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**Delivered at a Ceremony to Inaugurate "The Yogyakarta Principles"
translated into Nepali, organized by Blue Diamond Society**

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First of all thank you for inviting me to say a few words to launch the Nepali translation of the Yogyakarta Principles today. The Yogyakarta Principles were released and endorsed by a distinguished group of 29 international human rights experts in March 2007, while the Human Rights Council was in session. They draw on a wide range of very important international human rights standards and apply them to issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. These include extrajudicial executions, violence and torture, access to justice, privacy, non-discrimination, rights to freedom of expression and assembly as well as many others.

The principles provide a unique and detailed framework of standards and concrete actions which States should take to protect all persons from discrimination and abuse on account of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The human rights mechanisms of the UN have addressed the issue of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in a range of ways. For example, the Special Procedures of the UN have given attention to human rights violations against sexual minorities. However, there is still no single convention which brings together a UN position on the rights of sexual and gender minorities. The Yogyakarta Principles is therefore an important document to focus international attention on the need for a more systematic approach to protection.

In Nepal itself, the Interim Constitution, which is consistent with the provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 21 November, provides a framework for ending discrimination. It outlaws discrimination

on the basis of “sex”. There is still much work to be done to strengthen the legal framework in this regard and especially implement protective measures.

As the previous Representative stated on 9 January, the voices of lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender people (*metis*) are often among the most marginalized in society due to deep-seated norms, prejudice, violence and discrimination, and this has often led to profound social exclusion. The peace process, including the constitution-making process, offers an opportunity to ensure the creation of a new State built on equality, respect and inclusion. In that context, the Yogyakarta principles provide an essential tool for creating awareness, for debate, advocacy and action to develop a proper protective legal framework, and to end abuses against individuals on account of their sexual orientation and gender identity in Nepal.

It gives me great pleasure therefore to launch this book and wish you a successful interaction programme this afternoon.