



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



Press Release

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NGO Code of Conduct

Ian Martin, the Representative of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Nepal, has expressed concern that the Government proposal of a code of conduct for NGOs would be in breach of Nepal's international human rights obligations.

In a letter sent to the Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare, the Representative expressed concern that, under international practice, codes of conduct for NGOs are normally initiated and defined by civil society itself and are commitments entered into voluntarily by NGOs which do not have a legally binding character. He noted that, in contrast, in Nepal the NGO code of conduct was being proposed by Government and would have legally binding effects on NGOs.

With respect to the substance of draft points to be included in the code of conduct, as circulated by the Social Welfare Council, the Representative noted with concern that the proposed points would introduce constraints on the membership, objectives, programming, functioning, access to funding and affiliations of national and international organizations active in Nepal and would be incompatible with international human rights standards. Some of the points would impose explicit restrictions on organizations or their staff that are incompatible with the right to freedom of association and other human rights standards, while others are provisions that are so broad as to allow an application that would also be in violation of these standards.