SENATOR THE HON ZED SESELJA
Minister for International Development and the Pacific

REF: MC21-003363

Dr Krishna Hamal
General Secretary
FeNCAA Secretariat
51 Tanami Street
HARRISON ACT 2914

Dear Dr Hamal

Thank you for your letter of 16 May 2021 concerning the COVID-19 crisis in Nepal.

The situation on the ground in Nepal is indeed worrying. In this current crisis, Australia is again showing it is a committed partner to Nepal in times of disaster and emergency.

Last week I announced with the Foreign Minister a $17.5 million regional support package for Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka in response to increasing COVID-19 cases. This includes $7 million to support the Government of Nepal's response. Our support will be targeted in the most heavily affected areas of Nepal.

We are working closely with the Government of Nepal, community hospitals and primary health care centres to provide medical supplies and equipment including oxygen and oxygen concentrators, pulse oximeters, thermometers and bedside monitoring equipment.

Australia is also working to procure and distribute PPE, including facemasks, gloves and sanitisers, to hospitals and front-line health workers. A shipment of PPE from Australia is scheduled to be delivered by an ADF flight in early June in line with requests from the Government of Nepal.

We will work with our established NGO partners and the UN Resident Coordinator's office, who operate in coordination with the WHO and UNICEF to purchase other essential equipment.

Australia is supporting access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines in Nepal through the GAVI COVAX Advance Market Commitment. Through the COVAX facility, 1,920,000 vaccine doses are allocated to Nepal. The first shipment of 348,000 doses arrived on 7 March.

If you would like to discuss any of the above further, please do not hesitate to be in contact with the relevant Senior Adviser in my office, Stuart Watts (stuart.watts@dfat.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

Senator the Hon Zed Seselja
Minister for International Development and the Pacific
26 /2021