

Your Excellencies, Secretaries, Agency representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for accepting my invitation despite your busy schedule and today's difficult situation arising as a result of rapid and eventful political changes taking place.

Irrespective of how political systems will develop, people in Nepal and in the South Asian region, like people elsewhere around the world, are more concerned about where to get their daily water supply. Increasing migration to urban areas, encroachment of existing sources, pollution and climate change are all affecting the water supply service quality - not to mention our problems in management.

Nepal is also targeting to meet the Millenium Development Goal and aspiring to provide basic level of water supply to its entire population by 2017. But, this is a challenging task as the people are rapidly moving to urban areas and water supply systems can not be expanded in the same pace. Many of the rural settlements are on top of hills where getting a complete piped system is not only expensive but sometimes even impossible to find a good and reliable source.

Many areas in our region are located on the coasts and getting fresh water is difficult for them as well. The Government of Nepal therefore sees a great prospect in technologies like Rainwater Harvesting, which the SAARC head of states meeting has also duly recognized.

In this context, we have considered the forthcoming high level regional meeting on rainwater harvesting as a forum to invite high level delegations consisting of ministers, secretaries and other high level officials along with experts, academia and NGOs working in this field. I believe this meeting will provide a good platform to share knowledge, expertise and experiences among the countries of this region in harnessing rainwater to improve quality of life of our people.

Government of Nepal accords high priority to this meeting and requests support from your mission to transmit this message to respective ministries in your countries, so that an appropriate level of representation can be assured to meet the objective of the meeting – which is to bring about a policy shift in about how rainwater is managed and utilized

I have already extended my invitation to the fellow ministers and I will highly appreciate your followup in this regard .

Thank you all for coming today, and I invite you to join us for the lunch.

Thank you.

alanced unnot The climate change has globally affected the environmental system and all countries from our region are too facing this phenomenon. Water as an essential commodity for our daily life has been badly hit with changed precipitation pattern and natural disaster as flooding. Time has now come to realise the conservation and proper use of this natural resource and we believe rainwater harvesting will be one of the best tool to pursue for the proper management of water.

I expect with the participation of experts from various countries, the meeting will provide an opportunity to share knowledge, expertise and experiences among each country of this region.

Thank you.