

Nepal Portfolio Performance Review (NPPR) Annual Meeting

Opening Remarks delivered by Mr. Yub Raj Bhusal, Finance Secretary (Opening Session)

Honorable Finance Minister

Fellow Secretaries and Senior Government Officials,

Excellencies and Heads and Representatives of Development Partners,

Project Directors/Managers

Representatives of Private Sector and Civil Societies

Ladies and Gentlemen!

1. This is my first NPPR meeting as capacity of Finance Secretary though I was involved indirectly from my previous capacity. I am delighted to see NPPR process continuously moving ahead since more than one decade under the leadership of the Government. We have high expectations from this mechanism as this has also become a reform tool of the government. I have been briefed that the working team is also discussing how this mechanism can be more effective and result focused. However, we all know that NPPR alone can't solve all the problems. This is one of the forums that complement government's efforts to address the broader issues of the projects/programs. We have been observing, in various review meetings, that there are common matters that we are confronting with. This is the right forum for all of us to discuss those common issues that are hindering our smooth implementation of the projects/programs. In this sense, I am happy to see this big gathering this morning.

2. I have been briefed that traditionally, NPPR used to cover five critical thematic areas – public financial management, procurement, human resources, monitoring evaluation and mutual accountability. Though this is related to donor funded projects/programs, the reforms that happen through this forum will certainly help whole public sector intervention. Government is always committed to continue reform agenda to move forward. The challenge always is to translate our commitment into practice.

3. I reviewed the last year's progress of NPPR Action Plan. The overall implementation scenario is mixed. My colleagues will present the details progress report sometimes later. I can say that higher level commitment is necessary to make things happen. We want highly satisfactory rating in all five key areas next year. Nobody has imposed reform on us. We have agreed jointly and commit ourselves to implement them. Therefore, I request my fellow Secretaries to own the NPPR Action Plan. Ministry of Finance will give priority for those actions to be achieved through any means, say coordination, facilitation or providing budget.
4. We are committed to adhere to the principles of Busan outcome document of aid effectiveness or say, development effectiveness. From this year, we have invited private sectors and civil society's representatives in the NPPR forum. We are working on new Development Cooperation Policy which is pending for long time which will address various debated issues that are around us regarding the aid effectiveness.
5. Though the overall macro-economic situation of the country is stable, we are concerned with the low economic growth resulting from low capital expenditure spending. We are trying to improve the systemic issues related to it. We are expecting this year growth scenario will improve. We need development partner's higher level support in our endeavor at this juncture where we have set the goal of graduating from LDC by 2022. We know that everything can't be financed by aid money. It should be selective and effective.
6. Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues in Ministry of Finance (IECCD) and team of development partners for this excellent arrangement to make this meeting happen. I wish afternoon discussions will guide us to address the portfolio issues which are our common concern.
7. I request all participants to contribute in the group discussions and come up with doable and practical solutions. Your suggestions will certainly add value to improve our projects operations next year.

Thank you.