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Vision Of Bandung After 60 Years : By Lakshman Bahadur KC

The 60th Bandung International Conference is being held in Kathmandu from 18th to 19th April 2015. The conference is being organised by Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organisation of Nepal. The commemorative event of the Bandung Conference is attended by delegates from 20 countries. The theme of conference is “Vision of Bandung after 60 years: Facing New Challenges.”

Landmark Event

Holding of Bandung Conference in the Indonesian city from April 18-20 in 1955 was a landmark event in the contemporary international relations. It was the first Afro-Asian conference attended by the leaders of 29 states which were mostly former colonies. Nepal was one of the participant countries. It laid down the foundation of Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization (AAPSO) and Non-aligned Movement (NAM).

The initiative to organise this historical event was taken by five countries--Ceylon (Sri Lanka), India, Pakistan and Indonesia. They met in Colombo, which was later known as Colombo powers, from April 28 to May 2 in 1954.

The Afro-Asian Conference discussed the problems of common interest and concern to the countries of Asia and Africa and discussed ways and means by which their people could achieve fuller economic, cultural and political cooperation.

Stalwarts like Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Chou En-Lai of the Peoples Republic of China, Sukarno of Indonesia, Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana had attended this conference.

These leaders played pioneering roles with the other Afro-Asian leaders for the promotion of Afro-Asian Unity and new vision and shared their common problems of resisting the pressures of major powers, maintaining their independence and opposing colonialism and neocolonialism as well as all kinds of external domination.

This was the time when the liberation movement was spreading fast against colonial rule in Asia and the African countries.

The founding fathers of the Bandung conference are no longer here and we pay them our tributes to them and their works. Though the conference has now been a history, the spirit of Bandung still pervades in world politics and international relations.

The spirit of Bandung was carried forward to the establishment of AAPSO in Cairo in 1958 and the first Non-aligned movement summit conference in Belgrade of Yugoslavia in 1961.

Both AAPSO and NAM are based on the Bandung principles. While NAM is the official organisation representing non aligned countries, AAPSO represents civil society movement as people's organisation. Since its inception, the AAPSO has been playing a very important role in peace and solidarity movement in the world.

Bandung conference was held under different historical situations. Since then the global environment has rapidly changed. The colonial era is now over and there is no cold war situation. In spite of this, the world of the 21st century is still not safe from threat of intervention and war. The continuation of regional wars in many parts of the world, ethnic conflict and civil war, rising poverty, environmental degradation, conventional and nuclear arms race and spread of terrorism in the form of ISIS have certainly affected the prospects of world peace and prosperity and human rights. The criminal activities of the ISIS have become a real threat to international peace and security.

Despite several attempts to tackle the menace of terrorism, it is on the rise. Terrorists operating trans-nationally involved in smuggling, narco-terrorism, and running the risk of chemical and biological weapons and nuclear terrorism.

This is very grave situation and concerns to all the peace loving people of the world. Therefore, the people of the world should unite against all forms of terrorism. The AAPSO has a special role to mobilise the world opinion against terrorism and in support of peace, democracy, human rights and sustainable development.

Thus the need of the hour is also to establish and implement policies for sustainable development and preserve and protect our ecosystem for the safe and more prosperous future.

Panchsheel, that is the five principles of peaceful coexistence, has been the moving force behind Asian and African movements for equality, freedom and justice against domination of the world by colonial and imperialist powers. It reflects the vision of Bandung spirit which is the foundation of the AAPSO and NAM.

Long Journey

From the first NAM summit held in Belgrade of Yugoslavia in 1961 to the sixteenth summit in Teharan of Iran in August 2012 the NAM has had a long journey. The NAM always worked for international peace, security disarmament, independence, development and cooperation among the nations of the world. It made a significant contribution in the area of decolonisation, détente, disarmament, development, democratization and dissemination

Similarly, since the formation of AAOSO in 1958 it has also travelled a long way and the peoples of the world have witnessed radical changes in international relations during these years. AAPSO has identified itself with the mass movement of the Afro-Asian and the Latin American peoples who have waged their struggles against colonialism, imperialism, racial discrimination and for social and economic justice.

Meanwhile, Indonesia is also holding an international conference from 19 to 24 April 2015 to mark the 60th commemoration of the Asian-African Conference and 10th anniversary of New Asian African Strategic Partnership (NAASP). The conference will be held in Bandung and Jakarta under the theme of "Strengthening South-South cooperation to promote world peace and prosperity.

Prime Minister of Nepal Sushil Koirala is taking part in the conference leading a Nepali delegation. Nepal is expected to lay emphasis on strengthening of South-South cooperation, peace, prosperity, and sustainable economic development of the region.

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