

Social and Ecological Market Economy



National Business Initiative (NBI) and German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) on behalf of the German Federal Office and Ministry of Economic Cooperation, jointly organised a presentation and discussion on Social and Ecological Market Economy (SEME) on 25 January. The speakers on the occasion were Cornelia Richter, director general, Planning and Development, GTZ and Dr Dieter Benecke, a German economic consultant based in Germany.

The programme started with a welcome speech by Horst Ammann, programme manager, GTZ Inclusive Development of the Economy. Padma Jyoti, president, NBI, who chaired the gathering noted that the country was in the process of formulating a new constitution and that there was a gradual but positive consensus among political parties. He further added that SEME is a concept with much promise if it can be better understood and implemented in the Nepali context. Dr Ram Sharan Mahat, CA member and former finance minister, who was chief guest on the occasion, said that though Nepal was experiencing a historic transition with many critical phases we can still have economic recovery and peaceful environment. He added that the SEME model has the potential of being beneficial for Nepal.

Dr Benecke made a presentation on the concept of SEME, outlining its aims, and the success conditions required for it. He mentioned that the SEME model was inclusive and would be appropriate for lessening the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Dr Benecke also said that there was a lot of talk in Nepal about the political system but there was hardly any debate about the economic system without which development is not possible. Richter while giving her presentation talked about SEME as a concept for furthering economic and social development which incorporates cultural characteristics, environmental protection and social cohesion. She said that Nepal's constitutional process was an opportunity to initiate a continuous structured public-private dialogue that creates a stable and learning social and economic order.

Dr Horst Matthaeus, programme manager, GTZ Federalism Support Programme, stressed that SEME was a systematic, flexible and adaptable model. He implored that if the model was to be implemented in Nepal, a compatible situation must also be encouraged. He concluded by saying that only dialogue with the actors was not the solution but the outcome of such dialogues has to be implemented with caution to avoid conflicts among parties.