Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Mr Roberto Azevêdo, arrived in Kathmandu on June 4, 2014 on a two-day visit. During his visit, he met Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Sushil Koirala, Minister for Commerce and Supplies (MoCS) Hon. Sunil Bahadur Thapa and State Minister of the same ministry Hon. Giri Bahadur K.C.

At the meeting with Mr Azevêdo, Minister Thapa reiterated Nepal’s commitment to an open and liberal economy and said that the Government of Nepal (GoN) has been formulating and implementing its policies and programmes in that spirit. He further said that the country is enhancing export trade to achieve the aims of poverty alleviation and socioeconomic development. Highlighting the role that WTO could play in mobilizing Aid for Trade (AfT) for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) by coordinating with developed countries and other donor agencies, Commerce Minister said that effective implementation of the Bali Package could help achieve the expected results. He added that Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) had helped to focus the mobilization of the AfT in LDCs and Nepal has also benefitted from it, but there was still need for increasing resources, as well as further enhancing resource mobilization in trade through other donor countries and agencies.

Pointing out that LDCs like Nepal needed special concessions, Mr Azevêdo underscored the importance of both production and market for export. It may be recalled that Mr Azevêdo had played a crucial role at the 9th Ministerial Conference (MC9) of WTO and showed his concern for LDCs in the areas of services waiver, duty-free quota-free market access and extension of the implementation period of the agreement relating to intellectual property rights.

There is need for increasing resources, as well as enhancing resource mobilization in trade through other donor countries and agencies.
EIF ED’s NEPAL Mission concludes

Dr Rattanad Adhikari, Executive Director of the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) at WTO, visited Nepal from March 10 to 14, 2014. Dr Adhikari was accompanied by Mr R. Manivannan, Regional Policy Manager—Asia and the Pacific, EIF Trust Fund, UNOPS, and Mr James Edwin, Coordinator, M&E, EIF-ES, Geneva. The team met Mr Madhav Prasad Regmi, Commerce Secretary, and Mr Toya Narayan Gyawali, Joint Secretary of MoCS and EIF Board Member.

At a briefing meeting, Mr Buddhi Prasad Upadhaya, EIF NPM, offered the major activities carried out by the NECTRADE Project from the last quarter of 2012 till early 2014, as well as planned activities for 2014. The team also attended the Pashmina Enhancement and Trade Support (PETS) Project’s launching ceremony.

Dr Adhikari held several meetings with high-level GoN officials, including Chief Secretary, Chairperson of EIF Nepal National Steering Committee, Secretary and Chief of Foreign Aid Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance, and key stakeholders and actors related to Nepal’s trade and development, including Ms Jacqueline Gorth of the German Embassy.

The team also attended Trade Mainstreaming Workshop, held meetings with Secretary of the National Planning Commission, officials of sectoral agencies (FAO, FNCCI) and projects (PETS, MAPs), and a wrap-up meeting with MoCS, UNOPS, and EIF Trust Fund, UNOPS, and Mr James Edwin, Coordinator, M&E, EIF-ES, Geneva.

WTO and Nepal
A high-level interaction

A high-level interaction programme, World Trade Organization and Nepal, was organized on June 5, 2014 in Kathmandu.

The interaction programme was chaired by Minister of State for Commerce and Supplies, Hon. Giri Bahadur K.C. Mr Roberto Azevêdo, Director General of the WTO, was the chief guest and keynote speaker at the programme. Mr Toya Narayan Gyawali, Officiating Secretary of MoCS, presenting the programme highlights, said the Bali Resolution had raised new hopes and Nepal, as an EIF beneficiary country, had succeeded in receiving support from EIF in the implementation of three Tier 2 projects.

Hon. Giri Bahadur K.C., chair of the programme, underscored the importance of implementing the Bali Package and of increasing support through the EIF to LDCs like Nepal. Mr Azevêdo said that Nepal had supported his cause considerably when she was coordinator of LDCs in 2013. He added that the LDCs should be competitive in receiving benefits from the WTO. He further added that, since government’s role is only to facilitate trade and it is the private sector that really carries out trade, it should take further initiatives in this matter.

Moderating the technical session, Mr Leela Mani Poudyal said that Nepal is yet to achieve the high expectations that it had from joining the WTO.

NRR Governor Dr Yuvraj Khatiwada said that optimal utilization of available opportunities was the biggest challenge for Nepal. NPC member Dr Suramit Wagle, called for paying special attention to capacity development. Former NRR governor, Mr Himalaya Sumsher JBR, stressed the need for an inclusive trade expert. Mr Prakash Man Shrestha said that Nepal had got opportunities from WTO membership, but supply-side constraints, lack of adequate infrastructure, lack of knowledge of the opportunities offered by the WTO agreements and technical constraints came in the way of utilizing those opportunities. Former Secretary of MoCS, Mr Purushottam Ojha, highlighted capacity development and trade-related assistance and need for forecasting ability. Ms Bita Bhandari, President of Women Entrepreneurs Association of Nepal (FWEAN), Mr Dinosh Shrestha of FNCCI, Mr Suresh Kumar Basnet, President of the Chamber of Commerce, Mr Gokarna Awasthi of Kantipur Publications, among others, shared their views.

The interaction programme was attended by about 40 participants, including Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank, members of the National Planning Commission and officials of Ministries concerned, Ambassador of Brazil, and representatives of the private sector, media and trade experts.

MoCS officials trained in ICT

Advanced training in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) was organized to enhance IT-related knowledge and skills of high-level officials of MoCS so that they could apply them in their day-to-day office work more effectively. The eight-day training began on May 26, 2014. The programme was customized to help participants apply what they had learned at work.

Commerce Secretary, Mr Narayan Gopal Malego, all three Joint Secretaries, Director General and Deputy Director General of the Department of Commerce and Supply Management and Under Secretaries of the MoCS participated in the training.

NECTRADE had acquired services of Himalayan Institute of Technology, Kathmandu, for conducting the training.
High-level inter-ministerial dialogue for export trade development

A high-level inter-ministerial dialogue on export trade development and strengthening SPS and TBT measures was held on January 23, 2014. The programme was chaired by Commerce Secretary, Mr Madhav Prasad Regmi. The Secretary of Ministry of Industry (MoI), Mr Krishna Gyawali, the Secretary of Ministry of Agriculture Development (MoAD), Mr Jaya Mukund Khanal, and the Development Counselor of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Nepal, Ms Jacqueline Groth, were also present at the programme.

Minister for Finance Hon. Dr Ram Sharan Mahat officially launched the Pashmina Enhancement & Trade Support (PETS) Project on March 10, 2014 in Kathmandu. The launching ceremony was chaired by the Secretary of MoCS and EIF Nepal Focal Point, Mr Madhav Prasad Regmi. Ms Arancha Gonzalez, Executive Director of the International Trade Centre (ITC), Dr Ratnakar Adhikari, Executive Director of EIF, and Development Counselor of Federal Republic of Germany in Kathmandu. Ms Jacqueline Groth were also present at the programme.

On the occasion, Mr Pushpa Man Shrestha, President of Nepal Pashmina Industry Association (NPIA) expressed his hope that the project would help in the production of quality Pashmina products and in creating a brand in the international market.

The chief guest, Hon. Dr Ram Sharan Mahat, hoped that the project would ultimately benefit the farmers and local stakeholders associated with the industry.

Ms Arancha Gonzalez pointed out the tremendous opportunities for Nepal to export agricultural, agro-food and forestry products, textiles and handicrafts.

Dr Ratnakar Adhikari said that the PETS project would be instrumental in positioning Nepalese Chyangra Pashmina products as luxury products from the Himalayan country. On the occasion, he also launched the new website of EIF Nepal, eifnepal.gov.np, developed by the NECTRADE Project.

Chair of the function, Mr Regmi released ‘The EIF Trading Story of Pashmina, Tea and Ginger’ in Nepal. He reiterated MoCS’s commitment to effective and well-coordinated mobilization of trade-related technical assistance.

Mr Toya Narayan Gyawali, Joint Secretary of MoCS and Chief of EIF NIP, urged the private sector institutions and entrepreneurs to come forward with more creative and innovative ideas and proposals. He expressed GoN’s commitment and readiness to implement policy measures, develop infrastructure and provide institutional support for stimulating Nepal’s exports.

Chyangra Pashmina is one of the 19 prioritized products of NTIS 2010. MoCS has initiated the PETS project with support from the EIF and is the result of collaborative efforts of the MoCS, ITC and NPIA. Capacity building of NPIA, support to increase export of Chyangra Pashmina products and creation of awareness and recognition of the Chyangra Pashmina trademark in target markets are the three components of the PETS project. EIF has contributed US$1,861,605 and GoN has contributed US$200,000 in kind to the project. The three-year project has been under implementation since June 2013.

Secretory of MoAD, Mr Jaya Mukund Khanal, remarked that Nepal needs to strengthen testing laboratories to ensure quality products to foreign markets. AFT should be mobilized for establishing effective and internationally accredited laboratory or testing facilities in Nepal.

Similarly, Secretary of MoI, Mr Krishna Gyawali, lauded the efforts of MoCS for establishing a mechanism for coordination among line ministries for export trade development. He informed that MoI has been providing services to the industries through one-window. Providing cash incentives to industries, reducing the FDI approval process from 22 steps (14-50 days) to 14 steps (5-10 days), providing five-year visa for the investors, among others are some of the developments in this regard, Mr Gyawali shared.

At the programme, presentations were made by officials of MoCS, MoI, MoD, Departments of Commerce and Supply Management, Agriculture, Livestock Services, Food Technology and Quality Control, Forest, Industry, Mining, Cottage and Small Industries, and Plant Resources, Nepal Bureau of Standards and Metrology and major project development projects in order to share the initiatives taken by them and also to bring such efforts towards export sector development in a harmonized manner.
One-day workshop on trade mainstreaming was held on March 12, 2014 in Kathmandu. The workshop was chaired by Mr Madhav Prasad Regmi, Secretary, MoCS. Dr Ratnakar Adhikari, Executive Director, EIF, Executive Secretariat at WTO, Geneva was the keynote speaker.

Delivering his welcome remarks, Mr Toya Narayan Gyawali, Joint Secretary, MoCS, said that trade cannot be looked in isolation but should be a part and parcel of the national economic policy-making. There is need to have a vision and work with missionary zeal to get to that vision. He said, “We have enormous challenges, but we can overcome them with the right kind of approach.” He added, “All of us should realize that we are in the same boat and success is judged by the level of prosperity of the people.”

Mr Buddhi Prasad Upadhyaya, EIF National Programme Manager, presented major efforts and initiatives undertaken by the GoN at policy, institutional, international cooperation and programme level for trade mainstreaming, role of MoCS as well as expected roles of different trade-related stakeholders. Mr Upadhyaya stressed that trade sector development is inevitable for achieving the government’s goal of poverty reduction. He added that the membership of the WTO was an opportunity for LDCs to have better access to world market.

Ms Jacqueline Groth, Counsellor, Head of Development Cooperation, German Embassy—the EIF Donor Facilitator—presented a paper, “Mainstreaming Trade into Nepal’s Development Policy: Role of Development Partners”. According to her, despite efforts of development partners and EIF for mainstreaming trade, practicable fundable proposals for trade sector development are lacking. She suggested that trade agenda should be incorporated in the development partners’ country strategy papers and in sector-specific programmes.

Delivering his keynote speech, Dr Ratnakar Adhikari, Executive Director, EIF Executive Secretariat, spoke on the relevance of trade mainstreaming in national development process, major efforts and initiatives undertaken by the EIF at global level and suggestions from Nepalese perspective. He suggested that NTIS 2010 should be aligned towards trade mainstreaming and budgetary provision should be sufficiently allocated for promoting trade.

Vice-President of CNI, Mr Manoj Kedia, said that effective coordination with government and related agencies can help the private sector perform better in trade. He urged the private sector, government, development partners, media and civil society to invest in physical infrastructure, hydropower, tourism and herbal products.

Dr Hemant Dahadi, Director General of FNCCI, suggested that the GoN should recognize the private sector as a major stakeholder in true sense and work with it. He called for the private sector to invest in branding, packaging, marketing and product development and do not shy away from competition. Furthermore, he asked the private sector to lead the process rather than be led by the government.

President of FNCCI, Mr Pradep Jhung Pandey, requested the government to extend incentives and schemes to exporters. He suggested that the government should give priority to the MoCS in terms of role and budget allocation.

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Mr Madhav Prasad Regmi, said the new ideas offered at the workshop could help address the widening trade deficit and mainstream trade. He informed the gathering that the National Steering Committee under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary of GoN, Trade Advisory Committee, six Technical Committees in different line ministries, as well as WTO focal points, have been providing regular support to the MoCS for trade sector development. Finally, he articulated MoCS’s commitment to consider the valuable suggestions forwarded by the participants in its upcoming policies and programmes.

The workshop was attended by about 105 participants, including Joint Secretaries and other officials from MoCS, Coordinators of EIF TCs from other line ministries, Joint Secretaries of Planning Divisions of the line ministries, representatives from WTO Focal Points, private sectors, trade experts, representatives from Economic Department of TU, KU, and University Grant Commission.
Regional EIF Workshop on Financial Management, Results Reporting and Communication

O n the invitation of EIF-Executive Secretariat (EIF-ES)-Geneva, a team of five members from Nepal participated in the Regional EIF Workshop in Financial Management, Results Reporting and Communication from May 19 and 23, 2014 in Bangkok, Thailand. The workshop was designed to enhance financial, reporting and communication parts in the EIF-supported country projects within the Asia-Pacific Region. It was aimed at enabling the building of a productive dialogue among EIF-ES, EIF-TFM and member countries.

The participants of the workshop mainly learned about UN ESCAP’s trade and investment division; trade agreements and negotiations; procurement and best practices in procuring goods and services; monitoring and evaluation of EIF results through results chain; understanding EIF outcomes and indicators, sources and means of objective verification; developing a work plan based on log-frame; legal aspects of EIF no cost and cost extensions, budget revisions, work plan revisions, audit obligations, audit guidance; defining communication objectives at different stages of the project cycle; developing powerful messages for trade mainstreaming; identifying best approaches to engage key stakeholders; identifying messages and channels by developing an outreach plan, among others.

The workshop was jointly organized by EIF-ES and UNESCAP. It was attended by representatives of 12 different countries from Asia and the Pacific Region, including Nepal. The Nepalese team was led by Joint Secretary of MoCS and EIF Board Member, Mr Tina Narayan Gyawali, and comprised Mr Chhabindra Parajuli, Mr Buddhi Prasad Upadhyaya, Mr Pankaj Girir and Mr Saroj Acharya.

2nd NTIS Review and Update Steering Committee meeting calls for expediting the review process

The second meeting of the NTIS Review and Updates Steering Committee was held on April 11, 2014. The meeting was chaired by Commerce Secretary, Mr Madhav Prasad Regmi. Mr Buddh Prasad Upadhyaya, NPM, briefed the meeting about the decisions of the first meeting and agenda of the second meeting. He also briefed about the progress on NTIS Review and Update. Also, the ToR of the International Consultant for the NTIS Review and Update was discussed and finalized at the meeting. The meeting decided to constitute six thematic working groups under the leadership of the coordinators of EIF Technical Committees. The thematic groups will facilitate and coordinate the process of NTIS Review and Update at sectoral level and provide technical feedback and suggestions in related areas. The meeting also discussed indicators for the potential products to be decided while updating the NTIS and number of products to be included in NTIS. Additional indicators, such as use of new technology and its sustainability, product uniqueness and value addition, integration into global and regional value chain process and employment generation were discussed as some of the important additional indicators.

Thematic Working Groups and Coordinators
1. Aid for Trade and Trade in Services: Joint Secretary of Planning and International Trade Cooperation Division of MoCS;
2. Trade Negotiation Capacity Development and Trade Support Institutions: Joint Secretary of Export Promotion, Trade and Transit Division of MoCS;
3. Agriculture and SPS Measures: Ministry of Agricultural Development;
4. Manufacturing, TBT, Investment and IPR: Ministry of Industry;
5. Customs and Trade Facilitation: Ministry of Finance;

The NECTRADE Project organized a meeting at the National Planning Commission (NPC) on January 2, 2014. The meeting was chaired by Dr Ralindra Kumar Shresta, Vice Chairman of the NPC. The Chief of Planning Division of different line ministries attended the meeting.

At the meeting, the decision and report of the National Steering Committee on NTIS 2010 and the task force constituted by that committee was presented. The presentation also covered the activities to be carried out by the MoCs in line with the recommendations of the report. Joint Secretaries, who are the chiefs of Planning Divisions of their respective ministries, briefed about their line ministries. The task force of NTIS 2010 could be made more coordinated and effective through line ministries. The chairs of many divisions of Industry, Finance, Home Affairs, Labour and Employment, Energy, Agriculture Development, Physical Planning, Works and Transport Management, and Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Ministries, Department of Customs, NPC, Secretariat, TEPC, among others, presented their programmes and estimated budgets for carrying out recommended activities after adding to the budget ceiling for the forthcoming fiscal year in accordance with the recommendations of the report of the task force constituted as per the decision of the EIF Nepal National Steering Committee.

Furthermore, it was decided each Ministry and agency will accord priority to trade from their own sectors and make necessary provision for development of the export sector, including annual budget and programme. The meeting also discussed that, for implementing the activities recommended in the report of the task force on export trade development, the responsible ministry and agency will formulate programmes and budget and request the NPC and Ministry of Finance for provision of necessary budget.

NPC asks all Ministries and agencies TO ACCORD PRIORITY TO TRADE

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3rd Tier 2 Project ‘IN-MAPS’ launched

T he Officiating Secretary of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Dr Annapurna Nand Das, launched the ‘Implementation of the NTIS in the sector of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (IN-MAPS)’ Project on June 26, 2014. The GoN, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) is responsible for overall execution of the project, while the MoCS facilitates project implementation through EIF implementation arrangements. The project aims to upgrade the MAPs value chain by introducing new marketing strategies like organic certification, trademarks and qualifying local products into international markets. Furthermore, it aims at improving production and manufacturing, improving practices with focus on sustainability and marketability of products. The EIF has provided US$1.9 million and the GoN has provided counterpart funding of US$123,400, whereas the German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation (GIZ) has contributed US$174,600.

The project will assist private sector stakeholders, including business service providers, as well as stakeholders from relevant government entities, in the MAPs value chain. The project interventions involve strengthening capacities of related government offices, private sector associations and local bodies for coordinating MAPs-related activities and for providing services to the private sector and community. Furthermore, IN-MAPS project will improve market access of value added products to the priority export destinations through collective marketing and branding.

The MAPs sector represents an important export product for Nepal in terms of revenue generation, employment, social impact and poverty alleviation. More than 95 per cent of commercially used herbs from the country are wild, organic and natural. About 1,800 species are currently being used for the production of Ayurvedic, Unani and Siddha medicines and for essential oils. Most of the processed essential oils are exported to overseas markets for manufacturing cosmetics, perfumery and pharmaceuticals. Local production of such items for export is very limited.

MAPs have been recognized by the NTIS 2010 as an important export sector. The IN-MAPS Project is the result of continuous efforts and role played by the MoCS and the NECTRADE Project.
Opportunities in the Far West

On the occasion of ‘Nepal Trade, Agriculture and Tourism Fair 2070 BS’, an interaction programme was organized in Mahendranagar, Kanchanpur, on March 1, 2014. The programme was organized in collaboration with FNNCI and Kanchanpur Chamber of Commerce and Industries. Commerce Secretary Mr Madhav Prasad Regmi was the chief guest at the programme.

Mr Tova Narayan Gyawali, Joint Secretary of MoCS, delivering a presentation, ‘Industrial and Business Opportunities of Far-Western Development Region’, said that the construction of a dry port in this region is expected to facilitate trade and increase exports. Furthermore, establishment of manufacturing and agro-processing industries will add value to Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs) products. He added that upgrading Dhangadhi airport as a regional international airport could promote the region to be an important tourist destination. He further said that the prosperity of the region can be ensured by focusing on hydroelectricity, tourism and herbal products.

Local entrepreneurs and representatives from Kanchanpur Chamber of Commerce and Industries raised issues like extension of incentives and free schemes for this region, setting up of a dry port and cold storage, strengthening Belauri customs point, building trade-related infrastructure, etc. Furthermore, the local farmers lack knowledge of high-value crops and constant linkage. The private sector requested that a branch office of the Export Promotion Centre, a seed company, an agricultural training centre, a herb processing centre, a human resource training centre and cold storages be established. They demanded that the concept of ‘one village, one product’ should be implemented in a large-scale manner. Furthermore, provision of subsidy should be made for farmers and investors and an organic certification agency should be provided.

Mr Dinesh Bhandari, former President of Kailali Chamber of Commerce, said that the government has not been able to exploit what this region can offer. The region remains in low priority of the government and the budget disbursement is very low. He requested the MoCS delegation to raise the issue of construction of a bridge over the Mahakali River in Kathmandu.

Mr Naresh Modak, President of Kailali Chamber of Commerce, said that the government is faced with challenges such as absence of a plant quarantine checkpost, export of goods without value addition, lack of access to market, inability to produce in mass quantity; lack of storage facilities; problems in exporting from the Banhara point of India, lack of trade-related infrastructure, etc. Furthermore, the local farmers lack knowledge of high-value crops and constantly face shortage of inputs such as seeds, fertilizer, irrigation, electricity, diesel, etc.

Mr Jib Raj Koirala, recalling that the region has high tourism and hydropower potentials, suggested that a dry port should be established in this region and trade-related infrastructure built. A road should be constructed for trekking to Mansarovar to attract Indian pilgrims, Mr Koirala stressed.

Joint Secretary of MoCS, Mr Jib Raj Koirala, said that setting up of Special Economic Zones and establishment of herbal processing plants and trade-related infrastructure like road, dry port, ICP and warehouse would help this region to harness potential benefits from the huge market of the neighbouring country. He added that the region is expected to attract tourists to the region.

Mr Toya Narayan Gyawali said that LDCs like Nepal, which are least influential in global trade activities, need to join the WTO to derive the benefits of multilateral trading system. Since the rights of countries are established based on the principle of one nation one vote, irrespective of their size and level of development, small and least developed countries like Nepal could assert their standpoints with equal importance.

EINF PNM Mr Buddhi Prasad Upadhyaya informed the participants about the EIF mechanism, its intervention in Nepal and Nepal Trade Integration Strategy 2010. He said that the EIF has posed a host of opportunities as well as challenges for Nepal. The country needs to enhance its skills and capacity to face competition. The country needs to counter non-tariff barriers and translate the commitments it articulated while becoming member in letter and spirit. The government, with support from the EIF mechanism, has been working regarding these issues and carrying out activities like trade negotiations, establishment of testing laboratories and other capacity-building measures.

Mr Toya N Gyawali delivering his presentation at the training programme in Dhangadhi.

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Mr Dinesh Bhandari, former President of Kailali Chamber of Commerce, presenting a paper, ‘Export Potentials in Far West Nepal’, said Indian businesses are getting advantage from Nepalese customers, but they have to be more assertive and zeal to work. Nepalese business is unable to benefit from their comparative advantage due to lack of trust and support from stakeholders and prudent policies.

Mr Bishnu Adhikari, President of SEJON, said media should link trade with development. Quality as well as accuracy of the information shared through media should not be compromised. The current trade reporting trend requires high degree of knowledge, analytical capability and good data related skills.

Mr Dil Bahadur Chhetri, a local trade journalist, said the region is faced with challenges such as absence of a plant quarantine checkpost, export of goods without value addition, lack of access to market, inability to produce in mass quantity; lack of storage facilities; problems in exporting from the Banhara point of India, lack of trade-related infrastructure, etc. Furthermore, the local farmers lack knowledge of high-value crops and constantly face shortage of inputs such as seeds, fertilizer, irrigation, electricity, diesel, etc.

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Mr Toya N Gyawali delivering his presentation at the training programme in Dhangadhi.
The 12th Aid for Trade Donor Group Meeting was held on April 3, 2014. The meeting was organized to receive Development Partners’ (DPs) inputs on the review and update of NTIS 2010.

Mr Ravi Bhattarai, Under Secretary of MoCS, informed that the EIF Mission appreciated Nepal’s efforts to utilize trade-related technical assistance (TA) and has expressed its willingness to provide support to address supply-side constraints.

Ms Jacqueline Groth, appreciated DPs for their support to trade sector development of Nepal. She pointed out the prevailing gaps in the TA requirements, such as those in improving technical standards, intellectual property and product development.

Mr Aayush Rai from DANIDA shared that UNNATI, a new programme launched by the Embassy of Denmark, will focus on private sector development through intervention in tea, ginger and dairy products. Ms Ellen Kallimovs from GIZ requested all DPs to look at dairy products. Mr Bhupendra Bhatt from ADB informed that ADB has been providing TA on trade facilitation through Sub-Regional Transport Enhancement Project, South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation Trade Facilitation Programme and SASEC Sub-regional Trade Facilitation Project. Ms Anita Mahat Rana from USAID informed that TA from USAID will pursue the ‘Feed the Future’ programme and consultation with MoCS is underway for future engagement to support trade.

Commerce Secretary, Mr Madhav Prasad Regmi, said that supply-side constraints, which have been identified as major barriers to LDCs’ exports, could be addressed through the AfT mechanism. He thanked the DPs for their generous support for advancing Nepal’s trade development agenda.

The 12th AfT Donor Group Meeting