



**Statement by Ai Kihara-Hunt
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal
Delivered at a Seminar to mark World Food Day,
Organized by the National Network for Right to Food**

16 October 2007

Dear representatives of the National Network for Right to Food, members of the media, colleagues and friends:

I am very happy to be with you here today to celebrate World Food Day, and would like to congratulate the organizers for preparing this seminar.

As UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour said in her statement to mark this Day, ensuring access to adequate food and preventing hunger is not only a development issue; it is a human rights imperative. The right to adequate food is a human right guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and in many other international human rights treaties. All people, men and women, have this right, regardless of their race, color, sex, language, religion, political opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. However, this right is only realized when everyone has access to food, which is sufficient, respects cultural traditions and ensures a fulfilling and dignified life, free of fear.

It is true that numerous challenges remain in fully realizing the right to food for all. Indeed, there are many issues that might stand as obstacles: discrimination and armed conflict amongst them. Reports indicate that the number of people who suffer from hunger has increased every year since 1996.

However, action needs to start now, rather than later. OHCHR-Nepal is continuing to expand its work in the areas of economic, social and cultural rights, despite the many challenges that remain in ensuring respect for political and civil rights. We look forward to working with all of you towards ensuring the right to food.

Thank you very much.