



Statement By:

National Human Rights Commission and UNICEF Nepal

On potential misuse of children before, during and after election

Kathmandu, 16th September 2013

The National Human Rights Commission of Nepal and United Nations' Children Fund (UNICEF) are increasingly concerned about potential misuse, manipulation and engagement of children by political parties in pre and post-election campaigns in the country as there are alarming reports about plans of different parties to engage children and schools in political activities.

Both, constitutional human rights body - NHRC, and inter-governmental organisation mandated to promote and protect children's rights - UNICEF reiterates and reminds all actors, particularly political parties and state structures in charge of elections about general principles relating to child protection and children's involvement in political activities, as stated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, which has been ratified by Nepal as well as Election Code of Conduct which is specifically prohibits use of children in any procession, rally, mass meeting, meeting, gathering, election campaign or any election related work or activity.

In addition, as it is enshrined in the Code, we would like to remind all stakeholders about their obligations not to use schools and school premises for any political purposes and ensure that children are not misused for political purposes by any party as well as ensure that schools remain zones of peace as it was jointly declared by the political parties of Nepal

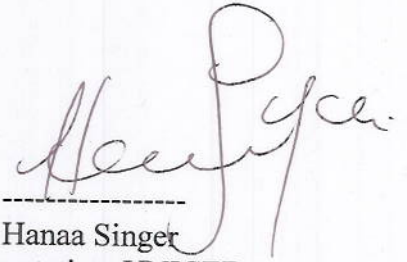
While acknowledging importance of children's opinion and their views, it is the responsibility of the government and other political actors to put in place systems that allow children to participate in political processes in a manner appropriate to their age, without misusing and manipulated as well as engaging them for interests and benefits of different political parties and structures affiliated with them.

NHRC and UNICEF urge all parties to respect the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, and other international norms and national standards including Election Code of Conduct and to take all necessary measures to avoid exposing all boys and girls under the age of eighteen into participating in political activities, including ongoing and planned *bandhs*.

NHRC and UNICEF urge all parties to ensure that children are not used through manipulation or coercion for political purposes, and that their rights to education and protection from any form of exploitation are respected.



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