

## **Press Release**

Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations and Other International Organizations, and leader of the Nepali delegation to the High Level Segment of the 16<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council H. E. Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai addressed the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva today.

Ambassador Bhattarai expressed unequivocal commitment of the Government of Nepal to the protection and promotion of human rights of all Nepalese citizens. He further expressed Nepal's commitment to make the Human Rights Council more effective, efficient and credible and underlined the need for strengthening national democratic institutions. He called for an enhanced and sustained support to capacity building needs of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) like Nepal.

He termed the Universal Periodic Review as a defining feature of the Human Rights Council. Recalling that Nepal had its UPR just a month before, he said that the entire process has been an opportunity for collaboration with various stakeholders, civil society, media and human rights institutions as well as for an interchange of ideas, learning and sharing experiences with the international community.

He underlined the need for Special Procedures and Mandate Holders to fully adhere to the principles of universality, impartiality, and objectivity, and said that appointments to these mechanisms should be based on high integrity, professionalism, expertise and geographic and linguistic and gender balance. He placed emphasis on the need to avoid the selective use of human rights for political expediency.

Ambassador Bhattarai termed all human rights as universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing. He said that there are indissoluble linkages among human rights, security, democracy and development.

He called youth power as being truly transformational. Ambassador said, five years ago, millions of people in Nepal came out in the streets calling for the establishment of democracy and guarantee of human rights. They prevailed in rejecting undemocratic and unconstitutional rule and politics of violence. The tide of democracy remains unstoppable. Today, youths are not only the future, they are the *present*. He said that the uprisings of youthful aspirations in recent days have sent a firm message of *the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family*, as recognized in the Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights sixty two years ago, as the only foundation *of freedom, justice and peace in the world*.

He said that the home grown peace process deeply embeds in itself the principles of democratic pluralism, protection and promotion of human rights, free press, rule of law, independent judiciary, constitutional checks and balances, social justice and inclusiveness. The elected Constituent Assembly remains engaged in completing the writing of a democratic constitution that will institutionalize these principles. He

expressed the commitment of the Government of Nepal to the protection and promotion of human rights of all its citizens irrespective of their caste, race, sex, ethnic origin, language, religion or ideological conviction. He informed that the two Bills for the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms have been submitted to the Parliament for approval. The Special Security Program in implementation since 2009 is geared to strengthening the law and order situation, protecting human rights and ending impunity. Criminal justice system is being improved.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) with its constitutional status has full autonomy in its functioning. Several other national human rights institutions are at work for the promotion and protection of the human rights of indigenous people, women, Dalits, Madhesis, disadvantaged groups and people from backward regions of the country. The Government has launched inclusive and affirmative measures, quotas and reservations to ensure their representations in all public sector undertakings- Ambassador added.

Ambassador Bhattarai highlighted the need for the realization of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). He said poverty, ignorance and diseases and their manifestations in various forms are a growing threat to the enjoyment of human rights. He termed low income, low human development, widespread poverty, food insecurity, social and economic instability as a vicious cycle of insecurity and underdevelopment. Ambassador termed the challenges created by climate change and natural disasters as unbearable burdens on the poor and vulnerable communities. The various manifestations of these factors pose cumulative threats to the enjoyment of human rights. He drew the attention of the international community to the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs to be held in Istanbul in May this year, and said that it is time to reflect on what we have collectively achieved, what needs to be done, and where and how we can work together to connect the threads of these components to help people enjoy their rights through our collective commitments and actions.

He thanked the international community and the United Nations for their support to the peace process and appealed for an enhanced level of cooperation and support at this historical moment for the positive conclusion of the peace process that will lay a firm and unshakeable foundation for the respect of all kinds of human rights in the country.

The full text of the statement is attached.

**Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations  
Geneva**

**02 March 2011**