

*One Union-One Voice*

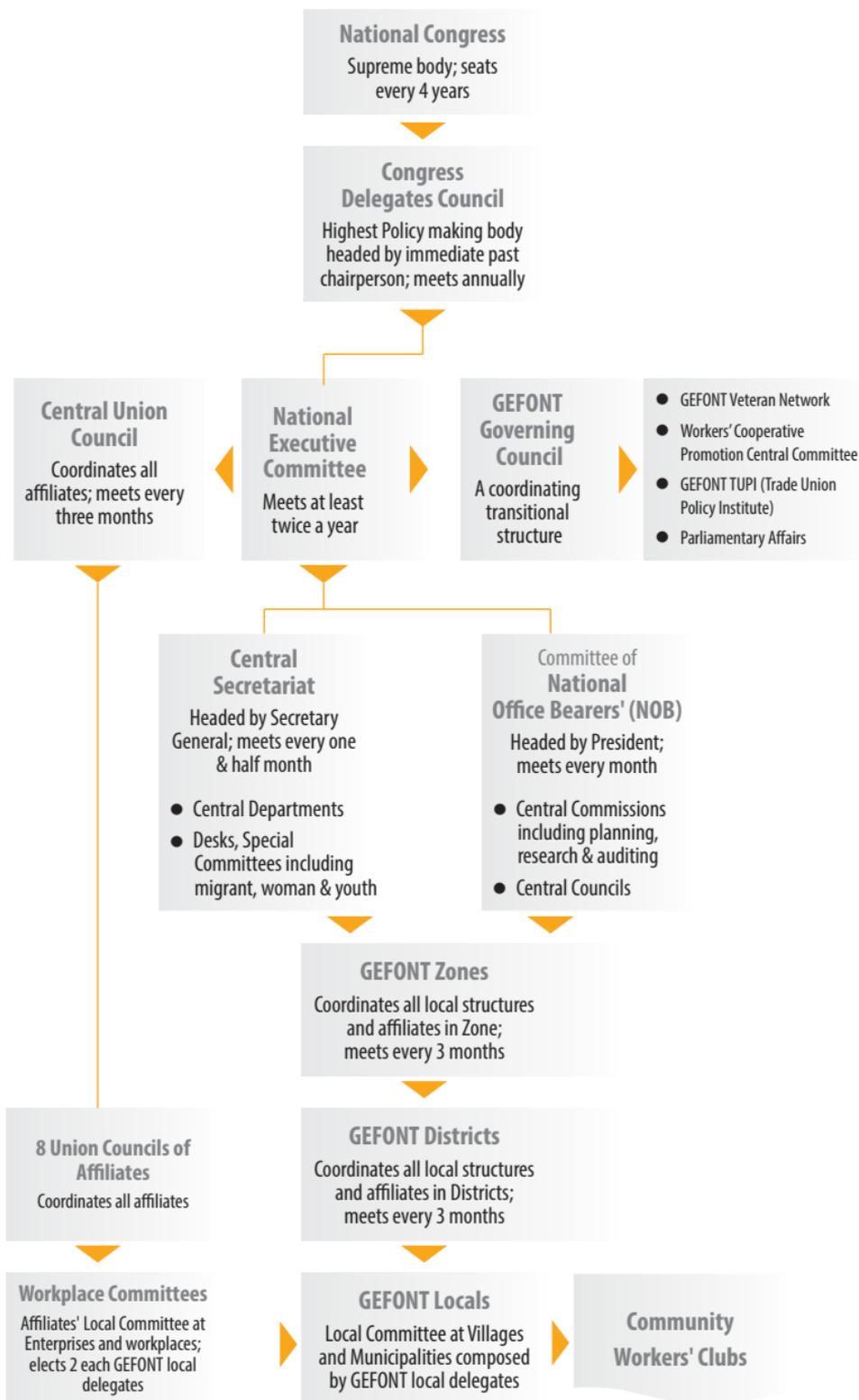


*Dignified, prosperous &  
creative life of the working class!*

**General Federation of  
Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT)**



# GEFONT Organisational Structure





## General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT)

General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) was established on 20th July 1989. As there was no union right in Nepal; GEFONT was launched underground.

GEFONT has 20 affiliates (as of April, 2014), which cover all three fields- the agriculture, industries and services; covering various sectors such as manufacturing, textiles and clothing, carpet industry, transport, hotels, restaurants and catering, tourism, printing, auto-mechanics, food production, breweries, chemical and metal industry, rickshaw pullers, tea plantations, street vendors, private school, hair dressers & beauticians, employees of security sector, thanka painting, tax- counselling, courier & cargo service, gold & jewellery work, construction and agriculture.

As a largest trade union Confederation in Nepal, GEFONT represents nearly 400,000 workers from all affiliates.

Over 33% women have been elected in National Executive Committee of GEFONT from its 5th National Congress.

GEFONT is one the founders of international trade union body- the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) established on November 2006. GEFONT affiliates are affiliated with various Global Union Federations (GUFs).

## OUR VISION

Dignified, prosperous and creative life of the working class is our vision statement.

## OUR MISSION

Our mission is to establish socialist production relations in Nepal by eliminating the existing production relations. To achieve the mission, we educate, organise and build capacity of the working class to enable them to influence policy formulation and process of political decision. We pay high emphasis to international solidarity to back up our efforts for labour rights including universal human rights.

## OUR GOAL

To establish Federal Democratic (*Loktantrik*) Republic of Nepal in which the working class has access and decisive role in all representative structures and bodies of the state.

## OUR OBJECTIVES

- To continue the struggle for social transformation with class vision
- To create a policy environment in which universal rights of the workers are promoted, protected and fulfilled
- To materialise single unionism as unified trade union movement in Nepal
- To ensure decent work for all



## OUR HISTORY

The history of Nepali trade union movement goes back to 1947. The formation of All Nepal Trade Union Congress (ANTUC), reorganized in 1950, was the first trade union centre in Nepal. This federation could not exist after 1960, when autocratic Panchayat System was forcefully imposed and unions along with political parties were banned.

After 19 years of continuous repression, in 1979, a historical mass movement gave birth to second generation of Nepali Trade union movement by launching Nepal Independent Workers Union (NIWU). After the struggle through NIWU, other federations gradually emerged in Hotel-tourism sector and transport sector along with others. In order to meet demand of the day- the necessity of proper coordination and understanding among trade unions of different sectors, finally, an initiative was undertaken on July 20, 1989. The significant outcome was General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions in an underground existence as a national centre for coordination of the movement and organizations. Active mobilization of workers by GEFONT in the successful popular mass movement of 1990 and open air environment for union work as the result of the movement paved way for fast unionisation. GEFONT was formally registered as the FIRST National Trade Union Confederation in the country in 1995 based on Trade Union Act-1992.

## Our Membership

During the Sixth National Congress, General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) has verified its membership. The statistics show, some of the area GEFONT has made progress and in some area it has lost some membership. In 5th National Congress, GEFONT represented 27 affiliate federations and few local level unions. The Confederation then had membership of 340,619. After five years the total membership of the Confederation is 3, 87,418 with the increment by 46,799 (13.7%).

1 Industrial Sector Union Council		Total Members
	Whole Industry Trade Union, Nepal (WHIN)	30,229
	Jute, Textile, Garment & Carpet Workers' Union of Nepal (JTG-CWUN)	14,925
2 Transport and Allied Sector Union Council		Total Members
	Independent Transport-Workers' Association of Nepal (ITWAN)	90,221
	Nepal Auto-mechanics Trade Union (NATU)	5,079
	Nepal Rickshaw Pullers' Union (NRPU)	6,170



### 3 Tourism Sector Union Council



Nepal Independent  
Hotel Workers' Union (NIHWU) 24,605



Union of Trekking-Travel-Rafting  
Workers, Nepal (UNITRAV) 12,536

### 4 Agriculture and Plantation Sector Union Council



Independent Tea plantation  
Workers' Union of Nepal (ITPWUN) 5,735



Federation of Agricultural  
Workers-Nepal (FAWN) 57,271

### 5 Education, Communication, Finance & Service Sector Union Council



Independent Press Workers'  
Union of Nepal (IPWUN) 2,939



Private & Boarding School  
Employees' Union (PABSEU)\* 5,422



Local unions at Banks  
and financial institutions 1,125

#### 6 Non-agriculture Informal Sector Union Council

	Central Union of Painters, Plumbers, Electro and Construction Workers-Nepal (CUPPEC)	89,541
	Nepal Street Vendors' Union (NEST)	15,250
	Nepal Security Service Trade Union (NSSTU)	3,282

#### 7 Urban Informal Sector Union Council

	Nepal Garbage Cleaners Employee Union (NGCEU)	5,224
	Home Workers' Trade Union of Nepal (HUN)	5,224

#### 8 Health Sector Union Council

	Nepal Barbers' Trade Union (NEBT)	2,345
	National Beauticians' Union of Nepal (NABUN)	1,117
	Nepal Health Worker and Employees Union (NHWEU)	3,521
	Nepal Health Volunteers Association (NEVA)	5,657

Total 387,418



## OUR HISTORICAL FOOTSTEPS

- 1946 Formation of All Nepal Trade Union Congress (ANTUC)
- 1947 Formation of the Biratnagar Workers Union (BWU)
- 1947 First labour movement started (March 4)
- 1950 Re-organisation of ANTUC
- 1951 Unification of ANTUC and BWU
- 1960 Ban on trade unions and political parties
- 1975 Great slow-down started in Biratnagar Jute Mills.
- 1978 General Strike in Balaju Industrial District (BID), Kathmandu
- 1979 Two-month long General Strike called by Construction Workers of East-West High Way

Workers' strikes started from BID, with the demands of union rights including various professional demands. Shortly it was supported by different sectors like transportation, tea plantation, hotel etc. and became nation-wide.

This movement established a new National Centre-Nepal Independent Workers' Union (NIWU)-as a continuation of ANTUC tradition with the aim to organise all workers irrespective of occupation and ideology.

Formation of another federation called Independent Transport Workers' Association of Nepal (ITWAN)

- 1981 Formation of Nepal Independent Hotel Workers' Union (NIHWU)
- 1983 Formation of the Trekking Workers Association Of Nepal (TWAN)

- 1989 Establishment of GEFONT by four founder federations-NIWU, ITWAN, NIHWU and TWAN (July 20)
- 1990 GEFONT played a significant role to gear-up popular movement as a co-ordinating body of all workers. The movement became successful, with multi-party system restored.  
  
GEFONT organised the first-ever open-air programme and reorganized its National Executive Committee  
  
Number of national affiliates rose to 9
- 1991 Various labour legislations- Labour Act, Trade Union Act etc. introduced
- 1992 GEFONT's First National Congress convened (March 28-31)
- 1995 GEFONT registered as the First National Confederation (May)
- 1996 GEFONT's Second National congress convened (March 16-19)
- 2000 GEFONT's Third National Congress convened (May 1-3)
- 2004 GEFONT's Fourth National Congress convened (May 1-3)
- 2005 Along with other trade union centres organised 1st Wider Trade union Conference as part of preparation to oust Royal regime imposed through February 1st Royal Coup
- 2006 Dedicated to Loktantrik movement; which converted into famous April Uprising. The people's revolt sidelined autocratic monarch and handed over all power to the resisted parliament
- 2007 Involved in peace building and active to end political transition; campaigned for establishment of Federal Democratic Republic
- 2008 Historical Constituent Assembly (CA) election held, most inclusive 601 member CA formed



May 28, 240 years long Shah Dynasty abolished by 1st meeting of CA, Nepal is declared first republic in 21st Century

- 2009 GEFONT's Fifth National Congress convened (April 4-7); leadership hand over at April 30

GEFONT organised its 20th Anniversary programme and presented memorandum on Ratification of ILO Convention 87 to Speaker of Constituent Assembly; launched ILO Convention 87- Ratification Campaign

GEFONT organised discussion with Constituent Assembly members and Trade Unionists on labour agendas

- 2010 First GEFONT National Youth Conference and 4th National Women Workers' Conference with the theme 'Equal Right, Decent Work and Dignified Life'

GEFONT started Wage Card campaign demanding overall wage increment and signed MOU with KCTU (Korean Trade Union) to safeguard the Rights of Nepali workers working in Korea

GEFONT mourns on untimely death of founding member Comrade Madhav Neupane

- 2011 Agreement between Trade Union confederations and Employers' organizations on wage increment and implementation of social security

Workers' minimum monthly wage increased by Rs. 1600 through meeting of Central Labour Council. The agreement in February 2012

Mt. Everest climber Dorjee Khatri aired ITUC flag on Everest summit

GEFONT elected as deputy member of ILO Governing Body; represented by Comrade Binda Pandey

Joint Trade Union Coordination Committee organised 2nd National Trade Union Conference

- 2012 GEFONT organised campaigns in 6 different places for Labour Inspection and organised national conference of presidents from big enterprises with more than 100 workers.

The central committee member of UNITRAV Dorjee Khatri climbed Sagarmatha for 8th time with the flag of newly established Global Union Federation INDUSTRIALL

3rd National Labour and employment conference

Nepal Independent Textile Garment Workers Union and Nepal Independent Carpet Workers' Union merged and launched new federation JTG-CWUN

100th issue of Shramik Khabar (Workers' News) launched in a grand ceremony by GEFONT

GEFONT organised Participatory Gender Audit Workshop

- 2013 GEFONT organised National Conference of Educators

5th National Women Worker Conference was organised

GEFONT organised large mass meetings across 8 main cities of Nepal including Capital City with the slogan 'Change: By Building Workers' Power'

Whole Industry Trade Union, Nepal (WHIN) was formed by merging of three federations – Nepal Independent Workers' Union, Nepal Independent Food and Beverage Workers' Union and Nepal Independent Chemical-Iron Workers' Union



Declaration of Workers' minimum wage increase by 29% to Rs. 8000

2nd GEFONT Youth Conference concluded with the slogan 'Youth workers for Change and Decent Work'

Home Workers' Trade Union of Nepal (HUN) was formed by merging four home based unions namely – Nepal Home based Workers' Union, Nepal Independent Domestic Workers' Union, Gold and Silver Trade union of Nepal and Nepal Thanka Artists' union

GEFONT in National Election Campaign; second CA election concluded

2014 GEFONT organised 6th National Congress and elected new leadership

An avalanche on Mt. Everest in 18 April, killed 16 top-summitters including UNITRAV Vice-president Dorjee Khatri; who had conquered Mt. Everest 9 times with union flags together with ITUC flag.

## Major Achievements of the immediate past tenure

During the current period, our programme for transformation has covered on education/ training programmes to enhance workers awareness, to coordinate with political parties and Constituent Assembly members to formulate pro worker constitution.

Political parties have agreed in principle for 10% representation of working class in state bodies. Adjustment of labour agenda in their drafts by Thematic Committees of CA and formation of 'Labour and Finance Committee' by the Parliament as the institutional recognition of the utmost importance of labour relations is countable achievement.

Our Policy coverage was much wider to strengthen local structures and struggles, to increase membership in agriculture-construction-self employed sectors, to promote social image of the union movement through mobilizations in special days and to mobilize workers for fair wage and decent work agenda.

In order to implement the broad-based policy Different activities conducted at different phases are as follows:

- A team including President and General Secretary to conduct training/education on structural reform during Zonal Conferences with direction to form local committees in accordance with new structures.
- Geographical area based mobilization of eight teams in order to clarify the role of local GEFONT Delegates, District Committees, District Union Councils and local committees for union formation, membership expansion and Dues collection (based on '17 paisa for 17 Rights' pamphlet).
- Union-based Team Mobilization for solving problems of coordination between committees of Affiliate unions and GEFONT geographical structures.



- Mobilization of 10 high level central teams for continued three months at workplace level to solve the problems faced at grassroots.
- Based on the feeling of big enterprise unions that there problems are not considered with special emphasis, GEFONT organized National workshop of union Presidents of those enterprises where more than 100 workers are employed. The workshop focussed its attention on ways to push forward interest based demands with high strong stress to labour inspection system as a focal point of local unions.
- One week national campaign for management of unions in difficulties
- Formulation of Youth Committee as a new structure focusing on Youth and nationwide campaigns
- First phase campaign for the formation of Workers' Community Club outside our committee hierarchy.
- Preparatory works to mobilize Veteran Unionists Network to coordinate the club and work as a bridge between senior generation and new generation of trade unionists.

Several proposals /suggestions were put forward during 5th National Congress towards restructuring of confederation and affiliates. Many works/ activities designed to function after the formation of federal states, have been postponed for the coming term. Still there were some problems in mobilizing the existing structures in current situation like –Geographic structures, union Councils, Youth, Women and Labour Relation.

- **Geographic Structure Coordination Committee** was formed to strengthen zonal and its subordinate structures. Main objective of this committee was to facilitate discussion at micro level based on

the decisions of National Executive Committee with a view to creative design of plans for effective implementation by Zonal committees. Zone committee is authorized to help or coordinate the unions and district committees along with their local committees under its jurisdiction. Responsibility of GSCC is to coordinate the work of zone committee. But during this term, GSCC Coordinator and Member Secretary were expected to attend all the zone, district and local level meetings! This trend negatively affected the independent functioning and leadership development process at Zonal & local level.

- **Central Union Council** was formed as a Nepali trend for Workers' controlled union movement. There is risk of over representation of some sector and under representation of others in following the policy of 'one individual one designation'. To minimize this risk all affiliate federations are grouped under 9 union councils. Each Union council is to send two of its members (one woman and one man) to represent in GEFONT-NEC. The centre of all the union councils - Central Union council is responsible to collect problems of all affiliates and submit recommendations to NEC. Based on the recommendations, NEC would go into new decisions. The central Union Council is expected to plan organizing, training and mobilization which would be followed up and implemented by union councils. However, union councils themselves were less proactive in their role. Hence the unions unknowingly tried to limit the role of Coordinator & Member Secretary of CEC as guests in their programmes.
- **Central Labour Relation Council** was formed to facilitate Collective bargaining in a dynamic way. It was imperative to discontinue the usual method of linking a single enterprise union leader and/or single central union leader to deal with employer/s for collective bargaining. It was planned to analyse the problems



of local level and categorize them under 'right-based' and 'interest-based demands and to assess how violations are taking place, so that 'labour inspection system' could be developed to maintain minimum labour standards. In past five years central union council was linked to zonal structure and necessary check list for labour inspection was developed. But local level activities could not be monitored regularly by CLRC and hence tasks related to LIS could not be materialized.

- **Veterans Network and GEFONT Community Workers' Club** could not be mobilized effectively. The club was misunderstood as 'sports club' in many cases and only youth were expected to be part of it. Similarly, Veterans Network was misinterpreted at grassroots as 'dumping site for retired unionists'. And hence we could not aware the grassroots about workers collective culture at the residential areas to ensure balance of 'work – life- family'.
- Membership expansion and organizational strengthening has brought expected results visible at growth rate of membership by 13.7% with additional members 46,799 during this five-year period. To create awareness on and public pressure for the ratification of ILO Convention 87- concerning Freedom of Association, several campaigns were organized along with attractive promotional materials in many places at one time. This issue was raised from the street and pushed to the Constituent Assembly/ Parliament. General Secretary of International Trade Union Confederation and Director of ILO-ACTRAV discussed this issue with leaders of political parties, Prime Minister, Speaker of the Constituent Assembly and President of the Republic in their visit. Though the Convention is not ratified, but the campaign has been highly significant.

## GEFONT Future Action

Building Workers Power is the necessary condition for Transformation. Major areas of work for building workers power may be put in a formula type expression as **Involvement-Organizing-Educating-Mobilizing**. Hence focusing these major areas of work, Following is the programme for this tenure:

### 1. Transformation: By Building Workers power

The Programme for Building Workers Power has two aspects – Right-based and organizational works. Following two headings will include both the aspects:

#### a) Ask Them: Where is our space ?

- The long run goal of GEFONT is Dignified, prosperous and creative life for working class. Hence to achieve this goal, we will continue the demand for 10% representation of workers in various representative bodies of the state with the slogan 'Where is Our Space?'
- In order to ensure political & constitutional rights of the workers, we will continue strong voice to insert the provisions in new constitution which were already included in the drafts of the committees of dissolved CA
- Continue dialogues, struggle and partnership with Constituent Assembly, Government and political parties.

#### b) Mobilize- Organizing Academy

- Effective Mobilization of GEFONT Structures and affiliates.



- Launching 'From Centre To Door to Door' programme by coordinating GEFONT-Veterans Network, Workers' Community Club and Workers Cooperatives.
- Central Labour Relation Council will coordinate Organizing academy involving of Union Councils, Zonal Committees, Women Committee and Youth Committee.
- Membership expansion by capacity building of new members in Informal sector, emphasis to new membership recruitment and explore potential areas for new opportunities of union expansion.
- Maintaining the rate of membership growth of 13.7% to increase membership.

## 2. Action for Secured Future

- The policy of 'The higher the social security, the larger the labour market flexibility' will be continued along with the activities to aware, promote and pressurize for the 9-themes of social security.
- In order to provide minimum relief to the workers, agreements were done with several private hospitals. These agreements will be continued and upgraded. On the Silver Jubilee ceremony of GEFONT in July, a Solidarity Fund will be declared by involving local unions.
- Continue dialogue with state to develop & implement scheme to utilize the National Welfare Fund for the benefit of the workers.
- Upgrade and continue the programmes for Women health.

### 3. 'Count Us in' Programme

- Get involved in ITUC programme for Gender Equality - 'Count Us In'
- As suggested by Participatory Gender Audit, an initiative will begin to elect Women's Committee by National Women Workers Conference within a year. The Conference will also design/concretize the policy for increase in women membership and enhance leadership.

### 4. One Union- One Voice

Under One Union campaign, several activities based on the principle of Initiatives- Competition-supremacy have created a wider structure for platform of single unionism. Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre (JTUCC) is in the process of taking a solid structure from a loose forum.

Therefore in the coming term,

- Upgrade JTUCC and continue dialogue with other recognised unions
- Continue partnership of GEFONT- NTUC-ANTUF under ITUC frame
- Emphasis on more upgraded GEFONT- CONEP partnership

### 5. Struggle and Co- Existence

- Labour law formulation and reform on two approaches – Right based and interest based
- Labour relation to be based on coordinated market economic policy and formulation of laws to implement social Security and Labour Inspection System.



## 6. GEFONT Y-Gen

Our aim is to build union to continue workers' movement for centuries. Therefore, to handover responsibilities to the future generation becomes imperative and we focus our work on youth generation.

If we calculate the time spanning from 1979 and the present, the three generations is participating in this movement. We need to acknowledge that the third generation is the product of digital age.

Thus, in forthcoming tenure, the structure for involving youth generation should be upgraded to educate and aware the potential youth leaders about labour and politics to develop their leadership capabilities.

## 7. Connecting the Globe

GEFONT is now a familiar name in international trade union family. This is the outcome of our collectivism in struggle and partnership since past 25 years. GEFONT is well recognized from ITUC to ILO Governing Body and from labour policy research bodies to multilateral social forum.

Therefore, in the forthcoming term, we will continue to contribute in international trade union movement and GEFONT will maintain the necessary connections with International bodies of sub regional, regional and international level, GUFs and national centres of all continents.

## 8. Organizing Beyond Borders

For the past two decades GEFONT is organizing migrant workers in the destination countries with the slogan 'GEFONT among

Workers Wherever They Are'. In some instances our efforts are enviable whereas in some our efforts have not bore fruits. Keeping in mind, the failures and challenges of past two decades in this term, we will

- continue promotional activities for Safe migration and gainful employment
- continue efforts in Korea, Hong Kong and Malaysia and focus on Arab nations – Lebanon, Qatar, Bahrain, UAE, Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia
- continue partnership and coordination with Diplomatic missions, Trade Unions of destination countries, International Trade Union Movement, Trade Union Solidarity Organizations and Social movements for support to migrant workers.

#### **9. GEFONT- TUIPI for Policy Analysis**

We will establish and operate Regular Trade Union school for building the base for new generation trade union movement. We will establish GEFONT-Trade Union Policy Institute (GEFONT –TUIPI) with a view to facilitate the school with necessary policy analysis. We will also focus our attention to strengthen National Labour Academy for comprehensive research on labour issues.

#### **10. Information and Communication**

GEFONT's Publicity work has been satisfactory and this will be continued in forthcoming term as well. We will further strengthen broadcast and Information communication, and continue partnership with media persons to ensure more favourable social



image of GEFONT. We will pay emphasis to further maximize the digital medium like website and smart phones in the coming term.

#### **11. Self-reliance programme**

The programme to promote investment could not garner much result during the current period. Even though our financial situation is not discouraging we could not fulfill the dream of initiating a sustainable base for investment.

Therefore, in the coming term, to strengthen our financial programme, following activities will be undertaken:

- Survey for investment and its promotion from new angles
- In order to uplift the economic status of the members at local level, skillfully mobilize the ongoing workers' cooperatives through promotional campaigns.



[www.gefont.org](http://www.gefont.org)



## General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT)

**P.O.Box:** 10652, Man Mohan Labour Building  
GEFONT Plaza, Putali Sadak, Kathmandu, Nepal.

**Tel:** 977-1-4168000, **Fax:** 977-1-4168001

**e-mail:** [dfa@gefont.org](mailto:dfa@gefont.org)

