



Conference Secretariat (www.canpec.org)
International Conference: Role of Diaspora in Higher education in Nepal
Toronto, Canada. July 7-8, 2018

Toronto Declaration 2018 on Higher Education in Nepal

On July 7-8, 2018, an international conference on Role of Diaspora in Higher Education in Nepal was held at the University of Toronto, Canada. It was organized by Global Policy Forum for Nepal (GPFN), Association of Nepal in the Americas (ANA), Canada-Foundation for Nepal (CFFN), and NRNA-Canada, with the support of Embassy of Nepal, Ottawa, and Concern Nepal Canada.

The focus of the conference was to review the knowledge, experiences and skills of Nepali diaspora scholars in North America and to identify ways to organize the Diaspora groups to support higher education in Nepal. More than 125 participants attended the conference, where some 30 scholars from US, and Canada presented papers on the topic. The conference also included an hour-long moderated panel discussion, where six highly experienced scholars deliberated how the Diaspora could help Nepali universities in advancing research agenda.

H.E. Kali P Pokharel, Nepal's ambassador to Canada was in attendance throughout the conference, and provided his thoughts on the conference and support of the Embassy to the Diaspora initiatives. Education Minister of Nepal Mr. Giriraj Mani Pokharel sent an encouraging message to the conference participants, and identified some areas where the diaspora scholars can help.

The conference has made the following recommendations and observations as “Toronto Declaration 2018 on Higher Education of Nepal”.

1. Accessibility, affordability, equity and quality should be the guiding principles for Nepal's education programs.
2. Higher education programs in Nepal should serve all students by providing choices of research universities, teaching universities and community colleges.
3. Academic programs must meet the ever-changing needs of the society by frequently updating the curriculum based on the latest developments in the respective fields.
4. A strong linkage between industry and academia can spur teaching, innovation and research in higher education, modernization of education and employable graduates.
5. Public education is the backbone for the development of a country. Private institutions of higher education should be on non-profit models like the many top universities in the US.
6. The conference emphasized that an evidence-based and problem-based learning, critical and creative thinking are crucial for advancing high quality education in Nepal.
7. The conference participants felt that by coordinating the existing individually-driven programs, and by mobilizing the funding access of the Diaspora scholars, the

Diaspora group can more effectively offer help for research and curriculum development in Nepal.

8. Many conference participants have already been supporting higher education in Nepal in their personal capacities, and offered to develop continuing education exchanges between the resident Nepali academics and diaspora scholars.
9. The conference participants pledged to develop a network of scholars and organize themselves to collaborate with Nepali institutions and offer academic support.
10. Institutional platforms are needed both in Nepal (including the support from the Government) and abroad for the exchange of knowledge, skills and expertise to be effective.
11. The diaspora scholars at US Universities can help build professional and research experience for Nepali researchers and faculties in US universities through exchange programs, which are available at US universities.
12. The diaspora scholars can work with the Nepali counterparts in increasing access to higher education e-books and e-journals to Nepali educational institutions.
13. The exchange of knowledge and learning is a two-way street where the both the Diaspora and Resident Nepalese scholars can learn from each other.
14. The conference organizers will synthesize the summary of the presentations made at the conference and share that widely with Nepali and diaspora groups, and share it with the relevant officials and academicians in Nepal.
15. The conference organizers will explore ways to hold a similar conference every two year in US and Canada in coordination with the planned NRNA knowledge conferences.