

**Embassy of India**

**Kathmandu**

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**Remarks of Ambassador of India to Nepal, HE Vinay Mohan Kwatra at the Special Interaction program in the presence of Rt Hon'ble Prime Minister of Nepal, Sher Bahadur Deuba to commemorate the International Day of Tigers**

**“ Prime Minister- Tiger Conservation Dialogue”;**

**Date- July 29, 2021**

**Venue: National Trust for Nature Conservation, Satdobato, Lalitpur**

**Excellency Rt Hon'ble PM of Nepal, Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba,**

**Excellency, Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal,**

**Excellencies Hon'ble Ministers,**

**Excellency Mr. Deepak Bohara,**

**Chief Secretary, Lt Gen Prabhu Ram Sharma,**

**His Excellency, Acting Ambassador and Charge d'Affairs, Embassy of Russian Federation of Nepal,**

**Government officials,**

It gives me immense pleasure to be a part of this August gathering today to celebrate the International Tiger Day – commemorating the decision taken in 2010 by 13 tiger range countries in St Petersburg, Russia, to raise awareness about the decreasing tiger population globally and to develop a plan to double the numbers by 2022.

This remarkable collaboration will always remain a cornerstone of what is possible when like minded countries commit and work towards a focussed initiative. It is reported that since 2010, tiger numbers have been increasing in India, Nepal, Bhutan and Russia.

Excellencies,

By virtue of having the single largest population of free ranging wild tigers, with this majestic species being our National Animal, India has always been at the forefront of tiger conservation.

In 1973, we initiated the focused species oriented program called Project Tiger, which has few parallels in the world. We started with 9 Tiger Reserves, today, we have 50 tiger reserves, spread across 18 states in India. We also have a specialized administrative set up under the National Tiger Conservation Authority to monitor and supervise our tiger conservation project.

Excellencies, though our sustained conservation and preservation strategy, India, with an estimated 2967 tigers, as per the latest census ie around 75% of the global tiger population, has effectively doubled the tiger numbers, four years before the St Petersburg target of 2022 . We have indeed brought our Royal Bengal tigers roaring back to life!

We have also been at the forefront in fostering international collaboration, co-operation, exchange of best management practices and capacity building, on tiger conservation with countries across the world.

India has entered in to bilateral instruments and Memorandum of Understanding with Tiger Range Countries, including capacity building workshops and Tiger conservation planning with Thailand, Malaysia, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia and tiger re-introduction exercise experiences have been shared with Cambodia and Russia.

Though collaboration with Nepal is already ongoing, we are also keenly looking forward to signing the Memorandum of Understanding on Bio-Diversity Conservation with Nepal, which extends to formulating biodiversity conservation strategy for all species including elephant, Gangetic dolphin, snow leopard, tigers and vultures etc.

Our campaign to enrich the wildlife ecosystem is not limited to tiger alone. The conservation programme of Asiatic Lions found in the forests of Gir in Gujarat and the Snow Leopards is also going on at a rapid pace.

Excellencies, Tigers still remain an endangered species. In the early 1900s, there were around 100,000 tigers, which has been reduced to a mere 3200 in 2010.

Human- animal conflict, challenges due to poaching and illegal trafficking in wild life remains a threat to our efforts. Climate Change is another challenge to tiger habitats, and we have joined the global efforts to tackle climate change, by moving towards clean fuel based and renewable energy /nature based solutions.

Through sustained international collaboration, promoting a sustainable life style that co-exists with nature and through efficient and effective use of technology, we could aspire to strive for the welfare of all beings on earth.

*“Bagh Ko Astitva*

*Manav Ko Dayitva*

*Jai Prakriti, Jai Sanrakshan”*

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