



**Closing remarks by National Human Rights Commission of Nepal
Hon. Chairperson Anup Raj Sharma in the closing ceremony of
International Conference Identifying Challenges, Assessing
Progress, Moving Forward: Addressing Impunity and
Realizing Human Rights in South Asia
9-11 April 2018, Hotel Yak and Yeti, Kathmandu**



*Hon. Chairpersons and members of NHRIs present here,
Chairperson of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions,
Representative from Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions,
Former Chairperson of National Human Rights Commission, of Nepal
Government officials,
Heads of security bodies,
Excellences and Representatives of diplomatic missions,
Human rights activists, civil society members,
Distinguished guests, Media persons,
Ladies and Gentleman,*

I am honoured to speak at the closing of this successful conference. I have always resist the use of the word "closing" in such deliberation. Rather I would like the word "beginning". It is beginning of sitting together discussing the Human Rights issues and finding the ways forward. I want to start by thanking Commissioners and entire team for having the vision of organising this conference and putting faith on my chairmanship. The Nepalese commission had given me absolute authority to prepare the concept as well as design of the conference. I was little frightened. I appointed Mohna Ansari as chairperson of preparation committee along with officers of NHRC. I am proud that Commissioner Mohna Ansari did commendable work for the success of this conference. Please give a big hand for commissioner Mohna Ansari .I also give my sincere thanks to my fellow commissioner Prakash Osti, Sudip Pathak and Govinda Sharma Poudyal, secretary Bed Prasad Bhattarai and Staffs of NHRC for their restless support and very positive role they have done.

Of course, we could not have reached this point without all the participants giving their dedicated energy and focus of mind on the issue of impunity in the South Asian region.

My thanks goes also to the fellow commissioners from NHRIs across the region, members of civil society in Nepal and elsewhere in the region, the media, the staff of the Nepal NHRC who have worked tirelessly to make this a success.

Special thanks also to the Governance Facility for believing in this initiative and even risking being criticized for doing so. And, of course, thanks to our longstanding partners, the UNDP, for their support. How can I forget the support given by APF.

I am delighted that we have been reached a strong Declaration, which will help all the NHRIs in the region to work more closely together and address critical issues such as impunity, migration and potential Human Rights Issues.

The time has come for impunity to be shown its place in history – the dustbin or dirt heap. We have by adopting the Kathmandu Declaration shown our commitment to ending this scorn that has marked South Asia and many other parts of the world for a long time.

We are not naïve to consider that we can do this overnight. It will be a long and slow process, but as is made clear in the Declaration, we are committed to address impunity and we have identified key stepping stones, whether it is in respect of civil and political rights and the legacy of conflict or in respect of economic, social and cultural rights and the engrained, century-old forms of discrimination against women and other traditionally marginalised groups or groups such as LGBTI, whose specific human rights concerns we are finally starting to recognise in this region.

It has been a very rewarding three days for me personally and I am sure we have learned so much from each other.

I can only end by expressing my deep-felt desire that we will all go away from here, feeling we have more clarity and resolve to address one of the key human rights issues in this region, hopefully very soon through a coordinated joint human rights mechanism.

Thank you again, and I hope to welcome you again in Kathmandu on our next joint steps on the realization of human rights in the South Asian region.

Thank you