



**Remarks of Richard Bennett
Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal
At a Programme to Release the ‘UDHR Song’ Created by INSEC
7 December 2008, Kathmandu**

Mr Subodh Raj Pyakurel, Chairman of INSEC; Hon Members of the Constituent Assembly; Colleagues from the human rights community; Members of the Media; and Friends:

Thank you for inviting me to this programme releasing the Human Rights song describing the meaning of all the articles in the UDHR. The past few days have seen a number of creative and effective activities marking UDHR60 and promoting human rights. This is a musical human rights weekend. As some of you know, yesterday OHCHR and a group of national and international agencies organised a concert in honour of the 60th anniversary of the UDHR. There, the band Kutumba delivered human rights messages in between playing its music and composed a new tune dedicated to human rights. Today INSEC releases a song about the UDHR, Music is a powerful medium to convey our human rights messages not only to Nepalis who cannot read, or who would ordinarily not be exposed to the Declaration, but also because it is a medium that moves us and inspires us to change our lives and our communities for the better.

Of course, the song will also raise awareness about the human rights in the UDHR and, I hope, empower all people, including members of historically marginalized groups, and women, to demand respect for their rights.

Creating a strong human rights culture in Nepal, as elsewhere, requires both a “top down” and a “bottom up” approach. Human rights defenders and offices like mine need to engage with duty bearers at senior levels to ensure that they meet their obligations, and ordinary Nepalis must have the awareness and the support to demand respect for their rights from local officials and security forces.

OHCHR-Nepal, in partnership with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), has recently taken what I think is a similar step to your ‘UDHR Song’, by producing an illustrated version of the UDHR, with the simplified text in Nepali. Some of you might already have copies. I am happy to report that one organisation, HR Home, has quickly followed our lead and is developing a brochure that will combine the poster’s illustrations with the UDHR in English and Nepali, and my Office is already discussing with NHRC other ‘tools’ that can be developed to reach out to all Nepalis with human rights messages.

Our High Commissioner says that 60 years after the UDHR was adopted it has probably had more impact on mankind than any other document in modern history. Nevertheless, we are still a very long way from achieving the goals it lays down and States’ political will to fulfill their obligations lags lamentably behind their pledges. If the Declaration is to remain relevant we must continue to introduce it to new audiences and new generations who can be inspired by its principles and who will hold States to their commitments.

My congratulations to INSEC on recording this UDHR song. May it be played all over the country and heard by every Nepali - whether President or peasant – repeatedly. Thank you.