

**Kathmandu Declaration**  
**on**  
**Gender Inclusion in National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)**

*Adopted at*  
*International Conference on Gender Inclusion in NHRIs*  
*held on September 3-5, 2024 at Kathmandu (Nepal)*

**Acknowledging** the initiation taken by the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal (NHRCN) in collaboration with the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF) and UN Agencies, we, the participants at the International Conference on Gender Inclusion in NHRIs, which includes representatives of NHRIs from 19 countries from the Asia Pacific Region, and members of national, regional, international organizations, and United Nations (UN) agencies, have gathered in Kathmandu, Nepal, on September 3-5, 2024, to discuss the importance of inclusion of gender equality and its intersectionality in the internal and external works of NHRIs, addressing systemic barriers, and to make rights of women and gender diverse people a priority in the face of emerging issues, that may be implemented, nationally, regionally, and globally.

**Reaffirming** the crucial role of NHRIs in safeguarding and promoting human rights at the national and international levels, and their specific efforts in strengthening gender equality commitments in its institutional structure and operation, in compliance with the Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (Paris Principles), and the General Observation of the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA), particularly No. 1.7 on ensuring pluralism of the NHRIs, and the Amman Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Global Alliance of NHRIs (GANHRI) in 2012.

**Reaffirming** the obligations and commitments under charter-based mechanisms and treaty based mechanisms, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Rome Statute on the International Criminal Court (ICC), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and other regional and international treaties.



**Reaffirming** the commitments and consensus generated gradually towards gender equality through evolving discourses in various global platforms and their consensus documents including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically its goals 5 on Gender Equality and 13 on Climate Action, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights, the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women.

**Reiterating** the determination and commitment of NHRIs from the region to progressing gender equality and inclusion, asserting that “women and gender diverse peoples” rights are human rights, and to enhance human rights standards, it is a critical aspect of our work to mainstream gender and safeguard equitable representation, and meaningful participation of all genders.

**Recognizing** that despite the steps taken by NHRIs from the region to ensure gender balance and to remove barriers to access legal recourse and remedies for violations of women and gender diverse peoples’ human rights, across the region they continue to experience violations in diverse forms, including but not limited to violence, discrimination and the harmful traditional practices, and thereby governments have to emphasize more on ensuring adequate protection and promotion of gender equality in their normative frameworks, its effective delivery in practice and to build progressive and resilient inclusive communities.

**Recognizing** that gender inequality and gender-based discrimination is pervasive and entrenched in all societies across the world that requires persistent, robust, proactive and sustained interventions, including from the NHRIs and range of stakeholders, to effectively promote gender mainstreaming, and safeguard the human rights of a gender pluralistic society, that promotes the principle of substantive gender equality and addresses the barriers they faced in all aspects of their lives, including in the evolving context of artificial intelligence and digitalization, economic crisis, and unpredictable impact of climate change, humanitarian crisis and public health emergencies.

**Recognizing** the intersectionality and the specific vulnerability of persons with disabilities, women, sexual and gender minorities, indigenous and other marginalized communities, and people facing the adverse impact of humanitarian and conflict crisis that undermine human rights; and the urgent need to intensify efforts to stop gender-based discrimination including on the basis of marital status, gender stereotypes and biases, and its vicious consequences, such as sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), denial and or lack of access to reproductive services and choices, unpaid care work, exploitation and abuse, lack of access to justice, and gender issues existing within the places of deprivation of liberty.

**Acknowledging** the implementation of the “pluralism” requirements of the Paris Principles and General Observations of the Sub-Committee on Accreditation that provides guidance for NHRIs on the performance of their mandate in relation to gender, and progressive efforts made so far

through its recommendations and comments to ensure the diversified representation in the operation and institutional structure of NHRIs.

**Acknowledging** the implementation of CEDAW General Recommendation No. 37 that focuses on the impacts of climate change and disasters on women's human rights, and requires to take effective measures to prevent, mitigate and respond to disasters and climate change and, in this context, to ensure that the human rights of women and gender diverse peoples are respected, protected and fulfilled.

**Noting with great concern** that the systemic discrimination at the normative levels and in actions in all aspects of the society, including the structure and operation of NHRIs, the backlash against gender justice, and shrinking spaces for human rights discourses, that undermine freedom of choices, as well as the security and or protection of human rights defenders (HRDs) committed for gender equality and inclusion, requires firm actions to retain the gains made so far in the human rights arena, and to ensure State accountability towards human rights violations of women and gender diverse peoples.

To achieve our joint goals and shared vision for gender equality in all aspects demand all to take bold, intentional and meaningful steps, including institutionalizing intersectional gender lens throughout the composition of NHRIs, its institutional structure, operation and culture;

We, unanimously call on all NHRIs, respective governments, UN agencies, private sectors, and the relevant stakeholders from the Asia Pacific region to respect, protect and fulfill the human rights of all genders by taking the following urgent actions:

- Ensure pluralistic and equitable representation, and meaningful participation of all genders within NHRIs', at all levels of operations and functions.
- Promote accountability for human rights violations, and ensure the integration of gender transformative approach in all NHRIs' mandated functions.
- Promote gender justice by taking specific actions and allocate resources aimed at achieving gender equality and inclusion, including to accommodate the impact of climate change, and or other current and evolving crisis.
- Review domestic legislations to provide policy guidance from gender perspective in compliance with international human rights standards.
- Periodically review NHRIs' internal policies, plans, culture and practices from gender perspective in compliance with international human rights standards to ensure NHRIs as gender inclusive human rights mechanism.
- Adopt right-based approach to data collection for ensuring systematic compilation of disaggregated data, documentation and dissemination of NHRIs' interventions on gender and gender diverse people.



- Ensure effective implementation of recommendations related to gender and gender diverse people made by Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA), Charter-based and Treaty-based mechanisms.
- Establish functional coordinating mechanism across NHRIs of Asia Pacific region to collectively raise the common issues of human rights violations related to women and gender diverse people.
- Periodically review on the implementation of this and all other gender inclusive related Declarations.

**We unanimously adopt this Kathmandu Declaration on Gender Inclusion in National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) on September 5, 2024 in Nepal.**

List of participating NHRIs from Asia Pacific region:

1. Australian Human Rights Commission
2. National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh
3. Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission
4. National Human Rights Commission of India
5. Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights
6. High Commission for Human Rights of Iraq
7. Jordan National Centre for Human Rights
8. Human Rights Commission of Malaysia
9. Human Rights Commission of the Maldives
10. National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia
11. National Human Rights Commission of Nepal
12. Oman Human Rights Commission
13. National Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
14. Palestine Independent Commission for Human Rights
15. Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines
16. National Human Rights Committee of Qatar
17. Ombudsman of Samoa
18. National Human Rights Commission of Thailand
19. Provedor for Human Rights and Justice of Timor-Leste

