

Opening Statement Delivered by H.E. Chandra Kumar Ghimire

The Ambassador of Nepal to the United Kingdom

At the Panel Discussion – "**Resolving Ex-Gurkha Grievances: Progress & Possibilities**"

Nepal Dialogue UK, Centre for Nepal Studies UK (CNSUK), Saturday, 1 February 2025

MP Ms. Alex Baker

Councillor Mr. Alex Crawford

Distinguished panelists,

Dear participants.

Good morning and Namaste!

It is a profound privilege to participate in this timely and significant discussion organized by the Centre for Nepal Studies-UK today. Without further ado, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the organizers, particularly to Mr. Krishna Adhikari, for their unwavering commitment to coordinating this monthly dialogue series by inviting the stakeholders and prominent figures from the relevant sectors.

The history of bravery, commitment, and sacrifice would be incomplete without acknowledging the contributions of the Gurkhas. Their legacy is etched in history, having made indelible marks during critical moments when the global order faced peril. Their steadfast loyalty and sacrifices have been pivotal in upholding democracy, the rule of law, peace, and the norms of coexistence during challenging times. Despite their extraordinary contributions, it is a stark irony that some of their legitimate demands for fair and equal pension rights and other grievances are long-outstanding. These demands are substantiated by the Tripartite Agreement of 1947, which was signed by the United Kingdom, Nepal, and India. This treaty has affirmed that Gurkha troops are an integral and distinguished component of the British Army and, by that virtue, it has been

succinctly stated that the Gurkha troops should be treated on the same footing as the other units within the parent army. We highly appreciate the British Government for ensuring that all individuals who had joined the army after 1 October 1993 are afforded the same rights as their British counterparts. Nevertheless, the issues faced by those who enlisted between 1 January 1948 and 30 September 1993 remain still unaddressed.

Negotiations are ongoing, and a two-tier mechanism has been established for this purpose. It is our firm belief that the alternative to negotiation is improved negotiation. Solutions arise from engagement rather than disengagement. However, success counts on our commitment to address issues as promptly as possible. Therefore, we are opposed to any delays in resolving grievances, if any there.

Our optimism remains fairly high, bolstered by the considerable goodwill and support in-built with British society, including its political sphere, for resolving the ex-Gurkha grievances. The participation of Madam Baker in today's Dialogue exemplifies this spirit of support. This is certainly a significant compliment. Thank you so much Madam! Let us all collaborate with utmost sincerity and generosity to ensure that the earliest resolution can be harvested in the near future.

With this motivation, I would like to extend my heartfelt wishes for the success of this Webinar. Additionally, I am hopeful that the discussions will offer a more favorable environment for negotiators so as to pave the way for a meaningful breakthrough.

Thank you very much!