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**PRESS RELEASE**

**“Concern over Side Walk Demolition in different locations of Kathmandu”**

In Kathmandu, large section of population prefers to walk. In fact, 18.1 percent of daily trips are made entirely on foot, and of the nearly 56.5 percent of the commuters who use different modes of public transport, a large percentage walk as part of their daily commute.

A survey carried out by Clean Air Network Nepal- Clean Energy Nepal has revealed that hundreds of pedestrians are affected directly by the side walk demolition in a road widening campaign led by Metropolitan Traffic Police Division (MTPD). The survey shows that about 882 pedestrians per hour are directly affected in Naag Pokhari area alone.

The Pedestrian count surveys were carried out simultaneously in Lainchour, Naag Pokhari and Putalisadak area where the sidewalks were demolished. The survey shows that Lainchour has the highest flow of pedestrians of 2010 in an hour while Naag Pokhari and Putalisadak recorded a flow of 882 and 690 pedestrians respectively. The figure clearly represents the inconvenience brought to large number of people who walk along that stretch. The pedestrians also expressed their discontent over the footpath destruction and slackness in maintaining the destructed one during the perception survey.

Side Walk demolition drive of Metropolitan Traffic Police Division (MTPD) in different locations of Kathmandu has expanded to Lainchour, Putalisadak and Kalimati. The drive which kicked off from Naag Pokhari (near Jai Nepal Cinema Hall) as their road widening campaign to ease traffic congestion has left many sidewalks demolished and yet waiting for the construction and maintenance.

Walking – the most basic urban transport mode for all short-to-medium length travel and for people at the lowest rung of the income ladder, these modes affect survival. Despite this, interests of non-motorized travelers tend to be systematically neglected. Sidewalk and thus pedestrians are often found to be neglected when it comes to transport system. The recent happenings have proved it to the most.

According to a study conducted by Kathmandu Valley Mapping Program (KVMP), pedestrians represent upto 40 percent of all fatalities in Kathmandu City in 2001. This reflects the pathetic condition of our roads. A study undertaken by Clean Energy Nepal and Clean Air Network Nepal in Kathmandu (2010) has revealed that pedestrian facility in Kathmandu is in worse condition and is not user friendly to physically disabled people. This clearly states the need for improving pedestrian facilities.

We would like to draw attention of MTPD and other concerned authorities including Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Ministry of Physical Planning and Works, Department of Roads and Department of Transport Management in this movement and we are very much concern for those people who uses sidewalks to commute daily to different destinations. We urge the concerned authorities to vision towards people friendly and sustainable modes for transport and traffic management which includes



walking by creating space for them and ensuring pedestrian safety when they on road through maintaining footpaths.

Safer footpath is a right of pedestrians.

Therefore, we humbly request MTPD and concerned authorities to stop destroying sidewalks and protect the pedestrian's rights. We also urge to catch your eye towards the importance of non-motorized transportation such as walking and biking, which eventually helps in sustainable urban mobility and contributes to more livable cities. Nepal needs to come up with an integrated framework on pedestrian facilities, road safety, landuse planning, public transport system and other transport infrastructures that will promote sustainable modes of transport in the country. Thus, we strongly urge concerned authorities to improve public transport, non-motorized transport system and formulate strategies for transport demand management.

We sincerely urge media to highlight this issue and sensitize concerned authorities and aware public on sustainable urban transportation.

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**Clean Air Network Nepal** is a network of individuals, experts, national and international non-governmental, governmental organizations and private sectors engaged in clean air activities. We are continuously working on the clean air, sustainable urban transportation and promotion of non-motorized transportation.

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