

# OUTLINE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF KATHMANDU METROPOLITAN CITY

## **Introduction**

The world's capital cities are the center of attraction on account of being the foremost cities of their nations in terms of their inhabitants daily lives and their national economies. Kathmandu city is the capital city and the biggest urban center of Nepal with rich historical, archeological and cultural significance. The existing Kathmandu city is the result of continuity of long history and culture spacing many countries. Kathmandu City needs to engage in activities ranging from local and national to international as well by virtue of being the capital city of Nepal. This basically reflects the importance of role it has to play in managing the affairs of the city. Basically three important role should be taken into consideration in relation to the development of Kathmandu City, one is the conservation and preservation of Kathmandu's unique cultural, archeological and historical heritage, and at the same time another important task is the Modernisation of Kathmandu City and thirdly it is essential to provide urban services to the people in simple, cost effective and reliable manner.

In this context, Kathmandu Metropolitan City has promoting international relations though a number of programs. The history of municipal international co-operation dates back only to around second world war when the cities initiated a concept of partnership between the cities as a framework for international development cooperation for the development of the cities. Basically the new trend toward globalisation and deepening interdependence in various spheres of social life accompanied by unprecedented development in transportation and communication have led to the creation of new order in the relationship among the cities of the world. Similarly with the end of cold war and the collapse of bipolar structure of global society has also defined the international relations in new perspectives with the emphasis on increasing role of the urban local government as well. It was primarily national governments which pursued international relations and diplomacy in earlier, the concept it has gradually changed in recent decades the phenomenon directly and indirectly with active role being played by international agencies, NGOs, and cities in terms of relations among the citizens and cities as well. Similarly as the cities will be the homes for people in the next 21st century, the cities are expected to be the center of economic activities, place of social and cultural creativity and

source of vitality with increased capability to deliver good and services to the people.

At a time when centralised, unproductive and undemocratic institutions has led to inefficiency in term of providing services to the people. Decentralised structures is contributing to bring the public sector closer to the people and have the potential for increasing the efficiency. In this context, the concept of decentralised cooperation is getting importance in the present times.

### **Objectives:**

The basic and primary objective of the international relations of the Kathmandu is to strengthen its institutional capability, mobilize international resources and share and exchange experience on matters related to different aspects of urban management and development. Local level internationalization is believed to have contributed to further strengthen partnership among various urban stakeholders particularly between local governments, local authorities associations and NGOs in national, regional and international level in transferring best practices and good lessons. It also contributes to strengthen world peace and prosperity and international understanding.

International relations, besides, open new horizon for the development of the city in terms of cultural exchanges, transfer of technology, utilization of best practices and resource mobilization which ultimately contributes to the capacity building of the city to be able to overcome the problems more effectively. It also contributes to strengthen the capabilities of local urban governments to effectively manage the urban development process and to build partnerships between various actors at local, regional and international level. It is therefore important as well as essential in order to develop a strong institution capable of harnessing the potentialities from international communities in terms of resource mobilization and institutional capacity building of the cities.

### **Institutional Arrangements:**

International Relations Secretariat is the focal point on matters related to activities of international co-operation and relations. IRS deal with issues related to international matters of Kathmandu Metropolitan City which include promoting already existing relationships as well as exploring new areas of cooperation for the institutional benefits. It also deals with protocol matters, relations with donors as well.

## **Status**

The history of Kathmandu Metropolitan City's international relations dates back to 1975 AD when an agreement was signed between Kathmandu and Eugene city of the United States of America with the objective of establishing formal relationship in order to promote exchanges between the two cities. Over the years the activities related to international relations of Kathmandu Metropolitan City have increased significantly and as a result of which Kathmandu Metropolitan City presently maintains formal relationship with 8 cities in different part of the world. In addition to Eugene city, Kathmandu has relation with Matsumoto City of Japan, Rochester City and Eugene City of USA, Yangon City of Myanmar, Xi'an City of the People's Republic of China, Minsk City of Belarus and Pongyang City of the Democratic Republic of Korea.

Similarly Kathmandu Metropolitan City is the full and good standing member of Regional Network of Local Authorities for the Management of Human Settlement (CITYNET), Yokohama, Japan, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), Toronto, Canada, Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC), Quebec, Canada, League of Historical Cities (LHC), Kyoto, Japan, Association of Major Metropolises, Paris, France and Mayors for Peace, Hiroshima, Japan. In addition to it, Kathmandu Metropolitan City has working relationship with The Earthquakes and Megacities Initiative (EMI), an international not-for-profit scientific non-governmental organization dedicated to the acceleration of earthquake preparedness, mitigation and recovery of large urban areas.

Over the years, Kathmandu Metropolitan City has fulfilled its commitments by hosting and organizing the South Asian Conference of Mayors and Local Authority in 1995 and Executive Committee Meeting of regional Network of Local Authority for the Management of GHuman Settlements (CityNet) in 1999.

Similarly Kathmandu Metropolitan City has awarded Dr. Daisaku Ikeda, President of Soka Gakkai International of Japan as the "Distinguished Person" honor in recognition for his outstanding contribution to the world peace, brotherhood and the development of peace". So Kathmandu Metropolitan City will work together with Soka Gakkai International on matters related to peace and education. In this connection, Kathmandu Metropolitan City has planned to honor Dr. Daisaku Ikeda, President of Soka Gakkai International of Japan with " Kathmandu Peace Award – 2060 " on 2 January 2004 in recognition for his outstanding contribution

to world peace, education and social harmony and non-violence movement throughout the world. Kathmandu Metropolitan City in line with its policy of promoting international relations has planned to establish relationship with the Makati city of the Philippines in the near future. Necessary actions are being carried out to establish relationship with the Islamabad city of Pakistan as its policy of establishing relationship with the capital cities of of the SAARC countries. Similarly Kathmandu Metropolitan City will establish relationship with Florence city of Italy, Cambridge city of the United States of America.

Besides, Kathmandu Metropolitan City is working with a number of international institutions on matters related to urban management and development on program babsis. It is seriously working out programs to mobilize resources from Asia-Urbs program of European Union.

Kathmandu Metropolitan City has reorganized and strengthened the existing structure of Department of International Relations has established a section under the department to explore the possibility of resource mobilization and services of non-resident Nepalese.