



## Government of Nepal and World Bank Sign Two Agreements to Enhance Connectivity and Human Capital

**KATHMANDU, November 14, 2018**—The Government of Nepal and the World Bank signed two agreements totaling US\$155.7 million (equivalent to 18 billion Nepalese Rupees) to be invested in the construction and maintenance of safe, resilient and cost-effective bridges in Nepal, and in improving food security of vulnerable households and communities in the country.

“With these two projects, the Government of Nepal and World Bank will come together to ensure better livelihoods, access, trade and life opportunities for thousands of Nepalese people,” said Hon. Finance Minister Dr. Yuba Raj Khatriwada. “The first credit of US\$133 million will be instrumental in ensuring the well-being of the country’s Strategic Roads Network, comprising of roughly 12,142 kilometers of national highways, feeder roads and other roads of national importance. The second project which will be in the form of grant of US\$22.7 million contributes to the Government’s capacity to deliver agriculture extension services at the decentralized levels, and to diversify income opportunities for the rural poor,” he added.

The first credit will finance the \$133 million Second Bridges Improvement and Maintenance Program targeting approximately 477 bridges along Nepal’s Strategic Roads Network. This includes maintenance support for approximately 90 bridges and upgrading road safety measures on approximately 180 existing bridges to help reduce accidents, injuries, and fatalities. The program will also support construction, rehabilitation or replacement of approximately 80 new two-lane bridges and 35 four-lane bridges. In addition, it will help the Department of Roads complete construction of 92 bridges that are vital to improving connectivity and access throughout Nepal.

“We are deepening our collaboration with the Government of Nepal through the development and sustainability of key strategic bridges, and through enhancement of food security and nutrition. These contribute greatly to Nepal’s development storyline by addressing the need for connectivity, human capital development and shared prosperity,” said Mr. Hartwig Schafer, Vice President of World Bank for South Asia Region.

Under the second agreement, the multi-donor Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) will provide a \$22.7 million grant to support the Food and Nutrition Enhancement Project. The project aims to improve the health and livelihoods of approximately 65,000 direct beneficiaries, of which 65 percent will target women. It will work with smallholder and marginal farmers to improve nutritional behavior by linking it with agriculture-related and income-enhancing activities. In addition, farmers from adjacent communities are expected to indirectly benefit through knowledge exchanges and other engagements from project-supported farmers.

The agreements were signed by Finance Secretary **Rajan Khanal** and World Bank Country Director for Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan **Qimiao Fan** in the presence of Finance Minister **Yuba Raj Khatriwada** and World Bank Vice President for South Asia **Hartwig Schafer**. Senior government officials were present during the occasion.