

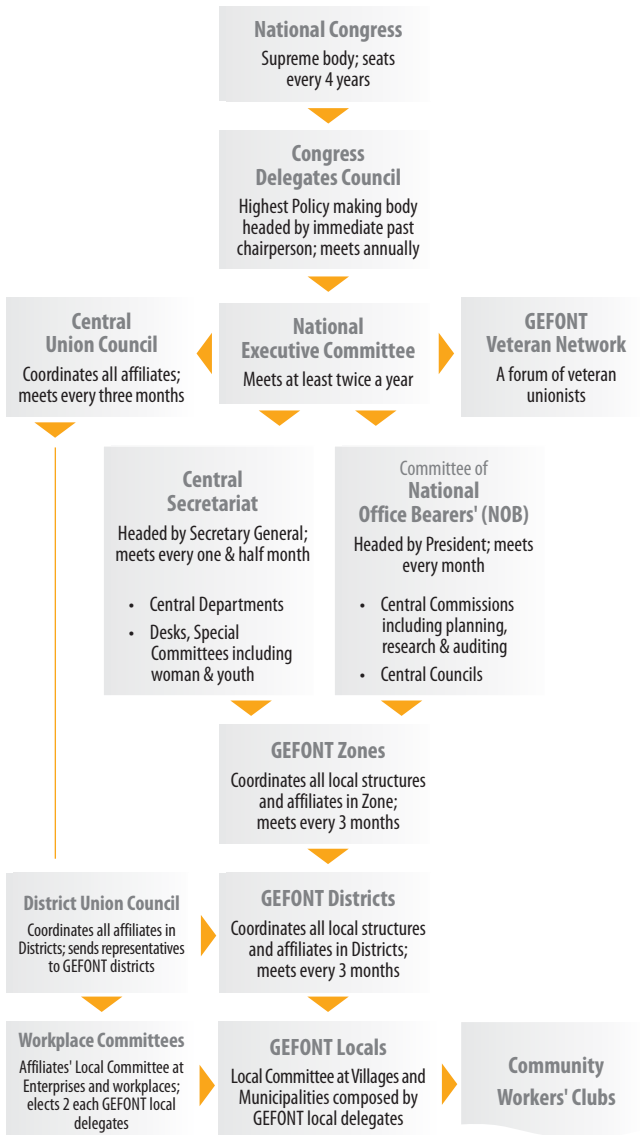
*For
dignified, prosperous
and creative life of the working class*

One Union-One Voice

**General Federation of
Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT)**



GEFONT Organisational Structure









Our Membership



During the Fifth National Congress, General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) has verified its membership. The statistics show, some of the area GEFONT has made progress and in some area it has lost some membership. Compare to verification of Fourth National, on an average, total membership of GEFONT is slightly increased. The special dues paying core membership has also been increased by 4%; compared to the last Congress from 15% to 19% of the total. Detail of membership is as follows:

1 Industrial Sector		Total Members
	Nepal Independent Workers' Union (NIWU)	9,522
	Nepal Independent Food and Beverage Workers' Union (NIFBWU)	5,554
	Nepal Independent Chemical-Iron Workers' Union (NICIWU)	12,496
2 Garment-Carpet and Allied Sector		
	Independent Textile Garment Workers' Union of Nepal (ITGWUN)	8,234
	Nepal Independent Carpet Workers' Union (NICWU)	7,558
	Nepal Thanka Artists' Union (NTAU) *	811



3 Transport and Allied Sector

	Independent Transport-Workers' Association of Nepal (ITWAN)	56,772
	Nepal Auto-mechanics Trade Union (NATU)	5,177
	Nepal Rickshaw Pullers' Union (NRPU)	15,959
	Nepal Petroleum Workers' Union (NePWU)	560






4 Tourism Sector

	Nepal Independent Hotel Workers' Union (NIHWU)	8,322
	Union of Trekking-Travel-Rafting Workers, Nepal (UNITRAV)	5,232

5 Agriculture and Plantation Sector




	Independent Tea plantation Workers' Union of Nepal (ITPWUN)	5,315
	Federation of Agricultural Workers-Nepal (FAWN)	68,019

6 Education, Communication, Finance & Service Sector





	Independent Press Workers' Union of Nepal (IPWUN)	2,534
	Private & Boarding School Employees' Union (PABSEU)*	5,627
	Nepal Courier & Cargo Trade Union (NCCTU)*	636
	Tax Councillor Workers' Organisation of Nepal (COWNT)*	1122
	Local unions at Banks and financial institutions	315





7 Non-agriculture Informal Sector

	Central Union of Painters, Plumbers, Electro and Construction Workers-Nepal (CUPPEC)	80,130
	Nepal Street Vendors' Union	13,256
	Nepal Security Service Trade Union (NSSTU) *	2,517

8 Urban Informal Sector

	Independent Garbage Cleaners' Union of Nepal (IGCUN)	5,222
	Nepal Independent Domestic Workers Union (NIDWU)*	605
	Nepal Home-based Workers Union (NEHWU)*	1030
	Gold & Silver Trade Union of Nepal (GOSITUN)	915

9 Health Sector

	Nepal Barbers' Trade Union (NEBT) *	6081
	National Beauticians' Union of Nepal (NABUN)	575
	Locals union at hospital	523

Total 330,619

General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT)

General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) was established on 20th July 1989. As there was no union right in Nepal; GEFONT was launched underground.

GEFONT has 27 affiliates (as of April, 2009), which cover all three fields- the agriculture, industries and services; covering various sectors such as manufacturing, textiles and clothing, carpet industry, transport, hotels, restaurants and catering, tourism, printing, auto-mechanics, food production, breweries, chemical and metal industry, rickshaw pullers, tea plantations, street vendors, private school, hair dressers & beauticians, employees of security sector, thanka painting, tax- counselling, courier & cargo service, gold & jewellery work, construction and agriculture.

As a largest trade union Confederation in Nepal, GEFONT represents over 300,000 workers from all affiliates.

Over 33% women have been elected in National Executive Committee of GEFONT from its 5th National Congress.

GEFONT is one the founders of international trade union body- the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) established on November 2006. It has been elected in General Council both at International and Asia-Pacific Regional level from the founding Congress. GEFONT affiliates are affiliated with various Global Union Federations (GUFs).



OUR VISION

Dignified, prosperous and creative life of the working class is our vision; the vision statement is- Socialism for dignified working class and prosperous life!

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to establish socialist production relations in Nepal by eliminating the existing feudal production relations. To achieve the mission, we educate, organise and build capacity of the working class to enable them to influence policy formulation and political decision making processes. We also mobilise international solidarity to back up our efforts for labour rights including the universal human rights.

OUR GOAL

To establish Federal Loktantrik (fully-fledged democratic) Republic of Nepal in which the working class has a decisive say in all structures and bodies of the state

OUR OBJECTIVES

- To continue the struggle for social transformation with class vision
- To create a policy environment in which universal rights of the workers are promoted, protected and fulfilled
- To materialise single unionism as unified trade union movement in Nepal
- To ensure decent work for all

OUR HISTORY

The history of Nepali trade union movement goes back to 1947. The formation of All Nepal Trade Union Congress (ANTUC), reorganised in 1950, was the first trade union centre in Nepal. This federation could not exist after 1960, when autocratic Panchayat System was forcefully imposed and unions along with political parties were banned.

After 19 years of continuous repression, in 1979, a historical mass movement gave birth to second generation of Nepali Trade union movement by launching Nepal Independent Workers Union (NIWU) along with others- more than half a dozen trade union federations. In order to meet demand of the day- the necessity of proper co-ordination and understanding among trade unions of different sectors, finally, an initiative was undertaken on July 20, 1989. This initiative ultimately launched GEFONT. After enactment of Trade Union Act-1992, GEFONT was formally registered as the FIRST National Trade Union Confederation in the country in 1995.



OUR HISTORICAL FOOTSTEPS

- 1946 Formation of All Nepal Trade Union Congress (ANTUC)
- 1947 Formation of the Biratnagar Workers Union (BWU)
- 1947 First labour movement started (March 4)
- 1950 Re-organisation of ANTUC
- 1951 Unification of ANTUC and BWU
- 1960 Ban on trade unions and political parties
- 1975 Great slow-down started in Biratnagar Jute Mills.
- 1978 General Strike in Balaju Industrial District (BID), Kathmandu
- 1979 Two-month long General Strike called by Construction Workers of East-West High Way

Workers' strikes started from BID, with the demands of union rights including various professional demands. Shortly it was supported by different sectors like transportation, tea plantation, hotel etc and became nation-wide.

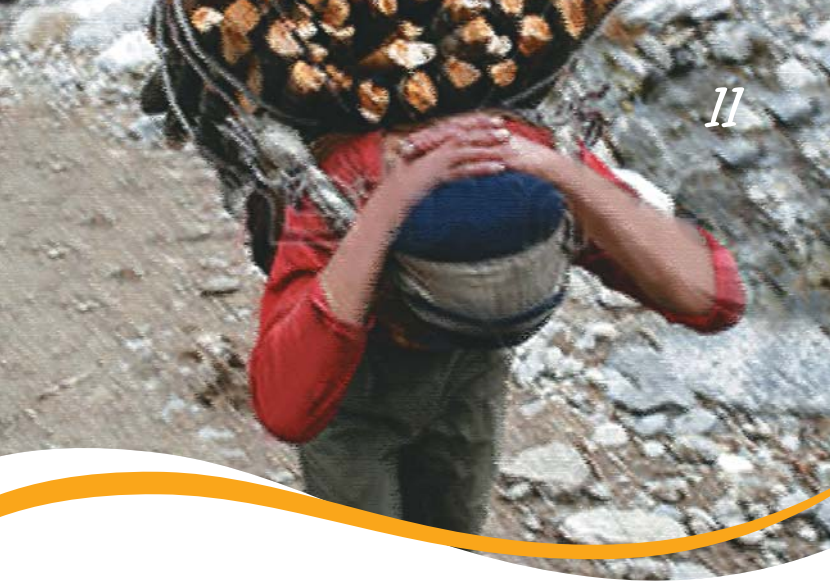
This movement established a new National Centre-Nepal Independent Workers' Union (NIWU)-as a continuation of ANTUC tradition with the aim to organise all workers irrespective of occupation and ideology.

Formation of another federation called Independent Transport Workers' Association of Nepal (ITWAN)

- 1981 Formation of Nepal Independent Hotel Workers' Union (NIHWU)
- 1983 Formation of the Trekking Workers Association Of Nepal (TWAN)
- 1989 Establishment of GEFONT by four founder federations-NIWU, ITWAN, NIHWU and TWAN (July 20)
- 1990 GEFONT played a significant role to gear-up popular movement as a co-ordinating body of all workers. The movement became successful, with multi-party system restored.

GEFONT organised the first-ever open-air programme and reorganized its National Executive Committee

Number of national affiliates rose to 9
- 1991 Various labour legislations- Labour Act, Trade Union Act etc. introduced
- 1992 GEFONT's First National Congress convened (March 28-31)
- 1995 GEFONT registered as the First National Confederation (May)
- 1996 GEFONT's Second National congress convened (March 16-19)
- 2000 GEFONT's Third National Congress convened (May 1-3)
- 2004 GEFONT's Fourth National Congress convened (May 1-3)
- 2005 Along with other trade union centres organised 1st Wider Trade union Conference as part of preparation to oust Royal regime imposed through February 1st Royal Coup



- 2006 Dedicated to Loktantrik movement; which converted into famous April Uprising. The people's revolt sidelined autocratic monarch and handed over all power to the resisted parliament
- 2007 Involved in peace building and active to end political transition; campaigned for establishment of Federal Democratic Republic
- 2008 Historical Constituent Assembly (CA) election held, most inclusive 601 member CA formed
May 28, 240 years long Shah Dynasty abolished by 1st meeting of CA, Nepal is declared first republic in 21st Century
- 2009 GEFONT's Fifth National Congress convened (April 4-7); leadership hand over at April 30

Major Achievements of the immediate past tenure

1. Wage increases in 2006 by 29% and in 2008 by 40 % as an across the board increase compared to previous wage rates in collaboration with other partner trade unions
2. Successful partnership with political parties and especially with CPN-UML which resulted into election of 4 trade union leaders from GEFONT in the Constituent Assembly in 2008 and also the election of 7 GEFONT leaders to the central committee of CPN-UML
3. GEFONT Campaign for Democratic Republic in 2007 with handbook and other campaign materials
4. Successful pressure and lobbying to insert trade union rights, right to social security and right to fair labour practice and provision of national labour commission in the Interim Constitution.
5. Campaign for ratification of ILO conventions 87, 102 and 105; as a result Convention No 105 and 169 have been ratified and the reinstated parliament endorsed resolution of commitment to ratify No. 87
6. Successful pressure & lobbying to ensure One-third representation/participation of women in every sector by declaration of the parliament.
7. Formation of Parliamentary Committee for Labour & Industrial Relations as the outcome of continuous political lobbying
8. Workers mobilization in the movement for full-fledged democracy with a decisive role in April uprising of 2006 against monarchy in order to achieve a democratic republic

9. Establishment of Mass-movement workers emergency fund jointly with other 3 partner unions of the movement to help the medical & surgical treatment of workers injured in the movement
10. Fast expanded and strengthened international relations and GEFONT as the founding member of the ITUC from Vienna Congress 2006 elected in the general council and in ITUC-AP; most of the federations affiliated to various GUFs
11. Establishment of Joint Board of GEFONT and NTUC as the promoters of single unionism in 2004 for the unification of trade union movement and in the progressive course, the formation of Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre through two significant events - Joint trade union Workshop in 2007 and national trade Union Conference in 2008.
12. Radio and television Programme Shram ra Sirjana (Labour & Creation) introduced and popularized
13. Successful policy lobbying and pro-worker intervention resulting into recognition and effective participation in various policy forums of the state
14. GEFONT flag hoisted at the world's highest peak Mount Everest in 2007
15. Effective work for the protection of Nepali Migrant workers abroad mainly in Malaysia in cooperation with MTUC, in Korea in cooperation with KCTU and in Hong Kong in cooperation with HKCTU
16. Movement against anti-workers labour ordinance imposed by the then king in 2005-06 including struggle against extremism of Maoist and other groups in the labour market during the insurgency period

GEFONT in ACTION

The tenure ahead of General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) will be marked by two highly significant tasks: reform of the labour market and social transformation. GEFONT has to play a crucial role in organisational strengthening, empowerment of the workers by enhancing their ideological awareness and in various aspects of policy interventions. At this historic moment of reconstruction and transformation of the state, society and economy, GEFONT is also expected to take a decisive lead in materialising the principle of working class unity and the campaign of single unionism.

GEFONT has long been at the forefront of the trade union movement of the country. To the movement, it has always given a new direction, energy and velocity. It is firmly committed to socialism with a clear-cut mission to start a new era, an era that ensures prosperity and dignity to the life of the working class. As such, the following plan of action has been proposed as an amalgamation of regular and special activities, which cumulatively aim at addressing the immediate needs of the working class as well as contributing to the goal of prosperous life with dignified work and prosperity.

1. Unity for Transformation: Special Campaign

'Lokatantric republic' is the system of our governance. In this two-word formulation, lokatantra refers to a political framework, a boundary outline, ratified by the sovereign people. And republic is the form of government elected by the people from amongst them within the framework of lokatantra. Nepal has just instituted this form of government. The task ahead is to institutionalise it. This is - institutionalisation of lokatantric republic - the first and primary responsibility of GEFONT in its tenure ahead.

Central to GEFONT campaign are the establishment, through new constitution, of participatory and inclusive lokatantra with economic and social rights; creation of federal states based on our own originality; establishment of equity-based state structures in a class framework by eliminating all forms of economic exploitations; and, eradication of all forms of social oppressions, such as gender, caste-ethnicity, linguistic and religious discriminations. Under this campaign will fall following initiatives:

- Training and education campaigns for the committees under newly formed Union Councils and GEFONT to ensure effective participation of the working class in the process of transformation
- Continuity of the ongoing collaboration of political parties to intensify the participation of the working class in constitution making
- Increased dialogues and interactions with Constituent Assembly, CA members and the government

2. Organisation Building, Expansion and Mobilisation of Workers

- a. The Congress has made amendment in the existing structure of GEFONT. The restructuring of the state will necessitate some new structures at various levels, which will require restructuring of GEFONT structures as well. In the light of this, the following are the major ones in the context of organisation building:
 - **Organisation-management**, as per a new structure, at the local level and special campaigns on organisation restructuring and mobilisation in yet-to-be-formed federal structures
 - The policy of (a) further strengthening and mobilising existing unions in formal economy, and (b) implementing sector-specific activities and membership expansion in both agricultural and non-agricultural informal economy, focusing workers in agriculture, construction and street vendors.
 - Enhance social image of the trade union movement by mobilising workers in special days
 - Mobilise workers both at local and national levels to resolve grievances including issues of decent work and fair wages, through Central Union Council of members organised under different affiliates



- b. **Establishment and Operation** of the GEFONT Veterans' Network: Senior unionists who have for long been active in Nepal's trade union movement as well as in establishment of GEFONT deserve due respect and appreciation. The movement continues to need their advice and guidance in the days ahead. To this end, the Congress has decided to establish GEFONT Veterans' Network to bring together senior unionists in honour of what they have done in the past as well to respectfully mobilise their wisdom and skills to benefit the movement in future.
- c. **Expansion of Community Workers' Club:** The unions established at the workplace and enterprises only represent a side of the emotional unity of workers. Their nature and place of work is different, and they belong to different enterprises. However, these workers reside in the same area and locality. In the union formation and mobilisation exercises to date, the workers are left to stay separately and non-united in the community they live. This has kept the alliance of the union movement loose. The 'community workers' club' will, on this backdrop, further expand the practice of 'workplace and community based committees' in order to unite the workers also in areas they live.

3. Intensified Campaign of Social Protection

We hold that the employers' demand of 'hire and fire' and labour flexibilities should be balanced with social security measures, such as pension, provident fund, insurance, including health insurance, education allowance for the family of the workers, and unemployment benefit, among others. To materialise this, the following will be done:

- Campaign for an integrated social security fund while disseminating, advocating and lobbying for other 9 aspects of social security
- Consolidate and continue with 'micro- health insurance' schemes
- Mobilise workers to raise awareness on workplace safety, occupational safety and health, and, thus, to protect workers from occupational hazards and diseases. Implement various constructive pressure-campaigns to use the funds deposited at the National Welfare Fund in favour of the workers
- The situation of women's health is heart-rending, and the sufferers from the situation are in the thousands. With the aim of providing some relief to the suffering sisters, GEFONT has established a Working Women Assistance Fund, and has started providing medical support to the concerned after the Fourth Congress. This Fund will be strengthened & mobilised and as an emergency relief fund, a new scheme will be launched in this tenure for all GEFONT members



4. Programme of Women Leadership Development and Gender Equality

The state has, policy-wise and constitutionally, established women's right to inheritance and descent. All discriminatory laws have accordingly been annulled, a law enacted against violence against women and at least one-third representation of women made mandatory in all organs of the state and society. It is, thus, mandatory to have one-third participation of women in all sectors of employment, with rights, benefits, respect and payments equal to male counterparts. In this respect, a policy has been proposed to form a GEFONT Women's Committee to replace the Central Women Workers Department formed in 1992, and include all members of the Committee as ex-officio member of GEFONT National Executive Committee. The Committee will implement various activities, including committee formation and mobilisation, to expand and intensify the campaign of gender equality.

5. Campaign for Single Unionism

It is a long felt necessity that there should be a unified campaign that mobilises all workers at all levels to build an integrated movement for workers' rights and welfares. For this, the slogan of 'one union, one voice' should be further amplified. GEFONT has, for the last 9 years, been an active promoter of the 'one union' campaign.. To make the campaign more effective, a set of joint programmes will be developed on the basis of a common code of conduct. The programmes will focus on institutionalising the Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre (JTUCC)

6. Labour Law and Labour Commission


The government of Nepal has started the process of reform in existing labour legislation to make laws relevant to the present context. The proposed law should, as per the principle of 'One Act - Multiple Rules', cover all workers, irrespective of whether they are organised or unorganised, whether they are in formal or informal sectors, and whether they belong to private-joint ventures or industries operated through national-multinational investments.

Similarly, as provided for in the Interim Constitution, a tripartite effort is being made to form a National Labour Commission. In this respect, efforts should be made to ensure that the Commission is constitutional, independent and powerful, enjoys the authority of a quasi-judicial body and has the aim of ensuring swift and easy justice to the workers in relation to labour disputes.

7. International Relations and Foreign Employment

Under international relations and foreign employment, focus will be as follows:

- a. Continue the ongoing campaign for the formation of 'One International Centre' to build 'unity' out of the 'diversity' now prevailing in the world trade union movement. Such unity would be based on the principle of 'plurality' and 'diversity'. GEFONT will initiate active efforts to make its role effective in ITUC and Take necessary measures to expand the role of GEFONT-affiliated unions in the Global Union Federations.

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- b. The government of Nepal has entered into labour agreements with various countries with a view to increasing the scope of foreign employment. GEFONT will organise necessary campaigns, including awareness raising events, to ensure that labour migration for this purpose is safe and secure, and that all workers are paid and treated as stipulated in the agreement.
- Efforts will be made to increase the role of diplomatic missions to promote the welfare of migrant Nepali workers
 - Formation of GEFONT support group to organise migrant Nepali workers
 - Expansion and establishment of bi-lateral relations with trade union centres in destination countries
 - Implementation of various awareness programmes targeted to migrant workers

8. Youth Participation in Union Movement

Under the theme of 'youths in social service' the following activities will be conducted:

- Holding of a national youth labour conference
- Formation of youth committees in various structure of GEFONT
- Formation of youth committees in each level of affiliates
- Implementation of creative extra-curricular activities for mobilisation of youths who are in employment

9. Research, Publication and Dissemination

The following will be focused under this theme.

- Undertake research on various issues of concerns of the workers, and publish their findings
- Regular publication of:
 - Shramik Khabar (Workers News)
 - Trade Union Rights
 - Shramik Mahila (Women Workers)
 - E-News Bulletin
 - Other publications those necessary for labour education
- Use of web-site, audio-video and print media for dissemination
- Regular interaction with news media
- Regular update of GEFONT's dissemination media

10. Economic Self-Reliance Programme

- Development and implementation of mechanisms to collect membership fees and thus to make the members' contribution effective
- Take active measures to generate sustainable incomes through the special committee on Investment Management and Promotion



Gefont Logo



Gefont New Flag



www.gefont.org



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