OECD-SEBON Conference and Roundtable on Financial Consumer Protection and Education in Asia-Pacific:

Understanding and responding to the impact of demographic changes for financial consumers

2-3 July 2019
Kathmandu, Nepal
1. Background

OECD-SEBON Conference and Roundtable on Financial Consumer Protection and Education in Asia-Pacific: Understanding and responding to the impact of demographic changes for financial consumers aimed to cover and discuss topics of interest relating to financial literacy, financial consumer protection and financial inclusion, highlighting their importance to Asia-Pacific economies. The conference and roundtable focused primarily on the issue of changing demographics, in particular the aging population, and the many financial education/literacy, financial consumer protection and financial inclusion issues and challenges that arise from this trend, which is affecting many countries in the Asia-Pacific region. This topic has also been identified by the Japanese Government as a priority area for financial inclusion under its 2019 G20 Presidency.

The conference was jointly organised by the Securities Board of Nepal (SEBON) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The OECD contribution was funded by the Government of Japan. About 120 people attended the conference, mostly from financial public authorities in Nepal and Asia (13 countries represented). See a full list of participants in Section 5.

2. Agenda items

Developed jointly by the OECD and SEBON, the agenda was designed to:
explore the challenges and opportunities for policy makers and other stakeholders seeking to promote financial education, financial consumer protection and financial inclusion in Nepal and other countries in the region
investigate policy tools to support and promote the financial inclusion of ageing populations. This discussion covered countries with ageing populations, and those with populations that are currently young, but facing the benefits and challenges of increased longevity.
present practical examples of providing financial education to children and young people, and discuss what more can be done to ensure that today’s youth are financially resilient in adulthood.
understand how governments see to ensure that everyone is financially included, regardless of where they live, especially in countries with large rural areas like Nepal
discuss challenges MSMEs face accessing traditional sources of finance and which financial skills they need to succeed.

In addition to OECD, SEBON and Nepal panelists, representatives from public authorities in the following countries and economies had a speaking role in the agenda: Bhutan, The United States, Japan, Singapore, India, Australia and South Africa, providing a global perspective and good practice examples from a variety of economies. The agenda also included representatives from not-for-profit organizations. The agenda was structured along these Sessions:

- Session 1: Financial education, inclusion and financial consumer protection in Nepal and across the region
- Keynote on technology as a tool to promote the financial inclusion of older people
- Keynote on Japan’s G20 Presidency Fukuoka Priorities
- Session 2: Supporting financial inclusion for older people
- Session 3: Reducing financial vulnerabilities from childhood
- Keynote: Mrs. S. Marandi, Executive Director, Reserve Bank of India
- Session 4: Understanding the different needs of rural, remote and urban populations
- Session 5: Improving financial literacy and access for micro and small enterprises


3. Summary of presentations and discussions

Day 1: OECD-SEBON Conference and Roundtable on Financial Consumer Protection and Education in Asia-Pacific

*Opening remarks*

Dr. Rewat Bahadur Karki, *Chairman of the Securities Board of Nepal (SEBON)*, started his welcome speech by thanking high-level public representatives from Nepal attending the conference, such as the Honorable Finance Minister; Dr Yubraj Khatiwada and the Acting Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank; Mr. Chintamani Siwakoti. The Chairman also thanked Mr. Antonio Gomes, Deputy Head of the Director of Financial and Enterprise Affairs at the OECD, as well as Ms. Adele Atkinson, Head of the Financial Education Unit and Mr. Miles Larbey, Head of the Financial Consumer Protection Unit. Dr Karki highlighted that such high-level attendances and contributions would mark a strong enlightening start of the event.
Dr Karki warmly greeted the numerous attendees from Nepal and abroad, including distinguished delegates from the OECD and its International Network on Financial Education (INFE), speakers, experts, public sector representatives, practitioners and media professionals. He noted, on behalf of the Securities Board of Nepal (SEBON), the importance of the two-day conference in Nepal’s history capital of Kathmandu and warmly welcomed the encouragement and support of OECD officials to SEBON in whole process of structuring the OECD-SEBON Conference and Roundtable on Financial Consumer Protection and Education in Asia-Pacific: Understanding and responding to the impact of demographic changes for financial consumers.

Mr. Karki then addressed the theme chosen for the conference; Understanding and responding to the impact of demographic changes for financial consumers, and stated that such starting point provided a platform to investigate the reality of financial awareness and education in Nepal and in the region. The Chairman noted that it was a valuable opportunity to understand the role financial awareness and education are playing in investment behavior, as well as other specific policy issues, like the status of financial education in different segments of the population, how to financially empower children and aging populations, the use of the-state-of-the-art technology in the promotion of financial education and inclusion of the latter group in the main stream of modern financial system.

The Chairman reminded participants that both Financial Consumer Protection and Financial Education are gaining international recognition among policy-makers, academia and practicing professionals as indispensable components of sustainable economic growth and prosperity. He expressed his wish that the conference would contribute to understanding the need and urgency of action in both areas, the search for effective policy and tools to raise the level of Financial Consumer Protection and Financial Education.

In this context, Mr. Karki presented SEBON’s existing tools which aimed for a more credible, resilient and inclusive financial sector in the country. He noted: i) Securities Related Act, 2006; ii) Commodities Exchange Market Act, 2017. Both legal tools, he continued, were aligned with SEBON’s mandate to protect and educate investors and contribute to develop a broad-based economy by regulating the securities and futures markets as well as commodity derivatives markets. He announced that SEBON planned to launch the Securities and Futures Market Institute, an education and training wing of SEBON, which would serve as an institutional mechanism and help execute SEBON’s mandate, by promoting Financial Consumer Protection and Financial Education.

Further to SEBON’s initiatives, the Chairman also noted that, more broadly, the Government had also been taking initiatives to formulate Financial Education strategies, including the final draft of 15th National Plan, which accommodated inputs of multiple stakeholders, and were at final stage of approval. He added that a Financial Sector Development Strategy was currently in implementation and presented a number of strategies related to the promotion of Financial Consumer Protection and Education.

The Chairman highlighted SEBON’s priorities as a major stakeholder of financial markets in Nepal, such as the promotion of investor education and awareness and the protection of investors’ interests by incorporating exclusive programmes in its annual policy, as well as conducting nationwide investors’ education activities. He also welcomed the overwhelming participation of stakeholders of capital markets which had celebrated the World Investor Week 2017 and 2018 by conducting various activities empowering the financial consumers and investors, jointly with SEBON. Furthermore, the Chairman noted SEBON had also been conducting nationwide economic media training and interaction programme in order to create a conducive environment in disseminating the information, news and views relating to financial markets.
Lastly, Dr. Karki reinforced the institutional objectives of SEBON: i) to enhance the efficiency and integrity of securities and commodities exchange markets; ii) to promote fair customer treatment by market participants; iii) to provide financial education and promote financial literacy; iv) to assist in maintaining financial stability and build confidence in the financial markets. The Chairman closed his welcome speech by reminding the audience that Financial Consumer Protection and Financial Education should have as ultimate goals to create a stable, credible and resilient financial system. Lastly, the Chairman expressed his wish that the conference would contribute to a common goal of promoting Financial Consumer Protection and Education, as well as positive behaviour change of savings and investment communities.

**Mr. Antonio Gomes**, Deputy Head of the Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs, OECD, made a video address. He started by congratulating the Securities Board of Nepal for hosting a timely and forward-thinking conference and thanking the Government of Japan for supporting the OECDs contribution to the event.

Mr. Gomes highlighted the OECD’s longstanding work on empowering consumers focused on a trilogy approach – combining financial education, financial consumer protection and financial inclusion policies. He noted that such comprehensive mix ensured that demand- and supply-side measures were used together to address policy issues in a way that supported financial stability and consumer empowerment. He addressed aspects of the event’s agenda, focusing his remarks on three aspects, noting that the event is: (i) forward thinking; for tackling demographic change, a topic that will be at the core of policy making in the coming years as the world population ages rapidly both in developed economies and developing regions. Mr. Gomes also stressed the fact that developing economies would very soon experience the benefits and challenges of increased longevity and the “longevity economy”; (ii) timely; as demographic change and its policy implications are now under the spotlight at the G20 level, through the work of the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion. He also reminded the audience that under the Japanese G20 Presidency, the OECD and the GPFI had identified 8 policy priorities to support aging populations and conference would provide more information about the ‘G20 Fukuoka Priorities’ throughout its two days; (iii) comprehensive; as the themes of the sessions were also going to address different target groups (rural populations, MSEs, childhood), apart from the older people population segment. He further noted that the conference would also discuss how digital technology could be a useful tool to support effective financial inclusion

**Mr. Chintamani Siwakoti**, Acting Governor, Nepal Rastra Bank, opened his remarks by thanking the OECD for choosing Nepal to host the event and for its collaboration with SEBON. He stressed that the Nepal Rastra Bank duly acknowledged the importance of Financial Education and Financial Consumer Protection and it was in the process of developing a financial literacy framework, which is planned to be implemented in licensed institutions after full implementation at NRB. In addition, to foster financial knowledge and services, the Deputy Governor mentioned that the NRB has licensed entities to practice simplified and transparent banking practices, organize financial literacy programs mandatorily, ensure privacy of client data, ensure ample measures for client protections, and arrange for grievance handling, among other measures. Mr. Siwakoti also stressed the need to make banking services accessible to people at an affordable cost and welcome the establishment of local branches across Nepal. He further mentioned the importance of account ownership to NRB and its effort to initiate a campaign to increase account ownership across the country.

**Hon. Finance Minister Dr. Yuba Raj Khatiwada**, Ministry of Finance, Nepal, thanked the OECD for choosing Kathmandu to host the event, acknowledged the growing importance of the East in the global economy and therefore the region’s need of Financial Education and Financial Consumer
Protection. He also mentioned the importance to understand the use of sophisticated technology for financial services and the impact migration in Asia-Pacific could have in demographics of the region. He reminded the audience that demographic trends could bring both opportunities and challenges and welcomed the growing participation of women in the labour force and need to address gender in Financial Education policies.

He stressed that Financial Education is a lifetime learning process and that events bringing different stakeholders on the field where not a final goal, rather a valuable opportunity to start conversations and raise awareness of the topic.

Dr. Khatiwada also mentioned that it was a priority for Nepal to engage its citizens in the production process and expressed the challenges of knowledge sharing in the country despite the increase of technology availability. He also shared that the inclusion of citizens in pension schemes was a key intervention to engage people in the production process and therefore citizens needed to be educated on resources available for them, prudent use of debt and saving for retirement. He noted that such tool would soften the impact of aging and changing demographics in Nepal.

The Finance Minister stressed the importance of the conference to Nepal, as the country fosters inclusive growth and he believe that sustainable developments was directed linked to financial inclusion and education. He mentioned the challenges brought by the lack of awareness around quality financial products and regulations and how that affected Nepal’s economy.

Lastly, the Finance Minister stressed the importance of incorporating Financial Education in the school curriculum and the benefits of exposing students from an early age to knowledge on financial services and technology.

Mr. Paristha Nath Poudyal, Executive Director, SEBON, thanked all participants for their attendance in the event and welcomed recent reforms carried out by SEBON to become a full member of the OECD’s International Network on Financial Education. He noted the organisation of the event as a
major outcome of recent efforts made by SEBON to engage with stakeholders internationally. Mr. Poudyal mentioned the extension of SEBON’s mandate in Financial Education and Financial Consumer Protection and the need of educating people so that they can make rational decisions while choosing financial products and financial market services. He lastly underlined that the conference was very timely and useful for Nepal.

Session 1: Financial education, inclusion and financial consumer protection in Nepal and across the region

The session was moderated by Dr. Rewat Bahadur Karki, Chairman, SEBON, Nepal.

As a Moderator of the session, Dr. Rewat Bahadur Karki, Chairman, SEBON, Nepal reminded the audience it was important to make use of emerging technological tools in finance services and to address accessibility and affordability issues. He further commented on the need for best practices on Financial Consumer Protection in Nepal, noting the presence of Mr. Miles Larbey, Head of Unit in the Panel. He also noted the advantages that international knowledge sharing with regulators such as the Monetary Authority of Bhutan could bring to the conference, acknowledging the participation of Ms. Nangsi Dema in the Panel. Lastly, he thanked Prof. Dr. Achyut Wagle for his engagement with the Secretariat of the OECD’s International Network on Financial Education in the last ten years and for helping to increase the cooperation between SEBON and the OECD that led to making this event possible.

Mr. Miles Larbey, Head of Financial Consumer Protection, OECD, noted that more people are being brought into the formal financial system in all around the globe, including in the Asia-Pacific region. He further commented on the importance of financial inclusion as means of providing access to financial products and services by giving consumers bank accounts, micro credit and micro insurance, but reminded the audience of key factors that make financial inclusion truly meaningful from the OECD’s perspective:

- needs to be accompanied by a certain level of financial consumer protection; so consumers’ money is safe and they are treated fairly
- financial education: to give people the knowledge, skills and confidence to make informed and appropriate choices about how to manage their money.

Mr. Larbey presented some of the OECD’s work on Financial Education and Literacy, including one of its key instruments; the OECD/INFE High-Level Principles on National Strategies for Financial Education, which serves as a roadmap for a country/jurisdiction to develop a national strategy for supporting financial education in their jurisdiction and country.

Mr. Larbey also presented the G20/OECD Task Force on FCP as the leading international forum for exchange of information and expertise on financial consumer protection among policy makers and development of global policy and guidance. He also highlighted one of its main instruments; the G20/OECD High Level Principles on Financial Consumer Protection endorsed by G20 and OECD that provides a solid foundation for an effective financial consumer protection framework.

Mr. Larbey continued his intervention by sharing some of the key demographic trends in Asia-Pacific, as well as financial inclusion and digitalization trends.

In this context, he noted that Nepal’s demographic growth is experiencing a phenomenon called “demographic dividend” with a large number of adults currently in the work force, but highlighted that the overall trend is a move towards an older population, as in the broader Asia-Pacific area. Migration and rapid urbanization are also important demographic trends in the region, bringing new challenges to be address.
In one of his slides, Mr. Larbey showed the age pyramids of Japan and Nepal in comparison and trends seemed to be similar, with Japan naturally experiencing aging of its population at an earlier time in its history than Nepal.

Mr. Larbey highlighted then the importance of financial planning for working age adults, as well as the tailoring of financial products to different segments of the population. In that context, access to credit which has increased in Asia-Pacific and Nepal; he noted, can help people achieve their goals, such as starting businesses or running farms, but it could also be followed by problems with debt. He also noted the significant increase on the account ownership.

He commented on the relevance of technology and digitalization in financial consumer’s lives and particularly on making financial products faster, more convenient and secure, as well as making people develop their financial literacy skills. He also reminded the audience that digitalization allowed new players to come into the market, increasing competition. However, he also noted that digitalization brings new risks to the financial landscape, such as the rise of new types of fraud and data protection issues. He also mentioned the challenges Financial Consumer Protection providers face when applying traditional Financial Consumer Protection laws to digital environments.

Lastly, he noted that the explosion in terms of data gave Financial Consumer Protection regulators, as well as financial service firms, a great opportunity to understand how financial consumers behaved and how regulators could tailor laws in response.
Age pyramid for Nepal (and Japan)

Figure 2. Nepal age pyramids for 1980, 2015, and 2050

Figure 3. Japan age pyramids for 1950, 1960, and 2055

Source: Demographic changes of Nepal, Government of Nepal Planning Commission, March 2017

Digital financial inclusion

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<th>Nepal</th>
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<td>Made or received digital</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Used a mobile phone or the</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
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Source: The Little Data Book on Financial Inclusion 2018, World Bank Group
Ms. Nangsi Dema, Head of the Financial Inclusion Secretariat, Monetary Authority of Bhutan, provided the perspective from Bhutan on financial inclusion’s reflections and developments. She highlighted that, in the context of theme of the conference – the impact of demographic changes for financial consumers – the country’s small population could potentially represent problems to policy maker in the long term. She also noted that despite Bhutan currently younger population (60%), it could also face an aging phenomenon in 10-15 years.

She highlighted some commonalities with Nepal in terms of financial inclusion challenges, such as the geographical challenges their terrains impose, making some regions very difficult and costly to reach for financial service providers, such as banks, for example. In addition, Bhutan is also a country with a large rural area, which presents challenge from equity financing of lands to the transition of subsistence farming to enterprise farming, which could tap into new technologic and infra-structure creation and developments, as well as innovative regulations.

Ms. Dema commented on the launch of Bhutan’s National Financial Inclusion Strategy in 2018 that is based on four pillars: develop customer centered financial services, improving accessibility to Asian banking, financial economic growth and transformation and financial capability and Financial Consumer Protection. Additionally, she mentioned pilot programs in schools for youth and entrepreneurship programs are also a couple of ongoing activities to foster financial capability in the scope of Bhutan’s National Financial Inclusion Strategy.

Prof. Dr. Achyut Wagle, Chair, Institute of Financial Education and Communication of Nepal, reminded the audience that Financial Consumer Protection and Education as defined by the OECD standards were still finding space in policy agendas of development countries like Nepal as essential ingredients for the financial empowerment of individuals and overall stability of country’s financial system. He further noted that financial inclusion efforts must move beyond the discussion on ‘access’ despite the levels of unbanked individuals in the South Asian subcontinent, by making sure that bank account were operational and people understood financial products. Also, he commented on other challenges such the need for cohesive and outcome focus material for Financial Literacy disseminated by public institutions and potential conflict of interest with market participants vis-a-vis their commercial activities, particularly with the private sector.

Professor Wagle highlighted that, in a developing country context, a nudge to open a bank account, develop of saving habits and introducing young students about the functions and importance of money should form the part of financial literacy, as well training of SME founders on bank-installment and interest rate calculations. However, he further noted that despite the ongoing efforts on promoting some of these tools, these efforts remained considerably fragmented and frequently uncoordinated.

Addressing current development in Financial Consumer Protection in Nepal, Professor Wagle noted that the banking industry had seen more progress than other sub-sectors of the country’s financial architecture, like insurance, payment gateways and remittance markets. Notably, he continued, whilst institutional mechanisms like savings and credit guarantees and legal framework on liquidity and bankruptcy had put the interests of the financial consumers in priority, there are still key opportunities for improvement. These include information exchange between service providers and seekers and the legislative power regulators’ have, still inadequate, he described, which still leaves consumers vulnerable.

Discussions: Questions & Answers Session with the audience

The session was followed by a lively discussion. Participants were interested in Bhutan’s international experience and inquired about the institutional placement of the Financial Inclusion Secretariat in the Central Bank of Bhutan, and what competences of the Secretariat could be seen as best practices. Ms. Dema noted that the Secretariat works independently and directly under the Govern’s office, despite close collaboration with other departments in the Central Bank.
Furthermore, participants asked for more information on the country’s programmes targeted to the youth.

Building on Dr. Wagle’s presentation, participants also asked about possible solutions for the micro-credit issue, beyond pushing individuals to open bank accounts. Professor Wagle noted that in addition to the funding and micro-financing efforts, Government should also aim to provide skills, managerial and entrepreneurship training to investors.

Addressing the question about the gaps between knowledge and attitudes/behaviors of investors, Mr. Larbey shared his prior experience in the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, in which he noted that they did not always acted in their best interest; that being either buying and selling stocks in questionable moments, or not understanding/reward and diversification of investment portfolios. He noted that solutions should have an overall approach, as players like stock exchanges, investors clubs, and securities regulators are well placed to help investors. However, robust Financial Consumer Protections mechanisms also had to be in place, as one could not expect that investors understood all market complexities and always adopt fair and transparent practices that work in their interests.

Keynote on technology as a tool to promote the financial inclusion of older people:
Dr. Joanne Yoong, Senior Economist; Director, Research and Science, Centre for Economic and Social Research CESR/CESR East, University of Southern California, United States

Dr. Joanne Yoong presented work funded undertaken on behalf of the OECD with financial support from the Japanese Government. She noted that demographic changes in Asia-Pacific are happening faster than any other region in the world and countries that aren’t yet aging societies, economies as young as Vietnam, Cambodia and Nepal are likely to face aging at a much faster pace than what has been documented in the past. Furthermore, old age support ratios are becoming slimmer, which means that people might no longer be able to rely on informal social networks to support them as they get older, as life expectancy increases. She further noted that this issue is impacting lower income countries affected no longer solely by physical health, but also by the increase of unhealthy life expectancy.

She highlighted that financial inclusion was an important tool to help people transition across different life stages, however, in the Asia-Pacific region, Financial Inclusion was incomplete in certain segments of the population.

Dr. Yoong mentioned that digital finance could offer new tools to expand Financial Inclusion such as lower back-office costs through automation, customer sourcing through social networks, digital distribution and fee collection on mobile phones, servicing with bots, messenger services, fraud prevention and credit assessment using biometrics and big data.

In this context, where situational awareness reveals to be very important, she also address the myths about older age, the use of technology and digital finance. She mentioned, among other facts, that older people are no longer a special case as the world’s average population age is becoming higher, and that the emerging of a different predominate type of intelligence (as opposed to a loss of capability to make smart choices), could be something policy makers could tap into, as different skills and priorities also emerge. Dr. Yoong also outlined the risks older people face in the digital space, which are note very different from classical risks, rather the digital space has allowed some of the classical triggers/scams to happen faster and more effectively.

With these changes happening as people grow older, she highlighted that, contrary to ordinary belief, older people are actually adopters of technology, but have different preferences and capabilities when compared to young adults. When looking into surveys about mobile/internet usage in Asia, she also noted that older people were using smartphones, however, not primarily for banking. Therefore data showing growth in mobile penetration in such populations might not be directly linked to a growth in digital finance.
Dr. Yoong stressed that success in promoting Financial Inclusion could look very different from country to country according to their level of development, as long as it addressed the needs of the local population and made financial products affordable. One size does not fit all. She further noted that when looking into surveys from the Asia-Pacific region on aging populations, only one of them included data on mobile participation and digital financial participation. This shows that aging studies had very little intersection with digital finance studies and that both opportunities and risks brought by technology should be further investigated.

Keynote on Japan’s G20 Presidency Fukuoka Priorities: Mr. Bumpei Sugano, G20 Office/International Affairs Office, Japan Financial Services Agency and Co-Chair of the G20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion

Mr. Sugano presented the developments and achievements under the Japanese G20 Presidency on Aging and Financial Inclusion, which was one of the country’s chosen policy priorities. He noted that Aging and its policy implications was chosen as one of the priorities not only because Japan is a frontrunner on this issue, but also because it is increasingly becoming a shared problem between countries, as in 111 countries 20% or more of the population will be 60+ in 2050. The G20 accounts for more than 70% of the elderly population today and there will be more than two billion elderly people globally in 2050. Furthermore, 80% of the elderly people will live in low and middle income countries, which showed that aging in developing countries is happening faster than in developed countries.

Mr. Sugano highlighted that even if financially included today, people could face challenges later in life from cognitive to physical decline. Financial matters may be one of the first sources of difficulty as needs of the elderly vary depending on cognitive/ physical ability, family and community ties, where they live and gender, among other factors. He noted it will be increasingly important to facilitate life-long financial planning, to improve financial literacy and to provide financial services to the elderly in a customized matter vis-à-vis their capacities and needs. Also, with increasingly longevity, he noted that is also important to encourage policy design towards young people, in addition to the elderly, in order to make them better equipped for a longer life in the future.

Mr. Sugano then presented to the audience the G20 Fukuoka Policy Priorities on Aging and Financial Inclusion: 8 Keys Steps to Design a Better Future document which was jointly prepared by the GPFI and the OECD for the Japanese G20 Presidency. He outlined the 8 Keys Steps for effective policy making in Financial Inclusion; (i) use data and evidence; (ii) strengthen digital and financial literacy; (iii) support lifetime financial planning; (iv) customize – address the diverse needs of older people; (v) innovate – harness inclusive technologies; (vi) protect – tackle financial abuse and fraud of older people; (vii) encourage stakeholder engagement – a multi-sector approach; (viii) target key audiences – address vulnerabilities.
Session 2: Supporting financial inclusion for older people

The session was moderated by Mr. Miles Larbey, Head of Financial Consumer Protection, OECD.

Mr. Krishna Prasad Acharya, CA, Board Member, SEBON and Former CEO of Employee Provident Fund, Nepal, welcomed the remarks of the Honorable Finance Minister of Nepal Dr. Yuba Raj Khatiwada that outline the path for Nepal’s strategies on Financial Inclusion. He noted that it is important for the country to understand how it will transition to an aging and aged population in the coming decades, and how policy making will respond to the challenges of financial inclusion for the elderly population. He welcomed the measures that are currently being taken by the Government of Nepal and the Central Bank (Nepal Rastra Bank), especially to promote financial inclusion in rural areas, opening new branches, encouraging mobile banking, providing interest free credit loans, and providing financial facilities to small industries.

He further commented on SEBON’s efforts to foster financial inclusion among investors, prioritizing their understanding of savings and credit and introducing stock broking of commercial banks.

Mr. Acharya mentioned that the Government of Nepal was already introducing measures to support elderly people in their society, addressing the challenges aging could bring to financial inclusion. Some
of those measures included: increasing allowances for elderly population, the introduction of compensatory health insurance and the contributory social security fund.

Mr. Bumpei Sugano, G20 Office/International Affairs Office, Japan Financial Services Agency and Co-Chair of the G20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion, Japan, commented on the role of governments and financial institutions in addressing financial needs of elderly populations. He noted that financial institutions are frequently the first place to notice consumers’ cognitive and physical decline. He also stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation between financial institutions and other stakeholders, like crime protection agencies, as people becoming more vulnerable to scams and frauds pose a shared common challenged among such institutions. Continuing on opportunities for cooperation between public institutions, he mentioned the gap between agencies concerned with elderly people and agencies concerned with financial inclusion; and suggested financial institutions could help bridge this gap.

Dr. Joanne Yoong, Senior Economist; Director, Research and Science, Centre for Economic and Social Research CESR/CESR East, University of South California, United States, built on Mr. Sugano’s comments on how different stakeholders can cooperate to identify and address needs of elderly people. She commented on how tests applied to measure financial literacy could be more sensitive in recognizing diseases that usually appear in the old age, like Alzheimer, than actual medical tests. She further mentioned that the financial services industry could build on the experiences and practices from other agencies, such as the performance of cognitive tests when people apply for driving licenses, for example.

Discussions: Questions & Answers Session with the audience

The panel took questions from the audience and the lively discussion was centered on the relation between the quantity of financial services and products being offered to consumers and what challenges this poses to elderly consumers; as choice becomes increasingly more complex and consumers’ capabilities are changing.

On this point, Dr. Yoong noted that choice complexity is actually a problem for all consumers. She noted that, for most of them, when faced with a large amount of choice, the financial response is frequently inaction. A problem that is particularly observed in elderly consumers is that, when facing choices that are new to them and that can be not linked to past experiences, they tend to become frustrated. Elderly consumers tend to prefer choices they can comprehend based on long term memory, but tend to face difficulties with new developments, when presented with products and platforms that are constantly changing. In this case, they tend not to make any choices, unless they have a social safety net or a trustful proxy that they are able to rely on in the process.

The discussion continued on aging in Nepal, social implications of elderly dependency on their families, and how that can impact financial inclusion. The audience also inquired about the possibility of disruptive technology, particularly in mobile technology, affecting policy making on financial inclusion for elderly populations.

Regarding social impacts of older people dependency on families, Mr. Acharya stressed the importance of teaching people to save from an early stage in their lives in order to increase independency when they reach the older age, as well as the introduction of effective pensions schemes. Mr. Bumpei complemented that customizing services, cited in the document he earlier presented as one of the steps to Financial Inclusion, could also help increase independency for elderly people as it bridges the gap between consumers’ needs and service providers.

The panel then finalized the discussion by pointing out that elderly people also face issues encountered by other segments of the population, such as accessibility and availability of financial
services, which can be limited in countries like Nepal that have a significant part of its population living in rural areas.

**Session 3: Reducing financial vulnerabilities from childhood**

The session was moderated by Dr. Adele Atkinson, Head of Financial Education, OECD.

Building on theme of the session, Dr. Adele Atkinson, Head of Financial Education, OECD, started the session by announcing that the OECD and its International Network on Financial Education were now in charge of **Global Money Week**, an annual financial awareness campaign built to inspire children and young people to learn about money matters, livelihoods and entrepreneurship.

**Dr. Gunakar Bhatta**, Executive Director of Nepal Rastra Bank, Nepal, outlined the background, the provisions for Nepal and future actions he considered important in order to reduce financial vulnerabilities from childhood. He noted that financial vulnerability happened in absence of financial access, financial inclusion and financial literacy. In developing countries, he continued, financial vulnerability can also be a consequence of inadequate income, imbalance of income and expenditure, income inequality and low resilient capacity.

He mentioned that the Nepal Rastra Bank is focusing on accessibility and it is currently expanding nationally through commercial banks and mobile banking. Another priority of NRB is to increase account ownership and, in that context, the bank is facilitating the distribution of social security allowances through bank accounts only, encouraging individuals not only to have them, but also to keep their accounts active.

Furthermore, he noted other activities undertaken by NRB on its efforts to promote financial inclusion, such as: the provision of loans to women entrepreneurs, the refinancing of facilities/ small business of inclusive development, the creation of micro credit programs mainly for unbanked people and increasing access to insurance 18 percent, among others.

Mr. Bhatta also outlined NRB’s efforts on Financial Consumer Protection, which focused mainly on expanding information about financial services and products, with their terms and conditions to be disseminated in a simple and clear way. Nepal Rastra Bank also implemented mechanisms to handle customers’ complaints such as the creation of a dedicated hotline and an online complaint filing.

He finished his speech by outlining future and ongoing actions undertaken by Nepal Rastra Bank to promote Financial Education and Financial Consumer Protection, and especially to reduce financial vulnerability in childhood: developing closer linkage of financial programs with sustainable development goals, focusing on efforts to reduce financial exclusion of women and dependents, developing an education system to ensure an equal access on financial resources, ensuring financial rights of women and children of international migrant workers and promoting financial access through financial technology (FinTech).

**Mr. Hariharan Neelakanta Iyer**, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), started his presentation by reminding the audience some of India’s key demographics indicators, such as the size of its population (1.3 billion), the population between 0-14 years old (372 million), the fact that India remains a country with large rural areas and that 73 percent of the 0-14 years old demography live in rural areas.

Mr. Iyer highlighted that child labor is still an issue in the Indian society, with around 10 million children (about 3.9% percent of the total child population) currently in the work force, even though data shows it had dropped from 2001 to 2011. Data also shows that average annual drop-out rate from (FY2012-13 to FY2014-15) has decreased in primary schools while mild increase in upper primary/ secondary schools. He noted the importance of analyzing social and economic conditions when addressing challenges and solutions for reducing financial vulnerabilities from childhood, particularly when looking at families that are above poverty lines, in which the children not only usually work, but are
also the main source of income in the family. In this context, he also noted that the government is making efforts to try keeping children aging 0-14 years in school, despite the social challenges.

Mr. Iyer then described the programs currently run by SEBI to promote financial education, like the Resource Persons Programs, that creates financial awareness by creating programs on various topics while tailoring them to identified target groups such as school children and young investors across the country. In their efforts to address the needs of young people, SEBI also organizes the Visit to SEBI programs in which college students visit the institution and SEBI officers visit different educational institutions and conduct financial awareness seminars.

Mr. Iyer then outlined India’s National Strategy on Financial Education, a joint venture of financial market regulators like SEBI, RBI, IRDA and PFRD and administered by the National Centre of Financial Education (NCFE), which aims to create awareness and educate consumers on access to financial services, to change attitudes and encourage responsible financial behavior. The National Strategy on Financial Education also addresses on the needs of children and young people, as it promotes the inclusion of financial education in the school curriculum.

As part of the National Centre of Financial Education (NCFE), set up independently to promote National Strategy on Financial Education, Mr. Iyer also noted other programs focusing on young people: National Financial Literacy Assessment Test (NFLAT): Free annual financial literacy tests for school students, Money Smart School Program (MSSP) and the Financial Education Training Program (FETP).

Finally, Mr. Iyer closed his remarks by stressing that it is very important that Financial Literacy programs to cover a wide population spread over varied regions, especially rural areas, in which children are far from the formal education system. Furthermore, he noted that government should invest in trainings for teachers, so that they are well versed not only on the subject, but are also aware of cultural and language different in rural areas.

Dr. Lillian Koh Noi Keng, CEO, Fintech Academy, Singapore, started her presentation by mentioning the importance of introducing financial education for children at a young age and throughout their education, as well as to make it interesting for them. In the context, she noted that to impact attitudes and behaviors of children regarding financial education, they needed to access it from a very early age.

One of the tools used in Singapore to get children and youth interested in the topic, she noted, is gamification, the introduction of problems and puzzles in which they can apply what they have learned from teachers. Those methods, as well as Financial Literacy and Entrepreneurship programs to schools and institutions of higher learning have been used in Singapore since 2009.

Dr. Koh commented on some of the programs introduced in schools, such as the use of mobile apps that give kids the ability to learn and manage money under a controlled environment (Learn-Through-Play) approach. Also, launched in Malaysia in 2016, she mentioned Cashville Kidz, a series of 24 animated episodes to be launched in primary schools, aimed to kids aged between 9 and 12 years old, in which they discuss saving, positive spending habits and investment. Beyond the implementation of different programs, Dr. Koh also talked about the importance of ‘unpacking’ the knowledge, making sure kids not only participate in those programs, but also that the lessons are followed by discussion on what was learned, the attitudes, values and skills children learned from them.

Discussions: Questions & Answers Session with the audience

The discussion followed by the session focused on the possibilities, challenges and advantages that creating an independent institution to promote financial literacy could bring to Nepal, and whether this could help needs of different target groups, like children and youth to be address.

In this context, Mr. Iyer highlighted the importance of cooperation between different stakeholders when addressing all challenges linked to financial education. It also allows different stakeholders to share their resources more effectively, understanding where they can most useful; e.g. governments
would focus on deploying their resources in areas that need basic financial education, while regulators would focus on capital markets and Financial Consumer Protection.

Lastly, Dr. Koh emphasized that financial education for children required continued efforts from different parties, including policy makers, schools, teacher, government and families.

Day 2: OECD-SEBON Conference and Roundtable on Financial Consumer Protection and Education in Asia-Pacific

Keynote speech: Ms. S. Marandi, Executive Director, Reserve Bank of India

Ms. Marandi started her presentation by noting that Financial Consumer Protection had become an increasing priority for all policy makers, as it was a contributing factor to the healthy development of the financial sector, including financial inclusion and helping achieve broader economic growth. Furthermore, she highlighted that the widespread uptake of digital financial services has heightened risks for consumers and raises concerns for policy makers working on the subject.

Ms. Marandi continued her speech outlining Financial Consumer Protection Initiatives by the Reserve Bank of India, which include: the standardization of forms commonly used by Bank Customers, the introduction of the Banking Ombudsman, Scheme (enables resolution of complaints from customers) for Digital Transactions, introduction of an Internal Ombudsman Scheme to strengthen internal grievance related to the structure of banks; the expansion of BO offices with specific jurisdiction covering the entire country, and the creation of Consumer Education and Protection cells covering the entire country as mechanism for handling entire spectrum of complaints, among others.

Ms. Marandi also commented on the issue of aging in India, noting that the growth in the population of elderly people had increased in recent years and that the trend was likely to continue in the coming decades. In order to address the needs of senior citizens, Ms. Marandi noted that the Reserve Bank of India had advised banks to put in place an explicit mechanism for meeting their needs, so that they don’t feel marginalized and benefit from banking services without difficulty. Some of those mechanisms included: door to door banking, in order to tackle accessibility; implementing a dedicated counter providing priority services do senior citizens, automatic conversion of account into a ‘senior citizen account’ based on the date of birth available in the bank’s records, provision of documents for claiming income tax exemption on interest on fixed deposit within stipulated time and a special system to handle complaints of senior citizens. These mechanisms have proven to be already successful as the share of complaints of pensioners has declined from 2016 to 2018.

Ms. Marandi also talked about India’s National Strategy for financial education, a multi-stakeholder effort, which planned to reach 500 million people over a five year timeframe (2013-2018). The Strategy aimed to undertake campaigns to help people manage money more effectively and to achieve financial well-being by accessing appropriate financial products and services. Ms. Marandi finished her presentation by sharing some learnings from India’s National Strategy for financial education, such as: the need to develop tailored content for each target audience, the need to create engaging material, the benefits of creating an independent entity to promote basic financial literacy, the benefits of leveraging existing infrastructure institutions and trainers and the lastly, the value added from the use of mass media.

Discussions: Questions & Answers Session with the audience

The Keynote speech was followed by questions from the audience and the discussion focused on how Nepal can learn from the power regulators and the Central Bank potentially had in India to enforce laws on Financial Consumer Protection. Ms. Marandi noted that not only the Central Bank had power to apply financial penalties, but also issues awards for best practices, which had to be disclosed in RBI’s annual report.
Session 4: Understanding the different needs of rural, remote and urban populations

The session was moderated by Dr. Lillian Koh Noi Keng, CEO, FinTech Academy, Singapore

Mr Suman Raj Aryal, Director General, Central Bureau of Statistics, Nepal, presented the results of a census conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics in Nepal and gave the audience a picture of the distribution of economy-related establishments in the country, relating it to the distribution of persons engaged in those establishments. He noted that most of the establishments were located in Kathmandu Valley and that less than 2% of those establishments were financial institutions in rural areas. He continued by presenting data that showed the economic activity of urban and rural areas, notably: the working age population rates: Urban – 64% / Rural – 36% and the young population: Urban – 66% / Rural – 34%. Mr. Suman emphasized that rural areas still replied mainly on agriculture and small businesses, while having a low level of access to financial services and strong retail market. Furthermore, he continued, rural populations located in remote areas struggled having to travel longer to access all needs of basic services, including financial basic services. Lastly, he noted the importance on classifying and mapping Nepal’s rural areas, in order to tackle challenges faced by population living in those areas.

Ms Leigh Coughlan, Senior Manager, Australian Securities and Investments Commission, Australia, started her presentation with geographic indicators of Australia and stated that capital cities and their surrounding concentrated most of the country’s population. Regarding the financial system of Australia, she noted that the country has a well established social security system, which provides basic economic support to people with challenges in participating in the economy, including types of benefits on unemployment, or with citizens are disable or providing from disabled people in their families. Also, all social security beneficiaries receive their payment through a bank account; which includes them in the financial system. On addressing the needs of people in rural areas of Australia, she noted that geographic location can inhibit financial inclusion, and combined with other factors may contribute to more severe financial exclusion. Ms. Coughlan then outlined some efforts, both local and national, of the government to provide services for population living in rural area, including indigenous people. She mentioned that some people in remote locations frequently are not aware of financial and retirement benefits until they have reached close to retirement. Lastly, she outlined some policies and initiatives undertaken by the Australian government: Face-to-Face: Big Super Days Out: Outreach to remote lands in central Australia (APY Lands) with industry and government representatives to engage with community on superannuation, which assisted more than 500 people engage with $3 million in superannuation; Online: MoneySmart Teaching Program: Equal access to resources across Australia; Mixed: Financial Wellbeing Network: National events to build capacity and strengthen networks amongst the financial capability practitioners

Mr. Lyndwill Clarke, Head of Department, Consumer Education, Financial Sector Conduct Authority, South Africa, noted that, in terms of financial literacy trends (after 2011), financial control was increasing over time and financial planning, as well as the ability to save decreasing in South Africa. In addition, financial literacy levels are highly affected by race, education and geography – as levels of financial literacy in rural areas where notably lower, highly affected by low academic literacy levels and poverty. Other challenges for financial inclusion, he cited, are levels of unemployment, poverty and high levels of debt. Having pointed out the disparity in financial literacy level between urban and rural areas, Mr. Clarke followed his presentation by sharing the steps South Africa is taking to reduce the gap. In 2017, the regulation moved to the Central Bank and the Financial Sector Conduct Authority was stablished, with
the objective of providing financial customers and potential financial customers with financial education programs, promoting financial literacy and the ability of financial customers to make sound financial decisions.

The FSCA standards also make sure that financial education programs, or other activities promoting financial literacy are appropriate and effective. In that context, FSCA introduced financial education in job creation and skills’ development programs, making sure young people entering the labor force are also educated in basic financial skills, such as budgeting and savings.

Lastly, he pointed out that the introduction of mobile units, in which FSCA officers could travel to rural and remote areas, was proving to be an effective way to reach consumers outside of formal urban centers, ensuring that the right, tailor-made advice and products are available to meet the specific situation and choices faced by individuals, families and communities in those areas.

Discussions: Questions & Answers Session with the audience

The discussion was initiated by the Moderator of the session, Dr. Koh, and initially focused on the challenges faced when implementing policies and programmes that aimed to reach rural areas.

Mr. Aryal pointed out that cooperation among stakeholders was key, while Ms. Coughlan mentioned that getting consumers to engage with existing financial products and making sound financial choices was a challenge, and noted that even when bringing disclosure and information to rural areas regarding financial products, that does not necessarily lead to informed decision making, practice and behaviour, much like in urban centres.

Mr. Clarke pointed out that implementing and coordinating activities in the country, while managing to reach different population targets was challenging for the FSCA.

The discussion then continued by Australia’s experience with implementing the MoneySmart programme in schools and how Nepal could learn from that experience. On this note, Ms. Coughlan pointed out that the programme focused on educators, channelling resources on building their confidence and capability, so teachers could engage with financial literacy as a topic and are able to communicate it effectively with students.

Mr. Clarke noted the importance of coordinating financial education programs to existing social economic programs, and also to create a culture of saving, beyond an informal network, in which people have enough trust in banks and financial institutions to manage their money.

Lastly, Dr. Koh commented on the possibility of FinTech being used to address needs of consumers who are unbanked and underserviced, if they have access to mobile phones.

Session 5: Improving financial literacy and access for micro and small enterprises

The session was introduced by Dr. Adele Atkinson, Head of Financial Education, OECD and moderated by Mr. Dipendra Bahadur Chhetri, Former Governor of NRB and Ex-Vice Chairman of National Planning Commission, Nepal

Dr. Adele Atkinson, Head of Financial Education, OECD, started her remarks by presenting the OECD’s work on financial education and the International Network on Financial Education, which now includes public institutions from 110 countries, including Nepal, represented both in the Technical Committees and affiliate memberships.

She noted that the work stream in financial education for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) started in 2015, but mostly focused on micro and small enterprises. On that note, she presented the audience some of the main products derived from that work stream: the G20/OECD High-Level Principles on SME financing (2015): Principle 7 “Enhance SME financial skills and strategic vision; the OECD working paper on Financial Education for MSMEs and Potential Entrepreneurs (2017) and focusing on Asia; the OECD paper on Financial Education for MSMEs in Asia (2017).
She pointed out that developing financial education for MSMEs, in a way, was not very different from developing financial education in general, as people’s behaviours were still ultimately behind all enterprises. However, she also noted that, financial education should be tailored to the audience, and the financial needs of entrepreneurs, for example, were different from financial needs of agricultural farmers. Understanding the equally important but different needs of their target audience is key for policy makers.

She further pointed out that, for MSMEs, there were already multiple organisations reaching them proving all sorts of information, including government. In this context, they have the opportunity to discuss financial needs, to access to existing material, to develop financial skills and to provide feedback on gaps of provision and knowledge.

She also stressed the importance of measuring levels of financial literacy on MSMEs and data collection. The OECD developed a tool which reflects the way it measures financial literacy for adults which covers knowledge, behaviour and attitudes, more relevant towards business than personal finances, covering demographics relevant to business and what kind of entrepreneurs needs financial education.

Mr. Dipendra Bahadur Chhetri, Former Governor of NRB and Ex- Vice Chairman of National Planning Commission, Nepal, presented some data on enterprises in Nepal, noting that half of them were still unregistered within the government and only 18% of those enterprises were borrowing from financial institutions.

He reminded the audience of some constraints MSMEs face regarding financial access: notably: a restraint of financial resource, which compromises expansion and growth; the interest in borrowings, which impacts sustainability of the operations and multiple financial detrimental to the industry.

Mr. Acharya finished his remarks by suggestion some steps for achieving financial inclusion for MSMEs: expand financial services to each Municipality in Nepal, expand micro finance institutions, as well as evaluate their performance by social indicators, focusing specially on poorer sections of community that might want to set up micro and small businesses.

Mr. Balram Paudel, Program Management Analyst, Strategic Planning and Development Effectiveness Unit, UNDP, noted the importance of supporting MSMEs, as well of the potentials benefits of supporting small businesses can bring investors.

From the UNDPs perspective, he noted that deploying resources into MSMEs has proven to be a long-term investments, but also a successful one, as it contributes to achieve the global goals for sustainable development.

Lastly, he outlined some of the steps UNDP was taking to expand support to MSMEs such as promoting enterprise based cooperatives and financial institutions, investing in human resource to connect needs to people with the necessary skills, create incentives for access to finance for production based enterprises and promote entrepreneurship development to the cooperatives and financial institutions.

Mr. Janardan Dev Panta, Micro and Small Enterprise expert and CEO of Nirdhan Utthan Bittiya Santha (Pioneer Micro Financial Institution), Nepal, noted that micro enterprises loan and micro finance institutions have grown by 46% and 83% respectively in 2018 in Nepal, and that 75,541 MSMEs financed by micro finance institutions have created 226,623 jobs in the economy. As part of Nirdhan Utthan Bittiya Santha (Pioneer Micro Financial Institution) incentives for MSMEs, he noted: helping existing clients to enhance their capacities by providing skills and entrepreneurship development training for MSMEs, providing basic financial, business literacy trainings and digital business solutions and developing ‘tailor-made client graduation strategy into MSMEs portfolios.

He further noted some challenges regarding MSMEs financing, such as: lack of adequate financial resources (existing short term financial resources financing long term requirement of MSMEs portfolio), regulatory hassles (like registrations, unfriendly tax regimes prevent promising rural
entrepreneurs to register as MSMEs) and MSMEs capacity constrain (in documentation requirements, maintain book of accounts, tax clearance certificate, collateral requirement, etc.)

Lastly, he concluded by stressing that MSMEs supported by conducive policies could help solve pressing social issues like unemployment and social imbalances. In order to boost creation and capacities of MSMEs, he mentioned solutions such as: Improve access to finance on MSMEs ecosystem (availability, price and terms-conditions), Improve market infrastructure like credit guarantee, Secured Transaction Registry (STR) and incentivise informal MSMEs to formalize their business and register with the government (through simplified registration, tax incentives).

Mr. Sanjib Subba, Chief Executive Officer, National Banking Institute, Nepal, noted that the importance of developing a national strategy for financial education in order to foster entrepreneurship development. He mentioned that access to formal finance was a major challenge for MSMEs, as well as high cost of borrowings, tax, audit and paperwork’s challenges, as well as banking basic financial literacy. Mr. Subba pointed out that these challenges currently made 40% of MSMEs to exit the market in four to five years and 15% of them to disappear in two years. However, he also point out data that shows that supporting MSMEs was helping Nepal’s economy as 25% of the country’s GDP was coming from MSMEs, as well as 70% of the total national export. Lastly, Mr. Subba presented a mobile application created by the National Banking Institute, the NBI Nepal, which allowed users to get about information on financial literacy, to calculate their loan and savings and watch success entrepreneurship stories video, among other functions.

Discussion: Questions & Answers Session with the audience

The panel was followed by a lively discussion that initially focused on financial resources and borrowing for MSMEs and the access to financing for entrepreneurs.

Mr. Chhetri pointed out that, despite facing some resistance to get entrepreneurs to commit to government formalities, especially in rural areas, they had seen better results when micro finance institutions took the lead and helped micro-entrepreneurs with the documentation.

Closing remarks:

Mr. Shigeto Hiki, Head of Special Projects and Outreach Unit, OECD, thanked the participants for their continued presence until the last session of the conference, as well as for keeping a lively discussion and high level of participation with questions.

He expressed his thanks to SEBON for jointly hosting the conference with the OECD and for providing great cultural entertainment for attendees and to the Government of Japan, which sponsored the OECD contribution to the event.

He thanked all participants and appreciated the sharing of a variety of experiences and expertise between the OECD, experts from Nepal, neighbouring countries and distant countries. He noted the important lessons from the Fukuoka Priorities presented by Mr. Bumpei Sugano, G20 Office/International Affairs Office, Japan Financial Services Agency and Co-Chair of the G20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion, and noted as that aging is an issue not only to developed countries, but also to developing countries. In Nepal, he noted, despite experience population growing and high fertility rates, he welcomed the precaution measures being taken in order to tackle aging and Nepal’s future.

When it comes to creating a better financial environment, he noted that both supply and demand sides should be addressed in developing future policy. In this context, he welcomed the dissemination of the G20 Fukuoka Policy Priorities on Aging and Financial Inclusion: 8 Keys Steps to Design a Better Future document which was jointly prepared by the GPFI and the OECD for the Japanese G20 Presidency with non-G20 countries.
Mr. Niraj Giri, Executive Director, SEBON, thanked the OECD for giving SEBON the opportunity to host the event. It was SEBON’s first effort in hosting an international conference and, he further noted, it encouraged them to continue hosting important international events as to enhance Nepal’s exposure to international arena.

He pointed out that discussions were fruitful on various issues regarding financial literacy, inclusion, consumer protection, supporting financial inclusion for ageing population and understanding needs of rural and urban population. Financial literacy has become more challenging with the increased use of artificial intelligence and FinTech across the globe, which had been a true learning and experience sharing occasion for Nepal. He believed that the conference provided participants the opportunity to understand contemporary issues, prevailing practices, suitability of tools being employed, and adequacy of the approaches that we are following, besides giving us an insight into the objective and strategies that we need to set in order to build a resilient, stable and credible financial system in our jurisdiction. The time spent together with fellow participants has helped us in building our network. The platform had also provided us the opportunity to create a regional network of regulators and financial educators. Lastly, he thanks all participants, speakers and moderators, the OECD and the Government of Japan, as well as fellow colleagues at SEBON for the joint effort on making the event a success.