



National Human Rights Commission of Nepal



Remarks by Mr. Top Bahadur Magar, Honourable Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission on the occasion of the 73rd International Human Rights Day

Rt Honourable Prime Minister,

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Today marks the 73rd anniversary of the promulgation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations. December 10 is celebrated around the world as International Human Rights Day. In this regard, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the distinguished guests, including the Rt. Honourable Prime Minister, for attending the program organized by the National Human Rights Commission. I also wish you all a **Happy 73rd International Human Rights Day**.

The 73rd International Human Rights Day is being observed around the globe today in commemoration of the fact that no one can restrict human's inherent rights to freedom, equality, respect and a life of dignity, and with the theme of **EQUALITY-Reducing inequalities, advancing human rights** as determined by the United Nations. However, the spread of the corona virus pandemic has threatened the human right to life as well as other human rights around the world. There is thus a need for us all to join hands in responding to this difficulty arising out of the pandemic.

Rt. Honorable Prime Minister,

As a member state of the United Nations and a party to various international human rights treaties and conventions, it is the major obligation of the state to respect, protect and fulfill human rights. And it is the mandate of the Commission to monitor the fulfillment of these obligations by the state and to hold the state accountable in case of non-fulfillment of the obligations.

Representing the Asia-Pacific region, Nepal has been elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council for a second term from 2021-2023. In the context of the role played by the UN in the protection and promotion of human rights in the world, the Council is regarded as the apex intergovernmental body. Hence, it has also added to Nepal's human rights obligations.

Since the establishment of the Human Rights Council, Universal Periodic Review of human rights situation of Nepal has been completed thrice already. The NHRCN has also been submitting reports on behalf of the National Human Rights Institutions in every cycle of the periodic review. Nepal has accepted 196 of the 233 recommendations received through the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (2020).

The Commission is confident that the periodic reports that remain to be submitted to the treaty bodies on behalf of the Government of Nepal will be submitted on time. The NHRCN has also been submitting its reports to the treaty bodies. I would also like to share that the National Human Rights Commission is currently preparing a report to be submitted to the Child Rights Committee. I also request the concerned stakeholders including the Government of Nepal to expedite the implementation of the recommendations received from the international human rights mechanisms and the treaty bodies. The Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030 envisage the creation of an equal, just and secure world for human beings, the earth and prosperity by eradicating all forms of poverty. As the 17 goals of sustainable development are also related to human rights, I call for their implementation in a way that the people can experience it.

The provision of eight constitutional bodies including the National Human Rights Commission in the Constitution is important in itself for concrete contribution to the respect, protection and fulfillment of human rights. The National Human Rights Commission of Nepal has been retaining "**A Status**" since its inception in 2001. It is also a matter of pride for all of us. The Commission's "**A Status**" and international image has made it easy for Nepal to be elected twice as a member of the Human Rights Council, which is also a matter of pride for the Government of Nepal at the international forums.

Considering the recommendations from international human rights mechanisms and Nepal's commitment in front of the various international forums, the Government of Nepal has an obligation to expedite the works remaining for ensuring justice to the conflict survivors. In this context, this task should be concluded as soon as possible through the transitional justice mechanisms so that the victims and their families' get a sense of justice.

The Government of Nepal has ratified the Palermo Protocol, also on the basis of recommendations made in the past by the National Human Rights Commission. Effective implementation of this Protocol has made it easier to avoid serious violation of human rights, such as human trafficking and bringing the perpetrators to justice system. I would like to request all the stakeholders for the effective implementation of this protocol.

In addition to the fundamental rights, Nepal has formulated many policies related to human rights before and after the promulgation of the current Constitution. It is also necessary to review the status of implementation of fundamental rights and human rights policies. Even as the five-year term of the federal, provincial and local level (governments) is coming to an end, many laws as per the concurrent powers listed in the Constitution have not yet been formulated. Some laws need to be reviewed to make them human rights friendly. I believe that the Government of Nepal will review with priority the laws to make them human rights friendly and take to initiative to soon promulgate laws under the concurrent list of powers.

The Government of Nepal's fifth Human Rights National Action Plan has been released and is in the process of implementation. The plan seeks to hold federal, provincial and local governments accountable so as to guarantee human rights. Nevertheless, the Commission has felt the need to develop ownership by involving all levels of government from the project development stage.

It has been come to light that Nepali citizens living in different countries as migrant workers have been subjected to torture and other human rights violations. Reports have also been made public about migrant workers being deprived of even the most basic human rights, where domestic workers are the most vulnerable. I am confident that the Nepali diplomatic missions and the representatives of the government, in collaboration with the National Human Rights Institutions of the countries concerned, will take the initiative to solve such problems of the migrant workers.

Following the appointment of the current office-bearers to the National Human Rights Commission, the Commission has formulated a strategic plan for the year 2021 to 2026. The plan serves as guidelines for the Commission to work for the protection and promotion of human rights at federal, provincial and local levels while programs such as business and human rights, climate change and human rights, corruption and human rights, sustainable development goals, and monitoring of human rights national action plan have been prioritized.

The world is still struggling to cope with the Corona Virus pandemic that spread across the globe. Vaccines against the corona virus have already arrived in Nepal. However, available data shows that 70 percent of Nepali citizens are still deprived of access to vaccines. I would like to draw focus of the Government of Nepal towards increasing access to vaccine for all citizens, and increasing rehabilitation and relief programs for earthquake and flood survivors. The delay in the construction work of the office building of the Commission, which was damaged by the earthquake, has impacted the work of the

Commission. On this occasion, I would like to request the Rt. Honourable to take initiative in the management of sustainable building for the Commission.

Rt. Honorable Prime Minister and Distinguished Guests,

Respect, protection and promotion, as well as fulfillment of human rights are not possible through the lone effort of any agency or authority of the state. This seems to be possible only through the joint efforts, coordination and collaboration between the Government of Nepal, National Human Rights Commission, other constitutional commissions, civil society as well as private and business sectors. Hence, the role of all human rights activists working directly and indirectly in the field of protection and promotion of human rights is very important. On this important occasion, I would like to appeal to all to join hands in the protection of human rights.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the national and foreign individuals/organizations for their respective significant contribution for maintaining human dignity and developing a human rights culture for the protection and promotion of human rights. The Commission looks forward to sufficient support, coordination and cooperation from all sides in the days to come. On the occasion of the 73rd anniversary of the promulgation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, I would like to extend my best wishes to all for the motivation to also work in new dimensions of human rights.

Finally, I would like to end my remarks here today by extending heartfelt gratitude to the Rt Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Guests and all the dignitaries who are present at today's function, despite the busy schedule.

Thank you!

10 December 2021, Lalitpur