

Remarks by the UN Resident Coordinator

Hanaa Singer Hamdy

24th Anniversary of the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal

Honorable Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, **Mr. Padam Giri**

Hon. Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission, **Mr. Tapa Bahadur**

Magar

Honorable Commissioners of NHRC and other Constitutional Commissions

Chairperson of the NGO Federation of Nepal,

Members of civil society, the media, and the international community

Distinguished Guests

Namaste and a very good afternoon to everyone!

On behalf of the United Nations in Nepal, I would like to offer sincere *badhaai* to the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal on your 24th Anniversary. *Badhaai* also for retaining your “A” status and surpassing the scrutiny of the Special Review! The UN Country Team is honored to be partnering with an institution that meets international standards!

Nepal is such a beautiful country! Its diversity is its beauty, as exemplified in the national anthem we heard earlier referring to the country as a garland made up of *sayaun thungga phool*. Nepal’s diversity is also a challenge. Nurturing social cohesion amongst such diversity requires the Commission, the Government, and the Constitutional Commissions to work hand in hand, to ensure freedom, equality, and equity of ALL its people. Leave No One Behind means prioritizing the furthest behind first like the *Dalits, Madhesis, Tharus, Indigenous Peoples, Muslims*, women and girls, sexual and gender minorities, as well as persons with disabilities.

Distinguished guests,

Nepal is still in the early stages of Federalism. While on a recent trip to the Karnali and Madhesh Pradesh, it was so heartening to hear positive narratives from citizens, and local and provincial governments on how federalism has brought the government closer to citizens.

However, much work remains for these citizens to fully experience federalism. Federal structures and institutions need more strengthening to bring services closer to the citizens. The exercise of autonomy and authority guaranteed by the Constitution is a must.

A lot also still needs to be done to root out deeply entrenched and pervasive harmful practices such as caste-based discrimination, untouchability, gender-based violence, and domestic violence, which hold people back from reaching their full potential. It is by undertaking steps to reduce inequalities in society, and reinforce the rule of law, that the envisaged structural transformation is achieved.

Distinguished guests,

Last year at the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, member states, including Nepal, vowed to uphold and promote human rights standards, principles, and values. These commitments are reflected in the recommendations from various UN Human Rights Mechanisms like the Universal Periodic Review; the treaty bodies, Resolutions 1325, and 1820, as well as Guiding Principles like Business and Human Rights. We hope, Nepal's National Action Plan based on these international norms, standards, and guidance is adequately funded and will thereby translate into reality, into tangible results.

I urge the Government as well as NHRC Nepal to highlight the progress being made in the country at international forums. This requires timely submission of periodic reports as obligated in various treaties for instance.

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister,

We should not let the momentum of transitional justice lose steam at any cost. Eighteen years after the armed conflict, uncertainty still looms amongst victims regarding the truth of the incidents and the whereabouts of their loved ones. The wounds, the pain, and the tears still plague the victims.

Echoing the Secretary General's messaging, I would like to encourage your Government and the Parliament to **"leave no stone unturned"** to ensure that all victims have access to truth, reparation, and justice that they have been seeking for decades that would eventually foster reconciliation and ensure non-reoccurrence of violations.

I also urge the Government to expedite the implementation of the recommendations made by the NHRC Nepal.

Dear Friends,

Today, on NHRC's 24th birthday, we would like to commend the Commission's continuous vigilance, adaptability, and dedication to the protection and promotion of evolving human rights issues, including in areas like climate change, misinformation, disinformation, and false information.

For NHRC to evolve, be relatable, and grow to keep pace with ever-changing scenarios, it needs an investment of resources, capacity, autonomy, and independence. Furthermore, the proposed new NHRC Act also needs to be adopted, in compliance with the Paris Principles.

One year short of your silver jubilee, at a time when globally we are grappling with numerous human rights challenges, it is even more important for all of us to rekindle the hope of protection of human rights and advance promises of freedom of speech, expression, opinion, equality before the law, and justice for everyone, everywhere, always.

The United Nations in Nepal remains committed to supporting the Commission and the Government in your endeavors to promote and protect human rights.

Jai Maanav Adhikaar !

Dherai Dherai Dhanyabaad.