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The NDC and OHCHR call upon the Government to fulfil its commitment to end all forms of discrimination

KATHMANDU – The National Dalit Commission (NDC) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal (OHCHR - Nepal), on the eve of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, call on the Government to take the steps necessary to fulfil its commitment to end all forms of discrimination, including caste-based discrimination.

The human rights situation in Nepal was recently reviewed by the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Among the recommendations provided by UN member states several were related to ending discrimination. By accepting most of these recommendations, the Government gave its commitment to eliminate all forms of discrimination and agreed to enact into law the Bill on Caste-based Discrimination and Untouchability. The NDC and OHCHR welcome this important commitment and stand ready to support the government on concrete action needed to implement the UPR recommendations.

Discrimination remains widespread in Nepal, resulting in the political, social and economic exclusion of millions of Nepalis on the basis of gender, caste, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and religion. Despite the obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Interim Constitution of Nepal and other national legislation, caste-based discrimination and untouchability remain a reality for many Dalits in Nepal. Continuing incidents of physical assault, arson, forced displacement, sexual violence and labour exploitation resulting from caste-based discrimination have been verified by OHCHR and the NDC through their monitoring.

“Deep-rooted discrimination is recognised as one of the root causes of the conflict in Nepal.” Jyoti Sanghera, Head of OHCHR- Nepal, stated. “The UPR process provides an important opportunity to the Government of Nepal to advance its commitment to eliminate caste-based discrimination. The Government is urged to swiftly adopt the Bill on Caste-based Discrimination and Untouchability in line with the highest international human rights standards.”

Bijul Bishwakarma, the Chairperson of the NDC, added “Caste-based discrimination must be defined as a crime and strong legal provisions be put in place to penalise the perpetrators, bringing an end to impunity for such acts. The adoption of the Bill on Caste-based Discrimination and Untouchability is paramount in providing the victims with proper and speedy access to justice. ”

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