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OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN NEPAL**



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**Representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal
addresses trafficking survivors at *Shakti Samuha* to mark
International Women’s Day (March 8)**

Shakti Samuha held its First National Gathering of survivors of human trafficking on Wednesday to mark International Women’s Day. In 1996, the Kathmandu-based NGO became the first organisation in the world created by trafficking survivors. Shakti Samuha focuses on preventing trafficking of members of vulnerable groups, particularly adolescent girls, providing services for trafficking survivors, and ensuring that their human rights are respected.

More than 120 women from across Nepal attended Wednesday’s conference, including some who had to travel for two or three days, on foot and by hitching rides, because of transportation strikes.

Representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal, Lena Sundh, and other speakers congratulated those women for taking control of an issue that has had profound effects on their lives. In her speech, Ms. Sundh stressed two fundamental principles:

- First, human rights must be at the core of any credible anti-trafficking strategy;
- Second, all stakeholders must work from the perspective of victims of trafficking and those who are vulnerable to it.

To be effective, a human rights approach to counter trafficking requires: improved cooperation between countries of origin and destination; addressing the issue of safe migration and management of employment opportunities abroad; better coordination between actors at the national level and integration of human rights into all parts of the national anti-trafficking system.

“A critical issue is to address the connection between trafficking, migration, human rights and social exclusion. It is not a coincidence that those who are the victims of the worst forms of trafficking and other human rights violations also belong to the most socially excluded and discriminated groups,” added Ms. Sundh.

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