











# China-Nepal Cooperation: Strengthening Disaster Prevention and Mitigation

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Wang Changling, a poet of the Tang Dynasty in China, once wrote: "The green hills are in harmony with the clouds and rain, and the bright moon was never two towns." China and Nepal are friendly neighbors linked by mountains and rivers, and share the unique and fragile geographical unit of Himalayan Mountains and Asian Water Tower. China and Nepal are both in one of the regions with the most frequent crustal activities and the most obvious impact of climate change, and they are facing severe threats from major natural disasters such as earthquakes, flash floods, mudslides, glacial lake bursts and avalanches. First of all, both China and Nepal are located in the Mediterranean-Himalayan seismic belt, and the crustal activity is extremely frequent. At 14: 11 on April 25, 2015, an earthquake of magnitude 7.9 occurred in Nepal (measured by China

Seismological Network as magnitude 8.1). The strong earthquake, centered in Boquera, Gurkha County, central Nepal, spread widely, including Tibet, China. Nepal's Interior Ministry announced on the evening of 27th that the earthquake had killed 3,904 people and injured 7,980 people in Nepal. As of 0: 00 on the 27th, the earthquake caused at least 20 deaths, 4 missing and 58 injured in Shigatse, Tibet, China, and relocated nearly 25,000 people, causing extremely serious social and economic losses. Secondly, the southern foothills of the Himalayas on the Sino-Nepalese border are steep in terrain and broken in geology, which is one of the regions with the most frequent mountain torrents and landslides in the world. At 5 o'clock in the morning of July 8, 2025, a mudslide disaster occurred in the area of Geelong Port on the border between China and Nepal. According to preliminary statistics, the mudslide has caused 11 people to lose contact in China, and 6 construction workers in China have lost contact in Nepal. Finally, the Himalayan region is extremely sensitive to global climate change, and the melting speed of glaciers is accelerating. Under the influence of climate warming, the glaciers of Asian water towers are melting at an accelerated pace. Since the beginning of this year, the rainy season in Nepal has arrived two weeks ahead of schedule, and many places have suffered from continuous heavy rainfall, which has caused landslides and floods, resulting in traffic jams on six major roads, including the East-West Expressway and Anika Highway. In this context, strengthening cooperation in disaster prevention and mitigation between China and Nepal is not just technical assistance, but an important issue related to friendly cooperation and mutual benefit between China and Nepal.

Strengthening China-Nepal cooperation in disaster prevention and mitigation is beneficial to the present and the future. This is not only

a wise move, but also the proper meaning of a responsible neighbor. China and Nepal need to carry out practical cooperation projects such as earthquake monitoring network and community disaster prevention and reduction in the field of disaster prevention and reduction. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1955, China and Nepal have continuously deepened practical cooperation in earthquake prevention and disaster reduction, relying on traditional friendship. China should provide earthquake monitoring assistance to Nepal and provide real-time geological data sharing and disaster early warning technical support for Nepal; At the same time, advanced disaster relief equipment, including laser scanning system that can quickly complete three-dimensional modeling of disaster situation, two-wheel opposite-direction cutting equipment that can realize fine demolition operation, and remote-control intelligent excavation machinery that Nepalese rescuers have mastered skillfully, can improve the emergency response efficiency in Nepal after the disaster. In terms of capacity building, China should continue to carry out community disaster prevention projects in Nepal, strengthen grassroots resilience, and systematically train disaster relief departments in Nepal to master emergency life support technologies for five common types of earthquake-induced injuries, such as head trauma and fracture, through live-action peacekeeping and medical joint drills.

However, despite the profound historical cooperation foundation and initial mechanism between China and Nepal, the current cooperation in disaster prevention and mitigation between China and Nepal still faces a series of challenges. First, the level of cooperation between China and Nepal is low, and the existing cooperation is mostly driven by emergency response, lacking a long-term and systematic joint disaster prevention and mitigation planning and coordination mechanism. In the mudslide incident at the Geelong Port in 2015, the cooperation between China and Nepal was mainly reflected in personnel search and rescue and infrastructure repair after the disaster, and no long-term mechanism such as pre-disaster risk assessment and early warning system co-construction was formed. Second, there is a big gap in capacity building between China and Nepal. Nepal's disaster prevention infrastructure is weak, professional rescue force is insufficient, and public awareness of disaster prevention is lacking. Meanwhile, Tibet, China's own disaster prevention capability needs to be improved, and its cross-border joint action capability needs to be strengthened. Third, the technical data sharing between China and Nepal is not smooth, and there are differences in technical standards such as disaster assessment model and data format between the two countries, which affects the efficiency of coordination. Any country will be extremely vulnerable in the face of natural disasters. As a country with high vulnerability to natural disasters, Nepal is naturally sensitive to sovereign independence and worried about additional conditions for aid. Understanding these challenges and concerns is the premise of deepening cooperation between China and Nepal. China has always been aiming at teaching people to fish, ensuring Nepal's leading position in rebuilding international cooperation, respecting Nepal's sovereignty, security and development needs, and not attaching any political conditions to aid.

If we want to break through the bottleneck of current cooperation in disaster prevention and mitigation, China and Nepal need to ac-

tively promote cooperation in the field of disaster prevention and mitigation and explore the key path of deepening cooperation. First of all, a ministerial dialogue mechanism between China and Nepal on disaster prevention and mitigation and emergency management should be established, and a medium-and-long-term cooperation plan should be formulated. Relying on the main platform of the Belt and Road international cooperation mechanism for natural disaster prevention and emergency management, we will deepen bilateral cooperation with key neighboring countries by building regional and sub-regional cooperation mechanisms, promote the establishment of bilateral, tripartite and even multi-party cooperation between countries, complement each other with existing international and regional cooperation mechanisms, and work together to contribute to regional peace and development. Secondly, we should focus on building earthquake monitoring network and flash flood early warning system in Nepal and upgrading emergency shelter facilities. At the same time, a special fund will be set up to support scientists of the two countries to jointly tackle the mechanism of cross-border disaster chain and early warning technology, and jointly build and share a multi-source disaster monitoring big data platform in Himalayan region to ensure that early warning information covers the last mile. Thirdly, all cross-border infrastructure projects aided or participated by China must implement disaster prevention standard management throughout the process; Implement collaborative engineering treatment for high-risk landslides and debris flow ditches on the border; Simultaneously promote bilingual disaster prevention science popularization, emergency drills and mutual assistance network construction in border communities, and build a grassroots defense line. Finally, in the face of the concerns of some other countries, China will demonstrate the essence of cooperation between China and Nepal with transparent actions, focusing on Nepal's people's livelihood needs and social development. At the same time, it also welcomes third parties that meet international standards to participate in Nepal's cooperation in disaster prevention and mitigation, and always follows the principle of Nepal leading and zero political conditions, so that disaster prevention and mitigation cooperation can truly become a peaceful link across geographical barriers.

To sum up, under the background of intensified climate change and frequent extreme disasters, the geographical reality that China and Nepal are connected by mountains and rivers determines that the two sides share weal and woe in disaster prevention and mitigation. Deepening China-Nepal cooperation is not only a strategic choice to ensure the security and development of their respective countries, but also an important measure to promote regional stability and prosperity. Building the life defense line of the Asian Water Tower will not only protect the social peace of the two peoples, but also provide a successful example for building a community of peripheral destiny and practicing global security initiatives. With greater determination and pragmatic actions, China should promote the deepening of cooperation in disaster prevention and reduction between China and Nepal, and make prosperity and development the mainstream voice of cooperation between China and Nepal.

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## Nepal's Middle-Income Dream: Rhetoric Without Reform, Vision Without Sustainable Economic Foundation

### By Kedar Neupane

**A Country Trapped in Super-Nationalist Political Party Musical Chairs: A Costly Illusion Without Pragmatic Transformation.**

Nepal urgently needs a bold and realistic development vision for long-term economic prosperity. While globalization offered transformative opportunities in recent decades, Yet Nepal failed to reposition itself strategically. Geographically situated between two of the world's largest and fastest-growing economies, India and China, Nepal could have become a bridge of commerce, supply chain, innovation, and regional cooperation. Instead, the country remained paralyzed by indecisiveness and partisan bickering, state capture and trapped in outdated political-economic thinking, and a lack of critical innovation matching the public aspirations of the time.

In today's interconnected global economy, clinging to outdated ideologies of super-nationalism and ultra-patriotism is not only delusional but counterproductive and self-defeating. Countries like India, China, Indonesia, Brazil, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam have embraced pragmatic strategies focused on competitiveness, innovation, and regional collaboration.

Nepal's protectionist economic policy postures, often framed in nationalistic rhetoric, has only alienated foreign investors and hindered growth. Empty pride cannot substitute sound policy pragmatism. National identity without economic strength becomes a hollow illusion and a mere hallucination. Over the decades, Nepal has not scaled up

the economic ladder and continued to remain at the lower scale on the purchasing power parity measure of the World Bank in Asia, and the poorest in South-24.

**Food Sovereignty: The Forgotten Foundation of National Security**

True national security begins with food sovereignty. Today, Nepal imports nearly all essential food staples and petroleum products from India. This growing dependency is alarming. Despite this, policy leadership remains passive. Meanwhile, millions of Nepali youth toil in the informal sector or migrate abroad, legally, or otherwise, in search of livelihoods their own country fails to provide.

Out-migration has become tragically normalized. Rural communities are hollowed out. The diaspora now constitutes a third of Nepal's broader identity, more a symptom of national despair than global opportunity.

**Youth Disillusionment and Economic Policy Paralysis**

Nepal must urgently rethink its pragmatic economic policy. With more than 56% of the population under thirty, the youth are central to national rejuvenation. Yet their aspirations are stilled by slogans masquerading as strategy. Super-nationalism offers no jobs. It only limits creativity and entrepreneurship and adds to disillusionment.

Nepal's investment environment is incoherent, marked by policy inconsistency and lack of investor confidence. Economic nationalism, repeated as *political rhetoric, cannot lift people out of poverty*, isolates Nepal from the interconnected world's economic progress. Between

1990 and 2020, globalization lifted over a billion people out of poverty, led by China and India. ASEAN and BRICS countries leveraged trade, investment, and market reform to grow. In 2024, BRICS nations accounted for 35% of global GDP, overtaking the G-7, a tectonic shift, unprecedented in economic history of the world.

In contrast, countries like Nepal, Zimbabwe, Cuba, Venezuela, North Korea, and Eritrea remain economically marginalized, trapped by outdated political ideologies and economic stagnation. Their citizens pay the price and remain far behind the growth curve of well-being and quality of life.

**The Cold War Is Over - So Should Be The Grounded Mindset**

The Cold War once justified ideological nationalism. But since the Berlin Wall fell in 1980 and the USSR disintegration, the world has transformed both politically and economically. Regional blocs like the EU, ASEAN, BRICS, NAFTA, MERCOSUR, and RCEP have reshaped the global economy.

China rapidly built immense new wealth under centralized leadership, blending market principles, like in capitalist economy, with social control and became the world's largest manufacturing hub of consumer goods, and parallelly dominating the supply-chain. India led the digital innovation in knowledge economy, redefining economic power shifts away from the Global North, unprecedented in economic history of the globe. These revolutionary developments created additional new wealth away from the Western



World, a multipolar geo-economy emerged. India, with its balancing strategic autonomy (by dumping away non-alignment) policy and structural reforms, has committed modernization and diversifying its economy.

The global economic center has shifted decisively to Asia and the Global South. Yet Nepal remains stuck in Cold War-era mentalities and narrative traps, missing the wave of transformation others have ridden to success.

**Political Economy in Disarray: Rhetoric Over Strategy**

Nepal's political leadership and elites have repeatedly failed to produce a coherent and credible economic roadmap. Despite frequent much-hyped investment summits and reform pledges, little has changed, except empty political headlines. Investor skepticism has deepened further due to unreliable policy and corrupt governance. In a multipolar geo-economic world, recycled ideological narratives do not attract capital. *Business-as-usual based on out-of-context*

grounded narratives do not attract foreign capital investment. What is needed is **critical thinking in public policy** domain for encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship, and a growth model that prioritizes inclusive prosperity.

National rhetoric does not attract

private investors and create competitive consumer markets. Proto-nationalism cannot build sustainable roads or generate jobs. If economic nationalism has failed before, why expect it to succeed now?

Political rhetoric and illusory dream of republican consolidation do not resonate with daily struggles of ordinary citizens. People want economic prosperity linked with high quality of living standards and well-being, not super-nationalist rhetorics.

The average citizen does not seek ideology, they seek quality education, healthcare, employment, food security, economic gains, and dignity.

**Path to Transformation: A Realistic Reform Agenda**

To break free from stagnation, Nepal must embrace structural reforms at all levels of governance orderliness. Transformation must begin with governance and quality education, foundations for a knowledge-driven economy. Key pillars include:

• Foster entrepreneurship and innovation: Establish platforms for startups, youth ventures, and tech ecosystems.

• Invest in infrastructure and energy: Prioritize reliable energy, transport, and coordination to support long-term sustainable investment.

• Create a stable and transparent investment climate:

Streamline bureaucracy and offer policy consistency to domestic and foreign investors.

• Support small and medium-scale enterprises:

Enhance access to finance, training, and technology for Small and Middle-Scale Enterprises.

• Embed critical thinking in education:

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