



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



Wednesday, 14 October 2009

OHCHR and ILO conclude workshop on the rights of indigenous peoples

14 October, Chitwan

OHCHR and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), in coordination with the district chapter of Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), held three-day training from 12 to 14 October on the rights of indigenous peoples in Sauraha of Chitwan.

The program aimed to provide conceptual clarity on ILO Convention 169 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, and to discuss how these instruments can be applied in practice. Issues covered included indigenous peoples' rights to development, non-discrimination, participation and consultation, and their rights to land and natural resources, as well as their role in wildlife conservation. The workshop also focused on how indigenous people can address challenges and concerns through dialogue and discussion, including in the framework of the current constitution drafting process.

Twenty-nine persons, including twelve women, from different indigenous communities, attended the training and shared their experiences. Member of Constituent Assembly Lucky Sherpa, a local human rights defender, a senior official of the Chitwan National Park and representatives from ILO and OHCHR facilitated the sessions.

At the conclusion of the program, participants had an opportunity to engage in a panel discussion with district authorities including the Chief District Officer, the Superintendent of Police, and the District Forest Officer, the Local Development Officer as well as a senior official of the Chitwan National Park. Participants raised various questions related to indigenous peoples living in Chitwan, and discussed ways to increase respect for the rights of indigenous peoples.

“This workshop provided a platform to discuss and gain a better understanding of opportunities and challenges regarding indigenous peoples rights, non-discrimination and respect for conservation in practical terms. Knowledge of legal rights in combination with dialogue between all relevant stakeholders is an important step towards the realization of the rights of all” said Johan Olhagen, the Head of OHCHR-Nepal Central Field Office.