



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



Press Release – 4 September 2007

New Representative of OHCHR-Nepal Takes up Post in Kathmandu

Mr. Richard Bennett, Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal, arrived in Kathmandu to take up his duties today, 4 September. Mr. Bennett has been serving since August 2004 as the Representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Afghanistan, and has worked with the United Nations in senior human rights posts in East Timor and Sierra Leone since 2000. Prior to joining the United Nations, he worked for many years with the New Zealand Human Rights Commission and Ministry of Justice.

Upon his arrival, Mr. Bennett gave the following statement to the media at Tribhuvan International Airport:

“Thank you for coming to meet me here today. I am very happy to be in Nepal and starting my work as the Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights at this critical time in the life of your country.

“I hope you will understand that because I am just arriving, I will make only a few comments now, and ask that you save your questions for a press briefing to be held in the near future.

“As you know, Nepal faces many human rights challenges, including impunity for past and ongoing human rights violations; lack of representation and the historical marginalization of women, Madheshis, Dalits, Janajatis and other groups, as well as people with disabilities and sexual minorities; the challenges of creating an environment free of fear, intimidation and violence in the context of the coming Constituent Assembly election; and strengthening law enforcement and the administration of justice to protect human rights and prevent violations.

“The peace process provides a unique opportunity to address these issues, and OHCHR-Nepal has given priority to focusing on them through its monitoring, capacity-building, legal advice and outreach activities. As the new Representative of OHCHR-Nepal, I will ensure that the Office continues to do its utmost, in cooperation with the Government, state institutions, human rights defenders, civil society and others, to strengthen human rights protection and contribute to ensuring that human rights remain central in the peace and electoral process.

Thank you.”