



Empowered Women, Prosperous Nepal The Joint Programme of the Government of Nepal, European Union and the United Nations

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Empowered Women, Prosperous Nepal Programme Joins Global 16 Days of Activism Campaign to Prevent Gender-Based Violence

Janakpur, 8 Dec 2023 – The Government of Nepal, the Delegation of the European Union in Nepal and the United Nations, through their Joint Programme 'Empowered Women Prosperous Nepal,' organized a joint event aligned with the global theme of "Unite: Invest to Prevent Violence Against Women & Girls" for this year's 16 Days of Activism Campaign Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

The event was graced by the presence of the Honorable Chair of Parliamentary of Women Children and Social Justice Ms. Rupa Yadav; the Deputy Head of Cooperation, Delegation of the European Union, Ms Eloisa Astudillo Fernandez; and on behalf of the UN Resident Coordinator in Nepal, Ms. Patricia Fernandez Pacheco, UN Women Representative. Attendees included representatives from the Provincial and Local Governments, the EU, representatives of United Nations agencies, civil society, policymakers, private sector entities and youth from Madhesh Province. The event fostered interactions among policymakers, locally elected women representatives, private sector entities, gender equality advocates youth, and civil society with an aim to understand ground realities and gather diverse perspectives on addressing gender-based violence.

"Despite strides in gender-based violence prevention and equality efforts, challenges persist," said Rupa Yadav, Chair of Parliamentary of Women Children and Social Justice. " Out of the 753 local levels in the country, only 115 municipalities have established the GBV prevention fund, signaling the necessity to expand its coverage. This gap highlights the disparity between promised legal rights and women's actual access to and benefit from these crucial funds. There's a pressing need to expand the coverage of the GBV prevention fund across local levels."

The joint event in Madhesh Province aligns with the global 16 Days of Activism Campaign, focusing on investing in the prevention of violence against women and girls and ensuring they can live lives free of violence and harassment. Highlighted by a Forum Theatre, the event emphasized positive masculinity and men's role in preventing GBV. In addition, a policy discussion gathered diverse stakeholders to garner commitments for increased investments in preventing GBV. This dialogue aimed to promote women's rights and equality through legislative actions, economic empowerment initiatives, and strengthening institutional frameworks. Furthermore, it aimed to bridge the gap between policies and effective GBV prevention services.

GBV is rooted in multifaceted factors, like economic disparities and entrenched cultural norms," stated Eloisa Astudillo Fernandez, Deputy Head of Cooperation from the European Union. "A proactive approach integrating GBV prevention and responses, as well as promoting equality, is essential and the European Union is committed to support the Government of Nepal in the investment in the prevention of Gender Based Violence."

The event highlighted the importance of public and private investments in preventing GBV, advocating for sustainable contributions to women's rights organizations. It also emphasized the critical role of workplace policies in ensuring women's economic security and safety.

"Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) presents a global concern that transcends borders and necessitates immediate collective efforts. Nepal's commitment to diminish physical/sexual violence by 6.5% among women aged 15-49 by 2030 signifies significant progress, yet effective planning and strategic investment in GBV prevention at every provincial level are imperative. It is imperative to disrupt unequal power dynamics governing women's bodies. To combat VAWG, let us take a united stance, raise awareness, allocate specific budgets, bolster support for women's organizations, and advocate for workplace policies ensuring the safety and economic stability of women," stated Patricia Fernandez Pacheco, UN Women Representative, speaking on behalf of the UN Resident Coordinator in Nepal.

The event culminated with the ministry representatives and agency leaders signing a commemorative plaque, joined by government representatives, private sector delegates, civil society organizations, and youth, affirming their commitment to invest in the prevention of GBV. The event notably highlighted investments in women's organizations, legislative measures, prosecuting perpetrators, and enhancing survivor services as focal points.

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About Empowered Women, Prosperous Nepal Joint Programme:

Empowered Women, Prosperous Nepal is a collaborative initiative by the Government of Nepal, the European Union, and the United Nations, aimed at promoting gender equality, empowering women, and fostering inclusive growth in Nepal. This joint initiative also seeks to challenge harmful social norms, empower women, and promote political participation despite the prevailing challenges faced by elected women representatives.

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