

# Climate change

## The mountain agenda

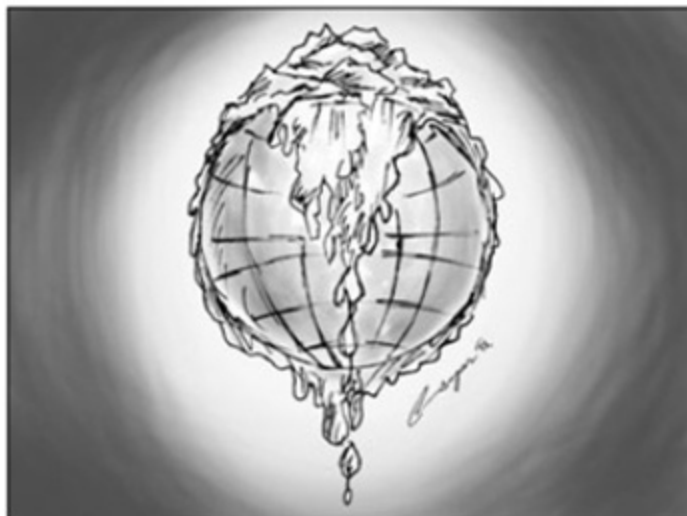
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From the top, Nepal could see the entire world, but being on the top is not always easy. According to the latest reports, the tops face higher threat of climate change as the degree of warming is higher in the high altitudes compared to the lowlands. Being on the top and bearing lofty mountains on its lap, Nepal has started a new initiative where the like-minded people of similar geography will discuss joining hands to raise the issues of climate change at global forums. The government's initiative to bring more than fifty countries to Nepal and start a process for new alliance of mountain countries in the long run to hype the mountain agenda may have various implications in the future, but it depends on how the country deals with the challenges that would come in the days ahead.

On the first week of April, more than fifty countries having over 4000-meter mountains are gathering in Nepal to discuss how the mountain agenda could be given greater importance in global gatherings so that these countries could get better support to tackle climate change. Nepal's territory is entirely mountain-

ous, and the impacts of climate change is said to be higher. Some reports have claimed that Nepal falls under the list of most vulnerable countries in the world. However, vulnerability depends upon the indicators used for the study, and vulnerability has no definite answer. We can say that we have started suffering due to climate change and due to the level of poverty and the geography. It's likely that we will have to face much threats in the future.

In this context, Nepal has started its journey by initiating the meeting of like-minded people, but it's still hard to predict whether Nepal would be able to continue this initiative or not. Mountains may have similar attributes regarding the geology and climate, but due to the level of development they have achieved and the political boundary they bear, it is not easy to come up on a single platform and raise the issues of climate change at global platforms. The politics of climate change is multidimensional and stands taken by different countries during the global meeting could affect several sectors ranging from diplomacy to foreign aid. So, being a leader with an empty pocket seems highly ambitious for



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Nepal, however, not impossible. Nepal is a member of Least Developed Countries group in the climate change negotiations that are held every year at the global level. Recently, the seventeenth meeting of these countries was organised in Durban of South Africa in December. There are 48 countries in the LDC group, but during the negotiations, Nepal has to put its voice through the

chair of the LDC, which is selected on consensus basis. Therefore, pushing the agenda on global forums is not easy as the ladder to reach the next floor is very high, and you need more energy to climb up the ladder.

Nepal has been trying to push the agenda of mountain countries in the global meeting, but its voice is merely recorded in the UN

system. Being a small landlocked and poor country, the participation of the country in the global meetings have not been more than mere attendance. However, the initiative taken by the country to promote the mountain agenda, not as individual but in-group, may turn into the opportunity to become the leader if handled properly, if not, it may fall into the pit from where it would not be easy to come up on the floor. There are hundreds of poor countries and billions of poor people in the earth, likewise, billions are highly vulnerable to climate change. So advocating specific agenda for the billions is not an easy task and to make the voice heard you need to be smarter and scientifically correct, and there should be a strong bonding of like-minded people to support your voice. The gathering where the ministers from the various countries are expected to attend would be helpful to mull on the agendas and sort out the priorities of mountain people. However, Nepal needs to be smarter and for this, strong preparations are needed if we really want to be a leader in mountain issues.

Expectations are high but it is difficult to believe that

all countries will attend the meeting headed by ministers. The meeting could be taken as successful if the countries agree to move further and discuss forming a permanent alliance of mountain countries which need not be for climate change negotiations only, but to act as the platform to share the research and technology and assure the promotion of mountain agendas. If the countries agree to set up some mechanism to materialise the agendas if agreed and declare the next meeting to be organised to further boost up the common efforts, it could be said that the countries are really serious to move ahead.

On the list of the mountain countries invited there are least developed to developed countries, donors to recipients and powerful to powerless. From America to Germany, Switzerland to Peru and Nepal to Bhutan, the countries with different economic ability bear mountains, and they have their own interest and strategy to deal with the outsiders. Being the host country, Nepal should be able to convince that there is the need to promote this agenda further and prove it worthy to continue such discussions.

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