong solidarity among trade unions
- To strengthen political power and access of trade unions in local, provincial and federal State
- To coordinate with labour friendly organisations at local and national level
- To strengthen the presence and representation of GEFONT in international forums, organisations and networks
- To strengthen knowledge, capacity and activism of trade union leaders and cadres to enhance their leading/active role in unions, organisations and federation both at home and abroad

Our triangular strategy to develop and mobilise labour power is increasingly relevant these days. We will give a boost to the

strategy to expand its scope focusing labour force engaged in wage employment, self-employed labour force within country, and the labour force employed abroad. We will enlarge the limit of development and mobilisation of organisation in:

- Agriculture, construction and scattered urban informal sectors in terms of number
- Modern service sector in terms of quality standard
- Productive industrial sector in terms of block

### **3. Labour Market Reforms**

The country's economy in the eyes of the working class is the socialism oriented economy. This is possible only by transforming the existing labour market enduring in the quagmire of injustice and exploitation. Therefore, Economic and Social Council needs to be formed in both the House of Representatives (HR) and the Provincial Assembly so as to address the workers agenda directly by the parliament.

Kathmandu Valley is at highest points while looking at the Indicators of Labour Productivity, Individual Capability and Household Happiness, however, other areas are far behind. Therefore, pressure and partnership is essential to uplift the position of workers at least equal to those of the valley.

Adjustment of wages with inflation rate or price hike through wage-indexation will be given priority in the coming days. High wages, humane working conditions and social security for all workers will be the major agenda for labour market reforms. In short, following will be the policy basis for labour market reform:

- Market regulation guided by socialist perspective



- Long term plan for making the workers owners of the means of production
- Implementation of labour laws for decent work
- Industry-level Collective bargaining in each province
- Policy focused social dialogue in national level
- Our organisation in the role of strong and effective policy intervention
- Attempt to increase the sensitivity of labour in all tiers of the government
- Pressure and partnership for the strategy of higher the wage – higher the productivity
- Creative and pressurising action to increase employment, quality and earning of workers
- Initiative for National Labour Conference in tripartite modality

#### Activities and Campaign of Priority:

- Campaign through collective effort for immediate increase of monthly wages by NRs 5,000 and daily wages to be NRs 600
- People's welfare programme to complement social security schemes
- Workers registration and Labour Desk operation in the local level to materialise contributory social security schemes and welfare programmes
- Provision for complaint hearing mechanism in the local level

- Formation of dynamic system of Industrial collective bargaining and making a common bargaining panel of the unions in enterprise/local level.
- Introducing labour audit in the local level and developing labour inspection system for immediate action
- Mobilisation of local level workers through capacity building programmes for making the occupational health and security policy more effective.
- Pressure for implementation of effective employment information centres in all metropolis, sub-metropolis and major cities of the provinces.

#### **4. Strengthening Unity and Solidarity**

In present political context of unity and polarisation, the union movement also needs to take a path by unifying as many trade unions as possible. This is the new course of movement, where the JTUCC will also continue with additional revision of its structure. Now, the JTUCC needs to be expanded in the provincial level, too. Through these structures of unity and solidarity, our efforts can give outcomes to make all levels of government more workers-friendly. Internalising this assumption, following three actions will be launched:

- Operation of strengthened and effective JTUCC
- Attempt to unify confederations based on the policies, programmes and principles of GEFONT
- A high level Task Force will be formed to materialise the unifying process.

## 5. Gender Equality

The programme passed by the Sixth Congress needs to be further consolidated. This Congress stresses on the modification of the earlier theme: "Make it happen" to "Let it consolidate through action". This Congress proposes to achieve 33% women representation at all level, end gender based discrimination, promote work-life balance, zero tolerance on violence against women, and continue to increase women members. Based on these themes, gender equality campaign will be launched:

1. Varying strategies for leadership development in women dominated sectors and the sectors represented by less number of women. This envisages different strategies and plans within the whole structure of GEFONT with coordination and mobilization of Women Committee and Affiliate Unions
2. Constitutionally, discrimination between men and women has decreased, however, in practice, women are still treated as the "subordinate" group. This shows the discriminatory attitude towards women justifying the prevalence of gender-based discrimination in the society. Coordination and joint movement is proposed here to reduce this bitter reality.
3. Interaction and exchange of experiences of the role models on the work and changing role of family members so as to enhance co-work culture in the domestic works.
4. Awareness raising and implementation of the code of conduct adopted by the Fifth National Working Women's Conference so as to promote the campaign of zero tolerance on violence against women.
5. Campaign on 33 representation of women at every structure and level.

## 6. Youth Mobilisation

Nepali Trade Union movement has three generation of workers at present: the first is around 60 years of age, the second above 40 and the third below 40 years. The first generation is in the process of getting rest from the work whereas the second stands as the backbone of the trade union movement. In this context, the following are the youth focused action agenda:

- Leadership development of the third generation to ensure strong union movement
- High priority to the unionization of youths by promoting youth employment, skill development and capacity enhancement.
- Campaign for more and more youth participation in union activities through workplace activities and identification of youth dominant areas and sectors/sub-sectors
- Youth participation in the every structure of trade union, keeping in mind the gender balance and documentation of youth within the union.
- Creative youth focused action so as to give responsibilities to youth and attract them towards union ensuring their capacity building.
- Interactions and expand partnership with organizations of students and youths keeping in mind that today's youth-students are the future trade union leaders.
- Special education campaign for youth workers to impart special issues related to youth workers' fundamental rights and role of trade union.

## 7. Protection of Workers working Abroad

We have significant achievements in the protection of Nepali workers in foreign employment. It has become more relevant with respect increasing number of workers abroad. In this context, GEFONT will give emphasis to the following in forthcoming days:

- Capacity building of GEFONT Support Groups
- Coordination and cooperation with Nepali diplomatic units in protection and promotion of Nepali workers abroad.
- Expand friendly relationship with the trade union centres in destination countries
- Organising awareness raising activities targeting workers in foreign employment
- Joint work with the ITUC and GUFs.
- Pressure for Government to Government Labour Contracts for safe migration
- Awareness raising on employment within the country by promoting flow of remittance in productive sector
- Institutional arrangement for the certification of the experiences, technology and skills earned by returnee Nepali workers
- Lobby to ensure voting right in general election for Nepali migrants from their destination

## 8. Organising Academy

The concept of organising academy emerged from the last Congress for the bright future of the movement and thus it needs further strengthening:

- Partnership with National Labour Academy for Labour Research
- Institutional development of the Trade Union Policy Institute and increase its effectiveness for policy analysis and thought provoking issues.
- Institutional management for the operation of the regular trade union school by linking with ideology-based courses from the centre and basic course from province level.
- Publicity of National Labour Source Centre as a research based hub for materials on labour.
- Development and revision of training and campaign materials
- Preparing Pool of organisers and their mobilisation in all provinces and local levels.

## 9. Communication and Publicity

Following activities will be carried out with prime importance keeping in mind the inevitability of attention in communication and dissemination:

- Membership campaign of Shramik Khabar with the slogan ‘Shramik Khabar in the hand of every worker’
- Making effective the audio, visual, print and online media in favour of organization and working masses
- Website upgrading and use of mobile-apps
- Revising corporate ID and promoting its use
- Disseminating short notice and trade union education through YouTube and other social networks
- Regularity of flow of materials

- Effective communication and dissemination in international level

## **10. Agenda of Contemporary Concern**

The environmental problem has come to a fearful situation and the climate change problem has turned to an adverse. In this context, our effort will be focussed on the following :

- Activities related to reduce the negative impacts of environmental problem and climate change on human being and health, employment and livelihood of working people.
- Establishing access and control in production of energy and its use by the working people
- Awareness Campaign among members and workers on negative impacts of environment degradation, particularly on livelihood, employment and health
- Pressurising the state and political parties for immediate action against occupational hazards due to climate change, pollution and occupational diseases in order to ensure safe work-place and decent work.

नेपाल ट्रेड यूनियन महासंघ (जिफेन्ट)

# हस्तांतरण

## LEADERSHIP HANDOVER P

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*Newly elected President Binod Shrestha and outgoing President Bishnu Rimal  
at Leadership Handover Programme*