**Statement by Hon. Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Leader of Nepali Delegation at the 2ndAsia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Summit Bangkok, 10 October 2016**

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellency General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand

Royal Highnesses,

Excellences, the Heads of State and Government,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen!

I bring you humble greetings from Nepal; the birth place of Lord Buddha whose preaching of peace and harmony nourishes not only Asia but the entire world and humanity.

As the newest member of this forum, my country is greatly honoured to participate in the 2nd Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Summit, being convened in this beautiful capital city of Bangkok.

I congratulate the Kingdom of Thailand for providing dynamic leadership as the Chair of the ACD and for hosting this summit with very relevant theme of "One Asia, Diverse Strengths". The convening of ACD Connect Business Forum has provided an important platform to exchange novel business ideas, practices and modalities. I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the Royal Thai Government for their generous hospitality extended to us and for the excellent arrangements made for this summit meeting.

Let me extend our best wishes to the United Arab Emirates as our next chair. Nepal welcomes the establishment of ACD Permanent Secretariat in Kuwait.

Mr. Chairman,

The continent of Asia is a vibrant mosaic with rich diversity –diversity of cultures as well as civilizations; diversity of people as well as practices; diversity of economies as well as political systems.

And, this diverse mosaic is connected by a common identity – - the Asian identity.

The diverse assortment of Asia is linked by a common aspiration –the Asian aspiration; aspiration for peace and prosperity.

To enrich that common identity, this platform can be a catalyst. To bring those aspirations together, this forum can be an enabler.

Mr. Chairman,

Today, Asia is emerging to be the global economic powerhouse. The development pursuit of some of the Asian countries is truely inspiring. The innovativeness and resourcefulness of Asian countries is more pronounced than ever before.

Our region is endowed with rich natural resources ranging from hydropower to biodiversity, arable lands to mineral deposits. The abundance of human resource is another asset.

Despite our huge development potentials, most of them have remained untapped and idle. Despite growing wealth creation, the Asian nations are not well connected with each other.

Despite our promising strengths, strides in socio-economic development of some of the Asian countries remain below our expectation.

Mr. Chairman,

Responsibility lies on us to work on our strengths for unleashing the potential; to vitalize the economic performance of all the Asian countries; and to ensure that not a single country from Asia will be left behind in this Asian century.

Connectivity in all modes-- road and rail networks; air links; waterways and transmission ways --will be the key enabler to realize this goal. For a landlocked country like Nepal, the importance of connectivity cannot be overemphasized.

Migrant workers provide a strong link connecting peoples and societies in Asia. Their rights must be protected and their safety and security must be guaranteed in view of their contribution to economic growth and development in both origin and recipient countries.

**Excellences,**

Not only are the strengths of Asia diverse. Our challenges too are diverse. Our hurdles too are diverse –diverse as well as demanding.

The threat of terrorism haunts us. Extremism of different hues mocks our conscience. Violence and transnational organized crimes pose a daunting threat. We should resolutely work to fight against these menaces.

The peril of poverty looms large. Economic inequality, natural disasters, climate change, and pandemic diseases are testing our abilities as well as intentions.

Mountainous countries like ours are highly vulnerable to climate change and are bearing the brunt of it disproportionate to their contribution to green house gas emission. They need special support measures to overcome climate vulnerabilities and ensure sustainable development.

And it’s beyond the reach of a single country to address these challenges. The synergy among the diverse strengths of Asia is a must to cross this equally diverse assortment of hurdles. A concerted effort among the Asian countries is necessary to decimate these difficulties.

In our pursuit to deepen the synergy among our diverse strengths, we are adopting the ACD Vision for Asia Cooperation 2030 and the Bangkok Declaration, along with ACD Blue Print 2017-2030 today.

These frameworks reflect our solidarity with commitment to Pan-Asian cooperation; our commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; our commitment for peace, prosperity and partnership in the continent.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Nepal is now at the crucial phase of reconstruction and development after the massive devastation caused by the earthquake in April and May 2015. We thank you all for providing immediate help in rescue and relief works and now for the reconstruction.

Nepal has huge development potentials. Hydro resources of Nepal can be a source of green energy not only for us but also for our neighbouring countries in Asia, greatly contributing to energy security in our region.

Nepal is bestowed with unmatched natural beauties and cultural treasures. Our tourism potential is equally huge but remains untapped. I invite investors from the region to invest on our resources; to join us in our development endeavours.

In advancing cooperation within ACD framework, we have offered to assume the role of a co-prime-mover in these sectors.

With the promulgation of the new constitution in September last year, we are now moving towards socio-economic development, with the aim of creating a peaceful and prosperous Nepal. We highly appreciate the understanding and cooperation from the international community in Nepal’s reconstruction and development.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, I reiterate sincere commitment of Nepal to contribute to the ACD process. It is my profound belief that we can build on our individual as well as collective strengths, to make a headway towards a prosperous future of whole of the Asia- one Asia with diverse strengths.

I thank you all!