

Regional Consultation Meeting of National Human Rights Institutions on Child Rights, 1 Dec. 2008

Regional Consultation Meeting of National Human Rights Institutions on Child Rights

Jointly Organized by National Human Rights Commission, Nepal and
Save the Children

Nov 30- Dec 01, 2008

Press Release

Kathmandu/ Dec 15, South Asian Regional Consultation Meeting of National Human Rights Institutions, Governmental bodies, Civil Society representatives on Child Rights has been concluded here today with an agreement of increasing coordination amongst the NHRIs of SAARC Region. The consultation meeting, jointly organized by NHRC Nepal and Save the Children, has emphasized the consolidated efforts of NHRIs; for which, a need is realized for the periodic and regular meeting of NHRIs, and formation of Working Group of Secretary Level. The meeting also has requested the NHRC Nepal to take initial responsibility.

This type of consultation meeting of NHRIs has been organized for the first time in SAARC region with the joint effort of NHRC Nepal and Save the Children on the occasion of 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Four major working papers presented and discussed in the meeting were *Children in Conflict: South Asian Perspective*, *Right to Education: Challenges in South Asia*, *Child Rights Monitoring- A Case Study of NHRC Nepal*, and *Trafficking in Children*“ Regional Perspectives. There was a serious and extensive discussion in the consultative meeting on various issues like- children are not realized and behaved as a complete human being, large number of world children live in South Asia where civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights have been violated mainly because of the conflict in different forms, very limited access to quality education of this region, etc. Representative from NHRIs, high ranking government officials of SAARC Countries, country representatives of Save the Children, representatives from INGOs and civil society from Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Maldives and Pakistan were participated in the meeting.

Recalling the Charter of the United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights-1948, and emphasizing the International Convention on Rights of the Child-1989, SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution- 2002, and the Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in south Asia- 2002, the Consultative Meeting, considering the vital role of NHRIs to implement the rights of the Children and duties of the States, has agreed upon and reaffirm the following:

1. A need to establish and strengthen Independent National Human Rights Institutes in all countries of South Asia. It emphasizes the importance of establishing and strengthening mechanisms with specific mandates to deal with the rights of the child.
2. The value of regional arrangement at SAARC Level and their conference periodically on the matters of Human Rights/Child Rights. It also recommends to establish a Working Group of Secretaries of all NHRI as a starting point to promote the relationship (good offices) among South Asian Countries. It

requests the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal to take an initial responsibility of setting up of the secretariat of such working group for the first two year.

3. NHRIs establish a network of cooperation among them in the region to deal with the violations, and protect and promote the rights of the child.
4. To urge the governments of the respective countries to take the rights of children as priority and respond to their rights as mentioned in UNCRC-1989 and other international human rights instruments.
5. The importance of access to quality education to all children focusing on most deprived; to appeal the national governments to have a proper mechanism to protect the rights of children affected by armed conflicts and trafficking.
6. To take forward the recommendation of this meeting to the forthcoming summit of NHRIs being held in January 2009 in India.

Giving remarks during the inaugural programme, Hon' Justice Kedar Nath Upadyay, Chairperson of NHRC Nepal stressed that any Government should not hesitate to punish the perpetrators of human rights violation. He expressed hope to reform the situation of human rights in South Asia by such consolidated efforts of NHRIs. Ms. Turid Heiberg, Regional Director of Save the Children, pointed out the extremely vulnerable situation of children in South Asia. She further emphasized the need of ratification of all the necessary UN treaties on child rights by the countries of this region and implement them as soon as possible. Hon Member Gauri Pradhan of NHRC Nepal pronounced that though one fourth of world children live in South Asia, the human rights situation of children is considerably miserable. He admitted that children of this region have not been able to utilize their rights due to the malnutrition, abandoning schools in the middle of the academic session, situation in and around the schools is full of violence, trafficking and exploitation in various forms. Two children Karan Thapa and Kalpana Lama inaugurated the opening ceremony of the consultative meeting by flaming a decorative panas.

Thank you