Sagarmatha Sambaad: A Global Dialogue

Sagarmatha Sambaad is a multi-stakeholder forum established by Nepal to deliberate on important issues of global, regional and national significance. Named after the world’s tallest mountain Sagarmatha (सगरमाथा, 珠穆朗玛峰, Mt. Everest), this Sambaad (dialogue) is in line with Nepal’s consistent policy of promoting global understanding and cooperation through dialogue, consensus building and collaboration. It originates in deep conviction and faith in the notions of common good and the collective wellbeing of humanity.

***Why Sagarmatha Sambaad?***

In today’s inter-connected world, there is a need to have more open dialogues in order to address contemporary issues and reach consensus on the ways forward. As a country with its own success stories of a home-grown peace process of inclusive democracy, women’s empowerment and uplifting of the marginalized sections of society; as well as of contributing to international peacekeeping and responding to climate change, Nepal offers a suitable venue for such a global forum.

Nepal is an ancient land with rich natural and cultural heritages. Historically, the Himalaya and its foothills have been home to many sages, thinkers and people who have attained Bodhisattva; enlightenment. As the ancient Sanskrit saying goes, ‘‘वादेवादे जायते तत्ववोध:” (Knowledge is produced through discourses), reflections, mediation, harmonious life with nature and enlightenment have remained defining features of our traditions. The ethos of “सवेभवन्तुसुखिनःसवेसन्तुखनरामया:”(May all be happy; may all be healthy) remains at the core of this humanist tradition. The majestic mountains, with Sagarmatha towering over us, inspire us to think beyond our borders and to reflect on issues in a holistic manner.

Nepal is in a new era of political stability following the successful conclusion of its peace process and the promulgation of an inclusive and democratic Constitution. The country’s priority now is on inclusive growth, sustainable development and socio-economic transformation. For this, regional and global partnerships are essential to address contemporary challenges and issues common to the global community. With firm commitments, Nepal has been contributing to global peace and stability through its longstanding contribution to UN peacekeeping missions, and also as an advocate of global non-proliferation and peace efforts, while making resolute calls for inclusive prosperity and a just society. Nepal, therefore, offers a welcoming ground to bring together a cross-section of leaders and stakeholders for a global Sambaad to exchange ideas and experiences and to provide inspiration.

Hosted by Nepal’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) and the Policy Research Institute (PRI), Sagarmatha Sambaad will be held biennially and will focus on pertinent themes. The first Sagarmatha Sambaad will take place in Kathmandu from April 2nd to April 4th 2020, with a focus on climate change, an existential issue of our time.

**Participation and Format**

As a multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral forum, Sagarmatha Sambaad will draw global leaders including heads of state/government, ministers, parliamentarians, policy makers, experts, media, business community, wider civil society, youths and people directly affected by the issues being discussed. The dialogue format will be open and interactive to enable free flow of ideas and views.

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Sagarmatha Sambaad 2020: Climate Change, Mountains and the Future of Humanity

Climate change has emerged as an existential global issue posing serious threats to both humankind and nature. Due to anthropogenic emissions, the global average temperature is rising at unprecedented rates, changing precipitation patterns, increasing the frequency of heatwaves, melting icecaps and glaciers, and raising sea levels, resulting in adverse impacts on both natural and human systems. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has drawn attention to the catastrophic consequences of not limiting global average warming to 1.5°C. Current emission trends put the world on track to 3-4°C of warming by the end of the century. The time window for urgent action to limit warming is very short. Climate change will not only jeopardize our efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, but will also reverse development gains, rendering millions of the poor to the brink of further marginalization.

Mountainous countries like Nepal, facing accelerated warming at high altitudes, are particularly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. Glacier melting and changes in the amount and timing of precipitations have profound impacts on the ways we organize our food systems and agriculture, on the management of critical infrastructures, including hydropower, and on the availability of water for basic human needs. Changes in the mountains have far reaching effects across the planet including on coastal regions, small island states and oceans.

Reducing emissions to stabilize the global average temperature is the most important challenge facing humanity in the coming years. Climate change is not only a crisis but also an opportunity for new investments and for a rethinking of our models of development. There is a need for transformational solutions that draw on both new technologies as well as traditional knowledge and nature-based practices.

Sagarmatha Sambaad 2020 will deliberate on contemporary issues of climate change, mountains and the future of humanity including: adaptation, resilience and livelihoods (including water, and disasters); green economy (including transport, trade, energy, industry, production and consumption); traditional knowledge and nature based solutions (including tourism, agriculture, forests and carbon sequestration), and transformational solutions (technology, innovation, lifestyle opportunities, climate justice and finance).

The first Sagarmatha Sambaad on ‘Climate Change, Mountains and the Future of the Humanity’ will contribute towards further strengthening a multi-stakeholder approach to addressing the climate change with renewed political will, innovative initiatives and investments, and collaborations at regional and global scales.

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