

## **10th Asia Pacific Regional Meeting (Sangam)**

**Phnom Penh City  
March 18-19, 2025**

### **Introduction**

The 10th Asia Pacific Regional conference, with the theme “SANGAM – Unity”, was a landmark event that brought together over 200 delegates from the Nepali diaspora across the Asia Pacific region. Hosted by the Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) National Coordination Council (NCC) of Cambodia, this event took place on March 18-19, 2025, in Phnom Penh. The meeting served as a platform for NRNs to connect, share ideas, and discuss pressing issues affecting Nepali communities around the world.

The theme, “Unity,” truly captured the essence of the gathering. It emphasized the importance of coming together to create shared solutions and amplify our collective voice. Delegates from all corners of the globe exchanged ideas on a range of topics—from the continuation of Nepali citizenship for NRNs, to promoting women and youth leadership, to fostering innovation and economic growth.

### **Objectives of the conference**

The conference’s goals were clear and impactful, aiming to address the critical needs and opportunities of the Nepali community worldwide:

1. Ensuring NRNs can retain Nepali citizenship and have the right to vote, no matter where they live.
2. Promoting business growth, social impact projects, and new ideas that can help improve the lives of Nepali people everywhere.
3. Encouraging more women and young people to take on leadership roles and become drivers of change in the NRN community.
4. Identifying ways to boost Nepal’s tourism industry, not only for economic growth but also for cultural exchange.
5. Aligning the NRN community’s efforts with global Sustainable Development Goals.
6. Promoting the rich Nepali culture and heritage, ensuring it’s passed on to future generations abroad.

7. Giving an opportunity for each country's NCC to provide updates on their work, challenges, and future plans.

## Key Decisions and Outcomes

The conference led to several important decisions that will shape the future of NRNs and their connection with Nepal. These conclusions reflect a deep commitment to improving the lives of Nepali nationals abroad, as well as strengthening Nepal's ties with its diaspora:

1. **Immediate Action on NRN Citizenship and Rights:** The conference called for immediate legal measures to implement the NRN citizenship provisions in the Nepali constitution. It was also emphasized that the NRN Act should be amended for a smoother and faster implementation.
2. **Recognition for Nepali Nationals in Foreign Countries:** More than 500,000 Nepali nationals living in countries like Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia, and Cambodia should be recognized as Foreign Nationals of Nepali Origin (PNO). This recognition would ensure their rights and better integration into their host countries.
3. **Voting Rights for NRNs:** While the Supreme Court of Nepal had directed that Nepali citizens abroad should have the right to vote in 2018, this right has not yet been implemented. The conference urged the government to take swift action, setting up legal frameworks for online voting and creating voter lists for NRNs.
4. **Boosting Investment through IPOs:** The Nepal government's amendments to the NRN Development Fund were praised, but there was a call for the percentage of Initial Public Offerings (IPOs) available to NRNs to be increased from 49% to 85%. This would allow more NRNs to invest in Nepal's economy and have a greater stake in the country's growth.
5. **Empowering Second-Generation NRNs and Women:** The conference strongly advocated for greater inclusion of second-generation NRNs, PNOs, and young women in leadership positions. There was also a strong push to ensure that Nepali children living abroad learn the Nepali language, culture, and traditions.
6. **Support for Migrant Workers' Future Security:** One of the key points raised was the need to establish a social security fund for Nepali migrant workers. This would ensure that Nepali workers abroad, as well as those returning from foreign employment, have secure futures. The conference also emphasized the importance of utilizing their knowledge and skills to contribute to Nepal's development.
7. **Formation of an NRN Advisory Board:** Despite the provisions in the NRN Act, the advisory board has not yet been formed. The conference called for the establishment of this board with representatives from the government and NRN associations to ensure decisions regarding NRNs are made collaboratively and effectively.
8. **Cooperation with the Supreme Court:** The NRN organization was urged to respect the Supreme Court's decisions and work towards creating simpler and more effective solutions. A call was made for accelerating the membership process through the Membership Information System (MIS).

9. **Strengthening Nepal-Cambodia Relations:** The discussions between Nepal and Cambodia on religious tourism and developing a Buddhist tourism circuit were seen as a key opportunity for strengthening bilateral relations. The conference called for faster action on establishing direct air services and improving infrastructure and security to position Nepal as a premier global tourism destination.

## Key Recommendations

To ensure the progress of NRN initiatives, the conference made several recommendations for future actions:

1. **Fast-Tracking Legal Reforms:** The government should move quickly to pass the necessary laws and frameworks for granting NRNs their citizenship rights, ensuring that voting rights are implemented in future elections, and recognizing PNOs in foreign countries.
2. **Investment Opportunities:** The government should continue to encourage NRN investments in Nepal, particularly by expanding IPO access and creating a more investor-friendly environment.
3. **Incorporating Youth and Women:** More focus should be placed on youth and women empowerment within NRN organizations, ensuring that second-generation NRNs are actively involved in leadership roles.
4. **Migrant Worker Support:** The establishment of a social security fund for migrant workers is crucial, along with creating ways for them to bring their knowledge, skills, and experiences back to Nepal.
5. **Cultural and Tourism Development:** There is a strong need for collaborative efforts between Nepal and Cambodia to develop a thriving religious tourism network. The government should also focus on enhancing Nepal's tourism infrastructure to increase its appeal globally.

## Conclusion

The 10th Asia Pacific Regional Meeting was a significant milestone in the journey of the Nepali diaspora. It demonstrated the power of unity among NRNs and highlighted the shared commitment to supporting Nepal's growth while preserving the rich cultural heritage of the Nepali people abroad. With strong resolutions and a clear path forward, the NRN community is poised to play a pivotal role in Nepal's future strengthening its economic, political, and cultural ties worldwide.

The collective action of NRNs, backed by the support of the government, will help ensure that the Nepali diaspora continues to thrive, contributing meaningfully to both their host countries and their homeland

**Sponsors:**

**Annex:**

**Declaration**

**Photos**