

**Statement by H. E. Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations and Other International Organizations, at the General Segment of the High Level Segment of the 16<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council, on Wednesday, 2 March 2011, Geneva**

Mr. President  
Madam High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Excellencies  
Distinguished delegates,

Nepal commends you, Mr. President, for the exemplary leadership you have provided to the Human Rights Council in these challenging times. I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in the discharge of your responsibilities.

My delegation expresses its deep appreciations for the committed and pragmatic leadership of Madam High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Mr. President,

The Human Rights Council has demonstrated its strength and willingness as an inter-governmental body to address human rights situations and work for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights. Nepal remains committed to make the Human Rights Council more effective, efficient and credible in the days to come.

The Universal Periodic Review has been a defining feature of the Human Rights Council. States have participated actively and constructively. Nepal had its UPR just a month before. 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. It has helped identify areas of needs. We call for an enhanced and sustained support to capacity building needs in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) like Nepal.

We are happy to note that the review of the work and functioning of the Human Rights Council as mandated by the General Assembly resolution 60/251 in order to make it more responsive and effective tool in preserving all human rights is moving smoothly with the adoption of the outcome document. We support the initiatives undertaken by the President in the review exercise. We are of the view that the basic principles as enshrined in the Institution Building Package should be preserved. Any outcome of the review should be based on consensus.

Nepal greatly values the work of human rights mechanisms including the Advisory Committee, Complaint Procedures and Special Procedures. The mechanisms should fully adhere to the principles of universality, impartiality, and objectivity. Selective use of human rights for political expediency should be avoided. We would like to emphasize that appointments to these mechanisms should be based on high integrity, professionalism, expertise and geographic and linguistic and gender balance.

Mr. President,

Nepal considers all human rights as universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing. There are indissoluble linkages among human rights, security, democracy and development. We believe that building national democratic institutions are vital to their sustainability.

A state party to most of the core international human rights instruments, we remain unequivocally committed to their implementation. Nepal follows a policy of constructive engagement with United Nations human rights mechanisms including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. We appreciate constructive contributions of civil society, media and human rights institutions and remain committed to work with them for advancing the respect of human rights.

Mr. President,

Youth have been transformational. 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 rule and politics of violence. The tide of democracy remains unstoppable. Today, youths are not only the future, they are the *present*. The uprisings of youthful aspirations in recent days are underlining that 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, constitute the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

Nepal is making a democratic transition following the end of a decade long armed conflict. 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.

Nepal remains committed 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. It is committed to strike a balance between peace and justice to the victims of conflict. Two Bills for the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms

have been submitted to the Parliament. 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.

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of Nepal, a constitutional body, has been given 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. Concrete steps are also being taken for the protection and promotion of the interests of minors, senior citizens, children, persons with disabilities, and refugees. Targeted programs and policies have been implemented in social, economic, cultural and other areas.

Mr. President,

Nepal attaches high importance to the realization of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). At Doha, Monterrey, and Johannesburg, development partners undertook upon themselves the obligations to open their markets for trade, provide resources for development and relieve debt burden of the poorest countries. As these commitments remain unmet, people continue to confront the question of daily survival due to, among others, stark inequalities, vulnerabilities, pervasive poverty, and severe impact of distorted and unfair trading regime which remain further compounded by a series of ongoing multiple crises including food, financial and economic crises. This calls for putting these challenges at the center of development discourse and improving trade rules to provide unhindered market access which are inextricably linked to the right to development and social stability for creating a conducive atmosphere for the respect of human rights.

Poverty, ignorance and diseases and their manifestations in various forms are a growing threat to the enjoyment of human rights. LDCs, to quote the UN Secretary General, remain at the epicenter of the developmental emergency. Low income, low human development, widespread poverty, food insecurity, social and economic instability create a vicious cycle of insecurity and underdevelopment. Climate change challenges and natural disasters are putting unbearable burdens on the poor and vulnerable communities as they lack resilience and capacity to mitigate effects. The various manifestations of these factors pose cumulative threats to the enjoyment of human rights. As the international community prepares to meet in Istanbul for the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs, 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.

In conclusion, while Nepal deeply appreciates the continued support of the international community and the United Nations at the time of democratic transition within the framework of the homegrown peace process, we appeal 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.

I thank you Mr. President.